



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OPENING REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS, HONOURABLE MAPISA-NQAKULA AT THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF THE 7TH SESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE JOINT PERMANENT COMMISSION ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY. MOUNT NELSON HOTEL, CAPE TOWN SOUTH AFRICA, 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Co-Chairperson

Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Directors General, and Permanent Secretaries;

Chiefs and Generals from both the South African National Defence Force and Zimbabwe Defence Force;

Commissioners and police chiefs of both delegations;

Senior government officials of both delegations;

Distinguished delegates;

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends

We are gathering here under the auspices of this, the 7th Session of the South African-Zimbabwe Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security, to once more affirm the long standing friendship and a shared future of our peoples.

The existence of bilateral structures such as the JPCDS, creates a necessary platform through which this friendship of our two nations can be extended and translated into practical programs that are mutually beneficial.

Zimbabwe and South Africa are sister countries bound together by history, geography and demographic affinities. Our respective peoples share a common past and destiny. This is the essence of our bilateral relationship which compels us as partners to tackle challenges that face our countries and peoples.

Co-Chairperson, we now realize that conquering our erstwhile oppressors was perhaps an easier task than the monumental challenges that face us today. Poverty, disease, ignorance and other social and economic ills blight the lives of the majority of our people. Our engagements at bilateral and multilateral levels, should be aimed at achieving the twin objectives of elevating living standards of our people; and guaranteeing their security.

These objectives must be attained within the context of peace and stability in our two countries, in SADC, the African continent and the entire international community.

It is also common cause that together we should also protect and preserve our common history and heritage.

In this regard I am glad to share with you that here in South Africa, the year 2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe - the military wing of the African National Congress, itself the leading force of our struggle for our people's liberation.

As part of the celebrations we are honouring all veterans of the liberation struggle beginning with the Luthuli Detachment which pioneered the armed struggle against apartheid.

One of the most historic and heroic campaigns by members of the Luthuli Detachment were joint operations between MK and the Zimbabwe Peoples' Liberation Army (ZIPRA) in Wankie and Sipolilo during the late 1960s. The two liberation movements faced the joint forces of apartheid and Ian Smith on Zimbabwean soil. Ties that bind our people were forged in blood in those battles that captured the oneness of our cause and destiny.

I am informed, Co-Chairperson, that Wankie and Sipolilo have been renamed Hwange and Guruve respectively. I feel it is important for our children and future generations to be aware of the historic significance of these two places.

Today we need to give our freedom and sovereignty substantive content. Our people need personal security, freedom from all forms of material deprivation and an environment that offers opportunities for personal growth.

Our security lies in creating a political and economic environment that yields freedom and prosperity to all our people. That is the essence of the challenge that we face as South Africans, Zimbabweans and indeed Africans. Through our bilateral relationship and the institutional frameworks we have created in SADC and the African Union we should focus our energies on the creation of material conditions that bring sustained development.

This ultimately is what will guarantee peace, stability and security on the African continent.

Our cooperation and regional and multi-lateral level has also ensured that our shared view for a better life for our peoples is extended to contribute to the building of a better Africa and the world. It is for this reason that both our countries have remain key contributors in strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the both the SADC and the African Union.

In this regard, let me commend Zimbabwe for the role you have played, as part of the SADC collective, in supporting efforts that led to Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's appointment as Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Co-Chairperson and friends, as we meet here today, the peoples of the world and the continent are witnessing the deteriorating security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Gaza strip in the middle east.

We are calling on the international community to ensure that no further lives are lost, by acting decisively to protect the innocent civilians, particularly women and children in these two regions. Specifically we support the review of the mandate of MONUSC and the move to increase deployment to enhance the capacity of the peacekeeping force to protect civilians.

While we are encouraged by the move towards a ceasefire in the Gaza strip, it is our view that the time has come for the international community to prevail upon any party to that conflict who is found to be perpetrating gross violation of human rights and the unjustified slaughter of innocent people.

Co-Chairperson, during this session we will receive a comprehensive report of the work of our experts and assess progress made in the work of the JPCDS since our last meeting at the Victoria Falls.

As we endeavour to continue our political and economic relations it has become more than ever important to professionalise our defence and security services for us to realise our goal of creating peace and stability which will lead to economic development between our countries. Our growing sophistication with intelligence gathering and surveillance must make it increasingly difficult for the criminal element hoping to benefit from economic clout of a stable region.

Combating cross border crimes requires us to be better organised. We require a common regulatory framework that supports our efforts of to build capacity in the area of intelligence and crime prevention.

Our common challenge remains that of provision of the necessary resources to defence and security structures during a period when budget considerations need to be balanced with other pressing priorities of our respective governments.

Lastly, it is important that these permanent commissions do not only yield peace and security, but must yield the creation of a very strong economic region in order for us to improve the lives of our people.

I believe and trust that this 7th Session of the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security will reinforce already healthy relations between our respective countries. It is therefore my greatest pleasure to welcome you to Cape Town and to declare this, the 7th Session of the Joint Permanent Commission officially open.

I thank you.

