



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Address by the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Tokozile Xasa at the Food Safety
Business Breakfast - Durban**

12 August 2014

Programme Director
MEC for Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (in
absentia)
Chairperson of FEDHASA – Mr Eddy Khosa
Distinguished Guests
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are gathered this morning following the Southern African Tourism Services Association (SATSA) conference that took place last week in the North West province. As I stand here, I am reminded of some of the salient remarks made by Minister Derek Hanekom in his address to tourism businesses and industry players. He stated that the “tourism sector is a quintessential example of an industry that depends on public- private partnerships...and government’s role is to create enabling conditions for the sector to build our destination’s competitiveness”.

I am pleased to see a room filled with members of the hospitality industry, who are here to support one of the many initiatives that will contribute towards making destination South Africa competitive. Our tourism industry is growing and performing well. This is attributed to the healthy relations, and the solid partnerships we have with the private sector on initiatives such as the Food Safety Programme.

As we commemorate 20 years of freedom, our government recognises that our country faces a myriad of challenges, most of which have a debilitating effect on our youth. As we all continue to work together towards moving South Africa forward, we should be mindful that the initiatives we embark on are strategically posed to address the triple challenges outlined in the National Development Plan of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

According to Statistics South Africa (STATS SA), the unemployment rate among youth aged 15 to 34 increased from 32.7% to 36.1% between 2008 and 2014. The World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Risk Report for 2014 revealed that South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate in the world for people between the ages of 15 to 24.

The future of any society is assured by its youth. With the youth constituting a little over 40 % of the 54 million South African population, it is imperative that we prioritise initiatives such as Food Safety Programme to capacitate, and empower our young people so they can make an impactful contribution towards the growth of our economy.

Tourism generated 9.5% of South Africa’s gross domestic product in 2013, and accounts for more than 1.4 million direct and indirect jobs in the country. As we continue to work together towards moving South Africa forward, it is incumbent on us all to ensure that we create opportunities that will develop and sustain our youth for generations to come.

Today, we celebrate one of our many youth oriented skills development initiatives - the Food Safety pilot programme. The Food Safety programme is an initiative of the Department of Tourism in partnership with FEDHASA that endeavours to address the development and employment needs of our youth. We have successfully trained and orientated 100 unemployed FET graduates as Food Safety Assurers (FSA). Food Safety Assurance (FSA) is a newly defined and created occupation that will boost consumer confidence in the safety of food in our hospitality industry. We are proud to announce that we now have 100 qualified Food Safety Assurers, placed in three provinces, who are committed to making South Africa a food safe destination.

I would like to thank:

- members of the hospitality industry in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga for embracing this programme, and ensuring that all 100 graduates were employed.
- FEDHASA, through its implementing company SAFSCO without which we would not have had the expertise and capacity to achieve this success.
- the mentors that hold the hands of the FSA's on a daily basis, who still continue to do a great job.
- Our host and provincial counterparts in the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, who play an integral role in the implementation of projects initiated nationally.

We appreciate the efforts made by all to ensure that this pilot programme is a success.

In conclusion, I would like to urge members of the hospitality industry in all the provinces to join us as we expand the food safety programme. We endeavour to train an estimated 5000 Food Safety Assurers, 500 Mentors and 75 000 food handlers on the minimum requirements of "food safe practices - making South Africa a globally recognised food safe destination by 2020.

By working together, both government and the private sector, we can reduce unemployment and make economic freedom a reality for our youth.

I thank you.

Tokozile Xasa, MP
Deputy Minister of Tourism

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