

**SPEECH FOR THE HONOURABLE MEC: EDUCATION IN THE
NORHTERN CAPE DURING THE WELL DONE FUNCTION FOR THE
GRADE 12 OFFENDER LEARNERS OF 2018 AT THE TSWELOPELE
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE MULTI-PURPOSE HALL**

15 JANUARY 2018

Programme Director

Regional Commissioner: Free State / Northern Cape

Deputy Regional Commissioner

Regional Head: Development and Care

Area Commissioner: Kimberley Management Area

Acting Head of Centre, Tswelopele Correctional Centre

All other senior officials of the Department of Correctional Services

**Representatives of the Department of Education and other government
departments**

Professor Ballim, Vice Chancellor of Sol Plaatje University

Representatives of Business (Metropolitan and Liberty)

Representatives of NYDA

Author and motivational speaker, Mr. Charles Dunn

**Northern Cape Finalists and Ambassadors of the SA Men of the Year
Awards**

**Members of the community and especially the parents of offender
learners**

Members of the media

The Class of 2018

The Class of 2019

Ladies and gentleman

Good morning, Goeie more, Dumelang

First and foremost, allow me to take this opportunity to greet you all and to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude towards the Regional Commissioner of the Free State/Northern Cape, Ms. Moodley, for extending an invitation to me to join you this morning to celebrate the achievement of the Class of 2018.

Programme Director, I must from the onset declare that Tswelopele Correctional Centre School and its learners have really found a very special place in my heart. Today, I am standing here as a proud mother of not only the learners in our community schools but also as a mother of each and every offender who has decided to embark on the journey to complete their education. I am extremely proud of the achievements of our Grade 12 offender learners of 2018 and for the consistent excellent performance of this particular school through the past four years. You continue to make us proud despite the circumstances and challenges you may have experienced or still enduring. Your commitment and dedication to complete your school career is not going unnoticed and together we have a good story to tell. It was my honor to host the top three achievers during the Northern Cape Department of Education's 2018 Matric Awards. I so wish that I could have had all of you at the ceremony because each and every one of you deserve to be acknowledged for your hard work.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that the achievements of the offender learners at Tswelopele Correctional Centre School will be engraved in the legacy of the Department of Education in the Northern Cape as well as the Department of Correctional Services. The achievement of 95% by the Class of 2018 is an absolute confirmation by the offenders, officials and the community that the Department of Correctional Services has unequivocally shift its trajectory to the achievement of its rehabilitation and social reintegration goal and objectives. It is a path of no return and a journey in which you are leaving huge footprints of success which I hope and pray all the other offenders will follow. I can safely announce that you are amongst the top performing schools in the Northern Cape Province and that you have no reason to feel intimidated by any of the Grade 12 learners in the schools in the Northern Cape Province.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Department of Correctional Services in the Free State/Northern Cape Region has been relentless in its efforts to provide offenders the opportunity to enhance their education. As we all know, there are challenges experienced such as vacancies of educators. I was made aware that despite these obstacles, the Management at the Correctional Centre and in the Management Area have put their heads together and some officials and external stakeholders have devised some means to

ensure that Grade 12 learners receive the necessary support and assistance, especially with mathematics and physics, to be able to complete their examinations. In Afrikaans word daar gesê **“Waar daar ‘n wil is, is daar ‘n weg”**. I am encouraged by the strong will power of both the officials and offenders to focus on the end goal instead of complaining about the bad circumstances. Of course, it is not the ideal situation but you have not been deterred from the goal you have set yourself, which was to ensure that all offenders are given the opportunity to complete Grade 12 successfully. Although there is one offender who may not have made it, he is not a failure but rather bears testimony to the fact that he went into the examination room and completed the exams. I am glad to say that through the Second Change Programme, he may receive another opportunity to complete his Grade 12 successfully.

Regional Commissioner Moodley and your team, your achievement comes at a time that our beloved country is celebrating 25 years of democracy. I am of the opinion that our founding fathers and mothers of this democracy that we enjoy today, would have been equally proud to see that South Africa belong to all, irrespective of the color of your skin, the language you speak, the community where you stay, being a free men in the streets or an offender incarcerated in a Correctional Centre. Amidst the challenges, such as crime, poverty, unemployment,

gender based violence and all other social ills, the choice is yours and it is in your hands to use the opportunities provided and make the best out of your situation or to choose a path of destruction.

Distinguished guests, this is the fourth year that Tswelopele Correctional Centre School has produced Grade 12 offender learners. In 2015 the school had its first Grade 12 learners and they achieved the highest pass rate of **92%** pass rate (11 out of 12 learners) in DCS. In 2016 the number of learners increased from 12 to 23 as more offenders realized the opportunity available for development. The pass rate was **74%** (17 out of 23 learners). In 2017, 19 learners enrolled and the pass rate increased to **78.94%** (15 out of 19 learners). The fact that the pass rate improved is a reflection of the extremely hard work of both the offenders and educators at Tswelopele Correctional Centre with the support of the Department of Education and many other stakeholders. I, once again, would like to congratulate the entire staff of the Department of Correctional Services as well as the offenders for contributing towards the pass rate of the Northern Cape Province. In her speech, during the announcement of the 2018 Matric Results in Gauteng on 03 January 2019, the Honorable Minister of Basic Education also acknowledge your achievements and as a country we are proud to note that the Department of Correctional Services had a pass rate of 77.3% nationally.

The pass rate in the Northern Cape Province, for 2018 may have dropped but I am certain that your results made us not to drop even lower. I also would like to appreciate the efforts and support provided by the officials of the Northern Cape Department of Education, through the leadership of the Superintendent General, Mr. Pharasi.

To the Class of 2018, I would like to encourage you to continue with your plans of furthering your studies and to equip yourself so as to be employable when you are released on parole or when you have finished serving your sentences. Allow me to quote for you a poem written by Dr. Don Mattera in his collection Azania Love Song which he titled **“New Vision”**.

“Look at me, I am the future. Time ebbs out. Like water sucked by ruthless seasons and yesterday shrivels unfulfilled, Empty! Today hobbles passively, like a Gandhi bathing in the sleeping Ganges. Yes look at me, I am tomorrow! My eyes are the windows of new hope, a new vision. My ears are the drums beating the heritage of my native land. My face the banner of Promise. Look at me, I am Tomorrow, manifest.”

Class of 2018, it is my sincere wish and prayer that you will gain a new vision for your life and that you will grab this opportunity with both hands as you are indeed our tomorrow. The future of our country is in your hands, amidst the adversaries that you may experience now.

Programme Director, I am aware that some of the relatives of our offender learners may also be present here this morning and I therefore would like to take the opportunity to extend my appreciation towards them for the support they have provided and that they have not lose hope in you. I am pleading with them to continue supporting your loved one as he serves his sentence. I was also made aware that the Class of 2019 is with us today and I specially would like to take the opportunity in congratulating them for completing their Grade 11 successfully last year. You are probably aware that we will be watching you closely this year as the ball is in your court to bring us a 100% pass rate. I would like to encourage you to work hard from day one and do your ultimate best. It is now your time to create your own footsteps and to craft your own legacy which you would like to be remembered with.

Distinguished guests, our Honorable President, President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, in his first state of the nation address, has passionately calling upon all of us to stand up and say "Send Me". If there is a time in our country that we need each and every one

to stand up and be counted, it is now. Each and every individual, organization, business, spiritual leader, academic, politician, educator and principal must embrace the call made as it is only then that we will be able to move South Africa forward. I believe that this is the year in which we as a Province and as a country are going to experience tremendous prosper on all levels. As we are preparing to cement our democracy through casting our votes in the National and Provincial elections, which will be held in May 2019, I am certain that our future is in good hands.

Programme Director, in my address during the Matric Awards 2018 on 04 January 2019 I quoted the following from the Greek Philosopher, Aristotle who said “***Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity***”. I would like to repeat it here today that every society needs this ornament and refuge. It is in this regard that each and every person in society must be a stakeholder in education and our actions should support the protection and promotion of teaching and learning at all times.

As my message draws to a close, ladies and gentlemen, I must emphasize it again that I am honored and humbled by the commitment of each and every one in the Department of Correctional Services.

Today we have once more proved that we will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the mandate given by the highest authority of this country, which is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, to make every South African feel and are safe, are executed diligently and with passion without fear of favor.

Thank you