



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Opening Address of Acting National Commissioner Nontsikelelo Jolingana at the National Correctional Services Senior Management Service (SMS) Conference held in Durban from 13 – 14 March 2014

Programme Director

The hosting RC Commissioner Nxele

Members of the National Management Committee (CDCs and RCs)

Members of the Senior Management Services in general

Organisers of the SMS conference

Dr. Molapo and Dr Zodwa Magwenzi

Rev. Mkhize (your words from the heart of heart)

Ladies and gentlemen

I greet you all in the name of my savior – Jesus Christ. Bringing you greetings from the APEX Leadership the Minister and Deputy Minister who are locked in Parliament dealing with government business before the end of this term.

Programme Director let me report From the team I lead, Commissioner Tsetsane is not here, he is serving notice as he has resigned from DCS to pursue some of his dreams.

Commissioner Klaas has been booked off sick. The rest of people who report to me are here.

I acknowledge these men and women Chief deputy commissioners and Regional Commissioners, the men and women on whose shoulders I am standing, so that I can see far. Without this collective leadership, I am nothing, so I do want to acknowledge them! I appreciate you colleagues!

We are gathered here today, at a critical time in the history of our new democratic country in general and in particular the Department of Correctional Services. As a country we are few weeks to the end of the term and in the same vain to the 3rd decade of freedom. South Africa is a young adult, that has begun to look back with a sense of pride about what she has achieved thus far, but faces a new journey of the third decade of existence with higher expectations of productivity and acceleration of the transformation of our society.

As President Jacob Zuma said of South Africa in government's 20 Year Review Report, Correctional Services too, "has a success story to tell". I can confidently say Correctional Services "is a good story" which must be told to the people of South Africa with vigour and confidence. Minister Sibusiso Ndebele said our Correctional System today is a far cry from the prison system we inherited in 1994.

Although the presentation of Mr Raseroka is going to give more flesh, I must take this opportunity to tell you that we have a number of good stories to tell, covering:

Our institutional transformation from a gender and racially biased apartheid prison system to an institution that reflects the demographics of our country's people fairly well, although there is a lot more to be done in respect of women and people with disabilities.

Our budget improved 19 fold from about R1 billion annual budget in 1995 to R19 billion in 2014,

demonstrating a strong commitment to invest in building a people's correctional system that reverences human rights and addresses historical imbalances.

A fundamental shift from a repressive prison system that was the last line of the onslaught against the people to protect apartheid, to being a rehabilitation focused institution that seeks to effectively break the cycle of crime in South Africa.

There are also many other areas that demonstrate our success in improving safe custody, in fighting fraud and corruption, in improving access to rehabilitation programmes including education and skills development, etc.

These would not have been possible without both correctional managers and officials, many of whom performed excellently in their respective corners away from the limelight. For this we also owe our gratitude to many fore-bearers of the leadership roles we have and many of you as administrative leaders of this institution. You deserve a pat on the back for this outstanding work that has contributed in making South Africans proud of who they are and who they have since become during our 20 year journey from prisons to corrections.

In as much as I reflected on great successes, there are a number of areas where we performed sub-optimally or even failed to meet our targets. By our own admission in the 2012-13 financial year annual report, we said, only 43% of the targets were fully met, which is a good honest account for our performance. In addition, we cannot be proud of 20 years of continued qualification of our financial statements by the Auditor General of South Africa, even if we may claim to have improved from over nine areas of qualification to only one.

Although we reduced overcrowding and incarceration rates over the past ten years, we are still rated on the negative side of the equation, meaning our efforts must be doubled to meet our targets for 2030. Corruption has been fought with vigour, but more needs to be done to eliminate the scourge that continues to rear its ugly head. We celebrated increased participation of victims and communities in decision making on inmate life cycle incidents but we remain with overall 5% participation rate in determination of parole decision for inmates.

The National Development Plan (NDP) states that one of the most important variables that are critical for our success in reaching the South Africa of our dreams is administrative leadership that had remained very unstable during the first two decades of freedom. Our focus now, going forward is on sharpening the leadership of correctional services, because, as John Maxwell says:

“Everything rises and falls on leadership”

We convened this SMS conference because, at this critical time I have described earlier, we need to build a formidable leadership collective of Correctional Services that will help place us on a higher path of transformation and development. The National Commissioner's leadership is incomplete without the full dedicated members of the National Management Committee.

They too are incomplete without all of you as SMS members. Currently we speak in many tongues on issues that affect our staff, and sometimes some of us are active proponents of discord in the “melodious music” we wish to sing. We trust that this SMS conference will help close that gap, ask the unpalatable questions that will unearth the truth about us, while also working together to find strategic solutions that will guide a further search for workable solutions to all our challenges.

I am sure you have observed that, despite phenomenal progress made to improve people's quality of life in South Africa, those not touched effectively over the years are beginning to lose patience and are taking to the streets to demand better service delivery. The same patience is running thin inside our facilities considering a number of issues left hanging, which led to the establishment of the Minister's Task Team on Human Resources. We need creative means of dealing with challenges facing us faster, as we intensify efforts to build Correctional Services as an employer of choice.

I therefore wish to urge everyone of you to throw your weight behind our collective leadership efforts to turn the tide on all those areas that either eluded during these two decades of freedom while also tackling new

challenges brought by our previous good performance.

On issues flagged by the AGSA we need to move beyond coming up with action plans for compliance purposes, but practical strategies to redeem ourselves from being labeled repeat offenders” by the AG. Operation Vukuza must bring real results.

On 16-18 January 2013 we adopted a new vision and mission in Zimbali, in an effort to better focus our department. We must not treat the drive to push for internalization of these by the staff as a compliance matter, but to ensure a full buy-in by all staff. Make them our ambassadors. We will not prescribe what you should do, let your creative juices and passion drive this, and I am sure excellent results will flow.

The quality of our performance information leaves much to be desired. This is not an unnecessary appendage to your primary responsibilities, but an essential part of your core performance as SMS members. We need to learn from the best, which include your local clinics that has three nurses that serve over 3000 communities. To them performance information is core with graphs on the wall and prompt advisories to the higher leadership where crisis emerge and interventions are required.

Our ability to translate our ambitious programmes into smart programmes that are measurable is a challenge we must tackle as this leadership collective.

We have structured a pregnant programme, which we believe will give birth to a dynamic, passionate and innovative leadership core of this institution.

This morning our focus is on laying the foundation with a reflection on Correctional Services 20 year journey and how we gear ourselves for the next decade and the achievements of the national vision 2030.

A renowned motivational speaker, Dr David Molapo will share his thoughts with us and bless us with a package on leadership development that includes a three-CD-pack of the world acclaimed leadership John Maxwell’s book on leadership. He will be accompanied by another guru who heads a Second Chances Foundation of Wits University – details of which will follow.

We will then get a perspective on the organizational culture of DCS.

These will lay a solid foundation for productive engagements of all of us in commissions. I am sure discussions in commissions will be fired up, and I urge you to consider singing an inspirational song of your choice to ignite the creative spark and fan it into flames.

Tomorrow, we also have a packed programme. We will get:

Reflections from the horse’s mouth – the AGSA on our compliance challenges.

A report on the Ministerial Task Team on HR issues.

A brief on key legacy projects of Minister Sibusiso Ndebele.

These will provide “meat” for “eating and digestion” by the commissions which are expected to help shape a clear way-forward before closing remarks of Minister Sibusiso Ndebele and a word of gratitude to all of you and all those left in our offices for work well done. We appreciate that we cannot find solutions to all our challenges over two days, but I am sure we will get a system in place for this leadership collective to continue finding solutions and implementing them going forward.

I do wish that you will mingle, find time to network with others and relax Kodwa ningakweletisi!!!

I wish you the best ever SMS session.

I thank you.