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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Contents

Results for July 20122

Tables.....4

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.....4

Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates’ offices.....5

Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons6

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R’000)6

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended July 2012 and the three months ended July 20117

Table 6 – 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 July 2012 and the three months ended July 20117

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....7

Explanatory notes.....8

Glossary9

General information.....10

Results for July 2012

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2012

Actual estimates	July 2012	% change between July 2011 and July 2012	% change between May to July 2011 and May to July 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	74 692	-17,6	-10,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	39 353	-12,3	-20,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	440,2	-5,4	-10,9

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 10,0% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded in the three months ended July 2012 compared with the three months ended July 2011. A 17,6% year-on-year decrease was recorded in July 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that made major contributions to the 10,0% decrease were:

- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing -5,2 percentage points);
- services (contributing -4,5 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -2,5 percentage points).

The money lent category partially counteracted the decrease and recorded a positive contribution of 2,5 percentage points – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The three months ended July 2012 reflected a 20,3% decrease in the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt compared with the three months ended July 2011. A year-on-year decrease of 12,3% was recorded in July 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories behind the 20,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -9,2 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -4,1 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,0 percentage points); and
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing -2,3 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 10,9% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt in the three months ended July 2012 compared with the three months ended July 2011. A year-on-year decrease of 5,4% was recorded in July 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributors to the 10,9% decrease were money lent (contributing -8,6 percentage points) and goods sold (contributing -2,3 percentage points) – see Table 6.

During July 2012, 39 353 civil judgements for debt amounting to R440,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R440,2 million were:

- money lent (R129,3 million or 29,4%);
- 'other' debts (R114,5 million or 26,0%);
- services (R73,6 million or 16,7%); and
- goods sold (R61,3 million or 13,9%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

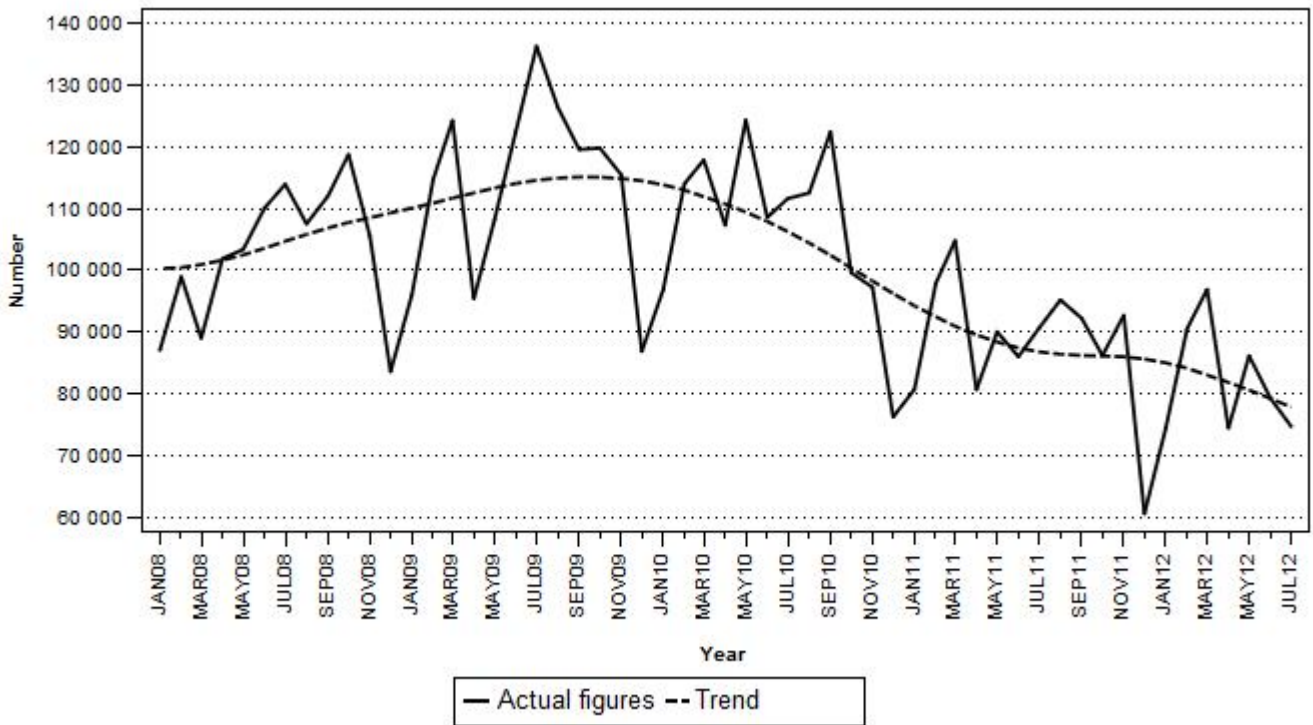
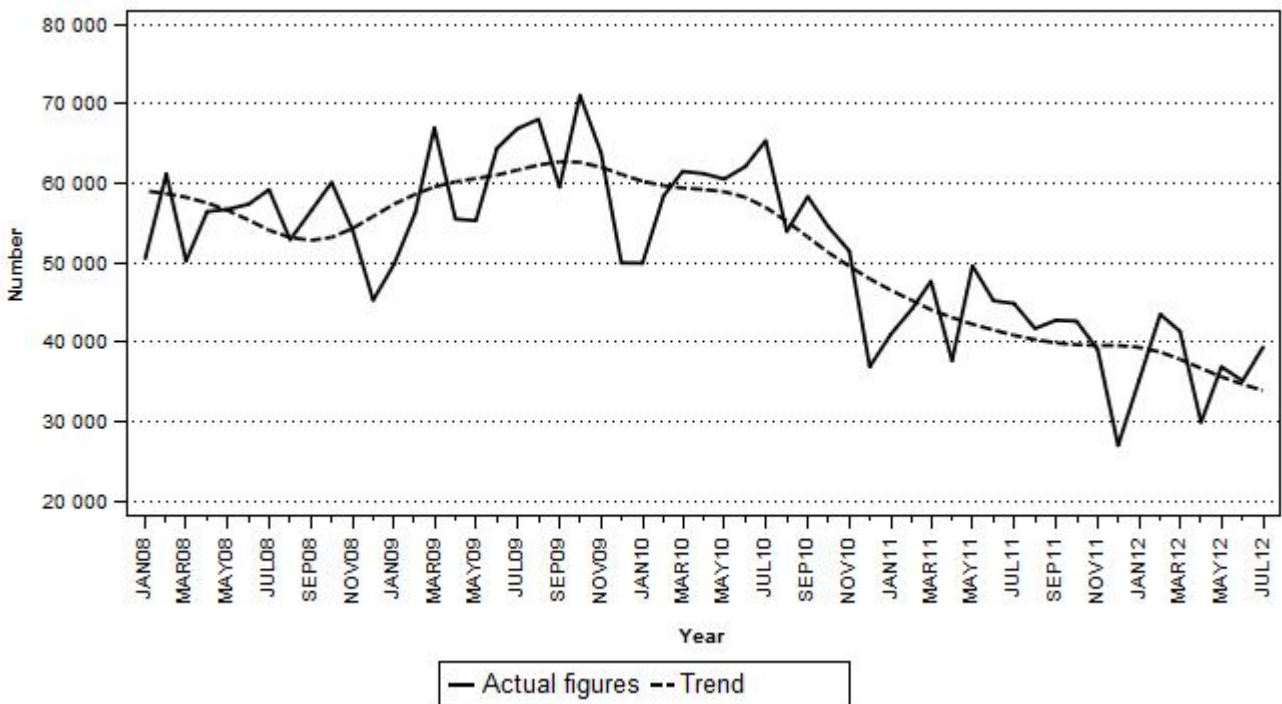


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	July 2011	1/ June 2012	1/ July 2012	2011	July 2011	1/ June 2012	1/ July 2012
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 228 074	115 762	84 719	82 955	1 074 543	105 321	74 717	71 886
	Seasonally adjusted		106 001	82 456	76 245		95 626	73 559	65 452
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	82 722	6 352	6 577	6 345	63 885	4 877	4 798	4 458
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	24 715	2 181	1 548	1 376	20 451	1 897	1 319	1 198
	Services - Professional	117 707	10 289	9 535	9 008	102 139	9 100	8 608	7 977
	Services - Other	197 580	18 504	15 171	11 154	176 093	16 741	13 974	9 762
	Rent	46 160	3 435	3 192	3 195	36 613	2 794	2 497	2 527
	Money lent	232 578	18 352	18 880	18 756	214 837	17 187	17 692	17 607
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	171 991	16 039	11 640	11 862	151 980	15 069	9 920	9 947
	Other debts	183 793	15 459	12 693	12 996	156 535	13 881	11 325	11 711
	Total - Actual figures	1 057 246	90 611	79 236	74 692	922 533	81 546	70 133	65 187
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		86 666	78 389	72 031		75 793	69 630	61 003

1/ Preliminary.

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, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2010	Year Total	118 066	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 366	33 988	138 594	17 342	64 259
2011	Year Total	79 463	60 025	11 782	4 842	16 605	64 927	222 519	47 918	37 724	94 991	14 597	41 547
	January	4 253	2 019	876	293	1 493	6 512	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585
	February	5 379	3 184	1 197	344	1 805	6 343	28 740	4 472	3 473	9 927	1 563	2 946
	March	6 907	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354
	April	5 317	3 823	1 423	290	1 581	6 031	19 903	3 398	2 711	7 212	1 016	4 428
	May	5 999	6 607	1 430	351	1 469	6 728	20 295	3 556	2 599	9 172	1 098	4 520
	June	7 480	5 207	975	374	1 325	5 738	17 516	3 829	2 459	8 132	1 368	3 855
	July	7 879	4 502	1 309	549	2 056	6 124	17 611	3 913	3 476	7 393	1 765	3 492
	August	7 482	6 460	1 137	680	1 268	4 909	15 940	4 581	3 251	6 977	1 448	3 982
	September	7 689	5 978	610	578	1 740	4 341	19 759	4 414	3 125	7 876	1 070	3 364
	October	6 220	6 621	588	244	1 141	3 976	12 013	5 438	3 187	8 655	924	2 893
	November	6 482	7 447	627	461	1 171	4 410	13 803	3 987	4 811	8 658	1 435	2 488
December	8 376	3 629	309	259	730	3 781	9 662	2 290	3 285	4 402	571	1 640	
1/ 2012	January	6 626	4 188	264	321	1 251	3 717	9 405	3 477	4 217	7 230	838	1 590
	February	6 421	6 720	345	710	1 269	4 068	12 143	4 107	6 091	7 905	987	2 259
	March	6 674	11 178	160	423	2 006	3 799	10 661	5 089	6 182	7 524	1 115	2 006
	April	6 630	4 986	152	350	1 591	3 374	9 428	3 524	3 944	7 098	1 083	2 194
	May	6 931	4 543	159	537	2 411	3 355	14 658	3 973	2 492	7 892	1 041	1 891
	June	6 655	3 038	125	590	2 048	3 373	10 056	4 548	2 500	9 580	1 079	1 976
	July	5 643	2 626	268	297	2 685	3 332	10 834	4 596	2 144	11 884	911	1 520

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Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	July 2011	1/ June 2012	1/ July 2012	2011	July 2011	1/ June 2012	1/ July 2012
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	56 599	5 010	4 168	4 642	48 208	4 198	3 482	3 988
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	10 636	985	1 010	822	8 673	816	883	706
	Services - Professional	68 314	6 350	5 645	5 504	63 158	5 895	5 074	5 022
	Services - Other	57 871	4 555	4 514	4 445	50 115	3 866	3 927	3 846
	Rent	25 693	2 057	2 145	1 846	20 599	1 606	1 653	1 411
	Money lent	163 337	14 841	8 750	12 197	158 119	14 406	8 148	11 572
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	44 550	4 280	3 846	3 715	38 545	3 889	3 271	3 048
	Other debts	76 406	6 791	5 062	6 182	67 988	6 060	4 620	5 626
	Total - Actual figures	503 406	44 869	35 140	39 353	455 405	40 736	31 058	35 219
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		39 825	33 161	34 805		36 198	29 355	31 171

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	July 2011	1/ June 2012	1/ July 2012	2011	July 2011	1/ June 2012	1/ July 2012
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	522 678	54 427	46 221	46 023	333 611	35 602	30 775	27 227
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	284 150	24 788	19 381	15 288	230 821	18 994	16 306	11 683
	Services - Professional	308 692	27 711	28 344	29 855	264 557	23 646	23 904	24 951
	Services - Other	592 032	47 075	41 347	43 759	444 349	31 996	30 760	34 837
	Rent	374 423	31 284	32 273	23 143	223 786	17 506	19 413	13 041
	Money lent	1 525 895	147 658	95 454	129 295	1 422 619	138 908	84 355	119 471
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	536 585	40 969	45 039	38 318	436 042	33 777	35 088	27 039
	Other debts	1 016 435	91 554	95 610	114 542	728 727	67 147	62 932	74 234
	Total - Actual figures	5 160 890	465 466	403 669	440 223	4 084 512	367 576	303 533	332 483
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		409 121	372 133	387 336		328 522	284 971	296 524

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 2012 and the three months ended July 2011

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May to July 2011	Actual estimates May to July 2012	% change between May to July 2011 and May to July 2012	Difference between May to July 2011 and May to July 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	266 596	240 041	-10,0	-26 555
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	139 682	111 384	-20,3	-28 298
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 411,8	1 257,4	-10,9	-154,4

Table 6 – 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 July 2012 and the three months ended July 2011 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	0,3	-4,1	-1,0
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,1	0,0	-1,3
Services - Professional	-0,5	-1,1	0,4
Services - Other	-4,0	-0,4	-1,3
Rent	-0,4	-0,2	-0,7
Money lent	2,5	-9,2	-8,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-5,2	-2,3	-0,4
Other debts	-2,5	-3,0	2,0
Total	-10,0	-20,3	-10,9

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 2011, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

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 2011	Actual estimates July 2012	% change between July 2011 and July 2012	Difference between July 2011 and July 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	90 611	74 692	-17,6	-15 919
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	44 869	39 353	-12,3	-5 516
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	465,5	440,2	-5,4	-25,3

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, 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.
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, 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.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for July 2012 was 92,7%. Improved collection rate for June 2012 was 95,4%.
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; and • <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 TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * 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.
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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