

REMARKS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES NKOSI PHATHEKILE HOLOMISA (AH! DILIZINTABA) MP, TO THE NCOP SELECT COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS AND EXECUTIVE UNDERTAKINGS ON THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES' PROGRAMMES ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR INMATES, ON VIRTUAL PLATFORM, ON 4 NOVEMBER 2020

Honourable Chairperson Ms Zukiswa Ncitha and members of the Select Committee on Petitions and Executive Undertakings, we thank you for affording us the opportunity to share with you the vision and plans of the Department of Correctional Services on skills development for the inmates who are in our care and custody. We wish to express our appreciation for reminding us of the undertakings we made before this August that we would return to share with you information on progress regarding our work in this regard. The Minister of Justice and Correctional Services would have preferred to have come in person to report back to you on those undertakings. However, due to Cabinet commitments which coincided with the date chosen by the Committee, he has requested me to come in his stead and to convey his sincere apologies for his absence.

Some of you will recall the words he uttered to you when he said, "We are currently looking at reviewing the skills programme in terms of our budget because we are of the view that every inmate should be able to go through this. So, we are looking at whether we can make it compulsory for every inmate to receive some kind of skills education or vocational training."

The Mission and Vision of the Skills Development Programme of the DCS is to provide **market-related** skills to offenders that will equip them with **needs-based** Occupational Skills and Vocational Education and Training, in order to facilitate their rehabilitation and social reintegration. This will also serve to ensure that we contribute to the Government Programme of Action, which seeks to create a skilled and capable workforce.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) states that the SA democratic state and common citizenship are founded on the values of human dignity, equality and the advancement of human rights and freedom. As part of building a humane and caring society, the right to basic education and training is a building block in the establishment of equality and the advancement of human rights.

In 2005 the Department of Correctional Services published the White Paper on Corrections which outlines the principles informing the core function of the Department vis-à-vis offenders, ie, “to correct the offending behavior in a secure, safe and humane environment in order to facilitate the achievement of rehabilitation and avoidance of recidivism”.

Chapter 4 of this White Paper further expands on rehabilitation as being the `process that combines the correction of the offending behavior, human development and promotion of social responsibility and values.

In addition, the Correctional Services Act compels us to provide access to a range of programmes and activities, including skills training. Due to the demand of industry and work opportunities outside the prison walls, our programmes are linked to the various Quality Assurance bodies, (SAQA, Umalusi and Quality Council for Trades and Occupations {QCTO}) to ensure they meet the set national standards.

The offenders are skilled in competencies that the Department itself can utilize, such as doing maintenance and repairs, plumbing, renovations, baking bread for inmate consumption, providing milk, meat, vegetables, fruit, etc.

Recently we built a recreational hall at George management area, using offender labour. As part of an integrated approach we motivate offenders to attend at least Adult Education Programmes (AET) to level 4 or grade 9, as this is the basic requirement for entry into accredited skills programmes.

This is also linked to Minister Ronald Lamola’s commitment made during the budget vote speech in October 2019, when he said, “*We will continue to play a pivotal role in the national strategy on poverty eradication through our management of 21 farms and*

115 small gardens that are being used for self-sufficiency and to provide work opportunities. Our production workshops, which specialize in cabinet making, wood machining, upholstery, furniture polishing, welding, plate metal work, fitting and turning, spray painting and powder coating, sign-writing, jig tool and dye making, garment making, confectionery and so on, continue to provide work opportunities for offenders, with the objective of skills utilization and development in order to enhance offenders' employability and self-sustenance upon their release"

Mindful of the scarcity of jobs for law abiding citizens, we are also providing skills to offenders to become entrepreneurs, to start their own business and even provide employment to other parolees and community members. Our Social Reintegration branch is able to follow some of these success stories.

Ideally, we would like to see every single inmate being skilled and better off than before being incarcerated. However, our reality is that we cannot involve Remand Detainees, firstly due to the risk involved, but also because of the uncertainty of the length of their incarceration. Accredited or formal skills training requires a minimum number of notional hours. The costs for some courses per offender is as much as R16 000 per person. We can, therefore, not include offenders with very short sentences, as we need to guarantee that they will be able to complete all the requirements. We also exclude maximum offenders due to the risk they pose and the security classification. Every training facility and workplace has a limited capacity in relation to the available floor space. We are thus limited in the number of offenders who can be allowed in a facility at any given time. Coupled with that is the current social distancing requirement that saw us reducing the numbers of people allowed in any space.

Needs Based Programmes/ Rehabilitation

Participation in skills development is based on the needs of offenders which follows a comprehensive assessment and the development of an individual's Correctional Sentence Plan (CSP). Female offenders are prioritized, including in skills like brick laying and plastering, besides the beauty industry like saloon work and nail-polishing.

Basic minimum entry requirements are:

- Possession of a SA Identity Document or a Valid Passport for foreign nationals. (we often contact family member who are willing to bring IDs to the CC, however, some offenders do not have funding to apply for IDs, Home Affairs assists with only the first application, not with lost IDs)
 - Ability to read and write
 - Ability to read English as the medium of instruction
 - Passed Standard 7 or Grade 9/ AET level 4

Critical Strategic Elements (Pillars) required to achieve Ideal Offender Skills Development are:

- Accreditation of offender training facilities and workplaces to increase offender participation.
- Alignment of the TVET College curriculum with local workplace.
- Maintenance of proper quality management and information management systems and processes.
- Ensuring proper implementation of Skills Development Policies and Procedures.
- Alignment of the organizational structure, recruitment and filling vacant posts of Skills Development at all the training sites.
- Optimization of skills development training facilities and resourcing of training facilities.
- Enhanced **partnerships** with internal and external stakeholders.
- Continuous motivation for the increase of voted funds in order to train more offenders.
- Voted funds are augmented by the NSF funding (currently R52 million over 3 years for the training of 5400 offenders)
- We apply annually for funding for the SETAs

The Department collaborates with various stakeholders to fund training of offenders and thus contributing to the personal development and rehabilitation of offenders.

We signed an Implementation Protocol Agreement with the National Skills Fund (NSF) under the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for training of 5480 offenders on various vocational and occupational programmes for the 2018/19 to 2021/22 financial years. During the first year of implementation, (2019/20 financial year) 1719 offenders were trained on various vocational and occupational skills programmes.

SASSETA funded the training of 276 offenders on vocational and occupational skills programmes. Services SETA funded the training of 44 female offenders on hairdressing Level 3 at Johannesburg Management Area. Merseta funded the training of 157 offenders in KZN.

In preparation towards the insourcing of the nutrition services, the Department of Correctional Services successfully trained 352 offenders on the accredited Chef Assistant and Baking Skills Programmes at the previously eight outsourced Management Areas.

DCS managed to save on costs by training 12 offenders at Pietermaritzburg Management Area (Textile Workshop) on industrial sewing machine repairs. This accredited skills programme contributed towards the Return on Investment (ROI) as 25 industrial sewing machines were repaired during the training phase.

DCS collaborated with the Department of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) and the City of Tshwane Municipality on the Waste Management pilot project for offenders at Kgosi Mampuru II Management Area as a contribution to Chapter 5 of the National Development Plan. The pilot project has successfully trained 25 offenders on accredited waste management short skills programme. The City of Tshwane Municipality donated 24 (240 litres) bins to Kgosi Mampuru II Management Area towards the project.

The Department through the partnership established with DHET secured bursaries for 16 Educators towards an Advanced Diploma in Adult and Community Education and Training Teaching (NQF Level 7) at Durban University of Technology (DUT).

DHET trained DCS' Technical Educators and Skills Development Practitioners on the administration and management of TVET College examinations. DHET, Umalusi and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) conducted TVET examination monitoring visits at registered DCS TVET Examination Centres to ensure compliance to National TVET examination standards.

In partnership with the Tshwane North Technical Vocational and Training (TVET) College, the Department has contributed to the Community Outreach Project through the implementation of learnerships for parolees, community members and offenders. Offenders, parolees and community members were trained on Agriculture (plant production), Cabinet making, Panel Beating, Welding and Early Childhood Development at the Zonderwater Management Area

DCS has also procured 20 computers for Pollsmoor and 15 for Kirkwood Management Areas, to ensure compliance with the implementation of TVET College Programmes as prescribed by the Department of Higher Education and Training. A total of 9 364 offenders participated in TVET College Programmes, and 14 717 Skills Training Programmes for the 2019/2020 financial year. DCS has increased offender participation from 17 534 in 2018/2019 financial year to 24 081 in the 2019/2020 financial year. The participation increased by 6 581 in the 2019/2020 financial year due to partnerships with external DHET, NSF, SASSETA and other SETA's. The Department trained 88 Technical Educators and Skills Development Practitioners as Assessors and Occupationally Education Training and Development Practitioners towards compliance and accreditation of offender training facilities and workplaces. Offenders incarcerated in the correctional facilities that do not have resources such as training facilities and workplaces, can be transferred to centres with resources.

DCS, much like the rest of the South African society is faced with an ever decreasing budget, and will not be able to involve all 150 000 inmates in skills training. However, inmates are also involved in other programmes and services, e.g. formal education, sports, arts and culture, spiritual care as well as therapeutic services provided by social workers and psychologists. Some of the programmes continue

while offenders are serving the remainder of their sentence under Community Corrections.