



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

**Address by the Minister, Mr. Sibusiso Ndebele, MP**

**Official Opening of New Facilities**

**Brandvlei Correctional Centre, Worcester, Western Cape**

**22 October 2013**

- **Programme Director**
- **Mayor of the Breede Valley Municipality: Your Worship, Cllr. Basil Kivedo**
- **Mozambique National Penitentiary Service Director-General: Dr. Eduardo Sebastiao Mussanhane**
- **Acting National Commissioner: Ms. Nontsikelelo Jolingana**
- **Western Cape Regional Commissioner: Mr. Delekile Klaas**
- **Chief Deputy Commissioner for Incarceration and Corrections: Mr. James Smalberger**
- **Other Chief Deputy Commissioners, Regional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners**

- **Justice, Crime Prevention & Security Cluster Representatives**
- **All Members of the Correctional Services Family**
- **The Community of Worcester**
- **Religious and other Community Leaders**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Distinguished Guests**

Last Friday (18<sup>th</sup> October), here in the Western Cape, a judgment was handed down, in the Labour Court of South Africa, pertaining to the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). As DCS, we welcome this Solomonic judgment by Judge H. Rabkin-Naicker. The Judge stated clearly that there is no suggestion that the Employment Equity Act is unconstitutional. The Judge did not order the applicants' protected promotion; did not give any order to costs; and dismissed the case of Pieter Davids who is from a non-designated group. DCS has appointed a team of experts to review its Employment Equity Plan, and ensure compliance with the Employment Equity Act. In the process, DCS will consult with organised labour and engage with the Departments of Labour and Public Service and Administration.

As alluded to by Judge Rabkin-Naicker, the preamble to our Constitution enjoins us all to be guided by the following principles:

"We, the people of South Africa,

Recognise the injustices of our past;

Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land:

Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and

Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to –

Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law;

Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and

Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

May God protect our people.”

As further stated by the Judge: “A particular issue that I wish to stress is that the loyalty of the employees to their department, on the part of witnesses on both sides in this matter, was palpable. This must form a good basis for the DCS to move forward”. As part of moving forward, in January, we declared this year (2013) as “The Year of the Correctional Official”. To this end, the Department is rolling out a new Human Resource Strategy focusing on, among others, the development of a staffing plan; the enhancement of relationships with employees, and recognized trade unions, to reduce labour disputes; rolling out an integrated Employee Health, and Wellness, Programme; and channelling more resources towards staff development. On 11<sup>th</sup> February, we established a Ministerial Task Team comprising representatives from organised labour and management. The task team has since been meeting regularly to tackle a number of employee-related issues, including employment equity. We call upon all stakeholders to utilize this forum. Furthermore, this morning, we officially opened a gymnasium, here at Brandvlei, for enhancement of the physical health, and well-being, of officials. We remain committed to the development of all our officials, as we are towards the development of all offenders.

On 9<sup>th</sup> October, DCS invoked Section 112 of the Correctional Services Act (Act 111 of 1998 as amended) and took control of the Mangaung Private Correctional Centre (MCC) operated by G4S. The safety, and security, situation at the Mangaung Correctional Centre has remained under public scrutiny for a while. This Public Private Partnership experiment, which has been undertaken in many other countries, has highlighted that the desired results have not been achieved. Therefore, this matter is under due consideration. This intervention forms part of our continuing efforts to improve safety, and security, in our facilities, and contribute towards ensuring that the people of South Africa are, and feel, safe! We will continue to monitor security in all our 243 correctional centres.

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011, DCS opened the state-of-the-art Tswelopele Correctional Centre in Kimberley. Today, we are gathered here at the Brandvlei Correctional Centre to officially open new facilities. In South Africa, the majority of correctional centres were built, over the past 100 years or so, when corrections and rehabilitation were unheard of. The Brandvlei Correctional Centre marks another landmark accomplishment in providing correctional facilities which make provision for rehabilitation, adequate security as well as conditions consistent with human dignity. New correctional centres such as Brandvlei reflect a philosophical, and architectural, evolution with improvements in concept, functional design and implementation of the new goals of rehabilitation, and training, of inmates. This R386,8 million facility includes a thousand beds, a kitchen which provides meals, as well as a laundry, for the 3000 offenders in the Management Area and utilization of the naturally-occurring hot water spring to heat water and ensure energy efficiency. In the current financial year, an additional allocation of R100 000 has been made towards a gym for offenders.

Section 35(2) (e) of the Bill of Rights, in the Constitution, states that offenders have the right "to conditions of detention that are consistent with human dignity, including at least exercise and the provision, at state expense, of adequate accommodation, nutrition, reading material and medical treatment."

During the adoption of the Freedom Charter, in June 1955, the Cape born, founding Chairman of the South African Coloured People's Congress, George Edward Peake spoke against the state's vicious measures against the oppressed. Peake declared, "We now move forward to the new age, a new age of intensified struggle and determination to win, a South Africa free of hatred.... We are going forward to a day of liberation." He roared, "Afrika! Mayibuye!" Stanley Lollan, the Transvaal Secretary of the South African Coloured People's Congress and friend of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Helen Joseph, did not, however, see Peake's envisaged day of freedom and a South Africa free of hatred. After the Treason Trial, the South African police followed him in Swaziland and tortured him. When he escaped to England, state agents followed him in London. One day, while addressing a crowd in Hyde Park, he was severely beaten and hospitalised at the Royal Northern Hospital. With the help of his brother, Arthur Lollan, this leader, in the South African Coloured People's Congress, was brought to his brother's house in Eldorado Park in a vegetable state. He was sickly, moody and aggressive. His brother, Arthur Lollan, recalls that Stanley Lollan, who campaigned for the Freedom Charter and is credited to have been the one who read the entire charter in English in June 1955, kept asking, "where are the police, where are the agents, waar is die boere?" Arthur would respond, "Stanley, it's all over now, you are free." Two months after his return from London, Stanley Lollan, whose family home was a hideout for Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu, died. George Peake's dream of building a non-racial society, free of hate, was realised with our 1994 miracle. Under the leadership of our founding President, Nelson Mandela, prisons began transforming from institutions of brute force, derision and humiliation to centres of hope, and new beginnings, focusing on public security as well as offender rehabilitation and reintegration. This is a realisation of the Freedom Charter that, in a democratic, non-racial South Africa, imprisonment would be aimed not at vengeance but at re-education and reorientation.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's official opening of this new generation-type correctional facility, the Brandvlei Correctional Centre, marks another landmark accomplishment by our democratic government. Our government is committed to changing the lives of our people, especially the poor, including those who have committed crime.

This government is determined in building a new, inclusive, caring and humane society. Our constitution puts a premium on human life, and our state institutions, in spite of challenges brought by criminals, continue to be resolute in protecting the human rights of all citizens irrespective of status, background, gender, ethnicity, religion or political affiliation. We believe in the original, inherent good and potential of all people including offenders. It was never a simple decision for the architects of our freedom to follow the example of other enlightened nations to abolish the death penalty. The founding fathers of our new nation knew the simple truth that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future. A man of character like Nelson Mandela, while he admits to despising all forms of crime with the inner core of his being, still maintained that we can only be a truly winning, and prosperous, nation if we do not give up on any human being. We must work hard to unleash the potential of all people, including those in custody. Never, never and never again will our correctional facilities be tyrannical institutions of slave labour where the corpses of our people, and migrants from the African continent, is used as fertiliser as was the situation with that despicable saga of the Bethal potato fields. Ladies and gentlemen, our hardworking, dedicated, responsible Correctional Officials cannot, and will never, throw away the cell key even if some people so wish. That would be illegal, even in the case of the worst offenders. Programmes in our centres are structured not only for the therapeutic recovery, or care, of the offender, but, primarily, to also develop social skills, employability acumen, entrepreneurship and facilitate offender reintegration. Our training programmes and cultural, recreational and sporting activities, will continue to be aimed at helping the personal, and social, development of offenders, stimulate their self-esteem and encourage a respectful attitude to the law.

The objective of the design of the sports, recreation, arts and culture avenues in the new Brandvlei Correctional Centre, is aimed at ensuring that offenders realize their full potential through nurturing their creativity, expression and innovation. The Youth Correctional Centre, here at Brandvlei, made it to the finals of the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) Annual Public Sector Innovation Awards. The centre's radio project, which seeks to build life and technical skills of offenders, was a finalist in the Innovative use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) for effective service delivery category.

The project, dubbed Basic Radio, competed with 11 other government departments. Since the radio station was started, more than 150 offenders have been trained in radio broadcasting and re-offending has decreased substantially. Some offenders used their broadcasting skills as a stepping stone to pursue careers upon their release. Partnerships have been formed with community radio stations, including Valley FM in Worcester and Eden FM in the Southern Cape, to be used as a platform by offenders who have been involved with correctional centre radio. Other current programmes at this centre include rugby, soccer, volleyball, athletics, cricket, boxing, dominoes, creative and performing arts, dance, choral music, traditional dance and poetry. Fellow compatriots, corrections is a societal responsibility. We are grateful to former Springbok Coach, Peter De Villiers, who conducted a rugby clinic with juvenile offenders from this centre. Offenders participated in rugby, soccer and volleyball matches against the University of The Western Cape, as well as sport clubs in the surrounding communities. We are also thankful to the South African Football Association (SAFA), for affording offenders an opportunity to attend a Soccer Referee Course.

We also wish to thank publishing company, Van Schaik, for their generous donation of books worth R1,5 million for the offender library. As a librarian myself, I cannot overemphasize the importance of books. We invite many others to partner with DCS in making our Reading for Redemption programme a success. Reading, and skills development, is at the core of rehabilitation. Programme Director, in January next year, a fulltime school will be opened at this Youth Centre. Furthermore, the Brandvlei Management Area is a registered FET College Examination Centre. Offenders from the Brandvlei Management Area also participate in the President's Award Programme (TPA). The aim of the TPA awards is to empower young people, between the ages of 14 and 25, by providing a balanced, non-competitive framework for self-development that will increase their self-esteem and enable them to become responsible citizens. Offenders attended the Bronze and Silver TPA award ceremony. Award leaders attended the TPA indaba. The Brandvlei Management Area is the only correctional facility in the Western Cape that enrolled maximum offenders in this programme. All these education initiatives seek to strengthen our resolve to ensure that offenders are given the opportunity to read, study and empower themselves for life after incarceration.

In conclusion, Worcester has a special place in our history. This community is currently leading our country in giving true meaning to reconciliation. They are putting victims of crime at the centre of the criminal justice system, through restorative justice and programmes such as our Victim-Offender Dialogues. We hope that governments' investment, in a centre like this, will produce new leaders for our country. The people of Worcester, and the entire Breede Valley Local Municipality, have demonstrated their capacity to show us the way and produce such talent. Worcester gave us an artist like Pieter Hugo Naude, Afrikaans poet C. Louis Leipoldt, Singer and playwright David Kramer as well as Afrikaans storywriter Dianna Ferrus. The Nobel Prize winner for literature, J.M. Coetzee, lived as a boy in Worcester. This place gave us cricketers like Claude Henderson, Peter Kirsten, Gary Kirsten, Tim Shaw, Rudi Bryson and Keppeler Wessels. The Union Vinegar Company was established here in 1913, and it was the first South African factory to produce Beetroot salad. This town gave us the delicious, famous Worcester Sauce. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1886, Worcester was in motion for development as it opened a railway line. In 1891, the Worcester Gold Mining Company Ltd was founded and it developed a gold mine at Barberton.

Today, may the opening of the new Brandvlei Correctional Centre re-galvanise us again on a new path for the reconstruction, and development, of our country. May this occasion remind the community of its significant role in the drafting of South Africa's charter of freedom. The memory of Stanley Lolan, George Peake, Nelson Mandela, Andrew Zondo, Steve Biko, Robert Sobukwe, Kgosi Mampuru II, King Makhanda Nxele, Braam Fisher, Frances Baard, Lilian Ngoyi, Amina Cachalia and Strini Moodley should forever remind us that our facilities will never again be institutions to breed hatred and destroy those in our care. In our struggle to build a safe, secure nation, our communities must accept, and integrate, ex-offenders and stop stigmatising them in order to discourage re-offending. I declare the new Brandvlei Correctional Centre officially opened. Baie, baie dankie, almal. Enkosi. THANK YOU.