



22 December 2009: No 76/09

END-YEAR MESSAGE BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR DEFENCE, MR TSEPE MOTUMI

It is with mixed feelings that we bid 2009 farewell. Whilst the year has been without challenges, it has also provided the Department of Defence and Military Veterans with opportunities and space to ensure that it fulfils its constitutional mandate to defend the country and its territorial integrity as well as contribute to the government's Africa agenda to better the lives of not only all South African citizens, but of all people in our region and the continent as a whole.

The ushering in of the new administration following the national general elections in April 2009 presented the department with further impetus to work towards the fulfilment of its objectives.

The appointment of the new political Executive to head the Department of Defence and Military Veterans brought hope and a new beginning to members of the department. Minister Lindiwe Sisulu was given a mandate by government to spearhead the establishment of the Department of Military Veterans. It is my held view that going forward, all of us in the department must take advantage of the new circumstances and perform our duties with a new-found zeal. Working together, we must provide to the ministry support that will ensure that government objectives to eradicate joblessness, poverty,

disease and crime as well as to improve education for our people are met.

During her budget vote speech in the National Assembly on 3 July 2009, our Minister committed herself and Deputy Minister Thabang Makwetla to work tirelessly to ensure that the general working conditions of our uniformed members are improved. Furthermore, the Minister informed Parliament that she had established a task team led by the Deputy Minister to investigate and advise government on modalities and processes to be followed in establishing the Department of Military Veterans as an independent entity. The Task Team has since completed its work and submitted the report to the Minister.

Regarding the improvement of conditions of service of our uniformed members, we have no doubt that this festive season will be a joyous one for them thanks to the announcement by the Commander-In-Chief, President Jacob Zuma on 16 December 2009. The Commander-In-Chief on this day delivered to the nation the good news that soldiers from the ranks of privates to colonels, would receive a salary increment of between two and sixty-five percent with effect from 01 December 2009.

During 2009, the department

registered many achievements, including the milestone of celebrating the tenth anniversary of its participation in peace support operations under the auspices of the African Union and the United Nations. It is within this context that, for many in the department, this festive season represents a well deserved break to be with their families and loved ones.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all members of the department who during the year under review worked tirelessly with dedication, loyalty and honesty to ensure that the objectives of the department are successfully implemented. You have worked and performed your duties diligently despite the challenges of, amongst others, declining budgets. I would like to assure you that your individual contributions did not go unnoticed and are highly valued.

I wish you and your families a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year. For those who will be travelling to various holiday destinations, drive safely.

Enquiries can be directed to Mr Sam Mkhwanazi at (012) 355-6123