



**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**  
Republic of South Africa

---

**MEDIA ALERT**

Date: 18 October 2013

Embargo: None

**ADDRESS BY THE HON. NN MAPISA-NQAKULA ON THE OCCASSION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL CAREER EXHIBITION PROGRAM OF THE SANDF. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST, MAFIKENG CAMPUS. 18 OCTOBER 2013**

Program Director

The Rector of UNW Mafikeng Campus, Prof Dan Kwadi

Members of the Executive management and Fuculties

SRC President and members of the Student Leadership in general

Representatives of the Provincial Education Department

University Staff

Esteemed Academics

Colleagues, Commanders and members of the SANDF

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends

Next April our people will together celebrate 20 years of democracy and freedom in our country. It is an achievement that requires us to celebrate together given the fact that freedom in our land was attained though the combined efforts of all South Africans and our common love for this country. It is an epoch that placed South Africa at the global stage as an envied example of what humanity can achieve working

together. Indeed a proud moment of emotion, where we all said, “today, it is indeed to be a South African.”

Program Director,

2014 will also mark another important accomplishment made by this nation in shedding its painful past of injustice and human suffering.

It will be the year when we will celebrate the ascendance of Nelson Mandela as our first Commander in Chief of a new South African National Defence Force, united from the divisions of our past, a true national asset in defense of our newly found democracy.

In many ways the history of the formation of the SANDF is closely knit South Africa’s story of the triumph of human will over adversity. Accordingly therefore, it should be a proud moment for us all.

It is incumbent upon us therefore, just as much as we need to defend the gains of our struggle for freedom, that we should safeguard our Defence Force. It is our last line of defence that needs to be protected as a national asset that serves all without consideration of affiliation.

This is the main objective of our national outreach program including our visit here today. To communicate a message that this defence force belongs to you. That the man women and men in uniform are a unique category of South Africans whose main preoccupation is your safety and the defence of our sovereign integrity.

For this reason it is important that we cultivate better interaction between the SANDF and the people it serves. The days have passed when our defence force was an unwanted stranger amongst our communities. To succeed in its new role as a partner in the success story of our country, the SANDF needs to be better understood by the people we serve.

On a personal note, let me indicate that I had a bit of anxiety when it seemed that we may not be able to make it here today due to an emergency caused by pressing national matters in Johannesburg.

We insisted, however, that despite the delay, our engagement with the staff and students of the University of the North West must take place because of the value we place on interaction with our institutions of higher learning.

The punted cliché that the future belongs to the youth, may be overutilised at times, but it is an inescapable truth.

In each one of you, our people see the future leaders of this country in various fields you have chosen – academia, business, politics, religion, science, technology and other areas of human endeavour. We as your elected leaders have a responsibility to create conditions conducive to the realization of those ambitions.

The role of the youth before you has set an example and a feat for you to emulate.

Young people at various stages of our struggle for freedom and the restoration of our human dignity took the lead. Their radicalism and fearlessness set us on an upward trajectory that ultimately led to our

freedom in 1994. It was young people who qualitatively transformed our struggle from a demand for acceptance as equals by our oppressors to that of a clarion call for self-determination in our land.

In 1944 the ANC Youth League was formed under the leadership of the late Anthon Lembede. Many of our heroes including Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu cut their teeth in the youth movement wherein their love for their country set us on a path to the inevitable victory of our people.

Although the youth before you have fought to bring us freedom and democracy, our country continues to face serious challenges if we are to succeed in building a truly united and prosperous society. We have unacceptably high levels of unemployment which translates to endemic poverty and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. Crime, poverty and a culture of lawlessness prevalent in many communities are issues we should all strive to face squarely.

As government it is our responsibility to create conditions conducive to sustained economic development, in order to address the many social ills that afflict our communities.

All of us however, have a role to play to ensure that we create a country that yields security and prosperity to its people .

Today I address an elite group of young people who have managed to enroll at this University and for this I must congratulate you all. But your job has just begun. You must ensure that your qualifications in your chosen fields make a positive contribution to the development of South Africa. We need an educated and skilled young population to

secure the development and prosperity of our country so that we can realize our lofty ambition to provide a better life for all.

It is important therefore that our education system does not continue on a trajectory of simply producing job seekers, but turn into the direction of training young people who themselves are able to create employment opportunities for others. The National Economic Development Plan provides a macro economic policy framework which addresses this issue. I recommend that you all familiarize yourselves with this policy document.

Let me warn however, that the NDP is not a magic wand or panacea for our economic challenges and resultant social problems. It only provides a policy framework that stimulates the growth of our economy but does not absolve us of the responsibility to play our part in the creation of a prosperous, humane and caring society.

Let me, at this stage make a few important points relating the defence environment in relation to this matter. While we encourage our youngest and brightest people to join the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), we understandably have limited job opportunities. The SANDF is a unique organization that requires a unique set of individuals whose commitment to the country is above the rest.

In this realm, there is an ongoing need to rejuvenate our force and bring in much needed expertise into the different musterings of the SANDF.

There are many aspects of the work of the SANDF that are not popularly known, including in the areas of engineering, avionics, medical

research, cutting edge technology development, nautical sciences and aerospace.

Of all the four arms of services of the SANDF, the Army, the largest of our services is the one that is widely or better known. Not much is understood about the work of the Navy, the SA Airforce, and the SA Military Health Services. In fact even in the case of the SA Army, the public may not fully appreciate the extent of the entire collective of our Landward Defence Systems. I will not go into detail on this now, except to say it is a challenge that we seek to address and we are starting here today.

We have an exhibition with career officials available to inform you of opportunities available in the various arms of the defence force.

We are keen to recruit people in scientific and technical fields to ensure that our army, navy, air force and medical services have people qualified to make the SANDF a national asset of the highest standard. Our officials at the exhibition will inform you of the programmes we have to recruit students at higher institutions of higher learning, including our University Reserves program.

The core mandate of the defence force is to defend the territorial integrity and people of South Africa. But it is by no means confined to that. The heroic work done by our men and women in uniform in many parts of our continent of Africa in peace mediation and enforcement operations, should be a source of pride for all South Africans.

We are proud of what we have achieved in ensuring that we build a continent that is stable in order for it to fully utilise its potential for the common benefit of all, including us here in the South. Much has been

achieved in this regard in the past twenty years by our young but capable Defence Force. Today Burundi is a stable country on an upward economic trajectory largely due to our diplomatic and military involvement. We are part of an international military brigade under the auspices of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo to bring peace and stability to a country whose progress has been retarded by prolonged military conflict and political instability.

We have committed our country to render assistance within our means to promote peace, stability and good governance in Africa. This being a prerequisite for the economic development of the continent.

A conventional view of the military was that of a fighting machine that did not require the nation's best minds. That view is incorrect. The defence industry now requires a high level of scientific, technological and strategic expertise. In the United States, the major military power in the world, 25 percent of scientists are employed in military related industries. The research done by these scientists is applicable to areas not related to the military. I make this point to highlight that the role of the military extends far beyond combat duties. Many of you may not be aware that the internet was first developed for use in the military and so are the many basic household appliances you use in your homes today. I am also aware that the most popular example you may know of is the Hummer vehicles, right?

Defence contributes enormously to economic development through, inter alia, as mentioned above, scientific and technological innovation. We are also working to enhance the stimulation of local economies through the mere presence of military bases in communities.

It is unfortunate that the humanitarian work done by the military is not adequately acknowledged. Our defence force is the institution most equipped and capable to respond to national disasters which often entail rendering assistance to destitute communities. This work has gone beyond the borders of South Africa with the sterling work done by the SANDF in response to devastating floods in Mozambique the most celebrated example.

Historically, and all over the world the military used to be regarded as a dumping ground for those considered of low intellect. Today the exact opposite is the case. Advances in military technology and strategy require the best minds to lead defence forces. The modern soldier must be educated, not just trained and must continue to educate him or herself to keep up with developments in the conduct of operations and the technologies involved.

In the case of officers, keeping up to date with political and geostrategic issues affecting their countries and regions they are located in, is of the utmost importance.

Most of you here have already chosen the professions you wish to pursue. Some may still have doubts. I invite you look at the military as a career option because it offers many rewarding opportunities that not only benefit you but contribute to the safety and economic development of our country.

I am looking forward to some of you becoming our colleagues in the near future.

Your country needs you. On a last note, let me once again thank the University Management, the SRC, you our students and the entire

University community for the warm welcome you have given me and my team, some of whom have been here for the past three weeks. It is a spirit that gives me confidence that when the partnership we want to develop with this university is already premised on the right foundation. We need each other, and when we work together, we dare not fail.

I thank you greatly.

**Enquiries:** Sonwabo Mbananga  
Ministry Spokesperson  
0820453963