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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Contents

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (APRIL 2010) 2

Detailed results: Tables..... 4

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons 4

Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates’ offices..... 5

Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons..... 6

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R000)..... 7

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2009 and the three months ended April 2010 8

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the three months ended April 2009 and the three months ended April 2010 8

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year..... 8

Explanatory notes..... 9

Glossary 10

General information..... 11

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (APRIL 2010)

Table A – Key figures for the month of April 2010

Actual estimates	April 2010	% change between April 2009 and April 2010	% change between February to April 2009 and February to April 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	107 775	13,0	1,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	61 933	11,6	1,6
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	532,0	-4,8	4,4

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended April 2010 reflected a 1,6% increase in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended April 2009. An increase of 13,0% was recorded between April 2009 and April 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 1,6% increase in the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended April 2010 compared with the three months ended April 2009 were civil summonses issued for ‘Money lent’ (contributing 5,2 percentage points), ‘Professional services’ (contributing 0,5 of a percentage point) and ‘Promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt’ (contributing 0,3 of a percentage point) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2010 increased by 1,6% compared with the three months ended April 2009. An increase of 11,6% was recorded between April 2009 and April 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements for ‘Promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt’ (contributing 4,6 percentage points), ‘Money lent’ (contributing 2,3 percentage points) and ‘Rent’ (contributing 0,2 of a percentage point) were the main drivers behind the 1,6% increase (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was an increase of 4,4% in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2010 compared with the three months ended April 2009. A decrease of 4,8% was recorded between April 2009 and April 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 4,4% increase in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended April 2010 compared with the three months ended April 2009 were the ‘Money lent’ category (contributing 2,9 percentage points), the ‘Other services’ category (contributing 1,2 percentage points) and the ‘Professional services’ category (contributing 1,0 percentage point). Two categories that contributed negatively were ‘Other debts’ (contributing -1,7 percentage points) and ‘Goods sold on an open account’ (contributing -0,4 of a percentage point) (see Table 6).

During April 2010, 61 933 civil judgements for debt amounting to R532,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R532,0 million were:

- Money lent (R190,5 million or 35,8%)
- Goods sold (R85,0 million or 16,0%)
- Services (R84,9 million or 16,0%)
- Other debts (R81,2 million or 15,3%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2005 to April 2010.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

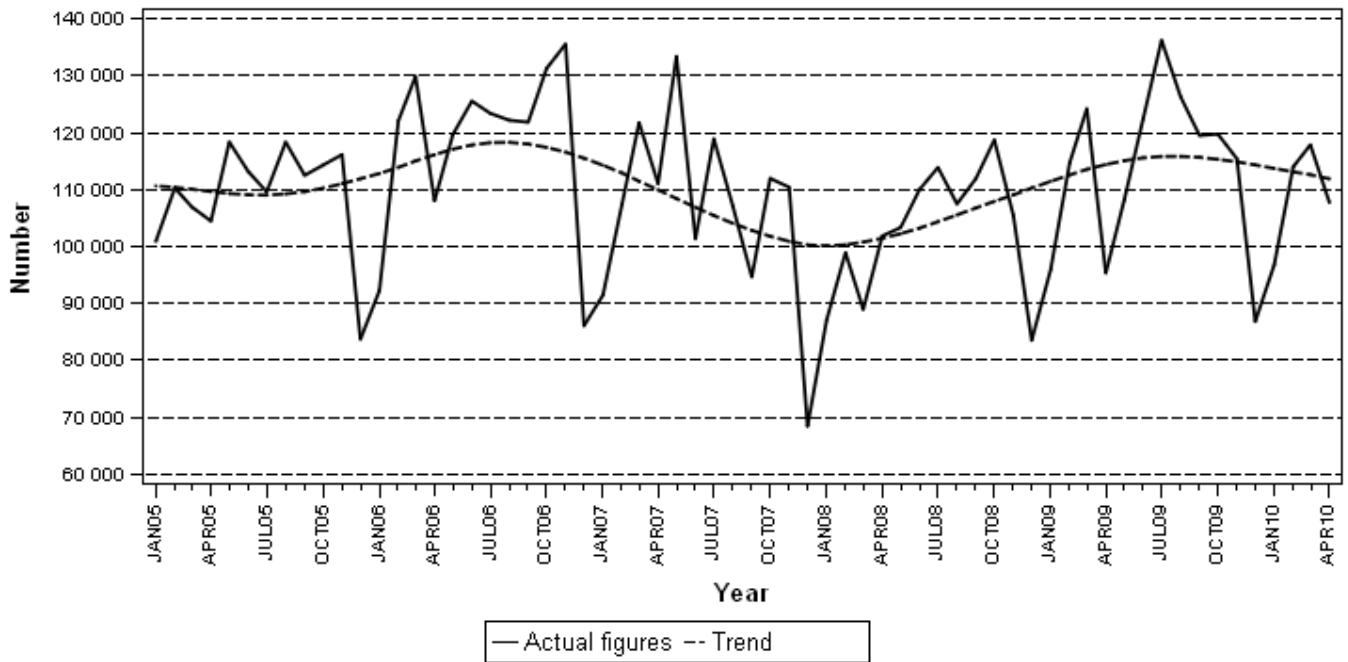
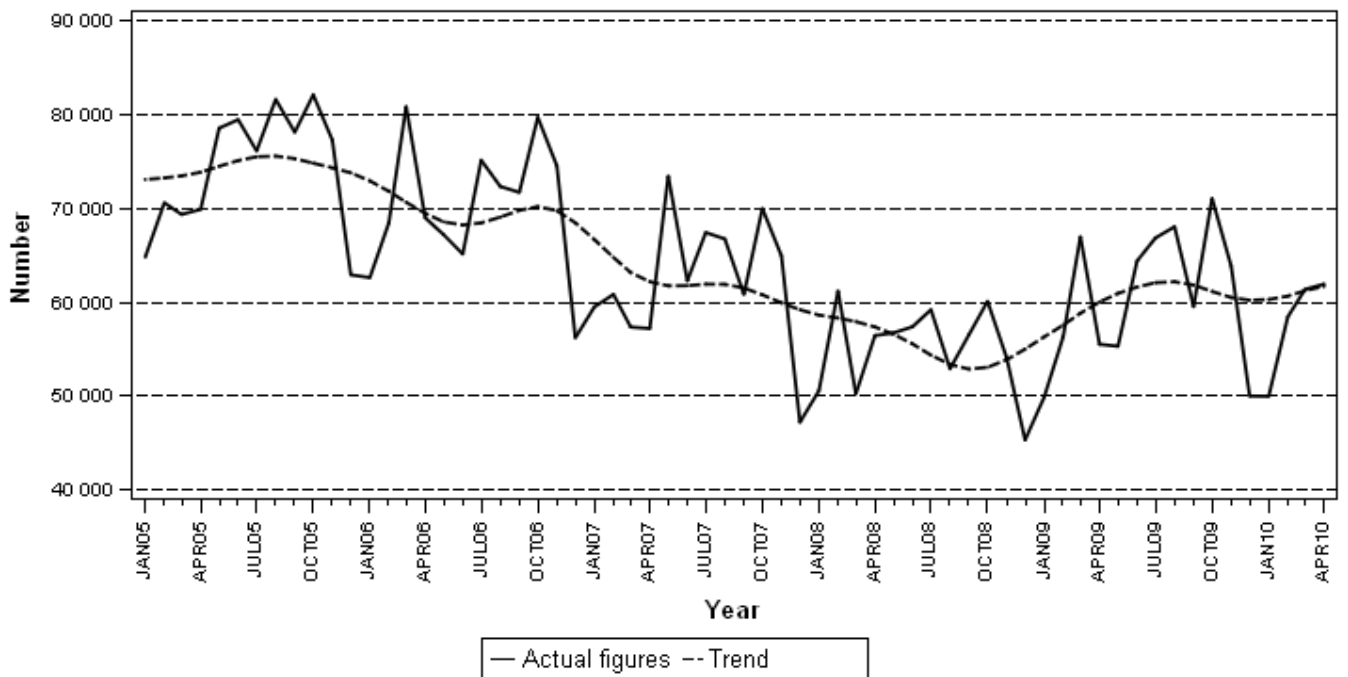


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		April	March	April		April	March	April
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	115 918	139 929	124 034	1 420 316	103 299	125 336	110 479
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		124 862	130 353	133 843		110 601	115 367	118 344
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	11 397	10 788	9 639	112 717	9 925	8 797	7 969
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	2 633	3 474	2 903	30 583	2 315	3 037	2 569
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	10 646	13 770	13 165	128 153	8 843	12 213	11 584
2.2.2 Other	164 618	11 417	14 738	12 649	142 316	9 785	12 616	10 687
2.3 Rent	51 389	3 809	4 556	4 446	43 153	3 328	3 861	3 526
2.4 Money lent	326 092	22 889	34 964	30 335	308 583	21 679	33 515	29 007
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	15 015	17 282	16 911	227 360	13 914	15 599	15 960
2.6 Other debts	256 599	17 561	18 327	17 727	210 475	13 806	14 633	13 875
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	95 367	117 899	107 775	1 203 340	83 595	104 271	95 177
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		97 797	109 990	110 353		85 954	96 299	97 636

1/ Preliminary.

Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2008	Year Total	117 171	54 474	17 553	7 236	19 284	78 092	205 869	59 060	33 410	138 384	26 859	33 374
2009	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
	January	8 353	1 955	1 259	515	1 713	7 400	20 427	5 126	2 299	10 835	1 265	4 435
	February	10 331	3 211	1 619	795	1 557	7 766	22 126	5 592	2 742	12 559	1 449	3 645
	March	14 242	5 191	1 759	755	1 807	7 604	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728
	April	9 791	3 286	1 384	538	1 403	7 336	18 223	4 108	2 668	9 863	1 671	2 494
	May	11 016	3 555	1 439	641	1 839	7 483	20 872	4 878	3 120	11 931	3 448	3 554
	June	14 060	3 298	2 364	639	1 537	7 470	24 521	4 495	3 063	12 165	2 698	2 670
	July	12 682	4 276	1 620	806	1 895	7 186	26 907	4 373	3 861	17 167	2 629	3 758
	August	10 659	5 756	1 721	871	1 693	7 967	22 448	3 667	3 181	21 921	2 034	2 971
	September	10 082	3 067	1 394	948	2 161	8 227	25 483	4 587	2 890	11 846	2 781	3 056
	October	12 376	3 973	1 349	542	2 478	7 429	20 819	4 981	3 420	11 304	1 589	3 200
	November	12 435	3 747	1 395	537	2 439	7 834	20 688	4 373	3 710	11 049	1 581	4 000
December	8 605	2 101	777	439	1 096	7 469	17 460	2 703	2 496	6 799	818	3 020	
1/ 2010	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 769	10 033	1 066	6 000

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		April	March	April		April	March	April
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	7 000	5 854	6 821	73 332	6 221	5 024	5 894
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	1 034	1 087	1 032	11 200	876	917	876
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	7 694	8 060	7 101	80 893	6 920	7 178	6 216
1.2.2 Other	78 652	6 229	6 664	5 856	69 473	5 731	5 860	5 024
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 272	2 386	2 161	22 483	1 814	1 928	1 728
1.4 Money lent	273 794	20 311	22 919	25 121	267 864	19 942	20 526	24 511
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	3 415	6 446	7 751	51 777	3 046	5 764	7 124
1.6 Other debts	95 130	7 547	7 953	6 090	86 580	6 933	7 175	5 485
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	55 502	61 369	61 933	663 602	51 483	54 372	56 858
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		57 637	61 099	64 260		53 004	55 143	58 482

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		April	March	April		April	March	April
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	55 160	57 111	57 316	497 848	39 152	37 506	40 049
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	30 883	33 338	27 654	319 087	25 065	27 009	22 441
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	21 547	47 334	28 719	266 902	18 030	39 388	23 749
1.2.2 Other	715 777	50 806	63 064	56 199	556 872	41 553	48 347	45 962
1.3 Rent	459 493	37 128	45 769	42 911	312 500	26 314	34 876	30 066
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	216 670	221 119	190 460	2 411 391	204 621	207 791	180 327
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	56 453	75 881	47 459	627 760	45 159	47 808	36 982
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	90 194	101 360	81 238	975 583	72 252	72 046	57 159
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	558 841	644 976	531 956	5 967 943	472 146	514 771	436 735
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		587 000	624 164	557 903		489 342	488 331	451 846

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2009 and the three months ended April 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates February to April 2009	Actual estimates February to April 2010	% change between February to April 2009 and February to April 2010	Difference between February to April 2009 and February to April 2010
Number of summonses for debt	334 322	339 695	1,6	5 373
Number of judgements for debt	178 813	181 731	1,6	2 918
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 704,7	1 780,1	4,4	75,4

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the three months ended April 2009 and the three months ended April 2010 1/

Item	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
– Open account	-2,7	-2,1	-0,4
– Instalment sale transactions	0,1	0,0	0,3
Services			
– Professional	0,5	0,0	1,0
– Other	-0,2	-0,2	1,2
Rent	0,1	0,2	0,6
Money lent	5,2	2,3	2,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	0,3	4,6	0,5
Other debts	-1,8	-3,1	-1,7
Total	1,6	1,6	4,4

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during February to April 2009, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates April 2009	Actual estimates April 2010	% change between April 2009 and April 2010	Difference between April 2009 and April 2010
Number of summonses for debt	95 367	107 775	13,0	12 408
Number of judgements for debt	55 502	61 933	11,6	6 431
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	558,8	532,0	-4,8	-26,8

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
	2	Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Purpose of the survey	3	The survey of civil cases for debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.
Scope of the survey	4	This survey covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of civil cases recorded; • number of civil summonses issued for debt; • number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and • value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
Statistical unit	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for April 2010 was 90,7%. Improved response rate for March 2010 was 92,1%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. loan agreement.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	'Other services' refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters and electricians.
Other debts	'Other debts' refers to all other kinds of outstanding debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and salaries, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat levies,
Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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