



**SPEAKING NOTES**  
**CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AUDIT ACTION PLAN AND STATE OF**  
**RECORDS REVIEW INDABA**  
**GOODWOOD MANAGEMENT AREA, WESTERN CAPE**

**11 November 2021**

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Mr Ronald Lamola in absentia

Acting National Commissioner, Mr Makgothi Thobakgale

Chairperson of the Audit Committee

Senior Management from DCS and other Institutions

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

South Africa has a constitutional mandate to strengthen our country's democracy by enabling oversight, accountability and governance in the public sector, thereby building public confidence.

As alluded to during our various engagements with the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services and various other stakeholders, changes brought on by the spread of COVID-19 have been met with difficult decisions to manage resources within a constrained budget and ensure the sustainability of services delivered by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). Nevertheless, DCS continues to work diligently to deliver on planned programmes and projects during the current financial year.

Today's session would have been ideal if perhaps the objective was to say how do we, as DCS, move into the mode of continuous improvement, and become trendsetters for other state organs on achieving clean audits. Unfortunately, we are not yet there and, sadly, it does not seem like we have registered significant progress in terms of the red flags. It was, therefore, imperative that we converge in this manner and dissect each component that has been an inhibiting factor.

I am saying this because, when you study the Auditor-General's (AG's) report on the Department of Correctional Services, what becomes prominent are the three root causes that we have allowed to normalise over the years. Then the question is, are we incapable to address them or we are just not prepared to move?

Let me cite them as they are:-

- Management not effective in developing and monitoring the implementation of action plans;

- Consequences for transgressions and poor performance implemented by management were inadequate; and
- Instability/vacancies in key positions.

These three factors have been raised consistently over the years, and it makes us to look like habitual offenders as we keep repeating them. I am therefore pleased that today we all took a stand, and we are saying enough is enough.

Programme Director, the audit action plan we have crafted is not the first. However, what has been the challenge is the implementation thereof, and, surely, we need to change this. Each official, manager and supervisor has a responsibility of monitoring the implementation of action plans to address audit findings and root causes in a timely manner.

Incurring irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure has to make us uncomfortable, and all those liable should know that it is a disciplinary matter. We simply cannot afford to allow the wrongs to normalise.

The audit action plan is a commitment that we are making, affirming that we will deliberately pay attention to the gaps in the system and implement equitable measures.

We are currently sitting with irregular expenditure of R1,4 billion due to lack of reviews and monitoring of supply chain management legislation. It is thus important that prescribed processes are followed in order to ensure that the selected supplier has the capacity to deliver the goods, and services and that it is done at a reasonable price with value for money.

Inadequate management of projects and contracts remain a weakness in DCS. It is therefore my fervent wish that today's plan will bring about the required change not just on paper, but through deliberate action.

Our country has adopted some of the most advanced policies, laws and regulations in the world. This is demonstrated by inputs from the Chair of the Audit Committee as well as the AG, making a quest to all of us to understand specific measures aimed at making us to conduct our business in a manner that is fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective.

National Treasury will always tell you that one of the greatest inhibitors to improved supply chain efficiency is poor planning. We therefore have a responsibility, as DCS, to continuously strengthen the system in order to detect and deal with irregular or improper practices whenever they appear.

Auditing and vetting of bid processes must be strengthened to ensure adherence, compliance and ultimately eliminate the possibility for fraud and corruption. In so doing, we will be able to avoid unnecessary negative findings.

Non-compliance must have consequences and accountability must be enforced at all levels. For example, there should be severe consequences for those who intentionally neglect the corrective measures we are putting in place.

I would like to urge all of you to extensively engage with supporting structures whenever you are not clear. Seek assistance and make it a habit to comply with standing prescripts.

In order for the Department to respond effectively to the mission of its commitment towards a clean audit, we need embedded DCS Strategic Alignment, Cultural Alignment and Quality Commitment. All DCS governance structures must be active, especially Exco which must submit a report to the ministry for noting following each meeting.

Manco must be diarised as a quarterly meeting, the ministry will in consultation with the Acting National Commissioner, provide the agenda for the meeting. The Audit Committee should assist us to examine the effectiveness of DCS Governance Structures. In the same vain, this could include examination of our strategy, structure, cultural alignment and their impact on service delivery.

DCS must redefine its purpose for existence driven through clean governance. For such to happen, we need every official to commit to this course.

Special words of gratitude to all participants and partners who have made invaluable inputs, as we map out our route towards clean audits.

Let me conclude by quoting Jackson Brown Jr:

**“That you may retain your self-respect, it is better to displease the people by doing what you know is right, than to temporarily please them by doing what you know is wrong.”**

With these words, let us go out there and make a difference. DCS needs all of us.

THANK YOU.