



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by Mr Fish Mahlalela, Deputy Minister of Tourism at the
Recognition of Prior Learning Graduation Ceremony for Chefs in
Cape Town**

Programme Director

Ms Alicia Wilkinson - Principal: Silwood School of Cookery

Mr Marc Le Sueur - Silwood School of Cookery

Ms Mmaditonki Setwaba - DDG Department of Tourism

Mr Sipho Ngomane - Chief Director Department of Tourism

Esteemed Graduates, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

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

In few hours' time from now, the President of the Republic will be outlining government's Programme of Action detailing how much ground we have covered so far and the projected distance we still have to traverse in the creation of a better life for all.

Ours is still a young democracy, many scholars and commentators are still arguing as to how long should it take to create a just and equal society and to transform South Africa into a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society?

We therefore, hope our people will endorse and allow this government's Programme of Action to continue unabated as we approach the end of the term of this 6th Administration.

Our government has been investing enormous efforts and resources to stimulate, transform and grow our economy so that it can create jobs, grow new and old industries, and create business opportunities for

millions of young men and women who are the hardest hit by the scourge of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The eradication of the legacy of apartheid and colonialism has been a critical priority of the past 30 years of democracy and it is still kept alive by its remnants which are the triple challenges - poverty, inequality and unemployment.

In order to mitigate the vicious impact of these, our government over the years has driven a deliberate and impactful programme of skills revolution essentially to empower all South Africans with the knowledge and skills to participate in the socioeconomic activities.

Our government has dramatically improved access to education, from early childhood right through to post-school education. Nearly every young person aged 15-24 years is literate, and adult literacy now stands at 85%, up from only 64% in 1996.

Under apartheid, the law prevented black people from entering skilled occupations. Today we have a growing black and skilled professional sector.

Today, we all gathered here to witness one of the interventions by our government, which is the National Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning which provides for the implementation of RPL within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

Let us all congratulate all the students who completed their Chef qualification at an NQF Level 5 and professional designation levels.

These achievements are indeed a by-product of a great partnership between ourselves as Department and the Silwood School of Cookery here in Cape Town.

Our test of success with regards to the skill development programmes in the Department is not on the outputs – how many students qualified, but more on the outcomes – how many were placed to various establishments around the country.

This is but one of the critical challenges that the Department still need to sharply address.

Government is unfortunately faced with various competing demands hence as government, we cannot train the number of young women and men that we require.

Our partnership with the Silwood School of Cookery, enables both of us to better understand our challenges and create a more enabling environment in which partnerships can flourish.

More importantly, partnerships build capacity to be more effectively through awareness-raising, partnership skills training and mentoring.

The main objective of the programme is to take learners through the RPL process to obtain a Chef qualification at an NQF Level 5 and professional designation levels.

With this Policy, is possible to work collectively to change the lives of RPL candidates, including workers and learners of all ages, unemployed people and other marginalised groups, as important beneficiaries of RPL services.

According to ILO, in the absence of recognized qualifications, a large proportion of people face severe disadvantages in getting decent jobs, migrating to other regions and accessing further education, even though they might have the necessary knowledge and skills.

The Recognition of Prior Learning process can help these individuals acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills, and thereby contribute to improving their employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem.

This increased prospect for inclusion in the labour market as a win-win situation for all, as employers are likewise able to access proof of skilled personnel and better match them with suitable jobs, while also increasing productivity.

And governments are further able to have better assurances of increased competitiveness and economic growth, as well as social inclusion and equity.

Our Department conducted a skills audit and developed the Tourism Sector Human Resources strategy in 2017. The skills audit revealed that there was a lack of mobility and career progression in the workforce within the sector.

The slow career progression for many tourism workers were attributed to a lack of formal training and education amongst other things.

This strategy identified the implementation of RPL initiatives as an intervention to advance career progression and growth in the sector through identification of employed and unemployed Chefs with experience, but no formal qualifications

We then collaborated with institutions such as the Silwood School of Cookery to implement the RPL programme on behalf of the Department. The Silwood School of Cookery is a chef school and an accredited assessment center.

So far, a total of about 110 students have been trained through this programme and 107 have graduated, which is 97% completion rate.

The Chef job is not merely a job, it requires true passion.

As you go out there to start working for your future, just remember these words as you serve our people, you are called to be true disciples of the tourism sector as food forms a greater part of the visitor's experience.

As government, our approach to skills revolution is to assist people to upskill and future-proof themselves in the light of this fast-changing work environment.

An empowered and adequately skilled workforce is critical for the success of the tourism sector, economy and global competitiveness.

We as government, we played our part by introducing young people to accredited educational programmes that not only contribute to improved service levels, but will also assure an enhanced visitor experience and the sector's sustainability.

It is now in your hands to go and strive for yourselves

Let me lastly, express our sincere appreciation to the Management of Silwood School of Cookery for such an outstanding work.

I thank you all

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