

Press Release

SA's DEFENCE INDUSTRY IS AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD

14 September 2016

Global interest in the South African defence industry is growing and there is broad agreement that it is among the best in the world and in the forefront of the development of innovative products, says the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula.

Opening the African Aerospace and Defence Exhibition 2016 in Pretoria today, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said the five day show is a platform for the industry to market their products and brands and gain access to the international purchasing and supply chains.

"It is pleasing to note the upsurge of international interest in our defence industries. This augurs well for our economy," she said.

During the opening of the show that draws more than 440 exhibitors from 34 countries the Minister announced that the National Defence Industry Council, launched in March, has just published a draft transformation charter intended to bring more small and medium enterprises into the defence sector.

Government expects from all departments, agencies and state-owned companies such as Denel to contribute to the deepening of industrialisation and the formation of partnerships that can support the growth of SMMEs.

"We want to go beyond this and create black industrialists within the sector and call upon existing companies to widen black ownership and participation in the defence industry," she said.

Referring to the deployment of the Rooivalk attack helicopter in support of South African forces that participate in peace-keeping missions, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said "we cannot rest on our laurels. We are already engaged in the process of upgrading this platform."

South Africa is prepared to engage with partner nations and "in line with the global trend of collaborative defence programmes" to consider the upgrading and co-production of the Rooivalk.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula welcomed the strong presence of defence exhibitors from

Africa Aerospace and Defence Organisers Office
Waterkloof Air Force Base | Solomon Mahlangu Dr
Centurion | City of Tshwane | South Africa

Mobile: +27 84 840 3214
Email: info@aadexpo.co.za
Website: www.aadexpo.co.za

other African countries at AAD, a show which “continues to cement its place among global aerospace and defence exhibitions.”

During the opening she cut the ribbon to the Africa pavilion at AAD 2016 which, for the first time, hosted companies from countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Namibia and the Sudan. She was joined at the function by the Premier of Gauteng, David Makhura, Secretary of Defence, Dr Sam Gulube and the Chief of the SANDF, General Solly Shoke, foreign defence ministers and senior representatives from 71 countries.

AAD 2016 is hosted at the Air Force Base Waterkloof and three days of trade exhibitions attended by defence decision-makers from across the world will end this weekend with open days for the public and Africa’s largest air show and flypast of aircraft.

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Enquiries: Ms Nakedi Phasha Marketing and Communications Manager (AAD) on +27 82 544 3339 or email address: marketingcomms@aadexpo.co.za

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