

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary): May 2006

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Key figures for the month of May 2006

	May 2006	% change between May 2005 and May 2006	% change between March 2005 to May 2005 and March 2006 to May 2006
Actual estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	119 263	0,8	8,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	74 905	-4,7	3,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	567,7	2,3	3,2

Key findings as at the end of May 2006

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2006 increased by 8,3% compared with the three months ended May 2005.

The major contributors to the increase of 8,3% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2006 compared with the three months ended May 2005, were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (+4,1 percentage points), 'other' debts (+3,9 percentage points), promissory notes and others (+2,7 percentage points) and goods sold on open account (+2,0 percentage points). There was, however, a decrease of 3,0 percentage points with regard to civil summons of 'other' services (see Table 6 column 2 page 10).

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for May 2006 increased by 0,8% compared with May 2005.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2006 increased by 3,1% compared with the three months ended May 2005.

The major contributors to the increase of 3,1% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2006 compared with the three months ended May 2005, were civil judgements in respect of money lent (+3,0 percentage points) and 'other' debts (+2,7 percentage points). However, this increase was partially counteracted by a decrease in 'other' services (-2,0 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3 page 10).

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for May 2006 decreased by 4,7% compared with May 2005.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2006 increased by 3,2% compared with the three months ended May 2005.

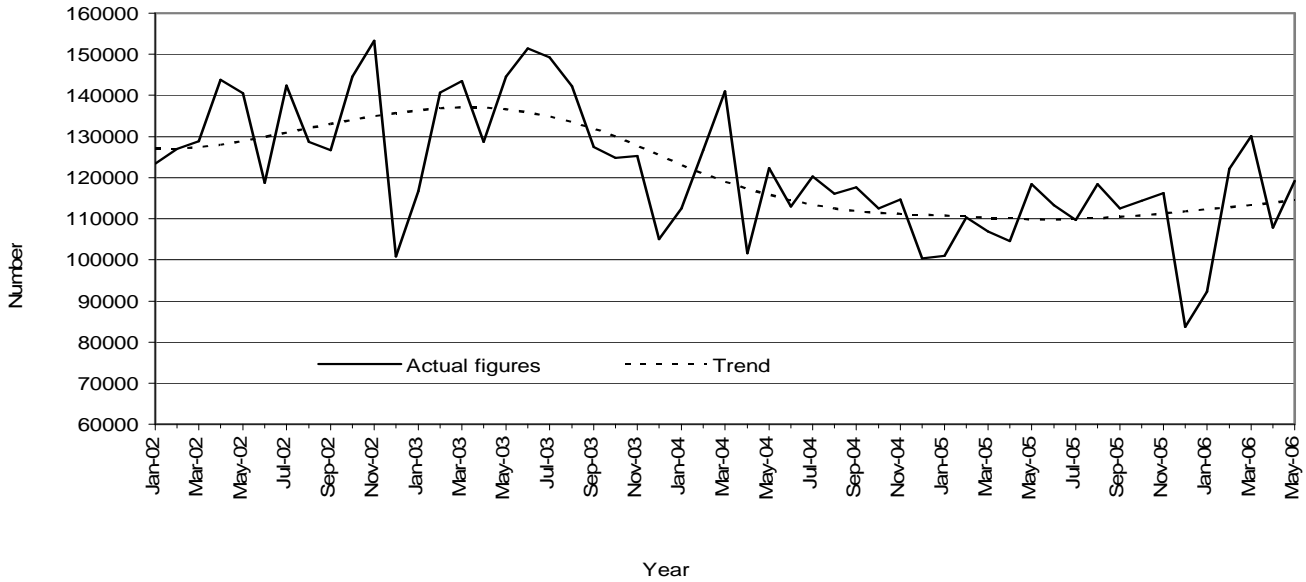
The major contributors to the increase of 3,2% in the value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended May 2006 compared with the three months ended May 2005, were civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (+2,6 percentage points), instalment sale transactions (+1,3 percentage points) and 'other' services (+1,3 percentage points). However, this increase was partially counteracted by a decrease in judgements recorded for promissory notes and others (-2,1 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4 page 10).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for May 2006 increased by 2,3% compared with May 2005.

During May 2006, 74 905 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R567,7 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R567,7 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R186,8 million or 32,9%) and 'other' debts (R119,8 million or 21,1%) (see Table 4 page 9).

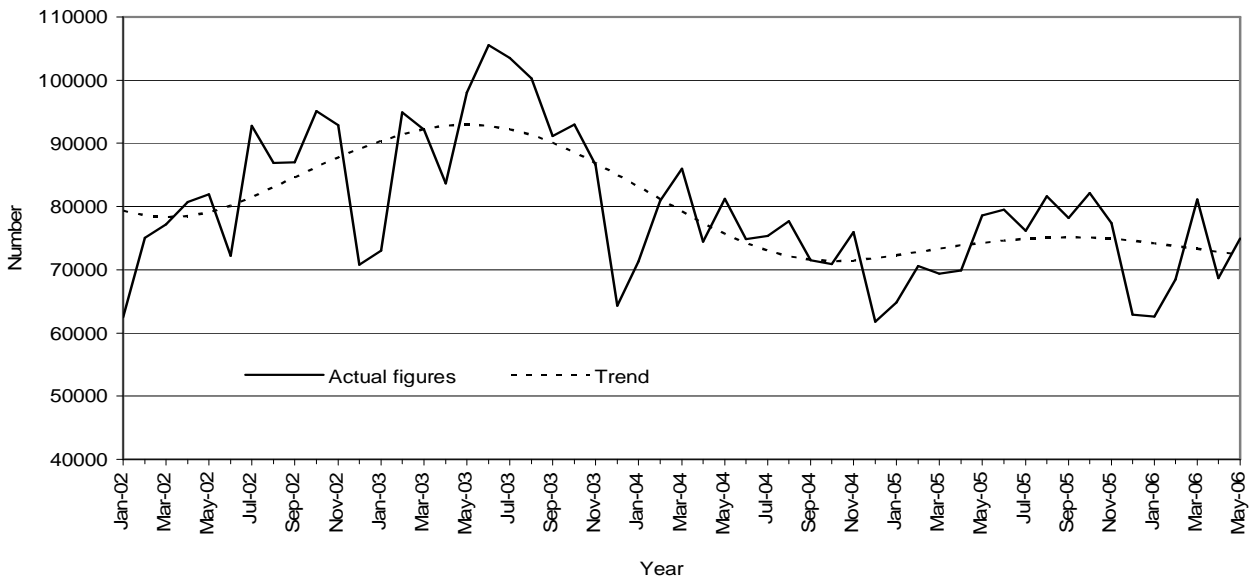
Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to 2006 respectively. In figure 1 since March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend started decreasing from May 2003 until September 2004 but levelled off until September 2005. The trend has been rising slightly since October 2005.

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 since April 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until June 2003. The trend has decreased since July 2003 until October 2004 but since November 2004 it has increased slightly until September 2005 and levelled off since then.

Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Notes

Forthcoming issue	Issue	Expected release date
	June 2006	24 August 2006
Purpose of the survey	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.	
Response rate	The response rate for May 2006 was 89,4%.	

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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			
	2005	2005	2006	2006	2005	2005	2006	2006
		May	Apr.*	1/ May		May	Apr.*	1/ May
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 514 116	135 575	120 088	136 689	1 373 027	124 258	107 526	123 352
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		129 363	131 375	130 806		118 439	117 319	117 973
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 679	11 763	13 818	14 440	138 886	10 254	11 991	12 451
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	51 566	3 090	2 423	2 514	46 903	2 691	1 933	2 083
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	152 858	14 363	10 850	12 218	133 286	12 734	9 406	10 526
2.2.2 Other	229 019	24 995	15 297	16 833	208 046	22 671	13 730	15 051
2.3 Rent	49 151	4 309	3 705	4 311	39 785	3 573	2 706	3 304
2.3.1 Money lent	296 341	28 553	27 554	29 450	277 400	27 023	26 315	28 263
2.3.2 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	128 403	11 556	12 050	15 090	118 238	10 725	10 643	13 427
2.6 Other debts	241 952	19 745	22 121	24 407	215 513	17 768	19 047	21 707
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 308 969	118 374	107 818	119 263	1 178 057	107 439	95 771	106 812
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		111 676	116 193	112 884		101 431	102 983	101 257

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

Table 2 - Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year or month	Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East-London	Kimberley	Pieter-maritzburg	Durban	Johannes-burg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereenig-ing and Vander-bijlpark	Bloem-fontein
2004	143 146	81 408	37 375	13 044	19 321	121 484	169 721	87 621	51 872	128 803	25 498	55 835
2005	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2005 - J	11 896	6 551	2 247	545	1 578	10 239	14 059	3 943	4 003	9 006	2 093	4 441
F	14 772	6 551	3 172	895	1 781	9 815	11 918	5 120	5 274	12 240	2 592	4 182
M	11 976	5 099	2 889	632	1 439	5 740	13 198	4 899	4 666	10 904	2 980	4 604
A	13 600	4 474	2 504	801	1 526	3 230	13 299	5 143	3 967	14 042	2 991	4 808
M	12 386	7 915	3 151	997	2 268	5 435	14 706	6 654	5 028	12 756	1 832	4 884
J	15 193	6 117	3 350	721	1 636	4 921	12 201	4 335	5 686	12 114	1 794	5 073
J	13 402	4 474	3 240	873	1 894	4 921	12 726	4 973	5 567	11 494	2 127	5 083
A	18 630	5 573	2 941	861	2 220	7 311	14 095	4 914	5 759	11 839	3 311	5 249
S	15 391	5 612	3 517	911	1 539	7 311	13 090	5 117	4 851	12 216	1 112	5 371
O	14 575	7 432	3 951	871	1 433	6 397	13 889	4 751	4 479	11 456	1 901	5 291
N	16 106	6 489	4 009	740	1 410	6 397	11 730	5 502	5 731	12 428	2 469	5 214
D	7 608	3 489	3 516	401	1 367	5 751	11 730	3 135	3 973	7 805	2 235	5 161
2006 - J	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
F	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
M	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
A	11 657*	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364*	12 046	5 658*	4 454	8 127	3 028	4 789
1/ M	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	4 789

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

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			
	2005	2005	2006	2006	2005	2005	2006	2006
		May	Apr.*	1/ May		May	Apr.*	1/ May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	114 109	11 052	9 717	9 771	104 472	10 277	8 665	8 843
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	16 620	1 382	1 004	752	14 927	1 222	874	665
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	83 017	7 913	6 129	7 044	77 613	7 698	5 358	6 236
1.2.2 Other	122 987	10 649	8 109	8 615	115 538	10 010	7 511	7 950
1.3 Rent	29 088	2 393	2 042	2 007	22 870	1 586	1 681	1 659
1.4 Money lent	309 063	26 906	23 235	27 958	304 434	26 563	22 696	27 406
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	82 229	7 350	5 927	6 641	77 741	7 066	5 504	6 274
1.6 Other debts	134 032	10 936	12 536	12 117	121 147	9 596	11 546	11 057
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	891 145	78 581	68 699	74 905	838 742	74 018	63 835	70 090
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		74 409	72 752	70 923		69 687	67 323	66 007

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

Table 4 - Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2005	2005	2006	2006	2005	2005	2006	2006
		May	Apr.*	1/ May		May	Apr.*	1/ May
R'000								
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	661 352	56 149	45 227	75 397	540 967	45 792	34 455	62 663
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	273 731	21 729	17 419	27 104	227 774	17 251	11 880	23 377
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	258 691	25 237	16 616	34 597	219 341	22 374	13 569	30 947
1.2.2 Other	601 147	49 534	55 866	52 642	507 366	43 053	46 226	43 563
1.3 Rent	217 608	20 288	16 571	18 920	155 938	13 706	13 154	14 201
1.4 Money lent	2 152 458	154 244	150 863	186 822	2 028 303	144 689	143 670	170 999
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	822 425	65 067	52 298	52 369	729 677	59 300	48 637	45 262
1.6 Other debts	1 663 448	162 626	156 332	119 800	1 281 651	127 700	107 387	89 508
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 650 860	554 874	511 192	567 651	5 691 017	473 865	418 978	480 520
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		585 126	561 717	595 688		485 291	454 830	489 713

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* Revised

Table 5 - Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Actual estimates March 2005 to May 2005	Actual estimates March 2006 to May 2006	% change between March 2005 to May 2005 and March 2006 to May 2006	Difference between March 2005 to May 2005 and March 2006 to May 2006
Number of summonses for debt	329 821	357 258	8,3%	27 437
Number of judgements for debt	217 858	224 679	3,1%	6 821
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 623,4	1 675,9	3,2%	52,5

Table 6 - Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Different kinds of debts	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	2,0	-0,4	0,6
Instalment sale transactions	-0,8	0,1	1,3
Professional services	-1,0	-0,3	0,2
Other services	-3,0	-2,0	1,3
Rent	0,4	0,6	-0,1
Money lent	4,1	3,0	-0,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	2,7	-0,6	-2,1
Other debts	3,9	2,7	2,6
Total	8,3	3,1	3,2

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during March 2005 to May 2005, divided by 100.

Table 7 - Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

	Actual estimates May 2005	Actual estimates May 2006	% change between May 2005 and May 2006	Difference between May 2005 and May 2006
Number of summonses for debt	118 374	119 263	0,8%	889
Number of judgements for debt	78 581	74 905	-4,7%	-3 676
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	554,9	567,7	2,3%	12,8

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, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
- Scope of the survey**
- 3 This survey covers -
 - 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**
- 4 The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrates' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.
 - 5 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 recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as the measure of size.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 6 The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
- Trend cycle**
- 7 Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
- Publications**
- 8 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:
 - *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly.
 - *SA Statistics* issued annually.

Unpublished statistics

- 9 In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not included in standard publications. The statistics can be made available in one or more of the following ways: computer printout, CD or diskette. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.

Symbols and abbreviations

- 10 R/D Refer to Drawer
CD Compact Disc
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 a debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. a 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 sales, 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 and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, signed by one person, in which he promises 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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