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DA-led metros have brought change to millions - Mmusi Maimane

DA leader sets out the accomplishments of these administrations two years on

Two years on, and DA-led metros have brought change to millions of South Africans

Note to Editors: the following remarks were delivered by the Leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), Mmusi Maimane, in Greater Ellis Park in Johannesburg today. The Leader was joined by the Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, and the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Solly Msimanga.

Two years ago to the day, history was made when the Democratic Alliance (DA) was elected into government in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay – the first time the ANC had lost control of these cities. As soon as agreements were finalised, coalition governments with several political parties were formed to serve the people and bring about real change.

From day one, it was clear that the governments inherited from previous administrations were in shambles – both financially and administratively. These administrations were endemically corrupt and heavily bloated which will again be the case if the ANC are ever again trusted to govern these cities.

Since then, these governments have been hard at work putting residents first by cutting corruption, prioritising service delivery, and passing pro-poor budgets in order to create jobs. This is a responsibility that we do not take lightly.

Any modern economy's prospect for sustainable development and growth hinges on the effectiveness of city-led economic growth. And the Greater Ellis Park area that we find ourselves in today is a visionary example of the sustainable growth of a city within a city. This is an example of how Mayor Mashaba is turning dilapidated and abandoned land in the Johannesburg inner city and revitalising it – creating low-cost housing and job creating industry to address historical injustices.

The very property we are on today is one of 71 pieces of inner city land earmarked as commercial and residential development for the benefit of the people of eGoli. This 1 640 square metre site is intended for the development of mixed income housing.

Johannesburg's New Doornfontein City Improvement District (CID) continues to pioneer the utility of industrial land in the east inner city. What was the City's historic manufacturing hub went to ruin under the previous ANC government, but is now on the cusp of being transformed.

The diverse space of land is set to be used as a manufacturing hub for mostly warehousing, light industry and amenities, an educational precinct, a mixed-use area for largely manufacturing, light engineering, warehousing, office and retail and at the heart of the development, a sports mecca space.

This is only one shining example of the DA difference that continues to transform the lives of more than 16 million South Africans living under a DA government. While we may have inherited metro governments that had long been forgotten by the ANC, DA governments will never take for granted those we serve - and the more than R100 billion in pro-poor budgets that were successfully passed in these governments are testament to this.

Today is a day to celebrate the first 24 months of DA-led coalition governments in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay as they lead in the fight to create jobs, stand up against crime, cut corruption and build One South Africa For All. These DA-led governments will continue to stand tall as beacons of hope for the South Africa of tomorrow.

City of Johannesburg

This hope was cultivated when upon assuming office in August 2016, the City of Johannesburg set itself the ambitious task of growing Johannesburg's economy to 5% by 2021. This remains a high target but was a goal the Mayor's team needed to reach to create jobs and turn the rising tide against unemployment in the City.

From day one, the DA-led City of Johannesburg made jobs and growth its primary focus. By creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurs and

businesses to grow, it was only a matter of time before the results began to show.

Despite the continued rise in the national expanded unemployment rate to 37.2% in the second quarter of 2018, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) released by Stats SA earlier this week shows this government has created an environment that produced 109 000 new jobs since the beginning of the year. This was achieved while reducing the expanded unemployment rate from 32.3% to 30.8%. If this trend continues, the City is well on its way to reaching the goal of 5% growth by 2021.

Quality infrastructure and the stabilisation of services will always be a non-negotiable for business in the continent's economic capital. The City has met this expectation by not only renewing infrastructure and stabilising services but establishing a responsive, dedicated, accountable and professional civil service that inspires confidence with the people of Johannesburg and delivers world-class services that will continue to make Johannesburg an attractive destination for investment.

The Khoebo Opportunity Centre has seen hundreds of young entrepreneurs walk through its doors, turning ideas into small businesses. The roll out of these Opportunity Centres are beginning to assist residents with crucial skills and support to grow their businesses so that they too can create job opportunities. In addition to Khoebo, the City's goal is to create 13 more Opportunity Centres through Johannesburg, deepening access to jobs with two in every one of the seven regions throughout the City by 2021.

Crime and corruption have become public enemy number one in the City of Johannesburg, and we are winning the war. More than 3 500 cases of corruption and maladministration involving almost R18 billion has been uncovered by the newly established Group Forensics and Investigation Services (GFIS) and the recruitment of an additional 1 500 Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD) officers has ensured the streets of Johannesburg are much safer. The launch of Operation Buya Mthetho has seen to more than 8 000 arrests by law enforcement officials since the beginning of the year.

Over 20 000 arrests have been made by the JMPD, and the GFIS has a specialised unit that counter-acts building hijacking syndicates and returns properties that have been hijacked to their rightful owners. With the

assistance of the JMPD, this unit has already returned 73 buildings to their rightful owners.

A free Community Substance Abuse Treatment Centres has been opened which includes provision for a 24-hour crisis line where the people of Johannesburg can speak with caring professional staff to get the help that they need. By the end of this financial year there will be eight of these Centres reaching areas such as Poortjie, Bophelong and Cosmo City.

In order to open up access to health services, extended operating hours within City clinics have ensured that residents do not have to decide between making it to work and receiving medical attention, and so that students never have to choose between going to school and accessing healthcare.

City of Tshwane

The City of Tshwane has also become the talk of the town with the Capital City having allocated R137.2 million towards Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) initiatives this financial year. In September last year, much needed reforms to the City's EPWP recruitment policy were introduced, effectively ending the system of insiders and outsiders that have previously marred EPWP job opportunities.

Tshwane's reformed EPWP recruitment policy framework is built on the principle of transparency. The selection process involves an open public lottery system where beneficiaries are randomly selected so that no individual can be approached or lobbied to occupy any of the work opportunities available in the City.

The new DA government inherited a major housing backlog, and corruption and maladministration had taken over the building and allocation of houses to the poorest of residents. While many live without the dignity of a brick and mortar home, previous ANC mayors lived in lavish luxury in the so called "Mayoral Mansion". This mansion was put up for sale and on 23 November last year it was sold for R5.1 million in order to build houses for those without. Proceeds made from the sale are already being used to build 40 houses for those without.

Over the past two years, great strides have been made towards stabilising the City's finances. This was achieved by strengthening the controls over

supply chain processes, slashing unauthorised and unnecessary expenditure and extricating the City from unlawful and expensive contracts.

This has resulted in turning a R2 billion inherited deficit into a surplus. The reported operating deficit for 2015/16 was R2.1 billion which was restated to R1.3 billion during the next financial year's audit process. This is evidence of a DA-run City handling public money with care, ensuring it is spent on the people, not politicians.

The Capital City closed the financial year with an operating surplus of R704 million.

Nelson Mandela Bay

On the other end of the country, the Nelson Mandela Bay coalition government has had all the odds stacked against them from day one. But in the face of adversity, a budget that focused on low-income communities, housing and informal settlement upgrades, roads, lights and community facilities was passed.

Prudent budgeting enabled the first Metro Police Service in the Eastern Cape to have been launched in Nelson Mandela Bay to tackle the scourge of crime in the City. Working closely with the South African Police Service (SAPS), they have seen to an 11% decrease in gang related crimes in the City's most dangerous communities such as Helenvale where a pilot project with Shot Spotter has improved response times and seen a number of critical arrests made.

The service has grown to 135 officers and 38 patrol vehicles with a specialised bicycle unit, ghost squad and bylaw enforcement unit in operation. It has been such a success that the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Police Department's Annual Police Plan format was adopted as the blueprint to be used by all Metro Police Departments nationwide.

In two years, the rooting out of corrupt senior officials, securing and monitoring of SCM offices and opening up of the Bid Adjudication Committee (BIC) to the public has turned around the City's finances and SCM and ensured that every penny is accounted for. The City is now liquid with over R2 billion in the bank, has a steadily rising collection rate and achieves some of the best capital expenditure in the country.

NMB recently received a AAA credit rating and a windfall Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) allocation of R178.8 million on top of the R911 million received at the beginning of the financial year. The City has succeeded in spending close to R1.1 billion on capital works that has directly improve the lives of the poor and made for better service delivery.

Services such as the Assistance to the Poor (ATTP) will see recipients receive R2 billion over the medium term, while R1.5 million is going to be spent on informal trading (EDTA) infrastructure. Almost half a billion rand has been apportioned to upgrading housing and informal settlements, human settlement projects, a bucket eradication programme, informal housing and electrification programmes. To date 9 000 of the 16 000 bucket toilets inherited from the previous ANC government have been eradicated.

To ensure the safety of their roads, more than half a billion rand has been put aside for roads and lighting. In addition to this, R150 million has been reserved for the upgrading and development of community facilities like Multi-Purpose Centres, libraries, sports facilities, parks and open public spaces.

Conclusion

These DA-led governments have put the people of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay first by creating jobs, waging war on crime, crushing corruption, delivering nothing but the best services and passing over R100 billion in pro-boor budgets. This is a total change for more than 16 million South Africans.

Change forced the ANC to realise that they cannot govern with impunity. This DA difference has come to be expected of us where govern and we would not have it any other way. South Africans deserve excellence in government and we hold ourselves to very high standards in pursuit of this.

These are not simply cherry-picked success stories. They are very real examples of the opportunities that exist for more than 16 million people who live under DA-led governments.

One of the greatest privileges one can ever be entrusted with is a mandate from the people to serve and it is these DA-led governments' past two years

of service to the residents of these great cities that we should all be celebrating today.

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