

RESPONSE TO MEDIA INQUIRY: POLLSMOOR CORRECTIONAL CENTRE REPORT

Issued by the department of correctional services

Your media inquiry received on 2 September 2015, regarding a report on Pollsmoor Correctional Centre by Justice Edwin Cameron of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, refers.

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) first of all, welcomes the report by Justice Cameron, following his visit to Pollsmoor Management Area on 23 April 2015. There is progress made in addressing challenges facing Pollsmoor Correctional Centre, as is done in the rest of the 243 facilities across the country. Progress made includes:

- Continued reduction of inmate population nationally from 187 000 to about 159 000 over the past ten years and continuing with, particularly, remand detainees reduced from over 60 000 to a 41 000 average nationally. These trends are barking the international patterns of growth in inmate populations. However, the challenge of overcrowding remain high in the Pollsmoor Remand Detention Centre, which services 17 courts in the Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality, a matter that is being discussed with partners of Correctional Services within the criminal justice system.
- Provision of health care services also continues to be improved with more scarce skills secured and retained including psychologists, pharmacists, nurses etc. Pollsmoor is a beneficiary of the advance technology installed to help the fight against the burden of disease, such as the Gen-Expert and the Mobile TB X-Ray machine (TB scanning machine).
- Infrastructure challenges are also being attended to as the Department of Correctional Services has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Public Works, while on the other hand, it is improving its in-house capacity for better management of the infrastructure development and maintenance programme, including the appointment of regional directors for facilities to help turn around our misfortunes in this regard.

The Regional Office of correctional services is closely monitoring the implementation of the action plan, with some programmes handled at a macro level by the National Department of Correctional Services. The Department of Correctional Services is committed to drive the transformation of prisons to correctional centres that are grounded on the respect of human rights as enunciated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the Bill of Rights. They require DCS to protect and promote democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. It is a long road ahead to the full realisation of the ideals of our constitution as well as those outlined in the White Paper on Corrections adopted nearly 10 years ago, but we are confident of success.