

The Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, Nkosi Phathekile Holomisa

The National Commissioner, Mr Arthur Fraser

All Regional Commissioners

Chief Deputy Commissioners

Officials from Sister Departments

All Officials from Correctional Services

Fiscal constraints.

We've to instill a new culture in the department, a culture of discipline and accountability. The best platform for us to instil a new culture is at the training college.

Training.

The Auditor General of South Africa has indicated that DCS has been earmarked as one of the departments in which the Material Financial Loss against senior managers will be established. This was done after repeated audit financial findings against the department, year after year.

The audit assessment of the AG reflect a department struggling with compliance, audit qualifications, Lack of Consequence Management, Inmate Management System rising irregular expenditure, Information Communication Technology, non compliance with SITA regulations, and ever rising Irregular

Expenditure have become permanent attributes of the department. Audit recovery plan has not yielded the desired outcomes.

The number of irregularities in the department laid bare in the AG report, mostly, emanate from a slow or even no response to improving key controls and addressing risk areas, inadequate consequence management and inability to fill vacancies in key positions.

Our observation is that matters of ICT, delays in filling key vacant positions, lack of adhering to financial delegations in the department remain a huge challenge with no clear effective turnaround strategy. The Accommodation Determination System and Inmate Management System all played a part in the qualification the department received.

The audit outcomes we received erodes public confidence in our systems. The Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services and SCOPA will be hard on us when we appear before them and rightfully so. The public has concluded that there is corruption and malfeasance in the department, can we blame them?

Corruption has no room in the department. It has a disproportionate impact on South Africans and it impedes the much needed economic growth, jeopardizing our capacity to turn around the economy and create jobs. Moreover, it solidifies an image of incompetence and poor leadership. We must not be complicit in acts that undermine the State and the will of the people. Those of us who see corruption

must not be idle, they must speak out , use the instruments that are available to us. Let us create an ethical culture instead of one of complicit silence.

As you honestly reflect on the performance of the department, in preparation of the journey ahead, the MTEF Period, the roadmap towards good governance and clean audit outcome should be at the centre of your plans. The internal audit committee and risk management must play a fundamental role towards the attainment of good governance. These are areas that we should be capacitating, their ability to detect red areas will allow the department to be better placed to eliminate shortcomings in its operations.

National Commissioner, we note the incremental improvements in the performance of the department, even though the AG is contesting some of our work moreover in incarceration. Let us build from this good performance. We have achieved 84%, let us sustain and improve that performance and address areas of concern so that whatever contestation that arose in the current audit report, it becomes a thing of the past going forward.

Where we need to improve operationally, we expect the National Commissioner not to hesitate but channel his energies in addressing those areas. Where we need change, change must happen, we cannot falter in the same area, year after year without consequences.

With regards to the self-sustainability model. It seems to me and the Deputy Minister, despite us stating this is one of our main priorities, it has fallen on deaf ears or there is no willingness to move on it. We

have on numerous occasions said our centres are theatres of operations, producing food and items that will create self-sustainability in the department.

We have said that we will operationalize a business entity that will enable us to realize self-sustainability, but what this has all been is talks about talks this far. There is nothing that we can show towards achieving this. This must be realized, we will not tolerate any form of deviation, this must be the lasting legacy of the DCS. The session must make and adopt firm resolutions, measureable outcomes and performance areas that will enable this. We must be measured by this aspect of our work.

Food for the centres rations is not affordable, it stretches our resources. We must explore business models that are financially sustainable and providing inmates with opportunities to expand their skills base. Until we realize complete self-sufficiency in correctional services, we would not have delivered on our mandate.

Utilization of offender labour in public infrastructure maintenance should be a priority. Inmates must help to resolve some of the challenges which do not require special skills. Help with the building of sport facilities. We must help our kids to have sports facilities. Road maintenance, cleaning towns, renovation at schools, clinics, etc . We must forge strategic partnerships with municipalities where our centres are located to make this a reality. Maintenance plans of municipalities should be aligned with our plans so that we can together save millions of rands for the taxpayers on areas where we can provide offender labor. Our centres must become innovative and cost effective, they must be centres of excellence.

Infrastructure is another area of great concern, some of our centres are old, they have dilapidated, and are a ticking time bomb. We have to priorities repositioning of our infrastructure unit, it is not justifiable that public works should take 10 years building a facility and we stand helplessly. Our unit should be empowered to intervene in real time.

Empowerment of Staff is key, Human Resource Management has been preoccupied with finalizing the Organizational Structure. We hope they are advanced in this area of work, they have had the whole financial year to complete this task. From next financial year, we expect implementation of this structure after it has been presented to us. We want Correctional Services to be an employer of choice and deliver on its mandate. We hope the Uniform Shift Pattern for the department will also be speedily concluded, HR has also been preoccupied with this matter since the beginning of the financial year.

The issues of inmates from foreign countries must be addressed. The department must explore the feasibility of entering into areas of cooperation with SADC countries on how we can process and address the growing number of inmates from neighbouring countries. We need to have protocols in this regard working together with Home Affairs and other relevant departments.

Chairperson of the Session, failure to apply restorative justice has shamed us. Recently, a person who murdered a well-known musician (Taliep Peterson) was granted parole without allowing the family of the deceased to make their representations. This one of many instances. If shortcuts can be taken in a high-profile case such as this, what happen to cases of low profile persons? This does not inspire confidence at all. We need to ensure that our parole regime adheres to all processes. Progress on the work done

reviewing the parole system must find reflection in the plans of the department going forward. Society continues to be horrified and pained by heinous crimes committed by some of our parolees.

The good work that the department of Correctional Services has done in producing over three hundred thousand Face Masks is an indication of our capacity. It has significantly contributed to the fight against the pandemic. However, we are worried that our production workshops have not performed as expected.

After visiting Witbank, I was told some of

the machines are as old as 1982, I cannot over emphasize the need for an urgent modernization of our manufacturing machinery

Deputy Minister, we have previously asked that officials in the Department of Correctional Services work closely with colleagues in the sister department Justice and Constitutional Development to address systemic issues in the Criminal Procedure Act and Correctional Services that can improve efficiencies in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, as DCS we should be at the forefront contributing to policies on social welfare, access to health services, education and employment because we know too well that overcrowding is not confined to the limits of criminal justice.

National Commissioner, the need to develop comprehensive and evidence-based criminal justice reform strategies, in order for them to be effective and sustainable, and the importance of harnessing public support for their implementation is critical.

Secondly, it is us who must guide on measures which may be taken to reduce the scope of imprisonment and develop fair sentencing policies. This includes both legislative and practical suggestions.

Thirdly we must be in a position to make a series of suggestions on how to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system. There is no better department that understands that a functioning criminal justice system, the importance of an integrated justice system in which institutions cooperate with each other and where accurate data is generated to develop effective policies and programmes, is essential to ensure that legislation is implemented properly to achieve its intended aims of delivering justice, promoting public safety and reducing the unnecessary use of imprisonment at the same time.

In conclusion we need to ask ourselves if we truly appreciate the privilege that has been bestowed upon us by society. Our role is critical, ours is about the humanness of our society, we cannot continue failing on critical matters, excellence is not an option it is a necessity. Thank you.