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Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

October 2015

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Contents

Key results for October 2015.....	2
Detailed results: Tables	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons	4
Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons	5
Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)	5
Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2014 and the three months ended October 2015.....	6
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 October 2014 and the three months ended October 2015	6
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	6
Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province.....	7
Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province	7
Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000).....	7
Explanatory notes	8
Glossary.....	9
General information	10

Key results for October 2015

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2015

Actual estimates	October 2015	% change between October 2014 and October 2015	% change between August – October 2014 and August – October 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	60 068	-20,3	-20,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	25 702	-5,9	-3,0
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	387,2	2,7	12,2

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 20,3% in the three months ended October 2015 compared with the three months ended October 2014.

The largest contributions to the 20,3% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,0 percentage points);
- services (contributing -4,3 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -4,0 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 3,0% in the three months ended October 2015 compared with the three months ended October 2014.

The largest negative contributions to the 3,0% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -2,8 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -0,8 of a percentage point); and
- goods sold (contributing -0,6 of a percentage point) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 12,2% higher in the three months ended October 2015 compared with the three months ended October 2014.

The largest contributions to the 12,2% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- services (contributing 3,0 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing 3,0 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing 2,9 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing 2,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In October 2015, 25 702 civil judgements for debt amounting to R387,2 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- 'other' debts (R102,8 million or 26,5%);
- money lent (R102,6 million or 26,5%); and
- services (R79,4 million or 20,5%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

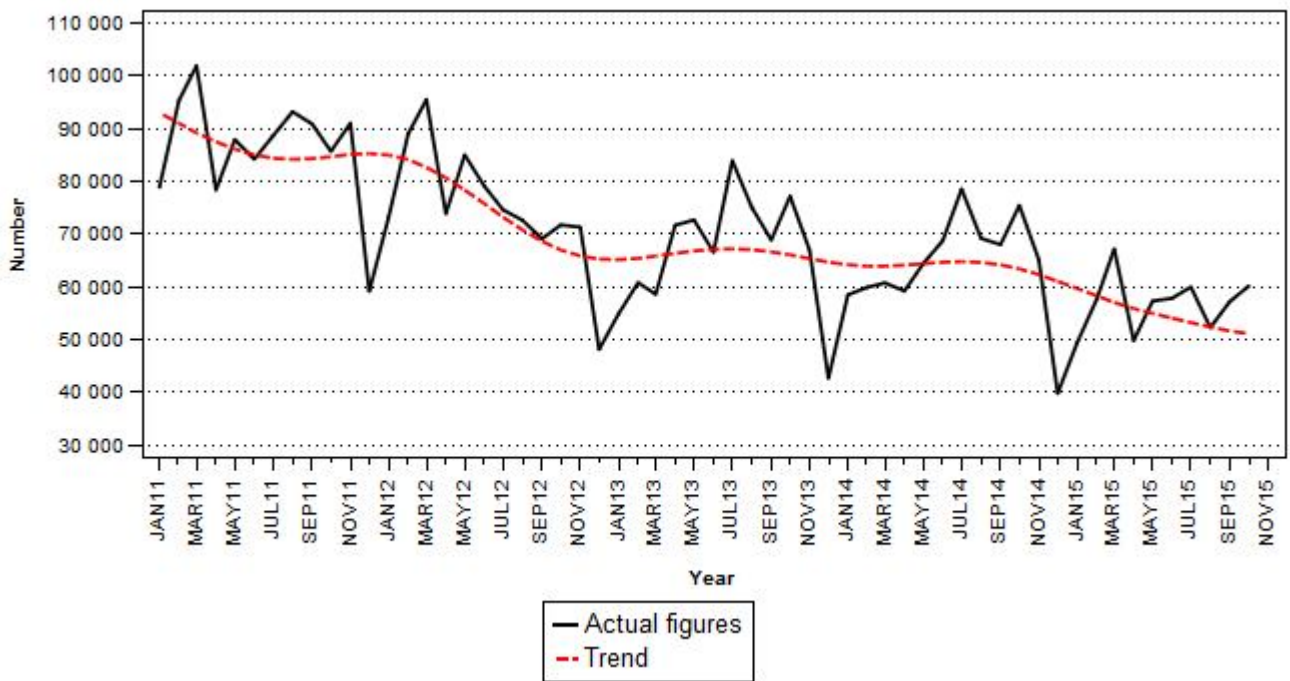
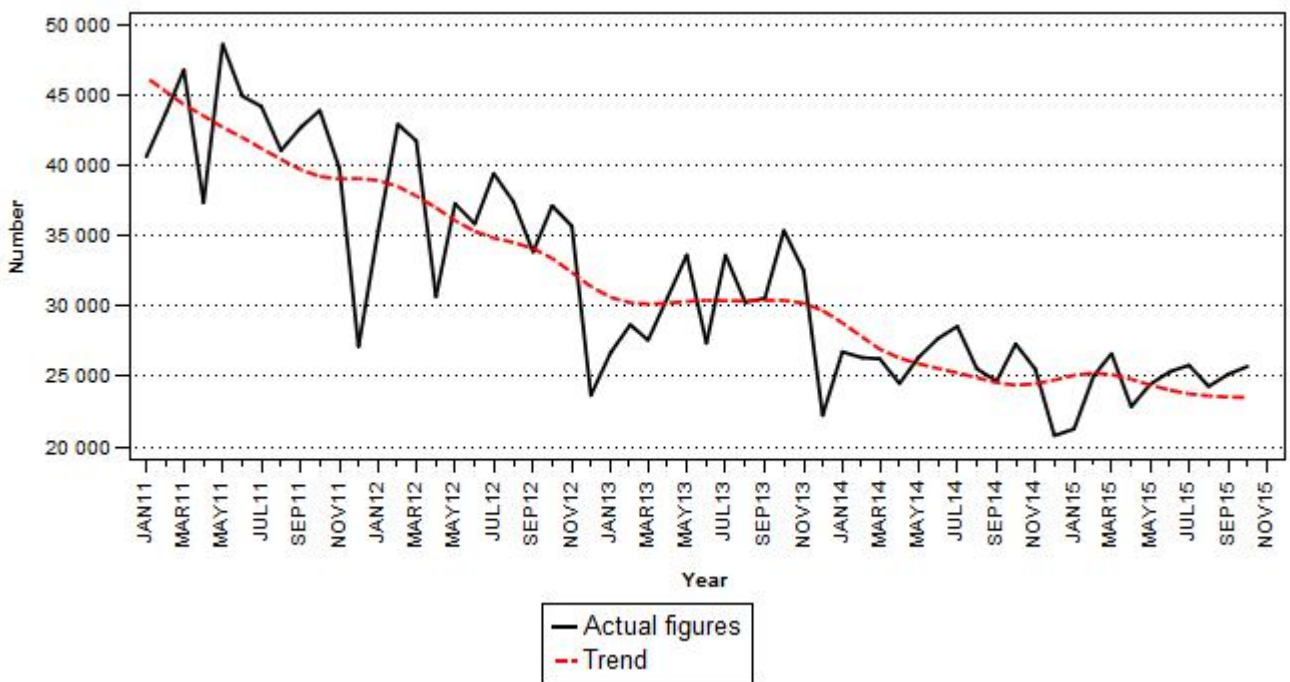


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Oct-14	1/ Sep-15	1/ Oct-15	2014	Oct-14	1/ Sep-15	1/ Oct-15
Cases recorded	Actual figures	838 926	83 866	62 300	65 990	738 542	75 445	54 207	51 892
	Seasonally adjusted		73 295	59 425	56 983		68 194	53 496	46 422
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	53 702	4 987	4 053	3 789	41 998	4 108	3 083	2 819
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	26 973	3 291	2 487	2 009	21 678	2 865	2 140	1 628
	Services - Professional	93 548	9 543	6 881	7 408	83 216	8 647	6 008	6 327
	Services - Other	124 116	11 723	9 044	10 092	107 931	10 220	7 213	8 037
	Rent	39 481	4 252	2 475	2 644	32 456	3 777	1 982	2 063
	Money lent	199 369	19 543	14 354	13 991	189 974	18 413	13 112	12 881
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	98 753	8 245	7 431	8 953	91 037	7 637	7 011	8 459
	Other debts	130 908	13 797	10 414	11 182	117 735	12 472	9 620	9 574
	Total - Actual figures	766 850	75 381	57 139	60 068	686 025	68 139	50 169	51 788
Total - Seasonally adjusted		65 637	54 045	51 745		59 885	49 710	44 906	

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Oct-14	1/ Sep-15	1/ Oct-15	2014	Oct-14	1/ Sep-15	1/ Oct-15
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	21 883	1 794	1 594	1 600	16 688	1 370	1 168	1 201
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 381	708	706	592	5 580	548	543	494
	Services - Professional	53 262	5 051	5 044	4 667	47 696	4 558	4 539	4 232
	Services - Other	47 316	3 896	3 499	4 297	41 425	3 440	2 948	3 657
	Rent	17 543	1 187	1 506	1 636	14 406	893	1 251	1 318
	Money lent	75 586	6 425	5 814	5 625	70 978	6 031	5 265	5 055
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 335	2 256	2 224	1 998	23 145	1 845	1 930	1 661
	Other debts	59 879	5 993	4 767	5 287	55 630	5 555	4 343	4 786
	Total - Actual figures	310 185	27 310	25 154	25 702	275 548	24 240	21 987	22 404
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		24 291	24 638	22 846		21 481	21 624	19 824

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2014	Oct-14	1/ Sep-15	1/ Oct-15	2014	Oct-14	1/ Sep-15	1/ Oct-15
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	289 100	25 559	26 472	27 590	166 780	14 673	14 869	17 474
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	89 599	8 484	11 627	9 016	75 311	7 193	9 420	7 882
	Services - Professional	268 653	23 875	25 945	24 851	234 985	21 276	23 946	21 886
	Services - Other	470 117	45 594	44 276	54 595	375 093	38 734	34 454	44 205
	Rent	277 582	21 657	22 369	30 323	201 587	12 382	16 248	21 688
	Money lent	1 085 532	96 561	105 939	102 568	1 002 428	91 830	91 094	92 573
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	418 697	34 738	34 981	35 481	349 493	27 065	31 091	30 573
	Other debts	1 201 729	120 496	106 442	102 767	779 107	70 422	68 741	75 283
	Total - Actual figures	4 101 009	376 964	378 051	387 191	3 184 784	283 575	289 863	311 564
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		335 879	371 491	344 273		253 296	285 548	277 087

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 October 2014 and the three months ended October 2015

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Aug – Oct 2014	Actual estimates Aug – Oct 2015	% change between Aug – Oct 2014 and Aug – Oct 2015	Difference between Aug – Oct 2014 and Aug – Oct 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	212 470	169 416	-20,3	-43 054
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	77 495	75 141	-3,0	-2 354
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 021,8	1 146,7	12,2	124,9

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 October 2014 and the three months ended October 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	-1,5	-0,5	-0,2
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,9	-0,1	0,6
Services - Professional	-2,2	-0,4	0,6
Services - Other	-2,1	0,9	2,4
Rent	-1,8	1,0	0,6
Money lent	-7,0	-2,8	3,0
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,8	-0,3	2,3
Other debts	-4,0	-0,8	2,9
Total	-20,3	-3,0	12,2

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 August to October 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 October 2014	Actual estimates October 2015	% change between October 2014 and October 2015	Difference between October 2014 and October 2015
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	75 381	60 068	-20,3	-15 313
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	27 310	25 702	-5,9	-1 608
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	377,0	387,2	2,7	10,2

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	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	723	3 844	8 002	3 810	19 956	2 972	2 205	57 236
	Jun	10 617	5 205	959	3 314	10 012	2 839	18 966	3 471	2 383	57 766
	Jul	10 353	5 406	843	4 302	9 882	2 618	20 210	3 699	2 594	59 907
	Aug	9 021	4 586	763	4 330	8 050	2 635	17 535	3 023	2 266	52 209
	Sep	9 108	4 882	727	4 195	9 065	3 373	20 049	3 413	2 327	57 139
	Oct	10 180	5 422	750	4 368	9 667	3 138	20 899	3 206	2 438	60 068

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	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	2 943	368	3 475	3 070	1 523	6 300	1 596	1 897	24 439
	Jun	3 869	3 987	407	2 758	3 691	1 631	5 480	1 605	1 908	25 336
	Jul	4 603	3 318	445	2 627	3 921	1 455	6 032	1 542	1 845	25 788
	Aug	4 109	2 620	438	2 855	3 284	1 234	6 246	1 667	1 832	24 285
	Sep	3 830	2 832	488	2 871	4 416	1 324	6 062	1 381	1 950	25 154
	Oct	4 264	3 211	412	3 100	3 906	1 017	6 538	1 787	1 467	25 702

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	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	44 532	3 974	48 534	33 327	16 938	100 285	28 835	11 255	361 994
	Jun	81 962	57 301	2 859	26 175	46 373	21 593	91 115	56 095	21 578	405 051
	Jul	86 915	49 682	4 954	30 311	46 133	19 282	104 086	68 679	13 939	423 981
	Aug	95 531	39 286	4 036	33 695	35 588	15 174	105 061	38 913	14 162	381 446
	Sep	53 835	54 304	6 480	28 910	51 247	16 280	105 994	43 077	17 924	378 051
	Oct	76 353	51 727	3 667	37 506	46 172	15 611	104 905	37 390	13 860	387 191

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 October 2015 was 85,7%. The collection rate for September 2015 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>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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