

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Minister of Defence says South Africa's defence will be mandate-driven

"The South African National Defence Force plays a constitutionally mandated role to secure our nation. And that is supported by the entire industry that would gather during the five days of Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD2018)," Minister of Defence Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said at a media briefing today.

She highlighted the fact that AAD2018's theme of "Unlocking Africa's aerospace and defence potential is very apt, in the sense that the defence industry, including aviation in the widest sense, plays a key role in economic development. The economic footprint of the industry stretches far beyond just the contribution of the country's GDP.

"By unlocking Africa's aerospace and defence potential, we contribute to stability and growth on our continent: South Africa is a peaceful country that lives in harmony with its neighbours," she stated. "In fact, we maintain a credible military force to secure our own sovereignty, but also to assist our friends and neighbours in Africa to enjoy peace and stability," the Minister added.

In referring to peace, the Minister reminded the audience that the 10th edition of AAD takes place against the backdrop of our nation commemorating the centenary of the births of former President Nelson Mandela and the struggle veteran Albertina Sisulu. "We remember them fondly: for their great contribution towards the democracy we are sharing in this country and bringing our people together in peace."

The growing threat to cyber-security was a particular issue the Minister highlighted. She said it was of paramount importance that efficient, powerful and cost-effective cyber defence and solutions be implemented to protect our critical information infrastructure. At AAD this year, a partnership with the University of Stellenbosch together with AAD and key industry players will present a platform to unravel key issues of cyber-security.

In response to a question from the media, the Minister reiterated that South Africa was taking the issue very seriously and referred to a bill currently before Parliament to address it. All entities in the Security Cluster are focused on finding solutions and as a developing nation, South Africa is seeking collaboration with developed nations.

This point was also echoed by Armscor CEO Kevin Wakeford who said that, although South Africa has sufficient internal capacity coordinated through a Cyber Command Centre, the country does not rule out foreign collaboration.

On the value of AAD hosted every two years, the Minister highlighted the political aspect of showing the wider world what South Africa has to offer, including the opportunity to establish joint ventures with our industry and sharing intellectual property. There was also the value for money, which goes beyond the monetary value. Finally, since AAD is the biggest defence and aerospace show on the continent and the only one in its particular format, it becomes an African initiative that affords the opportunity for networking and exposure on a broad front.

The chairperson of AMD, South Africa's industry representative association, Florence Musengi, highlighted the value of AAD for small, medium and micro enterprises.

Some of the statistics that were shared with the media, were the expected 90 foreign delegations invited from 47 different countries. The exhibition plays host to more than 300 exhibitors from 37 countries. According to Leon Dillmann, chief executive of CAASA, the host partner this year, 129 aircraft are on display, including 76 civilian aircraft and 34 from the SANDF. Nine foreign military aircraft are in attendance at AAD2018. He promised a spectacular display, particularly for the open days, which are preceded by a public holiday on Monday, 24 September. This generally has a positive impact on the air show.

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