

save as: budget

POPCRU PRESENTATION TO THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE
ON CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BUDGET

[16.03.2006]

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee for the Department of Correctional Services and Honourable members, ladies and gentlemen. It affords me great pleasure to take this rare and singular opportunity to express my gratitude and sincere appreciation for the organisers of this session for inviting POPCRU to make this presentation. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to make this submission on behalf of my organisation, which is a stakeholder in the department.

Chairperson, it is POPCRU's understanding that the Department of Correctional Services, as established in terms of section 72[2] of the Public Service Act, is part of the Public Service. The Department therefore, must:

- Fulfil the purpose of the correctional system in terms of the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998;
- As far as practicable, be self-sufficient and operate according to business principles; and
- Perform all work necessary for its effective management.

In analysing the budget of the Department of Correctional Services, we are impressed on some areas. However, as we have critically looked at the following areas for the Committee's digestion:

- Control of the Department;
- The Department's structure;
- Transformation issues
- Private Prisons

Control of the Department

The Department of Correctional Services is under the control of the National Commissioner, who must, without derogating from the generality of the Act, discharge the following, amongst others:

- Determine the fixed establishment of the Department and the number and grading of posts;
- Determine the distribution of the numerical strength of the Department;

The structure

The current structure comprises:

- Head office
- Six Regional Offices
- Management Areas

As prescribed in Correctional Services Act, the Commissioner have to organise or reorganise the Department at a national or provincial levels into various components, units or groups. The focus in this regard is on the management echelon of the department. It is our contention that the structure of the department is top heavy. This top-heavy structure impedes the necessary service delivery as required by the Correctional Services Act. The implications of this scenario is the following:

- Bigger part of the budget is spent on the management echelon.
- The filling of positions at lowest levels of service delivery is compromised;

- The workforce on the ground have to take the brunt in terms of making sure that with the limited personnel they have, services are discharged within the overcrowded institutions.

Incumbents of the top leadership are currently as follows:

- Eleven [11] Chief Deputy Commissioners [Deputy Director Generals];
 - Previously they were only three.
- Twenty seven [27] Deputy Commissioners [Chief Directors]
 - Previously they were only seven.
- One Hundred and forty six [146] Directors.
 - Previously they were less than twenty.

In translating the current positions into monetary value, an amount of ninety one million three hundred and sixty thousand four hundred and twenty nine rand [R91 360 429]. Clearly the expenditure for the previous incumbents was far too low. This figure is arrived at as follows:

• 11 DDGs	X	R 674 796	=	R 7 422 756
• 27 CD	X	R 556 063	=	R15 013 701
• 146 D	X	R 472 082	=	<u>R68 923 972</u>
		Total	=	<u>R91 360 429</u>

The increase on positions at the top echelon has not brought about change in service delivery on the ground. It is our further contention that due to the many positions at national level, there is duplication of functions. This area needs to be critically looked at.

Transformation issues

Our closer scrutiny of the budget, there is no provision made on the aspects of transformation. Moving from the historic prison department which focused mainly on locking up prisoners towards Correctional Services focusing on rehabilitation, development and care, there should be provision of a budget in this regard.

The government has, through its White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, provided a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of the public service. It is primarily about how public services are provided, specifically about improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which services are delivered. A transformed department of Correctional Services will be judged by one criterion above all, its effectiveness in delivering services which meets the basic needs of all citizens. For this to happen, there should be budget provided.

Private Prisons

In 1997 POPCRU engaged the then Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Sipo Mzimela to highlight the danger of the introducing the private prisons. We were however, informed that Parliament has already approved the concept and therefore, it could not be stopped. Our concern then, which is the greatest concern now is that the private prisons are more expensive to manage than public prisons.

The department of Correctional Services pays per bed of prisoners, regardless of whether or not the bed is occupied. The two private prisons [Global Solution & Kutama Sithumule] consume a big chunk of the department's budget to sustain them. This problem will exist in the department for the duration of contracts [25 years]. This is witnessed by the department's figures for the past three years, which outlines the following expenditure:

- In 2002/03 – R414 839 million
- In 2003/04 – R494 956 million.
- In 2004/05 – R510 624 million

Budget stands at R579 676 million for 2006/07 financial year. It is our strongest believe that government should take control of the private prisons so as to enhance the department's delivery of services within its mandate and capacity.

Recommendations

Having pointed out the above facts, the following recommendations are presented to this committee:

- ◆ There should be a lean and mean structure for the department with less or no bottlenecks. It should be organised within the following levels:
 - National : Policy formulation and Monitoring
 - Provincial : Administration and co-ordination

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- ◆ The Department of Correctional Services should take over complete management and administration of the private prisons. There will be money available to cater other important necessities of the department.

Honourable members, I hope we rise to the occasion and build this and officials in the department are looking [Tuesday, 16 March 2006]