

## CSIR hosts radar and electronic warfare conference

Engineers and other technical experts in the field of radar and electronic warfare (EW) recently converged at the CSIR to probe ways of defeating the "new phantom threat". This year's Radar and EW Knowledge Base annual event - previously know as the Ledger Conference - was hosted by CSIR Defence, Peace, Safety and Security.



In his opening address of the 4th conference in this series, Frik Beyers of Armscor told representatives from the SA Army, Navy, the Air Force, academia, defence research organisations and the defence-related industry that the gathering is about "probing the unseen". "We must try and look beyond the horizon," he said.

"There's a new phantom enemy, a new threat," he said, adding, "Continuing research and evaluation, especially in radar and electronic warfare, is key in countering these unseen enemies, which are sometimes in the form of terrorism or information warfare." Beyers praised the success of the Ledger project, which he said has achieved its objectives and continues to do so.

Project Ledger - funded by the Secretary of Defence and managed by the CSIR and Denel Aerospace Systems - is a way of collaborating on research between institutes, industry and various tertiary education institutions (TEIs). One of the project's objectives is to provide an opportunity for previously disadvantaged students to qualify in the field of defence-related studies and mathematics.

Ledger portfolio manager Johan Mostert, also from Armscor, said this year's conference was different from other years. "We have changed the conference layout to focus on the concept of centres of excellence at the universities," he said, adding that it was a major success.

For instance, he said, if a university specialises in remote sensing, the idea was to invite that institution to give feedback on the work it has done and its proposed way forward. He said the reason for this move was to make sure that research conducted at various universities across the country was in line with the South African National Defence Force requirements, especially the area sponsored by project Ledger by means of grants and contract research.

"Concerning radar, an element of the Ledger project that is owned and funded by the Department of Defence and managed by Armscor, we have met our objectives," he said. "Some of the technologies coming from these universities have been developed into prototypes by industry."

Mostert added that although the relationship between the different organisations and industry was healthy, there was general consensus that the working relationship between the military and the universities could be further enhanced.

The Ledger project, he explained, seeks to address military needs. "I am satisfied with the outcome of the conference and I think we managed to show the defence industry the type of research being conducted at universities, at research organisations and in industry," he said.