

Statistics of civil cases for debt

July 2005

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Key figures for the month ended July 2005

| | July 2005 | % change between July 2004 and July 2005 | % change between May 2004 to July 2004 and May 2005 to July 2005 |
|---|----------------------|---|---|
| Actual estimates | | | |
| Number of civil summonses issued for debt | 108 615 | -9,6 | -5,0 |
| Number of civil judgements recorded for debt | 73 448 | -2,5 | -2,1 |
| Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million) | 496,5 | -18,0 | -7,4 |

Key findings as at the end of July 2005

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2005 decreased by 5,0% compared with the three months ended July 2004.

The major contributors to the decrease of 5,0% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2005 compared with the three months ended July 2004, were civil summonses issued in respect of goods sold on account (-1,8 percentage points), rent (-1,1 percentage points) and money lent (-1,1 percentage points) (see table 5 column 2).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2005 decreased by 2,1% compared with the three months ended July 2004.

The major contributors to the decrease of 2,1% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2005 compared with the three months ended July 2004, were civil judgements in respect of promissory notes (-1,9 percentage points), rent (-1,4 percentage points) and 'other services' (-1,3 percentage points). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in judgements recorded for debt in respect of 'other' debts (+2,2 percentage points) (see table 5 column 3).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2005 decreased by 7,4% compared with the three months ended July 2004.

The major contributors to the decrease of 7,4% in the value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended July 2005 compared with the three months ended July 2004, were civil judgements recorded in respect of promissory notes (-2,0 percentage points), 'other services' (-1,8 percentage points), rent (-1,5 percentage points), 'other' debts (-1,5 percentage points) and money lent (-1,4 percentage points) (see table 5 column 4)

During July 2005, 73 448 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R496,5 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R496,5 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R169,9 million or 34,2%), 'other' debts (R95,0 million or 19,1%), promissory notes (R70,9 million or 14,3%) and goods sold on account (R54,7 million or 11,0%) (see table 4 column 5).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded from 2001 to 2005

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt

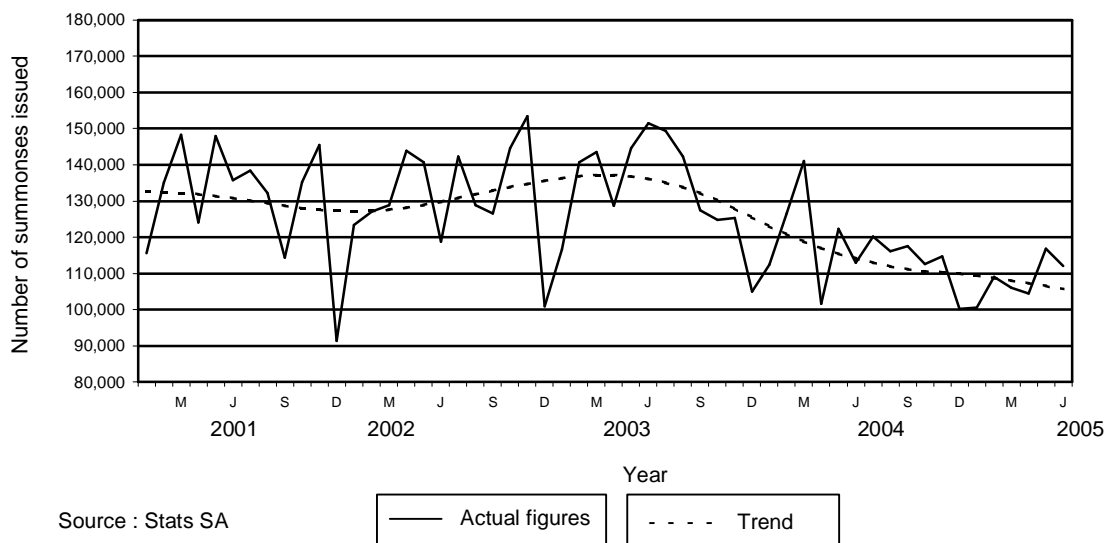
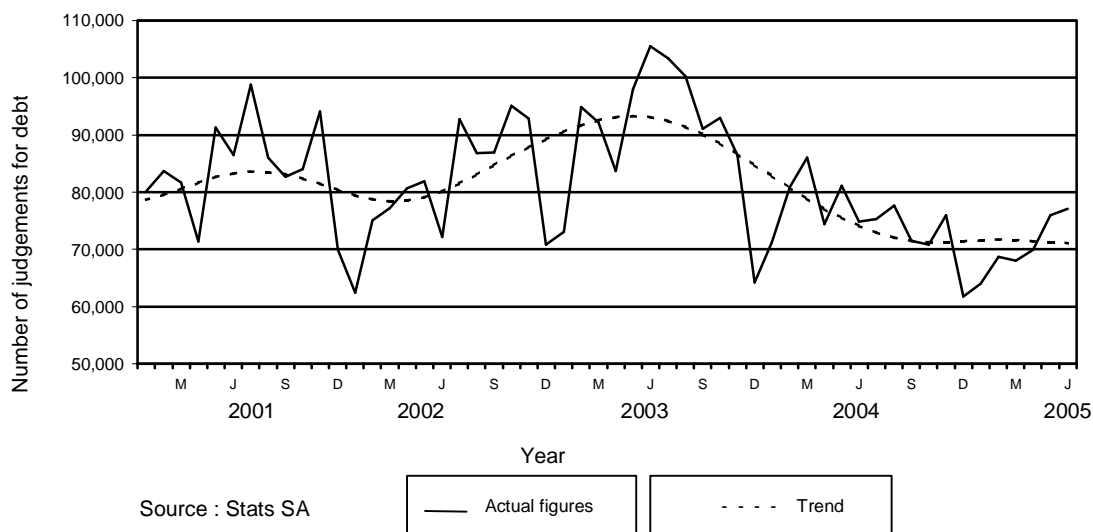


Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Notes

| Forthcoming issue | Issue | Expected release date |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | August 2005 | 20 October 2005 |
| Purpose of the survey | 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. | |
| Response rate | The response rate for July 2005 was 90%. | |

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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 | | | |
|--|--|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2004 | 2004 | 2005 | 2005 | 2004 | 2004 | 2005 | 2005 |
| | | Jul. | Jun. | Jul. | | Jul. | Jun. | Jul. |
| 1. Cases recorded | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Actual figures | 1 594 269 | 136 712 | 129 103 | 124 311 | 1 468 203 | 125 928 | 110 314 | 112 780 |
| 1.2 Seasonally adjusted | | 130 801 | 125 305 | 118 629 | | 119 951 | 110 037 | 107 045 |
| 2. Civil summonses for debt | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Goods sold | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.1 Open account | 166 745 | 15 592 | 12 971 | 12 902 | 146 808 | 13 594 | 11 107 | 10 736 |
| 2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions | 50 254 | 4 770 | 5 210 | 4 569 | 46 274 | 4 322 | 4 717 | 4 189 |
| 2.2 Services | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.1 Professional | 167 273 | 13 490 | 12 896 | 12 596 | 158 478 | 12 632 | 11 109 | 10 846 |
| 2.2.2 Other | 261 068 | 21 161 | 20 821 | 18 008 | 244 594 | 19 778 | 17 517 | 16 370 |
| 2.3 Rent | 59 425 | 5 198 | 3 909 | 4 198 | 45 218 | 3 974 | 2 978 | 3 603 |
| 2.4 Money lent | 325 544 | 27 080 | 27 299 | 24 996 | 310 493 | 26 058 | 20 919 | 23 831 |
| 2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 131 093 | 11 483 | 10 608 | 11 380 | 121 148 | 10 604 | 9 707 | 10 336 |
| 2.6 Other | 236 821 | 21 439 | 18 415 | 19 966 | 214 152 | 19 450 | 15 927 | 17 700 |
| 2.7 Total | | | | | | | | |
| 2.7.1 Actual figures | 1 398 223 | 120 213 | 112 129 | 108 615 | 1 287 165 | 110 412 | 93 981 | 97 611 |
| 2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted | | 112 004 | 106 166 | 101 228 | | 102 959 | 92 086 | 91 010 |

* Revised

Table 2 - Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

| Year or month | Cape Peninsula | Port Elizabeth | East-London | Kimberley | Pietermaritzburg | Durban | Johannesburg | East Rand | West Rand | Pretoria | Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark | Bloemfontein |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|------------------|---------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 2003 | 184 499 | 86 919 | 37 534 | 26 953 | 30 153 | 131 913 | 183 463 | 78 614 | 53 072 | 145 245 | 33 818 | 71 882 |
| 2004 | 143 146 | 81 408 | 37 375 | 13 044 | 19 321 | 121 484 | 169 721 | 87 621 | 51 872 | 128 803 | 25 498 | 55 835 |
| 2004 - J | 13 627 | 7 634 | 2 149 | 1 370 | 1 249 | 8 053 | 14 070 | 5 493 | 3 745 | 11 949 | 1 568 | 3 417 |
| F | 15 167 | 6 921 | 2 149 | 1 957 | 1 713 | 9 997 | 16 006 | 6 014 | 5 127 | 11 989 | 2 513 | 4 337 |
| M | 12 787 | 10 896 | 3 587 | 1 957 | 2 427 | 10 711 | 17 689 | 9 544 | 5 759 | 12 922 | 2 827 | 3 945 |
| A | 10 087 | 5 786 | 2 243 | 1 957 | 1 215 | 8 415 | 11 018 | 5 510 | 3 806 | 7 605 | 2 252 | 4 542 |
| M | 11 545 | 8 252 | 3 521 | 990 | 1 712 | 11 633 | 14 059 | 7 474 | 4 564 | 9 739 | 2 504 | 4 542 |
| J | 12 390 | 3 174 | 3 521 | 790 | 1 682 | 11 346 | 12 525 | 6 408 | 4 375 | 9 692 | 1 442 | 4 542 |
| J | 12 988 | 3 174 | 4 823 | 1 100 | 2 052 | 10 239 | 14 059 | 5 847 | 4 347 | 10 652 | 2 015 | 5 292 |
| A | 11 424 | 7 185 | 3 034 | 710 | 1 663 | 10 867 | 14 059 | 8 433 | 4 750 | 9 826 | 2 021 | 5 676 |
| S | 10 897 | 5 063 | 3 087 | 710 | 1 837 | 10 867 | 14 059 | 7 954 | 4 369 | 10 797 | 1 494 | 5 676 |
| O | 9 933 | 5 483 | 3 087 | 488 | 1 112 | 8 878 | 14 059 | 9 423 | 3 928 | 11 728 | 3 001 | 5 676 |
| N | 10 688 | 8 920 | 3 087 | 488 | 1 574 | 10 239 | 14 059 | 8 729 | 4 388 | 14 231 | 2 134 | 4 195 |
| D | 11 613 | 8 920 | 3 087 | 527 | 1 085 | 10 239 | 14 059 | 6 792 | 2 714 | 7 673 | 1 727 | 3 995 |
| 2005 - J | 11 896 | 6 551 | 2 247 | 545 | 1 578 | 10 239 | 14 059 | 3 943 | 3 547 | 9 006 | 2 093 | 4 441 |
| F | 14 772 | 6 551 | 3 172 | 895 | 1 781 | 9 815 | 11 918 | 5 120 | 4 152 | 12 240 | 2 592 | 4 182 |
| M | 11 976 | 5 099 | 2 889 | 632 | 1 439 | 5 740 | 13 198 | 4 899 | 3 850 | 10 904 | 2 980 | 4 604 |
| A | 13 600 | 4 474 | 2 504 | 801 | 1 526 | 3 230 | 13 299 | 5 143 | 3 967 | 14 042 | 2 991 | 4 808 |
| M | 12 386 | 7 915 | 3 151 | 997 | 2 268 | 5 435 | 14 706 | 6 654 | 3 621 | 12 756 | 1 832 | 4 884 |
| J | 15 193 | 6 117 | 3 350 | 721 | 1 636 | 4 921 | 12 201 | 4 335 | 3 959 | 12 114 | 1 794 | 5 073 |
| J | 13 402 | 4 474 | 3 240 | 873 | 1 894 | 4 921 | 12 726 | 4 973 | 3 690 | 11 494 | 2 127 | 5 083 |

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 | | | |
|--|--|--------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 2004 | 2004 | 2005 | 2005 | 2004 | 2004 | 2005 | 2005 |
| | | Jul. | Jun. | Jul. | | Jul. | Jun. | Jul. |
| 1. Judgements | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Goods sold | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1 Open account | 112 511 | 10 118 | 9 302 | 10 599 | 103 007 | 9 351 | 8 483 | 9 806 |
| 1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions | 16 017 | 1 256 | 1 470 | 1 637 | 14 307 | 1 117 | 1 299 | 1 469 |
| 1.2 Services | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 Professional | 84 612 | 6 304 | 7 713 | 6 860 | 80 025 | 6 070 | 7 174 | 6 327 |
| 1.2.2 Other | 139 466 | 11 223 | 11 869 | 9 904 | 131 269 | 10 531 | 11 315 | 9 396 |
| 1.3 Rent | 41 418 | 2 897 | 2 027 | 1 782 | 31 039 | 2 224 | 1 676 | 1 423 |
| 1.4 Money lent | 308 851 | 26 839 | 26 455 | 25 691 | 303 361 | 26 525 | 25 975 | 25 270 |
| 1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 94 137 | 8 100 | 8 226 | 7 694 | 89 724 | 7 808 | 7 972 | 7 401 |
| 1.6 Other | 104 609 | 8 618 | 10 006 | 9 281 | 96 031 | 7 976 | 9 191 | 8 510 |
| 1.7 Total | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7.1 Actual figures | 901 621 | 75 355 | 77 068 | 73 448 | 848 763 | 71 602 | 73 085 | 69 602 |
| 1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted | | 69 285 | 71 697 | 68 239 | | 65 787 | 68 347 | 64 595 |

* Revised

Table 4 - Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

| Item | Business enterprises and private persons | | | | Private persons | | | |
|--|--|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2004 | 2004 | 2005 | 2005 | 2004 | 2004 | 2005 | 2005 |
| | | Jul. | Jun. | Jul. | | Jul. | Jun. | Jul. |
| | R' 000 | | | | | | | |
| 1. Judgements | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Goods sold | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 Open account | 585 615 | 46 847 | 51 701 | 54 683 | 453 401 | 36 416 | 41 992 | 45 772 |
| 1.2.2 Instalment sale transactions | 284 507 | 26 503 | 21 198 | 24 939 | 233 000 | 21 155 | 16 916 | 22 566 |
| 1.2 Services | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 Professional | 260 267 | 38 244 | 23 689 | 20 701 | 226 121 | 36 104 | 19 624 | 17 077 |
| 1.2.2 Other | 744 612 | 64 473 | 51 267 | 46 315 | 642 577 | 55 085 | 46 294 | 40 492 |
| 1.3 Rent | 316 836 | 27 631 | 16 281 | 14 131 | 226 720 | 20 540 | 11 383 | 9 022 |
| 1.4 Money lent | 2 285 479 | 168 572 | 168 969 | 169 915 | 2 200 833 | 161 886 | 152 421 | 160 922 |
| 1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 902 100 | 56 707 | 75 683 | 70 865 | 826 289 | 52 091 | 70 901 | 65 374 |
| 1.6 Other | 1 523 389 | 176 567 | 105 397 | 94 981 | 1 068 799 | 119 638 | 77 659 | 73 644 |
| 1.7 Total | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7.1 Actual figures | 6 902 805 | 605 544 | 514 185 | 496 530 | 5 877 740 | 502 915 | 437 190 | 434 869 |
| 1.7.1 Seasonally adjusted | | 565 062 | 513 798 | 464 461 | | 481 991 | 445 136 | 418 903 |

* Revised

Table 5 - Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded

| Different kinds of debts | 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 | -1,8 | 0,6 | 1,4 |
| Instalment sale transactions | -0,1 | 0,2 | -0,1 |
| Professional services | -0,7 | 0,2 | -0,5 |
| Other services | 0,0 | -1,3 | -1,8 |
| Rent | -1,1 | -1,4 | -1,5 |
| Money lent | -1,1 | -0,7 | -1,4 |
| Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt | 0,1 | -1,9 | -2,0 |
| Other debts | -0,3 | 2,2 | -1,5 |
| Total | -5,0 | -2,1 | -7,4 |

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during May 2004 to July 2004, divided by 100.

Table 6 - Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

| | Actual estimates July 2004 | Actual estimates July 2005 | % change between July 2004 and July 2005 | Difference between July 2004 and July 2005 |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| Number of summonses for debt | 120 213 | 108 615 | -9,6% | -11 598 |
| Number of judgements for debt | 75 355 | 73 448 | -2,5% | 1 907 |
| Value of judgements for debt (R million) | 605,5 | 496,5 | -18,0% | -109,0 |

Table 7 - Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

| | Actual estimates May 2004 to July 2004 | Actual estimates May 2005 to July 2005 | % change between May 2004 to July 2004 and May 2005 to July 2005 | Difference between May 2004 to July 2004 and May 2005 to July 2005 |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Number of summonses for debt | 355 411 | 337 569 | -5,0% | -17 842 |
| Number of judgements for debt | 231 376 | 226 499 | -2,1% | -4 877 |
| Value of judgements for debt (R million) | 1 674,5 | 1 549,8 | -7,4% | -124,7 |

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, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
- Scope of the survey**
- 3 This survey covers -
 - 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**
- 4 The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.
 - 5 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 recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 152 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as the measure of size.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 6 The survey is conducted by mail each month for approximately 152 magistrates' offices.
- Seasonal adjustment**
- 7 Seasonal adjustment (variation) is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. This means the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour.
- Trend cycle**
- 8 Smoothed seasonally adjusted estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
- Publications**
- 9 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:
 - *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly.
 - *SA Statistics* issued annually.

Unpublished statistics

- 10** In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not included in standard publications. The statistics can be made available in one or more of the following ways: computer printout, CD or diskette. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.

Symbols and abbreviations

- 11** R/D Refer to Drawer
CD Compact Disc
Stats SA Statistics South Africa
TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei.

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 a debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. a 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 transactions 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 sales, 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 refers to medical doctors/dentists, advocates/attorneys, auditors/ accountants, architects, engineers and hospital services. |
| Promissory note | Promissory notes are written notes, signed by one person, in which he promises 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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