

Democratic Alliance speech by
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Gauteng residents deserve less talk and more service delivery

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**Madam Speaker;
Honourable Premier;
Members of this House;**

For the second time this year, we had the opportunity to hear the Premier outline his plans to improve service delivery in this province. Sadly, all we heard were the same plans we have been hearing since he first took over the administration in October 2022. Instead of improving service delivery, the residents of this province are given false hope.

The recent Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) released by Statistics South Africa for the second quarter of 2024 indicates that 128 000 were added to the unemployment line in the province. Furthermore, the expanded unemployment rate, which includes discouraged work seekers and those categorised as not in employment, education, or training (NEET), stands at a shocking 45.3%. So, Premier, while you were bragging about the gains made in employment in this province compared to other provinces, it is quite clear that more needs to be done to address the creation of employment opportunities in this province.

Long-term job opportunities are hard to come by; short-term opportunities provide our residents with the opportunity to put food on the table, but our economy is not growing as it should. Finding permanent employment becomes even more difficult if you do not have any job training or a tertiary qualification. This is why job creation targets set by this government are important. It offers our unemployed residents an opportunity to learn valuable skills that can be used to seek long-term employment. What should not happen, though, with the short-term job opportunities created by this government is leaving 32 000 youth unemployed after promising them that their contracts will be renewed for a further 12 months. This gave them false hope that they had job security for at least another year. By dashing these hopes, Premier Lesufi you have added thousands to the number of discouraged work seekers.

Madam Speaker;

For a long time now, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has been calling on the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG), under the leadership of Premier Lesufi, to start building a capable state. Building a capable state cannot only be spoken about. There has to be political will to ensure that this does indeed happen. For a capable state to be built, several things need to be put in place:

- Performance agreements that are signed with all MECs, heads of departments, and Director-Generals.
- Lifestyle audits should be conducted regularly; not once every five years.
- Protection must be afforded to whistle-blowers who want to report incidents of corruption.

Now, Premier, you have once again told us that the lifestyle audits are complete. We want to challenge you to make this public immediately. Furthermore, Gauteng residents need to know what will happen to MECs and officials who do not pass the lifestyle audits.

This cannot be a box-ticking exercise. In addition, when forensic investigations are launched, we need to know the outcomes of the investigations. Several forensic reports have not been made public. We need to know what the findings were and whether there is a case of corruption to be answered.

Premier, you know that for us to grow the economy, an enabling environment has to be created. However, without ensuring that proper mechanisms are put in place to curb corruption, investor confidence in this province will not be high. Having the private sector invest in the economic hub of the country is critical if we want to increase the number of long-term job opportunities that are created.

Our townships, informal settlements, and hostels remain some of the areas that receive little to no service delivery. Despite this being a focus for the past and current administration, there has been no difference that can be seen or felt by the residents who live in these areas. Our townships and their economies are meant to be revitalised through this programme but to date, we cannot see any change this programme has made. Residents living in informal settlements and hostels continue to live in squalor. During our numerous oversight inspections, we have seen that residents are battling to access basic services. Yet, there is an entire programme dedicated to improving their lives.

Crime continues to rise unabated in this province. Last year, over 6 000 crime prevention wardens were appointed. They are meant to assist in reducing crime. The reality on the ground is that the crime prevention wardens are not making any difference. Residents living in areas like Westbury, Eldorado Park, Riverlea, and Reiger Park continue to live in fear because of the ongoing gang violence. The South African Police Service (SAPS) is often unable to respond to reports of criminal activities. This is because they do not have the adequate resources they need to respond quickly and effectively to any incidence of crime. Premier, we have proposed that, to reduce crime in the province, we need to have a good working relationship with other law enforcement agencies in the province. This will help SAPS identify potential acts of crime before they happen and then put measures in place to prevent them from occurring.

Madam Speaker;

e-Tolls have indeed been scrapped. We welcome this, as e-Tolls were an unwanted system that was imposed on the residents of this province. The concern that we have now is the repayment of the e-Toll debt. We have been told for more than a year now that the Gauteng government is exploring various options to repay the e-Toll debt. The problem with this is that no arrangement has been put in place to pay the debt, and the interest on the amount owed is accumulating. The sooner a solution is put forward, the better. However, we will not agree to a repayment plan that puts an extra burden on the residents of this province.

The proposed provincial state-owned bank and provincial state-owned pharmaceutical company are ideologically driven fantasies that will waste taxpayers' money. We have entities that exist in this province, namely, the Gauteng Infrastructure Financing Agency (GIFA) and the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP), that are more than capable of doing the work that these two new proposed state entities will be doing. Premier, instead of creating a new pet project, focus on fixing what is wrong with the two entities that could easily do so much more if they were equipped with the correct staff and resources. These entities cannot become cash cows for a few connected individuals.

There are still a number of asbestos schools in this province. For years we have been hearing that these schools will be replaced. Yet they still remain the same. Premier it is high-time that you start making good on your promises. In addition, we know that the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development (GDID) is not capable of completing

projects on time and within budget. To fix this, a skills audit must be done immediately. Officials who are competent in managing projects needs to be appointed. Companies with a history of failing to complete projects on time and within budget must be blacklisted.

Madam Speaker, Covid-19 has changed how we do things, the way we work, and the way we study. Remote work and studying online have become a trend. It has also highlighted the need for this province to be more technology-savvy. However, the Department of e-Government is constantly failing to meet its targets for the rollout of LAN sites in various areas across the province. Upskilling our unemployed and equipping them with skills such as coding will remain a fantasy if this department does not meet its targets. We cannot speak about schools that are using the latest technology when the department tasked with ensuring that all Gauteng residents can connect to the internet is failing in its duty.

We cannot fix this province Premier, if you do not admit that there is a problem that needs to be fixed. You cannot simply start new projects that appear trendy so that it looks like you are running a province that is embracing new ideas and ways of doing things. Get the basics right first. Fix what is broken and ensure that all departments and all MECs who are appointed are fit for duty. Premier, you must ensure the basics are working first, before starting new projects.

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