

# Opening session of DA Federal Congress 2023

1 April 2023

Remarks by Geordin Hill-Lewis

*“What we’re building in Cape Town, we can build in SA too”*

What a privilege it is to address you all this morning!

Sixteen years ago I was here in this same hall as a young DASO member, fresh out of school, attending my first DA Federal Congress.

I could never have imagined then that I would one day be back here speaking to a packed Federal Congress as the Mayor of Cape Town.

So much has changed in these years.

Our party is nearly double the size it was then, and we have been through triumph and setback together.

Much has changed in our country, and in my own life too.

I became a husband, and the father of a beautiful little girl, and like every parent in South Africa, this has made me look at our country in a whole new way.

I am reminded every day that there is a generation of young South Africans counting on us to show that the promise of our young democracy is not yet lost.

And I intend to do just that, starting with Cape Town.

Building on the progress over the past seventeen years of unbroken DA government, we are writing the next chapter in the story of Cape Town.

I am fortunate to serve as Mayor at a time when the DA has a strong outright majority. This gives us the confidence and the strength to be ambitious with our plans.

You see, we’re on a mission to build a City of Hope for all.

That was our promise to voters when we campaigned in 2021, and it remains our pledge today.

And we don’t only mean hope for the people of Cape Town. We mean for all.

We want the city to be a beacon of hope for every South African too.

We are showing that you can have a government that cares for the dignity of every person.

We want to show that decline in South Africa is not inevitable.

In Cape Town, we refuse to accept electricity blackouts as a part of our future.

We are on track to make Cape Town the first Metro to be entirely load-shedding free.

We refuse to accept that four out every ten people who want to work can’t find any work.

Three-quarters of all new jobs added in the last quarter of 2022 were created in Cape Town.

We refuse to accept South Africa's horrific rate of violent crime.

In partnership with our outstanding colleagues in the Western Cape government, we've deployed more than 1200 of our own officers to the Metro's worst crime hotspots, and it is making a difference and saving lives.

We refuse to accept the collapse of sewers, roads and the water grid, as we are seeing in so many other places.

That's why we are breaking all records by rolling out R120 billion in infrastructure investment.

Most of this will go towards upgrading the sewer networks of Cape Town's poorest communities, because we want every person to have dignity in basic services.

We're going to out-invest, and out-build any other city in our country. In some cases, 2 to 1.

Instead of waiting for things to go wrong, we are rolling up our sleeves and preparing things to go right.

If this can be done in Cape Town, it can be done everywhere.

One year out from the most significant election since 1994, I am confident that the people gathered here today – this team – can do the same across South Africa.

So don't ever accept that it can't be fixed, because it can.

Don't ever accept that the country described in the Constitution is lost, because it isn't.

There is nothing so broken that this team can't fix it.

Because only the DA's policies will make South Africa grow again.

Only the DA can create jobs and deliver dignity to those whom poverty still robs of it.

Where we govern, things work, and things get better for everyone.

We can build a Bloemfontein of hope,

We can build a Kimberley of hope,

An eThekweni of hope,

A Joburg of hope!

The failures in these places are not inevitable, and we must refuse to accept them

We have the power to change those stories.

We have the power to build a South Africa of hope.

Thank you.