

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY ON FRIDAY, 04 FEBRUARY 2011.

Honourable Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize;
Director General Nhlanhla Ngidi;
KZN Regional Head Mnikelwa Nxele;
Provincial Heads of Departments;
Traditional leaders present;
Business Community;
Faith-based organizations;
All stakeholders;
Members of the media;
Protocol Observed;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured this evening to be a part of this important occasion to celebrate the excellence in the service delivery at the Department of Correctional Services.

We take this opportunity to thank this Department for organizing this initiative to get public servants to be service-orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous improvement in service delivery.

We are always encouraged indeed when we see people who are committed and willing to ensure that our country, and particularly the province of KwaZulu-Natal, is safer and prosperous. One cannot help but feel a sense of pride for the work you do.

Tonight's event has made us proud of the calibre of staff that the Department of Correctional Services has attracted - the soldiers in our crusade for breaking the cycle of crime – those who protect the next victim of crime and prevent repeat-offenses in society.

I am aware of the Correctional Service's call to give a second chance to rehabilitated offenders and that the current rehabilitation interventions are progressively registering the desired effect. But one other greatest achievement in this Department is how it has been able to transform in a democracy. This has been achieved through the commitment of the staff as well as the levels of service excellence one has come to associate with Correctional Services.

We know that we come from an era where public servants, particularly uniformed enforcement agencies, were distrusted by the majority of our people. But our officers have consciously worked to build up the confidence of the community they serve.

We have noted that among our awards this evening is a category for Good Governance which recognizes individuals who are champions of efficiency and effectiveness, champions in preventing fraud and corruption, for ensuring transformation and promoting integrity in the Department. We congratulate you on this because the challenge of transformation has never been easy.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the reasons we have gone all out to pay tribute to our officers at Correctional Services is that their work is no bed of roses. These officers work under the most difficult and dangerous conditions, and their daily duties include things most of us would avoid doing in a lifetime.

These officers look after people who have been declared by the courts of law as inappropriate to live with the public because they are dangerous.

It is on that score that we commend the Mlombile Award which is a posthumous award given to those who passed away. We recognize them for being role models, for being ideal correctional officials who spared neither effort nor energy in advancing the founding values of the correctional system.

Correctional Services' achievements so far have shown what can be done when we work together to pursue the common good. We are proud of these achievements, but we do not underestimate the difficulties that still lie ahead.

In fact, while celebrating Correctional Services' achievements we must accept that we are still at an infancy stage in our crusade to free our province from criminality in and outside prison. Overcoming the historic aggression of South Africans that manifests itself in our prisons is not an easy task and it cannot be accomplished in a short time.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to thank those men and women, past and present, who have contributed to correcting the perception about this profession and those who are determined to turnaround the delivery of services.

There are many people who are not honoured here this evening but who deserve to be saluted. I encourage them all to persevere in their good work and to continue building the Public Service and the province to be a better place we are all proud of.

Congratulations to you all!

I thank you

