

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**820. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) Whether, with reference to the report of the joint oversight visit of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence and the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans to Kinshasa and Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from 25 to 29 March 2018, consideration was given to the concerns raised by the soldiers of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) as reported by the Portfolio Committee regarding the very poor quality of (a) combat boots and (b) uniforms; if not, why not; if so, what measures were taken to significantly improve the quality and suitability of both combat boots and uniforms;

(2) whether (a) she, (b) her department and (c) a certain company (name furnished) have considered the recommendations for local procurement of certain items within the regulations of the Mission Area, based on the direct feedback on the ground in the DRC; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of the recommendations that have been implemented? NW979E

**REPLY:**

(1) (a) and (b)

Yes consideration was given to concerns raised not only by the Portfolio Committee but previously by the Minister and the Defence Force Service Commission.

Combat Boots

The SA Army engaged the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on the improvement projects of uniform and combat boots. The boot project of Special Forces was revived and improved as it was found to be suited for use by the SA Army. Development of the proposed boot for the SA Army with wearer trials of the new combat boot commenced on 01 December 2020.

The new boot roll-out will commence from 01 July 2021 to all SA Army members within the SANDF with priority given to operationally deployed Units and Individuals, replacing the current combat boot. This roll-out is pending the availability of funding to support and implement this project.

(1) (b): Camouflage Uniform

The improvement of the textile used for the cut, manufacture and trim of camouflage uniform is also being done in collaboration with the CSIR.

The first concept uniform designs will be presented to the SA Army Council by 30 March 2021 for approval.

Wearer trials for the new uniform design will commence from end June 2021 and a phased full roll-out is scheduled from December 2021 pending the availability of funding for this project.

A well-deserved funding injection of the budgetary allocation to the SA Army will aid in addressing the replacement of the current combat dress system with the quality available within the market through collaboration with the CSIR.