



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES, NKOSI PHATHEKILE HOLOMISA (AH! DILIZINTABA) MP, FOR
THE HAND-OVER OF A REFURBISHED HOUSE AT THEMBALETHU IN
GEORGE, 16 OCTOBER 2019**

Programme Director,
Leaders of Faith Based Organisations,
Our traditional leaders,
Councillors present,
Regional Commissioner, Deputy Regional Commissioner, Area Commissioner, Officials
of DCS,
Chief Magistrate, Mr Zeka,
Senior Management of Sister Government Departments,
George Community Policing Forum
Leaders of Non-Governmental Organisations,
Sampiso family and relatives
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's programme is all about holding each other's hand as we navigate through a plethora of challenges with the firm belief that a better life for all is possible and can be attained.

The Department of Correctional Services can be defined as an institution obsessed with positive change for safer communities. We constantly look for opportunities that can better assist the department to make a meaningful contribution to the people of South Africa.

While our mandate is to incarcerate and rehabilitate offenders, it is equally important that we interface with communities to effect crime prevention initiatives. We have to take the fight against crime to families and communities, where prevention has better chances of

succeeding. It should be our responsibility to ensure that our centres do not accept more young people that are supposed to be in schools instead of being behind bars. This is in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) and the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa, which recognise the family as the primary level, and the community as the secondary level, at which correction should take place.

It is for this reason that Correctional Services is not only addressing rehabilitation from an institutional point of view, but views society as the engine for societal transformation processes.

As a result, thousands of offenders, parolees and ex-offenders are involved in community infrastructure and food production projects that seek to plough back, provide some form of reparation for their crime, and strengthen the interface with victims, families, communities and various stakeholders.

We continuously encourage inmates to take responsibility to change attitudes and to ensure reconciliation with those that they offended for a peaceful co-existence in communities upon release. Hence we call on offenders to embrace the opportunity to be rehabilitated through skills development, which will not only ensure successful reintegration but also provide the means for self-sustenance upon release.

This refurbished house we are handing over today is the product of the work of inmates under the guidance of correctional officials from Southern Cape Management Area. The inmates involved in the project do acknowledge that the life they lived before was wrong and they are now committed towards making a positive contribution. This is just a gesture of saying, “we are sorry for our deeds; kindly give us a second chance so we can mend our ways towards becoming law abiding and productive citizens”.

It is thus our responsibility as Correctional Services to provide an appropriate environment for rehabilitation. Ours has been a journey of transformation as we vowed never to allow offenders to languish in prison without any tangible developmental skills. It is all centred around every offender leaving a correctional facility with an appropriate skill that will maximise opportunities for one to either find employment or start a business once released.

Programme Director, partnerships in the advancement of our society are important. It is in this context that I urge other stakeholders to extend a hand. Allow me to use this

platform and commend various partners who worked with Correctional Services in rebuilding this home, making it really new. I can firmly say that Hilda Sampiso's dignity has been amplified to greater heights.

Almost 65 percent of inmates in our centres are below the age of 35. These are young people mostly sentenced for murder, rape and robbery. This is a very disturbing phenomenon that cannot be allowed to continue. The manner in which Sydney Sampiso lost his life, talks directly to what I have just explained. The perpetrators are aged 16 and 17.

When we fought for liberation, we did not envisage a society that would be ravaged by crime, where our prisons would be packed with young children, coming mostly from previously disadvantaged communities. Our dream was for a safe and peaceful country where people would have access to basic services, including education which has the potential to relieve one from poverty.

Mam'uHilda Sampiso, I want to say to you, we do feel your pain. The community of Thembalethu can see your tears. We fully understand that the little contribution we are presenting to you today may never bring back your son, but we view this as the beginning of a healing process.

The Department of Correctional Services will continue with initiatives of this nature and redouble its efforts as we engage with young people to stay away from the life of crime. We all have a duty to make this country a decent place to live in, where all people are and feel safe.

The refurbished house that we are handing over to Mam'uHilda Sampiso is just one classical example where government, working together with various structures, makes it possible to protect not only the victims of crime, but also the most vulnerable in our society.

Let me thank the following partners for their contribution:

1. Caltex garage York Road
2. Total garage Knysna Road
3. Thembalethu Phuma Petrol station
4. Agri South Africa York Road
5. Thembalethu Cash Build

6. Ready mix George industrial
7. George Mayor's office
8. George Buco
9. Bradlows Furniture
10. DCS Officials

As I conclude, let us give hope to all our communities in this country. We are a caring government, working together, we can address the plight of the vulnerable, the unemployed and the under-privileged members of society at large.

I stand before you with the hope that today we are making a steady advancement towards the country of our dreams.

I thank you.