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Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

March 2010

**Embargoed until:
20 May 2010
09:00**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600/4892/8390

Forthcoming issue

April 2010

Expected release date

17 June 2010

Statistics South Africa • Mbalo-mbalo ya Afrika Tshipembe • Vuhlayisatinhlayo bya Afrika-Dzonga • Dipalopalo tsa Aforika Borwa • Ezezibalo zaseNingizimu Afrika
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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MARCH 2010)

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2010

Actual estimates	March 2010	% change between March 2009 and March 2010	% change between January to March 2009 and January to March 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	117 570	-5,4	-1,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	61 036	-8,9	-2,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	642,0	2,5	10,0

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The first quarter of 2010 reflected a 1,9% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the first quarter of 2009. A decrease of 5,4% was recorded between March 2009 and March 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 1,9% decrease in the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first quarter of 2010 compared with the first quarter of 2009 were civil summonses issued for goods sold on an open account (contributing -2,7 percentage points) and 'other debts' (contributing -1,5 percentage points). The three positive contributors were the money lent, promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt and instalment sale transactions categories (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2010 decreased by 2,2% compared with the first quarter of 2009. A decrease of 8,9% was recorded between March 2009 and March 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements for 'other debts' (contributing -4,2 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (contributing -2,3 percentage points) and 'other services' (contributing -0,4 of a percentage point) were the main drivers behind the 2,2% decrease. The promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category counteracted the decrease and contributed 4,1 percentage points (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was an increase of 10,0% in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2010 compared with the first quarter of 2009. An increase of 2,5% was recorded between March 2009 and March 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 10,0% increase in the value of civil judgements for the first quarter of 2010 compared with the first quarter of 2009 were the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing 5,3 percentage points) and money lent (contributing 5,2 percentage points) categories. Three categories that contributed negatively were 'other debts' (contributing -1,9 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (contributing -0,8 percentage points) and rent (contributing -0,3 of a percentage point) (see Table 6).

During March 2010, 61 036 civil judgements for debt amounting to R642,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R642,0 million were:

- money lent (R221,0 million or 34,4%)
- 'other debts' (R100,7 million or 15,7%)
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (R75,6 million or 11,8%) and
- 'other services' (R62,5 million or 9,7%) (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 March 2010.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

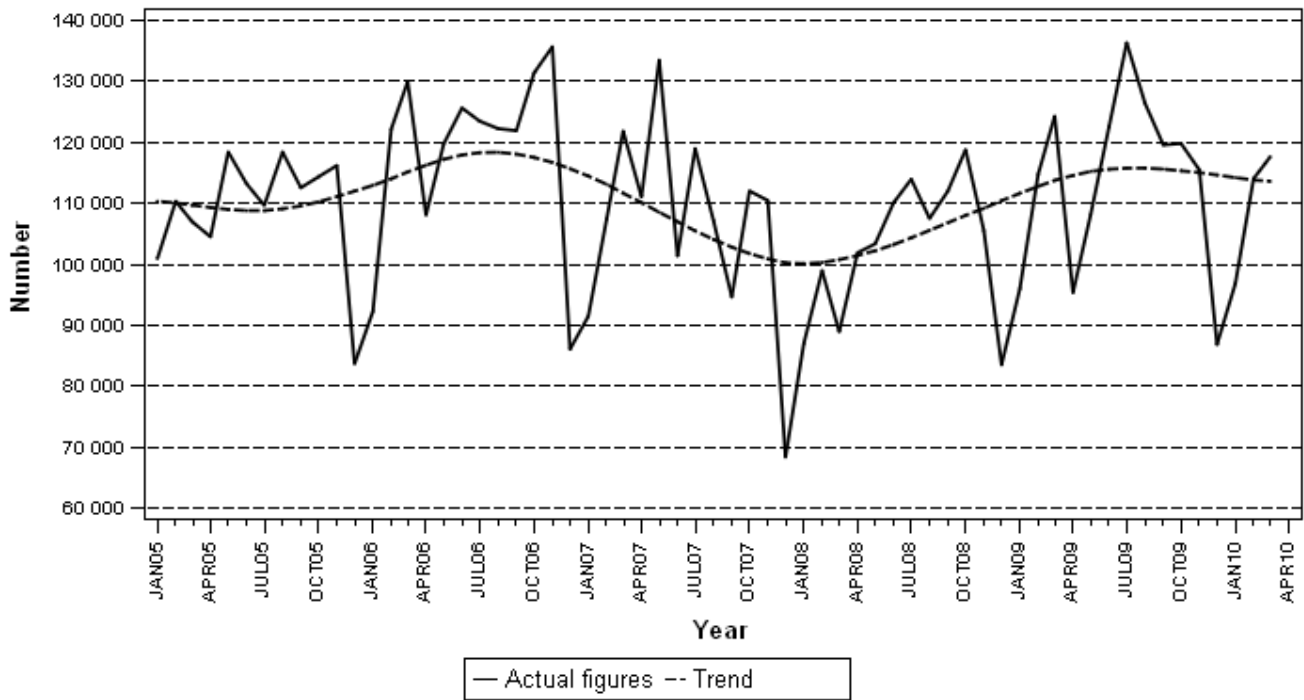
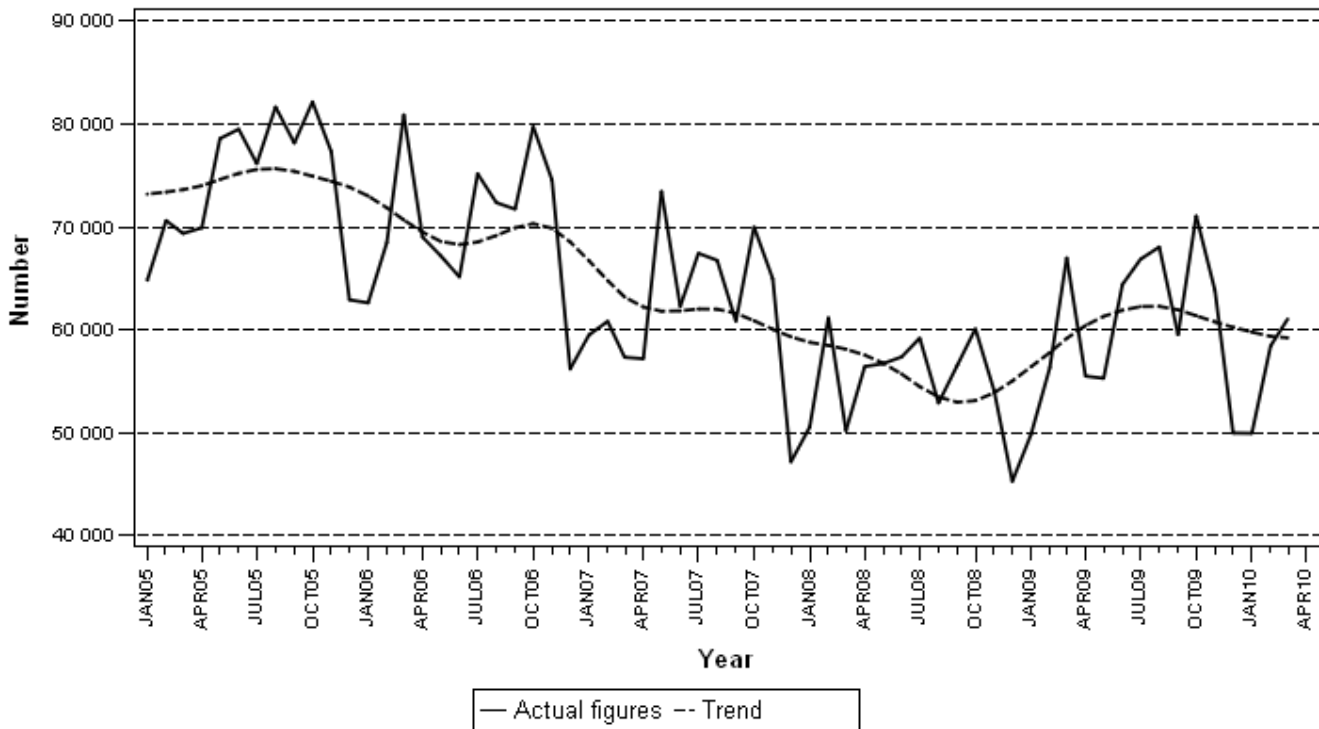


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 595 280	144 310	133 687	139 602	1 420 316	130 030	118 965	125 128
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		133 988	132 388	130 041		119 278	116 359	114 988
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	135 281	16 084	10 361	10 890	112 717	14 024	8 602	8 923
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 710	3 381	3 206	3 462	30 583	2 948	2 794	3 024
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	153 249	14 095	12 649	13 794	128 153	12 436	10 756	12 255
2.2.2 Other	164 618	14 634	13 626	14 654	142 316	13 172	11 698	12 558
2.3 Rent	51 389	5 079	4 312	4 571	43 153	4 341	3 621	3 882
2.4 Money lent	326 092	28 910	31 347	35 026	308 583	27 398	30 325	33 605
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	242 246	17 169	15 769	17 284	227 360	15 761	14 460	15 598
2.6 Other debts	256 599	24 882	22 751	17 889	210 475	20 966	18 623	14 218
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 365 184	124 234	114 021	117 570	1 203 340	111 046	100 879	104 063
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		115 823	114 802	110 162		102 283	100 184	96 261

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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	2 442	11 882	1 540	5 900

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			
	2009	2009	1/ 2010		2009	2009	1/ 2010	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 641	7 971	5 491	5 864	73 332	7 122	4 594	5 034
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	13 313	1 143	911	1 088	11 200	1 009	755	917
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	92 657	7 877	7 654	8 049	80 893	6 816	6 715	7 169
1.2.2 Other	78 652	7 313	6 297	6 608	69 473	6 711	5 592	5 810
1.3 Rent	28 873	2 112	2 286	2 402	22 483	1 540	1 814	1 936
1.4 Money lent	273 794	26 323	22 803	22 919	267 864	25 784	22 504	20 528
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 645	5 853	7 306	6 442	51 777	5 227	6 704	5 760
1.6 Other debts	95 130	8 401	5 681	7 664	86 580	7 504	5 176	6 878
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	727 705	66 993	58 429	61 036	663 602	61 713	53 854	54 032
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		65 464	60 074	59 661		61 693	55 038	54 076

1/ Preliminary.

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	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	750 317	64 115	48 428	56 685	497 848	41 909	29 170	36 558
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	387 538	33 674	31 456	33 478	319 087	27 650	25 697	27 111
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	333 644	38 802	29 428	47 227	266 902	32 739	22 972	39 518
1.2.2 Other	715 777	61 979	67 799	62 529	556 872	51 247	53 826	47 998
1.3 Rent	459 493	33 595	28 340	44 876	312 500	25 377	19 546	34 027
1.4 Money lent	2 551 641	212 457	241 694	221 008	2 411 391	203 556	233 354	207 742
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	790 247	67 165	61 026	75 563	627 760	51 465	49 394	47 725
1.6 Other debts	1 233 280	114 693	94 894	100 675	975 583	84 736	79 218	71 275
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	7 221 937	626 480	603 065	642 041	5 967 943	518 679	513 177	511 954
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		614 122	631 292	629 173		497 981	527 300	491 140

1/ Preliminary.

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

Actual estimates	Actual estimates January to March 2009	Actual estimates January to March 2010	% change between January to March 2009 and January to March 2010	Difference between January to March 2009 and January to March 2010
Number of summonses for debt	334 952	328 421	-1,9	-6 531
Number of judgements for debt	173 163	169 418	-2,2	-3 745
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 617,3	1 779,8	10,0	162,5

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 first quarter of 2009 and the first 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	-2,7	-2,3	-0,8
– Instalment sale transactions	0,2	0,0	1,1
Professional services	-0,4	0,3	0,8
Other services	-0,7	-0,4	0,7
Rent	-0,4	0,1	-0,3
Money lent	3,1	0,2	5,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	0,3	4,1	5,3
Other debts	-1,5	-4,2	-1,9
Total	-1,9	-2,2	10,0

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 January to March 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 March 2009	Actual estimates March 2010	% change between March 2009 and March 2010	Difference between March 2009 and March 2010
Number of summonses for debt	124 234	117 570	-5,4	-6 664
Number of judgements for debt	66 993	61 036	-8,9	-5 957
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	626,5	642,0	2,5	15,5

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'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 response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for March 2010 was 91,4%.</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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