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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

October 2012

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Results for October 2012

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2012

Actual estimates	October 2012	% change between October 2011 and October 2012	% change between August 2011 and August to October 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	71 848	-16,6	-22,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	36 823	-13,7	-15,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	459,1	10,0	5,4

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 22,0% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded in the three months ended October 2012 compared with the three months ended October 2011. A 16,6% year-on-year decrease was recorded in October 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that contributed to the 22,0% decrease were services (contributing -10,8 percentage points) and money lent (contributing -4,3 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 15,8% in the three months ended October 2012 compared with the three months ended October 2011. A year-on-year decrease of 13,7% was recorded in October 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories behind the 15,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,3 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -4,0 percentage points);
- services (contributing -3,3 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,1 percentage points).

The only positive contribution was recorded in the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing 1,5 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 5,4% increase in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt in the three months ended October 2012 compared with the three months ended October 2011. A year-on-year increase of 10,0% was recorded in October 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributor to the 5,4% increase was the 'other' debts category (contributing 12,4 percentage points) – see Table 6.

During October 2012, 36 823 civil judgements for debt amounting to R459,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R459,1 million were:

- 'other' debts (R143,2 million or 31,2%);
- money lent (R100,9 million or 22,0%);
- services (R82,5 million or 18,0%); and
- goods sold (R55,0 million or 12,0%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

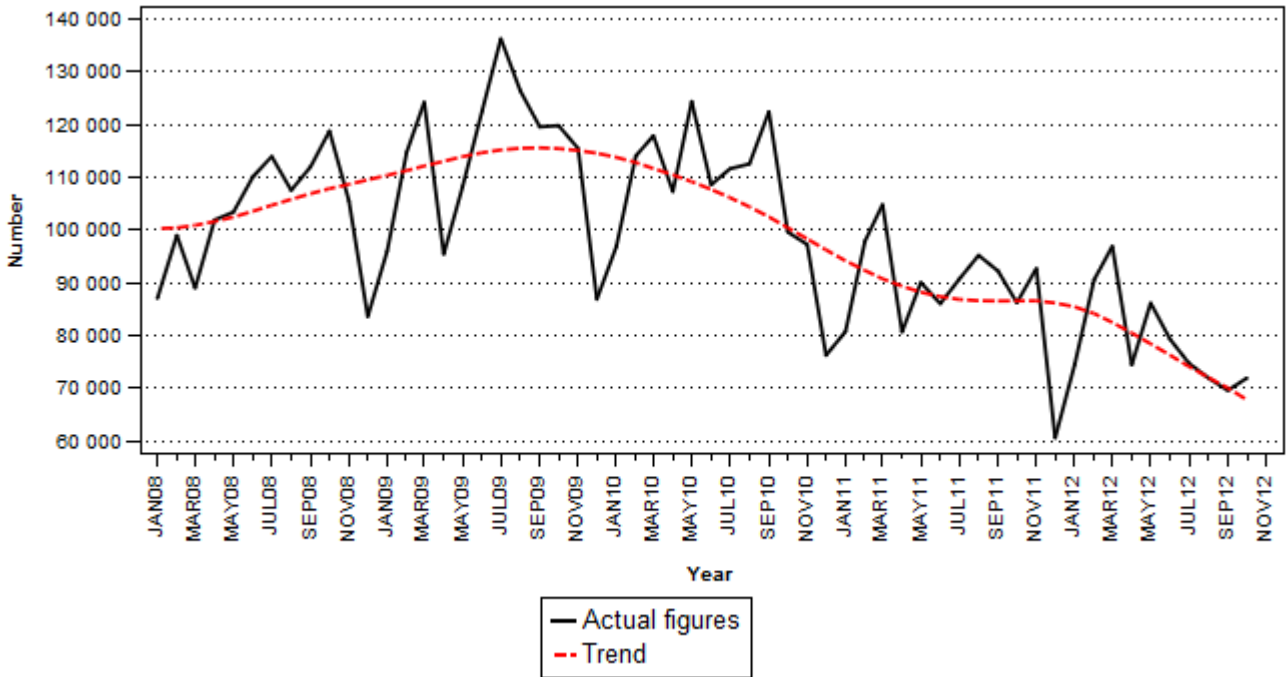
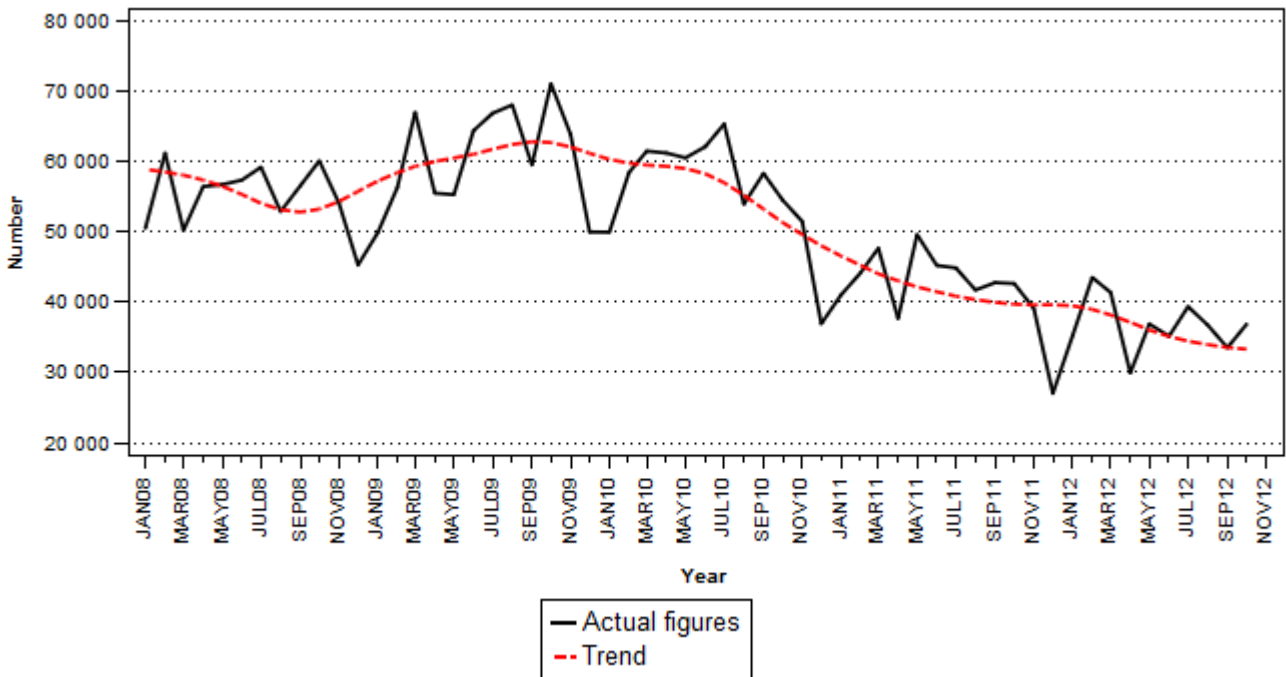


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2011	October 2011	1/ September 2012	1/ October 2012	2011	October 2011	1/ September 2012	1/ October 2012
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 228 074	96 522	75 358	78 038	1 074 543	84 205	61 558	63 710
	Seasonally adjusted		94 818	72 560	77 148		83 940	61 810	64 074
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	82 722	7 830	6 394	6 058	63 885	6 507	4 633	4 493
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	24 715	1 712	2 201	1 929	20 451	1 499	1 778	1 629
	Services - Professional	117 707	9 774	8 913	9 449	102 139	8 217	7 587	7 338
	Services - Other	197 580	19 994	9 855	11 141	176 093	18 017	8 202	8 998
	Rent	46 160	3 200	4 018	3 852	36 613	2 658	3 057	3 142
	Money lent	232 578	20 902	15 529	18 006	214 837	17 462	13 818	13 653
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	171 991	10 715	9 338	9 802	151 980	9 400	5 712	8 882
	Other debts	183 793	12 032	13 279	11 611	156 535	10 695	10 813	10 125
	Total - Actual figures	1 057 246	86 159	69 527	71 848	922 533	74 455	55 600	58 260
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		83 913	67 177	70 412		73 548	55 809	57 984

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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
	November	6 482	7 447	627	461	1 171	4 410	13 803	3 987	4 811	8 658	1 435	2 488
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
	June	6 655	3 038	125	590	2 048	3 373	10 056	4 548	2 500	9 580	1 079	1 976
	July	5 643	2 626	268	297	2 685	3 332	10 834	4 596	2 144	11 884	911	1 520
	August	6 176	2 522	193	414	2 036	3 427	11 463	3 626	2 342	8 474	1 083	1 908
	September	5 865	1 845	159	649	1 831	3 407	12 486	3 593	2 282	7 439	1 289	1 516
	October	5 343	2 501	197	1 053	1 551	3 642	12 909	4 725	3 018	6 855	603	1 161

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Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	October 2011	1/ September 2012	1/ October 2012	2011	October 2011	1/ September 2012	1/ October 2012
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	56 599	5 336	3 054	3 601	48 208	4 713	2 458	2 838
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	10 636	940	809	735	8 673	812	673	604
	Services - Professional	68 314	5 775	4 738	5 344	63 158	5 436	4 217	4 828
	Services - Other	57 871	5 323	4 037	5 128	50 115	4 616	3 463	4 527
	Rent	25 693	2 056	1 834	2 209	20 599	1 653	1 444	1 820
	Money lent	163 337	13 045	9 429	10 821	158 119	12 548	8 844	10 478
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	44 550	3 562	4 756	3 751	38 545	3 113	4 278	3 307
	Other debts	76 406	6 607	4 855	5 234	67 988	5 964	4 356	4 723
	Total - Actual figures	503 406	42 644	33 512	36 823	455 405	38 855	29 733	33 125
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		39 078	32 069	33 930		35 361	28 743	30 336

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2011	October 2011	1/ September 2012	1/ October 2012	2011	October 2011	1/ September 2012	1/ October 2012
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	522 678	45 307	33 507	41 584	333 611	30 467	17 710	22 621
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	284 150	25 853	13 250	13 410	230 821	19 860	10 186	9 913
	Services - Professional	308 692	25 738	23 713	23 683	264 557	22 565	20 184	19 020
	Services - Other	592 032	50 188	39 792	58 785	444 349	36 432	32 276	47 009
	Rent	374 423	31 120	30 240	34 353	223 786	19 111	17 724	22 196
	Money lent	1 525 895	102 361	101 352	100 905	1 422 619	95 937	90 041	94 688
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	536 585	59 431	41 828	43 181	436 042	50 314	33 421	33 986
	Other debts	1 016 435	77 427	116 128	143 155	728 727	60 256	62 215	65 610
	Total - Actual figures	5 160 890	417 425	399 810	459 056	4 084 512	334 942	283 757	315 043
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		375 276	398 105	413 810		298 408	282 877	281 501

1/ Preliminary.

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

Actual estimates	Actual estimates August to October 2011	Actual estimates August to October 2012	% change between August to October 2011 and August to October 2012	Difference between August to October 2011 and August to October 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	273 504	213 259	-22,0	-60 245
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	127 133	107 060	-15,8	-20 073
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 262,5	1 330,4	5,4	67,9

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 October 2012 and the three months ended October 2011 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-2,2	-3,4	-1,4
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,3	-0,6	-2,5
Services - Professional	-1,5	-2,7	-0,9
Services - Other	-9,3	-0,6	0,4
Rent	-0,3	-0,7	-0,9
Money lent	-4,3	-6,3	0,0
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,0	1,5	-1,8
Other debts	-2,2	-3,1	12,4
Total	-22,0	-15,8	5,4

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 August to October 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 October 2011	Actual estimates October 2012	% change between October 2011 and October 2012	Difference between October 2011 and October 2012
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	86 159	71 848	-16,6	-14 311
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	42 644	36 823	-13,7	-5 821
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	417,4	459,1	10,0	41,7

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, 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 October 2012 was 91,4%. The September 2012 collection rate remained unchanged.
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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