

FULL speech by **Andrew Louw**

ActionSA Northern Cape Premier Candidate

[FULL TEXT] ActionSA is the only Party that can Fix Northern Cape

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Good morning, goeie more, dumelang.

Esteemed Guest,

Ladies and gentlemen, our President of ActionSA, Mr Herman Mashaba, colleagues and the media present today, welcome to this press conference.

Today, I stand before you not just as a political leader, but as a fellow member of this progressive party ActionSA. One of the fastest growing political parties in South Africa and the Northern Cape Province.

As we approach this critical juncture of preparing for the 2024 general elections, I wish to share with you why I am deeply humbled and committed to be nominated as Premier candidate for the Northern Cape Province.

Before I get to the bolts and nuts of today's event, allow me to express my great appreciation to Mr Herman Mashaba, the President of ActionSA.

Your political astuteness, ethical leadership makes it easy to follow you, therefore ActionSA, the party you gave birth to, must be truly grateful to have you as a leader and President. I, like many others can confidently confirm that South Africa will be in good hands to be led by you as incoming President to fix South Africa, because you can.

Indeed, I am humbled that ActionSA has appointed me to this mammoth task to run as premier candidate in the Northern Cape Province. My fellow Actioners my appointment is not a birthright, but a gesture of trust encapsulated by the values of ActionSA under pin by:

- A commitment and accountability to public service above all other responsibilities

- An insistence on excellence in the provision of government services to communities
- A declaration that corruption, all forms of wrongdoing and unethical behaviour must have consequences.
- A solution orientated approach to communicating our offer to the South African people.

I am a man who was born in the dusty streets of Galeshewe. I completed my primary and high school education in Kimberley. Thereafter I managed to study part time at RAU, Wits etc.

I am a firm believer in family values and married to my wife Mariam for 25 years with 3 children 1 girl and 2 boys. I spent the better part of my life in Kimberley, where I worked for a few companies and my last employer was Transnet here in Johannesburg and in Kimberley.

I worked as a customer services manager in Transnet, thereafter I joined the political madness as a PR councillor in the Sol Plaatje Municipality in 2006. Shortly after the election in 2009 I was elected as a member of Parliament for the official opposition in Cape Town. I served in the shadow cabinet as shadow minister of Labour. My groundbreaking moment in Parliament was when the issue of labour brokers became a storm in a teacup. As the shadow minister for Labour together with other opposition parties we managed to table an alternative instead of the total banning of labour brokers.

My stay in Parliament was short, thereafter I was redeployed back to the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature due to a vacancy that arose. I was compelled to stand in big shoes long before my time.

I was but still a political novice yet thrown into the deep blue waters with little experience. It was uncharted waters, but groundbreaking moments emanated from handwork, which ultimately resulted in being the official opposition.

My political journey has been shaped by years of dedicated service within our community. I have worked tirelessly alongside each one of you, listening to your concerns, understanding your aspirations, and striving to amplify your voices within the halls of power.

This invaluable experience has instilled in me a profound sense of empathy, enabling me to comprehend the nuanced challenges that our diverse populace faces every day.

Moreover, I firmly believe that effective leadership demands more than just expertise in policy and governance. It demands a deep-rooted sense of connection and understanding of the people we serve. Throughout my tenure, I shall endeavour to build bridges and foster unity, transcend divides to create a cohesive and inclusive environment for all.

I believe in order to lead a sparsely populated and multicultural population like the Northern Cape Province requires a vision that respects diversity and promotes development. My ultimate goal is to create a sense of unity and belonging among the different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups in the province, while also celebrating their unique cultures and traditions.

I would also strive to improve the living standards and opportunities for the people in the province, especially in the rural and remote areas, by investing in infrastructure, education, health, and natural resources.

I would seek to balance the needs of the environment and the economy, by promoting sustainable and responsible use of the land, water, and minerals. I would also encourage cooperation and collaboration with the neighbouring provinces and countries, as well as with the national government and international organisations.

By doing so, I hope to lead the Northern Cape Province to a better future, by introducing ethical leadership and promoting a public service that will work for the people.

Beyond the realm of politics, my dedication to this province has transcended the limitations of my role. I have actively participated in grassroots initiatives, striving to create a positive impact that reverberates through every neighbourhood and every household. My commitment to fostering a culture of growth and prosperity within our community remains unwavering.

My vision for our future is not one that is shaped in isolation but one that is crafted through collective aspirations and shared values. It is a vision that encapsulates the hopes and dreams of each member of this diverse province, ensuring that no voice goes unheard, and no individual is left behind.

As a lifelong resident of the Northern Cape, I have a deep understanding of the unique challenges our province faces. From economic development to employment levels, from tackling corruption to addressing violence and crime. I am committed to finding innovative solutions that will improve the quality of life for all residents.

I stand here today not asking for blind allegiance but urging you to put your faith in a party who has not just talked the talk but walked alongside you, shoulder to shoulder, every step of the way. With your support, I am confident that together, we can build a future that not only meets our needs but also paves the way for generations to come.

Innovation is at the heart of my approach. I believe that by embracing new ideas and technologies, we can ensure the highest level of service delivery across all sectors.

My excellent communication skills have allowed me to build strong relationships with stakeholders at all levels, fostering a collaborative approach to problem-solving.

I understand the constitutional framework that governs provincial competencies and legislatures, and I am committed to upholding these principles in all my actions as your Premier.

What is wrong in the Northern Cape?

The Northern Cape is the least populated province in South Africa and contributes the least to national output. The growth rate has consistently declined since 2011.

Employment levels are low compared to national standards, with the absorption rate declining from 39.1% in 2010 to 34% in 2021 and youth unemployment level of 42.4%. ActionSA is committed to take the youth along by creating sustainable employment and addressing the issue of food insecurity.

According to STATSA (2017), only 20.5% of the households in the Northern Cape are food insecure, and the food insecurity level is above the National average of 15.8%.

Corruption is a serious challenge in the Northern Cape. Residents have blamed corrupt officials for poor service delivery in local and provincial government departments. High-profile government employees have been held accountable for money squandered, but millions remain unaccounted for.

Like many South Africans, the people of the Northern Cape are adversely affected by violence and crime. In addition, unemployment, and poor access to opportunities result in abject poverty.

Despite improvements in infrastructure, there are still challenges related to transparency, accountability, and return on investment for national/provincial interventions. These challenges require strategic leadership and innovative solutions to improve the quality of life for residents of the Northern Cape Province.

ActionSA's offer to the Voters of the Northern Cape Province:

The Northern Cape Province, the largest and most diverse province of our country, but sparsely populated. This province has a unique and beautiful landscape that combines desert and coast, creating a contrast of climate and scenery.

In addressing the 42,4% youth unemployment, a number of drastic changes need to happen immediately. If one considers the appetite levels for voting in the province, the stats speak volumes.

Many people are not interested in voting anymore, the reasons are obvious, the living conditions of most of the people are worrisome.

People are sick and tired of listening to empty promises. The only time political parties are around, when they need our votes, this is what voters complained about. ActionSA is in the business to capture all those voters who have lost the urge to go out to vote, starting with our burst campaign on the registration weekend in November.

Since the novelty wore off the governing party lost credibility in the Northern Cape. Let me give you a rundown on how the voters of the province have lost confidence in the ruling party:

In 2014 the ANC got 64,4% with a voter turnout of 71,3%, thereafter in 2019 ANC got 57,54% with a voter turnout of 64%. In 2021 the ANC got 50,5% with a voter turnout of 53%. The most significant drop was between 2019 to 2021 by 11%. This is the game changer for opposition parties and ActionSA will most definitely get into this space.

Since my appointment in October 2022 several political activities have happened on the ground. ActionSA started hitting the ground running by launching branches in the entire province.

In Kimberley, my hometown, of the 33 wards in the Sol Plaatje Municipality, 26 branches have already been launched. In the Phokwane area, which is one of the strongholds of the ANC, ActionSA has a footprint, all the wards have ActionSA branches.

It is electrifying to see how ActionSA is fast becoming a home brand to many disillusioned voters in the province. As late as two weeks back, ActionSA launched branches in rural areas like Kuruman. We have a footprint in Matoro, Mokalanoga, Tsineng, Gasese, Magojaneng, Dinokaneng and the list carries on. These are deep rural areas which politicians never visit because the road infrastructure is non-existent.

At the same time the voters have politically migrated to ActionSA as the only beacon of hope to transform the living conditions of the rural community. Many of these people were lost and left in the dark. Loadshedding is nothing new to them because they never had electricity 30 years down the line.

This is an indictment on the human rights of the forgotten community. A strong political will must transcend to turn the tables around to the betterment of all the people.

The province has five (5) regions and as ActionSA we advocate that each region be capacitated with an agricultural school to protect food security. Food security is the situation when people have access to food of quality and quantity all the time.

Despite great agricultural potential the people of this beautiful province are food insecure. The main course of failure was lack of technical skills in the Agricultural sector in the province.

These agricultural colleges must train trainers, researchers, farmers, and officials. The lack of this type of training worsens the food security in the province.

As ActionSA we have this on good authority that the budget for Agricultural college has never been used, because the province has no colleges. To attract investors and more agricultural expertise agricultural colleges must be established across all five regions as a matter of urgency. The province is blessed with two rivers (Vaal and Orange River) which are the lifeline to the agricultural economy of the Northern Cape. Now farmers and non-community farmers and students are obligated to travel outside the province to obtain agricultural training, and in the long run the province loses this expertise.

The province occupies 30% of the land mass in SA. It is a moisture stress province, therefore in these colleges the curriculum must meet the desires of the men in the street.

ActionSA will ensure that agricultural colleges are properly funded and resourced to address the imbalances created by the current government. The ActionSA methodology to address the 42% youth unemployment rate in the Northern Cape Province.

I've been deeply concerned about the skills gap that proliferates the high rate of youth unemployment in our province. I will as a result facilitate a collaboration of all mining executives in the Northern Cape Province to partner with the University of Sol Plaatje and TVET Colleges to develop skills that will solve youth unemployment in the Province.

According to the latest statistics, 66.5% of young people aged 15 to 34 are unemployed. This is not only a social problem, but also a threat to the sustainability and competitiveness of our mining industry.

I believe that one of the main causes of youth unemployment is the mismatch between the skills demanded by the labour market and the skills supplied by the education system. Many young people lack the technical, vocational, and employability skills that are required for entry-level jobs in mining and related sectors.

Moreover, many young people are unaware of the career opportunities and pathways that exist in the industry.

That is why I have decided to initiate a partnership between the Northern Cape Chamber of Mines, the University of Sol Plaatje, and the TVET Colleges in our province. The aim of this partnership is to develop and implement a comprehensive skills development programme for young people who are interested in pursuing a career in mining or related sectors.

The programme will consist of three main components:

- A career guidance and counselling service that will provide young people with information and advice on the various occupations and qualifications available in mining and related sectors, as well as the requirements and prospects for each option.
- A work-based learning scheme that will offer young people the opportunity to gain practical experience and exposure to the mining industry through internships, apprenticeships, learnerships, or mentorships with mining companies or suppliers.
- A skills training programme that will equip young people with the relevant technical, vocational, and employability skills that are needed for their chosen occupation or qualification, as well as for further education or entrepreneurship.

The programme will be delivered by qualified and experienced instructors from the University of Sol Plaatje and the TVET Colleges, as well as by industry experts from the Northern Cape Chamber of Mines and its member companies. The programme will also be aligned with the National Qualifications Framework and the scarce skills list of our province.

To ensure the success and sustainability of this partnership, I will do the following:

- I will engage with all mining executives in our province and persuade them to support this initiative by providing funding, facilities, equipment, materials, mentors, trainers, and job opportunities for the programme participants.
- I will collaborate with the University of Sol Plaatje and the TVET Colleges to design and deliver a high-quality and relevant skills development programme that meets the needs and expectations of both the young people and the mining industry.

- I will monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes of the programme on the employability, productivity, and income of the young people who participate in it, as well as on the performance, innovation, and growth of our mining industry.

I am confident that this partnership will create a win-win situation for all parties involved. It will help us to address the youth unemployment crisis in our province, while also enhancing our human capital and competitive advantage in our mining industry. It will also contribute to our social responsibility and economic development goals.

I hope that you share my vision and enthusiasm for this partnership. I invite you to join me in making it a reality.

In addition is the vision to harness homegrown talent to accelerate the socioeconomic growth of our province, the Northern Cape.

The Northern Cape is a land of great potential and diversity. We have rich natural resources, such as minerals, diamonds, and renewable energy. We have a vibrant agricultural sector, producing grapes, dates, nuts, and livestock.

We have a unique cultural heritage, with the San people being the oldest living population group in the world. We have a strategic location, bordering Namibia, Botswana, and four other South African provinces. Yet many of our skilled graduates are still unemployed.

It is ironic that the province with the lowest population density has the highest unemployment rate in the country. Not to mention the poor infrastructure and service delivery in many areas. We also are on the top list in terms of low levels of education and skills, creating intergenerational high rates of poverty and inequality.

How do we overcome these challenges and unlock our potential? How do we create a better life for ourselves and our children?

My answer is simple: we need to invest in our people. We need to develop and retain our home-grown talent. We need to empower our local communities to participate in the economy and benefit from its growth. We need to create a culture of excellence and innovation that attracts and retains investors and entrepreneurs.

I believe that the Northern Cape has the talent and the potential to become a leading province in South Africa and beyond. But we cannot achieve this if we are not self-reliant and proactive. We need to nurture our local talent, especially those who are in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and innovation.

We need to provide them with quality education, training, mentorship, and career opportunities.

We also need to celebrate our local heroes, especially those who have achieved success in their respective fields and have contributed to the development of our province. We need to recognise them as role models and ambassadors for our province.

Needless to mention, I am not saying that we should not exclude or discriminate against outsiders who come to work or invest in our province. On the contrary, we welcome them with open arms and appreciate their contribution to our economy and society.

But we also expect them to respect our culture, values, and aspirations. We expect them to integrate into and help develop our communities and become part of our team. We expect them to share their knowledge, skills, and experience with our local people.

We do not want outsiders who come here only to collect a paycheck or a quick profit. We do not want outsiders who treat our province as temporary or only good enough to help step-up their careers with no intention to accelerate socioeconomic development.

We do not want outsiders who exploit our resources or abuse our people and leave the province in a worse state than they find it. We want outsiders who come here with a genuine interest and commitment to our province.

We want outsiders who treat our province as their home or their partner. We want outsiders who add value to our resources and empower our people.

Another very important issue that affects us all in the Northern Cape: the health and wellness of our people.

As you know, our province faces many challenges in providing quality health care services to our communities. We have a shortage of health facilities, equipment, and supplies. But most importantly, we have a shortage of health workers, especially nurses.

According to the latest statistics, we have only 4.6 nurses per 10,000 population, which is far below the national average of 14.7. This means that many of our people do not have access to basic health care services, such as immunisation, antenatal care, family planning, and emergency care.

That is why I will initiate a programme to recruit, train, and deploy 200 new nurses in our province over the next five years.

The programme will consist of three main components:

- A recruitment campaign that will target young people who have completed grade 12 with mathematics and science, and who have an interest and passion for nursing. The campaign will also encourage existing health workers, such as community health workers and enrolled nurses, to upgrade their skills and qualifications.
- A deployment programme that will assign the graduates to work in one of the five district municipalities in our province: Frances Baard 100 nurses, John Taolo Gaetsewe 25 nurses, Namakwa 25 nurses, Pixley ka Seme 25 nurses, or the same 25 nurses for ZF Mgcawu.

To ensure the success and sustainability of this programme, I will do the following:

- I will allocate sufficient funds from the provincial budget and seek additional funds from the national government and other partners.
- I will liaise with the Hendrietta Stockdale Nursing College, and the district municipalities to design and implement a high-quality and relevant nursing curriculum that meets the needs and standards of our province.
- I will monitor and evaluate the impact and outcomes of the programme on the availability, accessibility, quality, and efficiency of health care services in our province.

I am confident that this programme will contribute to our social responsibility and health and wellness advancement as a province.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that by using our home-grown talent to accelerate provincial economic growth, we will not only create more jobs and income for ourselves, but also more pride and dignity for ourselves.

We will not only improve our living conditions and well-being, but also our social cohesion and harmony.

We will not only enhance our competitiveness and productivity, but also our creativity and innovation.

We will not only achieve economic growth, but also social transformation.

We will not only go to a better life, but also create a better life.

In closing, allow me to boldly say that ActionSA is motivated by a vision of a Northern Cape where every resident has access to opportunities, where our economy is robust and inclusive, and where clean governance delivers for all.

With your support, I believe we can make this vision a reality.

Thank you.

Issued by:

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