

Speech by Derrick America MPP
DA Western Cape Spokesperson on Local Government

“A Tale of Two Governments”

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Speaker, as I rise today to introduce this debate, I do so in the knowledge that the issue before us is one of boundless importance. It is my hope that this debate will see this house focus its discussion on concrete measures to improve the lives of our people. Because the truth is that our people are suffering.

For many, life is harder than it has ever been in living memory, and as elected representatives, we are responsible for helping them. Mr. Speaker, our people will not be helped by high-minded political ideology or another raft of empty promises. They will be helped by solid, accountable, clean government; they will be helped by services which are delivered efficiently and quickly. They will be helped by a government which strives, at all costs, to put the citizen at the forefront of every decision it makes, and every policy it pursues.

Speaker, time and time again, the Western Cape Government has demonstrated not only its ability, but its unflinching will to fall into that former category. Across the length and breadth of our province, this government is doing more than any other. In all but a few cases, our municipalities are leading the way in clean governance, in service delivery; they are pushing hard to help the Western Cape’s people to stand on their own feet, and giving them the tools to create the lives they deserve. The results of this uncompromising desire to innovate and improve, speak for themselves: clean audits, well-maintained infrastructure, towns and cities that claim the highest life expectancy and the lowest unemployment levels in the country.

Behind all of this is the provincial government, which works to ensure service is delivered at a consistently high standard to all the people of this Province.

But in all but a handful of cases, the sad reality is that the Western Cape's municipalities stand as the exception to the rule, when compared to the rest of the country. Speaker, when I look at how some parts of South Africa are run, I am shocked, and I am saddened. I was not surprised when news broke that some polls are predicting that the ANC's voter share has fallen drastically, even to as low as 40%. This is what has happened to a once-great party which has consistently placed its own interests above those of its constituents for thirty years.

Speaker, there was once a time when the ANC fought against injustice in this country. Today, they continue to fight equally as hard, but they now work to enrich themselves, and to steal from the public. To my colleagues across the aisle, I would offer the following piece of advice: listen closely to what is said during this debate, and begin to govern as effectively as this province does. If they do not Honourable Speaker, there will come a long-overdue day of reckoning. This day of reckoning for the ANC will be in 2024. Up till now, the electorate has largely accepted the ANC's liberation myth at face value.

They now want political parties that do things, and get things done. Not liberation movements that dream about doing things.

It is my hope that some of the initiatives highlighted during this debate will inspire, and shed light on the way forward, at a time in which our country is desperately in need of ethical and competent leadership.

I thank you.