

## MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### AFRICA AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE EXPO 2024 WAS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD which took place from 18 to 22 September at the Air Force Base in Waterkloof, in the City of Tshwane was a resounding success.

The organisers are relieved that there were no major or serious incidents during the duration of the event, with security as usual on high alert. Despite the inclement weather, which resulted into the cancellation of certain activities on Saturday following the snow that blanketed some parts of KwaZulu-Natal, activities resumed on Sunday with show-goers flocking the Airshow.

With over 35 000 of tickets sold, more than 32 000 visitors went through the turnstiles over the weekend, according to AAD Director Nakedi Phasha.

“The five-day event started with the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Angie Motshekga, officially opening AAD 2024 and later with President Cyril Ramaphosa visiting the event for a walkabout. This was a clear commitment by our government to the show and we are deeply humbled by the gesture. We are thrilled about the excitement created before the show and a number of countries participating,” she said.

“For us as the organisers, this has been a long and laborious journey from planning to execution. We ensured that we do everything at our disposal to make the 2024 edition of AAD bigger and better. Unfortunately, we experienced severe weather condition, which nearly brought a damper to the weekend’s activities. However, the show ended with a bang with multitudes of revellers visiting the event for the pinnacle airshow,” Phasha said.

With countries such as China, Russia, United Arab Emirates and Germany participating in this year’s Trade Exhibition, under the theme “*Exploring New Paths, Sharing Solutions, Showcasing Innovation and Capabilities.*” was a clear indication of the importance of this Africa’s largest exhibition and airshow.

In line with South African government’s commitment to support and propel emerging businesses, the Gauteng Tourism Authority in partnership with AAD offered complimentary exhibitions stands to 10 Small and Medium Enterprises in the defence and aerospace sector to showcase their innovation. Some of the companies also attracted media coverage from local and international media.

ADD's Youth Development Programme (YDP) proved to be a draw card with throngs of schoolchildren visiting Hanger 2 to learn about various careers in the defence and military sector, with various exhibitors from Sci-Bono, Armscor, Air Traffic Navigation Services (ATNS), Milkor, Rheinmetall, Numolux, Aeronautics Solutions and South African National Space Agency (SANSA).

"The Youth and Development Programme is a one of the unique and critical pillars of AAD which seeks to empower youths from disadvantaged and marginalised communities in the areas of Mathematics, Science and Technology, said Mr Kholisile Khumalo, the Chairperson of YDP.

"The programme offers South African youth various opportunities, ranging from career guidance, including job creation and being in the inside of an aircraft for the first time in their lives. The pinnacle of this year's event was Newzroom Afrika's Aldrian Sampier and his team reporting live from the show. It made the show memorable," Khumalo said, adding that it gave the show an upper hand as one of the six air shows in the world, and the only one in the continent.

"The defence sector plays a critical role as a catalyst in reducing youth unemployment in the country. It is important, therefore, that the show has support from all countries in the world and the continent, including all provinces, government departments, cities and municipalities in the country," Khumalo concluded.

The five-day event attracted throngs of local and international media reporting on various events, including the three-day conferences focusing on the South African Defence Industry Showcase, Future Warfare and Maritime Security.

With plans for the next trade exhibition and airshow scheduled to take place in from 16-20 September 2026, the organisers are mulling to host another memorable event in two years' time.

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### **About AAD**

*The Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) is an important event in the calendar of the defence industry. Hosted biannually, AAD is the only and largest aerospace and defence Exhibition and Air Show on the African continent. The event holds a flagship status in South Africa's, and indeed the Continent's, defence industry's calendar. The trade show has continued to grow with each edition and will once again bring together some of the world's major industry players to showcase the latest technological innovations in aviation, aerospace and defence industries as well as stage a platform to engage in dialogue and discourse on international defence, aerospace and other related best practices.*