

MEDIA RELEASE

AAD2018 media round-table highlights aerospace and defence successes and shortcomings

The first ever Africa Aerospace and Defence media round-table event hosted at AFB Waterkloof to set the tone for the upcoming Expo scheduled to take place on 19-23 September under the theme "Unlocking Africa's Aerospace and Defence Potential" provided significant insight into the challenges and successes of South Africa's aerospace and defence industry.

"Our belief is that the media has always played a crucial role in the success of Africa Aerospace & Defence, especially now with AAD2018, which takes place in an economic environment best described as flat," said Leon Dillman, CEO of the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA). "For that reason, we invited a few journalists and editors to get a first-hand glimpse into what's on offer and the state of play at present."

To further enhance this year's theme and in ensuring that the success of the event delivers its mandate, CAASA is the lead partner hosting this 10th edition of AAD – 20 years since the first aerospace and defence exhibition in this format was staged in South Africa.

According to Dillman, most of the 2018 numbers show an improvement on those of 2016, with over 30 000m² of exhibition space and 16 national pavilions booked. Exhibitors represent 37 countries and 175 official delegations have been invited from 47 different countries, of which 90 are expected. These include invitations to 23 ministers, 16 deputy ministers and 22 chiefs of defence, as well as significant numbers of chiefs of air force, navy and army. The organisers expect 35 000 trade visitors and 80 000 general public visitors on the open days. Some 450 accredited local and international journalists are expected.

Dillman outlined the key events of AAD2018, notably another media briefing on Monday 17 September, followed by a media orientation tour on 18 September. On that same day an air mobility demonstration is held, as well as an AMD Defence and Maritime Conference.

As usual the official opening ceremony takes place on the first trade day, 19 September. A cyber-security seminar is arranged in the Hangar 5 Theatre with Speakers including Dr Khanyile, Non-executive Director at Armscor, Professor Elmarie Bierman, cyber security institute and Eric Bownes, Head of Global strategy solution at Fujitsu.

In conclusion, Dillman announced strategic partnerships that have already been concluded with the likes of the City of Tshwane, South African Airways (SAA) and Wayam Travel (as travel partners).

To further unpack the informed role of 2018's theme, an illustrated dialogue was discussed leading to the following findings:

South African Defence Industry (SADI)

In a presentation by the National Defence Industry Council (NDIC), Zane Cleophas gave a perspective on the SADI. As recommended in Chapter 15 of the Defence Review, NDIC was established as a policy-making and coordinating tool for the defence industry. NDIC comprises the heads of a host of departments, stakeholders and state-owned companies.

NDIC's defence industry strategy has already been approved in April this year, followed by the defence industry fund (DIF) in July, for which investors are now being engaged.

The aim of NDIC is to revitalise the South African defence industry to the benefit of the SANDF and the economy. Through integrated all-government support, it hopes to increase capital funding for the SANDF and ensure a focused capital acquisition strategy.

NDIC highlighted the fact that defence has a significant economic benefit, notably through import replacement, export revenues, employment and skills expansion, and a driver of technology and innovation.

This has been seen in the impact of defence funding cuts since 1990: defence R&D has dropped from R6.1 billion to a mere R850 million in 2017, whilst employment came down to 15 000 as opposed to 130 000 in 1989/90. Exports have increased but are now dipping. Lacking orders from the anchor client (SANDF), the local industry's export potential will decrease.

NDIC is therefore intended to mitigate these risks and rebuild the SADI's invaluable domestic capability.

Small African Regional Aircraft

As an example of the local aerospace industry's capabilities, Denel Aeronautics outlined its development of the Small African Regional Aircraft (SARA).

With more than 50 years' experience in development aircraft, Denel embarked on the concept of SARA in 2012. It has been adopted as a potential National Flagship Programme by the Joint Aerospace Steering Committee (JASC) in line with national macro policies.

At least six South African universities are involved as a human capital development project. With Innovation being one of Denel's group values, this project is aimed at sustaining innovation through road mapping, R&D laboratories, design thinking and acquisitions. Denel views the way forward as to secure formal endorsement as a National Flagship Programme, securing partners and funding, and to develop continental and regional collaboration opportunities.

According to Lesetja Mogoba, SARA represents a national benefit through the air transport industry. Not only will it benefit the aviation sector, but also indirectly manufacturing, business services, tourism and trade, as well as the investment and labour markets.

UNLOCKING AFRICA'S AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE POTENTIAL



Other speakers included Ralph Mills from Paramount, who spoke on the Flexible Light Armed Systems of Helicopters (FLASH) as well as a closing sentiment from Ms Lulu Mzili, Group Executive of Business Enablement at Armscor who spoke about her passion for the Youth Development Programme (YDP).

The media round table ended in true Aerospace style, with media and AAD partners being taken on an experiential flight over Hartbeespoort in a **CASA** aircraft.

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