



CEO's Speech: SANSa Fifth Year Anniversary – 8 April 2016

Board members, officials from the DST and the CSIR, members of the senior management, middle management, staff and colleagues good afternoon.

We are gathered here to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the South African National Space Agency.

An anniversary offers us an opportunity to pause and reflect; to contemplate and ponder. To pat ourselves on the back but also to self-critique.

It offers an opportunity to look back at the journey travelled; the achievements made and the challenges faced.

It also offers the opportunity to look forward at the journey ahead and its many opportunities. It offers a chance to close a chapter and open a new one—a new future and a new destination.

In looking back we want to acknowledge and pay homage to all who have played a role in the establishment of SANSa.

We salute those who conceived the establishment of SANSa in the early 2000s. Those who formulated the National Space Strategy and the SANSa Act, key documents that govern what we do. Some are still in the science system and others have moved to other areas. Their hard work led to the birth of this important organisation.

I pay tribute to those who were involved in the SANSa Establishment Office at the CSIR; those who were the midwives that ushered SANSa into existence.

We pay homage to the employees who were involved in the SANSa Establishment Office before SANSa came to be, some of whom are still SANSa employees today: Asanda, Estelle, Zandiswa, Anita and myself. Fond memories go to Fanyana Mothupa, a hard working soul, who sadly passed on.

I want to pay homage to those who joined us on the eve of SANSa, people like Zweli, and the large cohort that joined on the 1st of April 2011—first day of SANSa.

I pay tribute to the employees who joined us from the NRF: Hermanus Magnetic Observatory and the CSIR: Satellite Applications Centre on 1 April 2011 and became the core of SANSa. They gave us a heritage beyond the five years we are celebrating today. Today we stand on the shoulders of their decades of success.

I salute the many staff members who joined SANSA at different times and have become part of the SANSA family since its establishment. We have now become one big family. Whenever the annals of the success of SANSA are read, your name will always be there.

The role of our different management teams cannot be forgotten.

I pay tribute to all the staff who have since left SANSA and moved on to other organisations. Their efforts were not in vain. They have laid one, two or more bricks in this monument of success.

I pay homage to the inaugural Board of SANSA under Mr Magugumela and the current Board of SANSA under Ms Joy-Marie Lawrence. Tribute also goes to Mr Omar Latiff who passed on last year. His contribution will never be forgotten. Without the support and guidance of the Board we would not have achieved what we have.

Our journey would not have been possible without the support and guidance of the Minister of Science and Technology, the Director General and the officials at the DST.

We owe our success to our stakeholders and clients. They have given us the reason for being—our *raison d'être* — “**in service of humanity**”. Their continued support and faith in SANSA has been second to none and an inspiration for us to do more.

Through all these collective efforts, hard work, dedication, innovation, creativity and ingenuity and belief in SANSA, we have achieved a lot.

It is because of this that today we can pause and look back and celebrate a number of achievements:

- We have established the **Earth Observation** directorate and today we deliver two mosaics a year; we have produced a human settlement atlas for the North-West province; the Fundisa programme has significantly contributed to geospatial information at universities and schools; we have provided our stakeholders with high-quality resources to successfully provide societal services—services that bring hope and transform lives.
- In **Space Science** we launched a very successful Space Weather Centre; built, in-house, a cutting-edge high-frequency radar and installed it in Antarctica; we have produced a large number of high-impact research papers and contributed to scientific books; provided innovative solutions to our aviation and defence clients and ensured the security of our country; we have inspired young people to love science and given them a reason to hope.
- Our **Space Operations** activities have supported 131 special launch operations over the last five years. These have transformed the global communication, navigation and science

landscape. We have established a very credible in-orbit function and significantly expanded our infrastructure hosting.

- In **Space Engineering** we have covered significant ground in developing our country's next satellite and are opening a new chapter in our national space effort and ambition to capture a sizable share of the space market.
- At the **Corporate Office** we have ensured that business processes, systems, and policies enable SANSA. Through these efforts, and those of the directorates, we have managed to get a clean audit for the last two financial years. This is a big achievement for a new organisation.

In celebrating our achievements we also celebrate our challenges and, indeed, our failures.

We do not celebrate these failures because they were good and enjoyable, but because they were opportunities to learn.

A fool does not learn from his mistakes. A normal man learns from his mistakes. And a wise man learns from the mistakes of others.

I believe we have, at least, learnt a lot from our mistakes and, better still, those of others.

Our Anniversary also offers us an opportunity to look forward at the hills and valleys that lie ahead.

As we move from the foundational phase of SANSA to the growth phase of SANSA, we need to have a fresh approach to what we do.

We need to be more positive and rise to the opportunities that lie ahead.

We need to refuse to think of SANSA as only the sum of its challenges but, rather, in the totality of its potential and opportunities.

We need to realise that innovation does not start with doing new things but, rather, by stopping old ones. Let's close the old and open the new.

Yes, we may not have the resources that we would have liked to have but that should lead us to greater innovation. Remember my talk on "*A beautiful constraint.*"

In the words of Wendy Appelbaum, "To make a difference is not about the money one has but the time and effort; and everyone has time and can make an effort."

SANSA is a great institution that has a potential to achieve greater things for our country.

Our mandate is compelling. Our strategy is ambitious. Our future has opportunity and is bright.

We have the people, the skills, the passion, the dedication and creativity to make a huge impact.

We have to create the future we want rather than bemoaning the past we could have had.

We have the support of the Minister, the DST, and the Board to excel.

Let Excellence be our lowest standard and not our highest.

Thank you and happy birthday SANSA!

Dr Sandile Malinga, CEO