

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, MS.  
MAGGIE SOTYU (MP) AT THE CHEF SOUTH AFRICA CONFERENCE AND  
EXPO AT PROTEA HOTEL CAPE TOWN WATERFRONT BREAKWATER  
LODGE IN CAPE TOWN**

**DATE: 25 NOVEMBER 2024**

Good morning esteemed chefs, culinary artists, and industry pioneers,

Today, we gather here not just to celebrate the art of cooking but to honour the vibrant tapestry of flavours, cultures, and stories that South Africa brings to the worldwide culinary stage.

From the bold spices of the famous Cape Malay cuisine to the rich heritage of South African braai.

In South Africa, we are so creative even in our own kitchens and we constantly reinvent indigenous ingredients. Hence, our kitchens are not places just to cook meals, but it is where tradition meets innovation.

Programme Director,

As we embark on this conference and exhibitions, let us explore how cuisine can continue to ignite our palates while elevating South Africa as a wonderful destination of choice.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation for being part of this memorable event to celebrate sheer determination and human resilience in the quest for holistic development.

As a young democracy, with thirty years behind us, many scholars and commentators are still suspicious as to how long should it take to create a just and equal society and to transform into a united, non-sexist, non-racial, democratic and prosperous society.

It is with pride that I would like to mention that the partnership between the National Department of Tourism and the South African Chefs Association, is a dynamic, practical and important project that trains and develops unemployed youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age in culinary arts.

The programme was first piloted in 2011 for a period of six (6) months and eight hundred (800) students enrolled. A clear indication of a need for skills development.

Skills development remains central as South Africa continues to refine its capacity as an industrial country.

In 2017, our Department carried out a skills audit and created the Tourism Sector Human Resources strategy.

The findings highlighted a lack of mobility and career advancement opportunities within the workforce of the sector.

The strategy identified the implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning initiatives as an intervention to advance career progression and growth through identification of employed and unemployed Chefs with experience, but no formal qualification.

Through our Recognition of Prior Learning for Chefs Programme, 110 learners from Gauteng, Limpopo, KZN and Western Cape with limited formal education obtained a chef occupational relevant qualification.

Our intervention provided these chefs with confidence to advance themselves and their careers.

For example, Chef Ponka Jack had more than 10 years of industry experience with no formal qualification. The NQF level 5 Chef Occupational Certificate, he obtained through us, will allow him to be considered for further promotion in the sector.

Chef Wiseman Nkosi from KZN was head hunted to be a private chef at Zimbali Country Estate after completing the programme.

The programme's achievements are truly the result of strong and meaningful partnerships with the sector.

It is important to mention that the measure of success with regards to skills development programmes in the Department is not necessarily on outputs, but more on the outcomes.

Meaning how many of our students were placed to various establishments around the country.

It is however unfortunate that because of various demands, we as the government still face challenges with regard to the training of young women and men that we require.

The RPL process can assist individuals to acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills and can then contribute to improving their employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem.

Programme Director, I would like to highlight the 2023/24 Food Safety Quality Assurer Training programme were implemented with 50 unemployed youth.

42 learners successfully completed the programme and received certificates of competency.

The Department of Tourism, through its Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), is continuously training young people between the ages of 18 to 35 in various fields within the Tourism and Hospitality sector.

I therefore urge all to really find interest in what we have to offer and request you to assist us with the implementation of our programmes so that we can address skill gaps as the tourism continues to grow.

Programme Director, to be a Chef is not merely a job, it requires true passion.

As the government, we fulfilled our role by offering young people access to accredited educational programmes that not only enhance service quality but also ensure an improved visitor experience in our country.

I want to leave you with this delicious quote: "Great food is not just about what's on the plate, but the stories it tells, the people it brings together and the memories it creates".

As Chefs, we have the power to inspire, innovate, and elevate not only the culinary world but the very spirit of our communities.

I thank you all.