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STATISTICAL RELEASE

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

February 2022

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Key results for February 2022

Table A – Key figures for the month of February 2022

Actual estimates	February 2022	% change between February 2021 and February 2022	% change between December 2020 – February 2021 and December 2021 – February 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	40 098	-9,7	-5,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	11 806	3,4	7,4
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	305,6	11,5	13,3

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 5,0% in the three months ended February 2022 compared with the three months ended February 2021.

The main contributors to the 5,0% decrease in civil summonses issued were:

- promissory notes (contributing -3,7 percentage points);
- services (contributing -1,9 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 increased by 7,4% in the three months ended February 2022 compared with the three months ended February 2021.

The largest contributors to the 7,4% increase were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing 3,7 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing 1,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

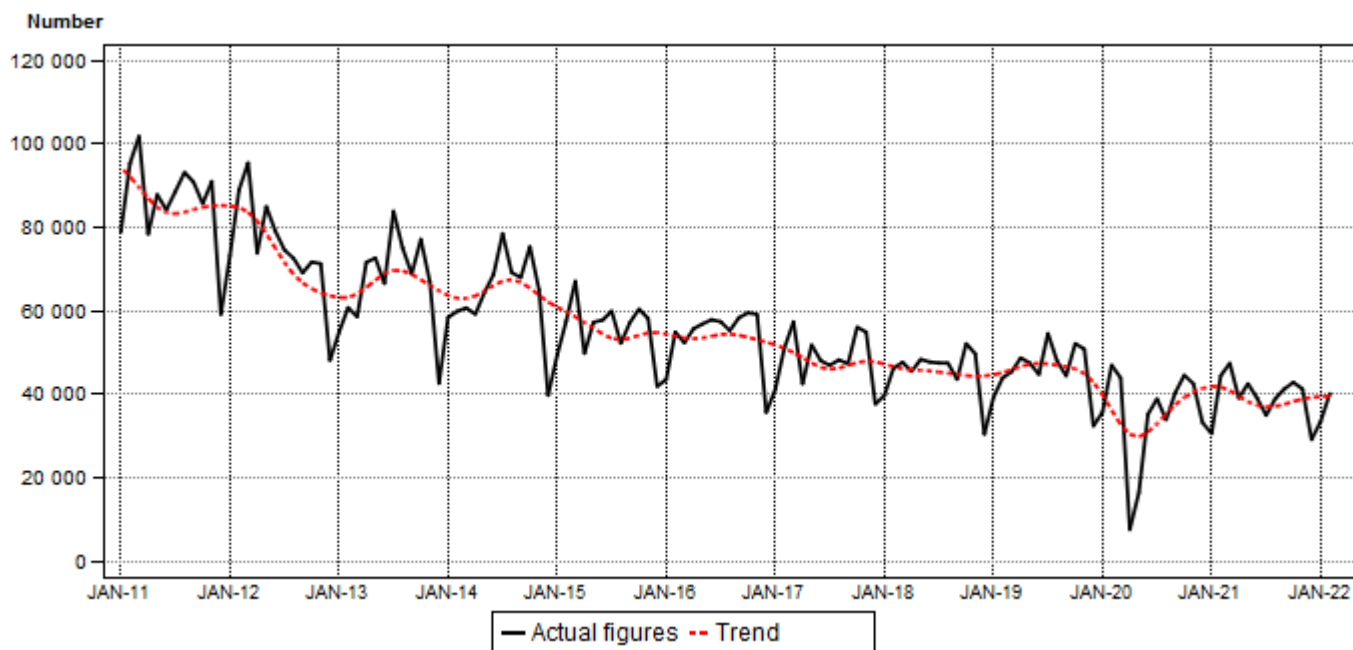
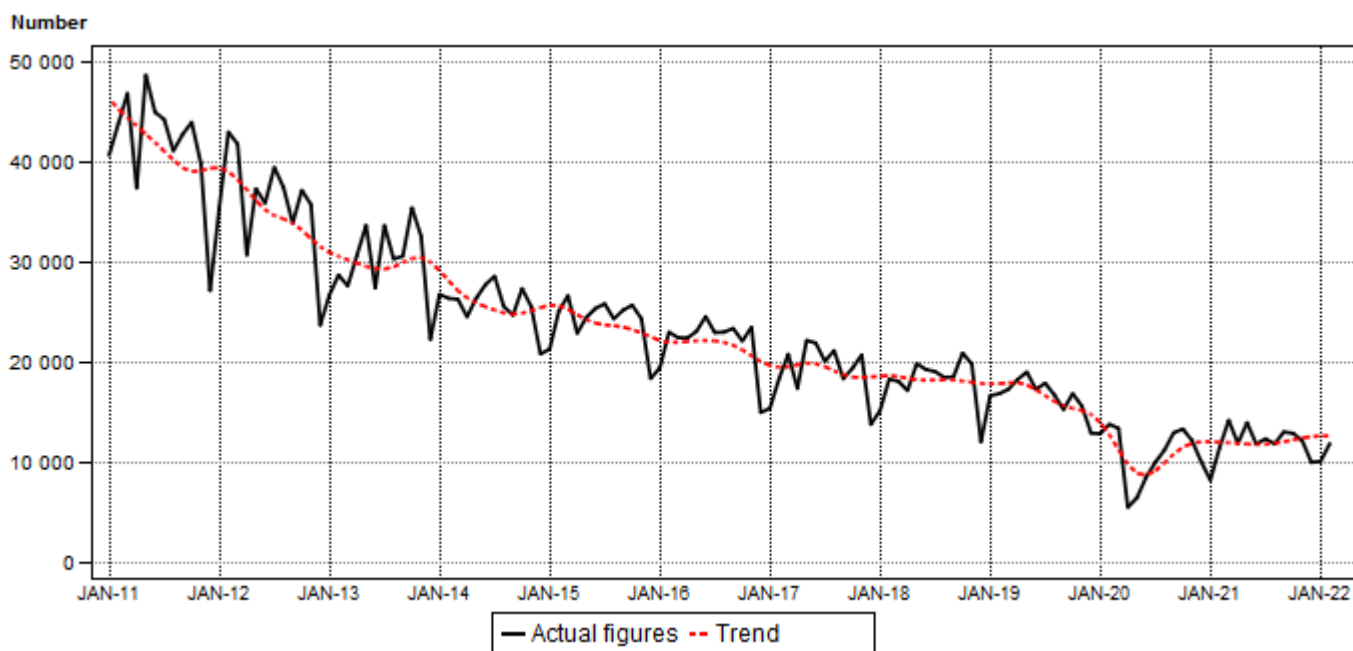
The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 13,3% in the three months ended February 2022 compared with the three months ended February 2021.

The largest contributors to the 13,3% increase were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing 6,1 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing 3,8 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing 3,0 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In February 2022, 11 806 civil judgements for debt amounting to R305,6 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R95,0 million or 31,1%);
- 'other' debts (R60,7 million or 19,9%); and
- services (R59,6 million or 19,5%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt**Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt**

Risenga Maluleke
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			
		2021	Feb-21	1/ Jan-22	1/ Feb-22	2021	Feb-21	1/ Jan-22	1/ Feb-22
Cases recorded	Actual figures	494 845	46 796	34 107	40 717	436 556	42 403	28 760	35 018
	Seasonally adjusted		45 260	44 673	38 855		41 313	38 254	33 545
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	22 874	2 071	1 823	2 317	15 198	1 466	1 232	1 529
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	15 644	1 340	1 228	1 274	13 175	1 203	1 017	1 029
	Services - Professional	48 261	4 557	3 889	4 695	41 729	4 097	3 286	3 970
	Services - Other	71 257	6 877	5 079	5 856	60 342	6 110	4 038	4 819
	Rent	27 753	2 904	2 197	1 967	21 361	2 473	1 665	1 372
	Money lent	116 700	10 260	8 209	9 711	108 854	9 703	7 504	8 999
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	59 140	6 188	3 479	4 506	56 487	5 977	2 898	4 196
	Other debts	109 473	10 196	7 556	9 772	99 171	9 297	6 570	8 755
	Total - Actual figures	471 102	44 393	33 460	40 098	416 317	40 326	28 210	34 669
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		42 739	44 131	38 132		38 735	38 000	32 765

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2021	Feb-21	1/ Jan-22	1/ Feb-22	2021	Feb-21	1/ Jan-22	1/ Feb-22
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	9 723	723	672	704	6 559	478	474	487
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	5 635	468	378	546	4 762	399	272	436
	Services - Professional	23 496	2 068	1 476	1 576	20 923	1 823	1 212	1 326
	Services - Other	26 540	2 136	1 757	2 237	23 612	1 857	1 500	1 939
	Rent	12 335	924	738	952	9 900	719	547	739
	Money lent	31 574	2 489	2 422	3 004	28 531	2 210	2 161	2 672
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	10 081	755	884	875	9 211	683	751	789
	Other debts	23 940	1 854	1 711	1 912	21 607	1 681	1 495	1 734
	Total - Actual figures	143 324	11 417	10 038	11 806	125 105	9 850	8 412	10 122
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		12 047	13 198	12 384		10 578	11 338	10 812

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2021	Feb-21	1/ Jan-22	1/ Feb-22	2021	Feb-21	1/ Jan-22	1/ Feb-22
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	220 750	20 838	13 178	14 286	103 048	7 955	6 216	6 856
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	204 306	13 596	11 456	12 240	171 819	10 982	7 588	9 267
	Services - Professional	224 848	21 960	11 989	16 789	176 770	16 922	9 406	12 597
	Services - Other	483 619	37 136	32 482	42 825	400 129	29 198	26 046	35 492
	Rent	398 259	31 164	20 313	27 579	295 650	19 971	13 231	20 835
	Money lent	983 153	79 429	81 517	94 963	918 510	72 626	76 793	88 576
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	383 004	29 872	27 096	36 274	340 792	25 688	25 248	32 206
	Other debts	669 111	40 082	41 781	60 680	554 372	35 014	35 335	47 262
	Total - Actual figures	3 567 050	274 077	239 812	305 636	2 961 090	218 356	199 863	253 091
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		282 247	303 045	312 801		226 433	249 741	260 956

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 February 2021 and the three months ended February 2022

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Dec 2020 – Feb 2021	Actual estimates Dec 2021 – Feb 2022	% change between Dec 2020 – Feb 2021 and Dec 2021 – Feb 2022	Difference between Dec 2020 – Feb 2021 and Dec 2021 – Feb 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	108 094	102 651	-5,0	-5 443
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	29 609	31 797	7,4	2 188
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	719,4	815,1	13,3	95,7

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 February 2021 and the three months ended February 2022 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	0,6	0,5	-0,1
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,5	0,4	1,2
Services - Professional	0,3	-1,1	-0,3
Services - Other	-2,2	2,0	1,1
Rent	-1,2	-0,2	-1,5
Money lent	0,5	3,7	6,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-3,7	1,1	3,0
Other debts	1,2	0,9	3,8
Total	-5,0	7,4	13,3

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 December 2020 to February 2021, 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 February 2021	Actual estimates February 2022	% change between February 2021 and February 2022	Difference between February 2021 and February 2022
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	44 393	40 098	-9,7	-4 295
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	11 417	11 806	3,4	389
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	274,1	305,6	11,5	31,5

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
2021	Feb	9 001	1 857	503	3 315	8 459	2 598	15 046	2 075	1 539	44 393
	Mar	9 973	2 706	625	2 961	7 731	2 148	16 375	3 210	1 675	47 404
	Apr	8 293	2 817	513	2 633	5 257	1 990	13 482	2 296	1 732	39 013
	May	9 072	3 024	652	3 535	7 507	1 450	12 958	2 682	1 645	42 525
	Jun	8 917	2 973	558	3 027	5 963	2 033	12 140	1 688	1 763	39 062
	Jul	7 021	2 710	725	2 667	4 851	1 756	11 580	1 938	1 659	34 907
	Aug	9 222	1 918	779	3 297	5 385	1 749	12 599	2 199	1 745	38 893
	Sep	8 362	3 041	515	3 309	5 313	2 086	14 337	2 486	1 778	41 227
	Oct	8 313	2 860	521	3 564	6 284	1 985	15 268	2 211	1 818	42 824
	Nov	8 764	3 032	457	3 955	5 186	1 540	13 875	2 671	1 740	41 220
	Dec	7 279	2 554	349	2 615	3 495	1 659	7 954	1 721	1 467	29 093
2022	Jan	6 523	2 509	460	2 604	4 803	1 539	11 160	2 178	1 684	33 460
	Feb	8 115	2 993	466	3 399	6 799	1 888	12 214	2 545	1 679	40 098

1/ Latest three 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
2021	Feb	2 156	1 065	175	1 301	1 887	802	2 168	776	1 087	11 417
	Mar	2 670	1 049	242	1 473	1 947	887	3 220	1 533	1 135	14 156
	Apr	2 141	989	200	1 541	1 916	642	2 196	1 045	1 166	11 836
	May	3 816	1 237	159	1 792	1 824	665	2 438	819	1 166	13 916
	Jun	2 422	1 673	164	2 105	1 651	349	1 654	594	1 159	11 771
	Jul	2 143	1 032	257	2 250	1 957	541	1 995	889	1 244	12 308
	Aug	2 066	659	266	1 931	1 620	682	2 640	694	1 243	11 801
	Sep	2 617	937	267	2 064	1 825	716	2 660	620	1 278	12 984
	Oct	2 673	1 020	254	2 256	1 712	648	2 536	517	1 243	12 859
	Nov	2 892	1 425	175	2 125	1 119	483	2 001	617	1 302	12 139
	Dec	2 158	1 013	99	1 483	1 249	553	1 613	663	1 122	9 953
2022	Jan	1 676	1 288	129	1 726	1 687	340	1 550	557	1 085	10 038
	Feb	2 868	1 257	175	1 851	1 348	597	1 814	678	1 218	11 806

1/ Latest three 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
2021	Feb	60 806	21 005	2 721	27 429	42 899	15 324	77 693	18 107	8 093	274 077
	Mar	69 027	21 207	5 942	20 962	48 240	16 546	130 397	23 862	7 654	343 837
	Apr	59 052	18 834	4 451	25 062	47 587	15 367	99 525	27 828	9 771	307 477
	May	62 817	23 081	2 732	26 618	43 891	16 807	84 463	20 609	8 270	289 288
	Jun	64 074	31 007	3 379	31 247	47 121	8 090	71 969	18 327	13 399	288 613
	Jul	61 900	20 111	4 549	26 797	52 527	10 779	65 016	21 488	13 432	276 599
	Aug	68 741	14 303	4 178	27 880	43 039	12 579	97 814	54 980	12 531	336 045
	Sep	75 269	23 317	4 371	28 592	66 193	13 703	115 558	13 361	16 500	356 864
	Oct	88 759	21 153	3 878	27 577	54 364	13 249	87 711	21 486	11 833	330 010
	Nov	94 672	25 820	5 568	27 259	42 919	7 696	80 047	16 686	11 791	312 458
	Dec	79 821	22 018	1 755	21 170	46 803	11 989	63 471	14 607	8 063	269 697
2022	Jan	48 137	20 494	3 439	28 982	45 395	5 377	70 829	11 212	5 947	239 812
	Feb	86 698	26 031	3 286	26 090	65 365	8 740	65 794	14 494	9 138	305 636

1/ Latest three 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 email, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for February 2022 was 79,8%. The improved collection rate for January 2022 was 78,8%.
Seasonal adjustment	8	Seasonally adjusted estimates of all categories are generated each month, using the X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the United States Census Bureau. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences, which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. Therefore, the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for civil cases for debt is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: Click to download seasonal adjustment for civil cases for debt February 2022.
Trend cycle	9	The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimate the underlying trend cycle.
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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