



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSIONER

Speaking Notes of the National Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Zach Modise at the Launch of Operation Letsema held at Kgosi Mampuru II Management Area, Pretoria, Gauteng

12 February 2016

Programme Director,
The Chief Deputy Commissioners,
Deputy Commissioners,
Senior Managers of the Department,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

As the Department of Correctional Services, we adopted a vision that says, we want to provide the best correctional services for a safer South Africa. Linked to this vision, we came up with clear-cut programmes and made undertakings in the Medium Term Strategic Framework to improve governance. Such a commitment meant one thing, and that is, Integrated Planning and execution as vehicles to take Correctional Services to Greater Heights.

We had to look at our system and identify issues and areas that need some attention. One glaring phenomenon we had been working to overcome, was audit qualifications particularly on assets. We felt that we have enough strength and the requisite skills to turn things around and make our vision a reality.

Upon receiving the Auditor General Report for 2014/15 financial years, we made a striking observation. After many years of audit qualifications, the Department of Correctional Services received a clean bill of health in its management of assets, although a new area of qualification was raised. This was a product of our continued vigilance and belief that together we can overcome anything. Our campaign, Vukuza, spearheaded by the whole executive management of DCS, made a significant contribution to this achievement. Addressing our strategic planning session in North West, I implored the management never to lower the guards, but be more vigilant, as there are still a number weak links we must eliminate so that we cannot slip back. We owe it to our past and future generations of leaders to strengthen, sustain and improve this condition, as integral to our vision of providing the best correctional services for a safer South Africa.

We have identified asset verification and inventory verification as areas of vulnerability, given the complexities of managing, among others, biological assets, such as Orchards. I am pleased to announce that we have secured service providers to assist us with the evaluation these Orchards to reflect the correct value.

Another area of challenge is the capturing of what was classified as consumables in the assets register, as assets and stock items. The Finance Branch is performing monthly financial statements so that discrepancies are rectified before the 31 March 2016. The progress I share with you should be understood in a broader context of progressive tightening of auditing standards in South Africa. To sustain and improve our position, we should always be on our toes. For instance the Auditor General has notified us that as from 2016/17 financial year, they will give an audit opinion on our opening balance of the inventory. The unfortunate part is that, the opening balance has to reconcile with the closing balance of the current financial, leaving us, literally, with 34 working days. This is a mammoth task, which calls for all hands on deck.

My colleagues at Finance will tell you that Inventory and Asset Management is a collective effort in any organization. This is one area where you cannot muddle-through and hope to yield positive results. In sustaining a clean audit on Assets, a clearly articulated and comprehensive approach is needed. It is due to this reason that **Operation Letsema** is born today.

It has to be a collected effort, the one that requires full participation from all officials within the Correctional Services family, yes, **Letsema**, Ilima, werksaam.

This has to cascade to every 'branch and leaf' of the Department of Correctional Services, which include the six (6) regions, and 48 management areas. As a result, the entire Executive Management of the Department has been deployed countrywide to drive Operation Letsema on the ground. As you are gathered here today, you are the cream of the crop that will carry our hopes and our aspirations to every official of this department. Let us hold each other's hand and improve financial affairs of the Department.

When we achieve this milestone, it will put us on a higher pedestal for realizing bigger and better goals, as outlined in the National Development Plan. It is impossible to develop realistic long-term goals when you do not even know the value of the assets at your disposal. We must ensure that both our manual and electronic systems are optimally utilized to provide the requisite data for better planning.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are on the right path and I have no doubt that Operation Letsema will yield the desired results. This is our Department, we carry hopes of the nation, working together, we can make a safer South Africa where all citizens will be and feel safe.

I thank you.