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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2009

Actual estimates	July 2009	% change between July 2008 and July 2009	% change between May to July 2008 and May to July 2009
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	137 749	20,9	12,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	66 860	12,9	7,7
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	659,0	11,0	15,9

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (JULY 2009)

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2009 increased by 12,5% compared with the three months ended July 2008. There was also a 20,9% increase between July 2008 and July 2009 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the increase in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2009 compared with the three months ended July 2008 were civil summonses issued in respect of promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (4,9 percentage points), money lent (4,4 percentage points) and 'other debts' (2,4 percentage points) (see Table 6). The 'other services' and rent categories were the only negative contributors.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

Following the trend in the number of civil summonses issued for debt, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2009 increased by 7,7% compared with the three months ended July 2008. There was also a 12,9% increase between July 2008 and July 2009 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements in respect of money lent (7,5 percentage points), and professional services (2,8 percentage points), were the main drivers behind the 7,7% increase in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2009 increased by 15,9% compared with the three months ended July 2008. There was also an 11,0% increase between July 2008 and July 2009 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 15,9% increase in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended July 2009 compared with the same period last year were money lent (5,8 percentage points), rent (3,4 percentage points) and instalment sale transactions (2,4 percentage points). The 'other debts' category was the only negative contributor (-0,9 of a percentage point) (see Table 6).

During July 2009, 66 860 civil judgements for debt amounting to R659,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R659,0 million were:

- Civil judgements relating to money lent (R252,4 million or 38,3%)
- 'Other debts' (R98,6 million or 15,0%)
- Other services (R69,1 million or 10,5%) and
- Goods sold on an open account (R65,4 million or 9,9%).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2004 to July 2009.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

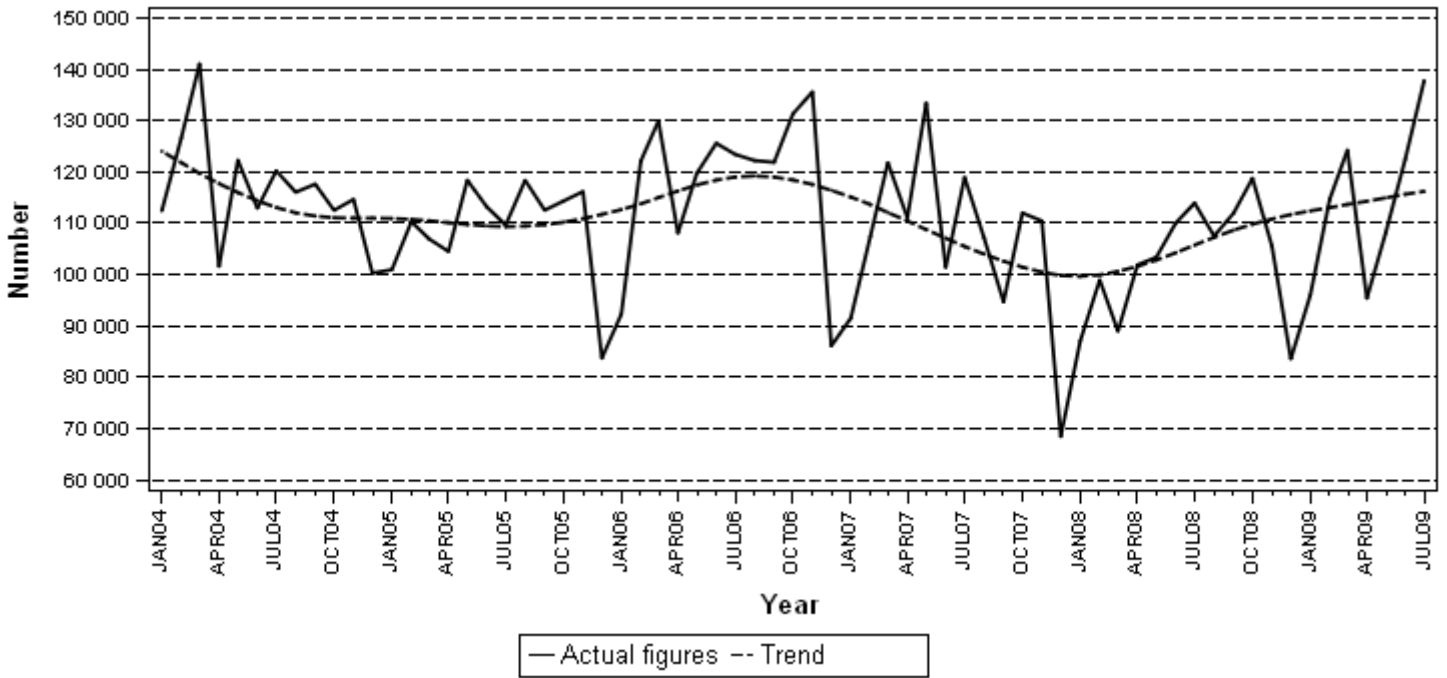


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



P J 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			
	2008	2008	1/ 2009		2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		July	June	July		July	June	July
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 442 676	132 519	144 899	155 947	1 265 159	118 378	125 765	137 337
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		121 597	135 815	141 785		107 939	119 181	124 018
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	116 702	10 530	11 822	12 551	95 703	8 661	9 649	10 229
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 242	2 232	3 134	3 278	26 472	1 976	2 611	2 786
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	132 886	12 256	12 144	14 557	112 140	10 301	10 212	12 362
2.2.2 Other	173 709	14 751	13 560	15 952	151 941	13 029	11 425	13 702
2.3 Rent	53 031	5 981	4 298	4 608	42 964	4 878	3 702	3 750
2.4 Money lent	283 693	27 253	27 268	35 449	262 921	24 891	25 642	33 481
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	201 891	18 783	24 194	25 662	189 884	17 560	22 644	24 374
2.6 Other debts	238 253	22 133	26 055	25 692	205 941	19 155	20 403	20 677
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 231 407	113 919	122 475	137 749	1 087 966	100 451	106 288	121 361
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		103 279	116 290	123 627		90 816	102 373	108 642

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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
2007	Year Total	117 403	65 797	32 766	9 226	17 420	77 021	215 297	51 978	40 863	153 646	26 219	45 913
2008	Year Total	117 171	54 474	17 553	7 236	19 284	78 092	205 869	59 060	33 410	138 384	26 859	33 374
	January	6 304	5 151	1 278	274	1 136	5 286	10 193	3 392	1 905	15 008	4 496	3 068
	February	9 395	4 538	2 187	431	1 132	5 476	11 003	4 424	3 242	11 748	3 638	2 842
	March	9 382	4 278	1 399	822	1 447	6 079	11 776	4 716	2 482	7 997	1 470	2 905
	April	8 158	6 398	1 807	465	1 851	6 648	17 776	5 253	2 858	9 995	1 815	2 658
	May	9 157	6 544	1 695	597	1 814	5 513	17 667	5 407	2 499	10 008	2 666	3 087
	June	8 499	6 045	1 578	928	1 557	5 572	19 524	5 494	2 673	12 313	1 865	2 987
	July	11 015	3 344	1 144	869	1 954	7 370	22 450	4 484	2 922	11 901	2 710	2 992
	August	9 558	4 502	1 180	500	1 615	6 213	20 052	4 552	3 490	11 136	2 236	3 050
	September	10 882	3 738	825	555	1 707	6 312	22 753	5 257	2 816	14 527	1 839	2 962
	October	12 480	3 866	1 549	405	1 966	7 767	18 597	5 758	3 777	14 812	1 975	2 374
	November	12 497	3 655	1 535	844	2 050	8 149	18 480	5 704	2 879	11 611	1 375	2 356
December	9 844	2 415	1 376	546	1 055	7 707	15 598	4 619	1 867	7 328	774	2 093	
1/ 2009	January	8 353	1 955	1 259	515	1 713	7 400	20 427	5 126	2 299	10 835	1 265	4 435
	February	10 331	3 211	1 619	795	1 557	7 766	22 126	5 592	2 742	12 559	1 449	3 645
	March	14 242	5 191	1 759	755	1 807	7 604	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728
	April	9 791	3 286	1 384	538	1 403	7 336	18 223	4 108	2 668	9 863	1 671	2 494
	May	11 016	3 555	1 439	641	1 839	7 483	20 872	4 878	3 120	11 931	3 448	3 554
	June	14 060	3 298	2 364	639	1 537	7 470	24 521	4 558	3 063	12 165	2 698	2 670
	July	12 648	4 276	1 620	806	1 895	7 186	26 907	4 436	3 861	17 167	2 629	3 758

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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			
	2008	2008	1/ 2009		2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		July	June	July		July	June	July
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 779	7 613	8 384	8 071	75 644	6 564	7 121	6 999
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	9 655	897	1 111	1 318	8 047	770	930	1 115
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	77 331	6 691	8 693	7 987	67 961	6 042	7 544	6 628
1.2.2 Other	80 433	7 374	7 466	7 564	72 556	6 587	6 598	6 111
1.3 Rent	30 891	3 249	2 674	2 861	23 363	2 483	2 164	2 106
1.4 Money lent	222 378	19 775	23 479	25 972	216 753	19 291	22 845	24 825
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	47 916	3 470	3 768	5 367	42 595	3 096	3 094	4 389
1.6 Other debts	106 174	10 129	8 825	7 720	95 631	8 922	8 107	6 944
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	660 557	59 198	64 400	66 860	602 550	53 755	58 403	59 117
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		54 442	62 825	61 377		50 212	57 168	55 067

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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			
	2008	2008	1/ 2009		2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		July	June	July		July	June	July
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	631 110	61 814	75 585	65 371	442 239	40 632	50 983	43 121
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	254 184	28 743	36 877	39 255	199 440	22 325	28 339	30 476
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	281 951	23 424	27 297	28 641	217 663	18 774	22 301	22 213
1.2.2 Other	595 868	66 885	67 059	69 079	455 915	51 696	53 393	46 813
1.3 Rent	323 395	25 917	51 089	42 089	212 835	18 560	37 804	26 906
1.4 Money lent	1 956 374	218 278	231 708	252 439	1 827 288	209 019	218 657	240 695
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	662 489	42 864	59 106	63 551	555 402	35 853	40 996	49 682
1.6 Other debts	1 314 647	125 700	111 055	98 610	1 012 729	86 242	89 869	80 957
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 020 018	593 625	659 776	659 035	4 923 511	483 101	542 342	540 863
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		529 735	616 239	585 185		452 231	509 557	501 517

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May to July 2008	Actual estimates May to July 2009	% change between May to July 2008 and May to July 2009	Difference between May to July 2008 and May to July 2009
Number of summonses for debt	327 330	368 384	12,5	41 054
Number of judgements for debt	173 282	186 553	7,7	13 271
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 620,9	1 878,3	15,9	257,4

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year 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	1,3	-0,6	1,3
--Instalment sale transactions	0,7	0,8	2,4
Professional Services	1,1	2,8	0,8
Other Services	-1,6	0,3	2,0
Rent	-0,7	-1,1	3,4
Money lent	4,4	7,5	5,8
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	4,9	0,4	1,0
Other debts	2,4	-2,4	-0,9
Total	12,5	7,7	15,9

1/ 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 to July 2008, 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 July 2008	Actual estimates July 2009	% change between July 2008 and July 2009	Difference between July 2008 and July 2009
Number of summonses for debt	113 919	137 749	20,9	23 830
Number of judgements for debt	59 198	66 860	12,9	7 662
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	593,6	659,0	11,0	65,4

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Purpose of the survey	3	<p>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.</p>
Scope of the survey	4	<p>This survey covers-</p> <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	<p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>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 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by mail each month from 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	7	<p>The response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for July 2009 was 89,4%.</p>
Trend cycle	8	<p>Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.</p>
Publications	9	<p>Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
Unpublished statistics	10	<p>In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics, which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to Drawer CD Compact Disc Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures</p>

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor 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 sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect to 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 and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, 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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