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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

January 2016

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Enquiries:

Juan-Pierre Terblanche
Tel: (012) 310 2965

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Key results for January 2016

Table A – Key figures for the month of January 2016

Actual estimates	January 2016	% change between January 2015 and January 2016	% change between Nov 2014 – Jan 2015 and Nov 2015 – Jan 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	43 525	-11,8	-6,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	19 369	-8,9	-8,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	276,7	1,6	1,7

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 6,9% in the three months ended January 2016 compared with the three months ended January 2015.

The largest contributions to the 6,9% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- money lent (contributing -3,0 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,8 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -1,8 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 8,2% in the three months ended January 2016 compared with the three months ended January 2015. The largest negative contribution to the 8,2% decrease was money lent (contributing -5,9 percentage points).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 1,7% in the three months ended January 2016 compared with the three months ended January 2015.

The largest positive contributions to the 1,7% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- rent (contributing 1,8 percentage points);
- services (contributing 1,4 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing 1,0 percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In January 2016, 19 369 civil judgements for debt amounting to R276,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R71,9 million or 26,0%);
- money lent (R69,4 million or 25,1%); and
- services (R56,9 million or 20,5%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

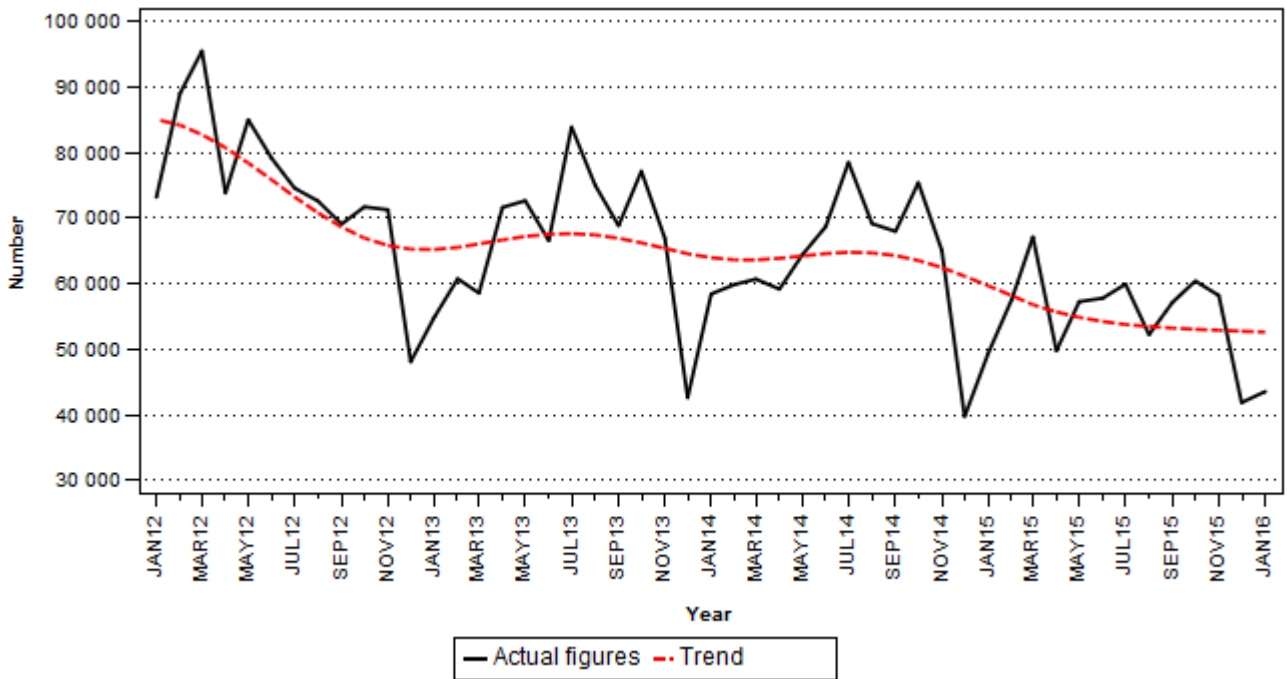
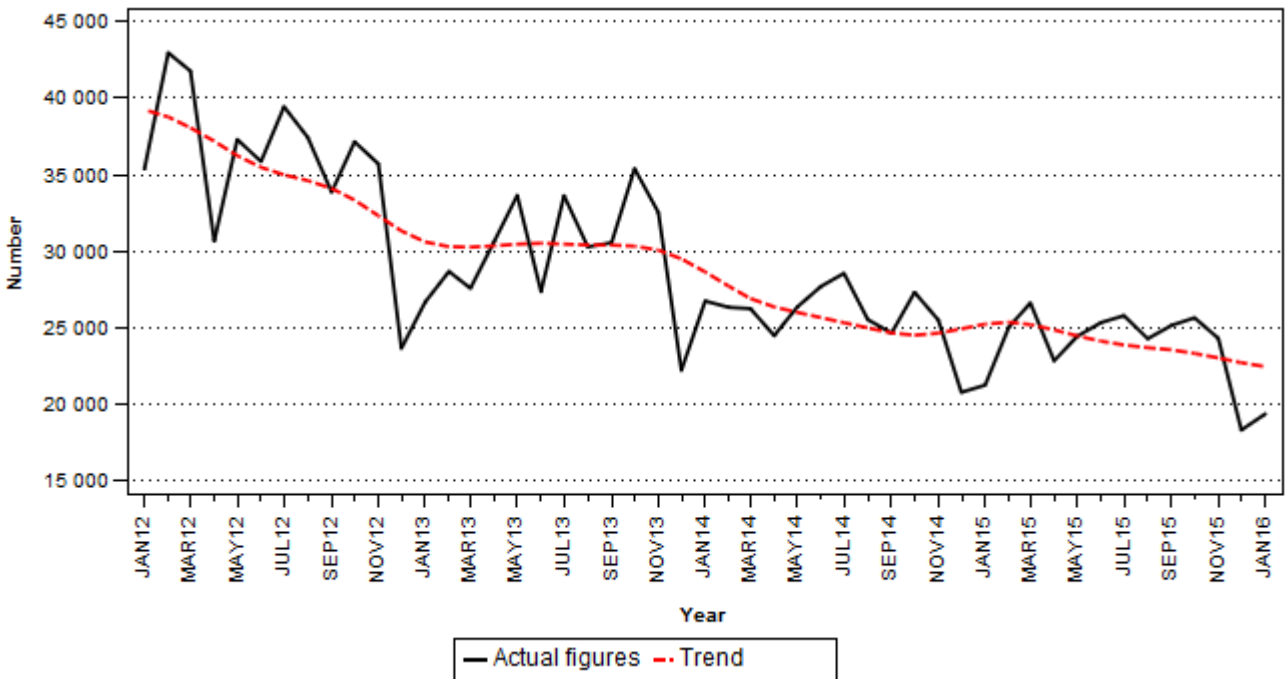


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2015	Jan-15	1/ Dec-15	1/ Jan-16	2015	Jan-15	1/ Dec-15	1/ Jan-16
Cases recorded	Actual figures	733 514	54 027	44 158	46 279	623 802	44 314	38 078	39 726
	Seasonally adjusted		66 609	65 166	57 231		53 905	54 831	48 596
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	43 664	3 002	2 772	3 009	32 616	2 328	1 884	2 368
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	23 011	1 821	1 440	1 614	18 234	1 423	1 144	1 209
	Services - Professional	84 964	6 189	5 584	5 618	73 636	5 651	4 785	4 554
	Services - Other	110 042	8 148	7 209	7 559	90 635	7 053	5 770	5 899
	Rent	29 255	2 322	2 007	2 366	22 558	1 850	1 586	1 886
	Money lent	164 531	11 937	10 057	9 719	153 342	11 340	9 357	8 620
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	89 682	6 092	5 927	6 009	83 701	5 574	5 506	5 520
	Other debts	123 254	9 823	6 845	7 631	111 399	8 948	6 074	6 872
	Total - Actual figures	668 403	49 334	41 841	43 525	586 121	44 167	36 106	36 928
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		58 460	61 238	51 735		51 618	54 891	43 424

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Jan-15	1/ Dec-15	1/ Jan-16	2015	Jan-15	1/ Dec-15	1/ Jan-16
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	18 545	1 450	1 232	1 197	13 804	1 102	927	912
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 426	601	502	624	5 752	456	422	557
	Services - Professional	50 913	3 433	3 018	3 280	44 324	3 006	2 717	2 905
	Services - Other	42 221	2 574	2 686	2 681	35 776	2 091	2 201	2 231
	Rent	17 851	1 534	1 419	1 496	14 517	1 154	1 136	1 235
	Money lent	69 713	5 658	4 005	4 015	63 786	5 275	3 585	3 588
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 604	2 302	1 639	2 343	23 763	2 002	1 397	2 103
	Other debts	54 764	3 703	3 823	3 733	50 056	3 396	3 383	3 310
	Total - Actual figures	289 037	21 255	18 324	19 369	251 778	18 482	15 768	16 841
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		24 086	23 075	21 979		21 126	19 911	19 299

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Jan-15	1/ Dec-15	1/ Jan-16	2015	Jan-15	1/ Dec-15	1/ Jan-16
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	275 495	17 101	16 725	15 994	157 824	10 011	9 585	8 944
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	104 326	6 515	7 198	7 522	89 527	5 389	6 484	7 141
	Services - Professional	285 325	19 283	16 232	21 855	230 346	16 706	14 354	19 442
	Services - Other	521 021	31 111	36 305	35 001	400 078	21 848	26 922	25 700
	Rent	304 315	20 048	19 339	23 447	213 394	12 616	15 079	17 254
	Money lent	1 172 061	79 102	77 927	69 443	1 052 905	75 973	67 592	60 412
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	506 174	39 293	43 991	31 571	422 857	34 055	36 670	28 198
	Other debts	1 229 098	60 050	79 771	71 894	841 493	47 410	54 656	48 446
	Total - Actual figures	4 397 815	272 503	297 488	276 727	3 408 424	224 008	231 342	215 537
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		341 046	365 812	348 038		273 322	278 822	263 997

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended January 2015 and the three months ended January 2016

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Nov 2014 – Jan 2015	Actual estimates Nov 2015 – Jan 2016	% change between Nov 2014 – Jan 2015 and Nov 2015 – Jan 2016	Difference between Nov 2014 – Jan 2015 and Nov 2015 – Jan 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	154 098	143 537	-6,9	-10 561
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	67 542	61 999	-8,2	-5 543
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	940,4	956,6	1,7	16,2

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended January 2015 and the three months ended January 2016 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	-1,3	-0,5	0,0
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-1,5	-0,2	0,4
Services - Professional	0,0	-0,3	-0,1
Services - Other	0,1	-0,4	1,5
Rent	-1,1	0,5	1,8
Money lent	-3,0	-5,9	-2,8
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	1,7	-0,9	1,0
Other debts	-1,8	-0,5	-0,1
Total	-6,9	-8,2	1,7

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt by the percentage contribution to the total during November 2014 to January 2015, 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 and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates January 2015	Actual estimates January 2016	% change between January 2015 and January 2016	Difference between January 2015 and January 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	49 334	43 525	-11,8	-5 809
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	21 255	19 369	-8,9	-1 886
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	272,5	276,7	1,6	4,2

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period 1/	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2015	Jan	7 140	4 573	836	3 513	8 559	2 831	17 487	2 363	2 032	49 334
	Feb	8 706	5 058	854	4 090	8 512	3 285	21 552	3 182	2 315	57 554
	Mar	11 105	5 267	758	3 774	9 790	3 322	26 436	3 976	2 681	67 109
	Apr	8 783	3 847	695	3 207	8 538	2 618	16 889	2 989	2 180	49 746
	May	11 421	4 303	723	3 844	8 002	3 810	19 956	2 972	2 205	57 236
	Jun	10 617	5 205	959	3 314	10 012	2 839	18 966	3 471	2 383	57 766
	Jul	10 353	5 406	843	4 302	9 882	2 618	20 210	3 699	2 594	59 907
	Aug	9 021	4 586	763	4 330	8 050	2 635	17 535	3 023	2 266	52 209
	Sep	9 108	4 882	727	4 195	9 065	3 373	20 049	3 418	2 327	57 144
	Oct	10 180	5 430	750	4 361	9 651	3 471	20 896	3 209	2 438	60 386
	Nov	10 506	4 398	735	4 880	8 794	2 864	20 261	3 513	2 220	58 171
	Dec	7 353	2 826	682	3 151	8 094	2 115	14 235	1 740	1 645	41 841
2016	Jan	7 050	3 004	577	3 678	6 501	2 232	15 769	2 833	1 881	43 525

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period 1/	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2015	Jan	2 852	2 905	321	2 882	3 409	1 205	4 214	1 666	1 801	21 255
	Feb	3 567	3 949	412	2 689	3 559	1 607	5 806	1 591	1 870	25 050
	Mar	4 342	3 578	486	2 653	3 874	1 641	6 259	1 696	2 082	26 611
	Apr	3 287	2 714	500	2 704	3 527	1 241	5 595	1 410	1 864	22 842
	May	3 267	2 943	368	3 475	3 070	1 523	6 300	1 596	1 897	24 439
	Jun	3 869	3 987	407	2 758	3 691	1 631	5 480	1 605	1 908	25 336
	Jul	4 603	3 318	445	2 627	3 921	1 455	6 032	1 542	1 845	25 788
	Aug	4 109	2 620	438	2 855	3 284	1 234	6 246	1 667	1 832	24 285
	Sep	3 830	2 832	488	2 871	4 416	1 324	6 062	1 381	1 950	25 154
	Oct	4 264	3 220	412	3 056	3 892	1 010	6 541	1 785	1 467	25 647
	Nov	4 163	2 966	458	2 600	4 106	1 027	5 938	1 580	1 468	24 306
	Dec	3 147	1 454	306	2 030	3 031	1 003	5 053	1 059	1 241	18 324
2016	Jan	2 773	1 950	344	1 869	4 108	885	4 417	1 627	1 396	19 369

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period 1/	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa	
2015	Jan	35 749	39 694	4 390	32 879	37 581	12 314	71 538	28 996	9 362	272 503
	Feb	60 494	62 150	3 894	41 807	39 312	23 497	87 033	35 345	9 539	363 071
	Mar	121 088	58 993	3 709	31 817	45 096	21 926	106 877	23 272	12 546	425 324
	Apr	62 810	47 176	4 018	28 057	39 357	11 619	88 888	28 653	11 625	322 203
	May	74 314	44 532	3 974	48 534	33 327	16 938	100 285	28 835	11 255	361 994
	Jun	81 962	57 301	2 859	26 175	46 373	21 593	91 115	56 095	21 578	405 051
	Jul	86 915	49 682	4 954	30 311	46 133	19 282	104 086	68 679	13 939	423 981
	Aug	95 531	39 286	4 036	33 695	35 588	15 174	105 061	38 913	14 162	381 446
	Sep	53 835	54 304	6 480	28 910	51 247	16 280	105 994	42 981	17 924	377 955
	Oct	76 353	52 076	3 667	35 954	45 980	14 400	104 905	37 194	13 860	384 389
	Nov	71 399	47 573	4 916	35 697	55 776	14 894	100 029	41 485	10 641	382 410
	Dec	61 750	25 351	2 698	24 175	36 816	13 727	104 642	19 770	8 559	297 488
2016	Jan	46 639	34 713	2 485	24 477	35 414	11 661	72 696	37 228	11 414	276 727

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

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 2016 was 86,2%. The collection rate for December 2015 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>South African Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
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 debt such as salaries and wages, medical fund debt, sponsored debt, class and tuition debt, tax, assessment rates and property 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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(012) 310 8044 (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

Produced by Stats SA