

**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE NATIONAL COMMISSIONER, ARTHUR FRASER AT
THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION – KOPANONG CONFERENCE CENTRE,
16 AUGUST 2019**

Programme Director,
Deputy Minister of Justice and Correctional Services
DCS Officials
Ladies and gentlemen

- Once again, I thank all of you for your coming and especially for your active participation in this Strategic Session in a manner than generated valuable ideas for the development of our Departmental Strategic Plans.
- I noted with appreciation the way we reviewed progress of implementing what we had set in 2018, where our lens focussed on the 5 to 50 years outlook.
- Here, I thank those of you who put together, in a team spirit, the presentations. And I am sure you will agree with me that the discussions that followed each presentation were lively and constructive. I also thank the facilitators for ably moderating the sessions.
- It was also exciting to look at the path being taken by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation on developing Strategic Plans moving forward, directed towards greater impact through clearly defined outputs and the outcomes to be attained.
- I was pleased to see how you all engaged in thorough discussion of these outputs, the seriousness with which you conducted the sessions in commissions to deepen understanding and concretise input into our Departmental Strategic Plan. This was a worthwhile exercise as we were able to table tangible plans, which are sensitive towards the government's collaborated approach.
- The impact of our deliberations must be felt in all the districts of this country. Hence the outcomes of this strategic session must usher and be seen through meaningful changes that must propel the society to be keen to play a role in corrections.
- All the issues which were raised in the past two days must find expression and their place in our strategic and operational plans as matters of performances for everyone – from the most senior right down to the lowest ranked official at centre level.

This was a worthwhile exercise as we were able to come up with what I can refer to as guidelines on:

1. How each official and directorate could strengthen indicators to measure and report performance towards contributing to the relevant output areas through corresponding strategic actions;
 2. How the architect of DCS could be better structured to respond more adequately to the mandate of the Department bearing in mind the government's approach towards service delivery through the Districts.
 3. How could DCS enhance synergies with other Departments and other partner institutions in the service of our people.
- On Wednesday, the Minister and Deputy Minister asked us some questions. Until now, we have not responded to those questions.
 - Why has the Department failed to deliver on its mandate? A string of qualified audit outcomes can only mean that we are not responding to our core deliverables.
 - A report presented by DC Raseroka informed plenary of the roadmap crafted in 2018, but it further raised sharply what was wrong in the system - as raised by officials on the ground. That report went further expressing how our officials envisioned DCS moving forward.
 - The Deputy Minister retaliated his frustration, asking what is really preventing the Department from implementing the legitimate and valid reforms being meted out by officials at centre level.
 - As the Accounting Officer, I therefore have a duty to respond to these questions. Difficult as they may be but our failure to respond appropriately will mean that we are likely to remain in a pit-whole, thus failing this Administration.
 - Deputy Minister, I can state here that failing this administration can never be an option.
 - ✓ Leadership stability has been one of the factors which have failed the Department from achieving its objectives. Since 1999 to 2018, which says in 19 years, DCS has had 14 National Commissioners. Many of these Commissioners were on acting capacity.

- ✓ Just a week ago in Nelspruit, the Deputy Minister could not understand why was the Region having so many actors in its establishment. Surely this can never be correct. We have to create stability in this Organisation.
- ✓ Procurement and governance issues cannot be overlooked. If it was in the past Deputy Minister I would have said we were still capacitating our Supply Chain. But the process of sourcing officials who are fit for purpose on this area has been done, we now need to deliver. No more excuses, and consequence management will have to apply if we are to change DCS around.
- ✓ Strategic HR Framework is being developed which will assist to us to be proactive and do implementation in a coherent way going forward. This will ensure that we not taken surprise and often reactive in our approach.
- ✓ Our Facilities section is receiving attention. The state of our centres and dometries for officials require serious maintenance. We often lay blame at the door of Public Works but such can no longer stand. We need to come up with a working solution and drag along Public Works into action.
- ✓ Monitoring of the implementation plans has to be prioritized as a delivering area in order to enable the system to detect where there's no movement.
- I do believe this coming together also helped to enrich our team spirit and mutual appreciation which are key for our enhanced delivery on our mandate.
- Indeed, the inputs from entities invited proved that integrated planning can no longer be avoided in government. With a shrinking fiscus, we have been pushed to be innovative and stretched to work beyond the correctional facility walls.
- Democracy functions well when commitments are met and where there are no delays – reasonable explanations must be provided.
- Surely many amongst us never knew that Environmental Affairs, Fisheries and Forestry could be so much in tangent with Correctional Services.
- Imagine an announcement by the President: Environmental Affairs and Correctional Services will now be providing furniture to Basic Education across the country.
- With these few remarks, I want to say, as we go back to our different directorates and regions, we should do with full knowledge that we are a collective. What we implement in our sections must have an impact in DCS as a whole and beyond.

- Overall, this strategic session has been thought provoking and promoted the open exchange of information and ideas. I thank you all for your attendance and participation.
- I highly appreciate the Minister and our Deputy Minister for their active participation and the guidance provided. We must consider ourselves to be fortunate to have leadership that is so dedicated and has the best interest of DCS at heart.
- I wish all of you good health and great success in all your endeavours. Together we can make constructive contribution into shaping a better future for DCS.

I thank you.