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## SA ensures aerospace research

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Johannesburg - The department of science and technology is committed to ensuring that South African companies actively supply global aerospace companies like Rolls-Royce with components, Science and Technology Minister Naledi Pandor said on Monday.

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"At present, South Africa is not in a position to design and manufacture an entire, fully-integrated aircraft system," she said.

"Therefore, the emphasis has been placed on developing key competencies where SA companies can become part of the global supply chain of the major first and second tier aerospace companies."

Pandor was addressing the International Aerospace Symposium of South Africa in Centurion.

The symposium is aimed at exploring international partnerships and contributing to economic growth and competitiveness in South Africa.

Pandor said the South African aerospace sector was developing expertise in areas including airframe manufacture, engine components, systems development and the integration of fixed and rotor blade aircraft and advanced weapons systems.

It was therefore vital for companies involved with these projects to work as a unit so they could penetrate international markets and supply companies like Boeing, Airbus, Rolls-Royce, Embraer and Snecma.

### International co-operation

"The DST is committed to supporting this effort, notably by promoting international research co-operation," she said.

South Africa could also make a meaningful contribution in the field of fossil fuels, which is being researched in the aerospace industry.

Through the department's Advanced Manufacturing Technology Strategy (AMTS) launched in 2003, it aimed to ensure that South Africa's role was more than just a manufacturing and assembly location of aerospace components.

"When the work of the AMTS turned its attention to identifying focus areas, the aerospace sector was identified as a key sector.

"In fact, an active aerospace network was mobilised, making a significant contribution to the work of the AMTS."

The department was also involved in creating a platform for enhancing aeronautics and air transport research and this was made possible by its partnership with an AeroAfrica-European Union project.

"The AeroAfrica-EU project represents the first attempt to capture the aeronautics and air transport capabilities and needs of the EU and SA in a complementary manner, useable as qualitative tools to enhance further co-operation," she said.

- SAPA