**The conman who quit on South Africa – John Steenhuisen**

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31 May 2023

DA leader says the cold, hard truth is that Ramaphosa is just another ANC cadre who betrayed our country.

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***Note to Editors****: The following speech was delivered by the DA Federal Leader John Steenhuisen during the Presidency Budget Vote Debate in the National Assembly this afternoon.*

Honourable Speaker,

I’d like to take this House back to 2019. Looking back from the winter of 2023, it can be difficult to recall what things were like back then.

But, if we are to chart a course away from the dangerous trajectory this country is currently on, then it is essential to understand how we got here.

Let’s go back to some excerpts from President Ramaphosa’s inauguration speech, delivered almost exactly four years ago to the day – and I quote:

“Let us declare our shared determination that we shall end poverty in South Africa within a generation.

That there should be no child who goes hungry.

Every school child will be able to read, and every person who wants to work will have a reasonable opportunity to find employment.

Let us build a truly non-racial society, one that belongs to all South Africans, and in which all South Africans belong.

It is to this brighter day that we now turn our eyes, to a vista rich with the hues of hope and promise.

A new era has dawned in our country.”

Soaring rhetoric, to be sure.

But instead of inspiring hope as they once did, hearing these words today leaves one with an altogether different set of emotions.

Despair. Betrayal. Anger.

We now know that the New Dawn was a deceitful campaign designed to present Cyril Ramaphosa as the one thing he never was, and never could be: a leader.

And, to be fair, it worked like a charm.

Millions of South Africans put their faith in Ramaphosa.

The respected international magazine, The Economist, even proclaimed that – and I quote – “To stop the rot in South Africa, back Cyril Ramaphosa.”

However, four years later, the President has broken every single one of the promises he made in his inaugural speech.

In fact, he lately seems barely interested in the job.

Like someone who quiet quit a long time ago.

Let’s remind ourselves of what he promised versus what he actually did.

He promised to end poverty. What he did has increased it dramatically.

He promised clean and accountable government. What he did was stuff Dollars in his Phala Phala couch.

He promised that no child will go hungry. What he did was to ban food distribution at schools during lockdown.

What he did caused child hunger to skyrocket by 50 percent, with one in three children now going to bed hungry.

What he did was plunge South Africa into stage six load shedding, because corrupt cadres have to eat while the people starve.

What he did caused our currency to lose over 40% of its value against the Dollar since the day he was inaugurated.

He promised that every school child will be able to read.

What he did has increased illiteracy, to the point where 81% of grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning.

What he did was spend millions on fumigating cockroaches in ministerial mansions while children die in pit latrines.

He promised that everyone who wants to work, will have a reasonable chance to be employed.

What he did has increased unemployment from 10 million people to 12 million people.

He promised to tackle crime and gender-based violence.

What he did has increased the number of people murdered per day from 57 to 76, and the number of women raped from 114 to 120 per day.

He promised a united non-racial society.

What he did was introduce race quotas that will cause 600 000 people to lose their jobs on the basis of their skin colour, and ban entire groups of South Africans from working in certain sectors and provinces.

Speaker,

After four years of deceit, it is now time for some hard truth.

The truth is that life in South Africa today is far worse for everyone than it was even during the lowest point of the Zuma years.

The truth, Mr President, is that you fooled the people of South Africa into believing that you could lead our country to better days.

But you are no leader.

What you are, is a confidence trickster.

A political swindler who milked your connections to become a billionaire and then left South Africa down and bleeding in the dirt once you were done with us.

But the jig is up, Mr President.

The businesspeople who once sang your praises cannot walk away from you fast enough.

The Reserve Bank that breathed a sigh of relief when you were elected is now warning that your love affair with a warmonger could soon result in sanctions.

Your legal advisers have told you not to challenge the High Court ruling that the Phala Phala report stands, because you will lose.

And on top of all that, the EFF is busy executing a reverse takeover of your party.

Now, we all know that you will return to this House tomorrow with red herrings like grandstanding and point scoring.

But the cold, hard truth is that, in the end, Mr Ramaphosa is just another ANC cadre who betrayed our country.

Speaker,

There is no more space for us to delude ourselves into believing that a cadre in shining armour is coming to save this country.

South Africa is in this disaster because we got carried away by empty promises.

If we are honest with each other, there was never any concrete evidence that Mr Ramaphosa could deliver any of the things he promised.

He made us believe, because we wanted to believe. And then he mercilessly dashed our hopes.

What we need to do now, is look to hard evidence of delivery when choosing who to vote for in next year’s election.

That is precisely what my party, the Democratic Alliance, is offering.

You don’t have to believe our promises. All you need to do is believe your own eyes.

Where the DA governs, we are actually lifting people out of poverty.

The DA-run Western Cape has the lowest rate of poverty and unemployment in the country.

Where the DA governs, food distribution to hungry children continued throughout lockdown, despite the national government’s efforts to stop it.

It is the DA that is fighting to address the cost-of-living crisis by cutting fuel levies and expanding the basket of basic foods – including chicken, beef and baby food – that are exempt from VAT.

DA-run Cape Town is on track to become the first city to meaningfully cut load shedding.

In fact, Cape Town’s investment in infrastructure is now bigger than Johannesburg’s and eThekwini’s combined, with 73 percent of the entire city budget targeted at the poorest residents.

In the DA-run Western Cape, double as many schoolchildren can read for meaning compared to the rest of the country, and we are investing R1.2 billion to reverse learning losses from the Covid lockdown.

In the previous quarter, the Western Cape created 98 percent of net new jobs in South Africa, while the eight ANC-run provinces together only added 2 percent.

Ratings Afrika recently confirmed that all five of the top performing municipal governments, as well as the top-rated metro in this country, are all run by the DA.

And, just yesterday, we received the spectacular news that the DA-run Western Cape has reduced the murder rate by an unprecedented 14% over the past year, while sexual offences are also down over 10%!

The DA’s R1 billion investment into the LEAP programme to make up for the failure of the national police is literally saving lives every day!

The DA may not be perfect and our job is far from done. But these facts speak for themselves.

It is important to recognise that none of these facts came about by accident.

They are the result of sensible policies combined with committed servant leadership from a party that actually cares about the people.

Speaker,

In that 2019 article endorsing Mr Ramaphosa, The Economist also had this to say, and I quote: “The DA has the right ideas for fixing South Africa, but it is in no position to implement them.”

It said that, because the DA had no clear path to victory, it was better to cross our fingers and hope that Mr Ramaphosa would fix the ANC.

But, fortunately, this is no longer the case.

As we head into the 2024 election, the DA – together with our partners in other parties – can indeed offer the voters of South Africa a clear path to victory.

The nine parties that are currently in discussions over forming a pre-election Pact garnered 35 percent of the vote in 2021.

By working together, we can grow by the 15 percentage points required for the Pact to take power nationally.

In addition to a solid DA majority in the Western Cape, the latest opinion polls already put the Pact at 43% in the Northern Cape, 45% in KwaZulu-Natal, and at 48% in Gauteng.

Unlike in 2019, voters no longer need to be deceived by Mr Ramaphosa’s smooth-talk or just hope for the best.

For the first time since 1994, the credible alternative our country has been yearning for, has arrived.

The Pact will combine the DA’s proven track-record of delivery and clean, accountable government with the diverse strengths of our partners across other parties.

To the voters who were deceived by Mr Ramaphosa in 2019, I say: don’t let him fool you twice.

To the 14 million registered voters who have stopped voting, I say: it’s in your hands to save your country, so switch your vote to the only credible alternative with a clear path to power.

To the 13 million more people who are not even registered to vote, I say: you matter, your voice must be heard, and your vote can save the country we all love.

Even if you think you’re not interested in politics, load shedding and hunger has shown that politics is interested in you.

As for Mr Ramaphosa?

To you I simply say: you have a great future behind you.

We all know that you quiet quit on us a long time ago.

But next year, the people will elect a new Pact government that refuses to quit on South Africa.

Thank you.

*Issued by John Steenhuisen, DA leader, 31 May 2023*