



tourism

Department:
Tourism
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM EMPOWERS 44 GAUTENG AND FREE STATE CHEFS WITH RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING QUALIFICATIONS

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The Department of Tourism broke down barriers this Human Rights Month by ensuring that skills and experiences are recognised for 44 chefs. A graduation ceremony for 20 beneficiaries of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme for Chefs was held in Bloemfontein today, while 24 Gauteng graduates were awarded on Wednesday, 5 March 2025 in Pretoria a formal qualification NQF level 5 (SAQA ID 101697).

A Skills Audit conducted in the development of the 2017 Tourism Sector Human Resource Development Strategy revealed that career progression in the tourism sector is slow. On average, an employee remains in one position for 7 to 12 years. The contributing factor to the slow career progression in the tourism sector is attributed to the lack of formal education for many tourism employees.

The RPL programme addresses the challenge of slow career progression in the tourism sector, targeting the Chefs profession. It recognises knowledge and skills gathered by those who have worked for years without any formal qualification and training.

This programme is one of the departmental transformation initiatives that aim to accelerate the redress of the past unfair discrimination in education, training, and employment. The process involves the identification of knowledge and skills already acquired, having this assessed and formally acknowledged.

Henceforth, the graduation ceremonies fell within Human Rights Month, which emphasises the right to dignity, equality, and opportunity for all; these values are embodied in the RPL programme.

It is against this backdrop that the Department of Tourism is focussing on an opportunity that has fallen on South African soil, namely the G20 Summit. As South Africa prepares to host the G20 Summit, chef graduates have a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience and career growth in the hospitality industry. With an influx of international delegates, dignitaries, and media, the demand for high-quality cuisine, catering services, and fine dining experiences will rise significantly.

The recent RPL class already produced successes. Chef Vincent Seli was promoted from a commis Chef to a junior chef at City Lodge Bloemfontein, while Sihle Soginga was promoted from a chef de partie to a sous chef at Anew Hotel in Centurion, Gauteng.

Below are some testimonials from the RPL beneficiaries:

Free State

- Lethlogonolo Moeketsi with over 6 years of experience in the culinary sector is excited to become an RPL Graduate and hopes that this will open further doors in his career. "I have

worked as a lecturer teaching culinary skills, and with this qualification, I look forward to go even further in my career. I have worked in many places including in Qatar during the 2022 world cup. I hope this will give me more exposure to expand my career even further”.

- Masego Melesi is a chef based in Bloemfontein, after finding out on a Facebook post, she applied for this programme and hopes this training will come in handy to help her achieve her dream of opening her own big restaurant. Chef Masego stated: “I have been working as a chef for 16 years and have a small eatery at home, I am very excited for this opportunity that the Department has offered me and I hope it will help me realise my dream of expanding my eatery into a bigger restaurant and provide me with much more professional skills”.

Gauteng

- Sihle Sogina hails from Midrand and works at Anew Hotel as a chef and his employer applied for the programme on his behalf. He expressed his joy for this achievement and hopes the qualification will open bigger doors as he did not have a formal qualification in the industry but possesses 12 years of experience. Chef Sihle said, “I am a chef with 12 years of experience and currently work at the hotel. I am very excited for this opportunity that the Department of Tourism has afforded me. I look forward to making use of these skills I learned to better my culinary skills”.
- Anthocus Mkhonto from Mamelodi outside Pretoria was informed by her employer about the RPL programme and applied as she hoped to upgrade her culinary skills. Chef Anthocus said, “I currently work for a restaurant (Tasha’s) as a kitchen manager, and I am grateful for this opportunity to enhance my skills. I worked as a chef as well, specialising as a salad lady, and I will use the skills I acquired to also empower other chefs at the restaurant”.

The Department extends its heartfelt congratulations to the 44 graduates and wishes them growth and progression in their careers.

ENDS

Ms. Tasneem Carrim
Departmental Spokesperson
Cell: +27 (0) 82 467 9227
Email: TCarrim@tourism.gov.za