

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for March 2011

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2011

Actual estimates	March 2011	% change between March 2010 and March 2011	% change between January to March 2010 and January to March 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	105 172	-10,8	-13,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	47 904	-22,1	-21,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	502,7	-22,2	-22,4

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The first quarter of 2011 reflected a 13,4% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with the first quarter of 2010. A 10,8% year-on-year decrease was recorded in March 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 13,4% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -5,0 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -4,3 percentage points);
- the services category (contributing -2,1 percentage points); and
- the 'other debts' category (contributing -1,8 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 21,3% for the first quarter of 2011 compared with the first quarter of 2010. A 22,1% year-on-year decrease was recorded in March 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The main drivers behind the 21,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the money lent category (contributing -9,6 percentage points);
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -5,0 percentage points); and
- the services category (contributing -4,1 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 22,4% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2011 compared with the first quarter of 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 22,2% was recorded in March 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 22,4% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -11,6 percentage points); and
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -7,0 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During March 2011, 47 904 civil judgements for debt amounting to R502,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R502,7 million were:

- money lent (R149,1 million or 29,7%);
- 'other debts' (R127,5 million or 25,4%); and
- services (R94,5 million or 18,8%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

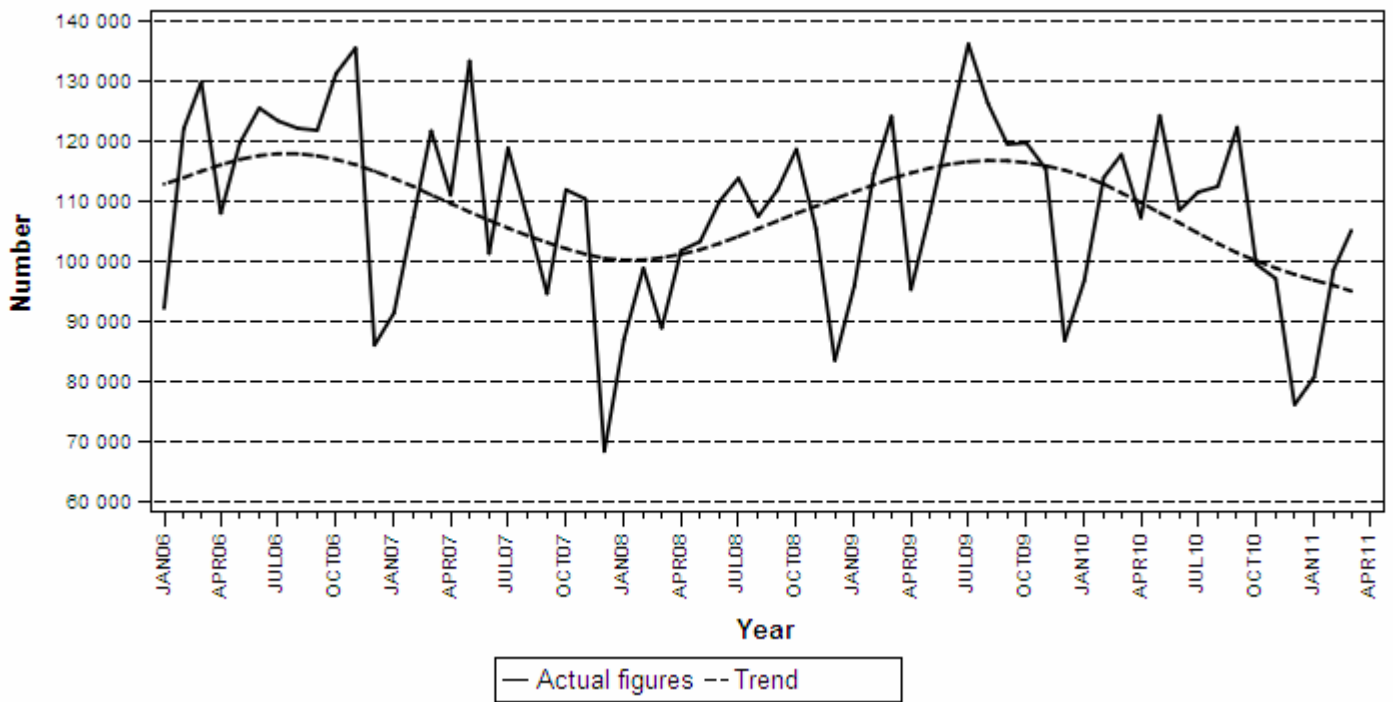
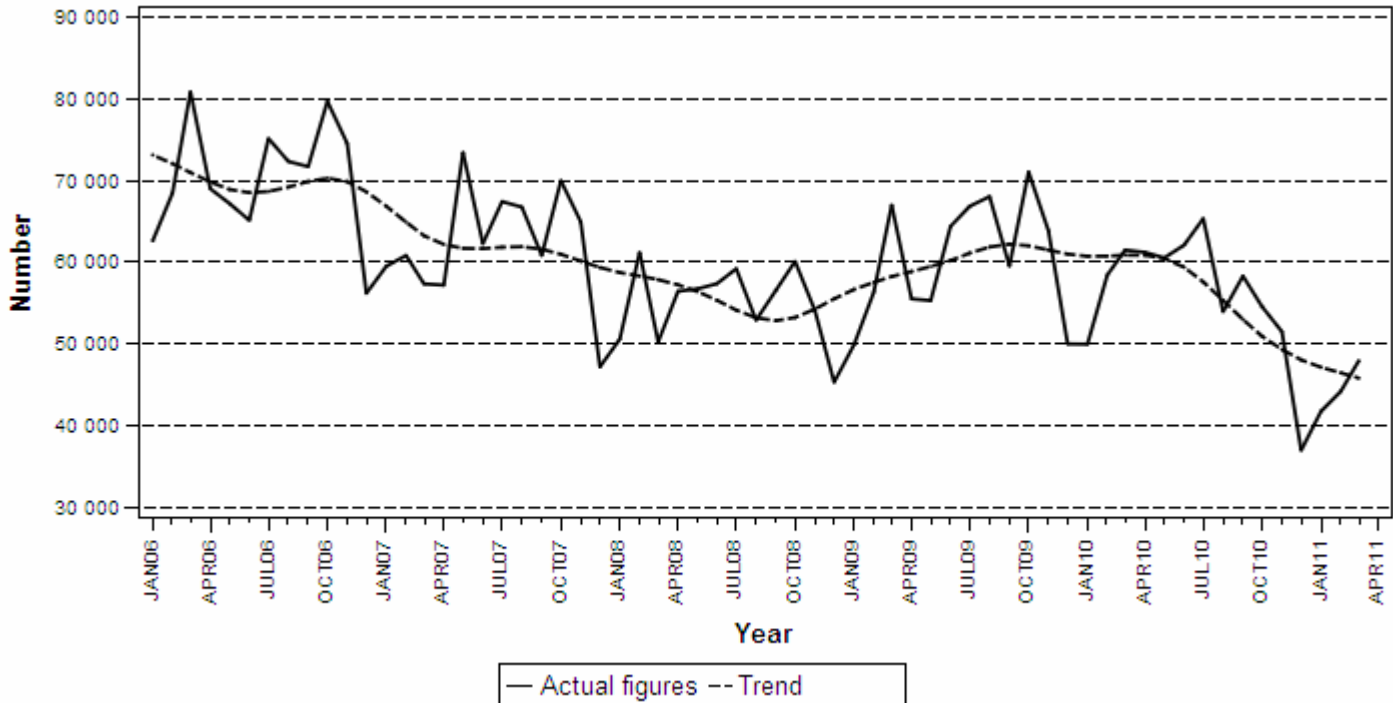


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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			
	2010	2010	1/ 2011		2010	2010	1/ 2011	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 469 321	139 871	113 923	119 541	1 299 023	125 311	102 300	107 224
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		128 425	111 145	109 452		113 617	98 365	96 872
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	108 884	10 681	7 916	6 902	87 313	8 747	6 129	4 982
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 736	3 461	1 963	1 692	27 418	3 028	1 678	1 404
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	147 619	13 751	10 224	10 476	128 120	12 194	8 643	9 389
2.2.2 Other	165 477	14 746	12 566	17 090	140 491	12 624	10 454	15 461
2.3 Rent	52 683	4 614	3 769	3 298	43 261	3 903	3 280	2 565
2.4 Money lent	314 868	34 974	25 202	30 660	298 470	33 524	24 172	29 395
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	230 272	17 298	17 869	16 960	214 984	15 605	17 143	15 723
2.6 Other debts	236 788	18 315	19 168	18 094	190 156	14 621	16 373	15 030
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 288 327	117 840	98 677	105 172	1 130 213	104 246	87 872	93 949
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		109 105	97 601	97 404		95 557	85 914	86 117

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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, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
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	8 015	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
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 516	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	October	6 673	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 676	3 102	12 802	1 759	5 925
	1/ November	6 983	3 340	1 081	351	1 594	7 022	19 021	3 961	2 618	11 105	1 159	4 012
	1/ December	4 934	2 049	930	101	1 167	7 143	24 746	2 679	2 033	6 421	542	2 640
2010	Year Total	118 066	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 366	33 988	138 594	17 342	64 259
1/ 2011	January	4 253	2 019	964	293	1 493	6 512	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585
	February	5 379	3 184	1 197	344	1 805	6 343	28 740	4 472	3 473	9 927	1 563	2 946
	March	6 695	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354

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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			
	2010	2010	1/ 2011		2010	2010	1/ 2011	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	67 065	5 838	4 615	3 403	57 366	5 012	4 000	2 611
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 394	1 075	814	880	10 259	908	664	709
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	86 597	8 063	5 782	6 258	77 977	7 192	5 229	5 714
1.2.2 Other	77 202	6 682	5 264	5 598	68 837	5 885	4 557	4 712
1.3 Rent	29 007	2 453	2 055	2 272	23 848	1 980	1 588	1 734
1.4 Money lent	244 032	22 942	14 958	18 167	236 581	20 556	14 574	17 733
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	72 356	6 466	4 062	3 499	65 192	5 774	3 661	3 079
1.6 Other debts	85 559	7 973	6 613	7 827	76 954	7 195	5 805	6 821
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	674 212	61 492	44 163	47 904	617 014	54 502	40 078	43 113
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		59 748	45 954	46 514		53 895	41 390	42 586

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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			
	2010	2010	1/ 2011		2010	2010	1/ 2011	
		March	February	March		March	February	March
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	613 287	57 093	42 504	41 855	394 335	37 490	27 807	22 944
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	354 943	33 305	22 490	24 118	274 906	26 977	17 997	20 576
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	351 311	47 355	24 628	33 567	281 299	39 484	20 969	28 502
1.2.2 Other	716 644	63 155	48 619	60 928	572 184	48 342	32 281	42 212
1.3 Rent	448 323	46 557	31 875	33 259	298 711	35 540	18 355	19 164
1.4 Money lent	2 202 708	221 093	145 134	149 053	2 059 059	207 869	137 975	142 673
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	792 214	75 956	47 833	32 369	646 469	47 845	38 309	24 263
1.6 Other debts	1 098 153	102 003	93 377	127 544	843 748	72 688	72 157	85 133
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 577 583	646 517	456 460	502 693	5 370 711	516 235	365 850	385 467
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		610 415	471 913	469 671		485 977	370 254	361 589

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the first quarter of 2011 and the first quarter of 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates January to March 2010	Actual estimates January to March 2011	% change between January to March 2010 and January to March 2011	Difference between January to March 2010 and January to March 2011
Number of summonses for debt	328 691	284 604	-13,4	-44 087
Number of judgements for debt	169 874	133 774	-21,3	-36 100
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 784,3	1 383,8	-22,4	-400,5

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the first quarter of 2011 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	-2,9	-2,5	-1,3
– Instalment sale transactions	-1,4	-0,3	-1,5
Services			
– Professional	-2,0	-2,9	-1,1
– Other	-0,1	-1,2	0,5
Rent	-0,7	-0,1	-0,6
Money lent	-5,0	-9,6	-11,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	0,5	-5,0	-7,0
Other debts	-1,8	0,3	0,1
Total	-13,4	-21,3	-22,4

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 2010, 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 2010	Actual estimates March 2011	% change between March 2010 and March 2011	Difference between March 2010 and March 2011
Number of summonses for debt	117 840	105 172	-10,8	-12 668
Number of judgements for debt	61 492	47 904	-22,1	-13 588
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	646,5	502,7	-22,2	-143,8

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.
Purpose of the survey	3	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.
Scope of the survey	4	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	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. 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.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for March 2011 was 88,1%.
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</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
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 or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer 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 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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