



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Speech of acting National Commissioner Ms. Nontsikelelo Jolingana  
at the Imvuselelo event at Dan Qeqe Stadium, Zwide Location in the  
Nelson Mandela Bay Metro on Sunday, 13 April 2014**

**Programme Director**

**CDC of Community Corrections Ms Pumla Mathibela**

**Regional Commissioner of Eastern Cape Mr. N.C. Breakfast**

**Executive Mayor of Nelson Mandela Metro Mr. Ben Fihla**

**Bishops and leaders of various denominations**

**The Management and staff of Correctional Services**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

We greet you all today in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Imvuselelo is a revival service aimed at the spiritual enlightenment, enrichment and upliftment of our correctional officials who carry our hopes and our aspirations as a nation.

Our theme says **“Arise and Shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you”** – words of wisdom from the book of Isaiah 60:1. Xa siyitsho ngesiXhosa ithi **“Sukuma ukhanye ngokuba ukukhanya kwakho kufikile”**.

This was said in a context where thick darkness was over the people, where certain developments were hanging as a dark cloud over the society, resulting in self-doubts, loss of hope and energy to soldier-on among the people of Jerusalem. The church must be instrumental in defeating the spiritual darkness that pervades the world.

We are grateful to our partners, SABC’s Umhlobo Wenene FM for such a sustained partnership to run a series of Imvuselelo's which seek to build public awareness on the massive challenges facing correctional officials in carrying out their work. We also have no words to express our appreciation of the Church for its role in praying for us to do God’s work progressively better.

There is no better way to promote **Corrections as a Societal Responsibility** than these initiatives which have touched millions of people, particularly in the Eastern Cape. Correctional Services is an institution of the state, meaning the people of South Africa in their entirety, which is assigned a responsibility of protecting the society from its own members that have turned to crime that harms our society.

Minister Sibusiso Ndebele says correctional officials are left with no option but to succeed, when parents, priests, teachers, local leadership, neighbours, police, justice and everyone one else has failed and given up.

Offenders get passed on to Correctional Services where officials have to spend every minute, every hour, every day, every week, every month and every year of the sentence period with a sentenced offender, and that goes with all the risks involved.

We must state that this is not an easy task and St Albans is a testimony to this claim, that being a correctional official is a risky job that is sometimes

thankless. Just last week, two officials were stabbed by offenders, that's just one incident in a series of those experienced over the past few months at this centre.

We must also state that the **nature of crime in general is becoming more and more violent**, with about 70% of inmates being young people. Lifers nationally have increased from about 400 in 1995 to over 12000 in 2014, a phenomenal increase since government took a hardline stance against serious crimes with minimum sentence legislation instituted since the advent of democracy.

In total these incidents can indeed hang as **a dark cloud over our facilities**, with a potential to **demoralize and drain our officials' energy**, demotivate them and make them more vulnerable to these abuses. That is why Minister Ndebele declared the financial year 2013-14 as the year of a correctional official and urged the African Correctional Services Association's Ministerial Consultative Forum held in Pretoria recently to declare an African Decade of Correctional Officials.

This is to appropriately recognize Correctional Officials as central to the delivery of the labour intensive correctional services, and as agents of rehabilitation, safe custody and social re-integration of offenders. On average human resources, which is taken as the most strategic resource for delivering correctional services, take up about 70% of the R19 billion annual budget of the Department.

We are left with few weeks to the end of the second decade of freedom and the fourth term of government. Our nation is currently in celebration of this milestone in the history of South Africa. As the question is asked whether we have a cause to celebrate, I am sure Correctional Services can answer boldly that indeed we have a lot to celebrate, although there is still a long-walk to reach the South Africa of our dreams. Allow me to flag a few reasons for celebrating 20 years of freedom:

- Education has taken an unprecedented centre stage in rehabilitation with intakes for pre-ABET programmes doubling since Minister Ndebele announced the compulsory education policy. Full-time

schools were increased from 1 in 2009 to 12 in 2014, artisan training reached 9400 in 2012-13 financial year and growing, while all levels of education continue to grow, to build characters and a sense of self-worth among offenders.

- We have also breathed new life into government's restorative justice and victim empowerment programme with the introduction of the Victim Offender Dialogue in November 2012 by Minister Sibusiso Ndebele.

Thus far we have held 96 sessions nationally touching over 2000 victims and communities while driving home five key variables of the change we wish to see among perpetrators of crime – viz.: Regret, Remorse, Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of offenders back into society. We seek to centralize victims' needs and aspirations in doing our work, and we appeal to the church to pray for this noble work of victim offender dialogue.

- Food production has improved, almost doubling in many areas while in others the self-sufficiency production levels have been reached. Because of the potential of agriculture to contribute in ensuring national food security and in giving skills that could enable offenders to self-employ and also create jobs for others, the Minister has established a Task Team to investigate and recommend more innovative ways of stepping up agriculture production.
- We have delivered phenomenally in ensuring secure custody since the advent of democracy as escapes were reduced by 96% from 1244 in 1995 to 58 in 2013-14 financial year. We have also improved the rate and the speed of rearrests of escapees as 41 of the escapees have been re-arrested, and 30 of them within two days, sending a clear message of zero tolerance of escapes.

Although these are commendable achievements, the road ahead is long and tough. Security breaches including smuggling of illegal substances, cellphones and drugs remain a serious challenge **in our Correctional Facilities.**

Levels of victim participation in the determination of parole placements and in rehabilitation require focused attention to speed up change. We need every one of you to spare a moment each day and pray for correctional officials to be more effective in breaking the cycle of crime, and for our nation to be increasingly safer for all including women and children.

The ideal of a South Africa where every person is and feels safe is still a distant goal, which needs us to double our efforts of strengthening and changing of correctional system in particular and the criminal justice system in general.

By holding this Imvuselelo Revival Service this weekend, we do not only seek to get our society to inspire our officials, but in celebration of the Triumphant Entry of Jesus, the Light of the World in Jerusalem. We hope and pray that The Messiah's Entry into Jerusalem then, will encourage and inspire us now, to be ambassadors of light, peace and salvation to all. We need to appreciate increasingly that our mission is God's mission. We are here to assure you that you chose the right career because correction is a noble profession, a light-shedding profession in contest with forces of darkness.

When we are urged today to Arise and Shine, we are called to take action by taking our light and placing it on mountain tops in order to enlighten the whole world, njengoko isitsho ivangeli kaMatewu 5 verse 15:

"Abasibaneki isibane basibeke phantsi kwetafile koko basibeka esiphathweni saso, ngaphezulu ukuze sikhanyisele bonke abantu".

As torch-bearers, this means we must serve with humility, and continue to lift those regarded as the most down trodden among us. Our founding father of Democracy, uTat'uNelson Mandela is well known for urging us to rise and shine:

"As we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same."

In the same vain, we need to take ourselves as part of the generation of correctional leaders, managers and officials that will allow our greatness inside of each one of us, to blossom and leave a solid legacy for the 2030 generations. As Tat'uMandela urges, this Imvuselelo must serve to ignite that spark of light inside of us to inspire many in our society.

Talmud teachings say:

“One person’s candle is a light for many. Act while you can, while you have a chance, the means and the strength.”

We are grateful to the organisers of this Imvuselelo, our partners Umhlobo Wenene, the Local Ministers Fraternal and the Nelson Mandela Metro for its unyielding support and assistance. We also appreciate every one of you who put aside his or her important programme for today to be with us in praying for our correctional officials and communities. We may have made good progress in the first two decades of freedom, but a lot more must still be done, because your mother, your child, your father, your brother and sister, as well as your grandmother and father deserve a lot better and safer environment. Together we can make the Nelson Mandela Metro, the Eastern Cape and South Africa safer. Let’s pray and make it happen.

**God Bless you all**

**I thank you**