



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
Republic of South Africa

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**MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS' HON. N. N.
MAPISA-NQAKULA OPENING REMARKS ON THE BILATERAL
MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF SWEDEN, MR
PETER HULTQVIST, DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, PRETORIA, 04
OCTOBER 2016**

On behalf of our government and our people, it is an honour and privilege to welcome you, Honorable Minister Hultqvist, to our country and in particular to our Defence Headquarters, the seat of the Ministry of Defence.

This meeting and our diplomatic relations follows a long standing history of friendship amongst our peoples, predating our democracy.

It is a well-known fact that the Kingdom of Sweden has been a dependable friend and ally of our peoples struggle for freedom and democracy, and that the strengthening of our diplomatic relations should be a natural progression.

It is therefore fitting in line with the spirit of this solidarity that we meet here today during the month of October, which we have dedicated to

celebrate the late ANC President, Oliver Reginald Tambo. As you are aware, President Oliver Tambo is credited with being the pioneer in strengthening our relations whilst we were still executing our struggle against apartheid, especially galvanizing international support to our struggle. This he was able to foster because of the close personal and working relations he had with the former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, believe to have been assassinated by the regime or its surrogates. The people of Sweden still fearlessly stood by us, in providing us with full diplomatic support as well as supporting us materially in those dark days of apartheid, including the imposition of sanctions against the apartheid regime.

Accordingly, after the attainment of our freedom, our former President Nelson Mandela visited Sweden in 1999, thus paving the way for the establishment of the Binational Commission, which was then led by our former President Mbeki. This created the necessary conditions for the establishment of our defence cooperation, and saw us sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation in the year 2000.

Since that signing, we have had a number of engagements between our two countries, ranging from the acquisition of our strategic defence packages (SDP), to exchanging of ideas and policy dialogue on the strategic defence review, training, exchange of ideas about our respective regional security situation, amongst others. It would be amiss not to specifically mention the acquisition of our Gripen fighter aircraft to our South African Air Force, thus making it the only country

on the African continent that is part of the Gripen user group. In this regard, we expect that there is deepened relations on the further training, maintenance and repair collaboration between our two armed forces.

On the international front, we believe that the balance of forces is in favour of a more just and equitable multilateral relations. In this regard, we need to leverage on the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) Cooperation. This would be to foster peace and security in our respective regions and spheres of influence.

Hon . Minister

Our two countries should leverage our long standing relationship to foster a more just and equitable multi lateral relations in our world order.

In this regard, I must also indicate that, with regard to cooperation I peace support on the Continent, that South Africa prefers a multi lateral approach. That such cooperation should at best be anchored on the sharing of broad principles between both the EU and the AU. This is necessary to ensure that any efforts for peace, are aimed at creating the necessary conditions for Africa's development and self sustainability.

It is important Minister that I must specifically acknowledge your own input on these matters, including your commitment to support an increased role for women and a gendered approach to peace support.

Your commitment to support pre-employment training capacity in peace missions is aligned to our own. I believe this is a matter on which we should pursue specific cooperation.

The currently existing Defence Cooperation has to date been led by our Deputy Director General Defence International Affairs. I am informed at the last Defence Talks there was agreement to hold these at the level of the Deputy Minister. This proposal is under consideration and the final decision will be duly communicated.

Honourable Minister, with these few remarks, I wish to welcome you to our country, and our Ministry of Defence and Military Veterans. I wish a fruitful stay further and a safe journey back to Sweden.

I thank you and a safe journey back to Sweden.