South Africa is the most miserable country in Africa

By Staff Writer

January 30, 2015

A new report by the Cato Institute puts South Africa among the most miserable countries in the world.

Cato is a public policy research organisation which bases its findings on four key data points: Unemployment levels, interest rates, consumer prices and economic growth.

"Every country aims to lower inflation, unemployment, and lending rates, while increasing gross domestic product (GDP) per capita," said author of the Index, Steve Hanke, a Professor at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

"Through a simple sum of the former three rates, minus year-on-year per capita GDP growth, I constructed a misery index that comprehensively ranks 108 countries based on misery,"

Countries not included in the table did not report satisfactory data for 2014, he said.

South Africa placed as the 10th most miserable country, largely due to its unemployment rate, which is at 25%.

The country is projected to have the 8th highest unemployment rate in the world in 2015, according to a report recently issued by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

South Africa is ahead of other African countries including Sudan (11), Egypt (18), Algeria (45), Mauritius (56), Seychelles (62), and Morocco (69).

The five most miserable countries in the world at the end of 2014 are, in order: Venezuela, Argentina, Syria, Ukraine, and Iran.

The five least miserable are Brunei, Switzerland, China, Taiwan, and Japan.

Venezuela finds itself in a recession and is at the top of the Misery Index due to its inflation rate, above 63%, the highest in the world.

The country earns 96% of its export revenue from oil, which has tumbled to as low as $45 a barrel.

The inflation rate in South Africa was recorded at 5.3% in December 2014. A prior index ranking of only 89 countries, placed South Africa 8th.