



**OPENING ADDRESS BY HON NN MAPISA-
NQAKLA, RSA MINISTER OF DEFENCE &
MILITARY VETERANS, ON THE OCCASSION OF
THE AFRICA AEROSPACE DEFENSE EXHIBITION
AND AIRSHOW, 2012 SEPTEMBER 19,
WATERKLOOF AIRBASE, TSHWANE**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, it gives me pleasure to welcome so many of our honoured guests, exhibitors and representatives of Industry as we open this, the 7th edition of the Africa Aerospace and Defense exhibition and airshow.

The AAD has now established itself as a landmark event in the calendar of both the Department of Defense and the Defence Industry as a whole. Since the turn of this decade, this event has been held every second year and has assisted all the partners to demonstrate their products and services, while generating growing public awareness about the Defense environment as a whole.

Program Director, allow me to start by thanking the various partners of the AAD and commend you for the excellent preparation of this expo.

Your hard work and dedicated cooperation amongst yourselves has ensured that as a country, we put together this wonderful exhibition and air show.

I also want to thank the Tshwane Metropolitan Council, not only for hosting us, but also for partnering with us in this event.

This year's AAD takes place in an international environment characterised by economic challenges affecting developed countries in particular. The defence environment has not escaped the effects of the economic downturn as many countries strive to balance their defence requirements against other competing social and state priorities.

It is a phenomenon that imposes challenges on us to think differently.

On the other hand, pockets of political instability and unrest continue to present unique challenges in our efforts to build a better and safer continent and the world.

As a continent and a region we share the world concerns regarding the scourge of piracy in the Horn of Africa, particularly around Somalia. We are grateful for the continued deployments by members of the international community to try and contain this scourge. South Africa will continue to support regional efforts by the SADC, through the deployment of resources to stop the migration of piracy down south into our areas of maritime responsibility.

We commit ourselves to work closely with all nations that are involved in the fight against those who seek to make travel by sea unsafe, and unattractive.

Furthermore, the continued and unabated problem of human trafficking, and organised crime in general, also remain a threat to peace and security of peoples of the world. The problem of extremism and acts of international terrorism also continue to pose a threat to the peaceful coexistence of nations.

We are however, encouraged by the fact that the world is making serious and fast advancement in information technologies responsive to both our human development and security needs. The advance in technology further enhanced the push towards a true global village. Equally, nano-technologies have brought about impressive developments in miniaturising control systems.

Here at home, our country still faces serious challenges of dealing with the inequalities created by past, namely endemic poverty and economic marginalisation of the majority who happen to be black and Africans in particular. These inequalities which play themselves out from time to

time, has placed on our government and all sectors of society, the need to utilise all levels of our planning to address resultant development goals.

It is within this strategic environment that we have set ourselves the objective of maintaining and growing our defence industry to achieve the following outcomes:

- A suitably resourced South African National Defence Force
- A strong research and development capacity for the country
- A diversified and commercially active defence industry

In our pursuit of the objective of growing our defence industry we have devised a strategy to create sustainably and mutually beneficial strategic partnerships, with companies from other countries. It is our belief that through this partnership, there can be the sharing of knowledge and expertise that can stand partners in a better position to deal with the unfolding reality of our time. Equally, our strategy provides possibilities of building strong mutually beneficial marketing partnerships. Similarly, we have set out to invite research institutions to partner with us to develop a strong research culture in the defence industry.

In this regard emphasis will be placed on building partnerships with our SADC partners and the continent. This is our natural base and we hope to build strong partnerships to produce requirements for our armed force.

Program Director,

The South African National Defence Force has been engaged in peace-keeping and peace enforcement operations. We are also required to stand ready in fulfilment of our commitments to the African Standby Force arrangement, and the SADC Brigade. The combat readiness of these force are of critical importance.

Various contingents of our forces are presently deployed in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These are two countries with very different terrains. The South African Army in particular traverses these landscapes on a daily basis. In the coming three financial years it is our plan to start the re-equipping of the army to cope with these challenges.

Program Director, having made strides in equipping our naval and airborne forces, we will be looking at re-equipping the ground forces of our country in the near future. It will also give us an opportunity to further develop our existing technologies so that our intellectual property remains up to date and relevant to a modern force such.

As you may have noted, the primary focus of our partnership efforts will be first and foremost, the South African Development Community and the Continent in general.

From a South African perspective, we will be looking to contribute to the goals of the new Growth Path, in terms of which South Africa intends to create five (5) million jobs and reduce unemployment from 25% to 15% over the next 10 years.

In terms of the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2012/2014, the defense sector will be looking to contribute to the growth of a skilled artisan base for the country as a whole and the defense industry in particular.

Before I take my seat, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you that on the 28th of September this year, there will be a change of command parade for the South African Air Force. After serving our country as Chief of the Air Force for 7 years, Lt General Carlo Gagiano will hand over the reins to Lt General Fabian Zimpande Msimang, who will be our new Chief of the Air Force.

I want to sincerely thank Lt General Gagiano for his dedication and commitment in service of the country and wish him well in his deserved retirement. In welcoming Lt General Msimang as the new Chief of the Air Force we pledge to him our support in taking the SAAF to new heights.

Lastly allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of our country, our people and Government, to express my sense of gratitude to my esteemed counterparts, the Ministers of Defense who have honoured us with their presence at this exhibition. We certainly value your gesture of friendship and solidarity. We also thank all the representative of countries present here. Your presence here adds significantly to the stature of this expo.

Let me extend a special thanks to all the exhibitors who have invested time and resources to showcase their companies and products and service here.

Your presence has defined the size of this exhibition, and it is our hope that your investment here will yield results for your companies.

We also wish all our visitors a pleasant experience in our country.

It is now my honour to declare this exhibition, AAD 2012, officially opened.

I thank you