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Statistical release

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Key results for August 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of August 2013

Actual estimates	August 2013	% change between August 2012 and August 2013	% change between Jun – Aug 2012 and Jun – Aug 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	74 884	3,2	-0,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	30 148	-19,4	-19,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	448,4	-7,4	-8,7

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 0,4% in the three months ended August 2013 compared with the three months ended August 2012. A year-on-year increase of 3,2% was recorded in August 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

Categories that contributed to the 0,4% decrease were:

- 'other' debts (contributing -1,8 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -1,2 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -0,4 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 19,1% in the three months ended August 2013 compared with the three months ended August 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 19,4% was recorded in August 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 19,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -8,8 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -5,9 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,9 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 8,7% lower in the three months ended August 2013 compared with the three months ended August 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 7,4% was recorded in August 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The major contributors to the 8,7% decrease were the money lent and goods sold categories (contributing -6,7 and -5,2 percentage points respectively) – see Table 5.

In August 2013, 30 148 civil judgements for debt amounting to R448,4 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- 'other' debts (R146,8 million or 32,7%);
- money lent (R99,9 million or 22,3%); and
- services (R87,3 million or 19,5%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

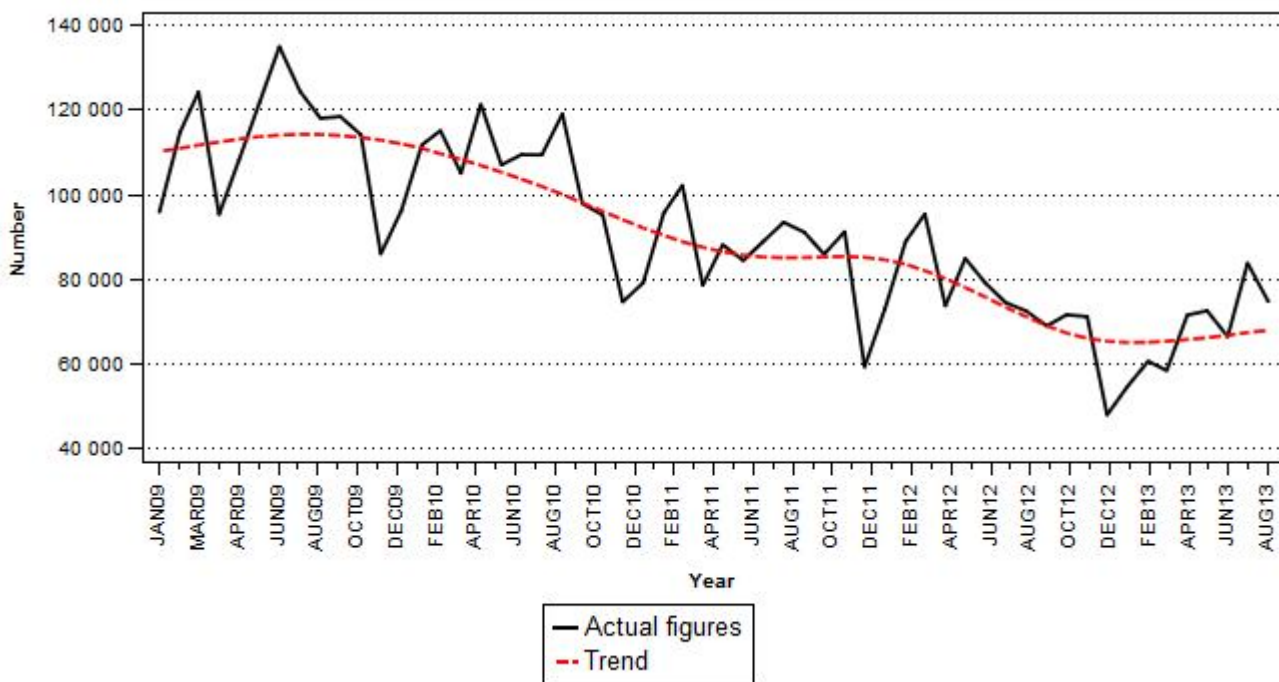


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Aug-12	1/ Jul-13	1/ Aug-13	2012	Aug-12	1/ Jul-13	1/ Aug-13
Cases recorded	Actual figures	976 918	81 990	92 823	81 955	839 397	67 778	80 992	71 228
	Seasonally adjusted		77 450	83 987	77 576		65 665	71 404	69 391
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	74 860	6 748	5 863	5 777	54 822	4 788	4 561	4 654
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 701	2 170	2 343	1 992	18 705	1 757	1 803	1 495
	Services - Professional	103 025	9 621	9 345	8 613	89 379	8 241	8 438	7 719
	Services - Other	160 522	10 953	14 263	12 536	140 113	8 679	12 815	11 082
	Rent	40 863	3 827	3 893	4 565	31 578	2 878	3 158	3 826
	Money lent	227 228	17 485	21 111	18 397	207 208	15 188	19 757	17 354
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	117 405	8 876	14 587	11 085	96 001	5 269	12 142	9 987
	Other debts	156 110	12 893	12 461	11 919	137 121	10 560	11 532	11 064
	Total - Actual figures	902 714	72 573	83 866	74 884	774 927	57 360	74 206	67 181
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		67 756	79 610	70 058		55 156	68 783	64 985

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Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Aug-12	1/ Jul-13	1/ Aug-13	2012	Aug-12	1/ Jul-13	1/ Aug-13
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 323	4 438	2 723	2 480	36 403	3 746	2 188	1 996
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 904	929	709	549	8 083	765	565	421
	Services - Professional	59 439	4 856	5 032	4 884	52 796	4 429	4 623	4 549
	Services - Other	54 045	5 405	4 845	4 696	46 033	4 563	4 221	4 073
	Rent	23 821	1 866	2 129	2 024	18 714	1 486	1 736	1 770
	Money lent	140 381	11 821	9 572	7 772	132 018	10 976	8 751	7 152
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	38 588	2 954	3 558	3 077	33 790	2 482	3 077	2 681
	Other debts	60 535	5 148	5 052	4 666	54 852	4 651	4 491	4 119
	Total - Actual figures	431 036	37 417	33 620	30 148	382 689	33 098	29 652	26 761
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		36 658	30 464	29 619		32 300	26 863	26 179

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Aug-12	1/ Jul-13	1/ Aug-13	2012	Aug-12	1/ Jul-13	1/ Aug-13
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	468 562	41 228	31 858	32 175	260 673	22 904	17 699	18 433
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	170 861	21 498	10 250	9 840	136 438	15 487	8 024	8 707
	Services - Professional	297 863	24 294	22 620	25 820	240 082	19 521	19 187	22 982
	Services - Other	514 290	55 730	60 611	61 470	399 896	41 783	52 988	41 090
	Rent	346 472	30 762	34 950	33 827	207 105	19 601	23 298	24 184
	Money lent	1 394 212	134 562	110 858	99 925	1 272 162	116 404	97 997	91 731
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	428 519	35 244	44 124	38 492	335 860	29 140	34 443	32 479
	Other debts	1 106 275	140 640	108 892	146 809	734 645	106 860	59 923	97 947
	Total - Actual figures	4 727 054	483 958	424 163	448 358	3 586 861	371 700	313 559	337 553
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		433 711	385 297	399 741		342 177	285 829	309 827

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – 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 2013

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2012	Actual estimates Jun – Aug 2013	% change between Jun – Aug 2012 and Jun – Aug 2013	Difference between Jun – Aug 2012 and Jun – Aug 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	226 201	225 284	-0,4	-917
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	112 693	91 133	-19,1	-21 560
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 348,8	1 232,1	-8,7	-116,7

Table 5 – 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 2013 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	-1,7	-5,1	-3,2
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,5	-0,8	-2,0
Services - Professional	-0,6	-1,2	-0,7
Services - Other	0,2	-0,7	1,4
Rent	0,9	0,0	1,5
Money lent	0,2	-8,8	-6,7
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	1,9	-0,8	0,5
Other debts	-1,8	-1,8	0,6
Total	-0,4	-19,1	-8,7

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 2012, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 6 – 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 2012	Actual estimates August 2013	% change between August 2012 and August 2013	Difference between August 2012 and August 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	72 573	74 884	3,2	2 311
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	37 417	30 148	-19,4	-7 269
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	484,0	448,4	-7,4	-35,6

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:
- 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.
- Response rate** 7 The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for August 2013 was 87,2%.
- 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:
- *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly.
 - *SA Statistics* 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
* Revised figures
- Changes in this publication** 12 The results published today are based on more representative data that include information from an additional 52 magistrates' courts. Previously Stats SA published data based on information collected from 151 magistrates' courts. The information collected from the 203 magistrates' courts is an improvement on how the survey is conducted.
- The time series data regarding civil cases for debt have been revised from January 2011 as a result of using the data based on the 203 magistrates' courts; the revisions are summarised as follows:
- the number of summonses issued is 1,2% lower for the period 2011 and 2012;
 - the number of judgements granted is 0,4% higher for the period 2011 and 2012; and
 - the value of judgements granted is 0,1% lower for the period 2011 and 2012.

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. 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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