Democratic Alliance speech by

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The case of the Premier who flew too close to the sun and failed to deliver services to Gauteng residents

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**Madam Speaker,**

**Honourable Premier Panyaza Lesufi,**

**Members of this House and,**

**Our esteemed guests.**

Our esteemed Premier is constantly telling us about his new and improved plans to deliver services to the residents of this province. They are ambitious, look good on paper and for a mere second give the residents some form of hope. While going through the budget for the Office of the Premier, I was reminded of the story of Icarus.

**The Premier who flew too close to the sun**

**Madam Speaker, Honourable members,** please indulge me for a moment.

Icarus, who is a figure in Greek mythology, tells us the story of a young, ambitious man imprisoned with his father, Daedalus. Daedalus devises an escape plan that, in his mind, was foolproof. Icarus and his father escaped imprisonment with an ingenious design of wings crafted from feathers and attached with wax.

Icarus, so thrilled with freedom and the experience of flight ignored his father’s warning to not fly too high. He soured closer to the sun which melted the wax on his wings, causing Icarus to plummet to the sea, and drowning. Icarus is an age-old cautionary tale about the dangers of hubris, recklessness and disregarding wise counsel. Our esteemed Premier should be heeding the warnings of this tale not merely for his sake but for the benefit of Gauteng residents.

**Madam Speaker,**

The Gauteng Office of the Premier has been allocated a budget of **R1.9 billion** for the **2025/2026** financial year, which is divided into three priority areas:

* Inclusive economic growth and job creation
* Improved living conditions and enhanced well-being
* A capable, ethical and developmental state

**Inclusive growth and unemployment**

**Madam Speaker,** let’s look at each of these key priority areas. Gauteng is the economic hub of the country and is meant to be the powerhouse of the African economy~~.~~ This province currently contributes **35%** to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But some key issues must be addressed first before we can truly say that we are creating sustainable job opportunities.

Yes, the Premier has his flagship programme, Nasi Ispani, which is meant to create employment opportunities for the residents in this province, particularly the youth. Our youth turned out in their numbers last year when this programme first launched, full of hope and joy. They were now finally going to be able to put food on the table for their family. However, this happiness and joy was short-lived. Many of these programmes were merely temporary job opportunities funded through the Expanded Public Works Programmes in the various departments.

Thousands of teacher’s assistants employed through the Presidential Youth Employment Service (YES) were left stranded when their contracts were abruptly ended. This is not creating job opportunities. Instead, it is creating a false narrative that only pads the employment figures quarterly.

Currently, there are 2.7 million unemployed people in this province, 3.6 million who are not economically active and 579,000 discouraged work seekers. Our Premier boasts about employment and investment opportunities but does not deliver.

**Improved living conditions and enhanced well-being**

**Madam Speaker,** as the Democratic Alliance (DA) in Gauteng, we have criss-crossed this province and seen the appalling conditions our residents are forced to live in. Mothers have to take care of their children in informal settlements that are either extremely hot during summer or bitterly cold during the winter. Our residents are not asking for handouts. Many residents have indicated that they are more than willing to build their own homes if they are provided with stands that have basic services installed.

All we have seen from the Premier is a rapid response to atrocious conditions in the Ramaphosa Informal Settlement in Emfuleni, where residents are forced to use buckets as toilets. Unfortunately. Ramaphosa is not the only Informal Settlement where this is happening; there are many across the province. Condemning a sanitation problem in one area is not enough. It is high time for this government to ensure that its so-called Township, Informal Settlement and Hostel Programme (TISH) works to benefit the residents. Yes, we know that this cannot be done in one go, but when an announcement of such a nature is made, we need clear timelines along with areas where upgrades are needed the most to be put front and centre and then fixed.

Premier Lesufi preaches about expanding healthcare, education and other essential services, when the incompetent Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development (GDID) is unable to complete any of its key infrastructure projects on time and within budget. The Rus Ter Vaal school has still not been fixed, while learners are being taught in an environment that is not conducive for learning and teaching. The Mayibuye Primary school was built on a wetland and is only partially occupied, while more money is being spent on fixing the shoddy workmanship. The Women’s Living Heritage Monument is still not operational. This is an indictment of our struggle heroes, particularly women who played such a vital role in helping the current government attain democracy.

Many of our residents are dependent on state healthcare, yet clinics take a long time to complete. A prime example of this is the Randfontein Community Health Centre. Over R22 million has been spent on this clinic, and six years later, it's still not open to the public. Placing a huge strain on the two other clinics in Randfontein. So again, **Madam Speaker**, how do we ensure that our residents have access to basic service delivery when clearly this government is failing, and we have a Premier who decides that flying too close to the sun with his ambitions is the correct way to do things? Not realising that his artificial wings are melting and that all he is selling is a pipe dream?

**Crime**

Madam Speaker, the residents of this province live in constant fear for their lives. Not because of inadequate police, but also because infrastructure is not being fixed on an ongoing basis. Traffic lights are not working, putting motorists and residents at risk, while streetlights are constantly out of order. The growing number Potholes and sinkholes are all over our roads are big enough one could probably go for a swim in them.

Going back to the issue of policing, I recently visited the Akasia police station in Pretoria. The police officers at this station are unable to properly protect the residents in the area because of a lack of resources. This police station is meant to have 24 vehicles, but only 13 are operational. So, how exactly are we improving the living conditions of our residents if we cannot get the basics right?

**A capable, ethical and development state**

For years, we have been hearing about how this province is committed to building a capable, ethical and development state. Yet, last year, when we requested that the 177 forensic investigation reports be released, **Madam Speaker,** this was turned down by the Premier’s office. We then submitted a Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) application, which was denied. We appealed the matter and were turned down. The next step we took was to take the matter to the Information Regulator of South Africa (IRSA).

Earlier this month, 47 forensic investigation reports were released to the public. It took the officials in the Premier’s office days to upload the documents to the Gauteng Provincial Government (GPG) website. We found allegations that need to be investigated, but the reports instead targeted junior officials and not the big names we expected to be revealed. Furthermore, these 47 reports are just a drop in the ocean and do not reveal the true extent of alleged corruption in the GPG. Now, if we wanted to build a capable, ethical and developmental state, these 177 reports would have been released a long time ago. Officials implicated in the reports would have been disciplined and not allowed to hold public office again. These investigations are important; however, when recommendations are not implemented, they don't serve a purpose.

**Conclusion**

While the plans on paper look good, they can only be implemented if the political will exists.

Until we see the Premier deliver on his promises instead of creating false hope, we cannot support this budget.

Unless we see allegations of corruption being addressed instead of swept under the carpet, we shall not support this budget.

As long as we have employment programmes that are not well budgeted and are being used for reasons of hubris, vanity and self-promotion, the Democratic Alliance will not support this budget.

A DA Gauteng led government would do the following:

* Conduct a complete audit of all government departments to assess what skills are lacking and whether officials are suitably qualified for the position they are appointed to.
* We would implement an infrastructure master plan, which will allow us to deliver projects on time and within budget.
* Where it is found that officials are implicated in allegations of corruption they will immediately be placed on suspension and the disciplinary process will begin immediately and concluded within 90 days.
* By eliminating corruption, we would be able to attract investment from the private sector which will allow us to create more employment and skills development programmes.

It’s high time, Madam Speaker, that the Premier stops flying so close to the sun, because we can see that he is all talk and no action, while drowning in a mountain of promises that cannot be fulfilled properly.

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