



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X424, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa. Tel. (+27 12) 444 6780, Fax (+27 12) 444 7027  
Private Bag X9154, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa. Tel. (+27 21) 469 5800, Fax: (+27 21) 465 3216

**Keynote address by Deputy Minister Elizabeth Thabethe at the Free State Tourism Buddies Graduation ceremony on 06 June 2017**

**06 June 2017**

Programme Director, DDG Tourism Sector Support Services  
MEC Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs; Dr  
Benny Malakoane  
The Executive Mayor of Matjhabeng Municipality  
The Ward Councillors  
Representatives from host Employers  
Learners  
Parents  
Officials from the National and Provincial department of Tourism  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good day,

Before we commence with the programme can we observe a moment of silence, in remembrance of our precious learner Mr. Simphiwe Ncamane who has gone to be with the Lord.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be addressing you today at this momentous occasion of the graduation ceremony for our young South Africans who participated in one of the departmental Training programmes, called Tourism Buddies.

Education and training are core elements in eliminating poverty and redress inequalities and it is the foundation for an equal society, education empowers people to define their identity, it enables people to take control of their lives and make informed choices or decisions. Poverty eradication and job creation through youth empowerment programmes is one of government's key focus area. While we recognise the role our youth played in the yesteryears, we should also celebrate the milestones achieved since the dawn of democracy.

Former President Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world". Tourism is also hard at work to improve the quality of life of our people. We strive to ensure that tourism benefits are inclusive and shared equitably amongst our citizenry.

Our provinces continue to offer unique experiences and we need to provide tourists with the best visitor experience so that they can continue to come back to destination South Africa. We can only achieve this if we have the right people with the right skills. Visitor experience as outlined in the National Tourism Sector Strategy, gazetted in May this year, highlights the development of excellent tourism skills and service levels as critical. A skilled workforce and excellent service will enhance South Africa's attractiveness globally.

Programme Director, the Tourism Human Resource Development strategy which was finalised recently, paves the way for the industry to grow through an appropriately skilled force. Some of the interventions mentioned in the strategy include initiatives such as Chef Training, Sommelier training

(wine connoisseur) Food Safety and hospitality Services Training Programme. These programmes are meant to support the tourism industry with the much needed skills.

The department's Expanded Public Works Programme is one of the vehicles that helps us realise the objectives of the Human Resource Skills Strategy. Through EPWP, the department responds to the challenges of expanding our economy whilst providing increased employment opportunities.

The provision of employment opportunities will contribute to the NDP's vision of creating 11 million jobs by 2030.

I would like to draw your attention to the Tourism Buddies Learnership programme. 100 unemployed youth from the Free State were enrolled in this programme for a period of 12 months. As you all are aware, training consisted of 30% theory and 70% practical training, where our learners were placed in various hospitality establishments.

Today, I am proud to announce that 80 of our learners from the Free State will receive qualifications which are fully accredited by CATHSSETA, our tourism and hospitality SETA. The qualifications are the National Certificate on Food and Beverages NQF Level 4 and National Certificate on Accommodation Services NQF Level 2.

Tourism has made huge strides through this learnership which targets our unemployed youth. In the last financial year, 2 654 youth graduated and 1 837 were women. 20 of the top achievers are currently placed in the Seychelles for further specialisation in French cuisine. Through this very programme, 60% of employment opportunities were created in the Western and Northern Cape.

Some of our learners in these two provinces are employed as managers and supervisors. The economic benefits of this programme were also shared by the local SMMEs. Local businesses were contracted to transport and accommodate learners during the training period as well as to provide uniforms for our learners.

Programme Director, I would also like to bring to the attention of our graduants, that tourism does not only provide employment opportunities but encourages people to become entrepreneurs as well. I urge you to visit the National Tourism Careers Expo taking place in this province from 28 -30 September 2017. If you have a tourism business idea, please present it to the Youth Business Zone at the NTCE. Hopefully your dream of becoming an entrepreneur might be realised.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all our partners for the role they played in this programme. The success of this project was depended on our collaborative approach and partnerships to harness the sensible use of resources and pragmatic planning as outlined in the NTSS. Your support and contribution was immeasurable.

Finally, to our graduants, I would like to reiterate that education is the key to unlocking your potential and today proves all of your hard work and determination. As you celebrate your achievement, you must prepare and brace yourselves for future challenges. Tourism has opened the door for you to new opportunities. Well done! and Congratulations to you all.

I thank you.

.