

## **Mr President, now is the time for getting things done**

By Solly Malatsi MP – DA Shadow Minister in the Presidency

To paraphrase the Book of Ecclesiastes: *“There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.”*

There is a time for campaigning and there is a season for governing.

There is a time for making promises and there is a season for delivering services.

There is a time for adjusting to a new position and there is a season to lead.

Mr. President, you have made a lot of noise with a lot of promises.

A promise to herald a new way of doing things. A different way from the horror of the last 9 wasted years.

You have serenaded the country into the misbelief that chanting “Thuma Mina” repeatedly will miraculously solve all the problems South Africa faces because of the ANC.

So much so that it has become a hollow chorus sang the loudest by those who have been in power the longest; while millions of South Africans continue to suffer in poverty.

The truth is that the ANC you lead today, Mr. President, was sent 25 years ago to serve the people of South Africa. It was the very same ANC that promised “a better life for all.”

While there is no doubt that life is, indeed, better in South Africa in 2019 than it was during apartheid, there are many South Africans who are yet to fully enjoy the promise of a better life.

Today 3 million South Africans do not have access to reliable drinkable water such as the people of Gom-Gom and Makhaza villages in Malamulele in Limpopo.

There are currently 9 million South Africans living without access to electricity such as the people of Xitlakati Extension in Giyani.

Over 55% of young people are currently unemployed without any real prospect of getting a job in the immediate future.

*Mr. President, the people of South Africa are tired of the broken promises. They want services and real action. And they want them now!*

Mr. President, as an admirer of Theodore Roosevelt’s “the man in the arena” quote, do you honestly believe that you are in the arena with honest men and women?

Do you honestly believe that all these men and women in your cabinet and party are worthy of serving SA?

Look to your right. Look to your left. Look behind you. Are these people men and women of honour to lead South Africa to the path of prosperity?

The reality, Mr. President, is that you are in the arena with crooks with some who are jostling to steal from taxpayers while others are plotting to overthrow you.

Contrary to the believers of the gospel of the New Dawn, the problem with South Africa is not that the so-called good men and women in the ANC are over-powered by the bad guys.

The problem is that the ANC is too factional beyond repair to have policy cohesion. Its obsession with ideologically redundant policies show it has no relevant ideas to solve the problems we have now.

Madame Speaker, it is ironic that this administration has identified "building a better Africa" as one of its priority points.

Yet it still rolls out red carpets for despots, dictators and the most vicious human rights abusers in the world.

South Africa's foreign policy is now held hostage by the ANC historical liberation associations rather the pursuit of human rights that our constitution vows to.

*There is no Messiah, not even you Mr. President, who can save the ANC out of the bondage factional wars and policy contradictions.*

South Africans want a government that works. They want a government that strives to do the right things, the right way, all the time.

Truth be told, it is possible to achieve this. DA administrations from the Western Cape provincial government to Midvaal are testimonies we are doing the right things, the right way in government:

The Western Cape has the highest levels of access to piped water (99%), access to electricity (97%) and access to waste removal (98%) in the country. The Western Cape has the highest life expectancy in the country as a direct result of investing in solid public healthcare. The national expanded unemployment rate sits at 38% while Cape Town is the lowest at 22.7%. 14 of the top 20 best-governed municipalities in the country, are all led by the DA.

Fellow South Africans, you are more likely to get a job, live longer, and have uninterrupted access to water, electricity and sanitation services if you live under a DA government.

Notwithstanding the mistakes we often make, we are driven by the pursuit to do the right thing.

DA governments don't steal from taxpayers. They don't waste money on junkets and executive luxuries to feed the inflated egos of politicians.

Every cent is geared towards making life better for those we serve.

Getting stuff done the right way, on time is business as usual for the DA in government.

Many of our people understand that governing can be hard. They understand that sometimes service delivery takes time to happen.

What is inexcusable, though, is the tortoise-pace to deliver the most basic services.

*Mr. President, it matters not where you get your solutions. As long as they are the right ideas to make our country succeed, use them. As much as you may dislike our successes in government, use our ideas where they work.*

One of the most noticeable developments from the reconfiguration of government departments is the repositioning of state entities into the Presidency.

It is now clear, more than ever before, that the current Presidency is building a massive spin and PR machine to polish its propaganda.

Nothing illustrates this clearly, more than the congregation of the Government Communications and Information Systems (GCIS), Brand SA and Media, Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), in the Presidency with Minister Mthembu as the government's new super spin-doctor.

*We will be watching very carefully how these entities execute their mandates to ensure that there is no manipulation of information or the use of unethical practices to portray the government positively in the media and internationally.*

Mr. President if you are serious about accountability and transparency, then publish all performance agreements between your office and cabinet.

Let the public track the performances of Ministers against their targets so that we can identify the non-performers are.

Compel all Ministers and their deputies to comply with financial disclosures so that none of them or their immediate families do business with the state.

Institute lifestyle audits for cabinet and all the boards of state entities to eliminate conflict of interests.

Mr. President, all of these interventions can be executed immediately. They don't a summit or consultation with your boss, Ace Magashule. All they need is decisive leadership. Now is the time and season to act!