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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Results for February 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of February 2013

Actual estimates	February 2013	% change between February 2012 and February 2013	% change between December 2011 to February 2012 and December 2012 to February 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	59 813	-33,9	-28,2
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	28 087	-35,4	-27,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	414,7	2,6	-0,8

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 28,2% in the three months ended February 2013 compared with the three months ended February 2012. A 33,9% year-on-year decrease was recorded in February 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that contributed to the 28,2% decrease were:

- money lent (contributing -9,1 percentage points);
- services (contributing -8,6 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -5,5 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 27,1% in the three months ended February 2013 compared with the three months ended February 2012. A 35,4% year-on-year decrease was recorded in February 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories behind the 27,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -16,7 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -3,3 percentage points);
- services (contributing -3,3 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -2,4 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 0,8% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt in the three months ended February 2013 compared with the three months ended February 2012. However, a year-on-year increase of 2,6% was recorded in February 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributors to the 0,8% decrease were the money lent category (contributing -6,0 percentage points) and the goods sold category (contributing -2,8 percentage points).

The 'other' debts category partially counteracted these decreases and contributed 10,1 percentage points – see Table 6.

In February 2013, 28 087 civil judgements for debt amounting to R414,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R414,7 million were:

- 'other' debts (R157,1 million or 37,9%);
- money lent (R96,2 million or 23,2%); and
- services (R67,3 million or 16,2%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

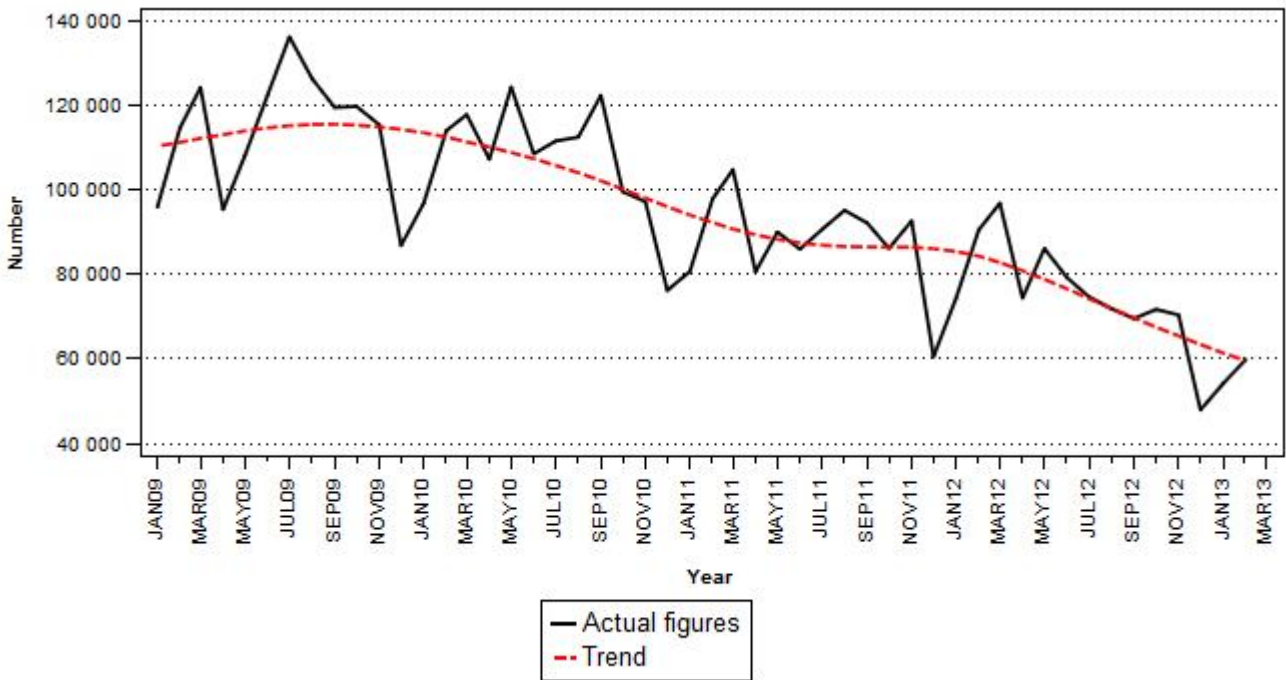
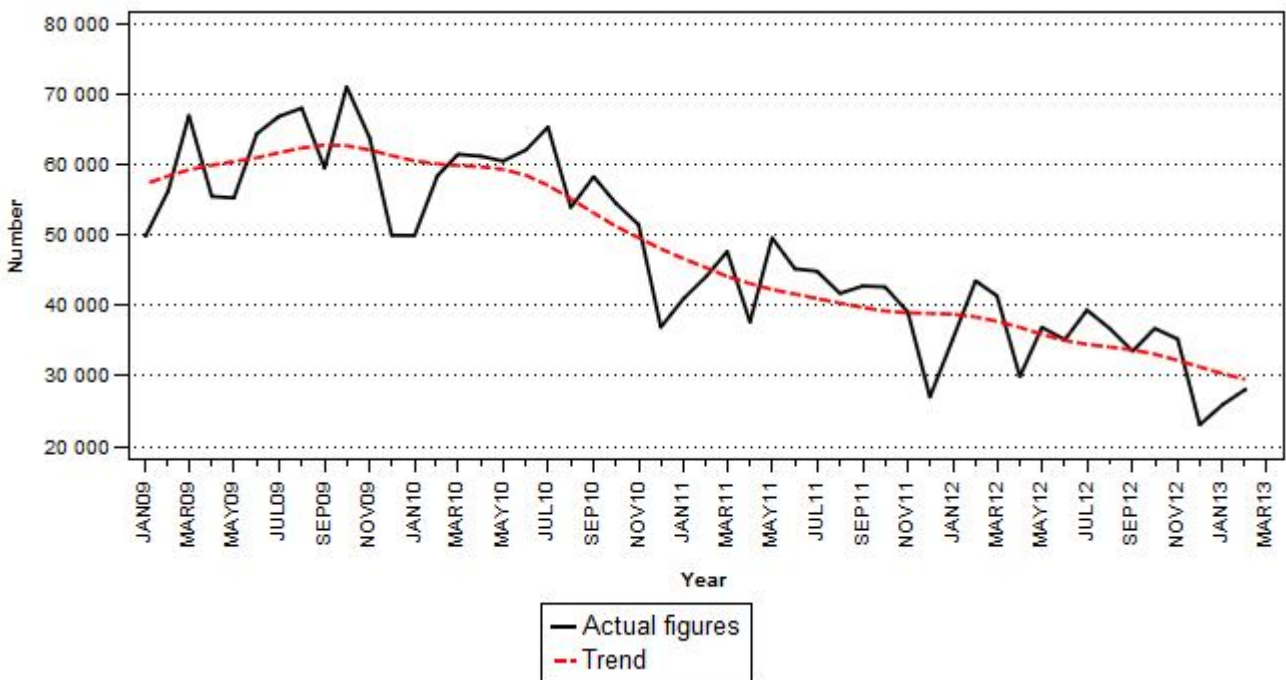


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Tables

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	February 2012	1/ January 2013	1/ February 2013	2012	February 2012	1/ January 2013	1/ February 2013
Cases recorded	Actual figures - Actual figures	977 066	96 618	58 001	63 804	847 341	86 560	51 990	56 582
	Seasonally adjusted - Seasonally adjusted		93 238	68 221	61 517		82 331	60 068	53 751
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	73 272	6 706	4 502	4 651	54 229	5 207	3 611	3 730
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 512	1 691	1 409	1 199	18 853	1 432	1 237	994
	Services - Professional	104 351	8 399	6 567	7 322	91 458	7 559	6 121	6 637
	Services - Other	161 543	17 646	8 205	9 876	143 468	15 931	7 195	8 739
	Rent	41 859	3 469	3 071	3 447	32 306	2 727	2 484	2 767
	Money lent	223 677	25 698	12 679	14 345	206 727	24 474	12 072	13 714
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	121 720	11 045	7 979	8 300	99 449	9 603	7 200	7 528
	Other debts	158 728	15 865	9 715	10 673	139 386	14 513	8 766	9 482
	Total - Actual figures	907 662	90 519	54 127	59 813	785 876	81 446	48 686	53 591
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		86 961	62 343	57 363		76 844	55 105	50 362

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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 and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
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
2012	Year Total	72 859	47 774	2 348	7 096	21 344	42 468	131 836	47 547	39 350	92 109	11 895	20 344
	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
	September	5 865	1 845	159	649	1 831	3 407	12 486	3 593	2 282	7 439	1 289	1 516
	October	5 343	2 501	197	1 053	1 551	3 642	12 909	4 725	3 018	6 855	603	1 161
	November	5 256	2 663	184	1 150	1 310	3 490	11 312	4 018	2 393	6 770	1 270	1 400
December	4 639	964	142	602	1 355	3 484	6 481	2 271	1 745	3 458	596	923	
2013	1/ January	3 941	1 788	123	209	1 519	2 622	8 551	3 632	1 581	5 478	548	895
	1/ February	4 707	2 359	43	336	1 434	2 798	9 799	4 119	2 167	5 589	1 454	1 224

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	February 2012	1/ January 2013	1/ February 2013	2012	February 2012	1/ January 2013	1/ February 2013
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 082	4 375	2 611	2 793	36 413	3 681	2 082	2 289
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 214	741	582	576	7 711	606	487	462
	Services - Professional	59 721	5 410	4 095	4 227	53 796	4 945	3 787	3 848
	Services - Other	53 957	4 824	3 619	3 733	46 716	4 260	3 153	3 203
	Rent	24 403	2 225	1 656	1 616	19 245	1 702	1 365	1 327
	Money lent	133 396	15 882	6 181	7 966	127 428	15 377	5 912	7 633
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	39 428	4 081	1 828	1 535	34 512	3 721	1 599	1 258
	Other debts	62 463	5 963	5 344	5 641	56 788	5 425	4 889	5 127
	Total - Actual figures	426 664	43 501	25 916	28 087	382 609	39 717	23 274	25 147
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		44 955	29 725	29 034		40 883	26 536	25 908

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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			
		2012	February 2012	1/ January 2013	1/ February 2013	2012	February 2012	1/ January 2013	1/ February 2013
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	465 325	43 341	31 715	27 631	256 746	23 812	16 795	15 396
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	174 338	14 294	9 604	8 684	140 403	10 988	7 926	5 406
	Services - Professional	299 848	30 074	16 344	22 719	245 619	25 254	13 435	18 849
	Services - Other	508 675	39 497	35 844	44 586	398 310	30 348	30 023	30 802
	Rent	352 667	31 296	23 920	31 238	212 691	18 276	12 007	20 800
	Money lent	1 290 816	126 165	74 109	96 235	1 191 224	113 082	67 049	89 002
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 475	40 549	33 216	26 422	346 698	29 406	28 066	21 000
	Other debts	1 141 752	78 814	99 386	157 146	758 441	57 124	57 508	79 654
	Total - Actual figures	4 676 896	404 030	324 138	414 661	3 550 132	308 290	232 809	280 909
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		393 491	381 225	401 288		301 922	263 207	273 905

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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 February 2013 and the three months ended February 2012

Actual estimates	Actual estimates December 2011 to February 2012	Actual estimates December 2012 to February 2013	% change between December 2011 to February 2012 and December 2012 to February 2013	Difference between December 2011 to February 2012 and December 2012 to February 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	225 453	161 853	-28,2	-63 600
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	105 728	77 063	-27,1	-28 665
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 030,8	1 022,8	-0,8	-8,0

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended February 2013 and the three months ended February 2012 1/

Item	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,6	-3,1	-1,5
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,1	-0,2	-1,3
Services - Professional	-1,3	-1,3	-0,9
Services - Other	-7,3	-2,0	0,2
Rent	-0,3	-0,8	-0,1
Money lent	-9,1	-16,7	-6,0
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-3,1	-2,4	-1,3
Other debts	-5,5	-0,7	10,1
Total	-28,2	-27,1	-0,8

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 during December 2011 to February 2012, 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 February 2012	Actual estimates February 2013	% change between February 2012 and February 2013	Difference between February 2012 and February 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	90 519	59 813	-33,9	-30 706
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	43 501	28 087	-35,4	-15 414
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	404,0	414,7	2,6	10,7

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 February 2013 was 86,1%. The improved collection rate for January 2013 is 92,1%.
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</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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