

**Welcome address of Acting National Commissioner Nontsikelelo Jolingana at the 6th National Corrections Excellent Awards held in Kimberly – Northern Cape on 7 March 2014**

**Programme Director**

**Honourable Minister of Correctional Services Hon. Sibusiso Ndebele**

**Honourable Deputy Minister of Correctional Services Ngoako Ramatlhodi**

**Regional Commissioners of Correctional Services**

**The Chairperson of the African National Congress: Mr. Block**

**Our special Guests of Honour today – the 68 finalists**

**Senior Management of Correctional Services and other Departments**

**Ambassadors and torch bearers in our quest for excellence**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

A very good evening to all of you,

It is a special honour for me, as the custodian of this campaign to make excellence in correctional services a habit, to be welcoming you at this prestigious event tonight.

Excellence Awards represent the gold standard for people strategy. All too often it is forgotten just how important it is to recognise those who push the boundaries, those who dare and challenge convention, those who have made a conscious decision that in the daily execution of their duties it is business unusual and a tireless effort to be innovative and do the best they can with the limitations that they are faced with on a daily basis.

These Awards have provided a platform for our pockets of excellence to be celebrated but also a platform upon which the entire Department can learn from each others best practices. More importantly, these awards provide us with a opportunity to once again acknowledge one of our best and most important assets, our human resources.

One of the best means of transferring commitment to excellence and habits from normally a few to many among us, is to recognise and celebrate such excellence. This is the understanding of Correctional Services which informed our introduction of these National Corrections Excellence Awards in over the past decade.

Programme Director, Honourable Minister, Deputy Minister and guests, at this point I believe these awards are delivering the expected outcomes, even if there are areas that require attention. They have first grown in stature and are recognised and winners are adored across our institution with more and more partners on board to support these efforts including CAPITEC, Nexus, Gems, Mustek, Pinnacle Africa, to name a few.

I strongly believe these Corrections Excellence Awards have contributed immensely to the service delivery milestones this department achieved over the last ten years in general and particularly over the last five years of freedom and democracy. There has been progress in our performance outcomes almost across all the categories identified for honouring excellent performers. These categories, in the first place were identified for inspiring correctional officials working in our priority areas to pull-up their socks and strive for excellence, not as a destination but as a never ending journey for better service delivery.

Allow me Programme Director to just list the categories as well as what I think are direct benefits of these awards at the level of outcomes:

**FIRST – INDIVIDUAL AWARDS**

Batho Pele Award that in simple terms place people first and in this case we include victims of crime and ordinary citizens who deserve a safer environment for all their daily activities. Having said that, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge my special guests tonight – Mr. Dennis Williams and call him to the front. He is our ambassador of Excellence whose case study was submitted to the inaugural DPSA led Public Service Excellence Awards last year, and he came back holding a second top position in the country in the Batho Pele category. This is an outstanding achievement that is affirming our special “space in the sun”, where other government departments busk and enjoy limelight as excellent performers. I have undertaken to ensure we enter the next cycle and further drive the introduction of Excellence Awards under the auspices of African Correctional Services Association (ACSA) which is currently led by South Africa.

Best Individual in Education and Training Award, which seeks to lift and centralize the role of education and training in our rehabilitation efforts. This is Together with the Team Awards of the apex leadership, have contributed in increasing the intake of completely illiterate inmates since the Minister’s announcement of compulsory education last year. Besides this achievement, we also boast of having increased fulltime schools from 1 in 2009 to 12 in 2014, while intakes in various other schooling and training categories has also grown.

The Good Governance awards that cover efforts to fight fraud and corruption, serious maladministration as well as improving the compliance of this institution with various key policy prescripts of government. From a corruption infested system of prisons we inherited, we build capacity to deal with this scourge and received a third top placement in an assessment done by the Public Services Commission in 2011-12 out of over 86 institutions of state at local, provincial and national levels. We boast of 94% conviction rates and implementation of serious sanctions against culprits found guilty.

The Masibambisane Awards that seeks to mobilise stakeholders to join hands in taking delivery of correctional services to a higher development path. We have taken collaboration with many stakeholders to a higher trajectory with even Faith Based institutions that declared no interest in servicing their followers with criminal records, are now on board having signed a memorandum of understanding with DCS.

The Public Safety Award that seeks to sharpen all levers of security in the department such that we contribute effectively in keeping South Africa progressively safer. We sustained the reduction of escapes over the past 20 years from over 1244 to 54 escapees in 2013/14. Although we still believe an escape is one more too much, we must recognise excellence which include the fact that 41 of last year’s escapees have been re-arrested 30 of them within 48hours of escaping;

## TEAM AWARDS:

Under special team categories we have discretionary awards determined by the apex leadership of Correctional Services which is the Minister, Deputy Minister and National Commissioner!

Program Director it is important to note that at the end of this evening, Correctional Services would have honoured over 159 torch bearers and Ambassadors of correctional excellence at a national level from the time we started with these awards.

It is also important to note that these 68 finalists that are here tonight, are the cream of the crop of over 6000 officials that demonstrated throughout this campaign from Correctional Centres upwards, that they yearn for excellence and are therefore excellent performers in their own right within the space they are. All of these officials demonstrated their desire for achieving excellence and as participant in such a noble cause, they too are winners. I am sure that among these finalists there are many who have entered for a couple of years. They fell, but never failed to continue trying, which is a critical characteristic of a winner. All those that did not enter this competition for the first time this year should lift their hands for us to recognise their spirit of resilience, which Robert Kiyosaki, called the winning spirit. Let us give them a well deserved applause.

To the nominees that will not win any award tonight, my message to you is that you must take note that your nomination is itself a victory. If an artist gets nominated for the final Oscar Awards, that becomes one of the credentials – with some celebrating their nomination for ten times without bringing the award home. That is the level of resilience and recognition of the Corrections Excellence Awards we wish to reach.

Programme Director, Honourable Minister and Deputy Minister and our distinguished guests, I must confess that I continue to be inspired by many men and women in Correctional Services who value this noble profession. I cannot fail to also acknowledge that there are those of us who serve excellently outside of the spotlight, making invaluable contributions to place us where we are today. We owe them our greatest gratitude too.

With those few words allow me Programme, to assume the powers that are vested in me as the acting National Commissioner and the Accounting Officer of Correctional Services to declare the 6th Corrections Excellence Awards officially open!!!! We gonna beat this drum of excellence until we are heard from the farthest distance!!!!

I wish you all the best and May the best win tonight.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES:

It is now my singular most honour to introduce the Honourable Minister of Correctional Services, Mr. Sibusiso Joel Ndebele. As we celebrate winners today,

It is always a challenge to introduce the man of Minister Ndebele's stature as there is so much to say. But let me try the excellence route....

I am glad to say this Department is in capable hands of an outstanding leader and a consistent winner. Just after a year in the Department, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) commended Minister Ndebele for taking bold steps in addressing gender parity within DCS. The progress we are making is noted although we have not yet arrived!

Excellence in public service is very close to Minister Ndebele. It is for this reason that as Premier of KZN, he pioneered in South Africa the KwaZulu-Natal Public Service Training Academy which served as the centre of human capability development, producing public servants who are skilled, productive and dedicated to serving the public in the province. When his term as Premier came to an end in 2009, he was rated the Best Premier in SA by an Ipsos Markinor Poll rating government leadership in the country. The Best Premier Award had followed the Auditor-General's praise of his leadership and commitment towards ensuring effective and efficient financial management of the various government departments in the Province.

Education is very close to Minister Ndebele. In KZN, he prioritised adult literacy through an innovative programme which came to be known as Masifundisane. At Robben Island, Minister Ndebele completed two degrees, and his honours degree in 1985 was awarded with a distinction by the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Prior Minister Ndebele being Premier, he served KZN as MEC for transport for ten years. He pioneered the Asiphephe campaign which was later adopted nationally as the Arrive Alive Campaign. With minimal budgets, Minister Ndebele proved extremely innovative, resourceful, and committed to women empowerment, rural development, and Broad-based Black economic empowerment. He launched award-winning, innovative, road infrastructure projects like:

The Emerging Contractor Development Programme aimed at Emerging Black Contractors to enter construction industry.

ZIBAMBELE (doing it yourself) - A road maintenance programme targeting the contracting of women-headed household contractors.

The African Renaissance Road Upgrading Programme (ARRUP) with the key objective of ensuring that sourcing of inputs for road construction material for each of the roads was sourced from local communities.

In 2000, Mr. Ndebele received the COMTO award for continuous support of African Renaissance at the Transportation African-Renaissance Transportation Awards in the US.

Minister Ndebele is one of South Africa's finest intellectuals and innovative strategists. He contributes regularly in the South African media (print and broadcast) on a variety of themes including, restorative justice, reconciliation, heritage, history, crime, rehabilitation of offenders, and gender. Similar to his previous government designations, he has introduced innovative programmes in the Department of Correctional Services aimed at rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into society. Two of these programmes are Reading for Redemption and the Victim-Offender Dialogues (VODs) which are based on the restorative theory of justice. The internationally-renowned South African novelist, Niq Mhlongo, described him in 2013 in The Sunday Independent as "one of South Africa's hard working politicians"!

an ordinary local from Kliptown, Soweto, wrote in The New Age that "Mr. Ndebele's leadership in the Department of Correctional Services is going a long way in defining the identity of the new South African society which is based on constitutionalism and a human rights culture."

Those who have worked with him in government call him the public servant who works a minimum of 90 hours a week, while others work a 40 hour week. A former prisoner of Robben Island, Minister Ndebele once wrote, "That which injures instructs."

We have got a good story to tell! The department has traversed through all the hardships and challenges to transform itself as a caring institutions. Today is an example of all those men and women who have Embraced transformation to change for the better! Today is your day to celebrate and enjoy the good work you have done.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the podium, the Minister of Correctional Services, Mr. Joel Sibusiso Ndebele, with a deserving, warm round of applause.