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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

July 2016

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Key results for July 2016

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2016

Actual estimates	July 2016	% change between July 2015 and July 2016	% change between May – July 2015 and May – July 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	57 389	-4,2	-1,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	22 909	-11,2	-6,7
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	345,1	-18,6	-13,2

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 1,6% in the three months ended July 2016 compared with the three months ended July 2015.

Negative contributions to the 1,6% decrease were recorded for civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -1,3 percentage points);
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -1,2 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -0,5 of a percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt was 6,7% lower in the three months ended July 2016 compared with the three months ended July 2015.

Negative contributions to the 6,7% decrease were recorded for civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -3,8 percentage points);
- services (contributing -1,4 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,4 percentage points; and
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -1,0 percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 13,2% in the three months ended July 2016 compared with the three months ended July 2015.

The largest negative contributions to the 13,2% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -7,7 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -3,0 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,5 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,0 percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In July 2016, 22 909 civil judgements for debt amounting to R345,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R101,8 million or 29,5%);
- ‘other’ debts (R85,4 million or 24,7%); and
- services (R66,1 million or 19,2%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

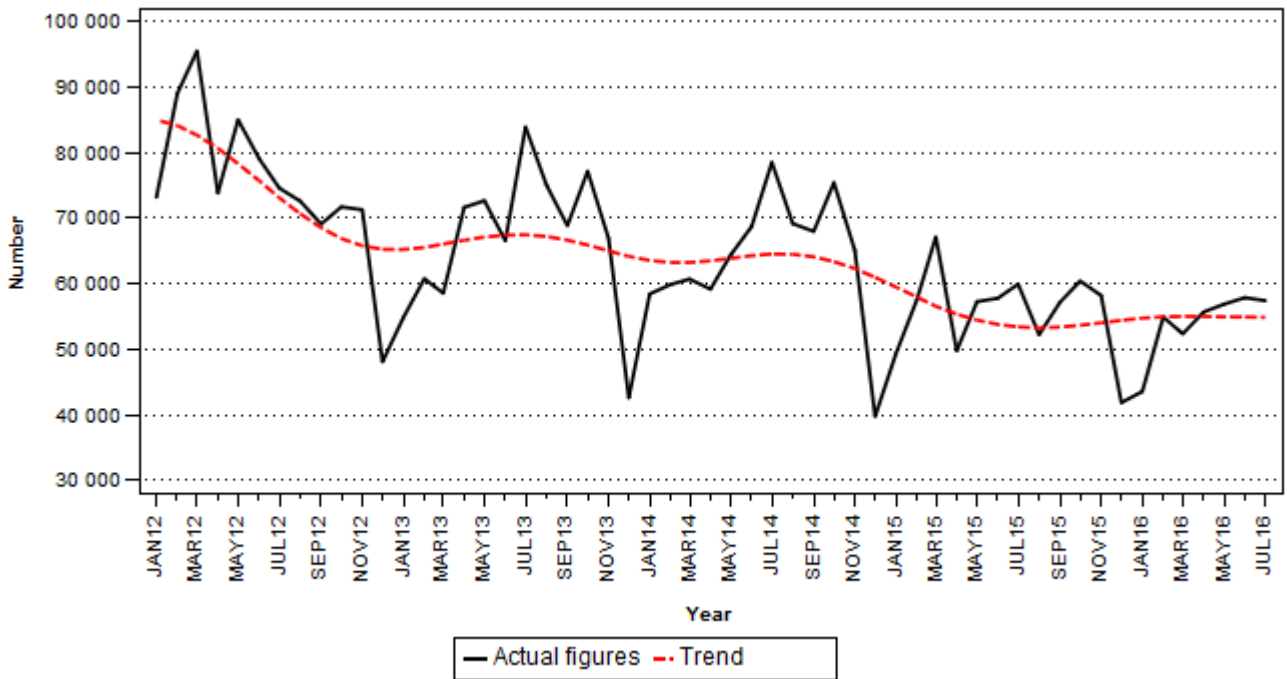
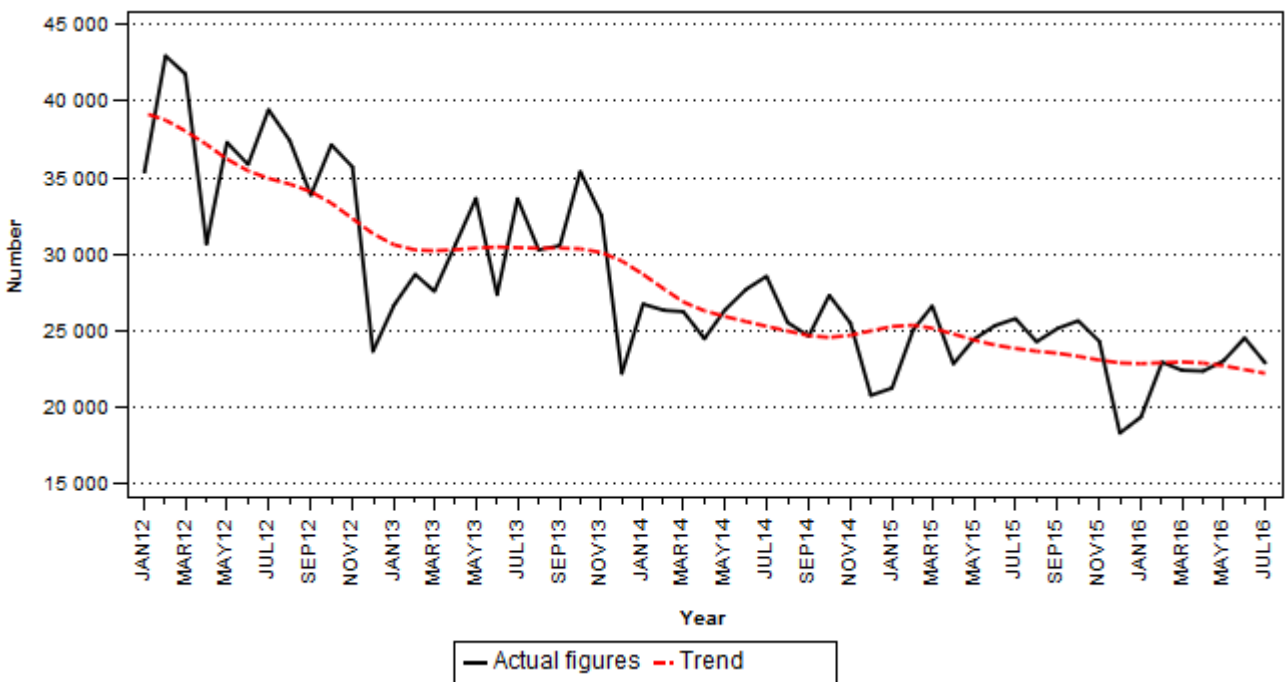


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Jul-15	1/ Jun-16	1/ Jul-16	2015	Jul-15	1/ Jun-16	1/ Jul-16
Cases recorded	Actual figures	733 514	65 768	62 939	61 852	623 802	55 560	54 698	53 898
	Seasonally adjusted		57 024	59 455	53 375		48 216	50 913	46 635
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	43 664	3 910	3 943	3 387	32 616	2 858	3 101	2 575
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	23 011	1 805	2 216	1 907	18 234	1 393	1 715	1 623
	Services - Professional	84 964	8 024	7 083	6 778	73 636	6 681	6 096	5 944
	Services - Other	110 042	9 832	9 377	8 298	90 635	7 979	7 939	7 026
	Rent	29 255	2 591	3 018	2 921	22 558	1 849	2 447	2 277
	Money lent	164 531	15 149	14 008	14 687	153 342	13 729	13 303	13 979
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	89 682	7 161	8 153	8 830	83 701	6 595	7 538	8 285
	Other debts	123 254	11 435	10 054	10 581	111 399	10 062	8 817	9 266
	Total - Actual figures	668 403	59 907	57 852	57 389	586 121	51 146	50 956	50 975
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		52 660	54 797	50 176		44 477	47 831	44 162

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Jul-15	1/ Jun-16	1/ Jul-16	2015	Jul-15	1/ Jun-16	1/ Jul-16
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	18 545	1 504	1 566	1 529	13 804	1 080	1 206	1 167
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 426	635	770	595	5 752	479	682	510
	Services - Professional	50 913	4 638	4 124	3 848	44 324	3 970	3 724	3 443
	Services - Other	42 221	3 923	4 380	3 504	35 776	3 336	3 778	2 816
	Rent	17 851	1 450	1 639	1 556	14 517	1 186	1 372	1 275
	Money lent	69 713	6 472	5 631	5 500	63 786	5 882	5 174	5 042
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 604	2 517	1 969	1 989	23 763	2 147	1 718	1 746
	Other debts	54 764	4 649	4 446	4 388	50 056	4 253	3 972	3 894
	Total - Actual figures	289 037	25 788	24 525	22 909	251 778	22 333	21 626	19 893
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		23 678	22 917	21 122		20 452	19 958	18 281

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Jul-15	1/ Jun-16	1/ Jul-16	2015	Jul-15	1/ Jun-16	1/ Jul-16
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	275 495	22 098	26 973	20 839	157 824	9 664	14 232	10 475
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	104 326	9 378	7 145	5 498	89 527	7 373	6 291	4 620
	Services - Professional	285 325	26 299	21 481	19 022	230 346	21 042	17 842	16 997
	Services - Other	521 021	45 254	49 370	47 121	400 078	36 378	39 314	37 672
	Rent	304 315	32 412	27 175	29 205	213 394	21 170	18 510	20 858
	Money lent	1 172 061	105 749	91 955	101 803	1 052 905	91 154	83 793	94 095
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	506 174	50 415	32 020	36 226	422 857	42 260	26 487	32 510
	Other debts	1 229 098	132 376	88 870	85 353	841 493	73 979	68 055	60 392
	Total - Actual figures	4 397 815	423 981	344 989	345 067	3 408 424	303 020	274 524	277 619
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		391 664	331 915	318 689		281 684	264 261	258 442

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 July 2015 and the three months ended July 2016

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May – July 2015	Actual estimates May – July 2016	% change between May – July 2015 and May – July 2016	Difference between May – July 2015 and May – July 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	174 909	172 087	-1,6	-2 822
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	75 563	70 468	-6,7	-5 095
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 191,0	1 033,6	-13,2	-157,4

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 July 2015 and the three months ended July 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	-0,7	0,0	-0,2
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,2	0,1	-0,3
Services - Professional	-0,2	-1,7	-1,8
Services - Other	-1,1	0,3	0,8
Rent	0,8	0,7	0,5
Money lent	0,2	-3,8	-3,0
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	0,3	-1,4	-1,5
Other debts	-1,2	-1,0	-7,7
Total	-1,6	-6,7	-13,2

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 May to July 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 July 2015	Actual estimates July 2016	% change between July 2015 and July 2016	Difference between July 2015 and July 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	59 907	57 389	-4,2	-2 518
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	25 788	22 909	-11,2	-2 879
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	424,0	345,1	-18,6	-78,9

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	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
	Feb	10 083	4 413	656	4 331	8 300	2 514	19 548	2 732	2 309	54 886
	Mar	9 812	4 316	773	4 062	8 978	2 948	16 805	2 785	1 849	52 328
	Apr	9 217	4 721	1 041	4 192	8 481	3 458	19 974	2 474	2 109	55 667
	May	10 618	4 456	1 096	4 731	8 957	3 228	18 601	2 911	2 248	56 846
	Jun	11 126	4 543	907	4 100	9 376	3 005	20 179	2 466	2 150	57 852
	Jul	10 303	4 903	824	3 822	8 730	3 498	20 196	2 783	2 330	57 389

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	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
	Feb	4 763	2 760	442	2 247	3 341	932	5 594	1 490	1 378	22 947
	Mar	4 108	2 604	319	2 653	3 720	1 380	4 994	1 284	1 356	22 418
	Apr	3 521	2 501	422	2 642	3 913	1 626	4 901	1 482	1 357	22 365
	May	5 054	2 516	396	2 474	3 955	1 275	4 774	1 376	1 214	23 034
	Jun	4 089	3 796	458	3 288	3 867	1 557	4 842	1 163	1 465	24 525
	Jul	4 380	2 717	441	2 940	3 702	1 673	4 525	1 090	1 441	22 909

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	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
	Feb	80 249	48 557	9 865	26 294	35 541	13 735	96 530	37 966	12 237	360 974
	Mar	73 597	51 422	3 985	35 333	45 669	12 418	96 545	29 566	13 435	361 970
	Apr	60 953	37 659	4 941	32 688	42 409	14 659	84 791	30 406	8 823	317 329
	May	69 161	48 619	3 479	31 696	49 649	13 814	88 538	30 278	8 287	343 521
	Jun	58 989	50 694	3 018	33 334	49 813	12 863	81 022	42 028	13 228	344 989
	Jul	73 486	44 264	3 499	30 868	49 064	14 912	90 018	28 057	10 899	345 067

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 July 2016 was 85,2%. The collection rate for June 2016 was 86,2%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Unpublished statistics	9	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
Symbols and abbreviations	10	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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