

Resurrect infrastructure to provide services, growth economy

By **Isaac Sileku MP** - DA Member of the NCOP

Note to Editors: *The following speech will be delivered today during Parliament's debate on the State of the Nation address and is under embargo until delivery.*

Honourable Chairperson
Honourable President
Honourable Members

Voorsitter, president Ramaphosa se staatsrede van 2022 gee vir ons hoop. Nou wil ek vir die president die waarheid vertel oor die rol wat munisipaliteite behoort te speel in die opbouing van omgewings wat ekonomiese groei bevorder. En die waarheid is dat meeste van ons land se munisipaliteite eenvoudig nie daartoe in staat is of voorbereid is om die president se hervormingsplanne te implementeer nie.

The President has finally seen the light and agreed with the DA on the fact that the State, including municipalities, do not create jobs. This is the role of the private sector and what we need from the State is for them to make it easier for businesses to thrive.

Chairperson, building the requisite infrastructure in municipalities needed to provide services, growth and development, will be the biggest challenge if the President's reform agenda is to be successful. I am encouraged that the President placed greater emphasis on infrastructure development in his SONA.

Chairperson, the next goal is to facilitate closely-knit and integrated spheres of government between our national, provincial and local governments. The mandates and effectiveness of municipalities will be extremely important to achieve this.

This participatory governance model across the different spheres of government is already embedded in the Western Cape government, where the DA governs. The Western Cape provincial government established synergy between provincial, local governments and participating national departments. This has already resulted in economic growth and an environment conducive for investment.

Last year the DA campaigned to have many failing key competencies under national government devolved so that competent provincial governments such as the Western Cape can provide the services that national government clearly cannot. Our people are not safe due to a failed police service, a non-existent rail commuter system and a power utility that keeps asking South Africans to pay more for a service they cannot provide.

Once the Western Cape's mandates over SAPS, land belonging to Public Works and Rural Development, and transport infrastructure is broadened, the economic growth trajectory will increase exponentially. I urge the President to act in the best interest of the country and not his party's addiction to control and allow South Africans to get the services they need.

Chairperson, municipalities are at the coalface of supporting local economies and need to be fit for purpose to make the reforms work. Reports from the Auditor General and Ratings Afrika, tells us that the municipalities, especially those run by the ANC, are dysfunctional and are unable to facilitate growth and development.

Chairperson, this country will struggle to become a competent state when we have local governments like the Amahlathi Local Municipality in Stutterheim, which has been forced to arrange credit with a local Pick 'n Pay so that their workers can eat. This has become their focus, not service delivery and economic growth.

In the Amathole District Municipality a member of the Executive Mayoral Committee, was violently dragged from her office. Here, the focus is on power, positions and paycheques, and not service delivery and economic growth.

The Moses Kotane Local Municipality in North West has, since the elections, not succeeded in appointing members of the mayoral committee. The focus is not on service delivery and economic development but a fight over positions in the ANC.

Voorsitter, my ouma het my groot gemaak in Beaufort-Wes en ons was gewoond aan munisipale dienslewering. Dit het verander en die fokus is nou kaderontplooiing en korrupsie.

Chairperson, there is hope. Western Cape municipalities are available for those who are keen to learn how to run a competent and service delivery focused municipality. DA controlled municipalities have the blueprint.

In Mossel Bay municipality, political unity lead to a situation where all parties and even the unions participated in processes and agreed on the appointment of a Municipal Manager. The DA embraced the involvement of other parties and created political stability, which is a key to build economic conducive environments.

Chairperson, this is not unique to Mossel Bay. This is how it is in the DA-governed Overstrand, Stellenbosch, Cape Town Metro and others.

Chairperson, the ANC was rejected in Johannesburg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and other metros because they failed to provide services and to grow economies.

The successes in the Western Cape inspired voters to reject the ANC in these metros. They were rejected because the people saw the focus on economic growth and service delivery in DA governed entities.

Chairperson, when the President took the Oath as the Sixth democratically elected president of this country he said, "*Yes South Africa, Thuma Mina*".

The people did, and he rewarded them by sending them political leaders who continued to ruin the economy and municipal service delivery. The President's men and woman acted on the wrong intensions and reality of *Thuma Mina*: they went in and took instead of giving.

For the ANC *Thuma Mina* is a punch line. For the DA it became a sincere intension and reality and a way of living and governing.

The DA says to the President, "*yes, Thuma Mina,*" so that we can give all South Africans what the DA gives to the people in the Western Cape and elsewhere. There we already implement what you have articulated in your SONA 2022.