



MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS

Republic of South Africa

REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS MS NN MAPISA-NQAKULA OF SOUTH AFRICA AT THE PEACEKEEPING MINISTERIAL – UNIFORMED CAPABILITIES, PERFORMANCE AND PROTECTION, HELD AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS ON THE 29 MARCH 2019, NEW YORK.

The United Nations Secretary-General Mr Guterres, Your Excellency's Ministers of Defence, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Once again South Africa supports the initiative by the Secretary General to ensure that Peacekeeping Operations are more effective and responsive to the ever changing and evolving peacekeeping environment. The nature of the conflict we face demands dynamic responses in the manner in which we conduct peacekeeping operations.

South Africa is committed to the comprehensive measures in all aspects of mediation, peacekeeping, the protection of civilian, post conflict recovery and peace building, all underpinned by **political solutions to any conflict situation**.

For us to meet the high standards we have set ourselves of **high performance and effectiveness, uniformed training and capacity building** should take precedence to ensure that our peacekeeping efforts are more effective. Capacity building should be seen as a **key element of the preparation of peacekeepers**. We are committed to ensure well trained peacekeepers who are aware of the conduct and disciplined required of them in any situation, whilst providing them with relevant training and capacity building skills that will ensure their protection.

There is a greater need for **partnerships** to be developed amongst ourselves in order to enhance capacity building and training to improve **the output of peacekeepers**. Thus, a common approach to training and capacity building should support efficiencies and effectiveness of our

peacekeepers. In this regard we have a common understanding and perspective as SADC on the importance of triangular partnerships between the UN regional capabilities to address issues of training and capacity building.

On the women, peace and security agenda, South Africa has long recognized the important role women can play in all facets of the military. We have a proud record of more senior female commanders in peacekeeping missions to give expression to the practical efforts to engender security. One of our highlights **MONUSCO the DRC** is that the current contingent deployed in **Northern Kivu Region as part of the FIB, is led by a woman Lieutenant Colonel Sekgobela**. Until 2007, **the Squadron Commander of the Engineers in the DRC was a woman with a rank of Lieutenant Colonel**, who was referred to as the **“Angel of the SANDF uniform” in Munigi Base** where she was based. In 2017 one of our female officers received the **United Nations Military Gender Advocate Award in Vancouver** for promoting the principles within the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

MONUSCO RSABATT boast the largest number of women deployed in the DRC. Furthermore, the **Capital Liaison Officer based in Uganda is senior women with a rank of a Colonel**. Women are found in many environments including those previously dominated by males and continue to serve as role models in mission areas.

Since 1994 guided by **the Constitution of the Republic, the Defence Act and the recently approved new defence policy, the South African Defence Review 2015**, there has been a deliberate effort to make sure that women are encouraged to follow career paths in all mustering's and occupational spheres, including in the combat environment of our defence force.

Having started with one-woman Major General then, we now stand at six from 1996 to 2018. This is against the overall figure of Major Generals at forty (40). At the level of Brigadier General, one hundred and seventy-two (172) of them, forty-six (46) are women. The numbers are slightly better at the level of junior officers. The unique environment of the military needs to be considered in reaching the equity target of 30% of females especially in the combat and technical environment.

We have done well, but need to do much more to ensure that our armed forces are fully representative of the men and women of our country and reflect the demographics.

As we mark 25 years of the existence South African National Defence Force and simultaneously 25 years of our freedom and democracy during 2019, I would wish to see the RSA Defence commit to **more women commanders and staff officers across the services and divisions of the SANDF. RSA stands ready and prepared to share her own successes and challenges which she has experienced thus far on women participation in peace and security for the common good of enhancing the engendering of UN Peacekeeping efforts.**

Thank you.