**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTERS OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: HON THABANG MAKWETLA AT THE CEREMONY TO MARK THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE ST ALBANS MANAGEMENT AREA BAKERY: 31 AUGUST 2018**

Programme Director

Distinguished guests and partners

Correctional Managers and officials

Ladies and gentlemen

Today is a special day for Correctional Services; as it marks a number of critical milestones in our efforts to transform this department and promote corrections as a societal responsibility.

In short, the following milestones are being celebrated today:

* The Official opening of the St Albans Management Area Bakery;
* Introduction of the employability of parolees and probationers concept to the business community;
* Conclusion of Women’s Month.

Together, these are indicators of how serious we are in changing this institution to truly be a people’s correctional system that all South Africans can be proud of and support. We have made a clarion call to every sector and every individual, to join in making sure that delivery of Correctional Services is no longer business as usual.

Our mandate as DCS is to invest in rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes; aimed at breaking the cycle of crime as outlined in the National Development Plan, towards ensuring that all people in South Africa are, and feel safe.

We are saying; to successfully break the cycle of crime, we must work together in asking the question, WHAT IS IT THAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER TO TAKE SAFE DETENTION, REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL RE-INTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS TO A HIGHER LEVEL?

We ask this question not because we have failed; but because there is so much more to do and therefore our pace of delivery must double and be better than today and yesterday. We are talking of innovations, new and better ways of solving historical and current challenges facing delivery of Correctional Services in this country.

Programme Director, this morning we started with the official opening of the new bakery for the St Albans Management Area. Construction of the bakery commenced in 2017 and it was completed in March 2018 with a projected budget of R 1, 4 million for the renovations and an additional R 1, 4 million for the equipment. This investment shows that we take very seriously the founding principles of our constitution; and the provisions of our legislation and policies that seek to rehabilitate and equip offenders within our care, with the necessary skills to become employable and productive citizens. It is worth noting that this is the 9th bakery that we are opening as the Department of Correctional Services.

The DCS bakeries project began in 1992 with the opening of the Kgosi Mampuru bakery. The DCS bakeries are own resource projects managed under the directorate- Production Workshops and Agriculture. This division of the DCS provides support through the provision of products and services for offenders’ development and to reduce government expenditure.

Its core mandate is to provide job opportunities for offenders, increase their employability, skills development and skills utilization through production workshops, farms and bakeries. This division derives its directive from the constitutional framework that governs our country and the mandate of the Department of Correctional Services.

Section 40 of the Correctional Services Act No 111 of 1998 addresses the labor of sentenced offenders and reads as follows:

1. “Sufficient work must as far as is practicable be provided to keep sentenced offenders active for a normal working day, and a sentenced offender may be compelled to do such work. (b). Such work must as far as practicable be aimed at providing such offenders with skills in order to be gainfully employed in society on release” .

Chapter 4 of the 2005 White paper on corrections speaks to the objectives of the South African Correctional System. Objective 4.4.8 emphasizes that; “Employment and making a contribution to the wealth of the community by means of production is a key component to rehabilitation and the prevention of recidivism”.

As I have already mentioned, St Albans is the 9th bakery that we are opening. Our other bakeries are located in the following management areas:

* Kgosi Mampuru, Baviaanspoort and Boksburg in Gauteng; Drakenstein and Brandvlei in the Western Cape; Barbeton in Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga; Tswelopele and Goedemond in Free State/ Northern Cape; and now we have St Albans.

We also have bakeries that are currently in the planning stages, to be located in Potchefstroom, Tzaneen, Standerton and Pietermaritsburg.

This Directorate’s important work also takes us a step closer in achieving our goal to increase the number of trained artisans as outlined in the National Skills Development Plan. Our integrated and partnership driven approach towards rehabilitation, skills development, reintegration and economic empowerment; also allows us to take a step closer in our mission to enhance the self- sufficiency of the Department of Correctional Services and other government departments.. St Albans bakery started operating on the 16th of may 2018; they started with producing 500 loaves per day and have currently increased their production to 1470 loaves of bread per day.

The initial market for the produce at St Albans is offender rations for the centres under the St Albans Management Area. The bakery supplies St Albans Medium A, Medium B, Maximum and Port Elizabeth with bread for breakfast. There are seventeen (17) offenders from Medium B and four officials that are working at the St Albans bakery every day. Nationally; we currently have One Hundred and Nine (109) offenders working in our DCS Bakeries.

The estimated savings on bread baked with own resources as opposed to external procurement is an estimated net saving of; One Million, Nine Hundred and Seven Thousand, One Hundred and Twenty Five Rand and Eighty One Cents per annum (R 1 907 125,81 p.a.) for the first twelve months. This projection is based on a baking capacity of Two Thousand Three Hundred and Nineteen (2 319) loaves per day.

The output from the bakery constantly increases as the offenders become more skilled and more efficient at their jobs.

As the department; we are working to ensure that the bakery grows and becomes a self-sustaining enterprise with the following added benefits:

* The creation of work opportunities and the development of at least 28 offenders in craft bread baking on a permanent basis.
* While an additional eight (08) offenders minimum can be accommodated in six (06) week pre-release training courses; under the supervision of bakery officials and offenders and the guidance of Skills development officials.
* Increase self-sufficiency.
* Provision of development opportunities to offenders in market related skills.

Suitable and willing members of the community can also be offered an opportunity to be trained in the craft bread baking process under a controlled environment. Where surplus capacity may exist, the Management Area can engage other clients to supply their bread needs for additional income to the department.

The high rate of unemployment is one of the factors contributing to the high re-offending rates in South Africa; and that is why I have also decided to utilize this day to talk about the concept of the employability of parolees and probationers. According to Section 61(2) of the Correctional Services Act, 1998 (Act 111 of 1998), the department is obligated to assist offenders on their release to search for employment.

In the current state of our economy, one of the challenges that ex-offenders face upon their release include stigmatization and lack of skills. We have therefore rolled out a plan as the department to engage potential employers in order to reduce crime in our communities and thus reduce the rate of re-offending.

I emphasise again that as the stakeholders of the department, we must ask the question**: what is it that we can do together to take safe detention, rehabilitation and social re-integration of offenders to a higher level?** I believe from this gathering we will constitute appropriate networking and institutional arrangements to help answer the question. Humbled by our belief that we can achieve more when we hold hands together to break the cycle of crime.

Ladies and gentlemen we understand that South Africans are witnessing unprecedented levels of violent crime, with a strong belief that criminals have greater rights and privileges than law abiding citizens. These feelings are understandable and are a wake-up call for all leaders in families, communities, government, churches, businesses, labour and various other civil society structures.

We however believe that an overwhelming majority of our offenders are members of society who have a great potential for rehabilitation, and therefore deserve second chances. They too are citizens of South Africa who have families, are bread winners, are our children, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and friends. We therefore appeal to all business partners and potential employers across the spectrum; to join hands with us to gear our society to give second chances to rehabilitated offenders, who have demonstrable commitment to change and to give back to society.

We have many offenders who are best examples of what the Correctional System can deliver. Rather than calling them ‘mabhantinti’ and all other derogatory words, let us give them hope and courage to flourish. I want to assure you that Correctional Services will never deviate from positioning education and training of offenders as a priority.  We are saying let us rally behind them in order to make South Africa safer for all.

Last but not least; today as a country we are also concluding Women’s Month and celebrating the centenary of Mama Albertina Sisulu, a woman of fortitude who fought selflessly for the freedom that we enjoy today. As we commemorate this fearless champion of democracy and human rights, may we pledge, as men in particular, to increase the fight against the abuse of women and children. The responsibility to protect our children and sisters is ours as a nation. May this not just be a duty that we remember on special occasions but rather one that we commit our daily habits to. I would like to say to all the women that are here today; thank you, thank you and thank you. We celebrate and appreciate you every day for all you that do in building our nation

In conclusion, let us continue to work together in bringing the change that we want to see in our communities; and our beautiful country for a better future for our children and generations to come.

I thank you.