



CISM INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
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CLOSING BANQUET SPEECH

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It is indeed a pleasure for me to be with you this evening to participate in a CISM occasion, when we can look back with pride and satisfaction on one year of hard work and achievement which has brought its rewards.

The South African National Defence Force firmly supports the motto of CISM "Friendship through sport". Sport is great leveller and brings together large numbers of men and women from different countries, regions, ethnic backgrounds, educational and socio-economic levels. It has been found to be one of the most effective vehicles for unifying men and women and achieving the CISM aim of friendship in the worldwide military family.

A nation is militarily defensible when the military readiness of its Armed Forces forms an unbreakable bond with the physical, spiritual and moral strength of its people. Naturally our defence forces must be well organised and equipped, but of equal importance is the need for every member willingly to devote all of his resources to the execution of the highly responsible task laid upon him in the service of his country.

Success in the roles assigned to us depends upon an effective combination of human ingenuity in the form of tactical and strategic skills, the best in armament and high morale. The martial skill, strength of character and discipline of the individual remain the most important factors. In this context, physical fitness has a prominent role to play. It is for this reason that sport forms an essential and integrated part of SANDF programmes.

Very broadly, sport in the SANDF can be divided into two categories; sport involving mass or group participation and, at the higher level, sporting activities where the more gifted man or woman can compete in provincial, national or international events. Mass sport is important because it forms the basis upon which sporting achievements are built, promotes fitness in general and inculcates team spirit and other desirable attributes. Consequently, the SANDF creates the opportunities and provides the facilities for group sport.

The SANDF also has a responsibility to the more accomplished sportsman who volunteers for military service in the prime of his sporting career. We have tried to reconcile the exigencies of the service with the needs of gifted sporting personalities by granting them the opportunity to perform and to improve whilst undergoing military training.

Within the Defence Force we are busy with an unparalleled process of integration and rationalisation which will be our highest priority over the next few years. There are serious budgetary constraints on the SANDF because of the priority given to the reconstruction and development programme (RDP). The SANDF fully supports this programme. Consequently there may be a difference in the contribution the SANDF would like to make towards ESALO and CISM, and what is actually possible.

There are also huge demands on the resources of the defence force to support the RDP. Our sport infrastructure is one of these resources that will have to be fully used in this context. By necessity there will be some fluidity in the composition of the manpower of the SANDF which will affect the composition of our sports teams. The rationalisation at a later stage after the integration process is completed will further affect the composition of our sports teams.



Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate all those institutions who generously sponsor the competitions so essential to the furtherance of military sport, together with the organisers and administrators who selflessly devote their time and energy to the achievement of the highest standards.

We are proud to be a member of CISM and ESALO in particular, and we pledge our full support to the growth and strength of the military sporting fraternity.
