Democratic Alliance speech by

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Gauteng Provincial Government is not capable of ethical governance

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Madam Speaker, I have one big question concerning the Premier’s Office which claims to be doing so many things to ensure capable and ethical governance.

I read the following in the committee report:

“The Gauteng Provincial Government corruption fighting efforts are yielding results through a strong ethical culture which is the foundation of clean governance, and this is created through institutionalizing ethics and ethical leadership in government and society. The OoP through the Integrity Management Unit has collaborated with the Auditor General and Public Protector to strengthen measures against maladministration and acts of corruption. It is noted that the Forensic Unit which was based in the Provincial Treasury has been moved to the OoP to work closely with the Integrity Management Unit. This … is to fortify systems to change the culture of lawlessness and corruption.”

There is also a GCR Integrity Policy Framework and the Gauteng Anti-Corruption Strategy, to “address issues proactively rather than reactively”. Therefore, the focus is amongst others, prevention by building the capacity of Ethics Officers; detection by conducting lifestyle audits; vetting of SMS members and all SMS officials.”

It sounds so good, with lots of frameworks, units, strategies and various other things.

But my big question is this:

If these programmes are so good that they are “yielding results”, then why is this provincial government plagued by so many corruption scandals that should have been prevented beforehand?

Where is this “strong ethical culture” when thieves stole so much of the money that was supposed to save lives from the Covid-19 epidemic?

Why was R500 million wasted on the Anglo Ashanti ghost hospital on the far west rand?

My colleagues have spoken in earlier debates about the looting, wastage and inefficiency in so many departments.

I am frankly gobsmacked that even after the PPE scandal, dastardly people sabotaged the repair of the Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Hospital.

They didn’t seem to be deterred in the slightest.

When the fire happened at this hospital in April last year the premier’s office should have been at the forefront of efforts to repair and reopen it as soon as possible.

What we got instead was the usual incompetence and corruption, as well as bickering between the Department of Infrastructure Development and the Department of Health about who was to blame.

Honourable Premier, people are suffering because of the avoidable delays in reopening this hospital, and your office cannot escape the lion’s share of the blame.

If your office was really capable it would not have had to beg the National Health Department to do the job.

It seems to me that you can have all these fancy programmes which look good on paper, but if you are appointing the wrong MECs, and the wrong heads of departments, then they count for nothing because the rot starts at the top.

The reality is that in a real sense people are policies. If you don’t appoint the right people who support the right policies, then it simply won’t happen.

I noted with interest a report that the ANC is considering an overhaul of its cadre deployment policy. According to this report, the aim is to “introduce more objective, meritorious and fact-based criteria, so that positions taken are publicly defensible, including in court if challenged.”

Last year, ANC veteran Mavuso Msimang said in an interview that:

“Cadre deployment has been a disaster. It has created many things. The tenderpreneurs happened because the ANC did not have any money, but ANC-based people got tenders and exacerbated corruption. I'm not aware of how it has demonstrably benefited the state.”

The Honourable Premier has always defended cadre deployment and has confused the issue by accusing the DA of doing the same thing.

The key difference is that the DA only makes political appointments that are explicitly allowed by the constitution and not in the general civil service.

It is completely correct, for instance, that former member Mike Moriarty was chosen to be an adviser to the Johannesburg Mayor.

It would be completely wrong, however, to make the wholesale appointments that have led to state capture that have ruined whole departments and state-owned entities.

My colleague in Parliament Honourable Leon Schreiber has put in a PAIA application for the minutes of ANC Provincial deployment committees.

These should make interesting reading and will probably explain why so much has gone wrong with Gauteng’s provincial Government.

To conclude: there will only be a capable state when capable and honest people are appointed to run it. It is as simple as that.

**Media Enquires:**

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