



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES,
NKOSI PHATHEKILE HOLOMISA (AH! DILIZINTABA), MP**

Programme Director, Mrs Moodley,
National Commissioner, Arthur Fraser,
Senior Management of the Department,
Officials from Sister Departments,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning!

The mandate of this department, as you know, is to contribute to a just and peaceful society, in which citizens are and feel safe. We must ensure that offenders are exposed to rehabilitative opportunities that increase their chances of successful social reintegration in order to become exemplary citizens who are self-sufficient, lead a crime-free life and contribute productively to the growth of the economy.

The vision of the National Development Plan (NDP) is to ensure that people living in South Africa are and feel safe and enjoy a community life free of fear.

This is also in line with the seven priorities pronounced by His Excellency the President of the Republic, Cyril Ramaphosa, in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) earlier this year.

In carrying out its mandate, the department is anchored on the following cardinal programmes, namely, Incarceration, Rehabilitation, Health Care and Social Re-integration, as well as, ensuring good governance in our department.

This strategic planning session has brought together the apex leadership of this organisation to evaluate our progress as a department in implementing our core programmes, identifying the gaps and the challenges that confront us, and to chart the best way forward.

With the benefit of the presentations yesterday, particularly the 50 Year Strategic Intent that demonstrated sound, consultative and well documented evidence by yourselves, Minister Lamola and I, on reflection and in retrospect posed the question: “What are the barriers of implementation that are causing the department to move at a slow pace?”

I must say, I remain unsettled and disappointed that we did not receive any pointers on why this is the case.

Since my assumption of duty in this department, I have had a number of discussions with senior management and visited four Correctional Centres. The centre visits gave me an opportunity to engage with Correctional Officials, offenders, non-government organisations and social partners, as well as members of the public.

The essence of my address therefore will take the form of analysing what I consider to be the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the organisation, albeit at a high level.

One area that I am always passionate about is the organisational culture that gives us an impression of the ability and the agility of the department. I believe it is absolutely vital that all employees feel they belong and have a voice in an organisation. I, therefore, appreciated the sentiments of the junior employees expressed in the 50 Year Strategic Intent presentations. What then becomes imperative is that we follow through on those views as expressed by our officials at the coal-face of service delivery.

It would have made even better sense for me to have had representatives of correctional centre officials as part of this conversation, including organised labour as a key internal stakeholder. This is in order for them to share their perspectives on the posture of this organisation.

After all this is a rare occasion, a 5 year strategic forecast. It is therefore incumbent on us to ensure we are a representative grouping and are inclusive in our deliberations when we map our way forward. By so doing we will be able to arrive at a shared vision with a motivated personnel, and would be enabled to confront challenges with a unity of purpose.

We must be able to anticipate and mitigate matters that may pose a risk to our modus operandi and advancement as a department.

Amongst some of the biggest threats for me are governance issues in this department. These include the qualified audit findings of the Auditor-General that perennially point to non-compliance year after year. You will recall that the Minister yesterday also raised this matter quite sharply.

In essence this highlights an absence of a clear, deliberate system that conforms to proper planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation. We cannot afford that.

What compounds this in my view is that the Information Management System in the department does not favour us with reliable data to enable us to monitor and evaluate effectively.

We need to have a solid monitoring system that ensures that we collect clear and reliable data across all our management areas.

The introduction of the Integrated Inmate Management System (IIMS) was meant to be an information and technology solution to the gaps in our performance data collection processes. This system should have been a stepping stone in the department's journey towards digitization, as we enter the age of 4th Industrial Revolution.

It has, however, come to my attention that the system is costing the department a lot of money, while the progress of implementation is slow.

Ladies and gentlemen, the lack of reliable data almost renders it impossible for us to effectively evaluate the impact of our interventions. This is yet another area of weakness in our department.

Similarly, whilst on governance, Human Resource issues were presented to us as having been the biggest pre-occupation on the Road Show engagements with our staff. It is, therefore, expected that a particular focus has to be paid to this matter, starting with a definitive

Human Resource Strategy, Career Progression, Mentorship and Succession Planning.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Human Resource must prioritise Integrated Wellness Programmes in order to support our staff who work under highly stressful conditions.

What is also alarming in the Department is that funded vacancies are not filled timeously. The reasons given for these delays have been less than satisfactory.

I am also concerned about the high number of people who serve in acting capacities, some in very senior positions. This has the potential of creating a paralysis in decision-making and execution of our mandate.

The failure to fill funded vacancies adds salt to injury. It will be recalled that Priority number One of President Ramaphosa's priorities, as pronounced during his State of the Nation Address, is Economic Growth and Job Creation.

Yesterday, we received a number of presentations from our sister departments whose role is catalytic to the work that we do. What comes to the fore is the need for us to strengthen our strategic engagements, in order to form solid partnerships to achieve our overall mandate.

In our outlook it is critical that we have as our point of departure a functional, consistent and effective Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS). Against this backdrop, we have directed that the formation of an Interdepartmental Task Team be expedited, with a view to ensure that the ICJS implementation strategy is realised. In this regard the Department of Correctional Services must be a key contributor to the transformation of the justice system.

This will help with key interventions such as the consideration of the expungement of ex-offenders' criminal records, minimise the burden of overcrowding in our correctional centres, and improve our planning capacity.

Furthermore, we have noted that the Traditional Courts Bill has been tabled before the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and should be considered within the framework of the Integrated Justice System. This is a tool that could be used to relieve pressures that we have in our courts and in the DCS, by ensuring that some of the petty cases that clog our criminal justice value-chain are referred to these courts, which are the epitome of restorative justice.

I also understand that our Department has engaged the National House of Traditional Leaders, with regards to a Memorandum of Understanding that will regulate and strengthen collaboration between our Department and traditional leaders.

In the spirit of interdepartmental coordination, we must leverage and nurture the intellectual capital and goodwill from our sister departments in order to enhance the work that we do. The culture of working in silos tends to hamper our ability to forge ahead with some of our key interventions. For example, we should be able to increase our revenue by marketing and selling goods that are produced by inmates in our workshops. Thus, contributing to our ultimate goal to become a self-sufficient department.

In line with our social re-integration endeavours, there must be a coordinated approach to strengthening our partnerships with community-based organisations and non-governmental formations. The primary focus in this regard should be the need to raise awareness of our correctional programmes, as well as the aspects of reconciliation and restorative justice. It is our firm belief that the South African justice system must take into cognisance the well-being of the victim. Furthermore, we must make sure that our communities are the key beneficiaries of the labour and skills of inmates acquired in our facilities.

We have made great strides in the implementation of formal education and skills training programs. However, we realise that there is a resource gap in the number of teachers and trainers in our centres. Above all, we must ensure all of our training programmes are accredited.

The Department of Basic Education and Higher Education remain our main partners in this regard.

Improvement in the coordination of engagements with stake-holders will assist in making sure that we do not end up taking on responsibilities that are not ours to carry. Mental health is a serious challenge in our centres. Our facilities are not designed to accommodate these patients and our officials are not trained to care for them. Therefore, the Department of Health must assume responsibility to care for state patients, who should not even be residing in correctional centres.

Security is an issue of deep concern. Officials must ensure that they are diligent in the implementation of security processes. Negligence on this part has dire security implications.

We must reintroduce the issue of routine training of officials so that they are capacitated with the requisite skills to perform optimally. This training should include adherence to security standards and protocols.

Security upgrades in our facilities ought to be prioritised. The use of intelligence and installation of modern technology will help us detect defects in our security systems and maximise safety for everyone in our correctional centres.

As a matter of urgency we must conduct an inventory of our movable

and immovable assets, which will provide us with a clear picture of the state of assets in the department. This is an important activity that will help us deal with the issue of wasteful expenditure. **We must know how many tractors and implements we have in our farms; how many machines we have for sewing, furniture-making, etc. We need to know how many farms and gardens there are in our centres. This should help us know the extent of our capacity to produce**

Ladies and gentlemen, we must do things differently in order to reposition and rebrand this department. As Minister Lamola said yesterday we need to fight the stigma of corruption that is associated with the department.

There must be an audit of the skills levels in the department, which must provide a clear picture of the skills gap challenges. The key deliverables for each directorate must be clearly spelt out, in line with the structure of the Service Delivery Model and strategic intents of this department.

We should move away from this culture of consecutive qualified audits by putting proper governance systems in place; which must be properly implemented and monitored by those in charge.

National Commissioner, you bear the responsibility to ensure that there

are consequences for those who fail to perform their functions adequately. This is imperative if we are to improve adherence to good governance and optimise the performance of the department.

To this end, the Minister and I will be expecting a tangible Implementation Plan, which details the people responsible for each activity and with clear timelines for delivery.

In conclusion, we have observed that in this session there have been exciting deliberations thus far. We should take comfort in the fact that the sixth administration affords all of us, the opportunity to pioneer strategies that will unearth the potential of the correctional system in South Africa.

This department has the potential to become a leader for socio-economic development towards the realisation of our mandate, that is: a just, peaceful and safe society.

As I sit down, I want us to find ways of working closely with the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional Services, without compromising its independence. After all we have the same values to protect and the same constituency to serve, ie, the inmates in our Centres.

I thank you.

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