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Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

May 2007

**Embargoed until:
19 July 2007
09:30**

Enquiries:

User Information Services
Tel. (012) 310 8600 / 4892 / 8390

Forthcoming issue:

June 2007

Expected release date

23 August 2007

Statistics South Africa • Mbalo-mbalo ya Afrika Tshipembe • Tinhlayo-tiko ta Afrika-Dzonga • Dipalopalo tsa Aforika Borwa • Ezezibalo zaseNingizimu Afrika
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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2007

Actual estimates	May 2007	% change between May 2006 and May 2007	% change between March 2006 to May 2006 and March 2007 to May 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	134 371	12,2%	2,7%
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	73 003	8,6%	-14,8%
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	657,8	20,3%	-1,7%

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MAY 2007)

Key findings as at the end of May 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2007 increased by 2,7% compared with the three months ended May 2006.

The major contributors to the increase of 2,7% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2007 compared with the three months ended May 2006 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (6,8 percentage points), 'other services' (1,4 percentage points) and promissory notes and other (1,1 percentage points). There was, however, a decrease of 3,3 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for goods sold on open account and a decrease of 2,4 percentage points in 'other' debts (see Table 6 column 2, page 9).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2007 decreased by 14,8% compared with the three months ended May 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 14,8% in civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2007 compared with the three months ended May 2006 were civil judgements in respect of 'other' debts (-4,6 percentage points), 'other services' (-3,4 percentage points) and goods sold on an open account (-3,1 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2007 decreased by 1,7% compared with the three months ended May 2006.

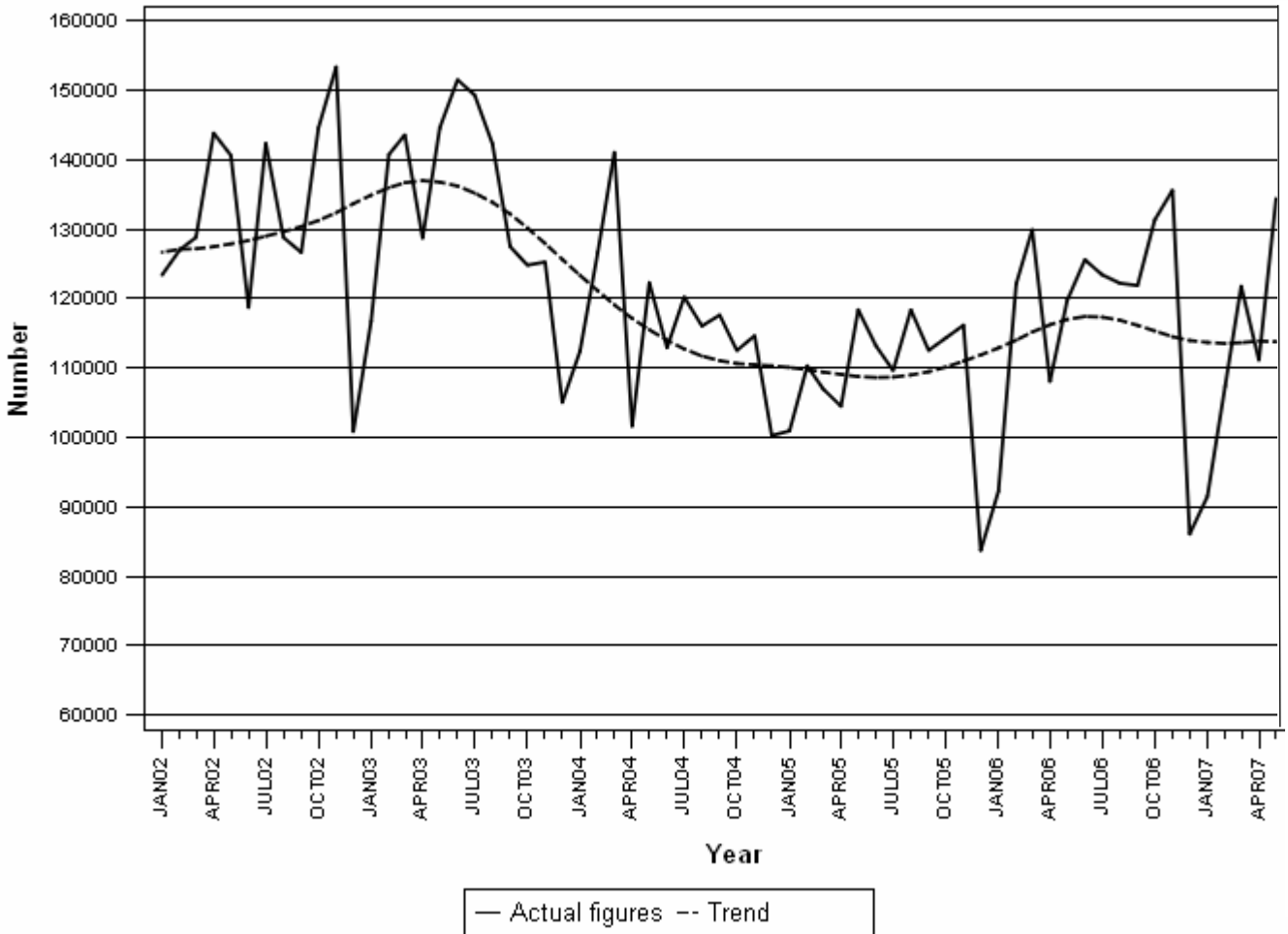
The major contributors to the decrease of 1,7% in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended May 2007 compared with the three months ended May 2006 were civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (-2,7 percentage points), 'other services' (-1,3 percentage points) and instalment sale transactions (-1,2 percentage points). There was, however, an increase of 3,7 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for money lent (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for May 2007 increased by 20,3% compared with May 2006.

During May 2007, 73 003 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R657,8 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R657,8 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R283,6 million or 43,1%) and 'other' debts (R104,3 million or 15,9%) (see Table 4, page 8).

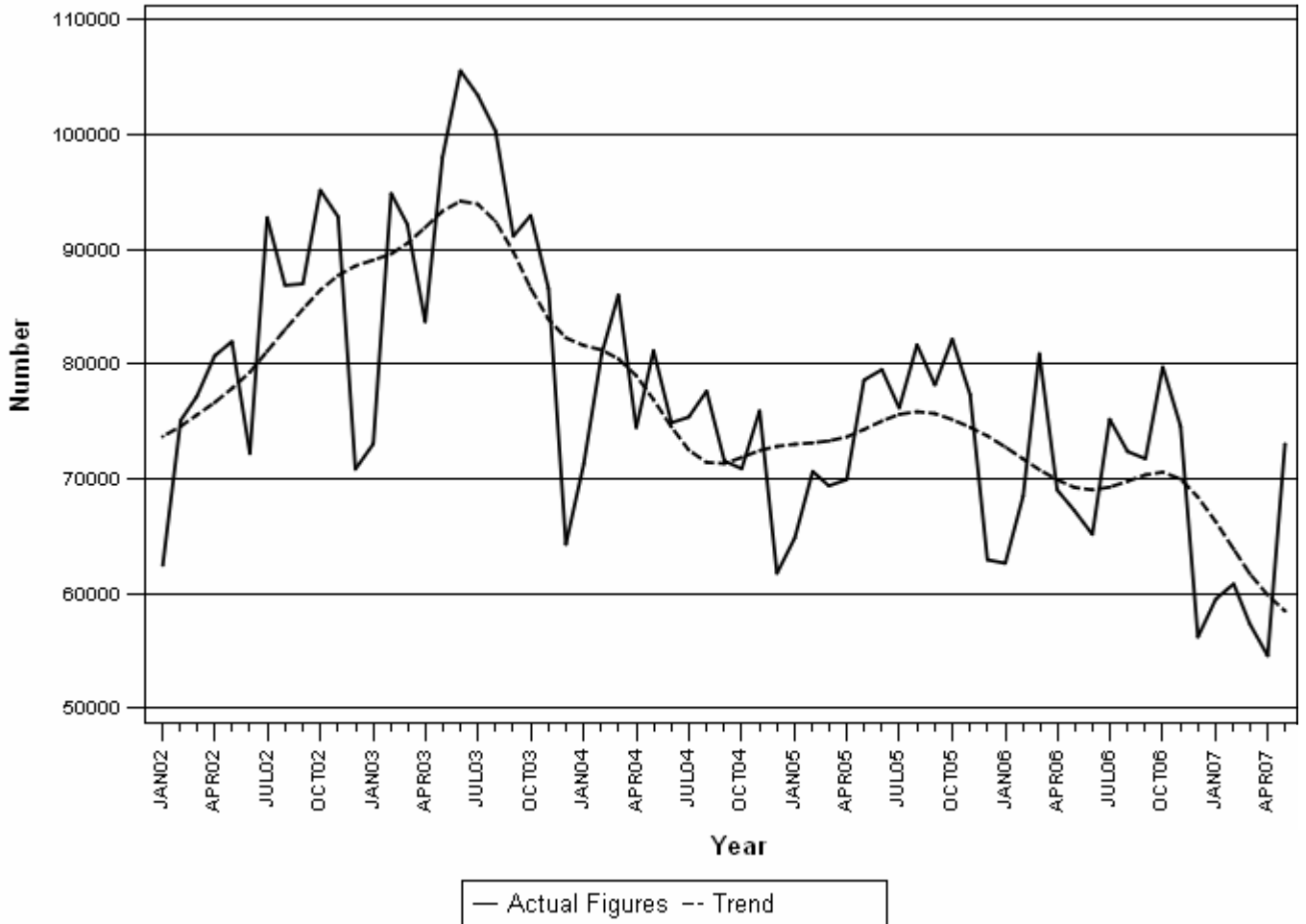
Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to May 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend decreased from May 2003 to February 2005 but levelled off until October 2005. From November 2005 the trend increased once more but levelled off from November 2006 until present.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 from January 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until May 2003. The trend decreased from June 2003 to August 2004 but from September 2004 it increased slightly until August 2005. Thereafter it decreased until June 2006. From October 2006 the trend declined until present.

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		May	*April	1/ May		May	*April	1/ May
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	137 123	124 925	155 460	1 442 388	123 896	109 016	136 966
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		128 143	135 449	144 646		115 326	118 353	126 787
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	14 652	9 798	12 312	137 314	12 598	8 103	10 296
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	2 888	1 731	2 473	28 794	2 225	1 427	2 038
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	12 439	11 158	12 914	117 768	10 816	9 361	10 419
2.2.2 Other	200 992	16 374	18 764	17 114	178 084	14 664	16 618	14 686
2.3 Rent	50 894	4 367	3 122	3 494	39 914	3 363	2 536	2 795
2.4 Money lent	407 106	29 168	32 977	44 815	387 509	27 952	29 844	41 682
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	15 169	13 549	19 076	133 964	13 492	12 232	17 595
2.6 Other debts	277 740	24 654	20 025	22 173	242 332	22 267	17 138	19 048
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	119 711	111 124	134 371	1 265 679	107 377	97 259	118 559
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		111 080	118 344	124 402		99 461	103 898	109 449

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	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2005	Year Total	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
	January	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
	February	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
	March	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
	April	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
	May	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
	June	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
	July	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
	August	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
	September	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
	October	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
	November	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	4 347	19 625	4 144	4 145
December	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	2 666	8 744	2 707	3 981	
2007	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922
	March	12 802	7 935	3 553	1 123	1 613	8 978	15 648	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010
	*April	9 347	5 013	3 167	1 123	1 748	8 518	15 648	5 091	4 826	12 558	4 822	3 652
	1/May	11 728	6 650	5 105	1 332	1 748	8 518	25 094	5 579	4 288	16 251	2 714	3 652

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		May	*April	1/ May		May	*April	1/ May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	9 717	6 807	8 124	109 368	8 813	6 068	7 222
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	770	745	959	10 582	682	607	796
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	7 072	5 467	6 043	69 974	6 238	4 913	5 451
1.2.2 Other	96 191	8 180	5 947	6 559	89 567	7 598	5 614	6 195
1.3 Rent	25 941	2 086	1 764	2 040	20 595	1 689	1 434	1 707
1.4 Money lent	297 379	20 637	21 498	30 927	289 631	20 029	21 140	30 578
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	6 661	4 472	8 959	68 753	6 280	4 189	8 605
1.6 Other debts	136 605	12 080	7 860	9 392	122 291	11 152	7 179	8 621
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	67 203	54 560	73 003	780 761	62 481	51 144	69 175
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		63 485	57 762	68 969		59 573	53 967	66 050

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		May	*April	1/ May		May	*April	1/ May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	72 367	43 219	90 780	523 117	60 223	32 166	78 882
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	28 470	17 867	22 813	197 360	24 254	14 483	18 985
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	34 498	16 497	20 732	223 269	30 630	13 558	15 179
1.2.2 Other	579 439	47 738	36 637	52 069	464 798	39 547	28 084	43 795
1.3 Rent	222 568	23 004	16 425	21 697	153 995	16 024	12 235	16 105
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	173 256	144 881	283 619	1 960 167	156 788	138 287	273 846
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	53 351	46 567	61 746	630 837	46 242	38 986	55 192
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	114 195	157 450	104 341	1 271 309	85 733	143 963	85 418
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	546 879	479 543	657 797	5 424 852	459 441	421 762	587 402
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		558 050	510 010	665 044		456 671	439 219	578 900

1/ Preliminary.

* 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 2006 to May 2006	Actual estimates March 2007 to May 2007	% change between March 2006 to May 2006 and March 2007 to May 2007	Difference between March 2006 to May 2006 and March 2007 to May 2007
Number of summonses for debt	357 685	367 279	2,7%	9 594
Number of judgements for debt	217 103	184 901	-14,8%	-32 202
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 653,7	1 626,2	-1,7%	-27,5

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.

	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	-3,3	-3,1	0,8
--Instalment sale transactions	-0,4	-0,5	-1,2
Professional Services	0,1	-1,3	-0,6
Other Services	1,4	-3,4	-1,3
Rent	-0,7	-0,9	-0,4
Money lent	6,8	-0,3	3,7
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	1,1	-0,8	0,1
Other debts	-2,4	-4,6	-2,7
Total	2,7	-14,8	-1,7

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 2006 to May 2006, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

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 2006	Actual estimates May 2007	% change between May 2006 and May 2007	Difference between May 2006 and May 2007
Number of summonses for debt	119 711	134 371	12,2%	14 660
Number of judgements for debt	67 203	73 003	8,6%	5 800
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	546,9	657,8	20,3%	1 109

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.
- 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 magistrate' 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 measure of size.
- Survey methodology and design** 6 The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
- Response rate** 7 The response rate for the civil cases for debt for May 2007 was 87,4%.
- 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:
- *Bulletin of Statistics issued quarterly.*
 - *SA Statistics 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, on diskette or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
- Symbols and abbreviations** 11 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 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 sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect to 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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