



Speaking Notes

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Lamola (MP)

Release of 2019 Inmate Matric Results

Tswelopele Correctional Centre, Kimberley Management Area

9 January 2020

Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Nkosi Phathekile Holomisa

Northern Cape MEC for Education, Mr Mac Jack

Acting National Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Mandla Mkhabela

Officials from Correctional Services and other Departments

Offender Matric Class of 2019

Esteemed Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we enter this New Year and this new decade, we draw closer to our ambition of a better and prosperous South Africa. In his 2020 New Year Message, President Cyril Ramaphosa said: ***“By working together towards the South Africa that we all want, sparing neither strength nor courage, we will progress and we will succeed”.***

For us to progress and succeed, systematic efforts must be made to ensure the rehabilitation of offenders across all correctional centres in the country. Correctional

Services is a necessary proactive, real time and reactive intervention in the encouragement and enforcement of constitutionally accepted values.

Offenders must be made aware of what society anticipates from them which is predominantly centred on a rehabilitation path. This will allow them to meaningfully contribute to a better and prosperous South Africa we envisage upon completion of their sentences.

In order to improve the levels of literacy amongst offenders in our country, and in particular the youth, the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) places significant emphasis on the provision of formal education and basic schooling for offenders.

The constitutional imperative for education is not a right curtailed by incarceration, and between the Departments of Basic Education, Higher Education and Correctional Services, literacy, schooling and education constitute some of our apex priorities.

International instruments indicate that education in a correctional environment must be in line with the educational system of the general society, and provision must be made for the continuity of the educational activity of our offender population.

Programme Director, as the first Correctional Services event for this new decade, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the 2019 academic year National Senior Certificate results for schools within our centres.

We had a relatively stable 2019 academic year, with less disruptions of teaching and learning as a consequence of cooperation and understanding within our correctional facilities on the importance of education by the offender population, and for that we are all grateful.

We must co-exist and adopt an integrated approach and view education not merely as a basic education issue, but as a societal imperative. It must be protected at all given times, and must occupy the attention and energy of all our people.

This administration has made it clear that we will do everything within our power to alleviate poverty, inequality and unemployment and education is central towards realizing this.

This places a mammoth responsibility on all citizens of this country not only to rally side by side with the Department of Basic Education, but to make it their obligation to see to it that education works and that the vision of this country that is profoundly postulated in the National Development Plan (NDP), is realised.

The NDP clearly states that we need to work around the clock to create conditions for growth and prosperity, where at the end, the masses of our people may concede and say in unison that: ***“We participate fully in efforts to liberate ourselves from conditions that hinder the flowering of our talents”.***

Succinctly, this resonates very well with what is articulated in the preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa on the need to improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.

The Department of Correctional Services is proud to be part of a democratic system, which also offers offenders access to education. We thus take pride in our efforts as we have managed to establish a total of 16 full-time correctional centre schools, including two at our Public Private Partnership centres which are Mangaung and Kutama Sinthumule).

Across all our schools which we run in cooperation with the Department of Basic Education, offenders are given a second chance to improve their educational levels and become productive citizens.

Once again, we have delivered incident-free 2019 matric examinations with no systematic irregularities that undermined the integrity and credibility of the exam processes. Today’s announcement, yet again, confirms our commitment to advance the values of education.

It says to us, it is not enough simply to have access to education behind bars but the provision thereof must emulate excellence too. We need to ensure that it is not just access to education we offer, but access to quality education to *Develop, Educate and Empower*.

Working with our partners, we were able to offer extra support classes and created a conducive learning environment that allowed offenders to achieve the best possible results.

Programme Director, I now move to present the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results for the 2019 academic year in our correctional centres.

The total number of full-time inmates who sat for the Grade 12 Examinations in 2019 was 161. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Grade 12 class of 2019 achieved a 82.6% pass rate. 133 offender learners passed and 65 achieved bachelor passes. Critical to acknowledge is that a total of six of our schools registered a 100% pass rate. This is represent a phenomenal increase when compared to the 77.3 percent we achieved in 2018.

In terms of individual excellence, the offender learner that achieved the highest average percentage pass rate is **Stangoni Sandile** from Usethubeni Youth, Durban Management Area, KZN Region, with an average percentage pass rate of 76,5%. Stangoni scored four (4) distinctions in English, Maths Literacy, Life orientation and Tourism.

The second best offender learner is **Malwande Mandla**, from Cradock Prison School, Cradock Management Area, Eastern Cape Region with an average percentage pass rate of 76,4%, registering three (3) distinctions in IsiXhosa, Life Orientation and Business Studies.

The third best offender learner is **Ganto Lesthego Thamie** from Cradock with an average pass rate of 73,60%, scoring two (2) distinctions in IsiXhosa and History.

Programme Director, working in collaboration with various partners, Correctional Services also makes provision for learners who want to pursue tertiary education opportunities. In addition, we also provide skills development through the Technical

Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, which seems to be the preferred option for the majority of offenders including women.

We ensure that skills development programmes offered to offenders are more practical, achievable, implementable and measurable. Offenders, irrespective of gender and age, are exposed to skills training including building and plastering, welding, painting, plumbing, vegetable production and other farming-related training interventions.

The training of offenders in various skills is a contribution by DCS to improve coherence in the approach to the skills needed in various municipal districts to strengthen the local economy.

The Department also uses these skills to strengthen self-sustainability and provide offenders with much-needed work experience in preparation for their release.

We also have Production Workshops and an Agriculture Division which ensure self-sufficiency of the Departmental mission through provision of products and services in order to develop offenders and reduce government expenditure.

The Department has nineteen (19) textile workshops, ten (10) steel workshops, ten (10) wood workshops, nine (9) bakeries, one (1) Locksmith workshop as well as one (1) shoe factory.

We have a total area of approximately 40 000 hectares of land, consisting of twenty-one (21) big farms and one hundred and fifteen (115) small farms which predominantly farm with vegetables.

The disaggregation of agricultural land is used as follows: Grazing/natural land: 20 885 ha; Irrigation land: 2 040 ha; Dry land: 6 386 ha; and land that is not ideal for farming (wetlands, rock embedded) constitutes 9 937 ha.

The Department contributes towards self-sufficiency, to provide for internal needs through: manufacturing of offender garments (excluding female underwear, socks, sneakers and track suits), and bed-linen.

The Department also manufactures wood and steel products. Such products include office furniture, school furniture, equipment for kitchens, hospitals, furniture for offenders' cells, locks and keys, security equipment, recreational equipment and equipment for the farms.

As at the end of October 2019, 2 081 554 loaves of bread were produced from departmental bakeries, at an average cost of R5.12 per loaf of bread.

The Department will adopt an approach where each region will identify Skills Training Centres that will address the skills needs in various municipal districts. These skills will contribute to improve the coherence and effect of government service delivery and development through a multipronged approach.

Formal education ensures that offenders remain focused amid their circumstances so that they can reach their full potential. It is for this reason that education, and skilling of offenders are critical components of our rehabilitation programmes that are engineered to mould offenders to return to their communities as better, changed and law-abiding citizens.

In conclusion, let us honour the spirit of our late President, Tata Mandela who said: ***“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another”.***

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Grade 12 class of 2019 of offenders which has been successful in its examinations. A special compliment is extended to those offenders who have excelled and will be receiving awards. You

have made us proud, and we wish you the very best with your future studies and careers.

My sincere appreciation also goes to those who have supported these offenders, including their families and loved ones, the educators who have worked relentlessly to ensure that these offenders' dreams are realised, and to the officials who have contributed to enhancing safety and the quality of teaching and learning in our correctional facilities.

By working together, towards the Correctional Services, and South Africa that we all want, sparing neither strength nor courage, we will progress and succeed.

I THANK YOU.