



SANSa 5 year anniversary speech

by SANSa Chairman Joy-Marie Lawrence

8 April 2016

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow board members, SANSa staff, and all our guests.

I am honoured to be able to address you at the 5th anniversary of SANSa's establishment. It is indeed significant to take the time to reflect on how far we have come. On this occasion we are reminded of Tata Madiba (Nelson Mandela) who in reflecting on his journey said (and I quote) ***"I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come."*** Similarly we our taking this moment to reflect and look back at the distance, we as SANSa have come over the last 5 years. In doing so, I would like to reflect on 3 aspects; **SANSa's past, SANSa's stakeholders** and **SANSa's future**.

The South African National Space Agency came into existence through the promulgation of the SANSa Act on 3 December 2010 as a schedule 3A public entity under the auspices of the Department of Science and Technology. This signalled a giant leap into space science and technology for South Africa.

I was one of the founding board members of SANSa and I acknowledge the hard work of the inaugural board that did the ground work of establishing SANSa under the Chairmanship of Mr Maurice Magugumela.

I wish to acknowledge the work of the current Board who have so ably picked up the baton and are committed to the next growth phase of SANSa.

During those early years we started from scratch, developing policies which were approved and became the basis of the internal controls that lead to two unqualified audits in the first and second year and clean audits in year 3 and 4. This was a significant achievement for a newly establish entity. Policies are critical to SANSA's success and whilst some might say they are cumbersome, we are accountable for public funds. As the Board we endeavour to streamline the policies and make them user-friendly and we are currently in a policy review cycle.

Another significant achievement was successfully migrating employees from the NRF (National Research Foundation) and the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) and this required that we ensure compliance with legislated business transfer prescripts. New business units were also established, and recently SANSA Earth Observation was set up as an independent directorate. This has improved its focus and delivery to our key stakeholders in the public sector.

Over the years at SANSA we have developed two strategies, with the current one being the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan that was approved by the current Board in 2015. The Board has ensured that the agency meets its annual targets and in this regard we have performed well as reflected by the positive responses from Minister and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Science and Technology to our annual reports since establishment.

I would also like to thank the staff for working hard in contributing to SANSA achieving these targets, notwithstanding the foundational challenges. We delivered the science, the engineering and the applications. Our student training initiatives have been a success. Our outreach programmes have inspired young people. We have achieved all of this as succinctly stated in our motto, ***"in service of humanity"***

We are not an island and we acknowledge that we operate in an eco-system and I would also like to reflect upon and thank our stakeholders who have contributed to the success of SANSA. We must acknowledge the continued support and guidance of the Minister of Science and Technology, the Director-General and officials at the DST. Funding remains a challenge. The Parliamentary Grant funding has not increased substantially since

establishment; the funding for the satellite build programme has contributed to an increase in SANSA's income. However, the Board continues to engage the Minister with a view to optimise the resourcing of SANSA. At the same time the Board believes that the Agency has to find ways of diversifying its revenue.

SANSA has also been recognised internationally, and has continued to foster international partnerships, with international space agencies, including global space entrepreneurs. The Agency has signed a number of agreements with a number of continental and global partners. Our staff serve, or participate in various international forums and continue to strive to take South Africa to the world and beyond.

Finally, when we stop and reflect on the possibility of the SANSA of the future, I would like to share with you the parable of the 3 stonecutters:

One day a traveller, walking along a lane, came across 3 stonecutters working in a quarry. Each was busy cutting a block of stone. Interested to find out what they were working on, he asked the first stonecutter what he was doing. "I am cutting a stone!" Still no wiser the traveller turned to the second stonecutter and asked him what he was doing. "I am cutting this block of stone to make sure that it's square, and its dimensions are uniform, so that it will fit exactly in its place in a wall." A bit closer to finding out what the stonecutters were working on but still unclear, the traveller turned to the third stonecutter. He seemed to be the happiest of the three and when asked what he was doing replied: "I am building a cathedral."

We are entering a new phase of SANSA and while this new strategy substantially builds on the original five goals of SANSA, two additional goals have been added which indicate the strategic intent of the current Board to move SANSA from its foundational phase to its growth phase.

More specifically we are referring here to Goal 6 and 7 which focus on (1) the growth and sustainability of SANSA, and (2) ensuring that SANSA is a high-performance organisation. We need to focus more purposefully on transformation, particularly gender parity. We need to focus more strategically on the sustainability of SANSA and we need to focus more determinedly on the behaviours that will ensure that SANSA is a high-performance organisation. As the Board we will be discussing the SANSA Institutional Plan in May, this will

touch on the core of the SANSA business and position the Agency in the National System of Innovation. SANSA staff will be kept abreast on this.

The Board is very optimistic about SANSA's future and is determined to lead SANSA as we enter into the new phase but like the third stone cutter, this is about "building the cathedral", we will require everyone to get involved, so that together we can make a difference, in the South Africa and the World of today and that of the future.

In conclusion, I would also like to congratulate again and acknowledge Dr Sandile Malinga, the CEO, who the Board have re-appointed as CEO for a further period of 5 years to lead and shape the future of space in South Africa.

Thank you to the Minister of Science and Technology (Mrs N Pandor), the Director-General (Dr P Mjwara) and officials of the DST for their support and guidance.

Thank you to my fellow Board members, for your continue commitment, insight and governance oversight.

My sincere appreciation to the management team of SANSA, for your leadership and perseverance.

My utmost gratitude to all the staff of SANSA for your industriousness and passion for you are the future and the key to our success.

As Tata Madiba said in concluding his story "but I can only rest for a moment... and I dare not linger for my long walk is not ended."

As SANSA, we will continue to lead and inspire the South African community to join us on our journey to create a better future using science, technology and innovation for socio-economic growth and transformation. ***Our walk is only beginning.....***

Thank you.

Joy-Marie Lawrence