



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address to Staff by the National Commissioner Mr. Z.I. Modise

Melodi ya Tshwane Church, Tshwane

29 January 2016

- Programme Director: CDC Ligege
- Chief Deputy Commissioners
- The Acting Regional Commissioner of Gauteng
- RMCs of Gauteng and LMN
- Other Managers
- All Officials
- Colleagues

As the first month of the New Year draws to an end, it is, indeed, my special privilege to interact with you today.

Before we proceed any further, may I kindly request for all of you to rise to your feet as we observe a minute's silence in memory of all our colleagues who passed away last year and who are no longer with us. May their souls rest in peace!

In his 2016 New Year message, the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, said: "Progress has been made in various aspects, including our participation in the international arena. However, more hard work awaits us all in 2016 as challenges still remain".

At the close of 2015, as part of my year-end message, I said: "2015 was a year that has been marked by moments of the good, bad and ugly. As it comes to its close, the message we wish to convey to you all is one of hope. We have confidence in the wisdom, and good sense, of the majority of our officials, to share the hope, that the New Year will bring all of us in DCS nearer to a situation where tomorrow will be better than today. We take this opportunity to thank all of you who have made a positive contribution, this past year, to the difficult process of resolving various challenges in our department. We urge you all to persist in these noble efforts".

This year (2016), the formal correctional services system in South Africa marks 104 years making the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) one of the oldest government departments in the country. The democratic elections of April 1994 brought with it government's commitment to transform South African society at all levels. Apart from the fact that this commitment highlighted the need for the implementation of non-racial and non-sexist principles, it also focused on human rights, the rehabilitation of offenders as well as the effective implementation of demilitarisation.

In October 1994, DCS released the White Paper on the Policy of the Department of Correctional Services in the New South Africa. Its aim was to *"stimulate debate on correctional matters and redefine priorities that will eventually lead us to where we should be ... coming to grips with a correctional model for the new South Africa"*. Over the past 22 years, despite various challenges, DCS has made significant strides. However, we still have a long road to travel.

Since their appointment in May 2014, the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Adv. Michael Masutha as well as the Deputy Minister Mr. Thabang Makwetla continue to engage with officials across the country.

On 1 July 2015, following my appointment as National Commissioner on 10 June 2015, I interacted with you officials from Head Office as well as the RMCs of Gauteng and LMN. As part of my undertaking, I have also completed roadshows to all DCS regions and engaged with officials, and provided updates, across the country. As we continue marching into the third decade of freedom, we should not only appreciate the strides made over the past 22 years but also use them as the foundation from which we launch a more vigorous programme, of implementing policies and strategies, to place corrections on a higher delivery path. So much more needs to be done, and we do have the requisite political will and administrative commitment.

The National Development Plan (NDP) has now provided a blueprint for a South Africa people would love to see, realise and experience, where all people are, and feel, safe. Minister Masutha has said that Correctional Services is central to these national efforts towards a safer society. The Minister has described Correctional Services as a labour intensive operation, which seeks to break the cycle of crime through safe and humane custody, rehabilitation and social reintegration of offenders.

Central to our multi-faceted strategy to turn around correctional services delivery is the focus on our human resource capital, as a strategic resource, for building the capacity of the state to realise the ideals enunciated in the NDP.

We have engaged in a higher gear in the recruitment, training and retention of our personnel, with over 3,000 recruited and over 1,000 currently undergoing training in our two Correctional Services colleges. These recruits will help us fill entry-level positions, while also helping to accelerate the transformation of correctional services to a more representative institution in respect of women and people with disabilities. Of the 1,020 recruits currently at our colleges, 449 are women, and 21 are people with disabilities, which represent 44% and two percent of the new recruits respectively. Other crucial data indicative of our shift to professionalise corrections includes the fact that 286 of the recruits have degrees and diplomas, and are reflective of the demographics of our society.

Minister Masutha made a commitment to boost the human capital, among others, increasing the staff compliment from 42,000 to 66,000. The Minister committed to the professionalization of corrections, and to rollout an intensive recruitment drive, known as Operation Hira, that focuses on security and retaining officials with scarce and critical skills. These include medical doctors, nurses who are primary health specialists, educationists with technical skills, pharmacists, psychologists, engineers, artisans, social workers, employee assistance practitioners, agriculture technicians, information technology specialists, supply chain management specialists and occupational directed education and training development officers. The campaign was launched in Gauteng during Corrections Week in September last year, and was rolled out through a series of job fairs in all six regions. Operation Hira will enable the department to address a series of challenges that include high vacancy rates in these skills categories. For example, by 31 March 2015, the vacancy rate for medical practitioners was 39%, 34% for psychologists, 28% for pharmacists, 21% for educationists, 18% for professional nurses and 17% for social workers. The targeted skills are pivotal in ensuring that rehabilitation, and correcting offending behaviour, reach a higher level.

Our analysis of the recent staff turnover patterns show that a large number of officials are reaching their retirement age. In 2014/15, 1,705 officials resigned, 494 retired, 124 were dismissed, 219 passed on, 50 were medically boarded and 913 contracts were terminated.

These emerging, and challenging, patterns contributed to an overall increase in the vacancy rate from 5.7% in March 2014 to 8.4% in March 2015, which is below the 10% vacancy rate set by DPSA. Our biggest concern is the fact that in the scarce and critical skills categories, that are targeted in the Operation Hira campaign, the average vacancy rate was 19.6% by the end of March 2015. We regard our officials as the most valuable asset at the state's disposal, to help break the cycle of crime through rehabilitation, and the social reintegration, of offenders.

These are critical performance areas for HR, one of which is the vacancy rate. It is easy to place adverts in the media for vacancies. But it seems that's where it ends because, months down the line, there are no gross lists. Hence, the remainder of the recruitment process cannot continue. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) state that a gross list must be available within 14 days of the closing date, and an appointment must be made within two months. In 2014/15, over R700 million of our employee compensation budget was not utilised. It seems that this trend is continuing.

With regards to resignations, the introduction of a new tax law (Taxation Laws Amendment Act, 2015), that will be effective from 1 March 2016, has been met with unprecedented rumours. The truth is that there is nothing to fear. The changes mainly apply to provident funds, not pension funds. The rules of the pension fund have not changed, and will not change without officials being informed of any changes. Therefore, it is clear that remaining in the pension fund has no negative impact on any official. Remaining in the fund will benefit officials, because the monetary value of their benefits will grow. Remember, the old rules of the government pension fund remains. When an official retires from a pension fund, as has always been the case, they will be entitled to get one third of all their benefits as a lump sum and the two thirds as monthly annuities. On resignation, the total lump sum is paid as per the relevant tax implications. In case of the death of an official, a death benefit will be paid in accordance with the pension rules which have not changed.

In terms of other current issues in the Department, DCS received an improved audit report for the last financial year (2014/15) and was unqualified for asset management for the first time in years.

Whilst this is reason for feeling relieved, it is, by far, not reasons enough for celebration. The Auditor-General still has serious concerns about the credibility of our records/source documents, the accuracy of performance information related to our core mandate of rehabilitation and incarceration, misaligned operational plans between management areas and regions as well as legal claims against the department. It is for this, and other, reasons that we undertook Regional Roadshows, where we issued clear instructions and participated in detailed discussions with Area Coordinators, Heads of Centres, Area Commissioners and Regional Heads.

The department's appearance before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) in June last year was a punishing day, which was repeatedly broadcast by the media. Nevertheless, this has strengthened my resolve to cement a compliance culture.

The restructuring of DCS has been initiated, as we need to redirect the bulk of our activities toward the offender. Head Office must be streamlined and reduced by a third. Redeployed officials will strengthen regional operations. There will be two Deputy National Commissioners – one responsible for corporate services, which are all the support services such as the Branches GITO, Finance, Strategic Management and Human Resources. The other will be responsible for our core mandate functions: incarceration, development and care, security, remand detention and social reintegration. As National Commissioner, I want to focus 90% of my time on offender-related issues and 10% on issues to do with support services. We will reinstate the demarcation of provinces, not regions, and will, therefore, have nine provincial commissioners. We have to strengthen support functions at centre-level, and will, therefore, have three centre coordinators: HR, Finance and Incarceration. At present, one centre coordinator deals with all these functions. We have to appoint criminologists in our case management committees, because we need this expertise when dealing with the behaviour of offenders. I am keenly aware of the imbalances in resource allocations, and know more resources must go toward core mandate functions.

We were supposed to have a build programme. We are going to do maintenance ourselves. We have discussed this with the Director-General of Public Works. We must put our own maintenance plans into place, and establish construction teams of officials and offenders. The plan is to design correctional centres ourselves at Head Office with DCS architects and engineers. We have already appointed two engineers. This function will be the responsibility of the CDC: Incarceration, but the CFO will have line of sight.

I would like to put up facilities for recreation at our terrains. The facilities we had before have become dilapidated. Managers must occasionally get professionals to address officials about sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol abuse, HIV infection and so on. More must be done. We recently participated in the SADC Games in Botswana, and we are going to start again with departmental tournaments from which participants will be selected for the next World Police and Fire Games.

Whilst unqualified audit reports and our own build programmes is part of the legacy I wish to leave behind, capacitating officials is also part of my turnaround strategy. It is for this reason that Human Resources policies on Corporate Wear, Overtime, Performance and Career Management, Remuneration Control and Service Benefits were published last year. You were also invited to comment on the proposed new qualification for correctional officials for registration on the national qualifications framework. I am looking at salaries but we will have to go to the Bargaining Chamber about this, and then there is the centre and non-centre based issue about which we have entered into negotiations. The shift pattern must go back to first watch and second watch. Then there is the issue of a promotion policy. I have already had discussions with the Minister of Police and organised labour on separate occasions. We have recognised agreements with POPCRU and PSA. Therefore, Heads of Centres must have structured bilateral, and multilateral, meetings with the recognised unions every quarter. Talk to the issues in your environment, and report accordingly. Let me remind managers, we cannot wear two caps: managers cannot be shop stewards.

Our performance in DCS is not up to standard, and we must admit it. There should be consequences for non-delivery. That is the culture we want to inculcate in DCS.

It is for this reason that I have decided that the Internal Control and Compliance Team will report directly to the CFO and National Commissioner.

Budgets and resources must follow strategy, and not the other way around. We have become used to plan the wrong way around, and this must change.

I am tired of managers fighting with each other. Let's work on ourselves, and develop the psychological maturity to lead. Take your staff for training, and let's invest in the training of our officials.

We operate in an environment where the fiscus is experiencing distress, and where there are increasing calls from Treasury that we must get value for every Rand that we spend. We are still unable to spend our current budget, and fill vacancies on time. We cannot go to Treasury to request additional funds.

In 2013, government, together with organised labour, adopted the Service Charter which pledges a public service that is professional, efficient and effective. This is a very critical intervention for ensuring that service delivery is optimized. We need to ask ourselves, as DCS, if we have done enough to implement the Charter.

In conclusion, as you are aware, in terms of the Constitution, the 2016 municipal elections must take place between 18 May and 16 August 2016 – the 90 day window provided at the conclusion of five year term of office of municipal councillors elected in 2011 and in any subsequent by-elections. DCS must fulfil its obligations in this regard.

It was President Mandela who said: "We are confident that, motivated by the desire to serve the people, the public service will discharge its responsibilities with diligence, sensitivity and enthusiasm, among other things paying attention to the important goal of increasing efficiency and productivity."

Together, we can, and must, all join hands to secure a better future for DCS. We must all strive to be inspired, and disciplined, by a deep-seated love for our calling as Correctional Officials, without regard to race, colour, gender or station in life. We must anchor all our efforts in the common determination to build a department that will be the envy of many.

The Statistics South Africa 2014/15 Victims of Crime Survey records a significant improvement in the perceptions of correctional services, compared to 2013/14. In the latest survey, the majority (71,6%) of households in the country were of the opinion that Correctional Services safely lock away those who have been sentenced. About two-thirds of the population indicates that DCS rehabilitates those who have been sentenced to imprisonment. You deserve to be commended for this noteworthy improvement in public perceptions of Correctional Services.

Finally, as DCS, we look forward to a brighter 2016. Let us continue to live by the Batho Pele value statement - We Belong, We Care, We Serve.

THANK YOU.