

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of February 2007

Actual estimates	February 2007	% change between February 2006 and February 2007	% change between December 2005 to February 2006 and December 2006 to February 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debts	107 380	-12,1%	-4,4%
Number of civil judgments recorded for debts	60 827	-11,2%	-9,0%
Value of civil judgments recorded for debts(R million)	480,2	-18,6%	-6,2%

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (FEBRUARY 2007)

Key findings as at the end of February 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended February 2007 decreased by 4,4% compared with the three months ended February 2006.

In addition, the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended February 2006 decreased by 4,3% compared with the three months ended February 2005.

The major contributions to the decrease of 4,4% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended February 2007 compared with the three months ended February 2006 were 'other' debts (-5,5 percentage points), civil summonses issued in respect of goods sold on open account (-2,5 percentage points) and 'other services' (-2,1 percentage points). There was, however, an increase of 4,9 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for money lent (see Table 6 column 2 page 9).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debts decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended February 2007 decreased by 9,0% compared with the three months ended February 2006.

In addition, the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended February 2006 decreased by 1,6% compared with the three months ended February 2005.

The major contributions to the decrease of 9,0% in the civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended February 2007 compared with the three months ended February 2006 were civil judgements in respect of 'other' debts (-4,4 percentage points), professional services (-1,6 percentage points) and instalment sale transactions (-0,9 of a percentage point). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in money lent (+0,3 of a percentage point) (see Table 6 column 3 page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debts decreases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended February 2007 decreased by 6,2% compared with the three months ended February 2006.

In addition, the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended February 2006 decreased by 4,5% compared with the three months ended February 2005.

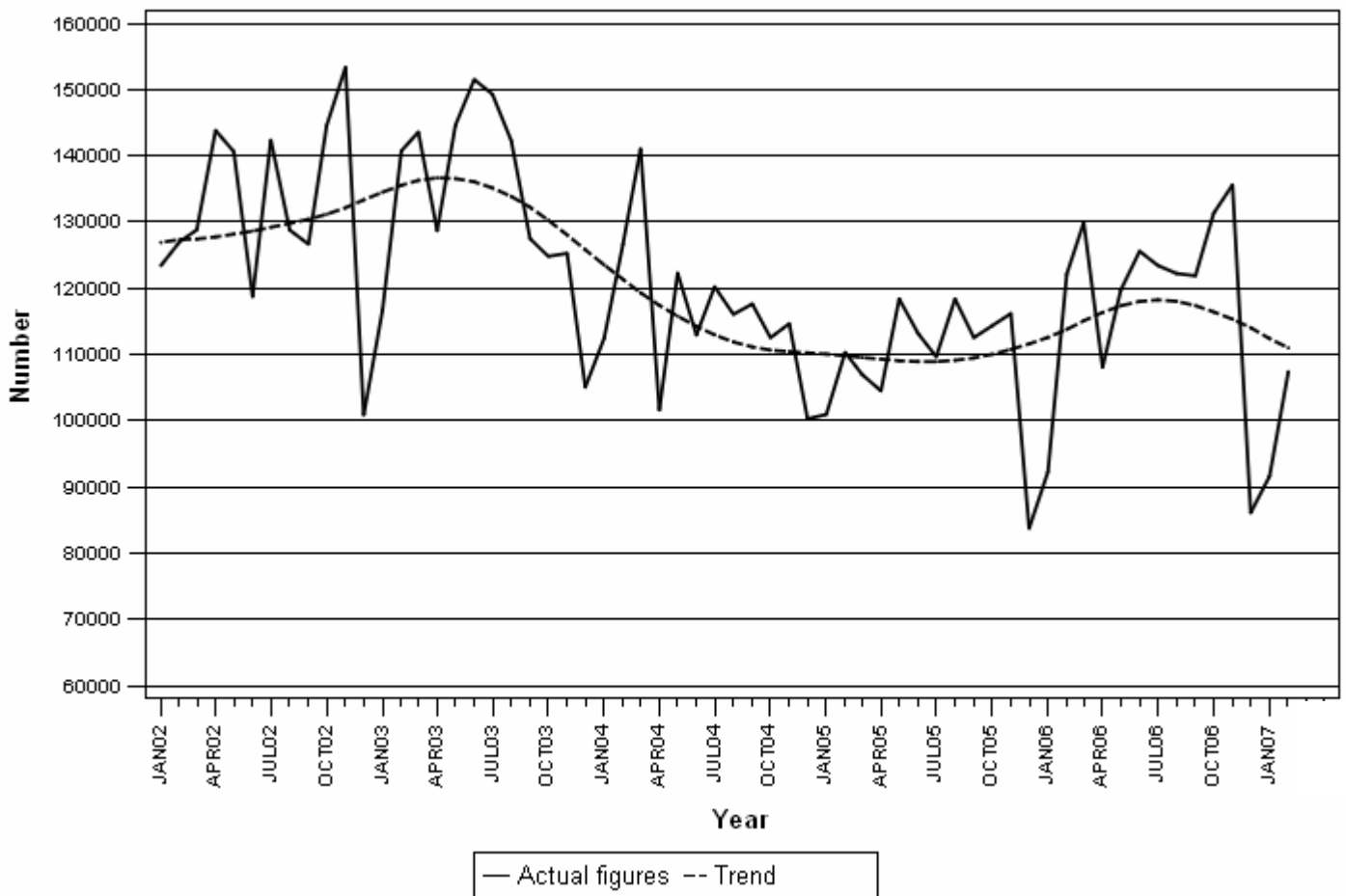
The major contributors to the decrease of 6,2% in the value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended February 2007 compared with the three months ended February 2006 were civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (-11,1 percentage points) and instalment sale transactions (-0,7 of a percentage point). However, this increase was partially counteracted by an increase in judgements recorded for promissory notes and other (+2,3 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4 page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for February 2007 decreased by 18,6% compared with February 2006.

During February 2007, 60 827 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R480,2 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to R480,2 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R159,1 million or 33,1%) and 'other' debts (R110,0 million or 22,9%) (see Table 4 page9).

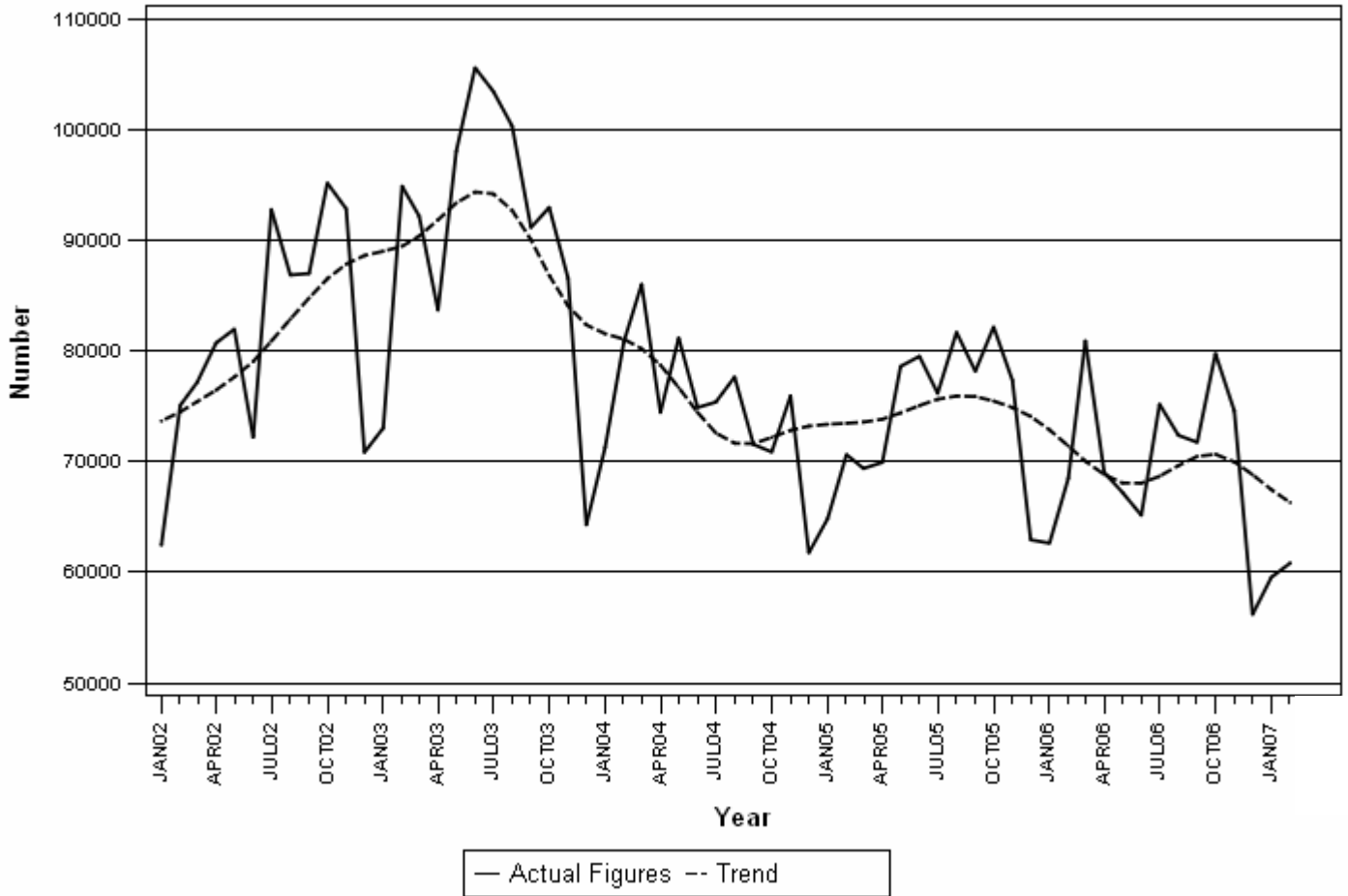
Figure 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to February 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend decreased from May 2003 to February 2005 but leveled off until October 2005. From November 2005 the trend increased once more but decreased from July 2006 until present.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 from May 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until May 2003. The trend decreased from June 2003 to August 2004 but from September 2004 it increased slightly until August 2005. Thereafter it decreased until June 2006. From October 2006 the trend declined until present.

Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debts



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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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		February	January	1/ February		February	January	1/ February
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	135 865	115 533	119 513	1 442 388	122 037	105 522	108 586
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		134 469	131 074	118 795		120 659	118 738	107 869
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	13 485	7 686	9 387	137 314	11 556	6 433	7 903
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	3 740	2 222	2 202	28 794	2 989	1 997	1 959
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	13 243	8 849	10 280	117 768	11 310	7 489	8 812
2.2.2 Other	200 992	17 930	10 457	15 685	178 084	16 305	9 083	14 023
2.3 Rent	50 894	4 004	2 701	3 563	39 914	3 275	2 172	2 935
2.3.1 Money lent	407 106	29 157	30 599	32 358	387 509	27 203	29 204	30 697
2.3.2 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	14 374	13 896	15 926	133 964	13 127	13 106	15 049
2.6 Other debts	277 740	26 179	15 192	17 979	242 332	22 887	13 162	15 450
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	122 112	91 602	107 380	1 265 679	108 652	82 646	96 828
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		119 564	106 787	105 460		105 612	95 177	94 295

1/ Preliminary.

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

Year or month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2005	Year Total	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
	January	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
	February	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
	March	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
	April	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
	May	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
	June	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
	July	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
	August	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
	September	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
	October	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
	November	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	4 347	19 625	4 144	4 145
December	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	2 666	8 744	2 707	3 981	
2007	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		February	January	1/ February		February	January	1/ February
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	7 725	7 431	6 981	109 372	6 753	6 800	6 361
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	1 423	816	750	10 585	1 236	721	683
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	6 820	5 411	5 764	69 974	5 973	4 995	5 210
1.2.2 Other	96 191	7 003	6 559	6 819	89 572	6 454	6 176	6 398
1.3 Rent	25 941	2 280	1 814	1 955	20 595	1 961	1 369	1 528
1.4 Money lent	297 379	23 954	24 049	24 399	289 631	23 597	23 812	24 136
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	7 407	5 286	6 459	68 759	5 980	4 944	6 148
1.6 Other debts	136 605	11 882	8 179	7 700	122 293	10 634	7 483	6 785
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	68 494	59 545	60 827	780 781	62 588	56 300	57 249
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		70 936	67 831	63 553		64 670	64 344	59 686

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		February	January	1/ February		February	January	1/ February
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	43 104	47 646	48 790	523 135	29 547	35 687	38 492
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	18 317	14 238	13 751	197 477	16 401	12 787	11 882
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	16 380	18 219	19 836	223 269	13 483	14 257	15 698
1.2.2 Other	579 439	46 169	41 458	47 385	464 809	39 392	35 486	39 722
1.3 Rent	222 568	13 640	15 153	21 969	153 995	10 468	9 800	14 754
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	135 338	144 584	159 118	1 960 167	132 021	139 848	153 979
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	73 315	61 044	59 311	630 860	66 349	56 842	54 900
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	243 632	113 186	110 024	1 271 327	160 730	85 006	82 437
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	589 895	455 528	480 184	5 425 039	468 391	389 713	411 864
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		585 906	527 760	480 706		464 335	448 639	412 664

1/ Preliminary

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Actual estimates December 2005 to February 2006	Actual estimates December 2006 to February 2007	% change between December 2005 to February 2006 and December 2006 to February 2007	Difference between December 2005 to February 2006 and December 2006 to February 2007
Number of summonses for debt	298 097	285 072	-4,4%	-13 025
Number of judgements for debt	194 040	176 564	-9,0%	-17 476
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 456,3	1 366,6	-6,2%	-89,7

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	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	-2,5	-0,7	1,0
--Instalment sale transactions	-0,9	-0,9	-0,7
Professional Services	-1,3	-1,6	0,6
Other Services	-2,1	-0,6	0,8
Rent	-0,4	-0,5	0,9
Money lent	4,9	0,3	-0,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	3,5	-0,7	2,3
Other debts	-5,5	-4,4	-11,1
Total	-4,4	-9,0	-6,2

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during December 2005 to February 2006, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

	Actual estimates February 2006	Actual estimates February 2007	% change between February 2006 and February 2007	Difference between February 2006 and February 2007
Number of summonses for debt	122 112	107 380	-12,1%	-14 732
Number of judgements for debt	68 494	60 827	-11,2%	-7 667
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	589,9	480,2	-18,6%	-1 097

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. |
| Scope of the survey | 3 | 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 | 4 | The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. |
| | 5 | 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 recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates, offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size. |
| Survey methodology and design | 6 | The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices. |
| Response rate | 7 | The response rate for the civil cases for debt for February 2007 was 90,1%. |
| 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 issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i> |
| 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, on diskette or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics. |
| Symbols and abbreviations | 11 | R/D Refer to Drawer
CD Compact Disc
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 sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect to 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 and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, signed by one person, in which he promises 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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