



Complete Rally Speech by  
**Mbali Ntuli MPL**  
Candidate for DA Leader

## **#MbaliNtuli4DALeader: A New Way to save the DA and SA**

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**Note to editor:** *This is the speech that was delivered by DA Candidate for Leader, Mbali Ntuli MPL, during a rally held at College Rovers in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. #MbaliNtuli4DALeader.*

Viva DA Viva

Halala DA Hala

Sanibonani, Goeie dag

Democrats I want to thank you so much for coming today. I want to thank you because I know you didn't come here for me but rather to hear and contribute to how we can save our party and then save South Africa.

We have two crises in South Africa right now. One is an economic crisis and the other is a political one.

I wrote a personal letter to all public representatives of the party some three weeks ago in which I raised a number of concerns I have about our party. In that letter, and the subsequent press conference, I conveyed that these problems are not insurmountable. We can and we will overcome them.

Let me be clear. I believe in this organization. I love our party. I believe in the people in this party and what we can achieve together. More than anything though, I believe our party is the only alternative to the governing party that can

save this country and take people out of the poverty that they have languished in for far too long.

I have been in this party for over a decade. I have served it at every level, from the branches to FedEx, as a politician and a staff member.

My history with this party goes back 22 years ago when Roger Burrows, a PFP stalwart, then introduced my family to the DA. So when I say this party runs through me, in good and bad times, I mean it. It is why I have always been so utterly loyal to our cause, even when I disagreed with some decisions that have been taken in the past. I did so because I love this party and want to protect the vision we have for the country.

I tell you this, because I have received a lot of support and encouragement from members of our party and the general public since I announced my decision to stand for DA Leader.

The majority of those messages made me realize that the things I mentioned truly resonate with many people in our party. Many people who've reached out appreciated the honesty and courage with which I spoke, and specifically recognized the need for us to be kinder and fairer. These are values I hold dear and I believe the party should live by.

In doing so, I believe it will strengthen our bonds as an organization which will indeed make the party stronger and restore confidence in our agenda. This is important, because our agenda is to change the lives of ordinary South Africans; ordinary South Africans who are either deep in poverty, or are constantly worried about their futures, and the future of the country.

So we have a big job ahead of us.

Good leaders are driven by purpose; They are clear on their *why*, and can articulate what underpins their calling to lead. At my announcement I told you my *why*, and I promise to always stay true to that.

I told you why the DA has been my chosen political home, and my history with the DA dating back to my formative years.

I spoke honestly about how I have had to live in two South Africas as a black female that also had the fortune of breaking into the middle class because of my industrious parents. This has allowed me to see people of other races and backgrounds as friends rather than representatives of their races.

I spoke about how Roger Burrows protected my family's rights, not because we shared the same cultural beliefs, but rather because he believed that people had the right to have and practice their own culture, and to believe what they liked.

Leaders lead with their *why*. That is why is important that you know mine.

Today, however, I want to address you about my plan for the DA and for South Africa.

You will recall during my candidacy announcement, I outlined four ways I believe we can save the party. These are by:

- Bringing fairness back to the party;
- Clearing up policy confusion;
- Getting back to realigning politics; and in so doing
- Restoring confidence in the party so we can again be a real alternative to the governing party.

I am under no illusion about how challenging the task ahead of us will be, but I believe we have to start somewhere as a matter of urgency.

**To build a fairer DA we must:**

- End the personality cults around leaders that we have allowed to creep into our organisation. No more leaders who are more important than any other members. I will be a leader that will be on the ground with you and always approachable as I have always been.
- Stop the culture of insiders and outsiders in our party. I will always be available to listen to the advice of any member and end the culture of only a few people having the ear of the leader. This breaks down trust between the leadership, public representatives and members. We are a party built on our membership and branches. It is time to take the party back to its membership.
- End the fear that has crept into our organisation where members feel afraid to express themselves out of fear of being victimised or no longer re-elected. I will let it start with me, and show that any member can express themselves and disagree with me and never be victimised for it. We simply cannot have a party where members do not feel free and where they are bullied and labelled. We need a new era and ethos.
- Cultivate a PPAS system in our party which objectively evaluates the work of public representatives and not as an instrument of punishment or to advance individual interests. To this end we must design a system that is fair to everyone and rewards hard work and effort and one that encourages us to produce meaningful outcomes rather than chase targets for target' sake. I will ensure we have a dedicated unit tasked solely with helping public representatives in areas identified during assessments to be lacking.
- Take care of those councillors who have been loyal to the party and achieved good scores across their term by allowing them to advance

straight to selection panel during an election period. Based solely on their work and not who they know.

- Build a disciplinary system that is independent and free of any politicisation by including independent jurists. This is so that its procedures and outcomes are trusted and respected in the same way we advocate for our nation's judiciary to be. We must lead by example in this regard. I will also speak to members to try engaging with one another before charging one another.

If we can get this right it will separate us from other parties who have, for too long, been consumed by their own internal struggles and failed to exercise proper consequence management for bad behaviour that has cost the people of South Africa dearly.

### **To build a stronger DA we must:**

- Return to our federal roots and give provinces and regions far greater autonomy to manage their own processes. We need to give them space to formulate their own election campaigns. We must federalise resources and strategy. That means use data and polling to support local campaigns, not dictate them with a top down approach. We need bigger support for local structures.
- Ensure that we use the party's machinery to build the profiles of all our councillors because they are the brands and faces of the party in their areas. This will make us stronger and able to win in wards using the brands of our hardworking councillors.
- Allow the DA Youth to run autonomous campaigns to garner support from young people in the way that the party cannot do. This is the same with DAWN. As a female leader, I will commit to support all DAWN leaders in driving issues that can empower woman and help to push for gender sensitive budgeting processes in government.
- Properly resource our DA Rainbow Network so that they can effectively champion issues that affect the Queer community. We must encourage members within the party to undergo sensitization training on sexuality issues so that we can all relate better to the challenges queer individuals face in our communities & the workplace. I will be proposing that a constitutional amendment to make DARN an official ancillary body of the party.
- Recognise that students are critical to the party's growth in different markets. Under my leadership, I will prioritise this market and be

available to meet them and help them campaign and be resourced to win votes for the party.

### **To clear up policy confusion**

Democrats, we must use the upcoming policy conference to make it clear to ourselves and South Africans who we are and what we stand for. Specifically:

- I do not believe that it is correct for any leader to pronounce on policy positions if they have not been agreed to by the party. I will never be a leader that causes confusion by pronouncing my own views as though they are those of the party. Especially the very views that divide us.
- To that end, I will be moving for a constitutional amendment to have policy conferences more regularly. A policy conference must take place at least six months before every single congress in future. The more our members and activists debate our policy in their structures, the less confusion there will be about who we are and what we stand for.
- I will be putting forward a constitutional amendment that changes the representation at our policy conferences. Our policy conference is currently attended by only a few more members than those who sit on Federal Council. There are no activists who can add a diversity of views and share experiences of their own communities. This has to change.

### **Realigning politics**

We have an opportunity we may never have again. South Africans are looking for something fresh and new from us. I believe with your help I can be a leader that will show South Africa how amazing things could be under a DA government.

I want us to win!

In the next few months we are going to be fighting the toughest local government elections we have ever fought. In order for us to ensure we return as many councillors as we can, we are going to have to inspire voters that have never voted for the DA before. If we do that, even those who stayed home and didn't vote for us will also return. I want us to work together towards this goal.

I believe that we can achieve this by accepting that coalitions are a reality of South Africa's present and future in the quest to realign politics in the interests of our people.

There are practical steps that we must undertake to take full advantage of this reality. Specifically we must:

- Build relationships of trust and respect with other opposition parties that share our vision for South Africa;
- Enter into coalition agreements between parties based on desired shared outcomes, and ensure that they are available to the public to ensure transparency;
- Put the pro-poor service delivery agenda at the centre of governance activity;
- Diligently exercise good governance practices; and
- Center engagement with coalition partners squarely on principles already agreed upon to avoid the breakdown in relations as we saw in Nelson Mandela Bay, Johannesburg and is currently playing itself out in Tshwane.

By deliberately and attentively pursuing these principles we can begin to take steps to change the lives of the South Africans in those communities as we have done successfully for more than 10 years in the Western Cape and Midvaal - where we govern.

## **Plan for SA**

On Wednesday this week the country watched as the Minister of Finance presented his annual budget for the 2020/21 financial year and it was thin on how we are going to create jobs with a projected growth path of 0.7%.

This is not how we resolve our economic crisis which is the reason why so many people are stuck in poverty and have lost hope.

While this is unfortunate, I believe there is an opportunity for the DA to capture the imagination of more South Africans by more aggressively advancing our successes in the Western Cape and Midvaal.

At the centre of our governance agenda must be creating an inclusive, stakeholder economy.

This means an economy where we are all stakeholders of South Africa's economy, and that no one is left behind.

I believe the DA needs to be more innovative in the offer we make, particularly to the millions of unemployed South Africans so desperate for new ideas on how to make their lives better. Our party already has policies on many things some of which we will discuss in April like policing, SOEs, crime, health etc. Without pre-empting April's policy conference, I have some new proposals I think the party should seriously consider.

In pursuit of building this stakeholder economy, I believe that we should:

- Fight to formalise the informal economy by creating an office in every municipality in South Africa where participants can register their

businesses. Through formalization, we can help their businesses to access funding opportunities that have traditionally not been available to them. My entire livelihood has been supported by parents who have built businesses in the informal economy. South Africans are incredible entrepreneurs. If we as the DA can speak seriously about helping people in the informal economy we would be speaking to the majority of South Africa.

We should also have, as a center piece of our economic offer, the township and peri-urban economies. We must establish special economic zones that create employment in areas far from city centres by:

- Investing in public transport – we need to help working people – and public transport must be the foundation.
- Establishing job centres that actually help people and not dead ghost buildings which make no contribution to denting our ballooning unemployment rate.
- Decrease personal income tax by as much as 5% over the medium term. South Africans already pay extra tax for security and reliable private transport. No middle class South African can create generational wealth because we are forced to live hand to mouth.

We must also increase the funding for skills development through bursaries and *“earn-as-you-learn schemes”*.

At the same time we ought to:

- Improve access to finance and training for SMMEs.
- Allow SMMEs to be tax exempt for the first three years as they try to establish their brands.
- Ensure every child in a quintile 1-3 school gets porridge in the morning, a peanut butter sandwich in the afternoon.
- Disband SAA. Use the money to create an entity that will introduce after school activities for all quintile 1-3 schools.
- Establish a centre for creche excellence that will train, license and constantly evaluate creches in township and rural areas in order to invest in early childhood development.
- Child abandonments have skyrocketed. We have millions of children who need adoption but the government is now trying to stop private adoption. We must fight to maintain the rights of private adopters because every child deserves a loving home with nurturing parents. Government is too slow with their processes for adoption when parents are prepared to provide homes for children in need.
- Cut the public wage bill and use half of those funds to establish one stop centres for women who need financial help to escape abusers. For mothers who may otherwise dump their babies because of postpartum depression to have a place of support and reprieve. Women’s mental

and physical health issues must be at the center of our holistic healthcare approach as a country.

- Incentivise business to stop focusing on quarterly reviews which lead them to job cuts in order to show profit, but rather have long term strategies that seek to put the customer first and invest in their employees and communities. In the end, it's the most promising way to build long-term value.
- Invest in adult re-education for the "lost generation" affected by the poor basic education outcomes of the last 25 years.
- Expand ordinary South African's ability to access justice. We must invest more in Legal Aid, which is often the only avenue available to ordinary South Africans to access justice.

## **Economic redress**

Nobody in SA can deny that in 1994 it was obvious that the people who needed to be redressed were those oppressed by the Apartheid regime. Those people were black, coloured and Indian people.

BEE and AA had good intentions to try and quickly balance the scales but it's clear from the implementation of the policies that they haven't had far ranging enough benefits for the people it meant to help. It's primarily been used to benefit a few people who are now an elitist class. However, as the DA we need to acknowledge that for the average black person who has been hired in SA they truly do not believe that they would have had those opportunities without these policies

The DA needs to be practical and understand that whilst we all want to live in a non-racial South Africa, race is still a huge factor in people's lives. We need to understand that recognizing race does not make us any less liberal, but rather gives agency to individuals who may consider race, gender, culture, religion and other things that make up their collective identity. People choose who they are so we cannot operate as though everybody thinks the way the DA does.

The reason this debate has become an issue is because our economy isn't growing and everybody feels scared for themselves and their children's future. If the economy was growing and everybody had a fair chance at opportunities and jobs then this conversation would be less binary and ahistorical.

Race shouldn't be a proxy for disadvantage but since the state and state-sponsored policies like BEE have failed, 28 million people, predominantly of colour, remain jobless or live in poverty.

AA and BEE need to be reformed, there is no doubt about it, and we should never be exclusionary to the increasing number of people who find themselves disadvantaged by a failing state. Growing our economy is the key solution to all our challenges.

## **The Green Economy**

If we want to be the future, then our policy, our thinking and our politics must be the future. We must own the future.

Any future government must be concerned with the climate crisis. This is about economics and not just green issues. It's about the future of the South African economy and whether we have good, reliable and clean energy to create jobs in a stakeholder economy.

To this end we need to:

- Stop factory farming, not only is it an inhumane way to treat sentient beings this way, but the toxic growth hormones, antibiotics, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) pumped into these animals land directly on the plates of the most poor in our country, making them sick.
- Abandon the idea of fracking. South Africa is a water scarce country and the potential of groundwater contamination of our water would be catastrophic considering we already have so many areas in drought.
- Support the passing of a comprehensive Climate Change Bill which sets a hard date of 2040 for achieving a Zero Carbon emission economy. The bill must place a strong emphasis on transitioning away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible.
- Invest in the Green Economy through innovation and research to create, not only new jobs, but better quality jobs in a manner that does not destroy the environment for present and future generations.
- Comprehensive animal welfare legislation based on the acknowledgment of animal sentience. E.g. Ban on Captive Lion Breeding and the lion bone trade.

A stakeholder economy is the future of our country, and we can lead it as the DA. That is an economy that is kind, strong and fair. An economy where business does not only focus on making profit but is interested in contributing to the country, investing in employees, and being ethical in their dealings.

We have to replenish lost skills. We must offer any employer outside of South Africa citizenship and tax incentives, provided they can employ South Africans for a minimum of five years, and show they have upskilled those who have no formal qualifications.

It is my belief that the implementation of some of these ideas would go a long way to giving all South Africans a shot at meaningfully participating in the economy.

Admittedly our economy has shrunk to such a large extent that South Africans have been limited in the extent that they can participate. This is a direct result of the poor governance practices of the governing party. Amongst the many failings of government is corruption and state capture, which have led to the state's growing inability to manage its State-Owned Enterprises. This has made it nearly impossible for government to provide the necessary services to the people of South Africa.

This is why I look forward to engaging Minister of Public Enterprise, Pravin Gordhan, on 06 March 2020 at *Daily Maverick's The Gathering* where SOE's will be at the centre of our discussions.

I will be challenging him on many of government's many failings in this sector, which have frustrated our economy with no end in sight. This is with particular reference to Eskom, SAA, SABC and other key SOEs.

## **Social Inclusion**

It is also abundantly clear that government does not meaningfully include the youth, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQIA+ community into the conversation about issues that affect them.

Having attended the funeral of Lindo Cele, a gay man killed in my constituency, I believe we must re-establish the *National Task Team on Gender and Sexual Orientation-based Violence Perpetrated against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)* in the Department of Justice, tasking it to look into this incident and may more like it.

This shouldn't be a box-ticking exercise but rather a meaningful interaction with actual policy outcomes that seek to better include these communities in decision-making about the broader societal problems that affect them.

## **Conclusion**

I am not saying that I or the DA has a silver bullet to fix all these issues overnight. It is nevertheless imperative that we continue reaching out to all vulnerable groups and giving them a political home. A home that advocates for their needs.

Under my leadership I will ensure that structures such as the DA Youth, DASO, DAWN, and the DA's Rainbow Network are given far greater legitimacy so they can effectively participate in setting the party's agenda, and widening our appeal to people who often feel forgotten in the democratic project.

I believe clearly articulating our shared purpose is critical to attracting and retaining voters, public representatives and staff alike. We need to present our offer in a simple way that the average South African can understand and speak to their hearts.

I want to lead the DA into a future that gives South Africans a legitimate alternative to the governing party.

Let me be clear. This campaign is not about me. It is about the cause we are all deeply loyal to. I am asking for your help to build a party together which we can all be proud to be a part of.

We must reimagine a DA of the future; A DA that is not about holding onto the past, but finding A New Way that leads us away from stabilization and stagnation, and towards growth and winning.

I am ready to lead a DA of the future, A WINNING DA

I am ready to lead a DA that is KIND

A DA that is STRONG

A DA that is FAIR

Viva Da Viva!

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