

## **Only the DA can help South Africa take back its rightful place as the economic powerhouse of Africa**

*By Dennis Ryder MP – DA Member of the NCOP*

When one considers the lofty position of respect, the moral high ground that South Africa enjoyed in the early years of our democracy when we were the darlings of the world, who would have thought that we would be standing here today, ashamed of ourselves, and the role that we play in International Affairs on our continent and in the world.

As we stand here having lost the position of largest economy in Africa to Nigeria, we must, in diagnosis and evaluation, consider the symptoms of this and then determine the root cause. Yes, the economy of South Africa under the ANC has worsened considerably, and the economic empowerment that we all agree needs to happen, has failed.

South Africa is the most unequal country in the world – this is a cry that is often repeated in this house, a cry used for the justification of race based schemes. But the cold hard truth is that, under the ANC's model of BEE, the gini co-efficient (the measure of inequality) has worsened. Unemployment is fast approaching 50% - reportedly the worst in the world. So here we are, the ANC continuing Verwoerd's work, entrenching poverty and dependence.

The average GDP per capita has been declining since 2014. This means that on average South Africans are poorer now than we were, now when the price of fuel, food and most goods is soaring.

Why do you think we have fringe groups forming to demand the ejection of our African brothers and sisters from our country? It is nothing more than a fight for resources amongst people desperate to fill their stomachs. What else can we talk about in a speech on Africa Day, other than the xenophobic calls of our fellow South Africans? Next will be calls for jobs in each province to be given to only those born in that province. Then down to towns, wards and neighbourhoods. Already we see calls for contracts to be given only to people living in a certain place.

And don't throw the issue of "illegal immigrants" back at me. This government has made it almost impossible for people to enter this country legally. Home Affairs is absolutely dysfunctional and the staff there see immigrants as an ATM to use as easy targets for bribery. If you hear the words "illegal immigrant" come from your lips, stop and check your privilege. Go and talk to the hundreds of foreigners who queue for hours at Horrid Affairs every day trying to comply with our nonsensical regulations designed to give petty officials a chance to demand bribes.

Yes, the symptoms all point to one disease. The African National Congress, through their policies, are the root cause of our fall from our hegemonic position as a regional and continental leader. BEE has failed to redress the Apartheid legacy of inequality. The various policies of RDP, GEAR, New Growth Path, the NDP have all failed and been abandoned, leaving us all a little poorer. Yes, the names of the super-rich have changed a little, but the majority still languish in poverty. Investors decry the policy uncertainty playing out under a weak president, following on from the "everybody grab what you can while you can" president.

The international relations are so bad that we have become complicit in human rights abuses in our region and beyond (I think of silent diplomacy in Zimbabwe while people are tortured and killed, our assistance

with the harbouring of Omar Al-Bashir when we should have arrested him, the deafening silence on Myanmar, and of course the ANC's recent support of Eastern Imperialism as Russia invaded the Ukraine.) In Amnesty International's 2019 article on Human Rights abuses, South Africa was the fourth country mentioned as an example.

In conclusion Chair, as we gather to discuss an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful post Covid Africa in an environment of increasing distrust, declining prosperity, and xenophobic mutterings, the treatment that South Africa needs is clear. I therefore prescribe an extended dose of Democratic Alliance government. Only the DA can help South Africa take back its rightful place as the economic powerhouse of Africa where our people enjoy the fruits of our substantial resources.

I thank you.