Socioeconomic conditions

This section uses statistical data to look at some key aspects of socio-economic conditions in 2002 and 2003. The main point of interest is to update the poverty profile. Evidence on education, health, the labour market and utilities is also presented. The main source of information is the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) carried out by INSTAT.

# Education

Education is a key policy area with a well-educated and skilled workforce being central to increasing economic growth and development. The levels of education in the LSMS panel for those aged over 22 years in 2002 were relatively low with 17.7% having 4-year primary education, 45.1% with 8-year primary education, 14.7% with secondary school education, 15.1% with vocational education and 7.4% with a university level education.

Looking at enrolment rates in school for those aged 7-18 years in 2002, 75% of this age group were enrolled in school or education. shows enrolment rates by age group, poverty status of the household and urban or rural area. Those aged 16 – 18 years were least likely to be enrolled (35%) compared to 85% of 11-15 year olds and 95% of those aged 7–11 years. Children

from poor households were less likely to be in school or education than children from non-poor households. Children in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to be enrolled in school or education (85% in urban areas compared to 69.5% in rural areas).

Enrolment status of children aged 7 – 18 years, 2002



Even though children in rural areas were less likely to be enrolled in school, the effect of the poverty status of the household is more marked in urban areas than in rural areas. Of children in poor households in urban areas, over one quarter (26%) were not enrolled in school compared to 17% of non-poor children in urban areas, a percentage point difference of 9%. In rural areas, non-poor children were only 4% more likely to be enrolled in school than poor children.

Those who were not enrolled in school were asked for the reason. The main reason given was that they had completed their studies or had no interest in continuing in education (54%), followed by having other work to do, including agricultural work (16%) and the school being too far way (15%) even though this last reason applied in rural areas only. Of those who were not enrolled in 2002, 50% were working as farm workers, 5.5% were employees, 2% were self-employed, 29% were unemployed and 13.5% had some other status e.g. ill, housewife.

Dropout rates as children become older are of concern. The key ages where the risk of dropping out is greatest are from 13 to 16 years. In 2002, 6% of 13-year olds were not in school, increasing to 23% at 14, 42% at 15 and 60% at 16 years of age.

### Changes between 2002 and 2003 for 15 – 18 year olds

Using the panel component of the LSMS for 2002 and 2003 the dropout rates for 15 – 18 year olds who were in education in 2002 can be seen. Of those who were in education in 2002, 86.4% were enrolled at both years while 13.6% were not enrolled in education by 2003. The dropout rate varies by age with those aged 15 in 2002 being most likely to drop out by 2003 (25%) compared to 10% of those aged 16 in 2002 and 6% of those aged 17 in 2002. So the dropout rate is greatest between the ages of 15 to 16 years, something which is in line with the legal age for leaving formal education and the typical completion age of 8 years in primary education.