



Youth descended into OR Tambo Indoor Sports Centre in Khayelitsha for Minister's Correctional Youth Summit.

## Minister hosts youth summit in Khayelitsha

By Solly Mashabela

Minister Michael Masutha warned parolees who continued with a life of crime after their release that they will be rearrested without hesitation.

**H**e was speaking at the fourth Correctional Youth Summit held at OR Tambo Indoor Sports Centre in Khayelitsha, Cape Town on Saturday, 25 June. He said two years ago he was rejecting 90% of parole applications of offenders sentenced to life due to inadequate evidence that, firstly, they have developed themselves with skills that would enable them to fend for themselves without resorting to crime, and secondly, due to inadequate evidence that victims have been involved in the corrections process. "For me, the safety of the community comes first," he said. He said compliance to parole conditions by parolees and probationers has increased from 86% to nearly 99%.

Khayelitsha is among the top five areas in Cape Town with the highest prevalence of murder and mob justice.

Minister Masutha announced that the department has recapitalised its agricultural production facilities, workshops, learning centres and factories with an injection of over R50 million. Youth who live close to correctional centres will be given opportunities to use these facilities to gain critical skills with which they can become employable.

"Assistance could include the provision of a stipend for the duration of their training, accreditation of their training by the SETAs, and finding job opportunities for them in various industries," he said. A programme almost similar to this has already been undertaken in Zonderwater in Gauteng region. Young unemployed people from the Cullinan area where given accredited training in among others, carpentry, vehicle body works, electricity, furniture making, manufacturing of clothing, and so forth.

Minister Masutha reiterated the message he delivered in other youth summits that those who do crime, do so at the expense of their own future as the law regarding criminal records everywhere in the world is that a record is for life, except for minor crimes. He said however, he was against ex-offenders being denied opportunities mainly on the basis that they have criminal records.

The Youth Summit closed with a question-and-answer session. The questions ranged from criminal records to employment, sports development for youth, and employment of people with disabilities. Nkosinathi Qwabe told the Minister and the panel to consider



Minister Michael Masutha addressing the youth during the Youth Summit.

including youth in the panel of speakers so that youth are not only the audience. Vuyisanani Ndlazi said there are sports programmes in Khayelitsha, but he believed they were not addressing youth's core concerns such as employment.



Edries Mussa took the opportunity to ask the Minister a question.

Minister Masutha said the government has a target of 2% for employing people with a disability and he has worked actively to ensure that people with disabilities are accommodated in workplaces, and those who are treated badly may even approach institutions such as the Human Rights Commission. He said the department is moving from only helping schools with food gardening to giving communities skills to do the gardens on their own and training youth in many trades to enable them to participate in the labour market.



correctional services

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