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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

March 2016

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Enquiries:

Juan-Pierre Terblanche
Tel: (012) 310 2965

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Key results for March 2016

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2016

Actual estimates	March 2016	% change between March 2015 and March 2016	% change between January – March 2015 and January – March 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	52 328	-22,0	-13,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	22 418	-15,8	-11,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	362,0	-14,9	-5,8

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 13,4% in the first quarter of 2016 compared with the first quarter of 2015.

The largest contributions to the 13,4% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,6 percentage points);
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -3,1 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 11,2% in the first quarter of 2016 compared with the first quarter of 2015.

The largest contributions to the 11,2% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,5 percentage points);
- services (contributing -1,8 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -1,5 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 5,8% in the first quarter of 2016 compared with the first quarter of 2015.

The largest negative contributions to the 5,8% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -4,6 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,6 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -1,1 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In March 2016, 22 418 civil judgements for debt amounting to R362,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R107,2 million or 29,6%);
- ‘other’ debts (R84,8 million or 23,4%); and
- services (R65,6 million or 18,1%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

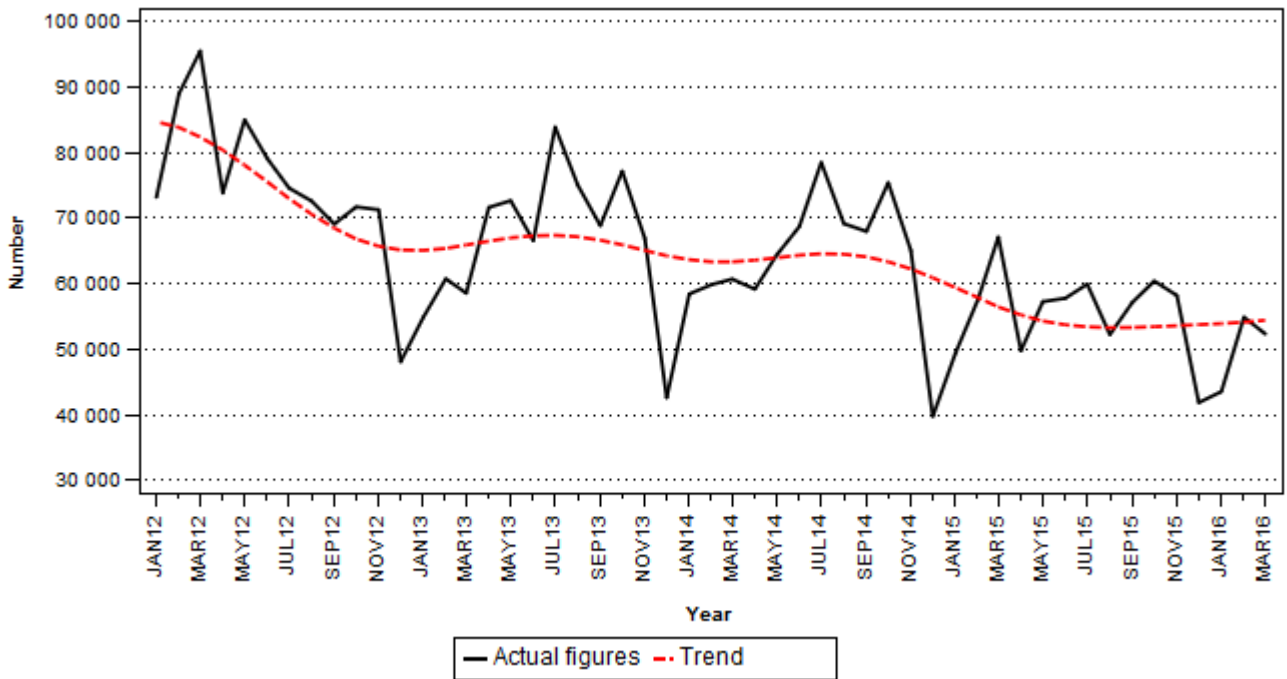
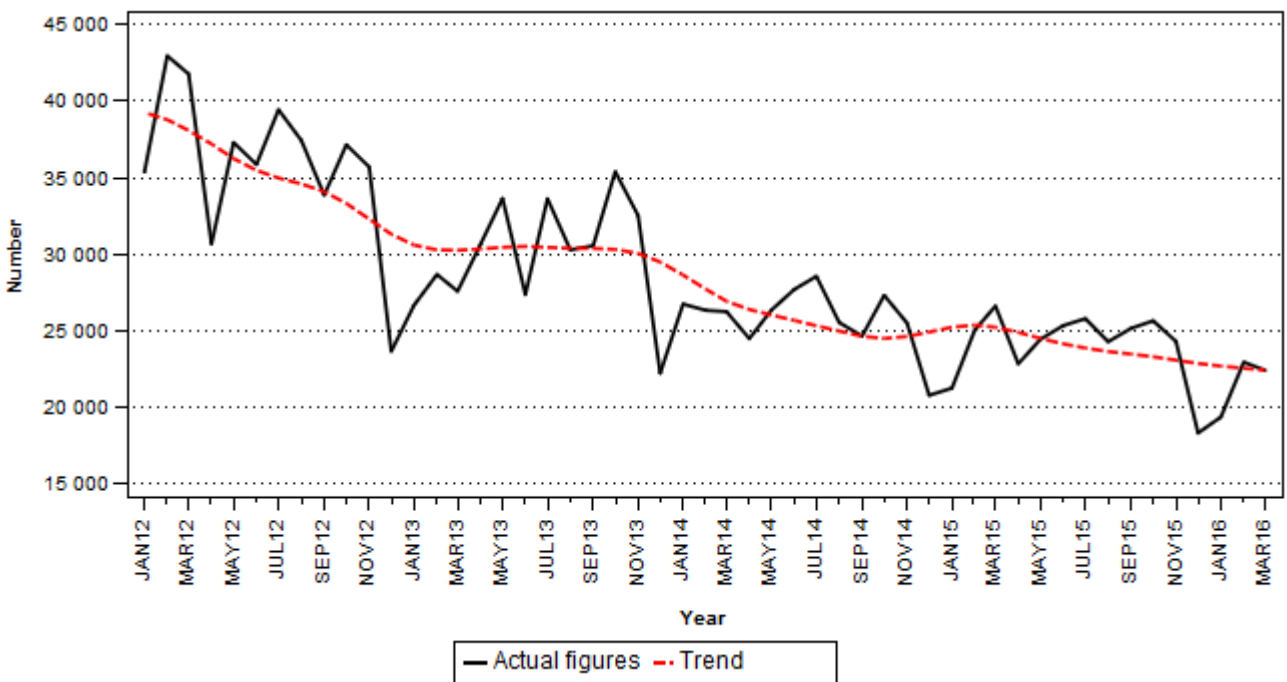


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2015	Mar-15	1/ Feb-16	1/ Mar-16	2015	Mar-15	1/ Feb-16	1/ Mar-16
Cases recorded	Actual figures	733 514	72 493	58 873	57 662	623 802	59 967	48 673	49 966
	Seasonally adjusted		71 281	59 660	57 394		56 896	49 264	47 945
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	43 664	4 222	3 511	3 340	32 616	3 305	2 720	2 516
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	23 011	2 137	2 570	1 817	18 234	1 641	1 241	1 444
	Services - Professional	84 964	7 985	7 154	7 055	73 636	6 578	6 439	6 090
	Services - Other	110 042	11 355	9 325	9 625	90 635	9 938	7 433	8 364
	Rent	29 255	2 951	2 547	2 988	22 558	2 325	2 011	2 226
	Money lent	164 531	17 586	11 644	11 662	153 342	16 827	10 484	10 974
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	89 682	8 988	8 054	6 658	83 701	8 455	7 652	6 186
	Other debts	123 254	11 885	10 081	9 183	111 399	10 927	9 283	8 331
	Total - Actual figures	668 403	67 109	54 886	52 328	586 121	59 996	47 263	46 131
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		67 429	56 414	53 245		59 680	48 078	46 434

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Mar-15	1/ Feb-16	1/ Mar-16	2015	Mar-15	1/ Feb-16	1/ Mar-16
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	18 545	1 793	1 439	1 561	13 804	1 378	1 082	1 218
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 426	726	498	512	5 752	528	412	422
	Services - Professional	50 913	4 866	4 094	3 662	44 324	4 117	3 680	3 255
	Services - Other	42 221	3 565	3 660	3 322	35 776	3 077	3 143	2 881
	Rent	17 851	1 722	1 532	1 476	14 517	1 438	1 288	1 200
	Money lent	69 713	6 578	4 883	5 127	63 786	6 123	4 426	4 745
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 604	2 765	2 169	1 994	23 763	2 427	1 767	1 714
	Other debts	54 764	4 596	4 672	4 764	50 056	4 284	4 185	4 278
	Total - Actual figures	289 037	26 611	22 947	22 418	251 778	23 372	19 983	19 713
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		26 094	23 408	22 140		23 167	20 448	19 646

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Mar-15	1/ Feb-16	1/ Mar-16	2015	Mar-15	1/ Feb-16	1/ Mar-16
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	275 495	26 673	23 860	22 828	157 824	17 497	11 867	12 379
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	104 326	8 209	6 433	7 634	89 527	6 714	5 800	5 886
	Services - Professional	285 325	23 710	24 127	22 329	230 346	19 800	21 172	19 088
	Services - Other	521 021	46 336	51 544	43 255	400 078	29 898	42 135	33 223
	Rent	304 315	28 773	24 859	27 982	213 394	21 747	17 612	19 966
	Money lent	1 172 061	94 732	92 941	107 225	1 052 905	88 914	82 874	95 050
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	506 174	51 876	34 573	45 942	422 857	44 739	28 043	37 717
	Other debts	1 229 098	145 015	102 637	84 775	841 493	129 054	72 166	61 406
	Total - Actual figures	4 397 815	425 324	360 974	361 970	3 408 424	358 363	281 669	284 715
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		408 536	345 494	346 513		343 613	282 556	272 083

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 2015 and the first quarter of 2016

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jan – Mar 2015	Actual estimates Jan – Mar 2016	% change between Jan – Mar 2015 and Jan – Mar 2016	Difference between Jan – Mar 2015 and Jan – Mar 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	173 997	150 739	-13,4	-23 258
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	72 916	64 734	-11,2	-8 182
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 060,9	999,7	-5,8	-61,2

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 2015 and the first quarter of 2016 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	-0,5	-0,8	-0,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,0	-0,6	-0,5
Services - Professional	-0,5	-2,5	0,3
Services - Other	-0,8	0,7	1,8
Rent	0,3	-0,2	0,2
Money lent	-7,6	-6,5	-0,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,2	-1,5	-1,6
Other debts	-3,1	0,2	-4,6
Total	-13,4	-11,2	-5,8

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 2015, 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 2015	Actual estimates March 2016	% change between March 2015 and March 2016	Difference between March 2015 and March 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	67 109	52 328	-22,0	-14 781
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 611	22 418	-15,8	-4 193
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	425,3	362,0	-14,9	-63,3

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
2015	Mar	11 105	5 267	758	3 774	9 790	3 322	26 436	3 976	2 681	67 109
	Apr	8 783	3 847	695	3 207	8 538	2 618	16 889	2 989	2 180	49 746
	May	11 421	4 303	723	3 844	8 002	3 810	19 956	2 972	2 205	57 236
	Jun	10 617	5 205	959	3 314	10 012	2 839	18 966	3 471	2 383	57 766
	Jul	10 353	5 406	843	4 302	9 882	2 618	20 210	3 699	2 594	59 907
	Aug	9 021	4 586	763	4 330	8 050	2 635	17 535	3 023	2 266	52 209
	Sep	9 108	4 882	727	4 195	9 065	3 373	20 049	3 418	2 327	57 144
	Oct	10 180	5 430	750	4 361	9 651	3 471	20 896	3 209	2 438	60 386
	Nov	10 506	4 398	735	4 880	8 794	2 864	20 261	3 513	2 220	58 171
Dec	7 353	2 826	682	3 151	8 094	2 115	14 235	1 740	1 645	41 841	
2016	Jan	7 050	3 004	577	3 678	6 501	2 232	15 769	2 833	1 881	43 525
	Feb	10 083	4 413	656	4 331	8 300	2 514	19 548	2 732	2 309	54 886
	Mar	9 812	4 316	773	4 062	8 978	2 948	16 805	2 785	1 849	52 328

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
2015	Mar	4 342	3 578	486	2 653	3 874	1 641	6 259	1 696	2 082	26 611
	Apr	3 287	2 714	500	2 704	3 527	1 241	5 595	1 410	1 864	22 842
	May	3 267	2 943	368	3 475	3 070	1 523	6 300	1 596	1 897	24 439
	Jun	3 869	3 987	407	2 758	3 691	1 631	5 480	1 605	1 908	25 336
	Jul	4 603	3 318	445	2 627	3 921	1 455	6 032	1 542	1 845	25 788
	Aug	4 109	2 620	438	2 855	3 284	1 234	6 246	1 667	1 832	24 285
	Sep	3 830	2 832	488	2 871	4 416	1 324	6 062	1 381	1 950	25 154
	Oct	4 264	3 220	412	3 056	3 892	1 010	6 541	1 785	1 467	25 647
	Nov	4 163	2 966	458	2 600	4 106	1 027	5 938	1 580	1 468	24 306
	Dec	3 147	1 454	306	2 030	3 031	1 003	5 053	1 059	1 241	18 324
2016	Jan	2 773	1 950	344	1 869	4 108	885	4 417	1 627	1 396	19 369
	Feb	4 763	2 760	442	2 247	3 341	932	5 594	1 490	1 378	22 947
	Mar	4 108	2 604	319	2 653	3 720	1 380	4 994	1 284	1 356	22 418

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
2015	Mar	121 088	58 993	3 709	31 817	45 096	21 926	106 877	23 272	12 546	425 324
	Apr	62 810	47 176	4 018	28 057	39 357	11 619	88 888	28 653	11 625	322 203
	May	74 314	44 532	3 974	48 534	33 327	16 938	100 285	28 835	11 255	361 994
	Jun	81 962	57 301	2 859	26 175	46 373	21 593	91 115	56 095	21 578	405 051
	Jul	86 915	49 682	4 954	30 311	46 133	19 282	104 086	68 679	13 939	423 981
	Aug	95 531	39 286	4 036	33 695	35 588	15 174	105 061	38 913	14 162	381 446
	Sep	53 835	54 304	6 480	28 910	51 247	16 280	105 994	42 981	17 924	377 955
	Oct	76 353	52 076	3 667	35 954	45 980	14 400	104 905	37 194	13 860	384 389
	Nov	71 399	47 573	4 916	35 697	55 776	14 894	100 029	41 485	10 641	382 410
	Dec	61 750	25 351	2 698	24 175	36 816	13 727	104 642	19 770	8 559	297 488
2016	Jan	46 639	34 713	2 485	24 477	35 414	11 661	72 696	37 228	11 414	276 727
	Feb	80 249	48 557	9 865	26 294	35 541	13 735	96 530	37 966	12 237	360 974
	Mar	73 597	51 422	3 985	35 333	45 669	12 418	96 545	29 566	13 435	361 970

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 2016 was 86,7%. The collection rate for February 2016 was 85,7%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Unpublished statistics	9	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
Symbols and abbreviations	10	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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Fax number: (012) 310 8664 (technical enquiries)

email: onicama@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)
magdaj@statssa.gov.za (orders/subscription services)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA