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Ministry Justice and Correctional Services

Republic of South Africa

Honourable House Chairperson

Members of the Executive Present

Deputy Minister for Correctional Services, Nkosi Phathekile Holomisa and

Deputy Minister for Justice and Constitutional Development Mr John Jeffery

**Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services,
Mr Bulelani Magwanishe**

**Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional
Services**

Honourable Members of this August House

**National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services, Mr Arthur
Fraser**

The Inspecting Judge, Justice Edwin Cameron

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

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House Chairperson, as we present the budget vote of the Department of Correctional Services, it is important that we remind this august house of our vision in the freedom charter which proclaims:

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance. Unquote

Therefore, we should always understand that most inmates incarcerated at our centres, will one day be released.

So, the question that arises is what kind of inmates would we release back to society. Will they be reformed and abhor their previous lives of crime? Will they be reintegrated back into society? And finally, will society accept them?

In answering these questions honourable members, it is important for me to illustrate to this house and society, what happens behind the walls of correctional services.

Our officials and professionals are creating an enabling environment for inmates to carve a new life for themselves. After years of serving time resulting from their infractions, and being exposed to rehabilitation and restorative programmes, inmates are on a path to become better citizens.

Unfortunately, upon their release, some inmates become subjects of ridicule, discrimination and deprivation of opportunities to eke an honest living. These factors make it extremely difficult for inmates to rebuild their lives. This then contributes to reoffending in some instances.

Communities must have an understanding that indeed corrections is a societal responsibility. It should not only be located within the Department of Correctional Services.

In corrections, we are addressing some of the challenges I have alluded to.

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We have dedicated men and women in brown uniform who are putting relentless efforts to steer corrections towards achieving our vision of providing the best Correctional Services for a safer South Africa.

Yes, there are some who stretch the limits within the workspace, like any other work environment, hence we impressed upon the department for consequence management to have an effect.

In order for us to implement programmes that will contribute to a safer South Africa, we table before this august house, a budget of R25,2 billion for the 2021/22 Financial Year.

The allocation will be divided as follows, R6,2 billion which constitutes 24.6% of the budget, is allocated to Head Office, the remaining 75.4% of the budget is allocated to regions, of which 58% of this is allocated to the programme Incarceration, followed by administration programme at 13.2%, Care programme at 12%, Rehabilitation programme at 10.6% and Social Reintegration at 6.2%.

The projected revenue collection for the Department of Correctional Services for the 2021/22 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period is R486,1 million. This revenue is mostly generated through the letting of accommodation facilities to personnel; selling of products produced in correctional centres workshops, and hiring out of offender labour.

We have set aside a total of R1,6 billion for Capital Works Programmes over the 2021 MTEF period, R1,1 billion is for upgrading of facilities and additions, and R486,1 million is for repairs and maintenance of correctional centres. The MTEF additional facilities will include Emthonjeni Youth Centre, Parys Centre, Brandvlei Centre, Burgersdorp Centre and Lichtenburg Centre.

Over the 2021 MTEF period, Correctional Services will also receive R50.2 million from the National Skills Fund and Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority for the training of offenders.

For the 2021/22 Financial Year, the average number of inmates funded are 169 681, of which 124 294 are sentenced; and 45 387 are unsentenced.

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Honourable Members, this budget, although lesser than what we anticipated, will enable the department to continue implementing its mandate which affects the lives of the general public and victims of crime, who must be protected from criminal elements.

Victims, who have experienced first-hand the harm of crime, have their hopes on Correctional Services.

Since the advent of democracy and the introduction of the Correctional Services Act (Act 111 of 1998), South Africa opted for a management approach where human rights are protected and the responsibility is placed on the correctional system to motivate and encourage offenders to do away with negative values through an array of rehabilitation programmes.

Inmates are thus expected to be reformed and ready to be reintegrated back into their communities upon successful completion of their sentences. During the course of rehabilitation, there are, however, certain disturbing episodes that derail the work of corrections, and such must never be allowed to normalise in a correctional setting.

When adopting the new Constitution of South Africa in 1996 which we are commemorating its 25th anniversary this year, our country's first democratically elected President, Tata Nelson Mandela, said:

“This Constitution is our own humble contribution to democracy and the culture of human rights worldwide: It is our pledge to humanity that nothing will steer us from this course.” Unquote.

The Constitution entrenches a clear path for a human rights-based model of correctional centre governance, which continues to motivate us on this journey today.

It is our Constitution that motivated us to adopt legislation, as well as numerous related protocols and strategies, that sought to improve the efficiency of our criminal justice system as a country. It is our Constitution that implores us to understand that inmates are a reflection of our society. And as a result, we

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should correct communities in order for us to reduce the correction of individuals.

Honourable Members, we want correctional facilities to become places where offenders are encouraged to believe in their inherent value as human beings in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules. As a result, there is no doubt that education, skills training and other such programmes play a pivotal role in reducing the rate of recidivism.

Management of COVID-19 at Correctional Services

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has been very vocal about the need to firmly embed correctional centres, inmates and correctional officials into the overall COVID-19 public health response of countries to address the plight of inmates during the pandemic and to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in correctional centres. This should also include vaccination programmes for inmates.

South Africa has heeded this call by the UNODC, as at 15 May 2021, Correctional Services was managing 177 active Coronavirus cases nationally, comprising of 84 officials and 93 inmates. This equates to 0.23% of staff and 0.07% of the inmate population. The cumulative recoveries to date translate to a rate of 96.32%.

It is befitting in this regard that I thank health care professionals in correctional services, management and all officials, for contributing to pushing back the devastation of COVID-19 within the department.

Our health care officials across all regions in the department, also responded positively to the call for vaccination, those who are yet to take the vaccine, we continue to encourage them to do so to protect their lives. Vaccination will also be rolled out to inmates, currently, they are being reached out with awareness campaigns on vaccination across all the regions.

House Chairperson, we are encouraged by the fact that on 16 March 2021, the National Assembly agreed to a motion, which collectively recognized the hard work of correctional officials across the country who face difficulties due to the nature of their work, moreover under this period of the COVID-19

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pandemic. To this end, we salute our unsung heroes and heroines in correctional services.

Victims Support Programmes

House Chairperson, we are going to inject fresh impetus into the type of support we make available to the victims of crime. More often, we have been accused of focussing on parolees and ex-offenders in terms of facilitating economic empowerment initiatives, at the expense of victims. Together with Deputy Minister Holomisa, we have instructed the department to broaden the envelope on the offender labour programme to benefit victims.

Practical developments are already underway in terms of victim empowerment. On 7 June 2021, together with Deputy Minister Holomisa, we will be handing over a house to the Zungu family in Weenen, KwaZulu-Natal, which was built through offender labour in partnership with the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The Zungu family was attacked on 18 June 2019 around midnight. The mother, Xinile Zungu, did not survive.

This unfortunate incident robbed the family of a breadwinner, leaving ten children as orphans. All of them are currently unemployed. The Zungu family can be best described as indigent.

The plight of such victims of crime cannot be ignored. Building this family a house is the little contribution correctional services could make. This house is 70 square metres, we thank the SABC for collaborating with us on this project, and securing a sponsor for the building material.

Integrated Justice System

Honourable Members, Correctional Services has developed a Social Reintegration Framework that seeks to instil corrections as a societal responsibility. As such, the Department is going to engage more actively within

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Government, as well as amongst the broader society, to ensure effective rehabilitation and reintegration of those who offend.

Amongst some of the initiatives will be to encourage the sentencing of those guilty of minor offences to community corrections rather than direct imprisonment.

However, in order to achieve the effective monitoring and rehabilitation of such persons, it will become imperative for the participation of the broader society in the process. This will also assist in addressing the root causes of crime and thus reduce repeat offending.

The failure to employ ex-offenders even on instances where they meet requirements is an area of great concern for us. Some institutions assume that a criminal record prevents one from securing employment, this myth requires some degree of public education as it is not true and should be completely rejected. In reality, this impacts negatively on reintegration efforts by the Department of Correctional Services.

Self Sufficiency and Sustainability in Correctional Services

Honourable Members, in the 2020/21 Financial Year, Correctional Services approved the Self Sufficiency and Sustainability Strategic Framework. This is aimed at taking a long-term view on developing and utilising state assets under the department to reduce the costs incurred by the fiscus in correctional services and to generate revenue. I have no doubt that self-sufficient correctional centres can truly be a catalyst for the innovative use of government funds.

As a department, we have established a joint working committee with National Treasury to ensure that the strategic framework gains traction and that a long-term institutional model of implementation is put in place.

Rehabilitation and corrections programmes implemented by the department will now be geared towards ensuring that offenders spend their time in

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incarceration contributing positively towards building our economy and communities.

Our approach to self-sufficiency and sustainability is holistic, based on sound strategic partnership with communities, business and districts surrounding some of our farms, working together with other government departments and tertiary institutions.

Implementation of the Strategic Framework for Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability is moving full steam ahead, with inmates and correctional officials poised to produce more in various correctional facilities.

Apart from upscaling government savings in the years to come, offenders will also gain formal qualifications in preparation to handing them over to community corrections.

Production levels in our farms, workshops and bakeries at various correctional centres across the country are increasing. During the first six months of the 2020/21 Financial Year, on average per day, 2 727 offenders worked in agriculture, and an average of 999 offenders per day worked in production workshops as part of offenders' skills utilization and development.

Through the use of offender labour, the following were produced: vegetables, 3 632 508 kg; fruits, 218 095 kg; eggs, 676 369 dozens; poultry, 591 718 kg; pork, 940 699 kg; milk, 3 150 990 litres; beef, 212 514 kg; as well as 1 839 645 loaves of bread for inmates' ration.

The value of Code three Orders, which are orders for furniture from other government entities, has increased from R1, 7 million in the 2019/20 Financial Year, to R5,44 million in the 2020/21 Financial Year.

We want to see these orders increasing, as the quality of furniture we manufacture is of the same standard, if not superior, when compared to many private outlets. We can save the government billions through this venture, as our prices are reasonable.

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Production workshops are also manufacturing uniform, wood, steel and textile products. Offenders are also involved in various arts and crafts projects that produce goods with a market value. This could provide an added opportunity for revenue generation.

As part of mitigating against the spread of COVID-19, Correctional Services also manufactured a total of 332 056 cloth facemasks for inmates in the first six months of the 2020/21 financial year.

Our steel workshops manufactured sanitiser holders, and foot pedal stands, to help further reduce the spread of the Coronavirus. This initiative does not only contribute towards the prevention of the spread of the virus, but it also counts as an addition to the skills set for offenders which could be used for self-employment upon release.

Inmates also developed sporting infrastructure at two schools, one in Bushbuckridge and the other in Alexandra. They also refurbished 1000 desks for schools in Mpumalanga, and they will soon do the same for the Eastern Cape.

During the 2020/21 Financial Year, our self-produced efforts saved the government R94 million.

By the end of the current financial year, it is expected that in Correctional Services nationally, no pork and eggs will be procured externally, they will be produced internally.

This drive will continue as we identify and remove more products from our procurement list and also set our sights on commercialising realised surpluses.

Together with Deputy Minister Holomisa, we will launch the Self-Sufficiency and Sustainability Strategic Framework through showcasing offender labour projects, on 27 and 28 May 2021 in Oudtshoorn and George respectively, in the Western Cape.

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The completed offender labour construction projects to be showcased include the following: Oudtshoorn Correctional Centre School, Oudtshoorn Correctional Centre Mess, George Management Area Pharmacy, George In-Patient Facility, George Dining Hall, and George Laundry Room. A similar launch of other projects will follow in other provinces.

Skills Training and Learnership in Correctional Services

The reduction in the compensation of employees' budget will have a negative impact on the implementation of developmental programmes, such as leadership and internships, which are the Department's foremost youth development and empowerment programmes. Learnerships and internships have, over the years, provided a pool of entry-level youth who were absorbed by the Department of Correctional Services.

We are aware of the challenges arising from budgetary constraints, related to the absorption of the 2000 learners who correctional services trained. However, 932 of the learners will be absorbed throughout our regions from the first of June. The remaining 1068 learners will be prioritised through departmental budget reprioritisation and the natural attritions processes this financial year.

Conclusion

House Chairperson, we appeal to all stakeholders and the broader society to work together with the department so that we can together, create efficient Correctional Services which will contribute to a safer South Africa.

I want to take this opportunity and thank Deputy Minister Holomisa for his support, management of the Department, led by National Commissioner, Mr

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Arthur Fraser, the Inspecting Judge, Justice Cameron, Organized Labour and all other stakeholders contributing to our mandate.

I want to conclude by quoting from the poem of an ex-offender, Sebolelo Shabangu, titled **Prison**:

Being incarcerated if Freeing;

Though demeaning, I see it as uplifting;

Some come in destructed and come out reconstructed.

Though a stumbling block, I chose to make them stepping stones.

I salute you prison;

You reconcile, you rehabilitate, you correct and event reintegrate. Unquote

Hakhensa Honourable Members!