

Democratic Alliance speech by  
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# Premier Makhura must account for empty promises to fight corruption and fix the Health Department

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Madam Speaker, my speech today will take the perspective of the hypothetical Man from Mars.

What would a completely alien visitor make of this provincial government?

Our Man from Mars listened intently to the Honourable Premier when he gave his inaugural speech in June 2014.

The Man from Mars was impressed by the frank way in which the Honourable Premier spoke about the anger of the people in this province on various issues, and what he was going to do about it.

The Man from Mars was a little puzzled that the Honourable Premier mentioned "radical change" no less than 29 times.

He wondered why so much needed to be changed when the same political party had been in charge since 1994.

The Man from Mars heard the Honourable Premier devote a lot of time to the plight of people in long hospital queues, and what would be done to fight corruption. He heard the Honourable Premier pledge that "fraud and corruption are prevented and detected early in the value chain to prevent losses." He also heard that there would be an "urgent turnaround" in the Gauteng Health Department.

Madam Speaker, people from Mars have long memories and understand things very literally. They think that what is said reflects reality, and that if someone says they will do something, then they will do it.

The Man from Mars also remembers that the Honourable Premier said in his SOPA address six years ago that good progress was being made in the Health Turnaround Strategy, and the Department would return to normality in May 2015. He also heard that the e-health programme would get rid of paper files and reduce queues, and that they would "commence with the building of new hospitals in Soshanguve and Lilian Ngoyi."

The Man from Mars wonders why that has not happened six years later. He has looked into a human language dictionary to find out what accountability means. He sees the following:

"Accountability is a willingness to accept responsibility for your actions."

The Man from Mars has looked at our laws and discovered that a provincial premier appoints MECs and heads of departments.

He has noted that the Honourable Premier appointed Qedani Mahlangu as Health MEC and Barney Selebano as health head, and they both left after the Life Esidimeni tragedy in which 144 mental health patients died.

Gwen Ramokgopa was the next Health MEC, with Mkhululi Lukhele as head of health. A high-level intervention team was appointed in November 2017 to fix the deep-rooted problems in the department. Surely this time things would improve?

But when the Covid-19 crisis hit, the managerial deficiencies were still there, and the corruption networks sprang into action. While health workers risked their lives with inadequate and sub-quality PPE, nefarious people decided to enrich themselves. And so, two more of the Honourable Premier's appointees left in disgrace - Bandile Masuku and Professor Lukhele.

The corruption and irregularities included the R2 billion spent on urgently needed infrastructure to create new beds.

The Honourable Premier boasts that 4265 new functional beds were added after April last year, but many of the beds were not completed on time and they are in the wrong places. This is why Steve Biko Hospital was overwhelmed with tents in the parking lot.

300 beds were supposed to be completed at Jubilee Hospital, 300 at George Mukhari Hospital and 150 at Bronkhorstspruit Hospital last year. But only 95 beds could be used

at Jubilee, there was not staff for the George Mukhari wards, and the Bronkhorstspuit wards are still not ready.

The big question is why extra beds were not built at central hospitals like Kalafong and Mamelodi?

And where is that Soshanguve hospital that was promised seven years ago?

The 300 beds promised for Kopanong hospital are not ready either. The extra 500 beds at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital should have made the expensive NASREC field hospital unnecessary, but they are not being used for Covid-19 patients. And the SIU is investigating the R500 million spent on the AngloGold Ashanti hospital which looks like it will be a white elephant.

The latest Auditor-General's (AG) report shows the usual financial mismanagement, including R3 billion in irregular expenditure last year. This brings the accumulated irregular expenditure to an astounding R19 billion. The AG also found that the appointment process for the NASREC facility was irregular.

Madam Speaker, I have brought in the perspective of the imaginary Man from Mars because the Honourable Premier seems to inhabit his own planet where every year, he makes the same promises to fight corruption and fix the health department, and he is never accountable for why this never happens.

The Honourable Premier keeps making poor appointments of MECs and heads of department, and the scandals continue. In December he announced yet another high-level intervention team to fix the Gauteng Health Department.

Seven years ago, I said in this House that his challenge would be the 3 Cs - Cronyism, Cadre Deployment and Corruption.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has now said that the ANC is "accused number one" when it comes to corruption.

It is actually that obvious.

It is a systemic problem with the party in power.

Last month, the Dutch government resigned over a child welfare fraud scandal. No lives were lost, and nobody stole any money. You can contrast it with the Esidimeni tragedy, the Bank of Lisbon fire, the PPE contracts scandal, the misspending on the AngloGold hospital - I could go on and on.

Honourable Premier, the same reason that you reluctantly forced out Honourable Member Bandile Masuku as Health MEC applies to you as well. You have failed to stop massive corruption multiple times. You made the wrong appointments, you did not monitor closely enough, you failed to do the oversight that would have prevented all these scandals.

You do not say radical in your speeches anymore because your administration is still very much what you railed about when you first became Premier. In fact, your own term of office has more failures and scandals than your predecessor had, and she was really bad. You also have the same empty promises.

This is obvious to any objective observer, as well as the proverbial Man from Mars.

In this province, Honourable Premier, YOU are accused number one when it comes to misgovernance.

And YOU are the one who is not fit to govern.

## **Media Enquiries**

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