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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Summary of findings: Statistics of civil cases for debt

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2010

Actual estimates	July 2010	% change between July 2009 and July 2010	% change between May to July 2009 and May to July 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	108 367	-20,5	-6,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	70 250	5,1	3,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	651,1	-1,5	-7,0

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The three months ended July 2010 reflected a 6,9% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the three months ended July 2009. A decrease of 20,5% was recorded between July 2009 and July 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 6,9% decrease in the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2010 compared with the three months ended July 2009 were the civil summonses issued for promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -3,2 percentage points), the money lent category (contributing -2,8 percentage points) and the 'other debts' category (contributing -1,8 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 July 2010 increased by 3,3% compared with the three months ended July 2009. An increase of 5,1% was recorded between July 2009 and July 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements for promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing 5,3 percentage points) and 'other debts' (contributing 1,8 percentage points) were the drivers behind the 3,3% increase (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 7,0% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2010 compared with the three months ended July 2009. A decrease of 1,5% was recorded between July 2009 and July 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 7,0% decrease in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended July 2010 compared with the three months ended July 2009 were the money lent category (contributing -6,1 percentage points) and the goods sold category (contributing -2,5 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During July 2010, 70 250 civil judgements for debt amounting to R651,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R651,1 million were:

- money lent (R227,4 million or 34,9%);
- 'other debts' (R105,1 million or 16,1%);
- services (R100,0 million or 15,4%); and
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (R92,8 million or 14,3%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2005 to July 2010.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

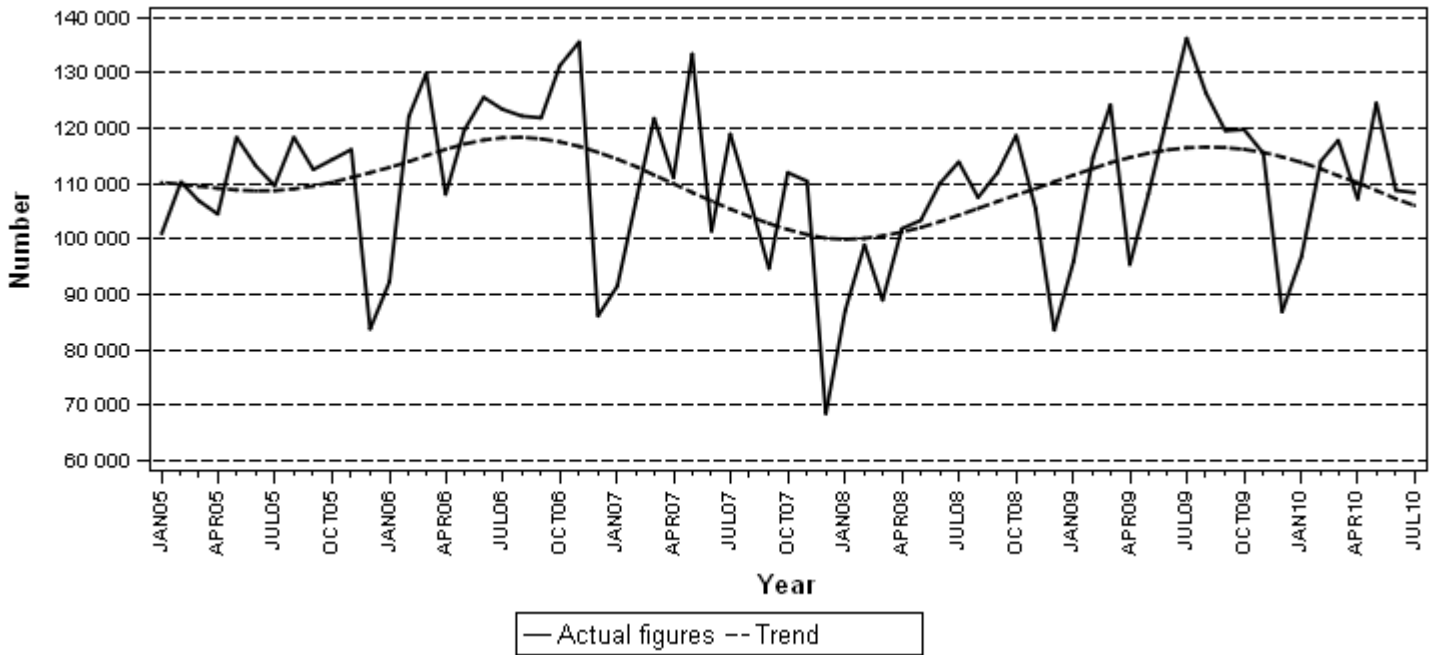
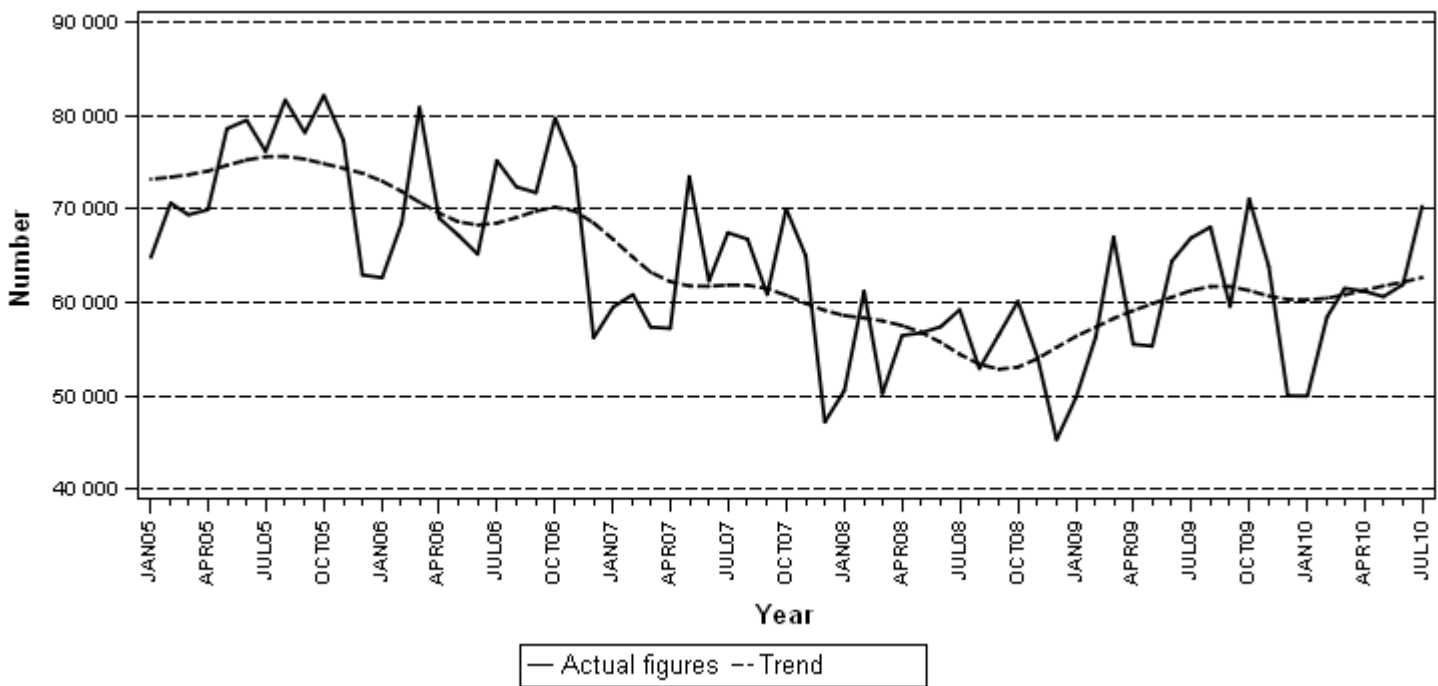


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		July	June	July		July	June	July
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	153 481	124 210	124 280	1 420 316	135 720	109 282	111 611
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		141 757	118 219	114 560		124 232	105 488	101 920
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	12 603	9 981	9 480	112 717	10 322	8 029	7 779
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	3 281	2 448	2 830	30 583	2 786	2 068	2 504
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	14 628	13 363	12 852	128 153	12 419	11 978	11 434
2.2.2 Other	164 618	15 998	14 743	15 038	142 316	13 837	12 436	13 136
2.3 Rent	51 389	4 699	4 379	4 212	43 153	3 817	3 327	3 395
2.4 Money lent	326 092	35 065	24 253	24 682	308 583	33 207	22 982	23 071
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	25 666	16 520	17 711	227 360	24 380	15 237	16 489
2.6 Other debts	256 599	24 319	23 099	21 562	210 475	19 517	18 508	19 077
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	136 259	108 786	108 367	1 203 340	120 285	94 565	96 885
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		123 770	104 139	98 230		108 912	92 316	87 535

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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
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
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	8 353	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	4 495	3 063	12 165	2 698	2 670
	July	12 682	4 276	1 620	806	1 895	7 186	26 907	4 373	3 861	17 167	2 629	3 758
	August	10 659	5 756	1 721	871	1 693	7 967	22 448	3 667	3 181	21 921	2 034	2 971
	September	10 082	3 067	1 394	948	2 161	8 227	25 483	4 587	2 890	11 846	2 781	3 056
	October	12 376	3 973	1 349	542	2 478	7 429	20 819	4 981	3 420	11 304	1 589	3 200
	November	12 435	3 747	1 395	537	2 439	7 834	20 688	4 373	3 710	11 049	1 581	4 000
December	8 605	2 101	777	439	1 096	7 469	17 460	2 703	2 496	6 799	818	3 020	
1/ 2010	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	18 943	5 171	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435

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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			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		July	June	July		July	June	July
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	8 130	6 202	6 429	73 332	7 026	5 451	5 602
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	1 305	1 105	1 311	11 200	1 123	895	1 007
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	8 042	7 577	7 834	80 893	6 672	6 862	7 144
1.2.2 Other	78 652	7 672	6 148	11 235	69 473	6 160	5 442	10 424
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 882	3 832	2 266	22 483	2 112	3 338	1 768
1.4 Money lent	273 794	25 831	20 964	23 395	267 864	24 766	20 574	22 741
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	5 343	9 158	8 242	51 777	4 412	8 587	7 565
1.6 Other debts	95 130	7 660	6 919	9 538	86 580	6 905	6 275	8 361
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	66 865	61 905	70 250	663 602	59 176	57 424	64 612
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		60 716	60 158	63 792		54 313	55 751	59 305

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		July	June	July		July	June	July
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	66 437	57 042	52 279	497 848	43 379	38 993	34 025
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	38 159	31 195	30 454	319 087	30 472	22 921	21 589
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	28 995	32 270	28 972	266 902	22 585	24 097	21 996
1.2.2 Other	715 777	70 923	55 747	70 997	556 872	47 515	41 907	57 082
1.3 Rent	459 493	42 470	43 513	43 102	312 500	27 676	28 859	24 802
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	252 055	207 651	227 375	2 411 391	240 979	194 124	213 693
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	64 631	64 881	92 827	627 760	51 053	57 175	72 347
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	97 178	86 276	105 058	975 583	79 990	64 180	74 713
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	660 848	578 575	651 064	5 967 943	543 649	472 256	520 247
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		577 195	537 643	565 486		484 736	437 935	460 149

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended July 2009 and the three months ended July 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May to July 2009	Actual estimates May to July 2010	% change between May to July 2009 and May to July 2010	Difference between May to July 2009 and May to July 2010
Number of summonses for debt	366 894	341 720	-6,9	-25 174
Number of judgements for debt	186 558	192 749	3,3	6 191
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 880,1	1 749,4	-7,0	-130,7

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 three months ended July 2009 and the three months ended July 2010 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	-0,8	-2,6	-2,2
– Instalment sale transactions	-0,4	0,0	-0,3
Services			
– Professional	0,6	-0,3	0,4
– Other	1,4	1,4	-0,5
Rent	0,1	0,3	0,0
Money lent	-2,8	-2,6	-6,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-3,2	5,3	1,4
Other debts	-1,8	1,8	0,3
Total	-6,9	3,3	-7,0

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 May to July 2009, 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 2009	Actual estimates July 2010	% change between July 2009 and July 2010	Difference between July 2009 and July 2010
Number of summonses for debt	136 259	108 367	-20,5	-27 892
Number of judgements for debt	66 865	70 250	5,1	3 385
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	660,8	651,1	-1,5	-9,7

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>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.</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's 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 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.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	7	<p>The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for July 2010 was 84,8%. Improved response rate for June 2010 was 91,4%</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</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
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 electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to Drawer 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 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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