



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER

**Address by the Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Mr.
Thabang Makwetla, MP
Grootvlei Correctional Centre, FS
21 November 2014**

- **Programme Director and Director for Human Resource Support: Dr. Pelmos M Mashabela**
- **Acting National Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr. Zach Modise**
- **Chief Operations Officer, Ms. Nontsikelelo Jolingana**
- **Regional Commissioner of FS & NC, Ms. S. Moodley**
- **Chief Deputy Commissioners and Regional Commissioner Present**
- **All Senior Managers of the Department of Correctional Services**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is an honour and privilege for me to be part of this important and pleasant occasion where we as government celebrate our committed and disciplined staff members who served the Department of Correctional Services for not less than 40 years of their singular lives.

Congratulations to you all for reaching this important milestone. We salute and applaud you all, for these years of dedicated service in this noble profession of Corrections.

40 years is a long time in a person's life. You undoubtedly have much to show for the time spent here. Many of you came here when you were young and you grew and matured with the Department over the years. Many of you started your own families, in addition to growing the DCS family.

Those who joined the then Prisons Department in 1974, will recall that this was the year the Soul Brothers was founded. Its famous hit, *Mama Ka Sibongile*, sold 175 000 copies on release.

In October of that year, Muhammad Ali knocked out George Foreman in the eighth round in what Boxing promoter Don King called the 'Rumble in the Jungle' fight in Zaire.

And in Egypt, the Ebony Leopards of Zaire were crowned African soccer champions after beating Chipolopolo of Zambia 2-0 in the 1974 AFCON finals.

And on the home front of course, in an unprecedented fit, Pule "Ace" Ntsoelongoe scored a total of 36 goals for Chiefs, still the most goals in one season by a player in the professional soccer league.

At Orlando Pirates, the teenager Jomo Sono was becoming the stuff legends are made of. He was already dubbed, "the Pele of South African football" by soccer fans.

To these veterans of DCS, we know that at your personal individual level, your successful desire to join this department was similarly a high watermark in your journey through life.

We thank you for your energy, loyalty, and diligence in the performance of your duties.

You wonderfully served the Department for not less than forty years; you are honourable citizens who deserve to be emulated. During this

evening of winners, we share in your celebration and revel in your achievement.

The Long Service Recognition Awards are meant to acknowledge the long relationship with the department and your contribution in our public service.

I am told in the period up to March 1996, Long Service Recognition was celebrated by the issuing of faithful service medals and certificates during military style parades- wherein 10,20,30 and 40 years' service was recognised. This was done in line with the then Correctional Services Act, No.8 of 1959 (section 94) and Regulations which has since been amended.

With the de-militarisation of DCS, from the 1st April 1996, the military style Long Service Recognition Awards were abolished. The Management Co-ordinating Committee (MCC) of the DCS had to align long service recognition with the traditions as applied in the broader Public Service under the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1994 and the Public Service Staff Code Part D.

The General Public Service Co-coordinating Bargaining Council (GPSSBC) Resolution 1 of 2012 provides that all officials with ten (10) years or more in service must receive an increased annual leave entitlement of 30 days and other specific long service recognition measures are 10 years' service certificate; 20 years' service certificate and a cash amount of R 7 500.00; 30 years' service certificate and a cash amount of R 15 000.00; and a 40 years' service certificate and a cash amount of R 20 000.00.

It is pleasing to note that between July 2012 and June 2014, there are 65 employees nationally, who completed 40 years of services. As part of the DCS 40 Years Long Service Awards, on 6th November 2014, 25 of the 65 officials, were recognised at a ceremony at Pollsmoor Correctional Centre. The remaining 40 officials from the other Regions, as well as Head Office, are being honoured here in the Free State tonight. These are men and women whose initial appointments were

between July 1972 and June 1974. For each individual 40 years of service represents 14 600 days in the employ of Government having, on average, worked in excess of 10 500 eight-hour shifts including weekends and night duty.

The certificates and cash amounts are tokens of our deep sense of appreciation for your service, and by no means can they be an equivalent of the time, intellect, and labour which you have invested in building this enduring Department.

Throughout their careers, our guests of honour and award recipients have been exposed to a variety of duties. These include the safe incarceration of offenders, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, restorative justice, security, administration, logistics, finance, offender complaints, community mobilisation etc.

It is a rare privilege in life to experience fundamental change of the magnitude our country undergone over the past 40 years, during which you were employees in this Department and civil servants under a state whose purpose and mission changed so drastically that it amounts to living one life in two worlds.

Your lives straddled both diametrically opposed worlds without breaking. Instead, you continued to grow and glow, demonstrating your professionalism as real civil servants who were rule-driven and non-partisan, willing at all times to put your skills to the best achievement of the desires of the statutory authorities of the day with the same vigour.

You indeed approached your occupation as a calling, and you deserve to be rewarded richly.

You joined the Department of Prisons and you today go on pension as retirees of the Department of Correctional Services under a progressive, popular state.

Thank you for being the trail-blazers of a new crusade of realizing the correction of South African citizens who are in conflict with the law, and the rehabilitation of those who are social misfits in our communities.

Compatriots,

As we celebrate our loyal staff and their dedication to this Department, we should also acknowledge staff challenges which this Administration is grappling with and which we are committed to finding solutions to. These challenges include among others:

1. The 7 day shift pattern establishment which appears to impact negatively on staff capacity, especially on Mondays and Fridays. We are receiving advice that our shift system, if it is not reviewed, has the long term potential of compromising security at our correctional facilities.
2. The apparent two tier system of centre-based versus non-centre based personnel. It appears that this distinction is a cause of much disgruntlement among our staff. It is alleged that skilled professionals are migrating to physical security (centre-based) functions because the remuneration is better here than with non-centre based activities.
3. Promotion – Apparently our Department does not have a clear policy on promotion. This negatively affects staff morale and performance.
4. Succession Plans – The Department does not seem to have a clear strategy of nurturing and growing talent in an environment where skilled individuals are prized and treated as a valuable, scarce resource.
5. Training of staff – Concerns are raised that our HR need to do more than it is currently doing in ensuring that its personnel continue to upgrade their skills. This would also include on the job training based on specific needs of the Department.
6. The Second Phase OSD – This is a matter that has been a challenge for the Department for a while. We have been appraised that there is a lot of work that has been done to resolve this matter under the leadership of the Acting National Commissioner and CDC for HR.

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. This requires that we all work together in finding practical, satisfactory solutions to the challenges that face us as a Department and as South Africans.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me share with you two personal accounts from our committed civil servants who will also be receiving their Long Service Awards this evening. In 1974, Ms. Mary-Ann Scheepers was only 19 years old when she left her hometown of Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape to Kroonstad to be trained as a Warder. She says, “the best memory for me will always be 13 years ago, when my husband was very sick. Although he was not employed by DCS, DCS gave me all the support like transporting him to hospital...that showed me how much DCS cared, not only about its employees, but their family as well”.

Since 2001, Mrs. Scheepers became part of the DCS Bowling Team, and has been chosen to represent the Department in next year’s tournament overseas.

Mr J.S. Human is full of praise for DCS: “I just want to say thank you. I am very proud to be part of Correctional Services for 40 years. I had good times in the Department and I was always able to give my wife and two daughters everything they needed. You will never be rich in the Department, but you will never go to bed hungry.” Mr Human met his wife at Goedemoed, and they have been married for 35 years. His wife’s father was also a member of the Department, and he was attracted to the Department because he admired the Department’s uniform which used to be worn by a disciplined friend of his father. He recalls the medal parades in the olden days which he describes as “special, elite occasions” of the Department.

His advice to new officials and the leadership of the Department is: “Be committed and loyal in your work. Every day, do what must be done and

more. Be proud of your career. Study because it is important to know your job well and to broaden your horizons”.

The Minister and the Department of Correctional Services wish to unreservedly thank the families and friends of the recipients, who have been with them on this long journey of nation-building, and for healing the wounds of victims of crime, and for giving those in conflict with the law a second chance in life to reform.

I also wish those of you who have gracefully retired, a peaceful and joyous retirement. We urge you to obtain sound financial advice in order to ensure that your hard earned savings look after you to the end of your days.

This Department will forever be your home. Don't hesitate to knock on our doors should you wish to discuss proposals about how we can improve our work and how we can improve the quality of your life.

Even as Senior Citizens, always bear in mind that the mandate of rehabilitating offenders is one we share with our broader society. It will always be an endeavor in which your professional voice particularly, must continue to be heard and your wisdom exploited.

I thank you all for your attention.