

Media Statement
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NEWCOMERS ADD TO GLOBAL INTEREST IN AFRICA'S PREMIER DEFENCE SHOW

A display of the Russian-made Sukhoi Superjet and the participation of the Australian defence industry will be among the new attractions at this year's AAD 2016 hosted at the Waterkloof Air Force Base in September.

Kevin Wakeford, the CEO of Armscor, says the Africa Aerospace & Defence exhibition will be the largest ever event of its kind on the continent surpassing the 2014 show which attracted more than 100 000 visitors over the five-day period.

During the first three days the focus will be on representatives from the defence and technology sectors who will visit the 13 pavilions with exhibitors from more than 30 countries while the public will be able to attend the air show on the weekend of 17 and 18 September.

Aircraft flown by the South African Air Force such as the JAS-39 Gripen fighter jet and the Rooivalk combat support helicopter usually attract wide public interest and also draw attention to the role played by the local defence industry in the growth of technology and advanced manufacturing.

The Sukhoi Superjet 100 will make its local debut at the Tshwane Show. It is a product of the Russian civil aerospace company – UAC – and has been a regular on regional routes in Central and Eastern Europe since 2011. It carries up to 150 passengers and may elicit interest from African airlines looking for aircraft to operate in regional markets.

Wakeford says the growing interest within the global defence and aerospace industry to have a presence at AAD – despite the current economic downturn

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– demonstrate an understanding that the African aviation market is on the brink of a major boon.

The number of aircraft passengers has grown at a rate of 5.8% a year since 2010 and this trend will accelerate with increased urbanisation and the expansion of the African middle class.

“AAD is the best place to be for major aerospace and defence companies who want to show their products and systems to decision-makers in Africa,” says Wakeford. This year’s show will exceed the 2014 event that attracted delegations from 64 countries and trade visitors from 84 destinations.

The Tshwane event will also see the first ever participation by the Australian and Greek defence sectors joining other leading industrial countries such as France, India, Turkey and the United States of America who have been regular exhibitors at the eight previous AAD shows.

The show will also focus attention on the local defence and aerospace industries that form part of the supply chains of multinational manufacturers or manufacture niche products for the global markets. A Youth Development Programme will be run concurrently to create a greater awareness about careers in the defence and technology sectors among young learners.

AAD is coordinated in Partnership by SA Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industry Association – AMD – which represents more than 70 local industry players. The Department of Defence and Military Veterans, Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa – representing more than 200 general aviation companies--- and the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armscor) .

ENDS

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