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Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

March 2009

**Embargoed until:
21 May 2009
09:00**

Enquiries

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Tel: (012) 310 8600/4892/8390

Forthcoming issue

April 2009

Expected release date

18 June 2009

Contents	Page
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MARCH 2009)	2
Detailed results: 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 persons	6
Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R’000)	7
Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.....	8
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 current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year 1/.....	8
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.....	8
Explanatory notes	9
Glossary	10
General information	11

Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2009

Actual estimates	March 2009	% change between March 2008 and March 2009	% change between January to March 2008 and January to March 2009
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	125 306	40,9	22,1
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	67 174	33,8	7,0
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	627,8	34,3	13,7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MARCH 2009)

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first quarter of 2009 increased by 22,1% compared with the first quarter of 2008. There was also an increase of 40,9% between March 2008 and March 2009 (see Table A and Table 5).

The major contributors to the increase in civil summonses issued for debt for the first quarter of 2009 compared with the first quarter of 2008 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (5,3 percentage points), promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (4,3 percentage points) and goods sold on an open account (4,1 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 2, page 8).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2009 was 7,0% higher compared with the first quarter of 2008. There was also an increase of 33,8% between March 2008 and March 2009 (see Table A and Table 5).

Civil judgements in respect of money lent (6,1 percentage points) and professional services (2,8 percentage points) were the main drivers behind the 7,0% increase in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt (see Table 6 column 3, page 8).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2009 increased by 13,7% compared with the first quarter of 2008. There was also an increase of 34,3% between March 2008 and March 2009 (see Table A and Table 5).

The major contributors to the 13,7% increase in the value of civil judgements for the first quarter of 2009 compared with the first quarter of 2008 were money lent (10,6 percentage points), professional services (2,2 percentage points), rent (1,9 percentage points) and other services (1,8 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4, page 8).

During March 2009, 67 174 civil judgements for debt amounting to R627,8 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R627,8 million were:

- Civil judgements relating to money lent (R212,7 million or 33,9%)
- 'Other debts' (R115,0 million or 18,3%)
- Promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (R67,2 million or 10,7%) and
- Goods sold on an open account (R64,2 million or 10,2%) (see Tables 3 and 4, pages 6 and 7).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2004 to March 2009.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

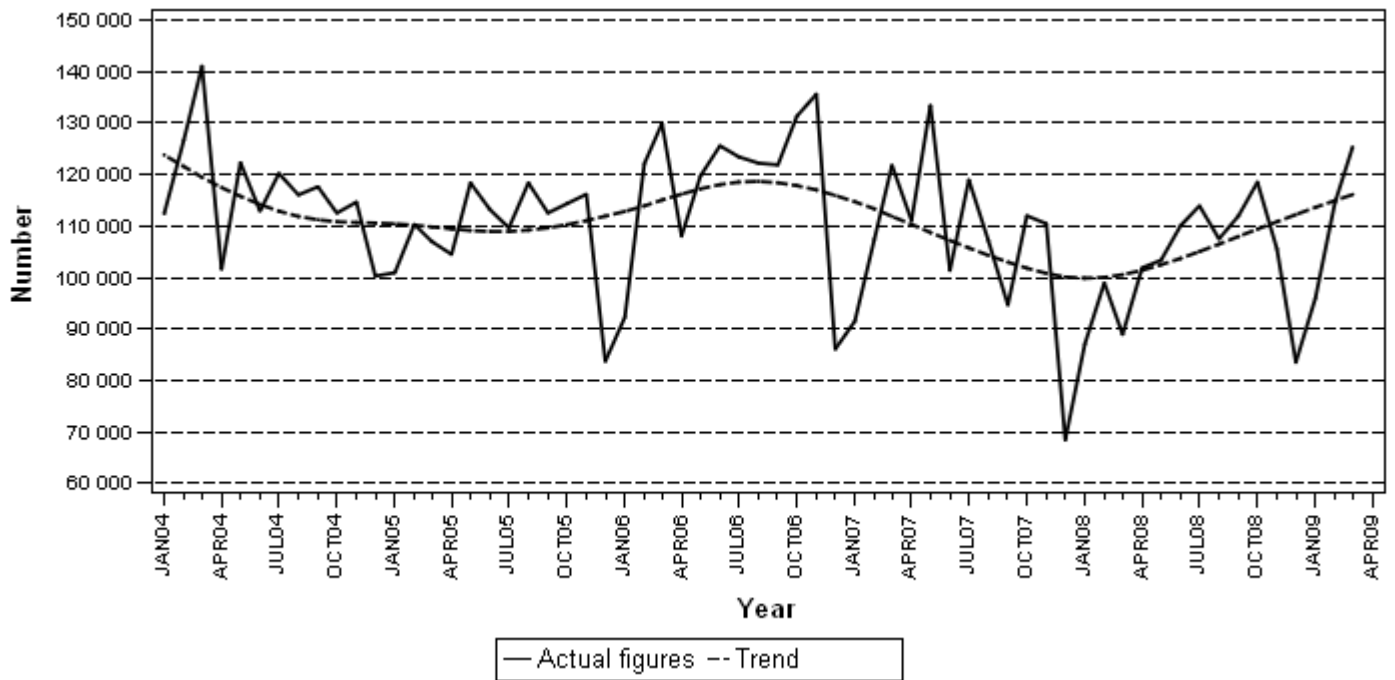
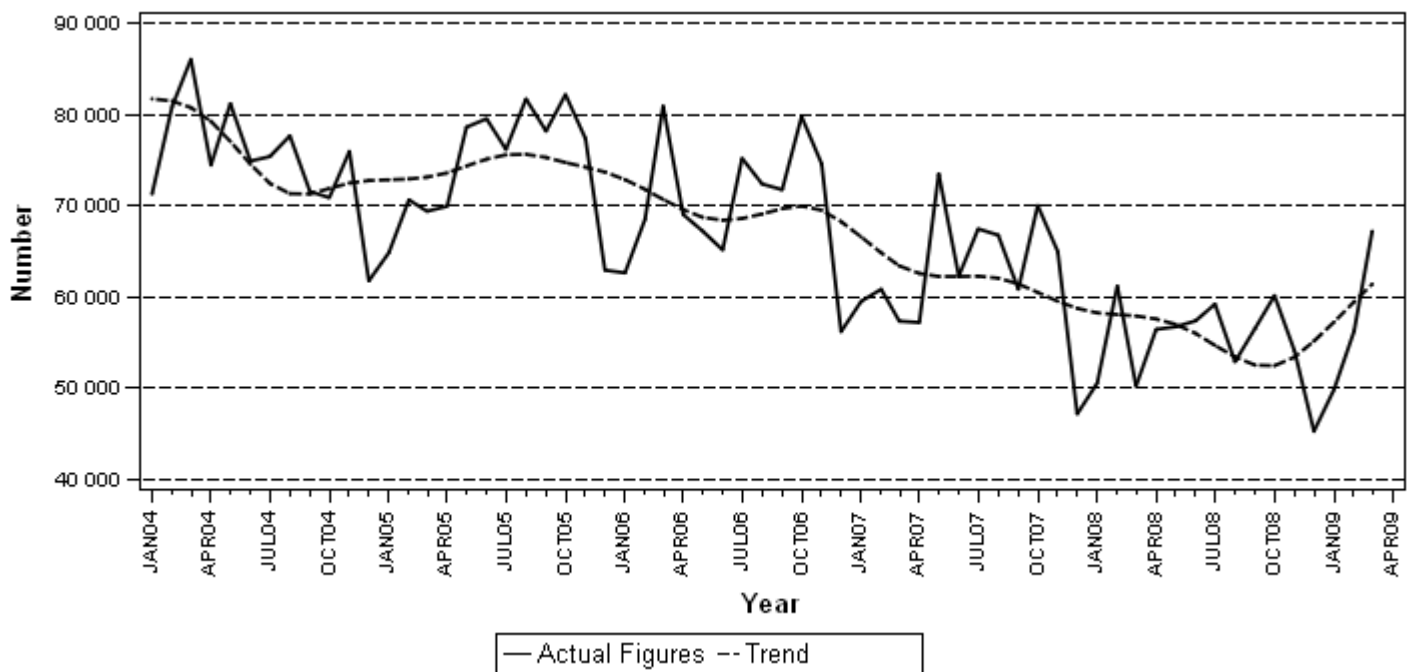


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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			
	* 2008	2008	1/ 2009		* 2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 442 447	106 179	134 588	145 445	1 265 052	95 378	121 847	131 159
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		97 746	134 215	134 213		87 402	120 832	120 232
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	116 610	8 925	12 253	16 064	95 651	7 471	10 386	13 969
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 176	2 608	3 059	3 450	26 449	2 259	2 655	3 048
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	132 864	9 526	13 033	14 289	112 121	8 285	10 403	12 616
2.2.2 Other	173 715	13 305	15 608	15 267	151 948	11 665	13 928	13 835
2.3 Rent	52 994	4 595	4 164	5 105	42 946	3 733	3 385	4 240
2.4 Money lent	283 693	20 336	27 434	29 111	262 929	19 254	26 233	27 637
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	201 872	11 367	16 704	17 183	189 872	10 517	15 678	15 802
2.6 Other debts	238 254	18 296	22 268	24 837	205 945	15 846	19 778	20 938
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 231 178	88 958	114 523	125 306	1 087 861	79 030	102 446	112 085
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		82 009	115 841	115 619		72 246	102 440	102 378

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

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
2007	Year Total	117 403	65 797	32 766	9 226	17 420	77 021	215 297	51 978	40 863	153 646	26 219	45 913
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
	January	6 304	5 151	1 278	274	1 136	5 286	10 193	3 392	1 905	15 008	4 496	3 068
	February	9 395	4 538	2 187	431	1 132	5 476	11 003	4 424	3 242	11 748	3 638	2 842
	March	9 382	4 278	1 399	822	1 447	6 079	11 776	4 716	2 482	7 997	1 470	2 905
	April	8 158	6 398	1 807	465	1 851	6 648	17 776	5 253	2 858	9 995	1 815	2 658
	May	9 157	6 544	1 695	597	1 814	5 513	17 667	5 407	2 499	10 008	2 666	3 087
	June	8 499	6 045	1 578	928	1 557	5 572	19 524	5 494	2 673	12 313	1 865	2 987
	July	11 015	3 344	1 144	869	1 954	7 370	22 450	4 484	2 922	11 901	2 710	2 992
	August	9 558	4 502	1 180	500	1 615	6 213	20 052	4 552	3 490	11 136	2 236	3 050
	September	10 882	3 738	825	555	1 707	6 312	22 753	5 257	2 816	14 527	1 839	2 962
	October	12 480	3 866	1 549	405	1 966	7 767	18 597	5 758	3 777	14 812	1 975	2 374
	November	12 497	3 655	1 535	844	2 050	8 149	18 480	5 704	2 879	11 611	1 375	2 356
December	9 844	2 415	1 376	546	1 055	7 707	15 598	4 619	1 867	7 328	774	2 093	
1/ 2009	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	8 622	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728

1/ Preliminary

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			
	* 2008	2008	1/ 2009		* 2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		March	February	March		March	February	1/ March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 782	7 672	6 941	7 985	75 647	6 920	6 075	7 134
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	9 656	597	864	1 142	8 048	516	705	1 008
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	77 332	5 504	7 326	7 886	67 962	4 928	6 138	6 837
1.2.2 Other	80 436	6 470	5 654	7 326	72 558	5 791	5 074	6 724
1.3 Rent	30 897	1 879	2 054	2 115	23 367	1 411	1 607	1 543
1.4 Money lent	222 381	17 678	20 083	26 432	216 756	17 308	19 648	25 894
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	47 923	2 866	3 962	5 853	42 598	2 656	3 407	5 227
1.6 Other debts	106 180	7 548	9 346	8 435	95 631	6 758	8 597	7 536
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	660 587	50 214	56 230	67 174	602 567	46 288	51 251	61 903
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		50 419	59 400	67 222		44 891	54 725	59 786

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* Revised

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

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	* 2008	2008	1/ 2009		* 2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	631 153	47 998	49 425	64 202	442 281	36 608	33 606	41 898
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	254 214	26 932	22 538	33 547	199 470	22 863	19 835	27 523
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	281 952	19 982	28 591	38 879	217 664	14 843	22 487	32 850
1.2.2 Other	595 900	45 855	53 905	62 005	455 930	33 746	42 889	51 287
1.3 Rent	323 505	21 082	35 096	34 365	212 864	14 372	19 278	25 771
1.4 Money lent	1 956 402	135 295	173 804	212 655	1 827 316	128 152	166 797	203 754
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	662 674	35 992	52 406	67 165	555 530	32 275	43 062	51 465
1.6 Other debts	1 314 636	134 186	102 611	115 002	1 012 625	113 616	88 074	84 688
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 020 436	467 322	518 376	627 820	4 923 680	396 475	436 028	519 236
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		463 249	539 304	620 998		384 555	453 545	501 974

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates January to March 2008	Actual estimates January to March 2009	% change between January to March 2008 and January to March 2009	Difference between January to March 2008 and January to March 2009
Number of summonses for debt	274 942	335 826	22,1	60 884
Number of judgements for debt	161 958	173 256	7,0	11 298
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 422,5	1 617,6	13,7	195,1

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 current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year 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	4,1	-0,5	1,3
--Instalment sale transactions	0,6	0,4	0,8
Professional Services	3,7	2,8	2,2
Other Services	-0,3	-1,7	1,8
Rent	0,7	-0,8	1,9
Money lent	5,3	6,1	10,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	4,3	-0,1	-3,1
Other debts	3,7	0,9	-1,8
Total	22,1	7,0	13,7

1/ 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 2008 to March 2008, 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 March 2008	Actual estimates March 2009	% change between March 2008 and March 2009	Difference between March 2008 and March 2009
Number of summonses for debt	88 958	125 306	40,9	36 348
Number of judgements for debt	50 214	67 174	33,8	16 960
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	467,3	627,8	34,3	160,5

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>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.</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' 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 recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates, offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by mail each month from 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	7	<p>The response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for March 2009 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 issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
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 CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to Drawer CD Compact Disc 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 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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