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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

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Key results for September 2016

Table A – Key figures for the month of September 2016

Actual estimates	September 2016	% change between September 2015 and September 2016	% change between July – September 2015 and July – September 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	58 339	2,1	1,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	23 336	-7,2	-8,0
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	363,6	-3,8	-10,9

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt increased by 1,0% in the third quarter of 2016 compared with the third quarter of 2015.

The largest positive contributions to the 1,0% increase were civil summonses relating to promissory notes (contributing 1,8 percentage points) and money lent (contributing 1,2 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 8,0% in the third quarter of 2016 compared with the third quarter of 2015.

The largest negative contributions to the 8,0% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -3,0 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -2,3 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -1,6 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 10,9% in the third quarter of 2016 compared with the third quarter of 2015.

The largest negative contributions to the 10,9% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- 'other' debts (contributing -6,8 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -2,5 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing -1,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The total number of civil judgements for debt granted in September 2016 was 23 336 amounting to R363,6 million. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R108,1 million or 29,7%);
- 'other' debts (R82,6 million or 22,7%); and
- services (R70,3 million or 19,3%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

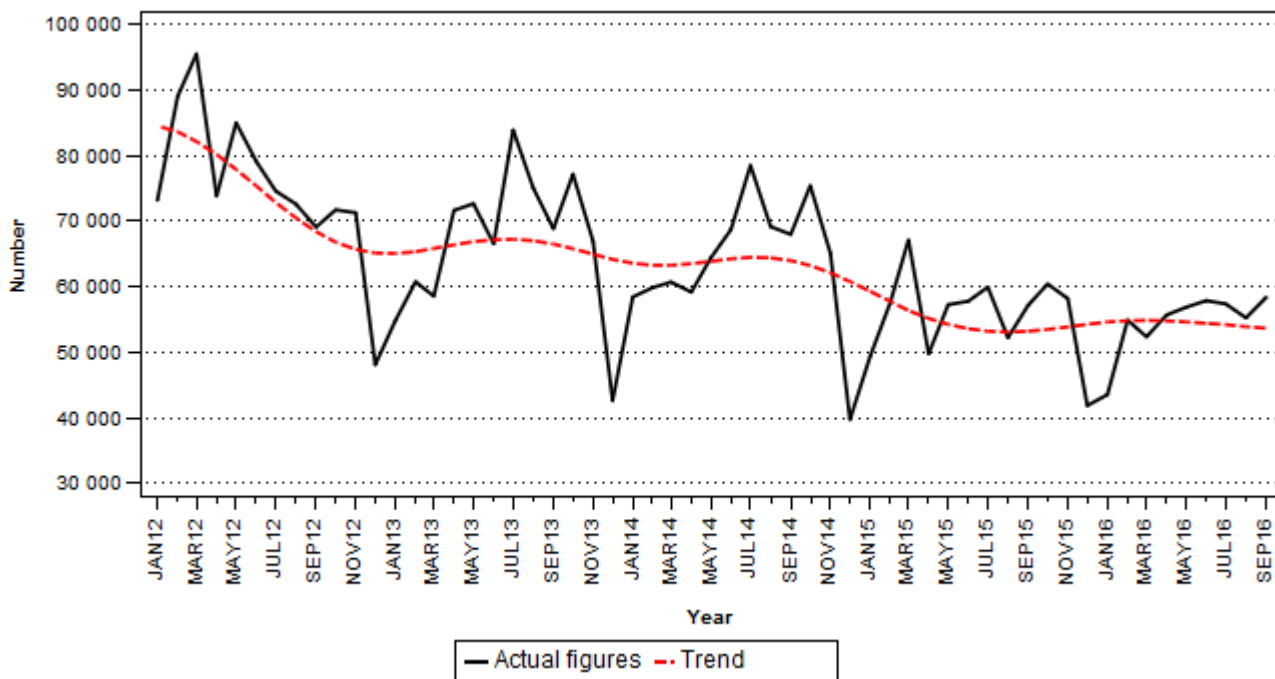
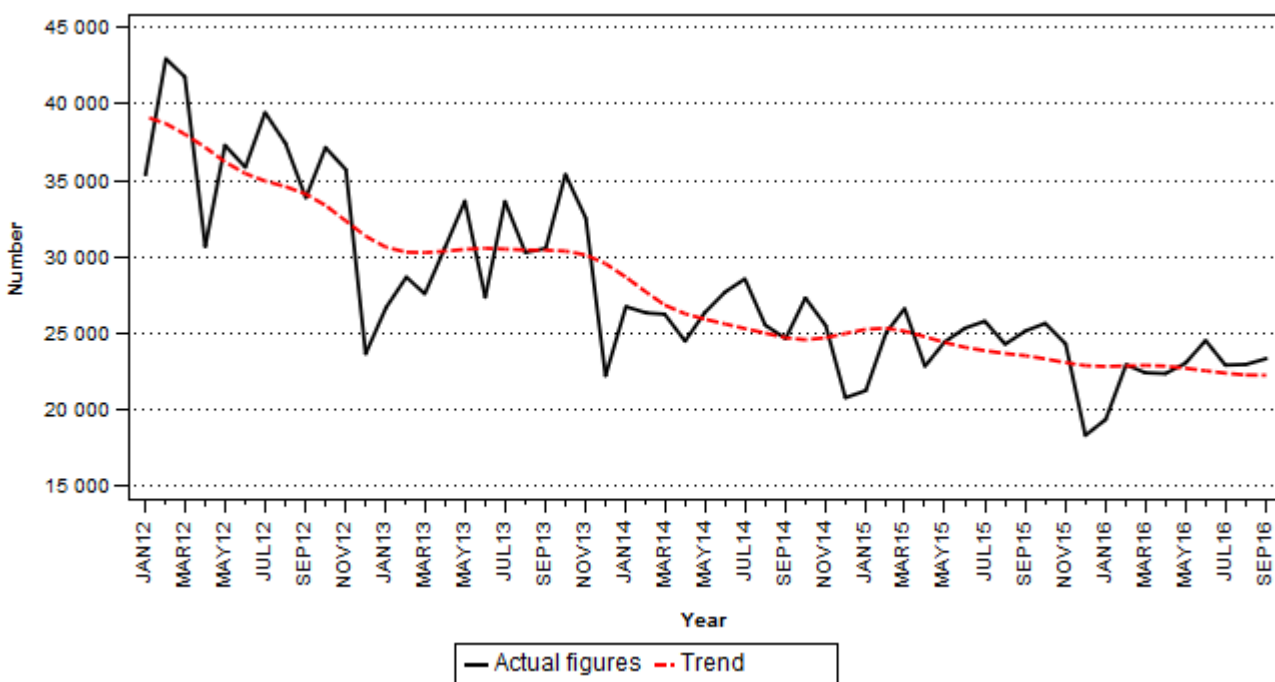


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2015	Sep-15	1/ Aug-16	1/ Sep-16	2015	Sep-15	1/ Aug-16	1/ Sep-16
Cases recorded	Actual figures	733 514	62 305	59 547	62 558	623 802	54 210	51 631	53 903
	Seasonally adjusted		59 048	57 712	59 035		51 257	49 716	50 579
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	43 664	4 053	3 169	3 516	32 616	3 083	2 308	2 615
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	23 011	2 487	1 563	1 704	18 234	2 140	1 134	1 415
	Services - Professional	84 964	6 881	7 144	7 770	73 636	6 008	6 265	6 792
	Services - Other	110 042	9 045	8 712	8 438	90 635	7 213	7 394	7 241
	Rent	29 255	2 475	2 464	2 468	22 558	1 982	1 848	1 866
	Money lent	164 531	14 353	13 578	15 296	153 342	13 111	12 837	14 414
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	89 682	7 431	7 932	8 217	83 701	7 011	7 375	7 710
	Other debts	123 254	10 419	10 664	10 930	111 399	9 624	9 181	9 659
	Total - Actual figures	668 403	57 144	55 226	58 339	586 121	50 172	48 342	51 712
Total - Seasonally adjusted		53 553	52 844	54 385		47 127	46 482	48 120	

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Sep-15	1/ Aug-16	1/ Sep-16	2015	Sep-15	1/ Aug-16	1/ Sep-16
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	18 545	1 594	1 419	1 480	13 804	1 168	1 073	1 135
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 426	706	435	608	5 752	543	336	523
	Services - Professional	50 913	5 046	3 907	4 062	44 324	4 541	3 602	3 646
	Services - Other	42 221	3 499	4 093	3 385	35 776	2 948	3 626	2 982
	Rent	17 851	1 505	1 567	1 518	14 517	1 251	1 304	1 238
	Money lent	69 713	5 814	5 192	5 513	63 786	5 265	4 747	5 096
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	27 604	2 224	2 147	2 157	23 763	1 930	1 876	1 837
	Other debts	54 764	4 766	4 200	4 613	50 056	4 341	3 731	4 026
	Total - Actual figures	289 037	25 154	22 960	23 336	251 778	21 987	20 295	20 483
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		24 465	22 520	22 621		21 462	20 036	19 918

1/ Preliminary.

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

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2015	Sep-15	1/ Aug-16	1/ Sep-16	2015	Sep-15	1/ Aug-16	1/ Sep-16
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	275 495	26 472	20 943	24 665	157 824	14 869	10 635	11 270
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	104 326	11 627	8 363	10 821	89 527	9 420	6 613	9 418
	Services - Professional	285 325	25 957	18 204	22 650	230 346	23 958	15 993	19 370
	Services - Other	521 021	44 276	55 497	47 642	400 078	34 454	47 572	38 454
	Rent	304 315	22 169	29 936	29 405	213 394	16 248	18 410	20 027
	Money lent	1 172 061	105 939	90 098	108 069	1 052 905	91 094	77 551	98 645
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	506 174	34 981	39 096	37 726	422 857	31 091	35 508	30 294
	Other debts	1 229 098	106 534	83 554	82 584	841 493	68 731	66 032	57 377
	Total - Actual figures	4 397 815	377 955	345 691	363 562	3 408 424	289 865	278 314	284 855
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		366 018	331 925	350 679		282 604	276 070	275 634

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the third quarter of 2015 and the third quarter of 2016

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Jul – Sep 2015	Actual estimates Jul – Sep 2016	% change between Jul – Sep 2015 and Jul – Sep 2016	Difference between Jul – Sep 2015 and Jul – Sep 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	169 260	170 910	1,0	1 650
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	75 227	69 215	-8,0	-6 012
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 183,4	1 054,2	-10,9	-129,2

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 third quarter of 2015 and the third quarter of 2016 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	-0,7	-0,2	-0,4
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,6	-0,4	-0,3
Services - Professional	0,3	-2,3	-1,3
Services - Other	-1,3	-0,7	1,2
Rent	0,0	0,3	0,7
Money lent	1,2	-2,3	-1,3
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	1,8	-0,9	-2,5
Other debts	0,4	-1,6	-6,8
Total	1,0	-8,0	-10,9

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 July to September 2015, 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 September 2015	Actual estimates September 2016	% change between September 2015 and September 2016	Difference between September 2015 and September 2016
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	57 144	58 339	2,1	1 195
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	25 154	23 336	-7,2	-1 818
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	378,0	363,6	-3,8	-14,4

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
2015	Sep	9 108	4 882	727	4 195	9 065	3 373	20 049	3 418	2 327	57 144
	Oct	10 180	5 430	750	4 361	9 651	3 471	20 896	3 209	2 438	60 386
	Nov	10 506	4 398	735	4 880	8 794	2 864	20 261	3 513	2 220	58 171
	Dec	7 353	2 826	682	3 151	8 094	2 115	14 235	1 740	1 645	41 841
2016	Jan	7 050	3 004	577	3 678	6 501	2 232	15 769	2 833	1 881	43 525
	Feb	10 083	4 413	656	4 331	8 300	2 514	19 548	2 732	2 309	54 886
	Mar	9 812	4 316	773	4 062	8 978	2 948	16 805	2 785	1 849	52 328
	Apr	9 217	4 721	1 041	4 192	8 481	3 458	19 974	2 474	2 109	55 667
	May	10 618	4 456	1 096	4 731	8 957	3 228	18 601	2 911	2 248	56 846
	Jun	11 126	4 543	907	4 100	9 376	3 005	20 179	2 466	2 150	57 852
	Jul	10 303	4 898	824	3 822	8 730	3 498	20 196	2 783	2 291	57 345
	Aug	10 070	4 200	1 040	4 079	8 760	2 939	19 001	2 724	2 413	55 226
	Sep	9 301	4 234	816	3 942	10 863	3 267	20 526	2 811	2 579	58 339

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
2015	Sep	3 830	2 832	488	2 871	4 416	1 324	6 062	1 381	1 950	25 154
	Oct	4 264	3 220	412	3 056	3 892	1 010	6 541	1 785	1 467	25 647
	Nov	4 163	2 966	458	2 600	4 106	1 027	5 938	1 580	1 468	24 306
	Dec	3 147	1 454	306	2 030	3 031	1 003	5 053	1 059	1 241	18 324
2016	Jan	2 773	1 950	344	1 869	4 108	885	4 417	1 627	1 396	19 369
	Feb	4 763	2 760	442	2 247	3 341	932	5 594	1 490	1 378	22 947
	Mar	4 108	2 604	319	2 653	3 720	1 380	4 994	1 284	1 356	22 418
	Apr	3 521	2 501	422	2 642	3 913	1 626	4 901	1 482	1 357	22 365
	May	5 054	2 516	396	2 474	3 955	1 275	4 774	1 376	1 214	23 034
	Jun	4 089	3 796	458	3 288	3 867	1 557	4 842	1 163	1 465	24 525
	Jul	4 380	2 719	441	2 940	3 702	1 673	4 525	1 090	1 449	22 919
	Aug	4 387	2 279	358	2 934	4 369	1 303	4 465	1 191	1 674	22 960
	Sep	4 222	2 286	397	2 488	4 611	1 174	5 323	1 241	1 594	23 336

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
2015	Sep	53 835	54 304	6 480	28 910	51 247	16 280	105 994	42 981	17 924	377 955
	Oct	76 353	52 076	3 667	35 954	45 980	14 400	104 905	37 194	13 860	384 389
	Nov	71 399	47 573	4 916	35 697	55 776	14 894	100 029	41 485	10 641	382 410
	Dec	61 750	25 351	2 698	24 175	36 816	13 727	104 642	19 770	8 559	297 488
2016	Jan	46 639	34 713	2 485	24 477	35 414	11 661	72 696	37 228	11 414	276 727
	Feb	80 249	48 557	9 865	26 294	35 541	13 735	96 530	37 966	12 237	360 974
	Mar	73 597	51 422	3 985	35 333	45 669	12 418	96 545	29 566	13 435	361 970
	Apr	60 953	37 659	4 941	32 688	42 409	14 659	84 791	30 406	8 823	317 329
	May	69 161	48 619	3 479	31 696	49 649	13 814	88 538	30 278	8 287	343 521
	Jun	58 989	50 694	3 018	33 334	49 813	12 863	81 022	42 028	13 228	344 989
	Jul	73 486	44 276	3 499	30 868	49 064	14 912	90 018	28 057	10 745	344 925
	Aug	61 855	45 098	3 643	35 048	55 705	14 182	86 036	26 621	17 503	345 691
	Sep	78 808	41 589	3 452	35 587	57 559	10 480	102 167	22 420	11 500	363 562

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, 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. 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:
- 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 September 2016 was 86,2%. The collection rate for August 2016 was 84,7%.
- Trend cycle** 8 Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
- Unpublished statistics** 9 In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.
- Symbols and abbreviations** 1 R/D Refer to drawer
0 Stats SA Statistics South Africa
* Revised figures

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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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