

Ensure that military activities do not harm the environment

By PO Dennis Ndaba

Photo: Sgt David Nomtshongwana

The DOD hosted an International Conference on Military Integrated Environmental Management at Kwalata Game Lodge and Conference Centre near Hammanskraal in Pretoria from 4 to 8 August 2003.

The conference was jointly presented by the RSA DOD and the USA DOD under the auspices of the RSA-USA Environmental Security Working Group (ESWG), which is one of the working groups operating under the bilateral SA-USA Defence Committee (DEF-COM). The international conference was aimed at facilitating the exchange of information on best practice models in military integrated environmental management among participants.

Military Integrated Environmental Management (MIEM) provides internationally accepted tools that defence forces can use to ensure that military activities do not affect the environment adversely. It includes among others, aspects such as:

- Adherence to relevant laws;
- Management of natural areas;
- Management of built-up areas;
- Management of cultural resources;
- Education and training on the correct use of the environment; and
- Development of environmentally friendly technologies.

In December 1999 a jointly hosted International Workshop on Integrated Range Management was held in Savannah, Georgia, USA. During the



workshop, which was attended by military delegates from ten nations, the need was expressed for a succeeding conference on military integrated environmental management. The RSA DOD indicated its willingness to host such a conference, an undertaking subsequently supported by DEF-COM.

International Conference on Military Integrated Environmental Management

The Chief of Logistics, Maj Gen Themba Ntsibande, opened the ceremony on behalf of the Minister of Defence, Mr Mosiuoa Lekota. During his address he said the DOD in South Africa had a history of environmental care reaching back as far as 1978 when the first internal policies on the environment were formally adopted.

This approach considers the entire scope of military activities and their associated footprint or impact on all attributes of the environment in a quest for sustainable use of any area of land, sea or air entrusted to Defence for use in the course of conducting its operations and training.

Such an ostensibly pervasive approach understandably presents the DOD with marked challenges in ensuring sustained environmental management performance. This

Be environmentally friendly.



Maj Gen Themba Ntsibande, the Chief of Logistics, holding a gift received from Mr Curtis Bowling from the USA.

situation is intensified by a climate that requires compliance with the prescripts of proliferating environmental legislation. It also includes minimising costs concealed in managing the environmental footprint brought about by all manner of military activities, expansion of military integrated environmental expertise and instituting the ethic of environmental stewardship amongst the broadest possible base of soldiers.

"As for our counterparts and co-hosts of the United States DOD, my gratitude and appreciation is extended also to you for your co-sponsorship of the event and support to the South African project team. You too, should be no less satisfied with what

you behold here today. The General Assembly of the United Nations at its Millennium Summit in September of 2000, adopted values and principles as part of the Millennium Declaration that include, among others, those on peace, security and disarmament as well as meeting the special needs of Africa," said Maj Gen Ntsibande.

He added that the New Partnership on African Development (NEPAD) is at the same time a pledge by African leaders which is founded on a common vision that encompasses the eradication of poverty and on piloting their respective nations toward sustainable growth and development. It is directed also at heading African countries towards active participation in the world economy.

Maj Gen Ntsibande continued: "There is growing awareness of the importance of environmental issues for sustainable development. This is supposed in the Millennium Declaration and captured in NEPAD, to be destined to project this continent into the African Renaissance and beyond. Defence organisations have a distinct contribution to make toward enhancing peace, stability and security for sustainable development. African military forces in particular must support the social, economic and environmental agenda of sustainable development through both their peacetime activities and operations by working closely with their allies in the regional denominations to achieve this."

"This conference should be used as the first platform and point of reference to develop that network among African security forces to advance the concept of military integrated environmental management. Through such co-operation it must be endeavoured to lend yet another dimension to interoperability among African security forces by giving thrust to their important role in supporting peace, stability and security in the quest to build the African continent. A military force as an instrument of government policy on security cannot discharge its obligations in terms of the environment in isolation. There are lead agents in government that set the pace and who are by virtue of their respective mandates responsible for directing the achievement of specific national environmental objectives," he concluded. 

Sappers deserve recognition

**By Lt Seani Neluheni,
SO3 Communication SA Engineer
Formation**

The GOC SA Army Engineer Formation, Brig Gen David Masters, and the Chief of Staff, Col William Endley, visited 35 Engineer Support Regiment at Dunottar on 11 June 2003. The Unit is responsible for providing and maintaining engineer equipment.

The Officer Commanding of the Unit, Lt Col Cornelius Grundling, and his staff, led the delegation on a visit through the Unit, which included a demonstration of newly designed mobile workshops.

"The best Sapper in his environment." These were the words of Brig Gen Masters when he addressed Sappers working in "Store 1" at 35 Engineer Support Regiment. The GOC walked through the stores with a glow of pride. He congratulated Lt Col Grundling and his staff on work well done. The GOC said that three months before, when Lt Col Grundling took over the command of the Unit, the stores had been a big mess. Now, however, the GOC was impressed with the manner in which Lt Col Grundling and his staff had arranged the store. All the equipment was in

place and the store was spotless.

Standing at the airfield guard tower one could easily identify and count the various types of vehicles, which were parked in an orderly manner, in spite of the massive area. The serviceability of the vehicles is checked regularly for combat readiness. The Unit now has a fixed plan to report the state of each vehicle to the Formation on a monthly basis.

The GOC referred to the engineers' equipment as the table where the engineers feed. He said that if the body could not be looked after, it will wear off. He urged that the members should look after their equipment. "People who do well, deserve recognition," stressed Brig Gen Masters. In his address he said good leaders could be seen. He emphasised the importance of showing recognition, eg by issuing commendation certificates, to those who are doing good work. 



Front row: Sgt Tembinkosi Maqungo. Middle, fltr: S Sgt Lazarus Mahlatsi and S Sgt Thabo Matshego. Back, fltr: Sgt Kenneth Simelane, Cpl Lucky Malatji, L Cpl Joseph Legodi, L Cpl Okie Mlotya, Spr William Mosenogi and Spr Ronnie Baloyi. (S Sgt W. Strydom, Sgt M.O. Maputla and Cpl C. McDonald are not present) - All Sappers will remember their dedication and loyalty as their photo will be placed in the Engineer Formation.