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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Results for May 2012

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2012

Actual estimates	May 2012	% change between May 2011 and May 2012	% change between March to May 2011 and March to May 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	86 107	-4,3	-6,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	36 894	-25,6	-19,7
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	413,9	-11,3	-19,6

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 6,5% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded for the three months ended May 2012 compared with the three months ended May 2011. A 4,3% year-on-year decrease was recorded in May 2012 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major categories that contributed to the 6,5% decrease were promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing -5,8 percentage points) and 'other debts' (contributing -1,9 percentage points).

The 'other services' category partially counteracted the decrease and recorded a positive contribution of 1,4 percentage points (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The three months ended May 2012 reflected a 19,7% decrease in the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt compared with the three months ended May 2011. A year-on-year decrease of 25,6% was recorded in May 2012 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The categories behind the 19,7% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,4 percentage points);
- 'other debts' (contributing -3,7 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -3,7 percentage points); and
- promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (contributing -3,4 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 19,6% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2012 compared with the same period of the previous year. A year-on-year decrease of 11,3% was recorded in May 2012 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 19,6% decrease were:

- money lent (contributing -10,2 percentage points);
- 'other debts' (contributing -3,9 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -3,2 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,2 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During May 2012, 36 894 civil judgements for debt amounting to R413,9 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R413,9 million were:

- money lent (R110,6 million or 26,7%);
- 'other debts' (R89,9 million or 21,7%);
- services (R78,7 million or 19,0%); and
- goods sold (R65,8 million or 15,9%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

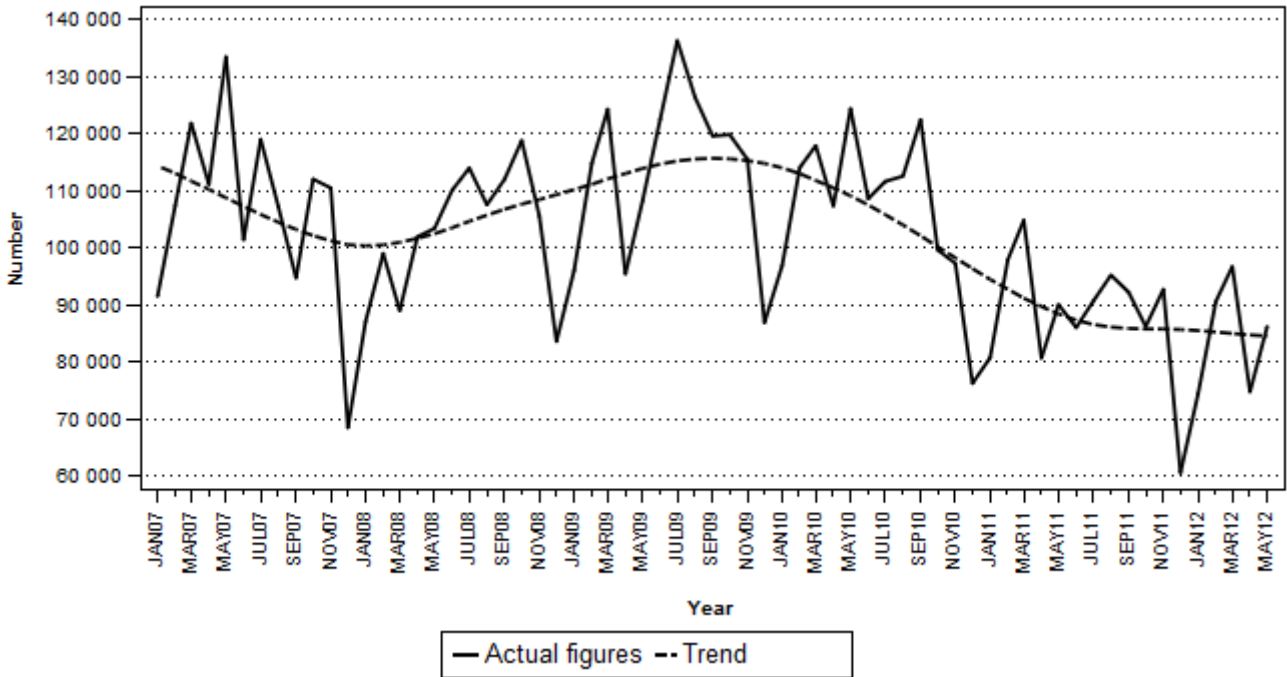
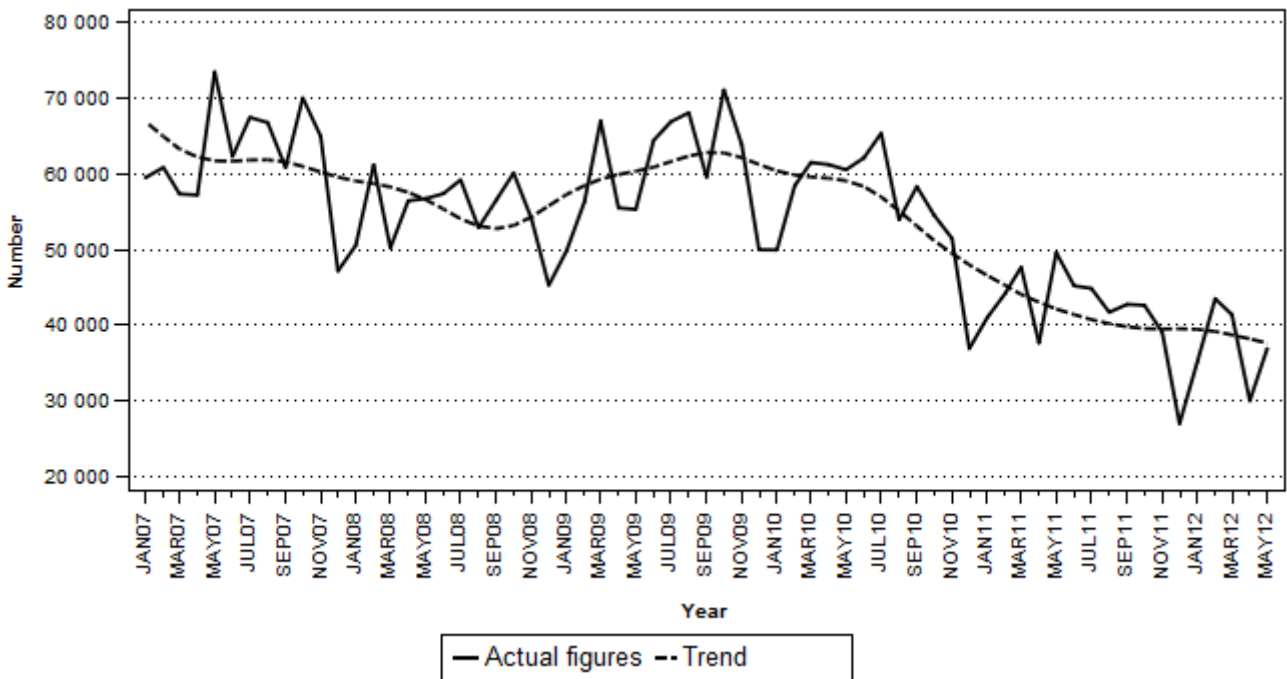


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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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	1/ May 2011	1/ April 2012	1/ May 2012	1/ 2011	1/ May 2011	1/ April 2012	1/ May 2012
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 228 074	107 929	80 613	91 838	1 074 543	97 753	71 391	81 114
	Seasonally adjusted		102 392	86 846	86 877		91 675	76 231	75 742
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	82 722	6 040	5 664	6 060	63 885	4 547	4 231	4 458
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	24 715	1 539	1 568	2 142	20 451	1 255	1 387	1 872
	Services - Professional	117 707	9 507	7 693	9 617	102 139	8 307	6 932	8 702
	Services - Other	197 580	18 769	13 983	16 105	176 093	17 124	12 746	14 526
	Rent	46 160	3 697	3 061	3 247	36 613	3 104	2 377	2 438
	Money lent	232 578	15 613	21 368	19 758	214 837	14 652	20 485	18 709
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	171 991	19 370	9 683	15 089	151 980	18 330	8 488	13 368
	Other debts	183 793	15 470	11 702	14 089	156 535	13 796	10 447	11 670
	Total - Actual figures	1 057 246	90 005	74 722	86 107	922 533	81 115	67 093	75 743
Total - Seasonally adjusted		87 214	82 068	83 094		78 123	72 957	72 598	

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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
	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
	April	6 630	4 986	152	350	1 591	3 374	9 428	3 524	3 944	7 098	1 083	2 194
	May	6 931	4 543	159	537	2 411	3 355	14 658	3 973	2 492	7 892	1 041	1 891

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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	1/ May 2011	1/ April 2012	1/ May 2012	1/ 2011	1/ May 2011	1/ April 2012	1/ May 2012
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	56 599	8 570	3 049	3 853	48 208	7 730	2 438	3 022
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	10 636	791	686	868	8 673	623	558	731
	Services - Professional	68 314	5 819	4 555	5 994	63 158	5 242	3 997	5 371
	Services - Other	57 871	4 918	4 033	5 093	50 115	4 424	3 455	4 362
	Rent	25 693	2 361	2 177	2 206	20 599	2 104	1 730	1 703
	Money lent	163 337	14 764	9 065	10 189	158 119	14 304	8 599	9 722
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	44 550	5 090	1 886	2 793	38 545	3 993	1 456	2 339
	Other debts	76 406	7 286	4 573	5 898	67 988	6 375	4 107	5 459
	Total - Actual figures	503 406	49 599	30 024	36 894	455 405	44 795	26 340	32 709
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		49 362	32 987	36 643		44 971	28 649	32 817

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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	1/ May 2011	1/ April 2012	1/ May 2012	1/ 2011	1/ May 2011	1/ April 2012	1/ May 2012
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	522 678	51 152	35 677	49 154	333 611	30 700	16 619	22 328
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	284 150	22 556	12 672	16 606	230 821	16 867	10 820	14 165
	Services - Professional	308 692	26 039	21 106	31 580	264 557	20 831	16 525	25 038
	Services - Other	592 032	50 705	33 637	47 140	444 349	36 446	26 383	34 195
	Rent	374 423	29 079	27 431	33 052	223 786	17 905	15 966	21 593
	Money lent	1 525 895	159 849	81 499	110 614	1 422 619	148 716	75 124	103 806
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	536 585	39 145	33 303	35 840	436 042	29 411	22 687	27 166
	Other debts	1 016 435	88 275	65 611	89 909	728 727	66 096	51 991	68 073
	Total - Actual figures	5 160 890	466 800	310 936	413 895	4 084 512	366 972	236 115	316 364
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		469 917	354 767	414 960		360 273	268 282	309 124

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended May 2012 and the three months ended May 2011

Actual estimates	Actual estimates March to May 2011	Actual estimates March to May 2012	% change between March to May 2011 and March to May 2012	Difference between March to May 2011 and March to May 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	275 404	257 503	-6,5	-17 901
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	134 923	108 319	-19,7	-26 604
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 351,2	1 085,8	-19,6	-265,4

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 three months ended May 2012 and the three months ended May 2011 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-0,3	-3,6	-0,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,3	-0,1	-2,6
Services - Professional	-0,7	-0,8	0,4
Services - Other	1,4	-0,6	-2,6
Rent	-0,2	-0,1	0,4
Money lent	0,6	-7,4	-10,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-5,8	-3,4	-0,5
Other debts	-1,9	-3,7	-3,9
Total	-6,5	-19,7	-19,6

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 March to May 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 May 2011	Actual estimates May 2012	% change between May 2011 and May 2012	Difference between May 2011 and May 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	90 005	86 107	-4,3	-3 898
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	49 599	36 894	-25,6	-12 705
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	466,8	413,9	-11,3	-52,9

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 magistrate's 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 May 2012 was 90,1%. Improved collection rate for April 2012 was 90,7%.
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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