

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

January 2011

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Key results for January 2011

Table A – Key figures for the month of January 2011

Actual estimates	January 2011	% change between January 2010 and January 2011	% change between November 2009 to January 2010 and November 2010 to January 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	80 939	-16,4	-14,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	42 018	-15,9	-20,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	423,1	-20,9	-21,5

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended January 2011 reflected a 14,8% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended January 2010. A decrease of 16,4% was recorded between January 2010 and January 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 14,8% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -5,2 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -4,4 percentage points); and
- the services category (contributing -3,5 percentage points) (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 January 2011 decreased by 20,3% compared with the three months ended January 2010. A decrease of 15,9% was recorded between January 2010 and January 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The main drivers behind the 20,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the money lent category (contributing -10,2 percentage points);
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -4,9 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -3,5 percentage points); and
- the services category (contributing -1,9 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a decrease of 21,5% in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2011 compared with the three months ended January 2010. A 20,9% decrease was recorded between January 2010 and January 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 21,5% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -11,5 percentage points); and
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -8,5 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During January 2011, 42 018 civil judgements for debt amounting to R423,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R423,1 million were:

- money lent (R146,5 million or 34,6%);
- services (R99,1 million or 23,4%); and
- goods sold (R62,5 million or 14,8%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

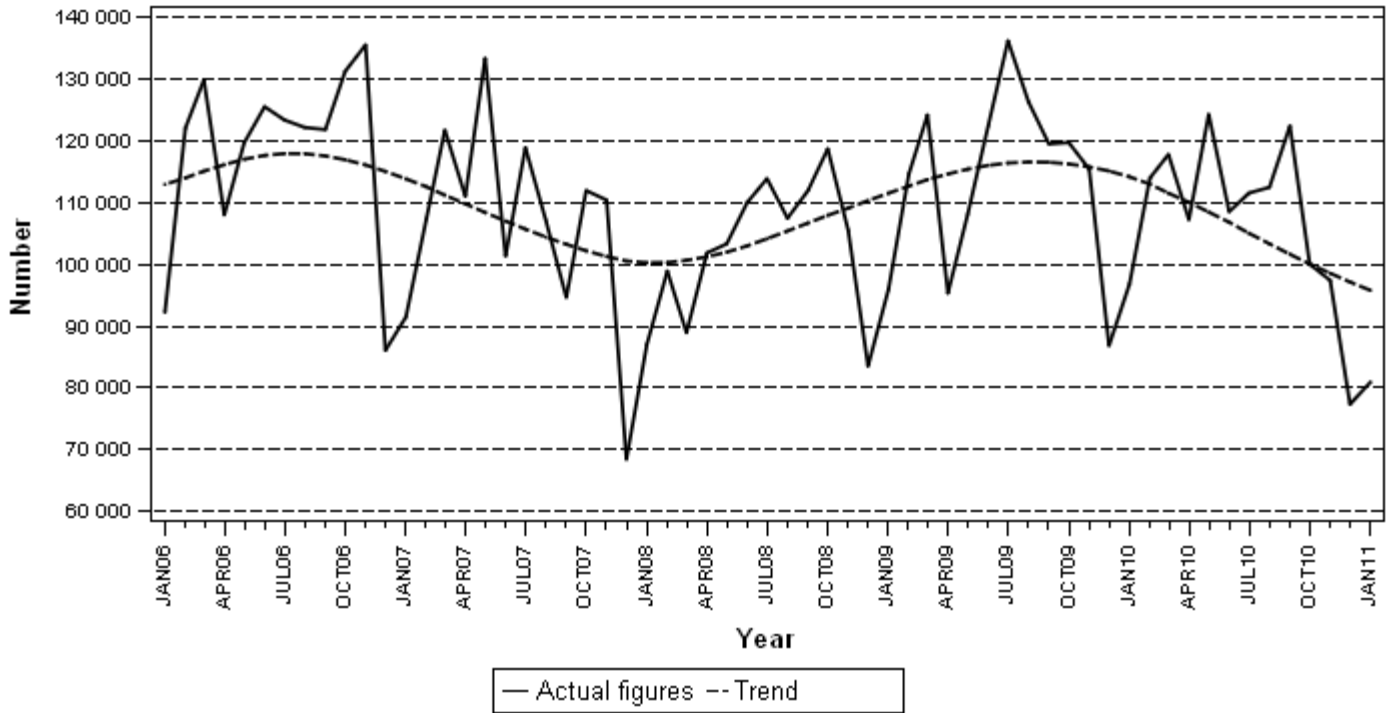
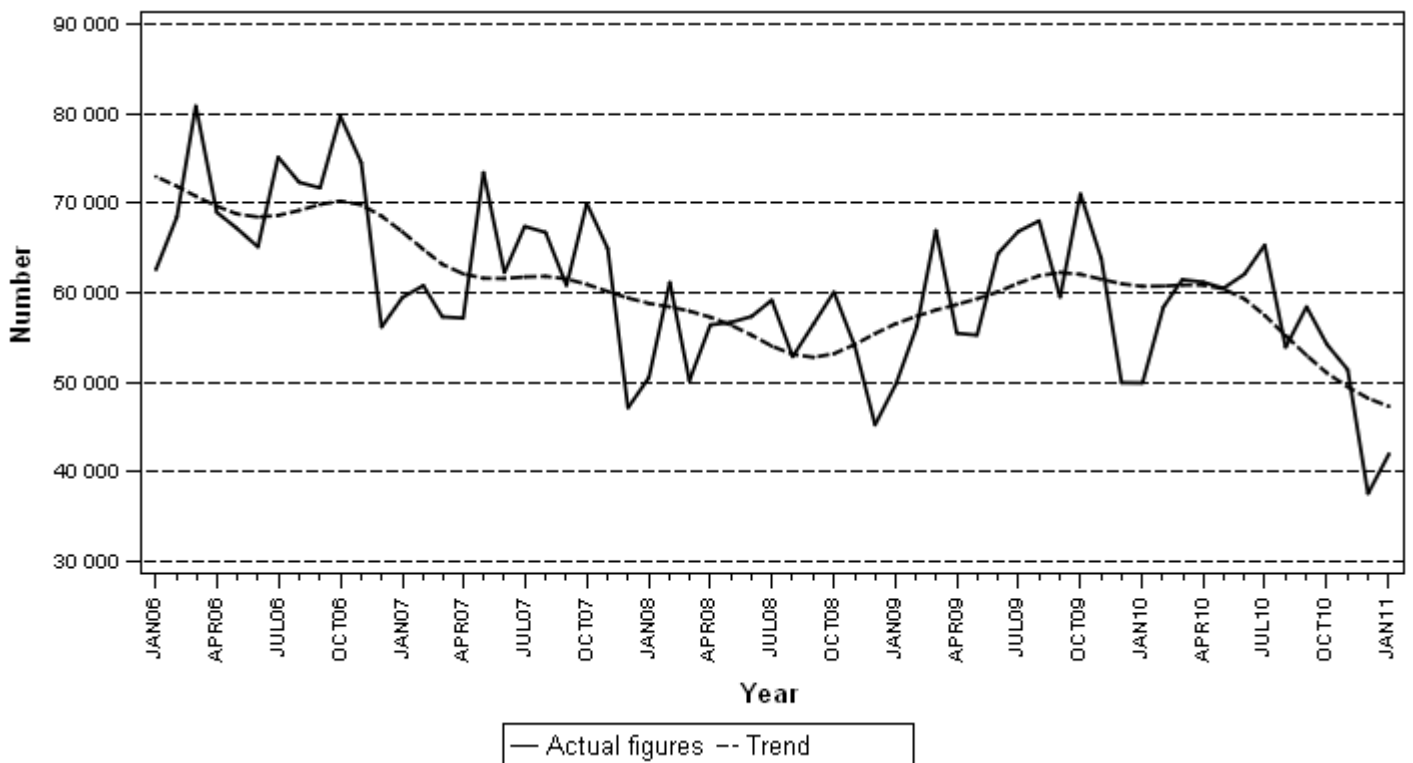


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	* 2010	2010		2011	* 2010	2010		2011
		January	1/ December	1/ January		January	1/ December	1/ January
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 470 326	111 971	87 382	96 640	1 299 409	98 838	77 486	85 798
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		128 122	117 297	110 600		112 982	104 222	98 167
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	109 226	8 119	4 964	4 767	87 492	6 832	3 592	3 609
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 850	3 044	1 644	1 533	27 389	2 600	1 360	1 294
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	147 856	10 301	7 368	9 360	128 242	8 666	6 219	7 996
2.2.2 Other	165 537	11 464	9 254	9 972	140 446	9 337	7 453	8 449
2.3 Rent	52 741	3 494	3 376	2 917	43 272	2 833	2 936	2 306
2.4 Money lent	314 943	25 161	15 634	19 354	298 590	24 410	14 700	18 378
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	230 191	17 456	19 863	17 303	214 859	16 305	19 035	16 623
2.6 Other debts	236 982	17 791	14 363	15 733	190 308	13 847	11 397	12 756
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 289 326	96 830	76 466	80 939	1 130 598	84 830	66 692	71 411
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		113 738	101 322	94 767		99 284	88 234	83 321

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* 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, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
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	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 505	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	1/October	7 298	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 712	3 102	12 802	1 546	5 925
	1/November	6 983	3 340	1 081	351	1 594	7 022	19 021	3 961	2 618	11 105	1 159	4 012
	1/December	4 934	2 049	930	101	1 167	7 143	24 746	2 679	2 033	6 421	542	2 640
2010	Year Total	118 691	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 391	33 988	138 594	17 129	64 259
2011	1/January	4 253	2 019	964	293	1 493	9 257	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585

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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			
	* 2010	2010		2011	* 2010	2010		2011
		January	1/ December	1/ January		January	1/ December	1/ January
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	67 135	4 611	3 000	3 763	57 343	3 984	2 393	3 225
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 438	978	772	815	10 227	851	630	677
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	86 881	6 609	5 205	5 509	78 297	5 829	4 757	5 041
1.2.2 Other	77 400	4 765	4 697	4 807	68 975	4 157	4 177	4 191
1.3 Rent	29 031	1 859	2 072	2 106	23 820	1 514	1 628	1 726
1.4 Money lent	243 958	19 428	12 115	15 825	236 544	19 080	11 697	15 435
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	71 718	6 372	2 749	4 111	64 562	5 881	2 272	3 774
1.6 Other debts	85 643	5 331	6 434	5 082	77 030	4 790	5 772	4 543
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	674 204	49 953	37 044	42 018	616 798	46 086	33 326	38 612
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		57 817	46 388	48 736		52 745	41 398	44 207

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* Revised

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	* 2010	2010		2011	* 2010	2010		2011
		January	1/ December	1/ January		January	1/ December	1/ January
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	612 329	39 770	32 410	38 096	393 132	25 849	18 723	25 978
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	355 809	32 768	23 099	24 385	274 998	27 633	19 027	21 307
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	350 121	26 508	20 844	26 310	280 677	23 036	18 161	22 458
1.2.2 Other	716 093	42 137	47 133	72 773	571 486	31 254	38 376	64 529
1.3 Rent	448 701	24 067	28 141	23 650	297 916	16 974	16 720	15 264
1.4 Money lent	2 202 867	185 878	114 849	146 530	2 059 140	175 486	105 515	134 681
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	791 033	103 827	42 438	35 102	645 114	90 396	32 437	31 757
1.6 Other debts	1 099 327	79 713	80 957	56 231	845 152	63 740	65 136	42 517
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 576 280	534 668	389 871	423 077	5 367 615	454 368	314 095	358 491
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		619 842	490 768	489 631		512 785	394 516	402 681

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 January 2010 and the three months ended January 2011

Actual estimates	Actual estimates November 2009 to January 2010	Actual estimates November 2010 to January 2011	% change between November 2009 to January 2010 and November 2010 to January 2011	Difference between November 2009 to January 2010 and November 2010 to January 2011
Number of summonses for debt	299 130	254 826	-14,8	-44 304
Number of judgements for debt	163 779	130 495	-20,3	-33 284
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 657,1	1 300,9	-21,5	-356,2

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 for the three months ended January 2010 and the three months ended January 2011 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	-3,1	-3,2	-2,2
– Instalment sale transactions	-1,3	-0,3	-1,1
Services			
– Professional	-2,3	-2,5	-0,1
– Other	-1,2	0,6	3,7
Rent	-0,1	0,1	-0,3
Money lent	-5,2	-10,2	-11,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	0,5	-4,9	-8,5
Other debts	-2,2	0,1	-1,6
Total	-14,8	-20,3	-21,5

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 November to January 2010, 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 January 2010	Actual estimates January 2011	% change between January 2010 and January 2011	Difference between January 2010 and January 2011
Number of summonses for debt	96 830	80 939	-16,4	-15 891
Number of judgements for debt	49 953	42 018	-15,9	-7 935
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	534,7	423,1	-20,9	-111,6

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, 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.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for January 2011 was 90,7%. Improved response rate for December 2010 was 91,4%.
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. • <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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