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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Results for March 2012

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2012

Actual estimates	March 2012	% change between March 2011 and March 2012	% change between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	96 698	-7,7	-7,7
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	41 495	-12,9	-9,5
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	361,2	-28,2	-22,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 7,7% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded for the first quarter of 2012 compared with the first quarter of 2011. A 7,7% year-on-year decrease was also recorded in March 2012 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the quarterly year-on-year decrease of 7,7% were:

- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -7,1 percentage points);
- the other debts category (contributing -2,2 percentage points);
- the professional services category (contributing -1,5 percentage points); and
- the money lent category (contributing -1,4 percentage points).

The other services category counteracted the 7,7% decrease to a certain extent and recorded a positive contribution of 5,3 percentage points (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The first quarter of 2012 reflected a 9,5% decrease in the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt compared with the first quarter of 2011. A year-on-year decrease of 12,9% was recorded in March 2012 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The main drivers behind the 9,5% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the services category (contributing -3,3 percentage points);
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -2,4 percentage points);
- the other debts category (contributing -2,0 percentage points); and
- the money lent category (contributing -1,5 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 22,1% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first quarter of 2012 compared with the same quarter of the previous year. A year-on-year decrease of 28,2% was recorded in March 2012 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 22,1% decrease were:

- the money lent category (contributing -7,8 percentage points);
- the services category (contributing -4,9 percentage points);
- the other debts category (contributing -4,8 percentage points); and
- the goods sold category (contributing -3,6 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During March 2012, 41 495 civil judgements for debt amounting to R361,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R361,2 million were:

- money lent (R104,9 million or 29,0%);
- other debts (R69,9 million or 19,3%);
- services (R65,4 million or 18,1%); and
- goods sold (R53,1 million or 14,7%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

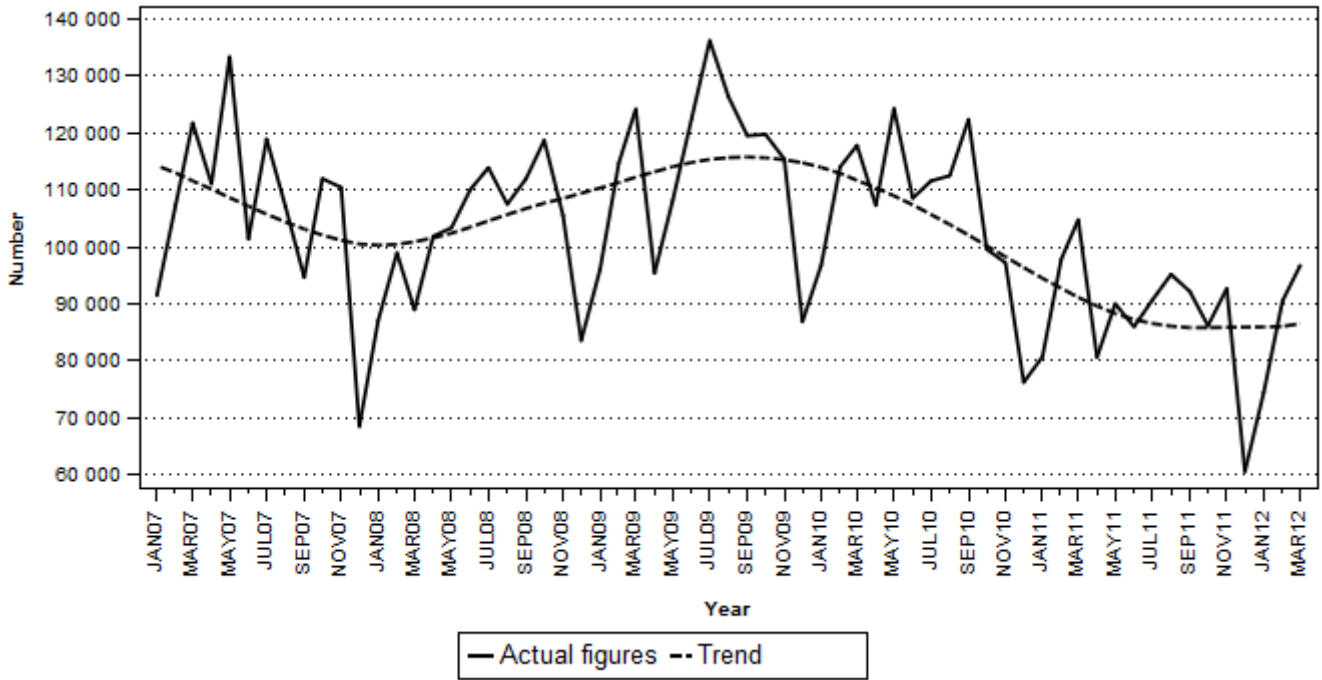
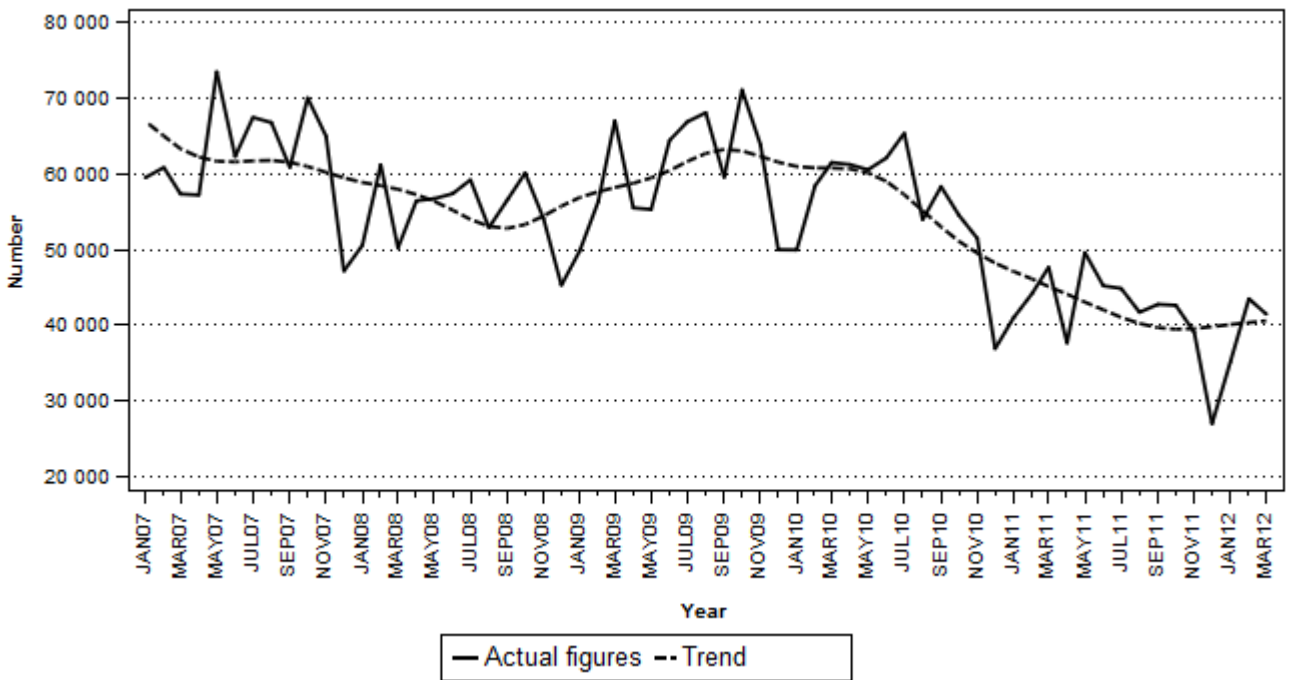


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		1/ 2011	March 2011	1/ February 2012	1/ March 2012	1/ 2011	March 2011	1/ February 2012	1/ March 2012
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 228 074	119 961	96 618	102 015	1 074 543	107 269	86 560	91 827
	Seasonally adjusted		108 428	92 676	91 968		95 584	81 921	81 546
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	82 723	6 770	6 706	6 120	63 885	4 758	5 207	4 506
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	24 715	1 772	1 691	1 950	20 451	1 465	1 432	1 684
	Services - Professional	117 707	10 427	8 399	9 575	102 139	9 287	7 559	8 657
	Services - Other	197 580	17 205	17 646	24 434	176 093	15 527	15 931	22 960
	Rent	46 160	3 383	3 469	3 606	36 613	2 617	2 727	2 955
	Money lent	232 578	30 290	25 698	23 664	214 837	29 028	24 474	22 675
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	171 991	16 992	11 045	11 404	151 980	15 743	9 603	9 638
	Other debts	183 793	17 950	15 865	15 945	156 535	14 803	14 513	14 641
	Total - Actual figures	1 057 247	104 789	90 519	96 698	922 533	93 228	81 446	87 716
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		94 840	87 255	87 359		83 514	77 811	78 380

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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
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
2011	Year Total	79 463	60 025	11 782	4 842	16 605	64 927	222 519	47 918	37 724	94 991	14 597	41 547
	January	4 253	2 019	876	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	6 907	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354
	April	5 317	3 823	1 423	290	1 581	6 031	19 903	3 398	2 711	7 212	1 016	4 428
	May	5 999	6 607	1 430	351	1 469	6 728	20 295	3 556	2 599	9 172	1 098	4 520
	June	7 480	5 207	975	374	1 325	5 738	17 516	3 829	2 459	8 132	1 368	3 855
	July	7 879	4 502	1 309	549	2 056	6 124	17 611	3 913	3 476	7 393	1 765	3 492
	August	7 482	6 460	1 137	680	1 268	4 909	15 940	4 581	3 251	6 977	1 448	3 982
	September	7 689	5 978	610	578	1 740	4 341	19 759	4 414	3 125	7 876	1 070	3 364
	1/ October	6 220	6 621	588	244	1 141	3 976	12 013	5 438	3 187	8 655	924	2 893
1/ November	6 482	7 447	627	461	1 171	4 410	13 803	3 987	4 811	8 658	1 435	2 488	
1/ December	8 376	3 629	309	259	730	3 781	9 662	2 290	3 285	4 402	571	1 640	
1/ 2012	January	6 626	4 188	264	321	1 251	3 717	9 405	3 477	4 217	7 230	838	1 590
	February	6 421	6 720	345	710	1 269	4 068	12 143	4 107	6 091	7 905	987	2 259
	March	6 674	11 178	160	423	2 006	3 799	10 661	5 089	6 182	7 524	1 115	2 006

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Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		1/ 2011	March 2011	1/ February 2012	1/ March 2012	1/ 2011	March 2011	1/ February 2012	1/ March 2012
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	56 599	3 477	4 375	3 922	48 208	2 634	3 681	3 285
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	10 635	929	741	752	8 673	740	606	639
	Services - Professional	68 313	6 014	5 410	5 305	63 158	5 453	4 945	4 671
	Services - Other	57 871	5 771	4 824	4 738	50 115	4 878	4 260	4 085
	Rent	25 693	2 191	2 225	2 123	20 600	1 644	1 702	1 663
	Money lent	163 337	17 945	15 882	16 257	158 120	17 507	15 377	15 835
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	44 550	3 533	4 081	2 833	38 546	3 112	3 721	2 445
	Other debts	76 406	7 808	5 963	5 565	67 988	6 759	5 425	5 131
	Total - Actual figures	503 404	47 668	43 501	41 495	455 408	42 727	39 717	37 754
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		46 161	45 096	40 169		42 179	40 928	37 221

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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		Total				Private Persons			
		1/ 2011	March 2011	1/ February 2012	1/ March 2012	1/ 2011	March 2011	1/ February 2012	1/ March 2012
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	522 678	46 090	43 341	39 778	333 611	25 776	23 812	20 643
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	284 150	26 472	14 294	13 319	230 821	22 712	10 988	11 253
	Services - Professional	308 692	26 653	30 074	26 711	264 557	21 419	25 254	21 413
	Services - Other	592 032	61 985	39 497	38 690	444 349	43 132	30 348	30 614
	Rent	374 423	32 666	31 296	29 659	223 786	19 552	18 276	17 055
	Money lent	1 525 895	146 677	126 165	104 890	1 422 619	140 951	113 082	96 009
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	536 585	33 016	40 549	38 266	436 042	24 777	29 406	29 173
	Other debts	1 016 435	129 810	78 814	69 867	728 727	84 963	57 124	56 990
	Total - Actual figures	5 160 890	503 369	404 030	361 180	4 084 512	383 282	308 290	283 150
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		472 820	404 617	337 894		363 729	301 995	269 018

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 2012 and the first quarter of 2011

Actual estimates	Actual estimates January to March 2011	Actual estimates January to March 2012	% change between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012	Difference between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	283 335	261 627	-7,7	-21 708
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	132 839	120 214	-9,5	-12 625
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 382,5	1 077,2	-22,1	-305,3

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 2012 and the first quarter of 2011 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-0,4	0,0	-1,0
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,2	-0,4	-2,6
Services - Professional	-1,5	-1,7	-0,1
Services - Other	5,3	-1,6	-4,8
Rent	0,0	0,1	-0,3
Money lent	-1,4	-1,5	-7,8
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-7,1	-2,4	-0,8
Other debts	-2,2	-2,0	-4,8
Total	-7,7	-9,5	-22,1

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 2011, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

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 2011	Actual estimates March 2012	% change between March 2011 and March 2012	Difference between March 2011 and March 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	104 789	96 698	-7,7	-8 091
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	47 668	41 495	-12,9	-6 173
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	503,4	361,2	-28,2	-142,2

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 magistrates' 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.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for March 2012 was 91,4%. Improved collection rate for February 2012 was 93,4%.
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; and • <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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