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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Enquiries:

Juan-Pierre Terblanche
Tel: (012) 310 2965

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Key results for May 2015

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2015

Actual estimates	May 2015	% change between May 2014 and May 2015	% change between March to May 2014 and March to May 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	57 265	-11,0	-5,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	24 448	-7,2	-4,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	362,9	5,3	9,0

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 5,5% in the three months ended May 2015 compared with the three months ended May 2014. A year-on-year decrease of 11,0% was recorded between May 2014 and May 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The largest negative contributions to the 5,5% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -2,9 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -1,3 percentage points); and
- rent (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 4,1% in the three months ended May 2015 compared with the three months ended May 2014. A decrease of 7,2% was recorded between May 2014 and May 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The largest negative contributions to the 4,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -3,1 percentage points);
- ‘other’ debts (contributing -1,3 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -1,0 percentage point) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 9,0% higher in the three months ended May 2015 compared with the three months ended May 2014. A year-on-year increase of 5,3% was recorded in May 2015 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The largest positive contributions to the 9,0% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing 4,5 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing 2,3 percentage points); and
- services (contributing 1,3 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In May 2015, 24 448 civil judgements for debt amounting to R362,9 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R107,3 million or 29,6%);
- ‘other’ debts (R99,4 million or 27,4%); and
- services (R64,0 million or 17,6%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

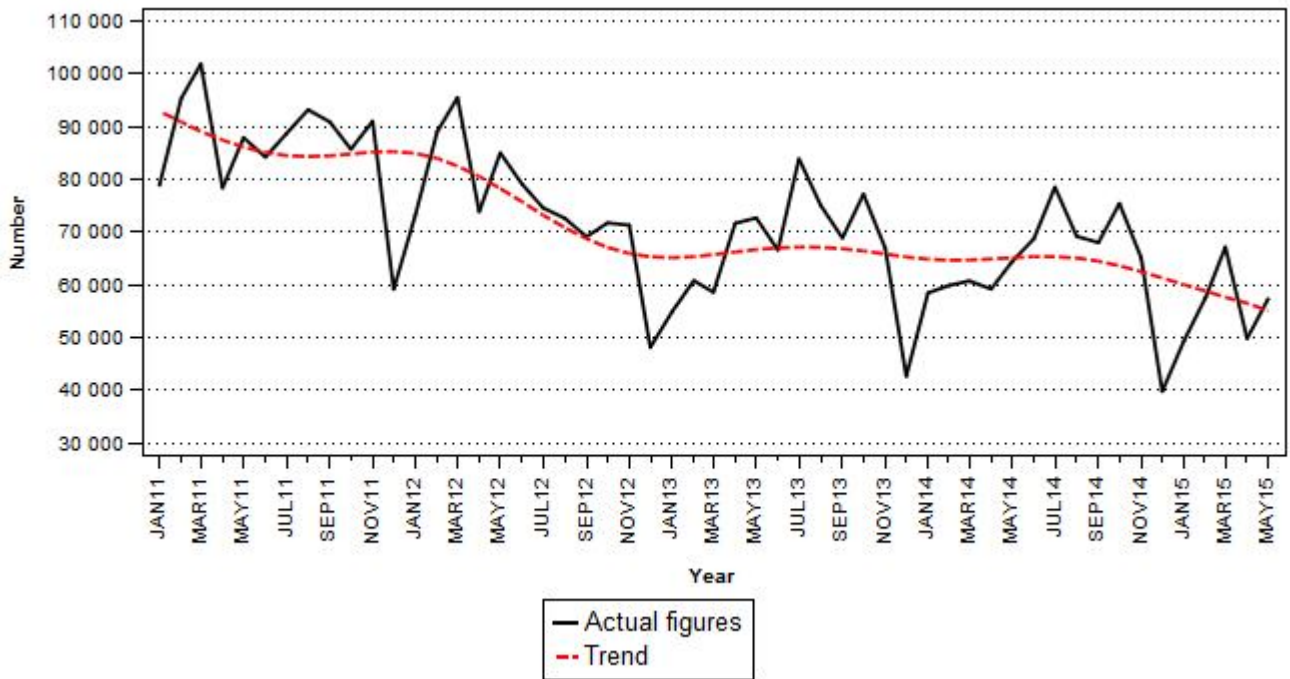
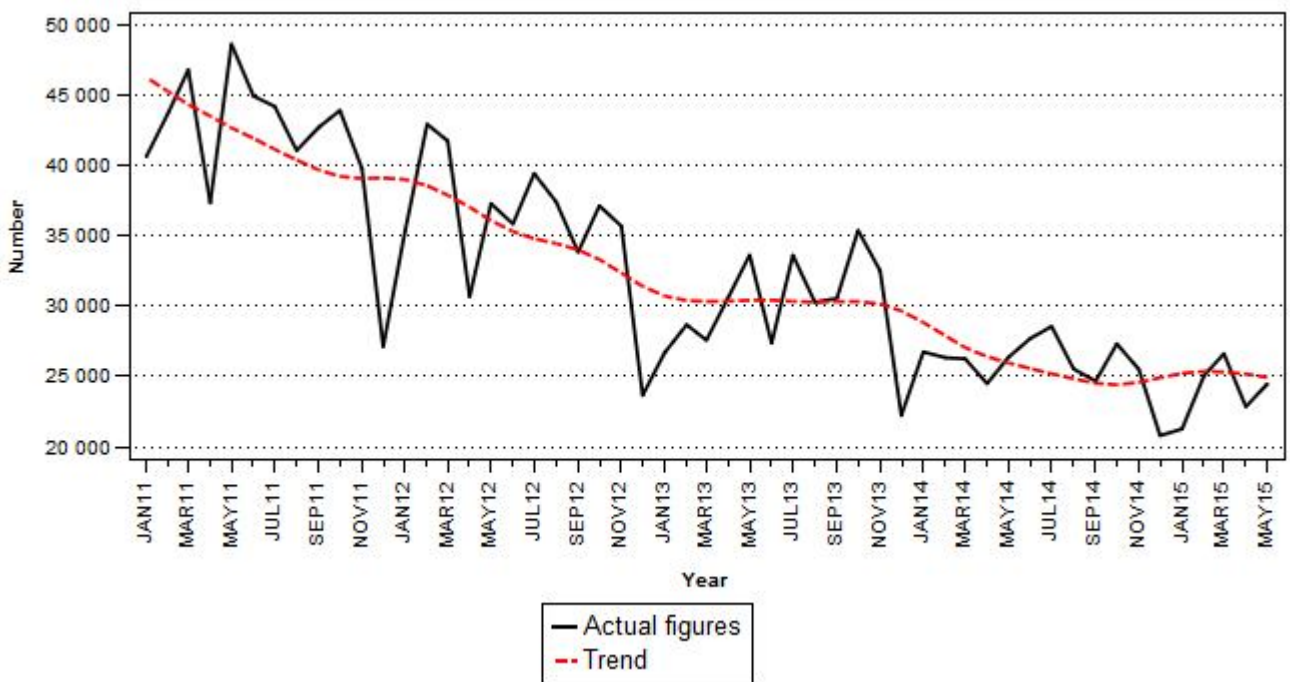


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	May-14	1/ Apr-15	1/ May-15	2014	May-14	1/ Apr-15	1/ May-15
Cases recorded	Actual figures	838 926	70 210	56 669	63 108	738 542	62 546	50 026	52 367
	Seasonally adjusted		66 831	61 201	60 036		59 380	52 968	49 834
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	53 702	4 360	3 218	4 127	41 998	3 405	2 391	3 160
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	26 973	1 816	1 727	1 993	21 678	1 432	1 314	1 637
	Services - Professional	93 548	7 834	6 503	6 719	83 216	6 979	5 720	5 647
	Services - Other	124 116	11 321	8 105	9 648	107 931	9 919	6 948	7 579
	Rent	39 481	2 849	2 254	2 338	32 456	2 387	1 833	1 788
	Money lent	199 369	15 933	12 257	13 551	189 974	15 259	11 450	12 541
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	98 753	10 349	5 841	7 816	91 037	9 882	5 384	7 474
	Other debts	130 908	9 900	9 841	11 073	117 735	9 087	8 860	10 059
	Total - Actual figures	766 850	64 362	49 746	57 265	686 025	58 350	43 900	49 885
Total - Seasonally adjusted		61 509	54 926	54 687		55 429	48 097	47 449	

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	May-14	1/ Apr-15	1/ May-15	2014	May-14	1/ Apr-15	1/ May-15
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	21 883	1 885	1 620	1 599	16 688	1 417	1 261	1 187
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 381	603	602	631	5 580	441	441	492
	Services - Professional	53 262	4 429	3 564	4 194	47 696	3 997	3 018	3 457
	Services - Other	47 316	3 953	3 050	3 550	41 425	3 412	2 519	3 146
	Rent	17 543	1 388	1 617	1 307	14 406	1 134	1 347	1 084
	Money lent	75 586	6 272	5 524	6 350	70 978	5 891	5 129	5 880
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 335	2 644	2 533	2 326	23 145	2 227	2 225	1 993
	Other debts	59 879	5 177	4 332	4 491	55 630	4 841	4 056	4 149
	Total - Actual figures	310 185	26 351	22 842	24 448	275 548	23 360	19 996	21 388
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		25 353	25 343	23 636		23 086	21 050	21 192

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	May-14	1/ Apr-15	1/ May-15	2014	May-14	1/ Apr-15	1/ May-15
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	289 100	29 197	19 661	25 315	166 780	12 412	12 843	15 426
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	89 599	6 624	7 418	9 021	75 311	4 709	6 644	8 083
	Services - Professional	268 653	23 283	19 276	21 243	234 985	21 052	14 590	17 037
	Services - Other	470 117	39 163	37 664	42 716	375 093	33 132	29 533	36 485
	Rent	277 582	24 896	25 847	21 322	201 587	18 607	18 760	15 587
	Money lent	1 085 532	87 193	85 241	107 253	1 002 428	82 583	81 378	96 684
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	418 697	38 612	33 555	36 564	349 493	32 612	30 478	32 514
	Other debts	1 201 729	95 739	93 541	99 418	779 107	71 873	65 578	58 127
	Total - Actual figures	4 101 009	344 707	322 203	362 852	3 184 784	276 980	259 804	279 943
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		330 793	376 272	349 756		252 464	306 566	254 818

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended May 2014 and the three months ended May 2015

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Mar – May 2014	Actual estimates Mar – May 2015	% change between Mar – May 2014 and Mar – May 2015	Difference between Mar – May 2014 and Mar – May 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	184 187	174 120	-5,5	-10 067
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	77 085	73 901	-4,1	-3 184
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 018,4	1 110,4	9,0	92,0

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 three months ended May 2014 and the three months ended May 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	-0,4	-1,2	-0,3
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,2	0,2	0,3
Services - Professional	-1,1	-0,3	-0,1
Services - Other	-1,8	-2,8	1,4
Rent	-1,2	0,2	0,9
Money lent	-1,1	0,7	2,3
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,3	0,4	0,0
Other debts	1,3	-1,3	4,5
Total	-5,5	-4,1	9,0

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 March to May 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 May 2014	Actual estimates May 2015	% change between May 2014 and May 2015	Difference between May 2014 and May 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	64 362	57 265	-11,0	-7 097
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 351	24 448	-7,2	-1 903
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	344,7	362,9	5,3	18,2

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	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	21 552	3 182	2 315	57 554
	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	752	3 844	8 002	3 810	19 956	2 972	2 205	57 265

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	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	5 806	1 591	1 870	25 050
	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	2 946	374	3 475	3 070	1 523	6 300	1 596	1 897	24 448

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	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	28 996	9 362	272 503
	Feb	60 494	62 150	3 894	41 807	39 312	23 497	87 033	35 345	9 539	363 071
	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	44 537	4 826	48 534	33 327	16 938	100 285	28 835	11 256	362 852

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 May 2015 was 86,7%. The improved collection rate for April 2015 was 87,2%.
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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General enquiries

Telephone number: (012) 310 4897/ 2965 (technical queries)
(012) 310 8600 (user information services)
(012) 310 8044 (orders/subscription services)

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