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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of June 2007

Actual estimates	June 2007	% change between June 2006 and June 2007	% change between April 2006 to June 2006 and April 2007 to June 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	105 799	-15,7	-0,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	59 463	-8,7	-5,6
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	466,0	-15,0	0,4

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (JUNE 2007)

Key findings as at the end of June 2007

The decline in all three categories (number of summonses, number of judgements and the value of those judgements) in June 2007 relative to May 2007 and June 2006 was due in part to the civil service strike that affected the administration of justice in June 2007.

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the second quarter of 2007 decreased by 0,9% compared with the second quarter of 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 0,9% in civil summonses issued for debt for the second quarter of 2007 compared with the second quarter of 2006 were civil summonses issued in respect of 'other' debts (-3,4 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-2,6 percentage points) and rent (-0,8 of a percentage point). There was, however, an increase of 3,4 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for money lent (see Table 6 column 2, page 9).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the second quarter of 2007 decreased by 5,6% compared with the second quarter of 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 5,6% in civil judgements recorded for debt for the second quarter of 2007 compared with the second quarter of 2006 were civil judgements in respect of 'other' debts (-5,0 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-3,8 percentage points) and 'other services' (-2,8 percentage points). There was, however, an increase of 7,5 percentage points with regard to civil judgements issued for money lent (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the second quarter of 2007 increased by 0,4% compared with the second quarter of 2006.

The major contributor to the increase of 0,4% in the value of civil judgements for the second quarter of 2007 compared with the second quarter of 2006 was civil judgements recorded in respect of money lent (6,8 percentage points). There were, however, decreases of 5,2 percentage points with regard to civil judgements issued for 'other' debts, 1,4 percentage points with regard to 'other services' and 1,1 percentage points with regard to instalment sale transactions (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for June 2007 decreased by 15,0% compared with June 2006.

During June 2007, 59 463 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R466,0 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R466,0 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R166,2 million or 35,7%) and 'other' debts (R85,6 million or 18,4%) (see Table 4, page 8).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to June 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend decreased from May 2003 to February 2005 but levelled off until October 2005. From November 2005 the trend increased once more but levelled off from November 2006 and is starting to reflect a downward trend.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

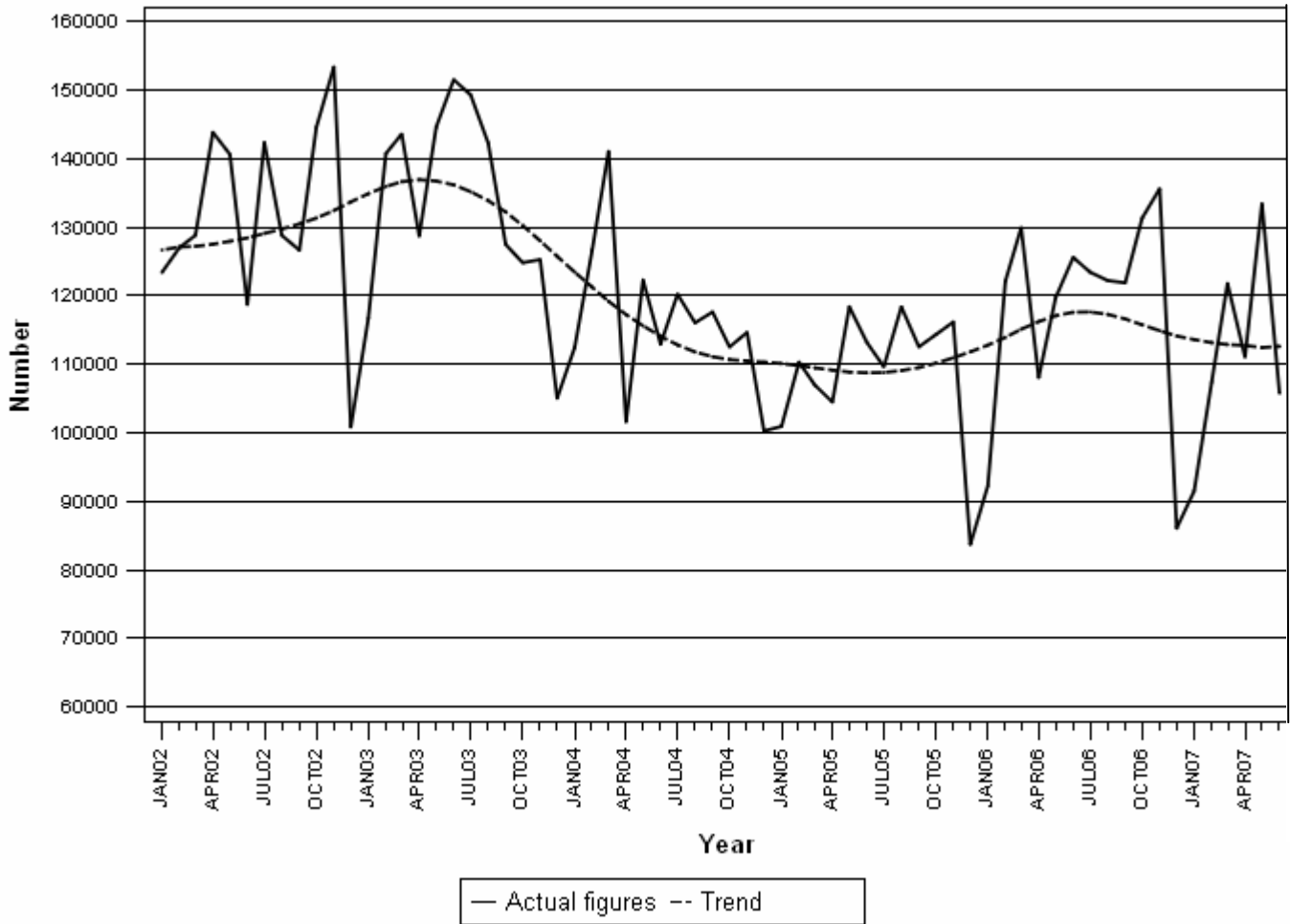
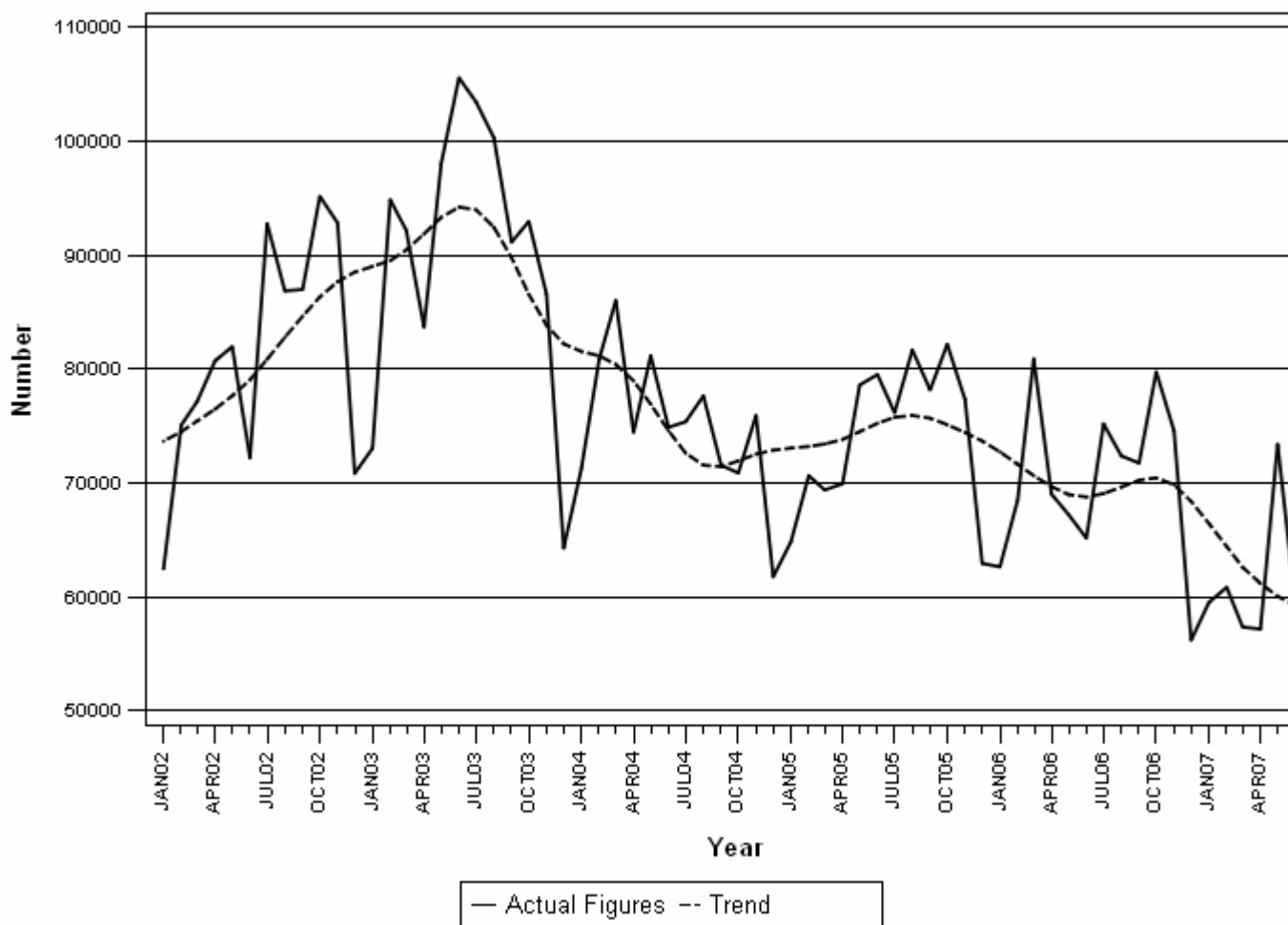


Figure 2 shows that the trend in civil judgements for debt generally declined from mid-2003, and this long-term decrease continued in 2007.

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		June	* May	1/ June		June	* May	1/ June
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	141 980	151 092	118 529	1 442 388	126 596	134 560	106 205
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		139 452	143 767	116 766		128 609	124 419	108 595
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	14 895	12 419	11 639	137 314	12 684	10 402	9 838
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	3 132	2 503	2 923	28 794	2 575	2 010	2 558
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	11 750	13 137	11 543	117 768	9 823	10 486	9 808
2.2.2 Other	200 992	18 629	17 038	17 512	178 084	16 693	14 524	15 171
2.3 Rent	50 894	5 204	3 706	3 453	39 914	3 891	3 322	3 123
2.4 Money lent	407 106	36 198	44 250	28 054	387 509	33 725	41 505	25 428
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	11 059	19 190	11 976	133 964	9 359	17 793	11 389
2.6 Other debts	277 740	24 710	21 166	18 699	242 332	21 966	17 946	16 520
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	125 577	133 409	105 799	1 265 679	110 716	117 988	93 835
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		121 463	125 140	102 714		111 860	108 794	95 329

1/ Preliminary.

* 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
2005	Year Total	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
	January	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
	February	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
	March	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
	April	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
	May	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
	June	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
	July	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
	August	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
	September	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
	October	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
	November	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	4 347	19 625	4 144	4 145
December	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	2 666	8 744	2 707	3 981	
2007	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922
	March	12 802	7 935	3 553	1 123	1 613	8 978	15 648	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010
	April	9 349	5 013	3 167	1 123	1 748	8 518	15 648	5 091	4 826	12 558	4 822	3 652
	* May	10 792	6 650	5 105	1 332	2 346	5 245	25 094	5 579	2 760	16 251	2 714	4 242
	1/ June	10 167	4 387	5 688	503	638	5 245	14 181	3 077	3 142	10 948	4 326	4 105

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		June	* May	1/ June		June	* May	1/ June
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	9 826	8 123	6 630	109 368	8 806	7 280	5 923
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	857	765	602	10 582	702	645	493
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	6 634	6 240	5 109	69 974	5 796	5 661	4 738
1.2.2 Other	96 191	8 031	6 580	6 051	89 567	7 467	6 206	5 667
1.3 Rent	25 941	2 005	2 063	1 728	20 595	1 684	1 717	1 392
1.4 Money lent	297 379	20 047	31 120	24 675	289 631	18 985	30 819	24 335
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	6 108	9 019	5 682	68 753	5 791	8 644	5 404
1.6 Other debts	136 605	11 631	9 475	8 986	122 291	10 676	8 635	8 289
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	65 139	73 385	59 463	780 761	59 907	69 607	56 241
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		64 485	69 738	59 114		59 393	66 751	55 906

1/ Preliminary.

* 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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		June	* May	1/ June		June	* May	1/ June
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	57 967	90 729	53 719	523 117	46 348	79 241	36 109
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	16 579	17 143	14 606	197 360	12 783	14 033	11 227
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	19 058	20 882	20 203	223 269	14 951	15 480	17 452
1.2.2 Other	579 439	51 679	52 394	44 092	464 798	39 980	43 578	32 636
1.3 Rent	222 568	16 705	24 667	19 757	153 995	11 489	18 704	15 111
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	166 341	289 449	166 183	1 960 167	151 300	281 185	158 259
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	56 548	62 750	61 822	630 837	43 463	55 920	55 234
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	163 412	103 647	85 575	1 271 309	109 171	84 773	71 132
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	548 289	661 661	465 957	5 424 852	429 485	592 914	397 160
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		572 074	671 540	489 432		456 807	587 727	423 817

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

Table 5 – 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 April 2006 to June 2006	Actual estimates April 2007 to June 2007	% change between April 2006 to June 2006 and April 2007 to June 2007	Difference between April 2006 to June 2006 and April 2007 to June 2007
Number of summonses for debt	353 349	350 269	-0,9	-3 080
Number of judgements for debt	201 353	190 008	-5,6	-11 345
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 606,1	1 612,2	0,4	6,1

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

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

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 April 2006 to June 2006, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – 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 June 2006	Actual estimates June 2007	% change between June 2006 and June 2007	Difference between June 2006 and June 2007
Number of summonses for debt	125 577	105 799	-15,7	-19 778
Number of judgements for debt	65 139	59 463	-8,7	-5 676
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	548,3	466,0	-15,0	-82,3

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, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Scope of the survey	3	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	4	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' 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 151 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The response rate for the civil cases for debt for June 2007 was 86,1%.
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 issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
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, on diskette or CD. 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 * Revised figures

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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