

**ADDRESS BY DR S. GULUBE**

**SECRETARY FOR DEFENCE**

**AT THE 2014 SANDF RESERVE FORCE SYMPOSIUM**

**UNISA-GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP, MIDRAND**

**11 SEPTEMBER 2014**

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Members of the Plenary Defence Staff Council

Generals and Flag Officers of our Defence Force

Officers/Non-Commissioned Officers/Warrant Officers/Other Ranks

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I acknowledge all the dignitaries that are here today, especially the foreign delegates representing their respective Defence Forces.

Allow me to thank Chief Defence Reserves, Major General Andersen for inviting me to spend some time with you to deliberate on issues relating to the SANDF Reserves. I am aware that this is the fourth Symposium that is taking place this year and I am indeed glad to attend this event.

I regard the Reserves as a strategic asset to the Department of Defence and the South African National Defence Force. The Defence

Act, Act 42 of 2002 provides that the SANDF shall consist of a Regular component and a Reserve Force component. The Reserves play a significant role within the DOD and they are contributing positively to the successful accomplishment of the mission and mandate of the Department of Defence and the SANDF. It is therefore important to look after the interests of the Reserves; looking after their careers; providing them with appropriate skills and decent benefits.

I am glad to see that we have a representative from the Portfolio Committee on Defence and the Chairperson of the SANDF Service Commission in our midst as well as the Chiefs of the Services so that we can all take note and be responsible for addressing the needs of this important component of the SANDF. It is time we think of possible ways in which we relate to and give back to the Reserves in effectively implementing the One-Force concept.

The Reserve Force is an absolute requirement and must therefore be revitalised to be able to perform its designated roles. The roles of the Reserves are critical and they have been confirmed as such in the Defence Review of 2014 which is currently before Parliament. Some of the roles include the responsibility of augmenting the Regulars in on-going operations; providing the expansion capability of the Defence Force for major combat operations and crisis response as well as providing certain specialist and scarce skills for the DOD. The Reserves also play a role in enhancing the relationship between the Defence Force and the public and private sectors and that is why we are here as a collective ensure that such relationships are maintained.

We should take note that the roles of the Reserves require of them to be of the right profile of a soldier in order for them to perform their duties successfully. It is thus, critical to ensure that the Reserves are rejuvenated, revitalised and transformed on a continuous basis. It is for this reason that the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans has listed the Revitalisation and Transformation of the

Reserves as Strategic Priority (Priority 6) within the DOD. A priority that confirms the importance of the Reserves as a strategic asset to the SANDF and which reads:

**“The Reserves must be transformed and revitalised so that they can fulfill their primary role of providing the majority of the conventional landward capability of the SANDF, whilst at same time supplementing the peace support missions conducted by the Regulars.”**

Generals/Flag Officers, ladies and gentlemen, we are faced with a situation where the unemployment rate in our country is at a very high level and this is largely found in the youth, even those that do possess a qualification or appropriate skill. The Reserve Force Service System is a voluntary system; members volunteer to render military service and are prepared to either serve with or without remuneration. The Reserve Force Service System effectively provides the CSANDF with the most cost-effective HR component of the SANDF with an expansion capability. For this system to be effectively and efficiently managed within the DOD and the SANDF, it is important to address the issue that we gathered here for today; “Employer Support”.

The SANDF is striving to have an “Employed Reserve Force” and various efforts are being aimed at pro-actively promoting the civilian job placement of Reserve Force (Res F) members. Unfortunately this effort is jeopardized when civilian employers are not in favour of releasing these members for Res F service when they are called-up for courses, deployments or other forms of military service. Previous and current experiences have shown that the leader element in particular of the part-time force is employed and their availability for service is subject to the goodwill of the employer.

I am glad that we have invited our foreign partners to obtain an international perspective so that we can learn from them on how best to deal with the issue of Employer Support and make these ideas applicable to the South African situation. I am equally happy to see that we have our local partners like Transnet, the SA Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA), the members of the Defence Provincial Liaison Councils together with the Military leadership and the Reserve Force Council so that we can address “Employer Support” as a collective. This has become a priority in the light of the increased level and duration of Reserve call-ups.

It is also important for me to reflect on the progress made by the Reserves to date. There are currently just over 21 500 active Reserves out of which approximately 15 000 are called-up annually for an average period of 180 days. The Reserves are making significant contributions within all four Services of the Department of Defence and increased utilisation has been observed over the years. The progress to date includes:

- a. Utilisation. The Reserves are playing an ever increasing role in Operation Corona (borderline safeguarding) and in Peace Support Operations. Reserves have been successfully deployed in Burundi, DRC and Sudan.
- b. Representivity. The White component has declined from 100% in 1994 to less than 15% of the total strength and females comprise 23%. The leader group positions are increasingly being filled by African members.
- c. University Reserve Training Programme (URTP). The University Reserve Training Programme has been implemented as a critical enabler that generates and enhances the quality of future junior leaders and provides scarce specialist skills to the SANDF

Reserves and the Regular component. To date, some 325 students have completed Basic Military Training of which 150 have done Officer Formative Training.

- d. Defence Provincial Liaison Councils (DPLCs). The establishment and operationalization of the Defence Provincial Liaison Councils in the different provinces has been implemented in order to engender employer support.
- e. Marketing. The marketing of the Reserves through briefings, the Reserve website, the Reserve Force Volunteer Magazine, tattoos etc, has been effective.
- f. International Successes. The SANDF Reserve Force Team won the “Experienced” division of the International Military Skills Competition held in Germany in 2014.

Without doubt it can be said that in South Africa there is sufficient interest and will amongst the average citizens to serve in the SANDF and fulfil their role in defending the country but the lack of “Employer Support” for this, could prevent them from enrolling for voluntary military service in the Reserves.

I wish you a productive Symposium and look forward to hearing the results of your deliberations.

I thank you.