

***Onthaal vir lede van SANW en MA na die Fakulteit Krygskunde se gradeplegtigheid,  
wat vanjaar ook as afskeid vir Genl.maj. Lindile Yam dien  
Universiteit Stellenbosch (US), 7 Desember 2011***

***Opmerkings deur prof Russel Botman,  
Rektor en Visekanselier van die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US)***

Thank you, programme director.

Honourable:

- **General [Solly] Shoke**, [Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF)]
- **Lieutenant-General [TM] Nkabinde**, [Chief of Human Resources in the SANDF]
- **Major-General [Lindile] Yam**, [the General Officer Commanding of the Infantry Formation, SANDF]
- **Colonel [Siseko] Nombewu**, [Acting Commandant of the Military Academy]
- **Senior Officers, Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers**
- **Prof [Julian] Smith** [Vice-Rector: Community Interaction and Personnel, Stellenbosch University (SU)]
- **Prof [Edna] van Harte**, [the outgoing Dean of Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Military Science]
- **Dr [Sam] Tshehla**, [Secundus Dean of the Faculty and designated new Dean of the Faculty of Military Science]
- **Members of the University Council**
- **Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen ...**

... all protocol observed, good afternoon, *goeiemiddag, molweni* and welcome to Stellenbosch. Thank you for your presence here today. We are glad to have you here with us on this joyous occasion.

As you can imagine, I preside over many graduation ceremonies, but the excitement never wears off. I always find it energising to be in the presence of talented and hardworking people who are passionate about their studies and research.

Today, I found it particularly uplifting to see degrees awarded to nearly 100 students in the Faculty of Military Science. I think to have such a good crop of bright people now versed in Military Science bodes well for the future of our nation, our region and our continent.

We all know that we face many challenges here in Africa. These relate to socio-economic issues, politics and governance, human rights, peace and security, as well as the environment – which has been high on the agenda with COP17 underway in Durban.

The way I understand sustainability is that all of these issues have to be addressed simultaneously if we want to improve people's lives and endow future generations with a positive legacy.

The unique relationship between Stellenbosch University and the South African National Defence Force represents a strategic alliance to do exactly that. We are convinced that African prosperity, peace and security can be promoted by strengthening education, research, defence and governance systems.

As you know, the vehicle that the University is using for making a relevant contribution to society is our HOPE Project – so named because it captures our conviction that it is through the application of knowledge-based solutions that we can help counter the despair that arises when people feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face.

Based on themes derived from the UN's Millennium Development Goals and the government's Medium-term Strategic Framework, we are throwing the weight of our science behind the country and the continent's most pressing needs – whether it is through research into renewable energy, food security in our region, conflict resolution in communities torn apart by poverty and violence, or rural healthcare and development.

As I have often stated, our vision for our country and continent is a future free from poverty, where the human dignity of all people is protected, where our social and ecological systems are healthy, and where peace, security, democracy and human rights are safeguarded.

And as I said recently when we graciously hosted by the SANDF in Saldanha, it is clear that there is plenty of common ground between our two institutions.

Now, this year we find ourselves at a point in history where both the head of our Faculty of Military Science and the head of the SANDF's Military Academy are leaving their posts more or less at the same time. But unlike the time not so long ago when we had a similar situation, this time there is no crisis.

This time, our joint programme of producing well-educated and highly trained professional military scientists and officers is in good shape.

And a key player that we have to thank for this is General [Solly] Shoke.

Firstly, sir, congratulations with your promotion earlier this year to Chief of the SANDF.

I remember the time when things were not going well in the Faculty and the Academy – and you provided leadership to help us smooth out the creases. From all of us, thank you for that.

Now, one of the things General Shoke did was to support us in appointing a woman to head up our Faculty of Military Science. It was a brave step, general, because the military has

traditionally been a man's world. But Prof Edna van Harte was the right person for the job, and you took a principled stand on her appointment.

One of the key aspects of the success that Prof Van Harte achieved in her time as Dean was that she helped put in place a new agreement between the University and the SANDF, replacing the old agreement that was badly out of date.

Now, a key ally as Commandant of the Military Academy had been Major-General [Lindile] Yam. He has since also been promoted and now in charge of the SANDF's foot soldiers as General Officer Commanding of the Infantry Formation.

General, congratulations, and thank you for the role you played to strengthen the relationship between the University and the SANDF. Our Vice-Rector: Community Interaction and Personnel, Prof Julian Smith, will in a moment pay tribute to your contribution more comprehensively.

One thing that is for sure is that in Colonel [Siseko] Nombewu and Dr [Sam] Tshehla we have suitable successors for General Yam and Prof Van Harte.

Colonel Nombewu, Dr Tshehla, good luck with your duties, and you can count on our full support.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, let me quickly share some exciting news with you. Just last week, Stellenbosch University's Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa – or SIGLA for short – signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forum for Former African Heads of States and Government – or Africa Forum for short.

What this MOU allows us to do is to tap into the collective knowledge and wisdom of our continent's respected elders for the next generation through SIGLA's Emerging Leaders Programme. This initiative will be launched early next year, and will be run on a regional basis across Africa.

We hope to be stimulating debate – both at academic and policy levels – about the challenges that face us in Africa in the fields of security, governance and leadership. It is by focusing on these areas that we can groom young emerging leaders for the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening to me. Let me conclude by simply saying – long live the partnership between the SANDF and Stellenbosch University!

Thank you.