



ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF DEFENCE & MILITARY
VETERANS, Hon. NN MAPISA-NQAKULA, AT THE AFRICA
AEROSPACE & DEFENCE EXHIBITION GALA DINNER,
KYALAMI, 20 September 2012.

Programme Director

Former Deputy President of the Republic, Ms Baleka Mbete

My Cabinet colleagues

Our Deputy Minister, Hon. Thabang Makwetla

Fellow Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Defence leading various delegations

Secretaries for Defence, Permanent Secretaries and Directors General

Chiefs of the Defense Forces present

Chiefs of Services

Defense Industry Leaders

Exhibitors

Esteemed Guests

It gives me great pleasure to once more welcome various delegations and guests to this Gala dinner.

I have been told that this year's AAD is the largest we have ever hosted, and it is therefore befitting that I should thank all of you for ensuring these levels of success this year.

So we can indeed say that you've sang for your dinner already.

Let me also acknowledge the support of our partners, SAAB, who have generously agreed to sponsor this dinner. Their partnership of many years with our country remains of critical importance.

We are glad that the expo is growing, because as it grows, so do the prospects of achieving its goals for enhanced partnerships and benefit for all our participants.

This exhibition continues to enjoy the active support of the South African Government through our Department of Trade & Industry, Science & Technology and the Department of Transport.

This 7th edition of the AAD has continued in keeping with the reputation of attracting some of the world's biggest names in aerospace and defense that are keen to do business.

I can only assume these major corporations and countries see this event as a suitable vehicle to get their order books in good shape. Clearly the importance of this exhibition is unquestionable.

I am particularly encouraged that this year Namibia has joined us as an exhibitor making it the second African country other than South Africa to do so. I think they deserve applause for this achievement.

I have had an opportunity yesterday to visit some of the exhibitions and I must say that I found the general levels of organization and high quality of products and services impressive.

Most importantly, I was encouraged by the fact that, in its innovations, the defense industry does not seem to be limited only to developing weapons of war, but that this innovations can be used for the advancement of technology in general. This is something we want to encourage and support, in order to ensure that the large amounts of resources invested in defense, continue to be used for the advancement of society in general.

As a government, we remain particularly proud that the South African defense industry that has continued to grow in placing itself at the forefront of innovation and research.

We are pleased that many countries have seen our defense industry as a valuable partner and we want to encourage this growth in the confidence and preference you have showed in our products.

Our defense industry plays an important role in our economy as well as in our human development strategies. It has been essential in stimulating new sectors of investment and development of new markets. We can therefore not ignore the role the South African defense industry plays within the SA economy. It is therefore acknowledged as a significant role player in the reconstruction of our country and its economy.

Our landmine and battlefield clearance technologies, have opened up vast tracts of conflict-ridden areas so that indigenous people can return to cultivating their lands, and once again walk pathways and roads without fear of deadly munitions that could maim or kill them - and their children. We are particularly proud of this achievement.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is important that I emphasise the humanitarian aspect of the military business first. For the South African Government this is of absolute importance as we are committed to peace support, humanitarian aid, security and stability for our country, our neighbours and our continent.

Lastly ladies and gentlemen, I invite you to use the opportunity of this dinner for beneficial networking and as a place where you can make new partnerships.

May your participation in the AAD and your stay in our country be memorable. May the friendships and partnerships you develop, be valuable and long-lasting.

I thank you,