

Lt Gen Jorge Goncalves, representing the Chief of the Angolan Army, Lt Gen Omar Mahmood Hayat, representing the Commander of the Pakistan Land Forces, Deputy Chief of the SA Army, Maj Gen L.R. Smith, the Army Command Council, Brig Gen David Muhoozi, Commander of the Ugandan Land Forces, Generals, Officers, Sergeant Major of the SA Army, SCWO C.A. Laubscher, Honourable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

We have gathered here tonight on the sidelines of what has so far proved an immensely successful Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) exhibition 2016 where we are showcasing our joint capabilities in as far as military hardware and aerospace technology is concerned. The purpose of this gathering is to thank all of you – friends of the SA Army from far and near – for gracing us with your presence in Waterkloof where Africa's premier aerospace and defence exhibition is currently underway.

This year's AAD pools together state-of-the-art technologies from across the globe and it was reassuring to see a number of African states exhibiting their impressive catalogues on defence and aerospace equipment that are designed to mitigate the battle space challenges that our militaries face.

I am delighted that amidst the hustle and bustle at the show in Waterkloof, we managed to steal a few quiet moments to plot the way forward as armies and see how best to leverage the showcased technological capabilities towards the fulfillment of the mandates our principals expect from us.

South Africa as host, led the pack with our political head, the Department of Defence and Military Veterans (DoDMV), the Armaments Corporation of South Africa, SA Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association (AMD) and the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA) unlocking the African continent's aerospace and defence potential.

As the SA Army, the largest force component in the South African National Defence Force, we appreciate your support during this show. The support you have shown us by exhibiting, showcasing and playing a role in adding your ingenuity towards further development of user-friendly aerospace and defence equipment.

Generals, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you would all agree with me when I say we conversed at length about pertinent issues and other matters that are crucial to our mutually beneficial relationships while at the AAD venue, from the opening day until now, and all that is left is for us to operationalise the commitments we made.

I am glad that we had helpful briefings at Waterkloof and through the foresight and resourcefulness of many of you; we were able to also delve into issues that we were not initially intending to. We shared empowering perspectives and I believe we shall take home to our principals a very positive message that says; with all our 54 countries in Africa and others across the world, the aerospace and defence environment is open for

business and pregnant with possibilities that can only propel our militaries and industries forward.

There are so many opportunities for our militaries and military industrial complexes to mutually benefit and develop. We have seen technologies that have the immense potential to become force multipliers wherever our forces are deployed. I am convinced that by the conversations we had, all of us recognize just how the application of state-of-the-art technology could make us both realise our operational objectives faster than we have ever managed in decades.

As we mingle and converse during AAD, I am filled with a sense of pride and hope for a better world where we create opportunities to trade in military hardware and equipment that are conceptualized, designed and put together specifically for real-time challenges in our operational theatres. We enter into this arrangement also cognizant that whatever we decide, we are not going to act in isolation from other global players who have traditionally been the manufacturers of reliable hardware employed in landward operations, maritime and air theatres. We shall naturally tap into the existing pool of knowledge that abounds on aerospace and defence matters and try to expand further and invent user-friendly hardware that adds value to humanity.

I hope these few words do justice to the appreciation the SA Army feels for the fact that you indulged us and became our guests at a marketplace of world-class Aerospace and Defence turnkey solutions under one roof which is the AAD.

Imagine the wide array of possibilities that 54 African countries stands to realise if we join hands with established global players, share expertise and create state-of-the-art military solutions that benefits us and takes us closer to our objectives. With the right attitude and cognitive investments into this project and our general cooperation on various army to army levels, our continent and indeed the world of defence and aerospace is destined for greater things.

Kindly continue enjoying what is left of the evening with us.

I thank you.