



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

**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES,
HON. RONALD LAMOLA AT THE DCS STRATEGIC SESSION – KOPANONG
CONFERENCE CENTRE ON 14 AUGUST 2019**

Programme Director,
National Commissioner, Mr Arthur Fraser
Chief Operations Commissioner, Mr Mandla Mkabela
Senior Managers of DCS
Our partners and stakeholders
Esteemed Guests
Ladies and gentlemen

1. Introduction

We are pleased to be part of the Strategic Planning Session of the Department.

We envisage that you will use the strategic session to reimagine, re-orientate and renew the department in the next five years. This platform should lay a solid foundation for us provide one of the best correctional services in the world.

This platform should also enable us to position the department as one of the important role players in the criminal justice cluster. We must make it impossible through the outcomes of this session for anyone in government or society to speak about the criminal justice cluster without speaking about correctional services, in other words we must make the integrated criminal justice system a lived reality.

Everyone must understand that if you arrest people you need prosecutors to prosecute, you need presiding officers to adjudicate and therefore you'll need enough correctional facilities to rehabilitate the offenders.

The strategic plan must elevate us to the level of an economic player in society, there will be no investor confidence in our country if we do not have a crime free society, as well as clear and visible signs of fighting corruption. We must demonstrate to society that our rehabilitation programme contributes to skills development to enable our inmates to find work or be self-employed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Strategic Planning is defined as, the management activity used to prioritise, focus available resources - both financial and human; to strengthen operations to ensure that the department is working towards achieving common goals.

The particular focus on the strategic session should be to finalize both the five year Draft Strategic Plan and the 2020/21 Annual Performance Plan that must be submitted to National Treasury and the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation for consideration.

We must also gear our work towards achieving priority areas that we have identified in the current financial year and we should not lose focus throughout our deliberations.

I often wonder, whether everyone who works in our departments has been able to internalize their importance in society and their importance in arena of state craft. When members of the public, citizens, your relatives, your children and partners express a view that the government is corrupt or incompetent, it is a reflection on you as much as it is a reflection on the political head.

This sixth administration is not going to have a business as usual approach, perceptions must be changed, action must be taken and society must be transformed. I take no pride in the fact that this particular department is seen as a failed department and a home to corruption.

Background on Crime

In a society like ours, which has one of the highest rates of crime in the world, citizens need to fully believe that systems we administer work. If we cannot prove that someone who enters our correctional facility comes out as a different person, as a person who is in a position to contribute positively to society, then we should ask ourselves what is the point of our department. The reality is that if we are not rehabilitating our inmates, then we are doing the opposite and we are not fighting crime but we are actually aiding it from within our facilities.

We have the opportunity to revive the image of this department, win the confidence of the people, and fight corruption. We can only deliver on these objectives if we have a convincing strategy, and let me be clear, strategies on paper will not assist if they are not implemented. As the Chinese say, what is important is not to take a decision, what is important is to implement. And ultimately, strategy execution is the responsibility that makes or breaks institutions.

It cannot be correct that as a department, we continuously discuss the same thing over again and over again, but we have nothing to show for it. The issue of modernisation has been on the cards for a long time in the department. Various modernisation initiatives have been stalled for different reasons, for instance, the issue of body scanners is something that we could have implemented three years ago, but here we are, smuggling of contraband is a constant reality in most of our centres in fact it is increasing.

Had we implemented the body scanners three years ago, we would have been in a position to show the results of a technological revolution and had rapid control over smuggling of contrabands that would have disrupted criminal activities in our centres.

In this term, implementation is not negotiable and it is of paramount importance and we cannot afford not to respond on these matters. In addition Deputy Minister Holomisa and I will not tolerate any corruption. Commissioner, let me be honest with

you this strategic plan will be incomplete if it does not have components that speak to fighting corruption.

2.Priorities of the ANC-led government on crime

As we said in the policy and budget speech, 25 years into democracy, we can profoundly boldly proclaim that as the Department of Correctional Services, we have done away with jails and have correctly placed our facilities as correctional facilities able to realise our triple task of incarceration, rehabilitation and reintegration. As the session unfolds, we must identify strategies that will enable us to continue along this path and deepen our transformative efforts in society so that we don't deviate from our goals.

In the media as we speak there are two incidents which can be directly linked to our failed rehabilitation programme. The tourist that was killed on table mountain was allegedly killed by someone who was released on parole. The Rolex gang which has been terrorising our communities is said to be beneficiaries of parole. Does this not question our rehabilitation capabilities. The very same offenders enter our facilities as though it is a revolving door. It is then not surprising then that over-crowding becomes an issue in our facilities. It is because the ones who should be out for good, keep coming back.

As government, we need integrated planning to fight against crime and the department must identify ways that it will use to work together with other departments and spheres of government to meet the expectations of our people.

We must contribute to the security cluster in terms of strengthening policing to rid our communities of all forms of crime, drugs, gangsterism and violence against women. This administration has resolved to crack down on corruption and state capture involving the public and private sector and we will combine both prevention and punishment in our approach and I expect the department to play a leading role in this regard.

3. Guiding Documents of the Session

Our work should also be guided by Outcome Three of the National Development Plan as we want to ensure that people living in South Africa are safe and that by 2030, our people must enjoy a life free of fear. As we strategize, our guiding documents should include the Annual Performance Plan for 2019/20 Financial Year, the State Of the Nation Address, the Minister's Policy and Budget Speech, Correctional Service Act, Criminal Procedure Act, 2005 White Paper on Corrections in South Africa and 2014 White Paper on Remand Detention Management in South Africa.

4. Challenges facing the Department

As the Ministry, we are not oblivious to the constant challenges that continue to undermine and frustrate the department's work but we need to manoeuvre through these challenges and address them accordingly.

We implore among participants of the session to ponder on how best we can respond to challenges of insufficient budget due to harsh economic conditions prevailing in the country and elsewhere, improper behaviour by some of our colleagues who embarrassingly engage in acts that undermine the mandate of the department.

We also have to reflect on our failure to achieve some of our indicators and goals in the APP in the previous five year period and we need to review them so that we can see how best we can achieve them.

Budgetary constraints are going to be with us for a long period and we need to be innovative and do more with the resources at our disposal and utilize our budget accordingly. Our plans should be informed by the budget as it will not be strategic to include indicators on the APP which are not budgeted for.

We will never tolerate under expenditure as we cannot express frustrations over inadequate funding but yet ourselves we fail to utilise resources appropriated to us as that will be detrimental to the community that we serve.

As much as we call for a prudent approach towards utilisation of our funds, this should never be misinterpreted to mean under expenditure as we must meet all our plans on the APP and spend accordingly.

5. Policy and Budget Speech Commitments

During the Policy and Budget Speech that we tabled recently, we committed ourselves to launch a Call Centre that will enhance service delivery in the department and we expect no deviation from this commitment and I am encouraged that plans are advanced towards fulfilling this.

We also committed to employ 2064 entry level correctional officials over two years between 2019 and 2021 and we must adhere to this commitment so that we can confidently account to the Portfolio Committee and the National Assembly when called.

We promised the nation that we will deal accordingly and decisively with errant officials within the department and we want to reiterate that we will not afford them any mercy as we cannot allow a few officials to undermine the good work done by the department and our rehabilitation agenda within our facilities.

Any official linked to acts of impropriety and colluding with offenders to undermine the law within our centres must brace himself or herself to face the full might of the law and such officials do not deserve to be part of our team.

We also announced that the Department has insourced inmate catering services at 26 kitchens, previously contracted to African Global Operations (Bosasa). The transition has been materially seamless, given that DCS staff and offenders were previously involved in the catering function and we should continue along this line.

It is imperative that we take cognisance of the fact that 65% of inmates in our correctional centres are young people and we need to provide them with skills that will enable them to find employment upon their release.

We also need to ensure that we conduct roadshows on our Parole System so that the community at large can understand how we arrive at decisions to place offenders on parole. Some sections of our communities do not have information on the parole system and they hold incorrect views which informs their conclusions that we release offenders without them completing their sentences.

It is imperative therefore that we reach out to communities and take them through our systems more in particular the rehabilitation process that we rely on to arrive at decisions of granting or refusal parole to offenders.

6. Preparation for Audit Outcomes

As we strategize, we must also bear in mind the audit outcomes for the department which are completely unacceptable as we cannot continue to be qualified year after year by the Auditory General.

This is the age of the internet and as the say, the internet does not forget. A simple search on the internet reveals that in 2016, the Accounting Officer of DCS at the time, expressed serious concerns about the state of the Department's performance information.

The Auditor-General of South Africa at the time found that, the reliability, consistency, measurability and usefulness of Department Correctional Services performance information was not satisfactorily. At that time, the strategic management was tasked to implement a turn-around strategy in order to address all matters raised but the following year, we were qualified again. The reality is that in the previous four financial years, we have had four qualified audit comes. This reveals that our internal controls are a cause for concern and our governance process are lacking.

To date, the DCS is still receiving qualified audit reports on issues relating to non-compliance to legislative requirements on planning, reporting and performance information. This has become the same song that is sang by a different choir.

We must adhere and comply with prescripts, legislations and processes that govern our work and strive for clean administration and accountability and this can be achieved by among others, doing the basics right.

We must strengthen our financial and performance management systems in the department and this will assist us to improve our audit outcome and we need to move towards a clean audit. I look forward to seeing effects of a fully functioning audit committee.

7. Accounting to Parliament

When reports are needed by institutions that we account to, we must not hesitate to provide correct and factual information to these institutions be it for oversight or accountability purposes and we must always cooperate with the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services as well as the Judicial Inspectorate on Correctional Service. It is in the best interest of the nation.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we must enhance the image of the Department of Correctional Services so that the good work that we do can find expression in the media and this will enable us to change the narrative that seek to portray our correctional facilities as centres for corruption.

Our facilities must be seen as centres that reintegrate offenders back into society as people who will actively contribute to the development of our country and use their acquired skills to create jobs and be economically active.

Our offenders must leave our facilities abhorring crime through our rehabilitation programmes and where we do not have resources, we must look at fostering

partnerships with strategic departments so that we can together create an enabling environment for offenders to gain skills and become better persons in society.

We want to take this opportunity and continue to wish progressive women's month to all women who continue to render patriotic services in the department even in the glare of danger. We fondly remember one of our own, Nomsa Joyce Stuurman, who fell in the line of duty at the Goedemoed Correctional Centre. We will continue to augment security at all our centres so that all our officials, more in particular women, are not exposed to danger.

We might be coming from a difficult era as a department but we are on the cusp of a new era of renewal and working together, we can advance social transformation in all our centres by stepping up the fight against corruption and maladministration.

I thank you!