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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Results for August 2012

Table A – Key figures for the month of August 2012

Actual estimates	August 2012	% change between August 2011 and August 2012	% change between June to August 2011 and June to August 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	71 753	-24,6	-17,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	37 824	-9,3	-14,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	472,2	8,5	-4,7

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 17,0% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded in the three months ended August 2012 compared with the three months ended August 2011. A 24,6% year-on-year decrease was recorded in August 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that made major contributions to the 17,0% decrease were:

- services (contributing -7,4 percentage points);
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing -4,3 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,3 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 14,8% in three months ended August 2012 compared with the three months ended August 2011. A year-on-year decrease of 9,3% was recorded in August 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories behind the 14,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,1 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,0 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,5 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 4,7% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt in the three months ended August 2012 compared with the three months ended August 2011. A year-on-year increase of 8,5% was recorded in August 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributors to the 4,7% decrease were money lent (contributing -4,9 percentage points) and goods sold (contributing -2,7 percentage points).

The 'other' debts category partially counteracted the decrease and recorded a positive contribution of 5,8 percentage points – see Table 6.

During August 2012, 37 824 civil judgements for debt amounting to R472,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R472,2 million were:

- 'other' debts (R145,7 million or 30,9%);
- money lent (R119,8 million or 25,4%);
- services (R75,6 million or 16,0%); and
- goods sold (R62,9 million or 13,3%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

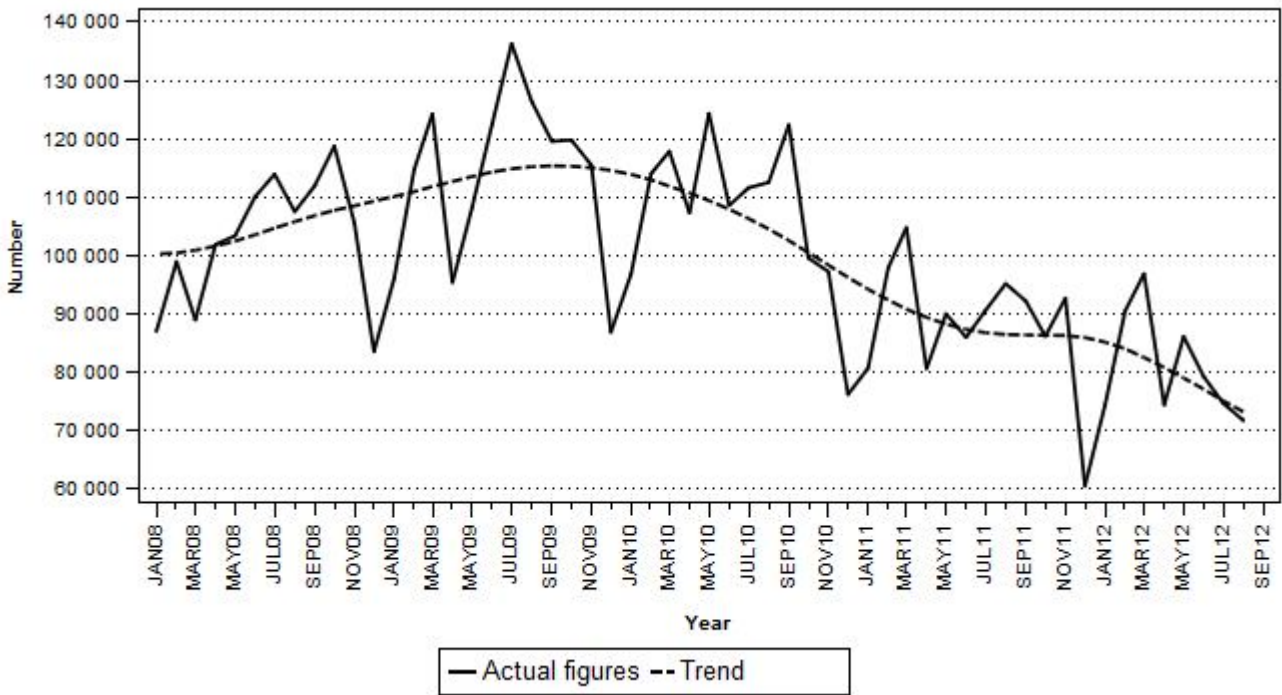
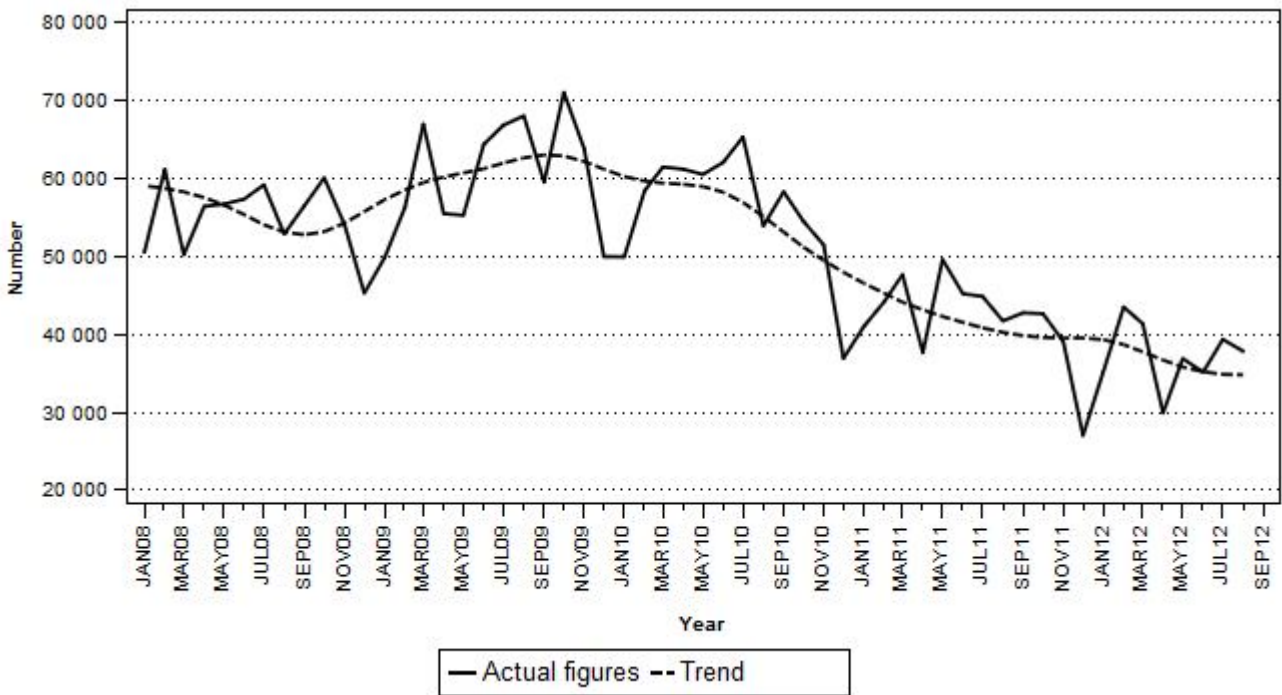


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Tables

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

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	August 2011	1/ July 2012	1/ August 2012	2011	August 2011	1/ July 2012	1/ August 2012
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 228 074	106 579	82 955	80 383	1 074 543	88 491	71 886	67 414
	Seasonally adjusted		100 572	76 084	75 833		85 570	65 205	65 383
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	82 722	8 581	6 345	6 680	63 885	6 757	4 458	4 792
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	24 715	2 846	1 376	2 164	20 451	2 332	1 198	1 761
	Services - Professional	117 707	10 954	9 008	9 861	102 139	9 432	7 977	8 476
	Services - Other	197 580	19 554	11 154	10 308	176 093	17 038	9 762	8 748
	Rent	46 160	4 534	3 195	3 948	36 613	3 501	2 527	2 951
	Money lent	232 578	20 932	18 756	16 606	214 837	18 901	17 607	14 801
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	171 991	11 397	11 862	9 296	151 980	7 640	9 947	5 513
	Other debts	183 793	16 367	12 996	12 890	156 535	12 849	11 711	10 492
	Total - Actual figures	1 057 246	95 165	74 692	71 753	922 533	78 450	65 187	57 534
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		89 581	71 322	67 502		75 120	61 293	55 139

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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, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2010	Year Total	118 066	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 366	33 988	138 594	17 342	64 259
2011	Year Total	79 463	60 025	11 782	4 842	16 605	64 927	222 519	47 918	37 724	94 991	14 597	41 547
	January	4 253	2 019	876	293	1 493	6 512	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585
	February	5 379	3 184	1 197	344	1 805	6 343	28 740	4 472	3 473	9 927	1 563	2 946
	March	6 907	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354
	April	5 317	3 823	1 423	290	1 581	6 031	19 903	3 398	2 711	7 212	1 016	4 428
	May	5 999	6 607	1 430	351	1 469	6 728	20 295	3 556	2 599	9 172	1 098	4 520
	June	7 480	5 207	975	374	1 325	5 738	17 516	3 829	2 459	8 132	1 368	3 855
	July	7 879	4 502	1 309	549	2 056	6 124	17 611	3 913	3 476	7 393	1 765	3 492
	August	7 482	6 460	1 137	680	1 268	4 909	15 940	4 581	3 251	6 977	1 448	3 982
	September	7 689	5 978	610	578	1 740	4 341	19 759	4 414	3 125	7 876	1 070	3 364
	October	6 220	6 621	588	244	1 141	3 976	12 013	5 438	3 187	8 655	924	2 893
	November	6 482	7 447	627	461	1 171	4 410	13 803	3 987	4 811	8 658	1 435	2 488
December	8 376	3 629	309	259	730	3 781	9 662	2 290	3 285	4 402	571	1 640	
1/ 2012	January	6 626	4 188	264	321	1 251	3 717	9 405	3 477	4 217	7 230	838	1 590
	February	6 421	6 720	345	710	1 269	4 068	12 143	4 107	6 091	7 905	987	2 259
	March	6 674	11 178	160	423	2 006	3 799	10 661	5 089	6 182	7 524	1 115	2 006
	April	6 630	4 986	152	350	1 591	3 374	9 428	3 524	3 944	7 098	1 083	2 194
	May	6 931	4 543	159	537	2 411	3 355	14 658	3 973	2 492	7 892	1 041	1 891
	June	6 655	3 038	125	590	2 048	3 373	10 056	4 548	2 500	9 580	1 079	1 976
	July	5 643	2 626	268	297	2 685	3 332	10 834	4 596	2 144	11 884	911	1 520
	August	6 176	2 522	193	414	2 036	3 427	11 463	3 626	2 342	8 474	1 083	1 908

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Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	August 2011	1/ July 2012	1/ August 2012	2011	August 2011	1/ July 2012	1/ August 2012
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	56 599	4 776	4 642	4 428	48 208	4 117	3 988	3 746
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	10 636	1 174	822	850	8 673	973	706	706
	Services - Professional	68 314	6 303	5 504	4 973	63 158	5 925	5 022	4 557
	Services - Other	57 871	4 777	4 445	5 261	50 115	4 103	3 846	4 544
	Rent	25 693	2 185	1 846	1 891	20 599	1 795	1 411	1 527
	Money lent	163 337	13 288	12 197	12 098	158 119	12 892	11 572	11 614
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	44 550	2 763	3 715	3 012	38 545	2 516	3 048	2 524
	Other debts	76 406	6 455	6 182	5 311	67 988	5 788	5 626	4 830
	Total - Actual figures	503 406	41 721	39 353	37 824	455 405	38 109	35 219	34 048
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		40 085	35 127	36 336		36 343	31 468	32 428

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	August 2011	1/ July 2012	1/ August 2012	2011	August 2011	1/ July 2012	1/ August 2012
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	522 678	43 709	46 023	41 113	333 611	30 504	27 227	23 127
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	284 150	30 649	15 288	21 785	230 821	23 477	11 683	15 784
	Services - Professional	308 692	28 153	29 855	23 940	264 557	24 415	24 951	20 257
	Services - Other	592 032	48 379	43 759	51 659	444 349	38 215	34 837	39 048
	Rent	374 423	38 081	23 143	31 589	223 786	24 467	13 041	20 364
	Money lent	1 525 895	115 031	129 295	119 760	1 422 619	106 893	119 471	111 136
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	536 585	38 022	38 318	36 672	436 042	30 298	27 039	30 249
	Other debts	1 016 435	93 315	114 542	145 680	728 727	66 938	74 234	111 978
	Total - Actual figures	5 160 890	435 339	440 223	472 198	4 084 512	345 207	332 483	371 943
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		416 955	394 202	450 861		337 606	298 922	362 732

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2012 and the three months ended August 2011

Actual estimates	Actual estimates June to August 2011	Actual estimates June to August 2012	% change between June to August 2011 and June to August 2012	Difference between June to August 2011 and June to August 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	271 756	225 681	-17,0	-46 075
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	131 804	112 317	-14,8	-19 487
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 380,3	1 316,1	-4,7	-64,2

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended August 2012 and the three months ended August 2011 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-0,4	-1,1	-1,1
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,6	-0,3	-1,6
Services - Professional	-1,0	-2,3	-0,3
Services - Other	-6,4	-0,2	-0,8
Rent	-0,4	-0,4	-1,4
Money lent	-0,6	-7,1	-4,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-4,3	-0,5	-0,3
Other debts	-3,3	-3,0	5,8
Total	-17,0	-14,8	-4,7

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 June to August 2011, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

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 August 2011	Actual estimates August 2012	% change between August 2011 and August 2012	Difference between August 2011 and August 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	95 165	71 753	-24,6	-23 412
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	41 721	37 824	-9,3	-3 897
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	435,3	472,2	8,5	36,9

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, ejectment 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.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for August 2012 was 89,4%. The July 2012 collection rate remained unchanged.
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; and • <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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