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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2007

Actual estimates	March 2007	% change between March 2006 and March 2007	% change between January 2006 to March 2006 and January 2007 to March 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	121 986	-6,1%	-6,8%
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	60 826	-24,8%	-14,6%
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	519,8	-12,8%	-10,9%

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

Key findings as at the end of March 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first quarter of 2007 decreased by 6,8% compared with the first quarter of 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 6,8% in civil summonses issued for debt for the first quarter of 2007 compared with the first quarter of 2006 were civil summonses issued in respect of 'other' debts (-5,0 percentage points), goods sold on open account (-3,8 percentage points) and 'other services' (-1,9 percentage points). There was, however, an increase of 4,3 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 first quarter of 2007 decreased by 14,6% compared with the first quarter of 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 14,6% in civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2007 compared with the first quarter of 2006 were civil judgements in respect of 'other' debts (-3,8 percentage points), goods sold on open account (-2,5 percentage points), money lent (-2,1 percentage points) and 'other services' (-2,0 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2007 decreased by 10,9% compared with the first quarter of 2006.

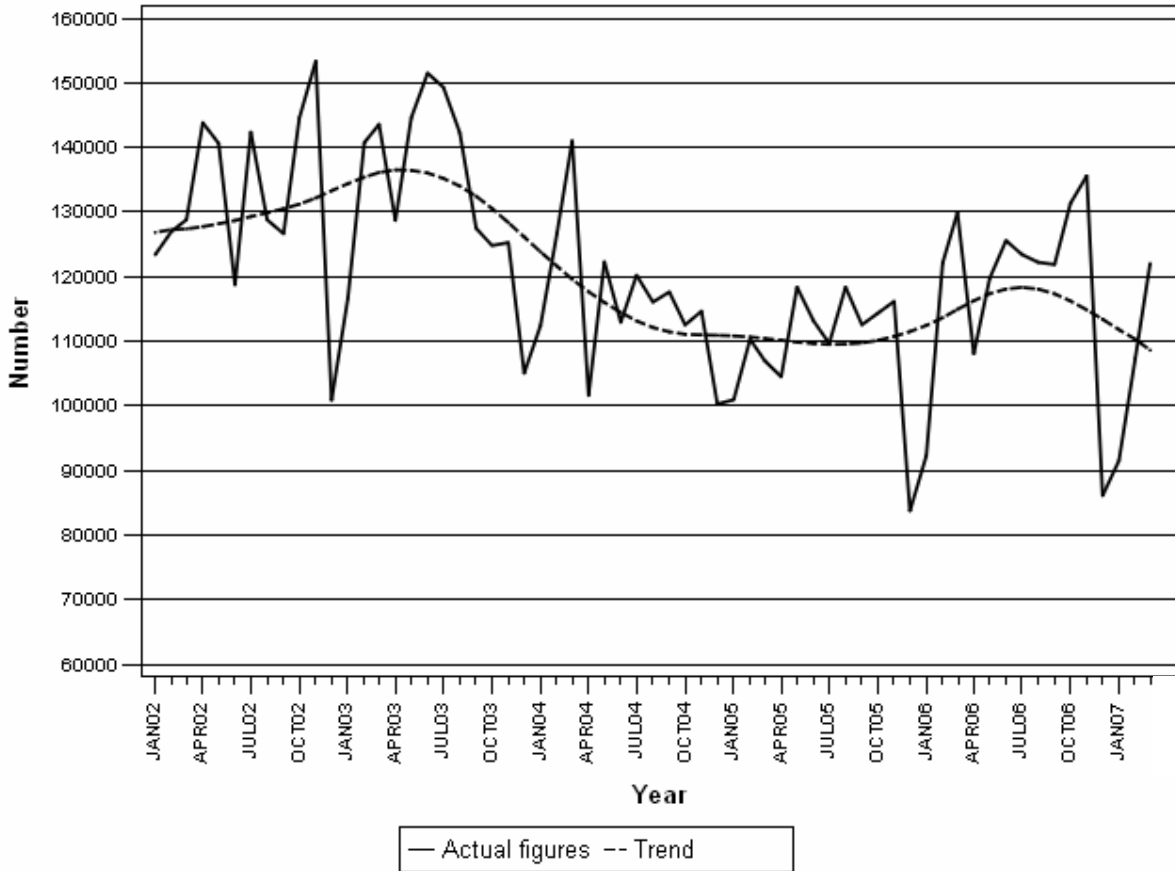
The major contributors to the decrease of 10,9% in the value of civil judgements for the first quarter of 2007 compared with the first quarter of 2006 were civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (-9,5 percentage points), money lent (-2,9 percentage points) and instalment sale transactions (-1,4 percentage points). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in judgements recorded for promissory notes and other (+1,5 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for March 2007 decreased by 12,8% compared with March 2006.

During March 2007, 60 826 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R519,8 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R519,8 million were civil judgements relating to 'other' debts (R145,1 million or 27,9%) and money lent (R144,7 million or 27,8%) (see Table 4, page 8).

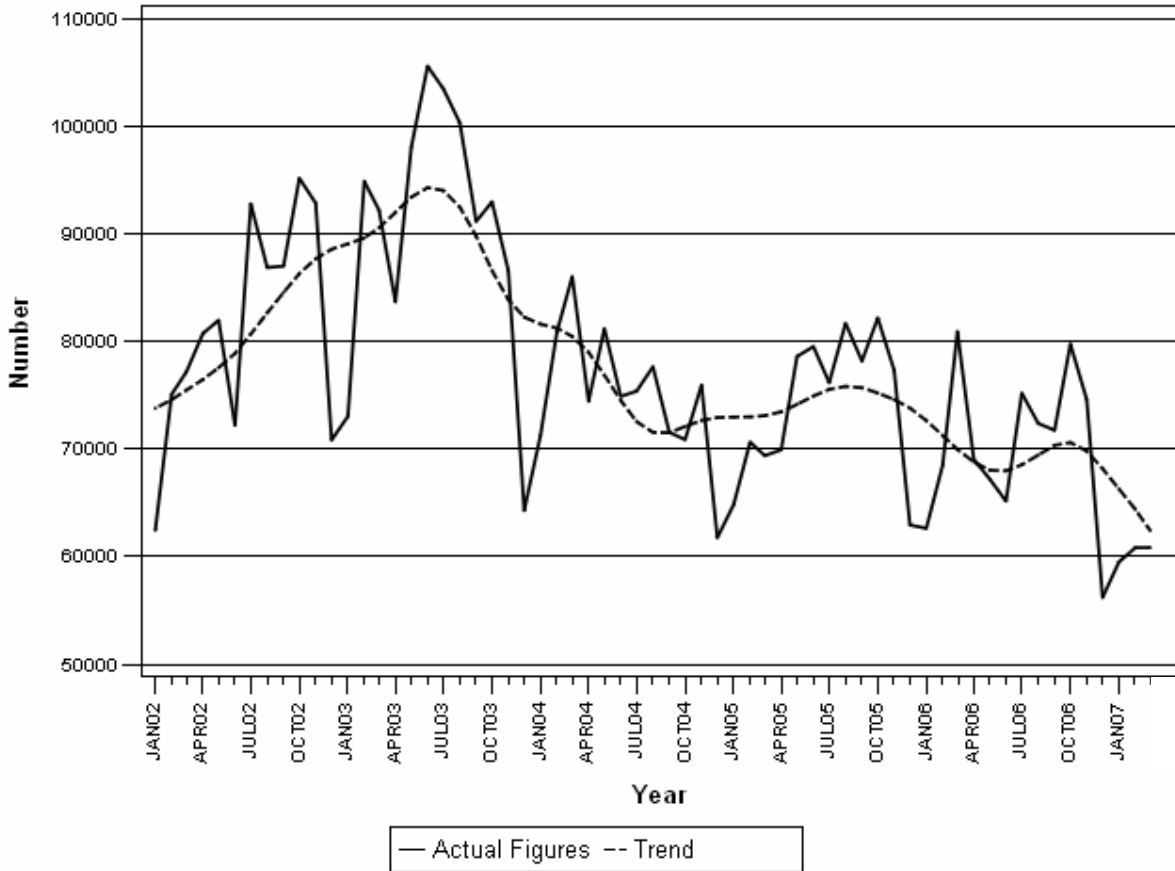
Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to March 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend decreased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

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 from January 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until May 2003. The trend decreased from June 2003 to August 2004 but from September 2004 it increased slightly until August 2005. Thereafter it decreased until June 2006. From October 2006 the trend declined until present.

Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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	
		March	February	1/ March		March	February	1/ March
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	147 107	119 501	138 424	1 442 388	132 264	108 574	123 838
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		131 746	118 799	123 558		118 764	107 653	110 897
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	17 341	9 376	11 479	137 314	15 116	7 893	9 873
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	2 966	2 202	2 690	28 794	2 502	1 959	2 415
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	12 850	10 278	12 008	117 768	11 063	8 810	10 397
2.2.2 Other	200 992	19 564	15 685	19 125	178 084	17 568	14 023	17 148
2.3 Rent	50 894	4 528	3 563	3 610	39 914	3 428	2 935	2 872
2.4 Money lent	407 106	32 060	32 358	35 441	387 509	30 708	30 697	33 473
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	14 639	15 926	15 365	133 964	13 334	15 049	14 430
2.6 Other debts	277 740	25 965	17 979	22 268	242 332	22 207	15 450	19 321
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	129 913	107 367	121 986	1 265 679	115 926	96 816	109 929
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		114 465	105 003	107 195		102 180	94 430	96 636

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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	18 368	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010

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	
		March	February	1/ March		March	February	1/ March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	10 568	6 971	7 720	109 372	9 470	6 351	6 836
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	1 872	750	835	10 585	1 731	683	747
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	7 175	5 772	6 065	69 974	6 716	5 217	5 484
1.2.2 Other	96 191	9 791	6 806	6 257	89 572	9 239	6 385	5 855
1.3 Rent	25 941	3 317	1 955	1 820	20 595	2 313	1 528	1 354
1.4 Money lent	297 379	27 870	24 406	21 168	289 631	27 224	24 144	20 199
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	7 906	6 459	6 619	68 759	7 433	6 148	6 303
1.6 Other debts	136 605	12 390	7 703	10 342	122 293	11 123	6 788	9 132
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	80 889	60 822	60 826	780 781	75 249	57 244	55 910
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		81 145	63 145	61 282		75 560	59 124	56 437

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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	
		March	February	1/ March		March	February	1/ March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	54 455	48 748	50 828	523 135	44 802	38 450	39 335
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	36 355	13 751	21 221	197 477	28 759	11 882	20 018
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	14 558	19 857	18 690	223 269	12 107	15 718	14 316
1.2.2 Other	579 439	54 947	47 350	48 974	464 809	42 237	39 687	35 074
1.3 Rent	222 568	21 333	21 969	16 774	153 995	16 404	14 754	12 237
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	177 654	159 140	144 667	1 960 167	169 686	154 002	136 119
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	58 369	59 311	73 516	630 860	50 945	54 900	67 924
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	178 198	110 036	145 105	1 271 327	112 935	82 449	94 811
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	595 869	480 162	519 775	5 425 039	477 875	411 842	419 834
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		572 782	478 008	505 740		457 867	408 026	407 848

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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 January 2006 to March 2006	Actual estimates January 2007 to March 2007	% change between January 2006 to March 2006 and January 2007 to March 2007	Difference between January 2006 to March 2006 and January 2007 to March 2007
Number of summonses for debt	344 293	320 851	-6,8%	-23 442
Number of judgements for debt	212 007	181 146	-14,6%	-30 861
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 632,0	1 454,2	-10,9%	-177,8

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	-3,8	-2,5	0,3
--Instalment sale transactions	-0,7	-1,0	-1,4
Professional Services	-1,4	-1,5	0,7
Other Services	-1,9	-2,0	0,0
Rent	-0,7	-1,0	0,2
Money lent	4,3	-2,1	-2,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	2,3	-0,8	1,5
Other debts	-5,0	-3,8	-9,5
Total	-6,8	-14,6	-10,9

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 January 2006 to March 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 March 2006	Actual estimates March 2007	% change between March 2006 and March 2007	Difference between March 2006 and March 2007
Number of summonses for debt	129 913	121 986	-6,1%	-7 927
Number of judgements for debt	80 889	60 826	-24,8%	-20 063
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	595,9	519,8	-12,8%	-761

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 March 2007 was 90,7%.
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 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 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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