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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

March 2015

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Key results for March 2015

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2015

Actual estimates	March 2015	% change between March 2014 and March 2015	% change between January – March 2014 and January – March 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	66 422	9,5	-3,2
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 395	0,6	-8,4
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	423,0	11,0	-3,5

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 3,2% in the first quarter of 2015 compared with the first quarter of 2014. A 9,5% increase was recorded between March 2014 and March 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 3,2% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -2,0 percentage points);
- rent (contributing -1,8 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -1,2 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 8,4% in the first quarter of 2015 compared with the first quarter of 2014. An increase of 0,6% was recorded between March 2014 and March 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 8,4% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -5,0 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -1,7 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -1,2 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 3,5% lower in the first quarter of 2015 compared with the first quarter of 2014. A year-on-year increase of 11,0% was recorded in March 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 3,5% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -4,4 percentage points);
- services (contributing -1,2 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -0,4 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

In March 2015, 26 395 civil judgements for debt amounting to R423,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R145,2 million or 34,3%);
- money lent (R93,3 million or 22,0%); and
- services (R69,4 million or 16,4%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

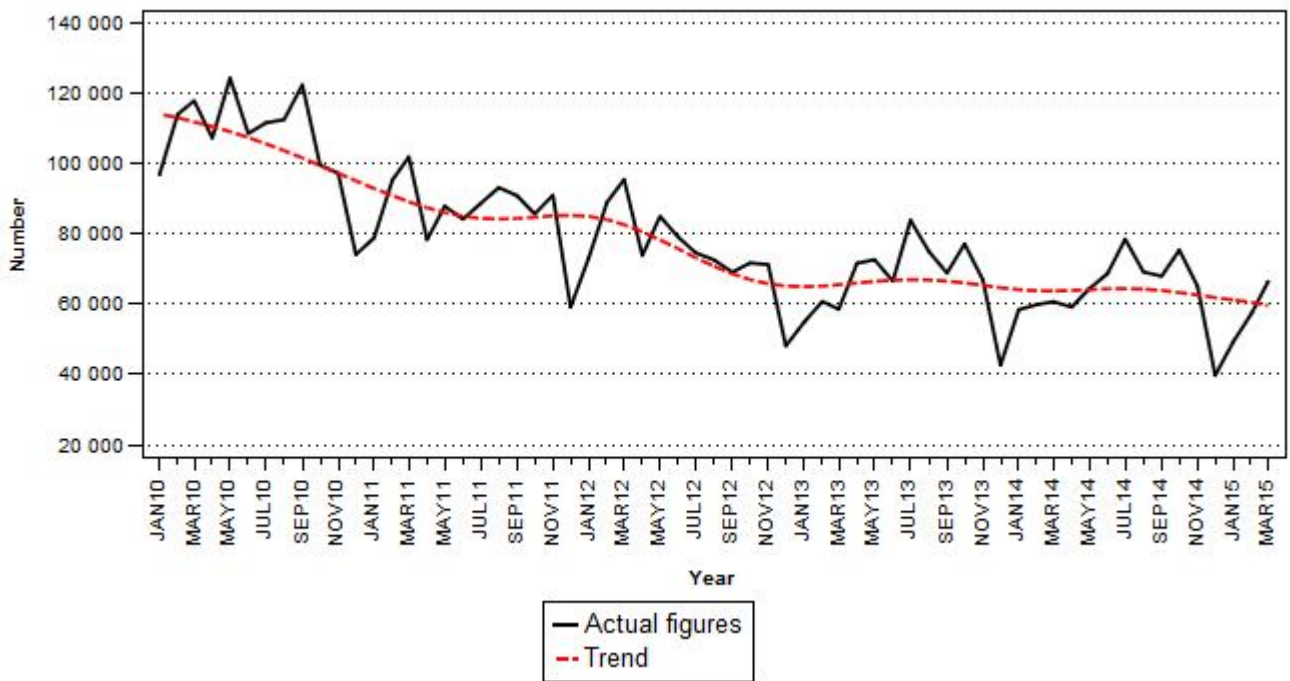
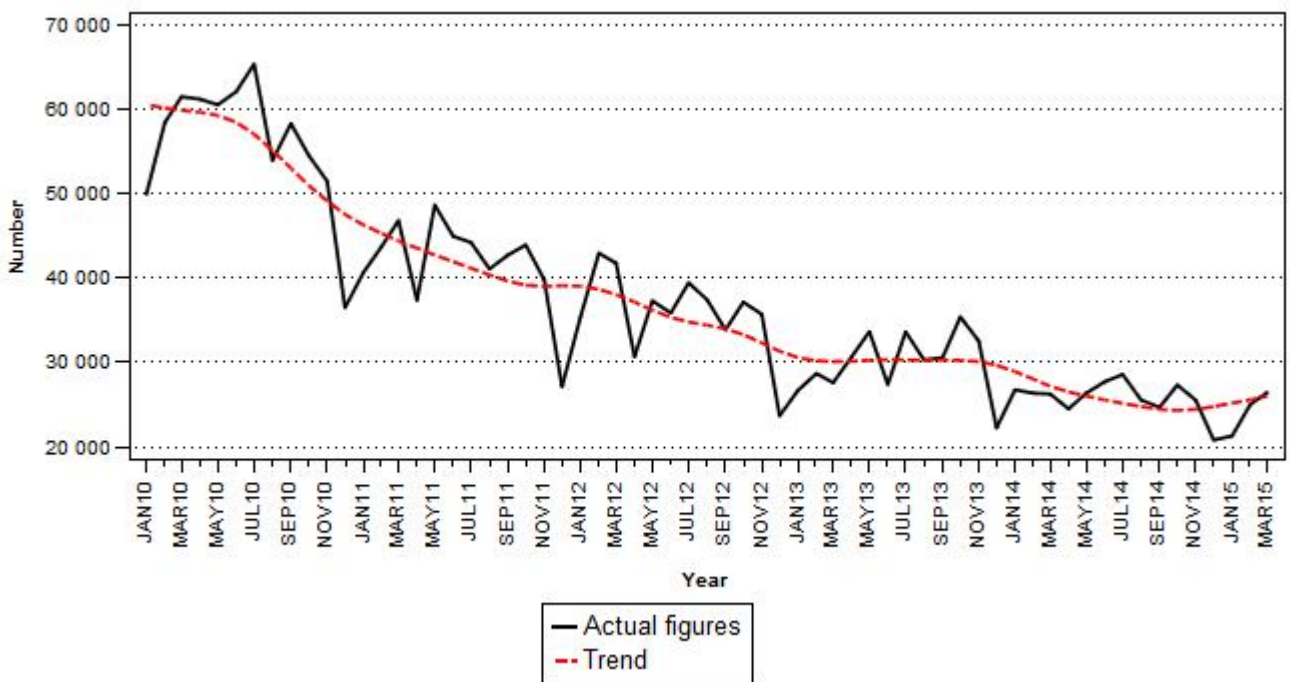


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Mar-14	1/ Feb-15	1/ Mar-15	2014	Mar-14	1/ Feb-15	1/ Mar-15
Cases recorded	Actual figures	838 926	67 555	64 924	71 806	738 542	60 090	58 102	59 336
	Seasonally adjusted		63 344	67 150	67 850		56 794	59 204	56 673
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	53 702	3 890	3 414	4 131	41 998	2 938	2 720	3 233
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	26 973	1 909	2 062	2 082	21 678	1 425	1 648	1 600
	Services - Professional	93 548	7 549	6 601	7 886	83 216	6 525	5 910	6 469
	Services - Other	124 116	10 781	8 449	11 375	107 931	9 599	7 244	9 979
	Rent	39 481	4 116	2 162	2 922	32 456	3 470	1 745	2 299
	Money lent	199 369	14 401	16 372	17 424	189 974	13 568	15 634	16 679
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	98 753	7 131	7 700	8 989	91 037	6 624	7 154	8 448
	Other debts	130 908	10 900	10 627	11 613	117 735	9 473	9 570	10 658
	Total - Actual figures	766 850	60 677	57 387	66 422	686 025	53 622	51 625	59 365
Total - Seasonally adjusted		55 447	59 841	61 128		48 828	53 217	54 453	

1/ Preliminary.

Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Mar-14	1/ Feb-15	1/ Mar-15	2014	Mar-14	1/ Feb-15	1/ Mar-15
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	21 883	2 144	1 557	1 742	16 688	1 622	1 158	1 327
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 381	644	727	661	5 580	474	566	463
	Services - Professional	53 262	4 456	4 539	4 812	47 696	4 058	4 047	4 054
	Services - Other	47 316	4 409	3 021	3 566	41 425	3 972	2 602	3 084
	Rent	17 543	1 674	1 407	1 703	14 406	1 357	1 139	1 422
	Money lent	75 586	6 214	6 558	6 566	70 978	5 844	6 109	6 138
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 335	2 239	2 518	2 742	23 145	1 855	2 193	2 402
	Other debts	59 879	4 467	4 699	4 603	55 630	4 014	4 337	4 292
	Total - Actual figures	310 185	26 247	25 026	26 395	275 548	23 196	22 151	23 182
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		25 934	26 173	26 324		22 914	23 312	23 062

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Mar-14	1/ Feb-15	1/ Mar-15	2014	Mar-14	1/ Feb-15	1/ Mar-15
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	289 100	24 692	25 336	26 480	166 780	17 724	12 614	17 362
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	89 599	7 608	12 181	8 098	75 311	6 749	10 890	6 616
	Services - Professional	268 653	24 137	22 501	23 341	234 985	20 260	20 029	19 410
	Services - Other	470 117	36 296	33 355	46 094	375 093	30 971	26 998	29 628
	Rent	277 582	22 843	25 840	28 676	201 587	16 676	17 689	21 761
	Money lent	1 085 532	101 749	102 250	93 266	1 002 428	84 598	97 649	87 749
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	418 697	46 246	38 091	51 849	349 493	40 626	32 840	44 745
	Other debts	1 201 729	117 617	102 803	145 238	779 107	66 358	70 372	129 239
	Total - Actual figures	4 101 009	381 188	362 357	423 042	3 184 784	283 962	289 081	356 510
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		367 101	343 362	407 958		269 642	299 065	337 279

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the first quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of 2015

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jan – Mar 2014	Actual estimates Jan – Mar 2015	% change between Jan – Mar 2014 and Jan – Mar 2015	Difference between Jan – Mar 2014 and Jan – Mar 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	178 943	173 143	-3,2	-5 800
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	79 316	72 676	-8,4	-6 640
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 096,7	1 057,9	-3,5	-38,8

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the first quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of 2015 1/

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

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt by the percentage contribution to the total during January to March 2014, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates March 2014	Actual estimates March 2015	% change between March 2014 and March 2015	Difference between March 2014 and March 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	60 677	66 422	9,5	5 745
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 247	26 395	0,6	148
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	381,2	423,0	11,0	41,9

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2014	Mar	9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	60 677
	Apr	9 252	5 239	1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	59 148
	May	9 760	6 894	1 445	4 044	8 469	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	64 362
	Jun	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 107	2 456	68 685
	Jul	12 853	6 730	1 505	4 864	10 610	3 691	32 249	3 514	2 462	78 478
	Aug	8 714	6 089	1 282	3 903	10 645	3 754	28 346	3 988	2 419	69 140
	Sep	12 079	5 130	976	4 000	10 359	3 230	26 895	3 052	2 228	67 949
	Oct	11 293	6 285	1 250	5 372	11 448	4 725	29 319	3 402	2 287	75 381
	Nov	9 614	5 420	845	4 071	9 974	3 968	25 024	3 739	2 390	65 045
Dec	7 799	2 266	420	2 578	7 701	3 329	12 097	1 533	1 996	39 719	
2015	Jan	7 140	4 573	836	3 513	8 559	2 831	17 487	2 363	2 032	49 334
	Feb	8 706	5 058	854	4 090	8 512	3 285	21 385	3 182	2 315	57 387
	Mar	10 764	5 279	758	3 774	9 790	3 322	26 072	3 976	2 687	66 422

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2014	Mar	4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	26 247
	Apr	4 062	2 877	697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	24 487
	May	4 095	3 686	812	2 586	3 629	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	26 351
	Jun	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 628	1 960	27 698
	Jul	5 529	3 913	631	3 607	3 685	1 515	5 884	1 743	2 044	28 551
	Aug	4 491	3 117	721	2 783	3 699	1 281	6 266	1 228	1 946	25 532
	Sep	4 662	2 946	684	2 342	4 051	1 300	5 535	1 368	1 765	24 653
	Oct	4 828	3 861	691	3 413	3 795	1 815	5 578	1 572	1 757	27 310
	Nov	3 879	3 860	509	2 925	3 669	1 440	5 915	1 497	1 808	25 502
Dec	3 339	2 104	225	2 342	3 333	1 131	5 350	1 264	1 697	20 785	
2015	Jan	2 852	2 905	321	2 882	3 409	1 205	4 214	1 666	1 801	21 255
	Feb	3 567	3 949	412	2 689	3 559	1 607	5 782	1 591	1 870	25 026
	Mar	4 142	3 580	486	2 653	3 874	1 641	6 279	1 696	2 044	26 395

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2014	Mar	74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	381 188
	Apr	75 402	37 096	6 650	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	292 490
	May	72 011	43 019	9 208	22 470	36 772	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 345	344 707
	Jun	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 943	12 050	327 148
	Jul	84 131	52 402	4 934	33 840	34 975	14 670	79 929	33 696	11 747	350 324
	Aug	56 977	41 055	5 043	27 985	38 151	14 280	97 007	19 280	11 649	311 427
	Sep	68 262	47 878	6 171	37 095	36 823	12 234	83 259	33 117	8 587	333 426
	Oct	73 833	41 426	8 712	48 906	43 394	20 149	87 208	44 660	8 676	376 964
	Nov	81 253	53 761	4 067	40 578	38 954	15 472	91 607	38 341	8 577	372 610
Dec	57 430	26 458	1 736	39 417	34 484	12 296	92 523	23 160	7 748	295 252	
2015	Jan	35 749	39 694	4 390	32 879	37 581	12 314	71 538	28 997	9 362	272 504
	Feb	60 494	62 150	3 894	41 807	39 312	23 497	86 318	35 345	9 539	362 356
	Mar	119 442	59 061	3 709	31 817	45 096	21 926	106 958	23 272	11 761	423 042

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

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, ejectment 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. 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 are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for March 2015 was 85,2%. The improved collection rate for February 2015 was 84,2%.
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>South African Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * 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.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
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.
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 debt such as salaries and wages, medical fund debt, sponsored debt, class and tuition debt, tax, assessment rates and property 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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