



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**CLOSING ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER NKOSI PHATHEKILE
HOLOMISA (AH DILIZ'INTABA!!) MP. ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2019
STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES**

KOPANONG CONFERENCE CENTRE, BENONI, 16 AUGUST 2019

- Programme Director,
- National Commissioner, Mr Arthur Fraser
- Chief Operations Commissioner, Mr Mandla Mkabela
- Senior Management of the Department
- Officials from Sister Departments,
- Our distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Good Afternoon!

The Minister and I, as deployees of the governing party to this portfolio have an obligation, and a civic duty, to discharge our responsibilities dispassionately.

We are accountable to the people of South Africa to the extent that we are held responsible for the value proposition and service offering of this department.

The brand promise that we make as DCS of a just peaceful and safer society. We shall continue to be held accountable when we fall short. As such we shall have to say things as we see them, confront issues as they present themselves. In so doing we embody equally the noble values of honesty, transparency and integrity.

So as we make our observations as the political leadership in the next five years, let us be at peace with the fact that often we shall have to agree to disagree.

However the bottom line henceforth is that Executive Authority of the Minister and I will have to prevail whenever we are in doubt about what needs to happen, why it needs to happen and by when it needs to happen. It is crucial that there be no ambiguity in our operations so that we are able to serve the people of South Africa to the best of our abilities.

Firstly, the bible says whenever three or more are gathered in my name, I shall be with them. Well as we are gathered here as the apex leadership of this department, we represent the interests of approximately forty-two thousand members of this team, our officials.

We also cater for the well-being of approximately one hundred and sixty two thousand inmates. The morale of the story is that, what we are here for as employees of this department, in whatever capacity, is not about us. I repeat it is not about any of us, instead it is a civic duty we owe to our motherland. It is our humble contribution *kwilizwe lokhokho bethu*, the land of our ancestors.

Everyone in this organization deserves their place in the sun, they should be heard, and they should be able to express themselves on matters that relate to the advancement of this organisation. As leadership this gives us an opportunity to draw from their insights, to draw from their wisdom in order to transform and move this organisation to a higher plane.

Ladies and gentlemen, for the organisation to flourish, relations between the management must be healthy, junior members of the organisation must be provided a space to express their views and participate in programmes that shape the direction of the organisation.”

Remember at the heart of the change management is a structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams and organisations from a current state to a desired future state, to fulfil or implement a vision and a strategy. Furthermore, we need to make sure we are a caring department where morale of every official is boosted and we have a common sense of purpose.

We move from a positive premise of a beautiful visionary product of your collective effort – the 50 Year Strategic Intent document, which can serve as catalyst for change, progress and actualization of our aspirations as DCS. All of you should be proud of this milestone and be ready to build on it.

Again the Minister made reference to the image deficit of the Department of Correctional Services in the public domain. It is incumbent on us as leadership to change this perspective, to re-engineer this organisation to one that is in sync with the objectives of the Moral Regeneration Programme, the Batho Pele Principles as well as embrace the values of Ubuntu.

To this end, it is imperative that we rebrand, re-orientate and reposition the DCS as brand that is consistent with the notion of a caring government that is responsive to the people, working in tandem with its social partners.

In this regard, the DCS should organise an Indaba whose overarching objective is to mobilise our social partners, such as community leaders, faith-based organisations, academics, civil society formations, labour formations, traditional leaders business against crime and naturally our sister departments as well as the judiciary.

This must happen with a view to build on the 50 year Strategic Intent project, that saw all these stakeholders contribute to shaping this outlook and the new trajectory. More significantly we shall be presenting to them, the outcome of their efforts in the form of a Stakeholder Metrix, as

well as to launch jointly the Programme of Correctional Services as an all inclusive Societal Initiative.

Through this Indaba, we shall galvanise support for correctional services programmes, such as social re-integration, restorative justice and reconciliation between the offenders and the victims. The launch of this compact, could possibly take place on the week of 16 December 2019.

As they say, charity begins at home, and as such the management of the DCS must go back to the junior Correctional Offices to inform and engage them about the outcomes, priorities of the strategic planning session.

In terms of restoring confidence in the brand, post the Indaba, it becomes instructive that we undertake an internal exercise that inculcates a sense of belonging for all employees by launching the department as a brand that we all want to contribute to. This may take place in the first quarter of the next financial year around June 2020.

National Commissioner, if we are to be taken seriously, we must expedite the formation of the Trading Entity, as this will go a long way in helping the department in its quest to be self-sufficient. It is not enough for us to brag about the assets, such as land, farms, production workshops, agricultural sites, bakeries, the human capital of inmates and even a golf course. We need to put them to meaningful use and productivity.

The establishment of this entity should not take the form of an abstract debate based on assumptions. The Strategic Management and

Research Divisions must conduct a desktop study of best practices locally and across the world in Corrections and other state departments. This must include an analysis of trading entities that have already been established in the country, such as Government Printing works.

We must learn from their experiences in order to reach our goals quicker. The outcome of this baseline evaluation must be a terms of reference that must inform the formation of an interdepartmental task team. This team's key mandate must be to scrutinise the practicality of the proposal on all elements, including finance, sustainability and the impact on the county's fiscus.

As the Minister said in his address, "the strategic plan must elevate us to the level of an economic player in society".

The National Commissioner will oversee the establishment of this entity with the team reporting to him. He in turn will ensure that the Ministry receives regular reports and updates.

We must also develop a data base of all the Memoranda of Understanding that have been signed hitherto between the DCS and other government departments, academic institutions as well as all our partners. This must include the bilateral agreements and any other international commitments we may have as a department. Lack of progress on these reflects negatively on the leadership of this department.

Linked to this point is the comment from the Director of Community Corrections, Mr Nesengani about the outcome of the partnership with Environmental Affairs. This echoes the point I made about the importance of strengthening our data collection, monitoring and evaluation systems.

The absence of a tracking tool that allows us to document best practices and to track the progress of key interventions across our centres, denies us the opportunity to talk about key successful interventions that promote the good work of this department.

The project he referred to is a partnership that resulted in increased skills, increased employability of offenders and reduced repeat offending. This gap in communication in the department results in us missing the ground-breaking work of officials at our centres.

The presentation from the Department of Environmental Affairs showcased exciting and innovative initiatives. The creation of cost effective fire-proof material to build dwellings in low income areas susceptible to disasters such as fire is particularly commendable. This opens up opportunities for engagement with departments such as Environmental Affairs and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to find technologically driven solutions to some of our challenges – such as the need for fire proof mattresses.

I must say I am impressed with the extent to which the department has established working relations with a number of departments. It is commendable, National Commissioner, to see Director Generals of Environmental Affairs and Basic Education and of officials actually taking

time off to present areas of mutual interest where we can converge for mutual benefit.

As you are aware, in this era of a new dawn, in the spirit of *Thuma Mina* the President has made the call that there be unity of purpose in the work of government.

Government must work in an integrated and collaborative fashion. So the involvement and the interest of these various departments in our work as Corrections is to be warmly received and applauded. Therefore the ball is in our court in nurturing and strengthening these relations for the common good.

One other area that will help to restore our credibility in the public domain is what Minister raised in his address that of the establishment of a Call Centre to help us respond to all the concerns of our inmates.

I also hold the view that a foundational structure or a Client Relations Unit to anchor the Call Centre is absolutely vital, if not already there. I am saying this in the context of a Call Centre being an instrument or a platform for redress whilst the discipline itself is Customer Care or Client Relations that will drive an overall strategy. This Call centre could also be used by all correctional officers to report corruption and any matter of concern.

As we re-engineer and reposition our organisation, whilst we grapple with a sluggish economy and fiscal prudence, we are compelled to be

creative and innovative in our approach so that we are able indeed to do more with less. In any event innovation and a fresh perspective will enable us to move forward in spite of challenges we face.

One of the cornerstone of the business we are in, is security in our facilities particularly in Correctional Centres. The breach of our security protocols makes a mockery of the work that we do and therefore continues to tarnish our image.

What is of extreme urgency is the need to install or to ensure there are scanners in Correctional Centres to improve safety for all concerned on the one hand and to prevent the smuggling of contraband on the other. This cannot be overemphasized.

Similarly tagging devices that are meant to track the movement of parolees must be prioritized and activated. Contractual issues that surround the use of such devices must not be allowed to derail the functioning of this valuable security device. The Minister and I must be furnished with viable and innovative options in the above regard by the end of September. It is unacceptable to advance an argument about contractual disputes as if those are the Alpha and the Omega, whilst we become dysfunctional as a state institution.

At this juncture I must again amplify what the Minister has raised in his address that of fighting corruption in the system. The Call Centre mentioned above is a platform to be utilized by inmates for whatever

they deem fit and for all correctional centres for any acts of corruption. Confidentiality will be sacrosanct in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen, corruption has the potential to undermine all that we do. And we are ready and willing to confront any forms of dishonesty and corruption head on. In this regard, National Commissioner as the Ministry we have not yet received a comprehensive report that spells out the extent, the nature and the details of what has taken place in this department in as far as corruption is concerned.

It will be a sorry state of affairs if we are to obtain that information elsewhere whereas the expectation is that the administrative leadership will take us into confidence. That must happen so that we have a good idea of where we are. In the absence of that we do have the authority to obtain what we need, however it would be best if we are advised of the status quo by yourselves.

We also expect that a special effort will be made to improve the Audit Outcomes from qualified to unqualified. The perpetual failure in this instance points to an organisation that refuses to be bound by oversight and an august body as the Auditor General's office. Secondly the ICT infrastructure challenges prompt us again to make this one of the key priority areas of focus and reports on progress must form part of regular reports to the Executive.

Similarly the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS) plays an oversight role in our work and therefore we should look forward to the reports they produce as those reports serve as a barometer for our performance and also help to give us pointers where the gaps are.

JICS as an institution must be given appropriate support so that they are able to function optimally in line with their mandate.

Ladies and gentlemen, what we are about here has nothing to do with our personal benefit, but to serve our people and therefore we must also respect the positions each one of us occupy.

When I write a letter and sign it off, I expect acknowledgement, followed by a written response in good time. It is a sign of disrespect and even insolence when that does not happen. I therefore expect such courtesy and due regard to be extended to all members of the Corrections family. There are matters that have nothing to do with rank but personal respect and by extension respect for others.

I also had an expectation the the National Commissioner will favour us with a broad overview presentation of this department on the first day especially as new additons to this family. I also expected the more senior executive members would play a more active role in shaping the agenda and giving direction and that did not happen and that has to change.

In conclusion with all the gaps the Minister and I have identified albeit in a short space of time, I predict a bright future for DCS as I believe there the majority of our employees are dedicated civil servants who are prepared to go beyond the call of duty. They need to be supported and encouraged to continue to work tirelessly to serve our nation. We shall be there to support and applaud such devotion. In fact we are still standing because of them. Let us give our staff a round of applause.

As corrections we are a microcosm of society and as such we shall encounter all manner of challenges, but we remain steadfast in our resolve to create a better life for all our people.

It is in that vein that I appreciate your endeavours and once more implore all of you to do the right thing, in other words to work as part of a team to make Corrections an environment where dedication, innovation and excellence thrives.

Thank you and travel safe.