



NEWS RELEASE

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AAD 2008 SHOW PREPARATIONS ARE ON TRACK

As preparations for the Africa Aerospace & Defence show (AAD 2008) go into top gear, its organisers briefed exhibitors and the media in Pretoria today (Wednesday, 16 July).

AAD 2008 opens on Wednesday 17 September at Air Force Base Ysterplaat in Cape Town for three trade days, with the public getting access over the weekend (20 and 21 September).

“Although traditionally held in Pretoria, the AAD exhibition and air show proved very popular and successful at the Cape Town venue,” explained Geoff van Hees, AAD show director. “We expect around 25 000 trade visitors and some 100 000 people on the two weekend public days.”

Co-owned by the South African Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association (AMD), defence acquisition organisation Armscor, the Department of Defence and the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (Caasa), this year’s show is hosted by AMD.

According to Van Hees, local and international exhibitors have now booked 90% of the available space in the eight halls and outdoor display area. An impressive maritime presence of South African and foreign naval vessels is sure to draw many visitors to Cape Town’s Waterfront area.

More than 200 exhibitors from around 30 countries are expected to showcase their latest products and equipment. Whilst many of the displays cater for security, peacekeeping and defence needs, AAD has seen a tremendous growth in commercial and general aviation participants.

“A dedicated area for light sports aircraft (LSA) types has been allocated with easy access to the apron for daily flight demonstrations. With home-built and kit aircraft, microlights and gliders – which are regarded as LSA types - being very popular in South Africa, we felt there was a definite place for these craft at AAD,” said Van Hees.

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Commercial and general aviation companies exhibiting at AAD 2008 include Airbus and Boeing, Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer, Dassault from France, Execujet, NAC and Placo. They have yet to announce the aircraft types visiting AAD 2008, but a good line-up of the likes of Bombardier, Cessna and Gulfstream can be expected. The major helicopter manufacturers like Sikorsky and Eurocopter are also likely to bring exciting new rotorcraft to the show.

Airbus indicated that its pavilion will contain the latest in their family of airliners, including the giant A380 and futuristic-looking A350-XWB (xtra wide body). Boeing is likely to focus on its new 787 Dreamliner.

As aviation plays an increasingly important role in supporting humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, the South African Air Force's (SAAF) Oryx and Agusta A109 light utility helicopters, as well as the Rooivalk, are sure to be in the daily flying display. The fast jets like the new Gripen and Hawk are sure to draw the crowds.

Some of the large defence companies like ATE, BAE Systems, Denel, missile house MBDA, shipbuilders Abeking & Rasmussen, Damen, and Navantia, as well as Sofema, Turbomeca and Saab intend to interest the local and foreign trade delegations and decision makers in their advanced systems and equipment.

Most of them have hospitality suites to entertain delegates from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the Americas, as well as South Africa's own military.

A series of conferences and workshops are scheduled to run concurrently with AAD 2008. These include an aerospace and armour symposium, hosted by the SAAF and SA Army respectively. Caasa is presenting a training seminar whilst the UK's defence manufacturer's association (DMA) hosts one on defence offsets and counter-trade.

The media will have a preview of AAD 2008 on the day before the show opens. Ample provision has been made for visiting journalists who will have access to a media centre near the flight line, fully equipped with internet connection and computer stations.

AAD's youth development programme (YDP) has traditionally been a popular attraction. With its focus on young learners, mainly from disadvantaged communities all over South Africa, the YDP wants to entice the youth to the exciting world of high technology, aviation and science. A key objective is to demonstrate and explore ways to expose South African learners to career opportunities in the aerospace, maritime and defence industry.

"We hope to present the best South Africa has to offer in terms of aviation and defence technologies, and to afford exhibitors with a professional opportunity to market their products here, into Africa and beyond," Van Hees said.

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