

Correctional applauded by SADC delegation for efforts towards good correctional practices



His Majesty's Correctional Services has been commended for its reassuring efforts towards good correctional practices which have been witnessed through comprehensive health delivery, approach to rehabilitation and integration of offenders to society.

A twelve member delegation jetted in the country last week for a regional exchange programme which seeks to strengthen

networking and contribute to policy influencing at regional level for improved health and livelihood outcomes for offenders and ex-offenders. During their two day programme, the delegation which mainly consisted of senior Correctional officers and health practitioners deliberated extensively on how His Majesty's Correctional Services has set up a good practice in integrated HIV management and health delivery.

The delegation was sponsored by Voluntary Service Overseas. The delegation came three SADC countries; Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. They further had the opportunity to be educated on the rehabilitation initiatives which the department undertakes for the inmates as well as the good practices on income generating projects within the institution. Speaking during the official opening of the workshop, Commissioner General Isaiah Mzuthini Ntshangase who was represented by the Commissioner Phindile Dlamini said the department was more than privileged to host the delegation from SADC countries for the benchmarking programme on good correctional practices.

Ntshangase said similarly to other correctional institutions within the SADC region, the department was faced with its fair share of challenges, which were an impediment towards attaining the best correctional standards. Such challenges include overcrowding within correctional facilities which results in compromised health standards, he added. He stated that the visit by the SADC delegation was not in any form isolated but part of the regional dream for better corrections in the African region as advocated by the African Correctional Services Association (ACSA). Through this forum, the department is able to benchmark on several agendas including rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, training of officers and provision of better health services.

According to Ntshangase, health within the correctional setup does not only involve inmates but officers and their immediate families as well.

The delegation had the opportunity to tour at least two of the correctional facilities in the kingdom being Matsapha and Mawelawela Correctional centre. They visited the

industries section which is the heart of all vocational work where offenders, through the supervision of officers undertake on carpentry, upholstery and tailoring amongst others. They further toured Vulamasango School where they expressed their excitement over the discipline and professionalism of the school.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, Charity Gezi who is the Commissioner responsible for rehabilitation programmes in the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service applauded His Majesty's Correctional Services, for the relentless efforts the department has put towards attaining good correctional practices.

The leader of the delegation mentioned that amongst the many interesting areas, they were impressed by the good health system through which health services are accessed by both offenders and officers. She further cited the rehabilitation programmes which play a pivotal role in acquainting offenders with life skills so that upon release from custody, they were self-employed. Gezi said there were a lot of ideas that they would emulate and apply in their different correctional centres as they have proved to be good rehabilitative projects.