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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

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Key results for January 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of January 2014

Actual estimates	January 2014	% change between January 2013 and January 2014	% change between Nov 2012 – Jan 2013 and Nov 2013 – Jan 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	58 173	6,1	-3,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 498	-0,7	-5,5
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	312,8	0,1	5,6

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 3,8% in the three months ended January 2014 compared with the three months ended January 2013. A 6,1% increase was recorded between January 2013 and January 2014 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 3,8% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -2,6 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,1 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -0,9 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 5,5% in the three months ended January 2014 compared with the three months ended January 2013. A decrease of 0,7% was recorded year-on-year in January 2014 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 5,5% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -5,0 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,8 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -1,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 5,6% higher in the three months ended January 2014 compared with the three months ended January 2013. A year-on-year increase of 0,1% was recorded in January 2014 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that contributed to the 5,6% increase were ‘other’ debts and services (contributing 6,1 percentage points and 3,1 percentage points respectively) – see Table 5.

In January 2014, 26 498 civil judgements for debt amounting to R312,8 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R85,2 million or 27,2%);
- ‘other’ debts (R83,9 million or 26,8%); and
- services (R57,6 million or 18,4%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

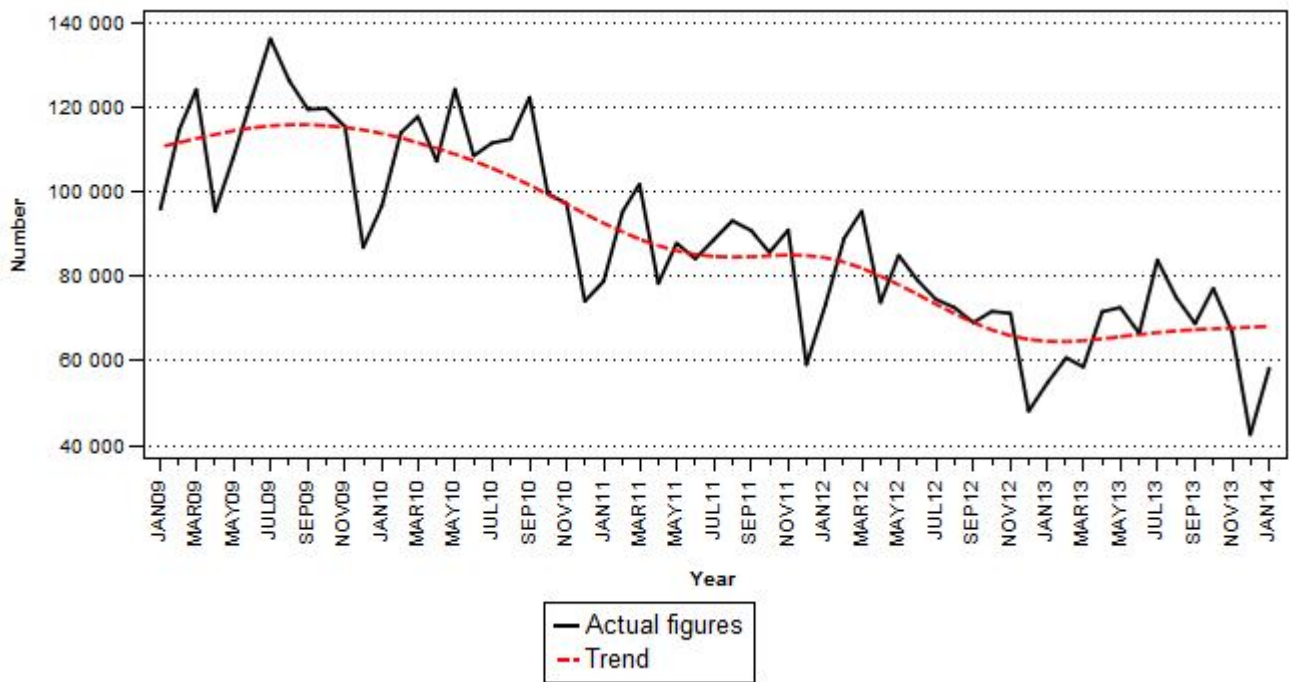
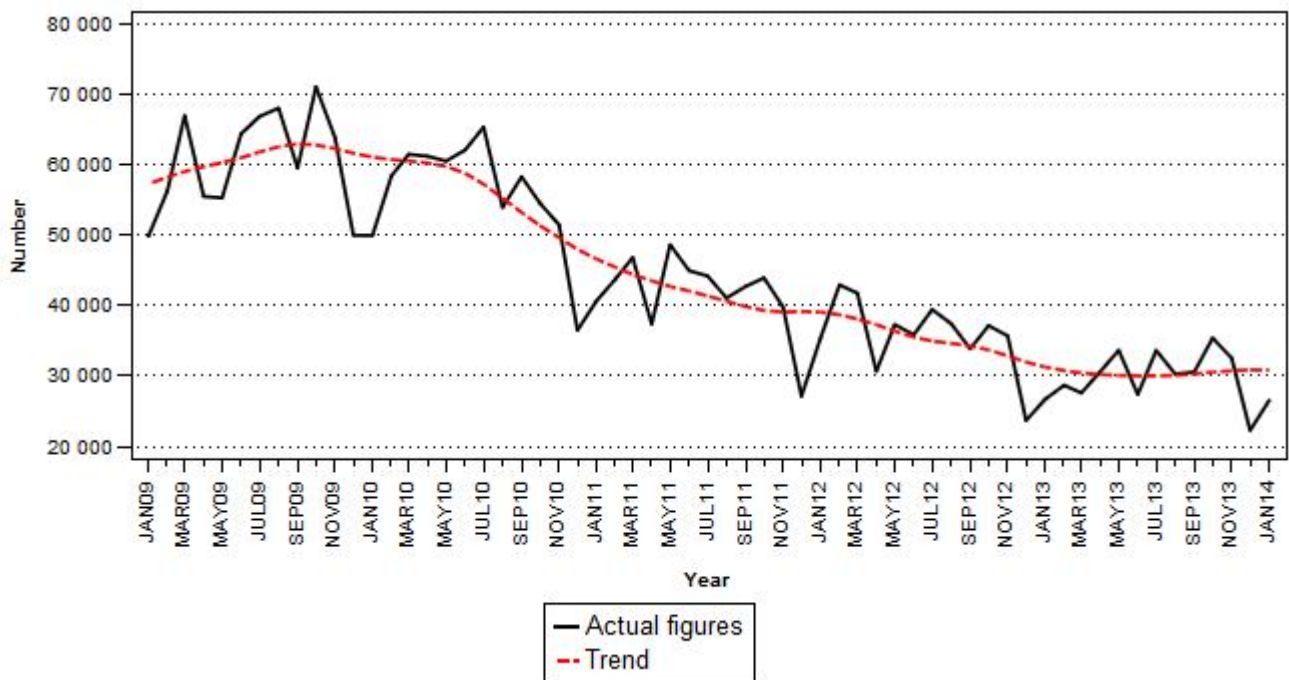


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Jan-13	1/ Dec-13	1/ Jan-14	2013	Jan-13	1/ Dec-13	1/ Jan-14
Cases recorded	Actual figures	885 320	59 087	46 445	63 823	771 364	52 266	38 878	54 210
	Seasonally adjusted		70 943	65 851	76 847		62 135	55 788	64 480
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	63 952	4 750	3 767	4 920	50 038	3 749	2 851	3 569
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 218	1 716	1 922	1 903	19 245	1 367	1 398	1 355
	Services - Professional	101 681	6 632	5 835	7 170	90 676	6 008	4 962	6 168
	Services - Other	136 141	8 966	7 154	9 351	119 176	7 534	5 923	8 126
	Rent	45 440	3 035	2 890	3 242	36 824	2 427	2 335	2 585
	Money lent	189 729	12 810	9 003	14 581	178 109	12 109	8 329	13 680
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 450	7 860	4 762	8 082	98 274	7 063	4 082	6 834
	Other debts	124 497	9 066	7 177	8 924	113 694	8 330	6 216	8 218
	Total - Actual figures	799 108	54 835	42 510	58 173	706 036	48 587	36 096	50 535
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		63 981	58 385	67 849		56 328	50 529	58 465

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Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Jan-13	1/ Dec-13	1/ Jan-14	2013	Jan-13	1/ Dec-13	1/ Jan-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 597	2 660	1 795	1 918	24 387	2 122	1 366	1 451
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 832	613	601	601	5 973	484	462	452
	Services - Professional	54 998	4 078	3 450	4 547	50 090	3 725	3 102	3 849
	Services - Other	54 712	3 681	4 125	3 732	47 374	3 059	3 690	3 228
	Rent	21 197	1 561	1 288	1 858	17 602	1 304	1 052	1 578
	Money lent	95 683	6 832	4 913	6 867	88 994	6 423	4 616	6 148
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 524	2 320	2 170	2 077	29 935	2 054	1 809	1 724
	Other debts	59 606	4 930	3 915	4 898	53 777	4 519	3 580	4 537
	Total - Actual figures	359 149	26 675	22 257	26 498	318 132	23 690	19 677	22 967
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		30 705	30 627	30 369		27 360	26 985	26 446

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2013	Jan-13	1/ Dec-13	1/ Jan-14	2013	Jan-13	1/ Dec-13	1/ Jan-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 467	31 286	18 940	27 786	210 195	17 284	10 552	18 672
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 821	8 998	8 048	6 884	99 484	7 397	7 004	5 744
	Services - Professional	278 838	15 877	24 688	23 604	235 212	13 198	18 260	18 100
	Services - Other	591 004	33 948	40 013	33 984	472 529	28 076	33 060	28 030
	Rent	349 318	18 953	19 695	25 190	242 204	10 908	14 577	19 142
	Money lent	1 207 193	75 799	80 711	85 170	1 088 550	68 705	64 900	76 479
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 317	32 468	30 227	26 276	363 640	27 585	25 323	22 440
	Other debts	1 412 608	95 077	84 398	83 910	785 061	52 992	61 674	57 832
	Total - Actual figures	4 768 566	312 406	306 720	312 804	3 496 875	226 145	235 350	246 439
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		379 167	399 357	382 967		267 219	305 943	294 036

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 January 2013 and the three months ended January 2014

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Nov 2012 – Jan 2013	Actual estimates Nov 2013 – Jan 2014	% change between Nov 2012 – Jan 2013 and Nov 2013 – Jan 2014	Difference between Nov 2012 – Jan 2013 and Nov 2013 – Jan 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	174 158	167 570	-3,8	-6 588
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	86 024	81 273	-5,5	-4 751
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 003,1	1 059,0	5,6	55,8

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 January 2013 and the three months ended January 2014 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	-0,9	-2,5	-1,0
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,0	-0,3	-0,6
Services - Professional	0,5	0,9	1,8
Services - Other	0,7	2,4	1,3
Rent	0,2	-0,1	0,2
Money lent	-0,7	-5,0	-2,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,1	-1,1	0,3
Other debts	-2,6	0,3	6,1
Total	-3,8	-5,5	5,6

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 November 2012 to January 2013, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

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 January 2013	Actual estimates January 2014	% change between January 2013 and January 2014	Difference between January 2013 and January 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	54 835	58 173	6,1	3 338
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 675	26 498	-0,7	-177
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	312,4	312,8	0,1	0,4

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. 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 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.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for January 2014 was 85,7%. The collection rate for December 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: <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 * 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.
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.
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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General enquiries

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(012) 310 8600 (user information services)
(012) 310 8358 (orders/subscription services)

Fax number: (012) 310 8664 (technical enquiries)

email: onicama@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)
magdaj@statssa.gov.za (orders/subscription services)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

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