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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 June 2010

Actual estimates	June 2010	% change between June 2009 and June 2010	% change between April to June 2009 and April to June 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	109 004	-11,0	4,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	62 013	-3,7	4,9
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	578,7	-12,3	-9,2

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The second quarter of 2010 reflected a 4,6% increase in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the second quarter of 2009. A decrease of 11,0% was recorded between June 2009 and June 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 4,6% increase in the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the second quarter of 2010 compared with the second quarter of 2009 were civil summonses issued for services (contributing 4,2 percentage points) and money lent (contributing 2,2 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the second quarter of 2010 increased by 4,9% compared with the second quarter of 2009. A decrease of 3,7% was recorded between June 2009 and June 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements for promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing 6,4 percentage points), money lent (contributing 1,2 percentage points) and rent (contributing 0,7 of a percentage point) were the drivers behind the 4,9% increase (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 9,2% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the second quarter of 2010 compared with the second quarter of 2009. A decrease of 12,3% was recorded between June 2009 and June 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 9,2% decrease in the value of civil judgements for the second quarter of 2010 compared with the second quarter of 2009 were the money lent category (contributing -6,9 percentage points), the goods sold category (contributing -1,5 percentage points), the 'other debts' category (contributing -0,9 of a percentage point) and the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -0,6 of a percentage point) (see Table 6).

During June 2010, 62 013 civil judgements for debt amounting to R578,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R578,7 million were:

- money lent (R207,6 million or 35,9%);
- goods sold (R88,3 million or 15,3%);
- services (R88,0 million or 15,2%); and
- 'other debts' (R86,3 million or 14,9%) (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 June 2010.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

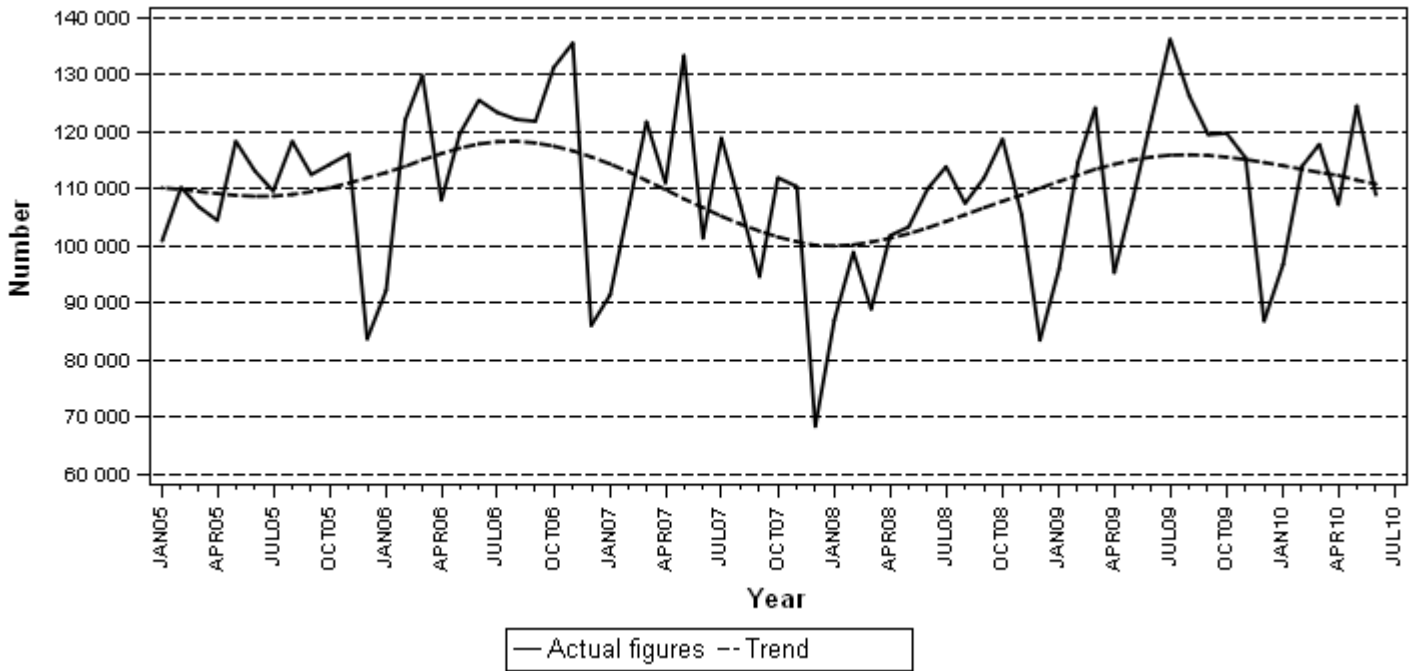
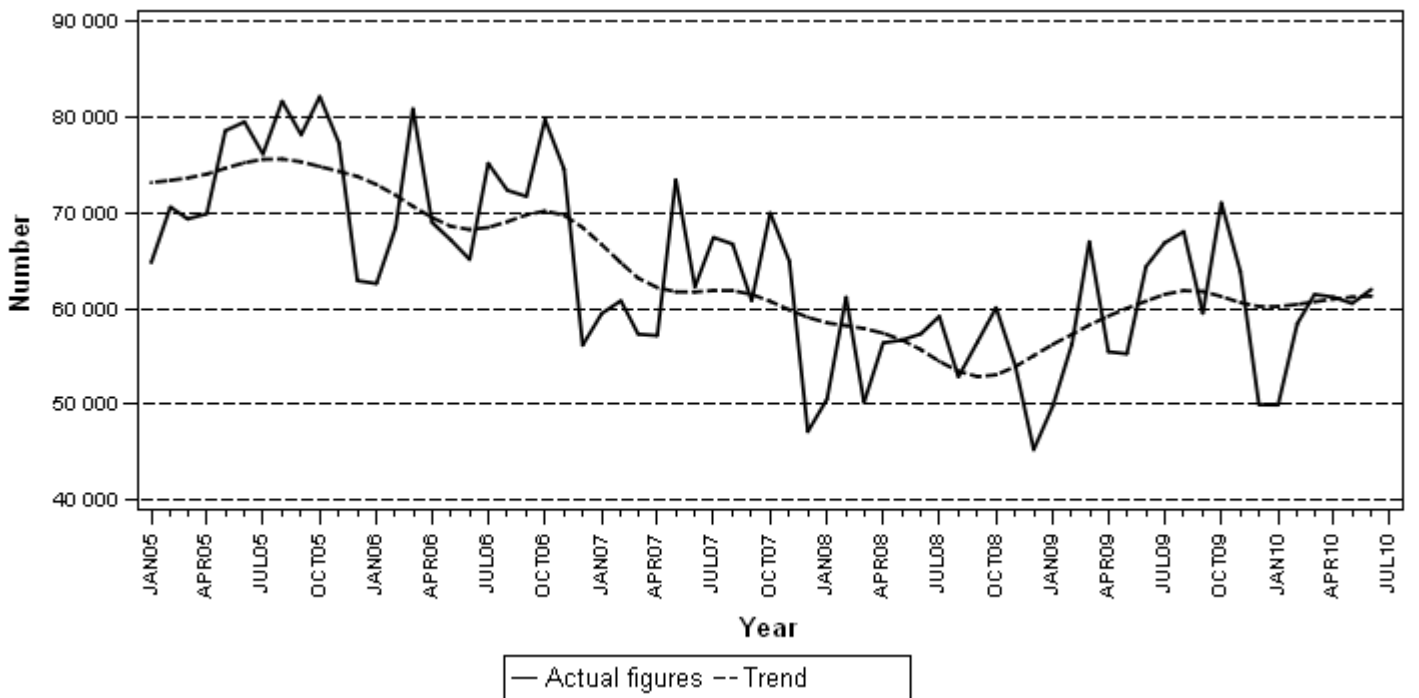


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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	
		June	May	June		June	May	June
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	144 833	143 348	124 426	1 420 316	125 691	126 178	109 453
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		138 170	137 671	118 859		121 912	121 054	106 371
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	11 822	12 348	9 985	112 717	9 649	9 293	8 023
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	3 134	2 603	2 450	30 583	2 611	2 174	2 064
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	12 144	15 326	13 428	128 153	10 212	12 999	12 039
2.2.2 Other	164 618	13 560	16 640	14 819	142 316	11 425	13 928	12 497
2.3 Rent	51 389	4 298	5 079	4 398	43 153	3 702	4 053	3 349
2.4 Money lent	326 092	27 268	27 591	24 303	308 583	25 642	26 084	23 023
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	24 194	23 952	16 520	227 360	22 644	22 536	15 237
2.6 Other debts	256 599	26 055	21 046	23 101	210 475	20 403	16 650	18 504
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	122 475	124 585	109 004	1 203 340	106 288	107 717	94 736
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		118 045	120 517	105 254		104 371	105 012	93 174

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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

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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	
		June	May	June		June	May	June
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	8 384	5 448	6 202	73 332	7 121	4 552	5 447
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	1 111	1 203	1 105	11 200	930	983	895
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	8 693	8 124	7 608	80 893	7 544	7 497	6 891
1.2.2 Other	78 652	7 466	5 925	6 150	69 473	6 598	5 152	5 446
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 674	2 321	3 869	22 483	2 164	1 750	3 375
1.4 Money lent	273 794	23 479	22 088	20 966	267 864	22 845	21 677	20 576
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	3 768	5 221	9 158	51 777	3 094	4 317	8 587
1.6 Other debts	95 130	8 825	10 218	6 955	86 580	8 107	9 352	6 305
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	64 400	60 548	62 013	663 602	58 403	55 280	57 522
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		62 701	61 274	60 087		56 708	55 732	55 586

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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	
		June	May	June		June	May	June
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	75 585	55 199	57 093	497 848	50 983	35 333	39 072
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	36 877	41 497	31 206	319 087	28 339	27 700	22 932
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	27 297	28 257	32 444	266 902	22 301	21 350	24 169
1.2.2 Other	715 777	67 059	57 544	55 585	556 872	53 393	45 462	41 885
1.3 Rent	459 493	51 089	49 528	43 570	312 500	37 804	33 938	28 916
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	231 708	133 461	207 566	2 411 391	218 657	123 481	194 039
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	59 106	42 658	64 881	627 760	40 996	32 802	57 175
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	111 055	111 619	86 315	975 583	89 869	95 011	64 197
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	659 776	519 763	578 660	5 967 943	542 342	415 077	472 385
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		610 133	540 030	531 551		499 276	426 997	430 431

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the second quarter of 2009 and the second quarter of 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates April to June 2009	Actual estimates April to June 2010	% change between April to June 2009 and April to June 2010	Difference between April to June 2009 and April to June 2010
Number of summonses for debt	326 002	340 857	4,6	14 855
Number of judgements for debt	175 195	183 766	4,9	8 571
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 778,1	1 614,9	-9,2	-163,2

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

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 April to June 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 June 2009	Actual estimates June 2010	% change between June 2009 and June 2010	Difference between June 2009 and June 2010
Number of summonses for debt	122 475	109 004	-11,0	-13 471
Number of judgements for debt	64 400	62 013	-3,7	-2 387
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	659,8	578,7	-12,3	-81,1

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 June 2010 was 90,1%. Improved response rate for May 2010 was 90,7%</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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