



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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Reach for the Young Stars – One & Only

3 November 2016

Distinguished guests
Captains of industry
Ladies and Gentlemen
Our shining stars...

It is my absolute privilege to share this special moment with you. It is a beautiful moment in a young person's life when they have found their passion – their niche in life. You could certainly not have chosen a better industry to pursue your dreams in. Tourism remains a vibrant and growing industry. Not only is it a recognised economic pillar for our country but it's also a people-orientated industry. Yes, my dear rising stars – you are at the coalface of this industry.

The vision for South African Tourism is for South Africa to be one of the preferred tourist destinations in the world and to maximise the economic potential of the tourism industry for the benefit of our country and its people. Programmes like these give expression to this. It lends credence to the fact that Tourism is so much more than a destination – it's about the experience – the South African experience.

To give you a brief snapshot of the state of tourism. The latest Tourism Satellite Account as released by Statistics South Africa indicates that the travel and tourism sector's direct contribution to GDP was at R111 billion in 2014. Direct employment was at about 680 000 for the same period. Meanwhile the total or combined (direct and indirect) contribution of travel and Tourism to GDP as released by the World Travel and Tourism Council was at R375 billion in 2015, with total employment (direct, indirect, and induced) at about 1,6 million people. The total combined GDP contribution from travel and tourism was about 9, 4% for 2015. Foreign tourist arrivals have done remarkably well in 2016. The total international tourist arrivals recorded for January to August 2016 increased by 14.8% in comparison to the same period in 2015.

We will continue to invest in skills transfer and capacity building to create an enabling environment to invest in this scarce skill. The Department of Tourism has since April 2010 partnered with the South African Chefs Association (SACA), the International Hotel School, the Silwood School of Cookery, and the South African Chefs Academy School, in implementing the National Youth Chefs Training Programme through its Social Responsibility Implementation Programme to have young people skilled and trained in the culinary arts.

To date, this unique partnership, which began in April 2011, enlisted 2677 young people from all walks of life in all 9 provinces. This Programme ensures world-class service standards, promote South African indigenous cuisine and at the same time produce chefs who are able to compete with the best in the world.

The programme is designed to provide the students with both theoretical and practical training to eventually take their place as fully fledged chefs in the hospitality industry in South Africa. The qualification earned through the programme is recognised by all cookery or food-related sectors, from small restaurants to large-scale hotels. The qualification is also recognised internationally. To date, the programme has resulted in 712 learners securing permanent employment. The programme is implemented in 26 registered culinary schools and FET colleges and 321 workplaces in the hospitality industry in all nine provinces. Indeed Tourism is Moving South Africa Forward!

It is with pride and gratitude that I make particular acknowledgement today of the involvement of the eight institutions represented here who offer theoretical and practical training to the young chefs present here today. This would not be possible without your investment in our young people.

I also want to thank the judges who so willingly gave of their time and expertise to participate in this exciting programme and who had the unenviable task to decide who the final winners are. Pivotal to this event, is the amazing Annette Kesler and her wonderful team who have made this possible. Annette – you are a game changer and a light bringer and I salute your passion.

Tourism is going through a golden era and experiencing exceptional growth at this time. I would like to welcome all the trainees and graduates of the programme to the industry and thank you for your contribution in helping the industry grow. My thanks and appreciation is also extended to all executive chefs from the various hotels and campuses for their commitment to facilitate skills development and to encourage a supply of skilled specialised human resources for the benefit of our hospitality industry in general and tourism sector in particular.

Shooting stars have been associated with making a wish that could change your life. To our rising stars, our shining stars – I would like to share the following quote with you – ‘If it’s meant to be, it’s up to me.’ Go and shine brightly and light up the sky.

I thank you.