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Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



ATTENDANCE OF THE 13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYER SUPPORT FOR THE RESERVES IN NETHERLANDS FROM 06-08 OCTOBER 2015

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Photographs by Defence Reserves Division

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) participated in the 13th International Conference on Employer Support for the Reserves (ICESR) in Rotterdam, Netherlands from 06-08 October 2015. A conference of this nature is held biennially and it was for the first time that South Africa took part in the ICESR.

The conference convened over three days and the theme was: “Reservist and Employee - the best of both worlds”. The participants were from Defence Forces of seventeen countries around the world. The countries involved were, Netherlands, South Africa, Singapore, Lithuania, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, New Zealand, Ireland, Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, United Kingdom, Hungary, France, Austria and Norway.

The nature of the conference involved syndicate work and plenary discussions from the syndicates. The practical participation of both employers and the military members made it more interesting. Both parties could sit together and jointly discuss the pros and cons of employing Reserve Force members in the private sector and together propose solutions to the issues that are experienced for the employer and the military as well as the individual. This was a good exercise and of benefit to South Africa since there are efforts to get the programme for employer support working for the SANDF. It was interesting to get the views of the different countries and to learn from best practices as shared.

The main topics of discussion with industry/corporations included: Sharing Employees; Obstacles; Obligation; Employee Development as well as Acceptance and Support. The main conclusion was that the business indicated that it is indeed beneficial for companies to employ Reserve Force members. The Reserve Force member on the other hand experiences a sense of commitment of being ‘three-times a citizen’; the role of being a Reservist; an employee and of being a family person. This experience indeed brings out the best of both worlds, which leads to good citizenship.

The South African delegation comprised four members; two from the office of Chief Defence Reserves (Brig Gen Molefe and Col Niyabo) and the other two members from the office of Chief Human Resources (Col Madubula and Lt Col Mhlaba). The delegation was well received and well hosted for the duration of the conference. It was an experience of both hard work and fun – “*the best of both worlds*”, which ended off with a nice boat cruise and a tour of the city of Rotterdam.



(L to R) The four SANDF delegates that attended the ICESR in Netherlands: Col P.A. Madubula, Lt Col T.P. Mhlaba, Col Z. Niyabo and Brig Gen S.D. Molefe.



Group photo of the syndicate that visited Shell Group in Rotterdam.



Col Niyabo during a tour of Broekman Logistics in the harbour of Rotterdam.