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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

November 2013

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Key results for November 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of November 2013

Actual estimates	November 2013	% change between November 2012 and November 2013	% change between Sep – Nov 2012 and Sep – Nov 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	66 603	-6,5	0,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	32 377	-9,3	-7,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	438,2	7,7	2,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt increased by 0,3% in the three months ended November 2013 compared with the three months ended November 2012. A 6,5% decrease was recorded between November 2012 and November 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that contributed to the 0,3% increase were services (contributing 3,2 percentage points) and rent (contributing 0,7 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 7,8% in the three months ended November 2013 compared with the three months ended November 2012. A decrease of 9,3% was recorded year-on-year in November 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 7,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,2 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,6 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -2,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 2,1% higher in the three months ended November 2013 compared with the three months ended November 2012. A year-on-year increase of 7,7% was recorded in November 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main category that contributed to the 2,1% increase was ‘other’ debts (contributing 4,3 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In November 2013, 32 377 civil judgements for debt amounting to R438,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R137,8 million or 31,4%);
- money lent (R110,9 million or 25,3%); and
- services (R73,2 million or 16,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

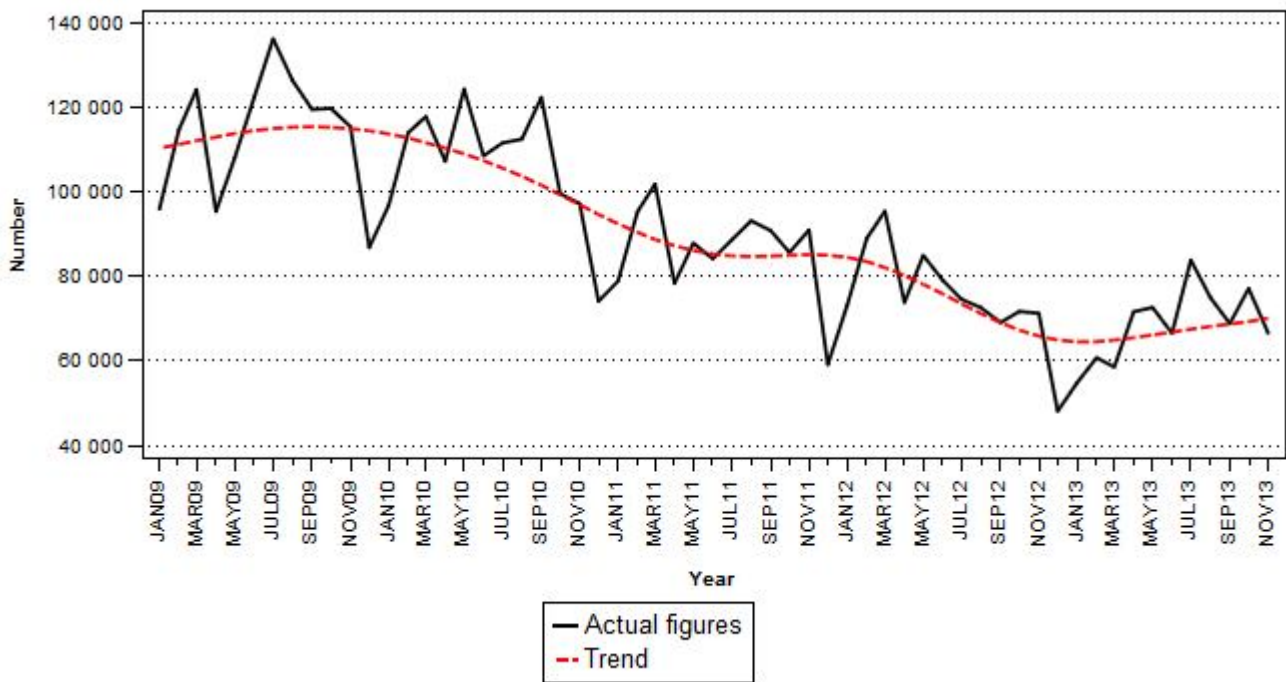
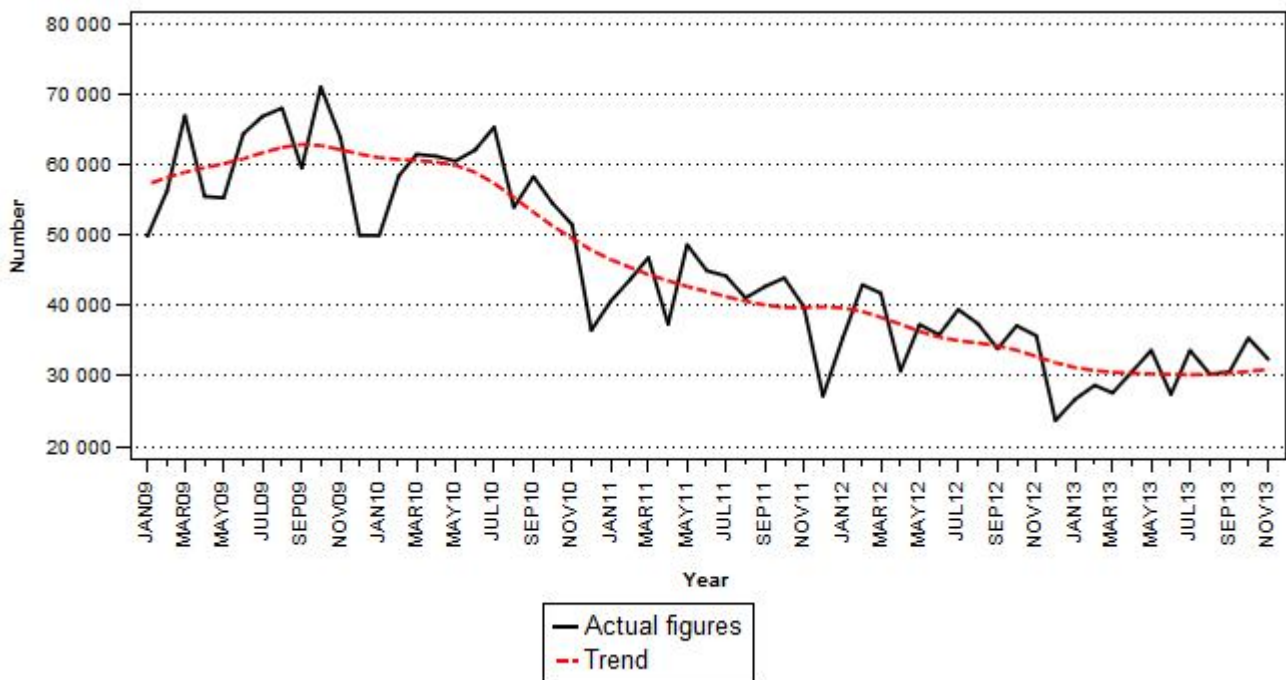


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



**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			
		2012	Nov-12	1/ Oct-13	1/ Nov-13	2012	Nov-12	1/ Oct-13	1/ Nov-13
Cases recorded	Actual figures	976 918	77 585	84 001	73 054	839 397	65 554	73 751	62 329
	Seasonally adjusted		76 093	82 110	71 605		63 761	73 357	60 619
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	74 860	7 078	5 389	5 970	54 822	5 265	4 140	4 653
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 701	2 951	1 878	2 692	18 705	2 314	1 457	2 090
	Services - Professional	103 025	8 973	10 992	9 330	89 379	7 894	9 824	7 895
	Services - Other	160 522	12 413	13 912	13 429	140 113	10 034	12 390	11 912
	Rent	40 863	4 221	4 083	4 521	31 578	3 308	3 233	3 816
	Money lent	227 228	15 923	19 552	13 971	207 208	14 658	18 672	13 089
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	117 405	6 763	10 231	5 962	96 001	5 291	8 974	4 927
	Other debts	156 110	12 930	11 098	10 728	137 121	11 270	10 028	9 674
	Total - Actual figures	902 714	71 252	77 135	66 603	774 927	60 034	68 718	58 056
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		68 859	73 374	64 112		58 229	68 031	55 990

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Nov-12	1/ Oct-13	1/ Nov-13	2012	Nov-12	1/ Oct-13	1/ Nov-13
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 323	3 175	3 171	2 309	36 403	2 612	2 638	1 778
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 904	813	716	651	8 083	674	507	461
	Services - Professional	59 439	4 785	5 349	5 074	52 796	4 265	4 954	4 447
	Services - Other	54 045	4 748	5 557	5 684	46 033	3 940	5 051	5 169
	Rent	23 821	1 796	2 113	1 930	18 714	1 488	1 766	1 641
	Money lent	140 381	10 871	8 985	7 976	132 018	10 106	8 393	7 439
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	38 588	4 591	3 218	3 972	33 790	4 229	2 741	3 431
	Other debts	60 535	4 912	6 272	4 781	54 852	4 510	5 692	4 268
	Total - Actual figures	431 036	35 691	35 381	32 377	382 689	31 824	31 742	28 634
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		34 326	31 905	31 100		30 644	28 595	27 567

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Nov-12	1/ Oct-13	1/ Nov-13	2012	Nov-12	1/ Oct-13	1/ Nov-13
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	468 565	34 924	32 051	35 806	260 678	20 318	21 468	26 088
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	170 861	13 303	11 148	10 100	136 433	11 611	8 613	8 445
	Services - Professional	297 868	22 787	28 855	27 171	240 087	17 653	26 255	22 573
	Services - Other	514 292	43 040	50 787	46 023	399 902	33 106	42 788	39 751
	Rent	346 466	31 620	31 401	29 774	207 105	20 728	22 479	22 814
	Money lent	1 394 203	146 126	124 223	110 890	1 272 156	138 420	117 111	99 296
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	428 523	33 515	42 704	40 624	335 860	27 958	35 907	34 493
	Other debts	1 106 276	81 596	129 366	137 808	734 641	51 534	80 211	63 631
	Total - Actual figures	4 727 054	406 911	450 535	438 196	3 586 862	321 328	354 832	317 091
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		391 950	408 166	420 821		303 413	320 370	297 764

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended November 2012 and the three months ended November 2013

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Sep – Nov 2012	Actual estimates Sep – Nov 2013	% change between Sep – Nov 2012 and Sep – Nov 2013	Difference between Sep – Nov 2012 and Sep – Nov 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	212 013	212 562	0,3	549
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	106 675	98 308	-7,8	-8 367
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 264,7	1 291,0	2,1	26,3

Table 5 – 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 November 2012 and the three months ended November 2013 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	-1,1	-2,2	-0,9
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,1	-0,4	-0,5
Services - Professional	0,8	-0,4	0,6
Services - Other	2,4	2,2	-0,1
Rent	0,7	0,2	0,3
Money lent	-0,7	-6,2	-1,8
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,1	-2,1	0,3
Other debts	-1,6	1,1	4,3
Total	0,3	-7,8	2,1

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 during September to November 2012, 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, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates November 2012	Actual estimates November 2013	% change between November 2012 and November 2013	Difference between November 2012 and November 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	71 252	66 603	-6,5	-4 649
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	35 691	32 377	-9,3	-3 314
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	406,9	438,2	7,7	31,3

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 November 2013 was 82,3%. The collection rate for October 2013 was 85,7%.
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. • <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 * 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 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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