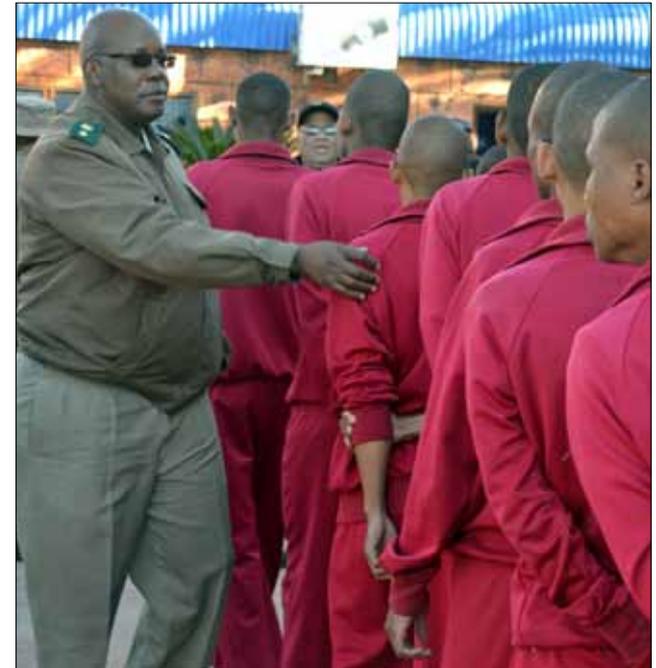




Dancer - The Infene dancers from Groenpunt Management Area kept the audience on its feet with their performance.



Youth offenders stand up to be counted.

opment centre. We run youth camps inside the correctional centre and have developed good relations with the parents of the youth offenders so that we can call them to help when an offender becomes delinquent," she said. They have also identified correctional officials with professional qualifications in teaching, nursing and in technical areas to help the youth in the areas in which they have expertise.

Youth offenders debate how to mend their ways

By Solly Mashabela

Youth offenders from correctional centres across the country shared the lessons of being incarcerated with officials and community members in Kimberley on Tuesday, 24 June.

The department had convened a youth dialogue to find solutions for the scourge of youth delinquency that is troubling many communities. The dialogue was also to launch the department's youth strategy.

Offenders cited common problems encountered by youths as contributing factors to them committing crime. The most pressing issues were peer pressure, unstable families, unstable communities and lack of education and development.

Acting National Commissioner Zach Modise reminded the youth offenders that their problems are not any worse than those faced by youth who

came before them. He said the youth of 1976 who did so much to obtain freedom chose not to involve themselves in bad things and today's youth also have a choice not to do crime. "Do not get into gangs, start preparing for your role in your family and community when you are released," he said. He appealed to correctional officials to help youth offenders to become better persons.

Head of Kimberley Correctional Centre Thembi Buthelezi said they have already heeded the call by Mr Modise to improve the lives of young offenders. "We have converted a place that used to be a maintenance centre into a youth devel-



Acting National Commissioner Mr Modise told the youth offenders that they have a choice to make.

Buthelezi said youth offenders at Kimberley Correctional Centre spend their days in the school section. Withdrawing privileges such as participation in family days are effective in improving the behaviour of youth offenders.

Other officials that have taken the issues of youth to heart are KK Mhango and MJ Mathaha. They coach the Free State and Northern Cape region's athletic team that participated at the Offender Athletics Championship held in Rustenburg earlier this year. Mathaha said there is not much difference between working with youth in correctional centres and working with them outside of correctional centres. "It all boils down to patience," he said.