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Seasonal Newsletter

South African Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association
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SAWIB Breakfast Engagement Sets the Stage for a Transformative Women's Month in Defence

9 May 2025 | SAAMDEC Grand Defence, Centurion

In a morning charged with vision, purpose and solidarity, the South African Women in Business (SAWIB) Breakfast held a powerful place in the calendar of South Africa's aerospace, maritime and defence industry leaders. This engagement was not merely a networking breakfast, it was a strategic gathering of minds and hearts, with a clear focus on taking a seat at the table to ensure that women inclusion in the defence sector is now.

Originally planned for 500 guests, the event garnered overwhelming interest, with nearly 750 RSVPs, and an impressive 600 attendees showing up. This unprecedented turnout served as a powerful testament to the strength of the SAWIB movement and a powerful indicator of sector-wide readiness to embrace transformation and advance gender equity.

Ms Michelle Nsomolo, who delivered the welcome address, set the tone for the morning by underscoring the importance of creating a space where female leaders felt empowered to engage. Her call was clear: "It's up to us to change the face of the industry." Attendees were reminded that this moment was not just about celebration, but about the importance of ensuring that the power of collaboration is put into practice.

Nsomolo reaffirmed SAWIB's role as a gender advocacy arm of the broader industry association, SAAMDEC, and underscored how it emphasised the collective responsibility to empower women across the aerospace, maritime and defence industries. She also shared current dynamics in Africa's SADC region, where women occupy only 15% within AMD, she urged for urgent intervention and a united force to lift as we rise.

The breakfast also marked a vital milestone on the road to the inaugural SAWIB Awards, a forward-looking initiative designed to position as a driving force for gender transformation in the South Africa's Women's Month. Nsomolo confirmed that early signs of interest and nominations for the awards suggest strong momentum for change.

The spirit of transformation was echoed by General Mosa who strongly stated, "Let's leave the old ways of guns." Her message was clear—this journey is intergenerational, it challenging the mindsets of the past while laying the foundation for a future where women have equal opportunity to lead, innovate and shape the industry for women."

Dr Khulile Mthabela delivered one of the most poignant moments of the morning, sharing how her own journey from a young transformation strength that women bring to the defence sector. With a community rooted in service, she brought lived experience, she traced her journey to industry leadership—reminding all present that empowerment is not given, it is claimed.

Sharing the remarkable evolution of Sasebok Defence & Aerospace from a small, local business into a global leader of years ago, Kim Kohler underscored the importance of leadership that actively lifts others and shareholder. In 2015, she advanced to majority ownership at EFS, and by 2024, she had successfully transitioned ownership, 90% shareholder of the company.

Her story was not just a personal milestone—it was a testament to what is possible when women are determined, strategic and unapologetically ambitious. With grace and conviction, she reminded the room that "we are not just here to take a seat, we are here to sit around the table and shape it to reflect our shared vision," symbolising both the challenges and the unwavering strength of women who have persevered to lead, innovate and drive lasting change.

The panel discussion brought together a powerhouse of voices and perspectives:

- **Ms Khulile Mthethwa**
- **Ms Michelle Nsomolo**
- **Ms Kim Kohler**
- **Ms Nombeko Sebabatso**
- **Ms Nomfundo Tshabalala**

Each speaker delivered her own form for personal journey, insights and strategies to break systemic barriers. Their shared message was powerful: "Together, we really can create an inclusive and diverse defence sector."

AMD Unveils New Vision and Mission at Strategic Renewal Event

Cobb Conference Centre, Hendrik Verwoerd Drive - 12 May 2025

The launch of the Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association (AMD) Strategic Renewal Event, held at the Cobb Conference Centre, marked a pivotal moment in a year filled with purpose, relevance, and forward-thinking strategy. Held at the iconic Cobb Conference Centre, the event was a bold declaration together stakeholders, partners and industry leaders gathered to seize for an afternoon of reflection, reconnection, and renewed focus. Under the theme "Reflect, Reconnect, Renew", the event was the programme marked a strategic pause, a moment to ground and inclusivity in a rapidly evolving global defence landscape.

Mr Sandile Ndlovu, Executive Director of AMD, delivered the keynote address, sharing the association's transformation journey and vision for the future. He highlighted the rebranding, marking AMD's evolution from a traditional association to a modern, forward-looking organisation, and the strategic shift from a membership-only model to a broader, more inclusive ecosystem that now includes associate members, partners, and stakeholders from the wider industry. Ndlovu stressed the importance of ensuring that the voices of the industry are heard, and that the association remains agile and responsive to the needs of its members and the broader defence community.

Mr Ndlovu also highlighted the critical role of strategic partnerships in driving the association's continued growth and impact. He emphasised the importance of collaboration across the aerospace, maritime and defence sectors, and how AMD is actively building bridges between stakeholders to foster innovation and sustainable growth. The event was also used to unveil the new AMD logo, a symbol of the association's renewed identity and forward-looking ambitions.

The event was made even more impactful by the participation of 12 AMD Ambassadors, who shared their personal journeys and how AMD has supported them in their future of South Africa's defence industry. This segment offered a powerful reminder of the human impact of the association's work and the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and purpose within the defence sector. As the event transitioned into a networking session, the energy was palpable with laughter, conversation, and a shared sense of inspiration. The day concluded with a strong sense of unity and purpose, with many attendees expressing their future of defence. It also plays a pivotal role in inspiring the minds of the future, ensuring that the sector remains vibrant, purpose-driven, and collaborative—a fitting beginning for the road ahead.

Colin Singaram, AMD Marketing Chairperson

Bridging Continents, Building Futures:

Saudi Delegation Honoured at Defence Dinner Hosted by Minister Angie Motshekga

25 May 2025

In a profound gesture of solidarity and diplomacy, the **Honorable Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Angie Motshekga** hosted a formal dinner in honour of the visiting delegation from the Saudi Arabian Defence Industry (SADI). The event, held after all day meetings, the evening not only underscored growing ties between the two nations but charted a critical mile-stone in South Africa's defence industry transformation.

The evening unfolded with dignified elegance from 18:00 to 20:00 at a venue that perfectly reflected the occasion's blend of tradition, heritage and future-focused ambition. **Dr Khulile Mthethwa** opened the programme with an overview of the evening's significance, underscoring the importance of this first-of-its-kind engagement. Dr Pinyosha Komanga, a guest-in-waiting, served the evening's catalyst.

Minister Motshekga then delivered a keynote address that was both commanding and deeply personal. She spoke with conviction about the strategic imperative of building a sovereign defence industry in an interconnected world—one that reaffirms the bonds of friendship and shared purpose that have long characterised the relationship between the Saudi Arabian Defence Industry and the Republic of South Africa."

Minister Motshekga hailed the South African defence industry as "robust and capable," with advanced design, engineering expertise and transformation-driven systems. She invited Saudi Arabia to partner in innovation, co-development, and skills exchange, highlighting the immense potential of a revitalised defence Memorandum of Understanding.

In a powerful affirmation of global South-South cooperation, the Minister praised Saudi Arabia's rise from 42nd to 6th in the global defence industry, and its ambitious goal to become the world's third-largest defence industrial hub by 2030. She emphasised the shared commitment to leveraging this momentum to build partnerships that are rooted in equity, shared knowledge and long-term sustainability.

She closed her address with a compelling call for responsible innovation, stating that "the future of defence must be ethical and strong. Let us value our greatest asset—our children—and in their stead, ensure that the next generation of peacebuilders, innovators and leaders—their dreams and their possibilities—are not lost to conflict."

Following her address, Brigadier General Abdullah Saeed El-Ghamdi, Chairman of the Saudi Arabian Defence Industry, presented a token of appreciation to South Africa's delegation in recognition of their strengthen cooperation. The symbolic exchange of gifts followed, underscoring the mutual respect and goodwill that defined the entire evening. The event concluded with a live epidemic of dignitaries from both governments, including Saudi Arabian Defence Industry Chairman Brigadier General Abdullah Saeed El-Ghamdi, underscoring the importance of human capital, and the enduring spirit of innovation in a dynamic world.

What follows is a glimpse into the mind of a leader who refuses to conform, who measures success not just in milestones, but in the impact it leaves behind. For the future is as exclusive as it is uncompromising.

For the full interview go to amd.org.za

Interview with Dr Mthobisi Zondi

By Tshenolo Motsepe

Dr Mthobisi Zondi is the visionary leader of Sandock Austral Defence, a company that has transformed into a global leader in the defence sector. Under his leadership, Sandock Austral Defence has grown into a multi-million Rand company with over 20 years of experience in the industry. This journey has not been easy, but he has stuck to his vision and has now reaped the rewards.

As the Executive Chair of Sandock Austral Group Holdings (Defence and Security) Chair of Sandock Austral Defence, Chairman of Sandock Austral Technology and Manufacturing Ltd, Chair of PlatMSA SADC Industrial Hub, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the International and Future Defence Centre, Institute of the Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industries Association.

His distinguished career includes roles as Chairman of the Gauteng Liquor Board, Chairman of the Gauteng Gambling Board, Chair Integration and Jobs as well as Chairman of the Board of Governors at Executive Management Institute, overseeing offshore support services for the South African National Defence Force across various sectors, including Chief Operations Manager at Richards Bay Terminals and

A Full Circle Moment: AMD Returns to Its Own Offices After Five Years

In June 2025, a quiet yet deeply symbolic milestone was achieved by the Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industries Association of South Africa (AMD). After five years of strategic, mission-driven operations, AMD proudly returned to its own offices.

The return is dedicated office space—on the first floor of Castle Walk Shopping Centre, at Oak Avenue, where the Association once proudly hosted prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic—marks a full circle moment for AMD. It is more than a logistical decision; it is a powerful statement of resilience, strategic foresight, and the enduring strength of its members. Likewise industry dialogues and advocate for the interest of its members, Likewise industry dialogues and advocate for the interest of its members, Likewise industry dialogues and advocate for the interest of its members.

The return to Castle Walk is therefore not simply a relocation; it is a full circle moment. It reaffirms AMD's core mission of bringing together leading both accessible and accountable to its stakeholders. The return to Castle Walk symbolises the strength of AMD's foundation—grounded, agile and people-driven.

Beyond its practical benefits, the space has already begun to rekindle the camaraderie that defined its earlier years. It offers a dedicated for members to walk in for spontaneous collaboration and for staff to engage in focused, productive work in a setting that fosters trust and agility. Its refined, intelligence-coordinated and thoughtfully curated space is a tribute to AMD's aerospace, maritime and defence industries and beyond.

In returning to its roots, AMD is not merely revisiting a physical place, rather it is embracing the future with renewed clarity and confidence. The Association is now positioned to deliver greater value to its members, to serve stakeholders as it continues to build, advocate and lead with purpose.

Steady Leadership for a Transformative Era: Mr Troostheide Confirmed as AMD Chairperson, Mr Motale Elected Vice-Chair

Following a Special Meeting of the AMD Board held on 26 June 2025, the Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industries Association (AMD) has been strengthened by the appointment of Mr Wesley Troostheide as Chairperson of the Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industries Association of South Africa (AMD), with Mr Isaac Motale elected as Vice-Chairperson for the Board with unanimous.

As AMD embarks on the implementation of its new strategic vision, mission and programme of action, Mr Troostheide's leadership is expected to provide the stability and strategic depth required for a transformative phase. The Board expressed full confidence in his ability to navigate the sector through its next phase of growth, innovation, and capital AMD's partners in the wake of the South African defence industry.

Mr Wesley Troostheide, a seasoned leadership and governance professional, brings a wealth of experience across the defence, aerospace and technology sectors. His appointment as Vice-Chairperson is not only a vote of confidence in his strategic and governance leadership, but also a recognition of the critical role he has played in the sector's transformation journey. As the Chairperson, he will lead the Board in overseeing the implementation of AMD's new strategic direction, ensuring that governance frameworks remain robust and that the Association continues to deliver value to its members and stakeholders. His leadership is expected to foster greater collaboration between the Board and the Association's leadership team, and to strengthen AMD's position as a trusted voice in the defence sector's transformation agenda.

Mr Isaac Motale, the newly elected Vice-Chairperson, brings a wealth of experience in the defence and technology sectors, with a strong emphasis on transformation and ecosystem development. His leadership is expected to complement the Chairperson's strategic focus by ensuring that the Association's initiatives are grounded in practical, sector-wide realities and that the voices of its members are heard in the boardroom. His appointment is also seen as a strategic move to strengthen the Board's capacity for inclusive and impactful decision-making.

Mr. Wesley Troostheide AMD Chairperson

Mr. Isaac Motale AMD Vice Chairperson

Mr Troostheide's appointment is expected to accelerate the Association's transformation agenda, with a focus on strengthening the sector's supplier base, enhancing skills development, and ensuring that AMD's programmes remain aligned with the evolving needs of its members and the broader defence ecosystem. The Board has also signalled its intention to leverage the new leadership to deepen engagement with government and industry stakeholders, and to position AMD as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation in the South African defence ecosystem.

The Board extends its sincere thanks to the outgoing Chairperson, Mr Kim Kohler, for his tenure and contribution to the Association. His leadership has been instrumental in steering AMD through a period of growth and transition, and his legacy will be felt across the organisation for years to come. The Board wishes him well in his future endeavours and looks forward to his continued support in the spirit of collaboration that has defined his tenure.

The Board is confident that the combined experience and vision of the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be instrumental in guiding AMD through its next phase of growth and impact. The Board has full confidence in the leadership team and the strategic direction set by the new Chairperson, and looks forward to a period of stability, innovation and sector-wide collaboration in shaping the future of the industry.

A Defining Moment: Minister Motshekga Addresses First-Ever Combined AMD - SAAMDEC AGM

On 11 July 2025, the Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industries Association of South Africa (AMD) and the South African Aerospace Maritime and Defence Council (SAAMDEC) held their first-ever combined AGM, which was hosted by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Angie Motshekga, who delivered a powerful address to the assembled leaders.

This historic format unfolded under the banner of transformation. Over following, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans and Strategic Objectives earlier this year, the Minister underscored the urgency of building a sector that is not only resilient but also inclusive, a strategic decision that resonated with the broader theme of the event's council, both of which share the same membership base, underscoring the shared mandate of the two bodies.

Through **"Roles and Responsibilities"** the AGM brought together sharing force the mutual obligations between industry and government in the defence sector. The Minister's address was a call to action, linking calls for a solid supports funding mechanisms and access to markets—it also boasts responsibilities, underscoring that the industry must actively contribute to national security goals.

Gracing the event were the Honourable Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Angie Motshekga, who delivered a powerful keynote address. Her presence and message underscored government's commitment to the sector and the critical role it plays in ensuring a robust capacity in national security, economic development, and innovation.

For our remarks, Minister Motshekga emphasized the importance of collaboration between government and industry, noting that South Africa's defence sector must leverage its strategic assets and capabilities to maximize the benefits of defence industry partnerships and harness the potential of South Africa's defence industry to drive economic growth and technological advancement. She also emphasized the critical role of skills development.

The event also marked a significant leadership transition. SAAMDEC bid farewell to its outgoing Chairperson, Mr Kim Kohler, who served and hand over to current Vice-Chairperson Expert Charles Jeremy Jeffrey, who served diligently since 2019. Mr Grundling leaves behind a legacy of strategic leadership and a strong foundation for the council, leaving a project expected by both challenge and growth. His successor Jeffrey brings a wealth of experience as a critical enabler of defence industry transformation, and his appointment is seen as a strategic move to ensure continuity and deep appreciation by both the Board and the broader membership.

The 2025 AGM will not only be remembered for its "firsts"—first combined format, first itinerant session and first major address by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans—but it will be remembered that the South African defence industry is entering a new chapter. One that is more aligned more focused and more cohesive, with leadership that is deeply committed to serving the country's interests at home and abroad.

As AMD and SAAMDEC turn the page, the sector does so with a renewed sense of purpose to rebuild to lead and to serve—for the future.

A Farewell to Steadfast Leadership: Mr Cornelius Grundling Bids Farewell to SAAMDEC

After four years of unwavering dedication and impactful leadership, Mr Cornelius Grundling officially concluded his tenure as Chairperson of the South African Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Council (SAAMDEC) on 11 July 2025. His farewell was announced during the SAAMDEC Annual General Meeting (AGM), which was held concurrently with the AMD AGM at the Grand Defence, Centurion. The AGM, held on July 2025, at the Grand Defence, Centurion.

Mr Grundling, who served two consecutive terms from 2019 to 2025, oversaw over a period of transition for the defence industry. SAAMDEC, the term was marked by the implementation of strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing collaboration and promoting the growth of South Africa's defence and related industries. As a respected leadership figure, Mr Grundling's tenure was characterized by steady hand and pragmatic leadership were instrumental in navigating the council through a complex operating environment.

Under his leadership, SAAMDEC strengthened its collaboration with government stakeholders such as the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) and the Department of Defence. Hence, amplifying the voice of industry and unlocking opportunities for growth and innovation. The council also saw increased participation in defence exhibitions and trade missions, a testament to the sector's resilience and its ability to adapt to global dynamics. These initiatives ensured that transformation remained firmly on the agenda, with discussions on supplier development and the uptake of SMMEs and black-owned enterprises.

In his farewell address, Mr Grundling expressed his deep appreciation for the council, SAAMDEC, the Minister of Defence and Military, and the broader South African defence community for their unwavering support. He reflected on the challenges he faced and the progress made, while offering heartfelt encouragement to his prospective successor and the incoming leadership team. His farewell marks the end of a

Sitha Bayisile
Outgoing Chairperson of SEAMEC

By the Council's transitions into a new leadership phase, Mr Grundling's legacy of strategic foresight, dedicated service, vision, and steadfast leadership will undoubtedly continue to influence the council's trajectory for years to come. The council wishes him the very best in his future professional and personal pursuits and are confident that his next chapter will be as impactful as his journey with us has been.

Leadership Departure: Mr Sihle Mayisela Bids Farewell to AMD and SAAMDEC

The Aerospace Maritime and Defence Industries Association of South Africa (AMD) and its Expert Council, SAAMDEC (South African Aerospace Maritime and Defence Council), have bid farewell to the resignation of Mr Sihle Mayisela from all leadership roles within the structures, following his departure from Henscott South Africa, the company under which he was employed.

Mr Mayisela resigned from two critical roles:

- Chairman of the Expert Council (SAAMDEC) at AMD
- Member of the AMD Board of Directors

Mr also served as Vice-Chairperson of the SAAMDEC Board and chaired the Skills Committee, which focused on skills development in the sector.

His decision to step down follows his formal exit from Henscott South Africa, bringing an end to his official affiliation with the aerospace, maritime and defence industries.

Mr Mayisela's leadership within the defence industry landscape has been marked by strategic foresight, unwavering professionalism and a deep commitment to governance excellence. His role as Chairperson of SEAMEC was important strides in the stakeholder

Sihle Mayisela
Outgoing Chairperson of SEAMEC

South Africa Makes a Bold Statement at IDEF 2025: National Pavilion Stands Tall on the Global Stage

South Africa's defence industry delivered a powerful statement at the International Defence Exhibition Istanbul (IDEF 2025) 22-27 July held in Istanbul, Turkiye, with the South African National Pavilion making waves as one of the most impactful national exhibitions on the global defence stage. The pavilion, hosted by AMD, showcased the country's continued commitment to global defence partnerships, innovation and industrial growth. The Honourable Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Gen (ret) Bantu Holomisa, led a high-level delegation to the event, underscoring the importance of this platform as a strategic engagement hub for government and industry participants. Their presence at the Pavilion not only uplifted the delegation but also sent a strong message of national unity, strategic intent, and support for industry growth and international collaboration.

A Powerful Delegation: South Africa "Came Out Guns Blazing"

The South African National Pavilion was a collaborative effort with the Department of Trade Industry and Competition (the dtic) and key industry stakeholders. The pavilion showcased South Africa's defence capabilities across the entire ecosystem. From advanced protected mobility to next-generation drone technologies and high-performance tactical gear. South African innovation was on full display.

The Pavilion featured **17 leading** companies, each bringing unique capabilities and expertise to the table:

- Protector
- AMSOL
- Reshoot Cape Africa
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- Denel Dynamics
- Milkor
- Paramount Group
- Paramount Armoury
- Protech Technology
- Sprayed Group
- Tactical Supplies
- Armscor Ammunition Company Systems (ACS)
- SFS Engineering
- Tactical Gear and Equipment
- Tactical Supplies
- AMSA Armour

These companies represented a cross-section of the country's advanced manufacturing, defence R&D, and niche product development capabilities. The diversity of the exhibitors underscored South Africa's ability to deliver tailored solutions for a strategic platform for business discussions and commitments to government engagements, opening the door for new export opportunities and long-term partnerships. The presence of such a high-level delegation underscored the importance of the event for both delegation and their Turkish counterparts, signalling mutual interest in strengthening bilateral defence and trade relations.

The Pavilion was more than a showcase; it was a statement of intent. South Africa's defence industry is not just to participate, but to lead. In a sector where credibility, capability and collaboration matter most, the National Pavilion stood as a symbol of integrity, innovation and industrial excellence.

Backed by strong political will, visionary leadership and cutting-edge technology, South Africa's participation at IDEF 2025 reaffirmed its place among the world's leading defence industrial powers.

Looking Ahead

The success of the Pavilion signals future international engagements. IDEF 2025 has undoubtedly served as a springboard for enhanced global partnerships, increased market visibility, and strategic alignment with international defence priorities. The momentum generated by the Pavilion will ensure that South Africa's defence industry remains a key player in the global defence ecosystem. From advanced protected mobility to next-generation drone technologies and high-performance tactical gear. South African innovation was on full display.

The South African defence industry didn't just show up. It showed up, stood tall and led from the front.

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For information and distribution please contact Tshenolo Motsepe
info@amd.org.za 011 181 8959
Shop No. 6, Castle Walk Shopping Center, Nossob Street, Erasmuskloof, Pretoria