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Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

April 2016

**Embargoed until:
15 June 2016
09:00**

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Forthcoming issue:

May 2016

Expected release date:

21 July 2016

Contents

Key results for April 2016	2
Detailed results: Tables	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons	4
Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons	5
Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)	5
Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2015 and the three months ended April 2016	6
Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2015 and the three months ended April 2016	6
Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year	6
Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province.....	7
Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province	7
Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000).....	7
Explanatory notes	8
Glossary.....	9
General information	10

Key results for April 2016

Table A – Key figures for the month of April 2016

Actual estimates	April 2016	% change between April 2015 and April 2016	% change between February – April 2015 and February – April 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	55 667	11,9	-6,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	22 365	-2,1	-9,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	317,3	-1,5	-6,3

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 6,6% in the three months ended April 2016 compared with the three months ended April 2015.

The largest contributions to the 6,6% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,1 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 9,1% in the three months ended April 2016 compared with the three months ended April 2015.

The largest contributions to the 9,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -5,2 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -2,7 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 6,3% in the three months ended April 2016 compared with the three months ended April 2015.

The largest negative contributions to the 6,3% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -5,4 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,5 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -1,0 percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In April 2016, 22 365 civil judgements for debt amounting to R317,3 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R94,5 million or 29,8%);
- money lent (R86,8 million or 27,4%); and
- services (R58,2 million or 18,3%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

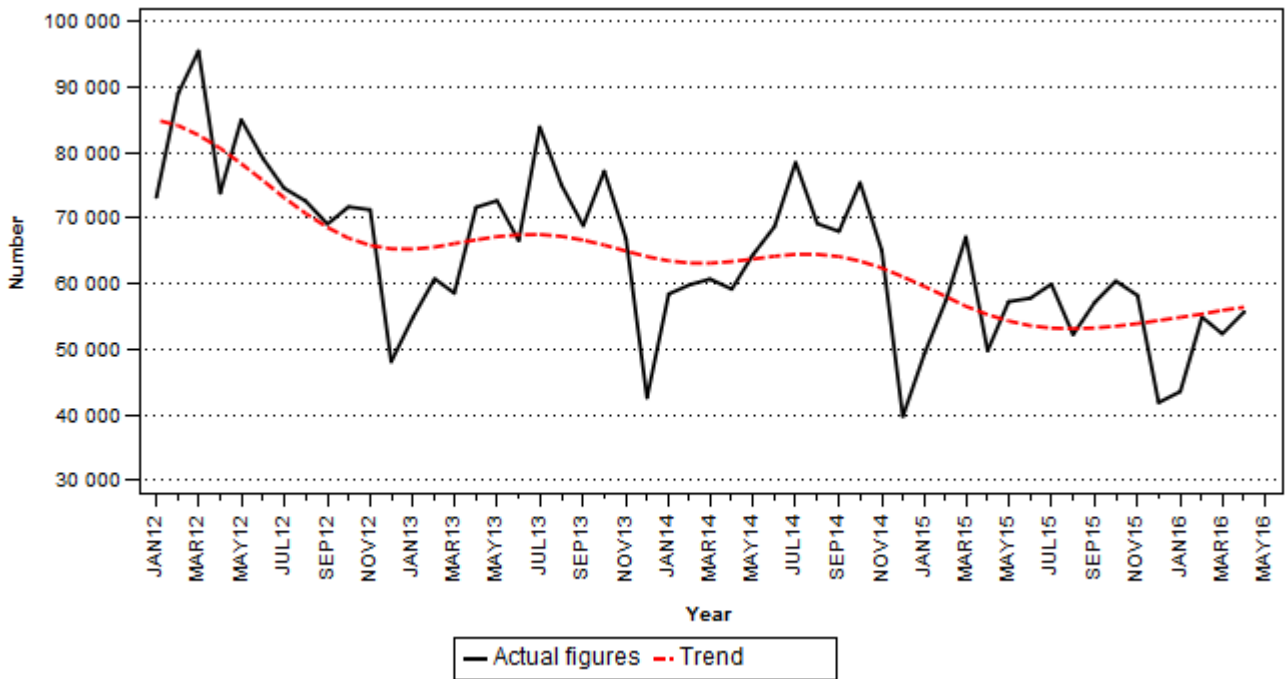
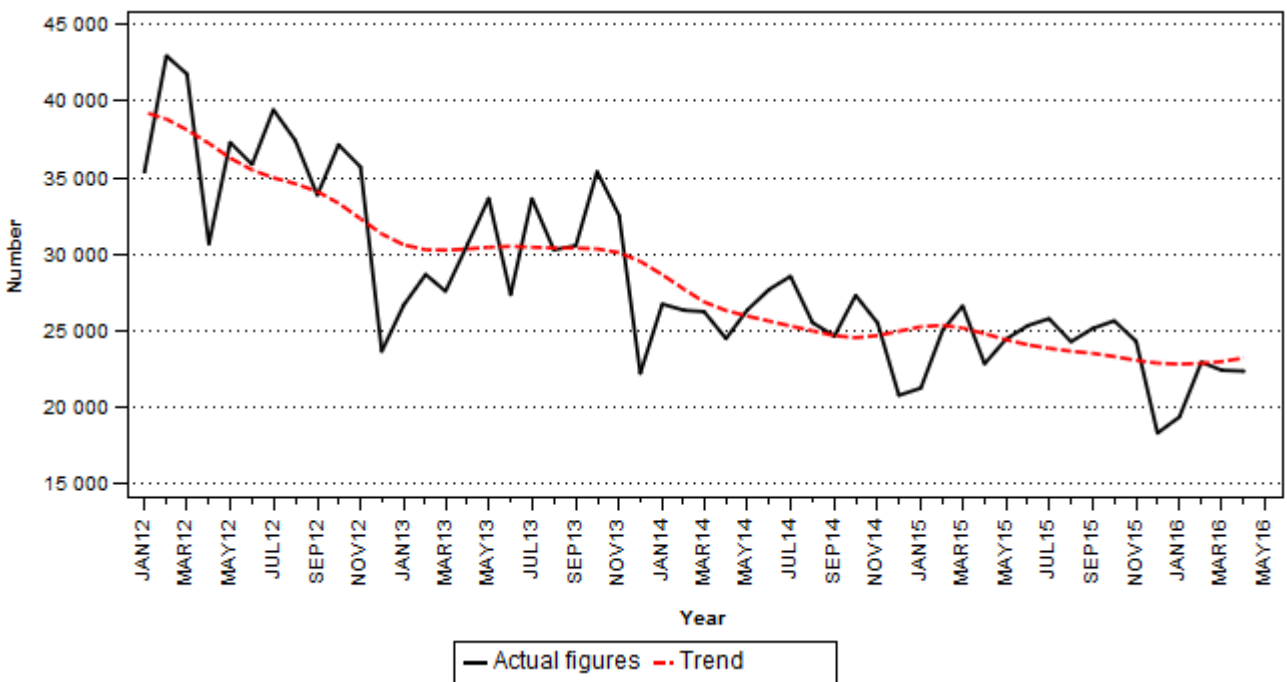


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Apr-15	1/ Mar-16	1/ Apr-16	2015	Apr-15	1/ Mar-16	1/ Apr-16
Cases recorded	Actual figures	733 514	56 669	57 662	61 344	623 802	50 026	49 966	53 674
	Seasonally adjusted		59 282	58 095	63 994		51 272	48 432	54 793
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	43 664	3 218	3 340	3 398	32 616	2 391	2 516	2 542
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	23 011	1 727	1 817	1 819	18 234	1 314	1 444	1 485
	Services - Professional	84 964	6 503	7 055	7 462	73 636	5 720	6 090	6 671
	Services - Other	110 042	8 105	9 625	9 834	90 635	6 948	8 364	8 511
	Rent	29 255	2 254	2 988	2 511	22 558	1 833	2 226	1 981
	Money lent	164 531	12 257	11 662	12 462	153 342	11 450	10 974	11 387
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	89 682	5 841	6 658	7 606	83 701	5 384	6 186	7 134
	Other debts	123 254	9 841	9 183	10 575	111 399	8 860	8 331	9 423
	Total - Actual figures	668 403	49 746	52 328	55 667	586 121	43 900	46 131	49 134
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		53 235	52 960	59 441		46 322	47 153	51 855

1/ Preliminary.

Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Apr-15	1/ Mar-16	1/ Apr-16	2015	Apr-15	1/ Mar-16	1/ Apr-16
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	18 545	1 620	1 561	1 619	13 804	1 261	1 218	1 215
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 426	602	512	792	5 752	441	422	695
	Services - Professional	50 913	3 564	3 662	3 589	44 324	3 018	3 255	3 165
	Services - Other	42 221	3 050	3 322	3 359	35 776	2 519	2 881	2 954
	Rent	17 851	1 617	1 476	1 343	14 517	1 347	1 200	1 094
	Money lent	69 713	5 524	5 127	4 787	63 786	5 129	4 745	4 294
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 604	2 533	1 994	1 676	23 763	2 225	1 714	1 384
	Other debts	54 764	4 332	4 764	5 200	50 056	4 056	4 278	4 717
	Total - Actual figures	289 037	22 842	22 418	22 365	251 778	19 996	19 713	19 518
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		24 648	22 284	24 017		20 992	19 666	20 571

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Apr-15	1/ Mar-16	1/ Apr-16	2015	Apr-15	1/ Mar-16	1/ Apr-16
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	275 495	19 661	22 828	20 895	157 824	12 843	12 379	10 838
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	104 326	7 418	7 634	7 620	89 527	6 644	5 886	6 673
	Services - Professional	285 325	19 276	22 329	17 451	230 346	14 590	19 088	14 403
	Services - Other	521 021	37 664	43 255	40 714	400 078	29 533	33 223	30 944
	Rent	304 315	25 847	27 982	22 797	213 394	18 760	19 966	16 699
	Money lent	1 172 061	85 241	107 225	86 799	1 052 905	81 378	95 050	78 671
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	506 174	33 555	45 942	26 530	422 857	30 478	37 717	21 846
	Other debts	1 229 098	93 541	84 775	94 523	841 493	65 578	61 406	67 974
	Total - Actual figures	4 397 815	322 203	361 970	317 329	3 408 424	259 804	284 715	248 048
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		373 159	349 239	366 419		297 166	273 549	282 138

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2015 and the three months ended April 2016

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2015	Actual estimates Feb – Apr 2016	% change between Feb – Apr 2015 and Feb – Apr 2016	Difference between Feb – Apr 2015 and Feb – Apr 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	174 409	162 881	-6,6	-11 528
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	74 503	67 730	-9,1	-6 773
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 110,6	1 040,3	-6,3	-70,3

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended April 2015 and the three months ended April 2016 1/

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

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt by the percentage contribution to the total during February to April 2015, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates April 2015	Actual estimates April 2016	% change between April 2015 and April 2016	Difference between April 2015 and April 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	49 746	55 667	11,9	5 921
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	22 842	22 365	-2,1	-477
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	322,2	317,3	-1,5	-4,9

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2015	Apr	8 783	3 847	695	3 207	8 538	2 618	16 889	2 989	2 180	49 746
	May	11 421	4 303	723	3 844	8 002	3 810	19 956	2 972	2 205	57 236
	Jun	10 617	5 205	959	3 314	10 012	2 839	18 966	3 471	2 383	57 766
	Jul	10 353	5 406	843	4 302	9 882	2 618	20 210	3 699	2 594	59 907
	Aug	9 021	4 586	763	4 330	8 050	2 635	17 535	3 023	2 266	52 209
	Sep	9 108	4 882	727	4 195	9 065	3 373	20 049	3 418	2 327	57 144
	Oct	10 180	5 430	750	4 361	9 651	3 471	20 896	3 209	2 438	60 386
	Nov	10 506	4 398	735	4 880	8 794	2 864	20 261	3 513	2 220	58 171
	Dec	7 353	2 826	682	3 151	8 094	2 115	14 235	1 740	1 645	41 841
2016	Jan	7 050	3 004	577	3 678	6 501	2 232	15 769	2 833	1 881	43 525
	Feb	10 083	4 413	656	4 331	8 300	2 514	19 548	2 732	2 309	54 886
	Mar	9 812	4 316	773	4 062	8 978	2 948	16 805	2 785	1 849	52 328
	Apr	9 217	4 721	1 041	4 192	8 481	3 458	19 974	2 474	2 109	55 667

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2015	Apr	3 287	2 714	500	2 704	3 527	1 241	5 595	1 410	1 864	22 842
	May	3 267	2 943	368	3 475	3 070	1 523	6 300	1 596	1 897	24 439
	Jun	3 869	3 987	407	2 758	3 691	1 631	5 480	1 605	1 908	25 336
	Jul	4 603	3 318	445	2 627	3 921	1 455	6 032	1 542	1 845	25 788
	Aug	4 109	2 620	438	2 855	3 284	1 234	6 246	1 667	1 832	24 285
	Sep	3 830	2 832	488	2 871	4 416	1 324	6 062	1 381	1 950	25 154
	Oct	4 264	3 220	412	3 056	3 892	1 010	6 541	1 785	1 467	25 647
	Nov	4 163	2 966	458	2 600	4 106	1 027	5 938	1 580	1 468	24 306
	Dec	3 147	1 454	306	2 030	3 031	1 003	5 053	1 059	1 241	18 324
2016	Jan	2 773	1 950	344	1 869	4 108	885	4 417	1 627	1 396	19 369
	Feb	4 763	2 760	442	2 247	3 341	932	5 594	1 490	1 378	22 947
	Mar	4 108	2 604	319	2 653	3 720	1 380	4 994	1 284	1 356	22 418
	Apr	3 521	2 501	422	2 642	3 913	1 626	4 901	1 482	1 357	22 365

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2015	Apr	62 810	47 176	4 018	28 057	39 357	11 619	88 888	28 653	11 625	322 203
	May	74 314	44 532	3 974	48 534	33 327	16 938	100 285	28 835	11 255	361 994
	Jun	81 962	57 301	2 859	26 175	46 373	21 593	91 115	56 095	21 578	405 051
	Jul	86 915	49 682	4 954	30 311	46 133	19 282	104 086	68 679	13 939	423 981
	Aug	95 531	39 286	4 036	33 695	35 588	15 174	105 061	38 913	14 162	381 446
	Sep	53 835	54 304	6 480	28 910	51 247	16 280	105 994	42 981	17 924	377 955
	Oct	76 353	52 076	3 667	35 954	45 980	14 400	104 905	37 194	13 860	384 389
	Nov	71 399	47 573	4 916	35 697	55 776	14 894	100 029	41 485	10 641	382 410
	Dec	61 750	25 351	2 698	24 175	36 816	13 727	104 642	19 770	8 559	297 488
2016	Jan	46 639	34 713	2 485	24 477	35 414	11 661	72 696	37 228	11 414	276 727
	Feb	80 249	48 557	9 865	26 294	35 541	13 735	96 530	37 966	12 237	360 974
	Mar	73 597	51 422	3 985	35 333	45 669	12 418	96 545	29 566	13 435	361 970
	Apr	60 953	37 659	4 941	32 688	42 409	14 659	84 791	30 406	8 823	317 329

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

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. 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 are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for April 2016 was 88,7%. The collection rate for March 2016 was 86,7%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Unpublished statistics	9	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
Symbols and abbreviations	10	R/D Refer to drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * 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.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
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.
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 debt such as salaries and wages, medical fund debt, sponsored debt, class and tuition debt, tax, assessment rates and property 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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