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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Contents	Page
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (FEBRUARY 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 February 2009 and the three months ended February 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 February 2009 and the three months ended February 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 (FEBRUARY 2010)

Table A – Key figures for the month of February 2010

Actual estimates	February 2010	% change between February 2009 and February 2010	% change between December 2008 to February 2009 and December 2009 to February 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	118 331	3,1	2,7
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	59 491	5,6	3,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	631,8	21,6	12,5

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended February 2010 reflected a 2,7% increase in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended February 2009. An increase of 3,1% was recorded between February 2009 and February 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 2,7% increase in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended February 2010 compared with the three months ended February 2009 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (contributing 2,7 percentage points) and promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing 1,3 percentage points) (this category includes credit card debt). The three negative contributors were the goods sold, 'other services' and rent categories (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 February 2010 increased by 3,8% compared with the three months ended February 2009. An increase of 5,6% was recorded between February 2009 and February 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements in respect of money lent (contributing 5,5 percentage points), promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing 3,8 percentage points) and professional services (contributing 1,4 percentage points) were the main drivers behind the 3,8% increase. The 'other debts', goods sold and rent categories were the only negative contributors (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was an increase of 12,5% in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended February 2010 compared with the three months ended February 2009. A 21,6% increase was recorded between February 2009 and February 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 12,5% increase in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended February 2010 compared with the three months ended February 2009 were money lent (contributing 8,0 percentage points), promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing 4,5 percentage points) and goods sold (contributing 2,6 percentage points). The 'other debts' and rent categories were the only negative contributors with 4,0 and 1,1 percentage points respectively (see Table 6).

During February 2010, 59 491 civil judgements for debt amounting to R631,8 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R631,8 million were (see Tables 3 and 4):

- money lent (R240,4 million or 38,1%)
- 'other debts' (R98,2 million or 15,5%)
- 'other services' (R76,3 million or 12,1%) and
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (R75,9 million or 12,0%).

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

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

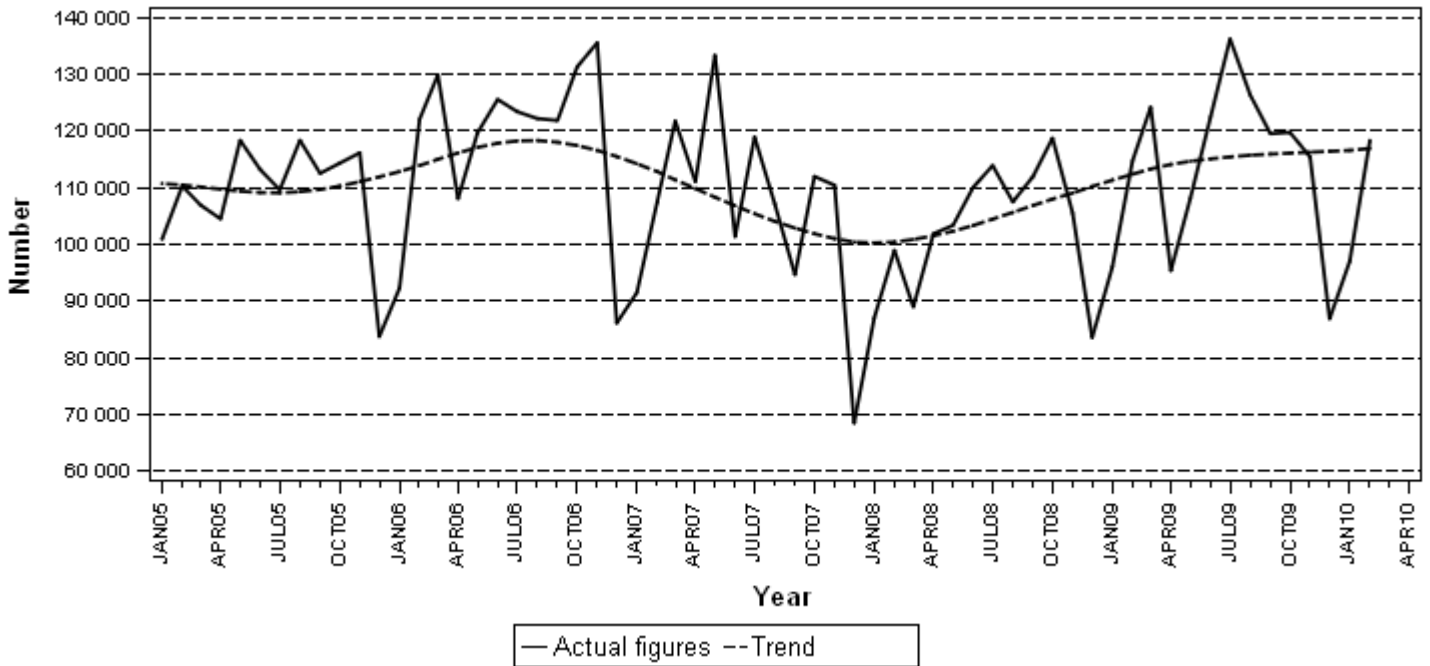
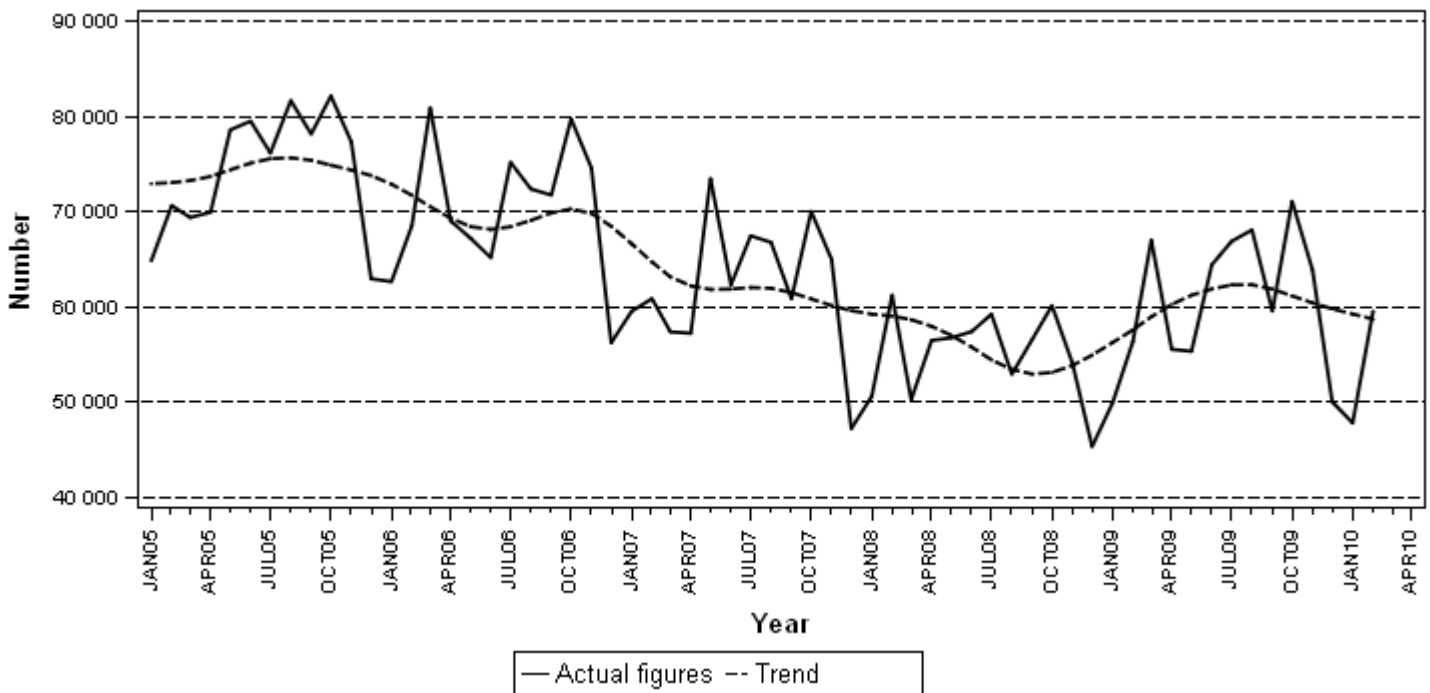


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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	
		February	January	February		February	January	February
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	134 785	112 179	137 997	1 420 316	121 953	98 833	122 858
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		132 460	129 664	136 031		118 641	113 101	119 462
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	12 316	8 126	10 505	112 717	10 427	6 842	8 733
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	3 128	3 044	3 219	30 583	2 692	2 600	2 776
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	13 047	10 299	12 673	128 153	10 416	8 631	10 759
2.2.2 Other	164 618	15 612	11 533	13 933	142 316	13 932	9 289	11 766
2.3 Rent	51 389	4 221	3 492	4 292	43 153	3 407	2 828	3 608
2.4 Money lent	326 092	27 434	25 219	32 970	308 583	26 231	24 428	31 981
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	16 713	17 520	17 172	227 360	15 686	16 350	15 951
2.6 Other debts	256 599	22 250	17 804	23 567	210 475	19 761	13 856	19 197
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	114 721	97 037	118 331	1 203 340	102 552	84 824	104 771
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		114 830	114 806	118 768		101 230	99 939	103 561

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

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
	1/ November	12 435	3 747	1 395	537	2 439	7 834	20 688	4 373	3 710	11 049	1 581	4 000
1/ 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	22 867	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	24 771	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991

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	
		February	January	February		February	January	February
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	6 999	4 669	5 608	73 332	6 106	4 006	4 640
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	880	978	897	11 200	717	851	743
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	7 318	6 769	8 016	80 893	6 129	5 983	7 036
1.2.2 Other	78 652	5 647	5 164	6 964	69 473	5 070	4 534	6 199
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 077	1 880	2 256	22 483	1 622	1 529	1 805
1.4 Money lent	273 794	20 105	18 946	22 652	267 864	19 662	18 637	22 364
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	3 964	3 949	6 699	51 777	3 409	3 494	6 088
1.6 Other debts	95 130	9 328	5 407	6 399	86 580	8 580	4 871	5 874
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	56 318	47 762	59 491	663 602	51 295	43 905	54 749
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		57 314	55 707	60 276		52 008	51 268	55 234

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

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	
		February	January	February		February	January	February
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	49 768	41 953	50 789	497 848	33 735	27 255	29 250
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	22 967	32 768	31 077	319 087	20 182	27 633	25 424
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	28 462	27 295	31 662	266 902	22 368	23 805	24 815
1.2.2 Other	715 777	53 955	47 635	76 279	556 872	42 955	36 868	61 294
1.3 Rent	459 493	35 362	25 511	27 531	312 500	19 421	17 113	18 885
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	174 171	174 801	240 411	2 411 391	166 818	165 954	232 478
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	52 408	53 571	75 910	627 760	43 063	41 259	63 837
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	102 289	81 073	98 160	975 583	87 753	65 371	82 390
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	519 382	484 607	631 819	5 967 943	436 295	405 258	538 373
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		520 506	581 719	633 811		442 117	482 368	544 714

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

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

Actual estimates	Actual estimates December 2008 to February 2009	Actual estimates December 2009 to February 2010	% change between December 2008 to February 2009 and December 2009 to February 2010	Difference between December 2008 to February 2009 and December 2009 to February 2010
Number of summonses for debt	294 263	302 218	2,7	7 955
Number of judgements for debt	151 451	157 231	3,8	5 780
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 417,2	1 594,3	12,5	177,1

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 February 2009 and the three months ended February 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	-1,2	-1,7	0,8
– Instalment sale transactions	0,5	0,2	1,8
Professional services	0,1	1,4	0,7
Other services	-0,7	0,0	1,8
Rent	-0,3	-0,3	-1,1
Money lent	2,7	5,5	8,0
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	1,3	3,8	4,5
Other debts	0,4	-4,9	-4,0
Total	2,7	3,8	12,5

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 December 2008 to February 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 February 2009	Actual estimates February 2010	% change between February 2009 and February 2010	Difference between February 2009 and February 2010
Number of summonses for debt	114 721	118 331	3,1	3 610
Number of judgements for debt	56 318	59 491	5,6	3 173
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	519,4	631,8	21,6	112,4

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Purpose of the survey	3	<p>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.</p>
Scope of the survey	4	<p>This survey covers -</p> <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	<p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>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.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	7	<p>The response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for February 2010 was 90,1%.</p>
Trend cycle	8	<p>Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.</p>
Publications	9	<p>Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	<p>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.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures</p>

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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