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Speech by Minister Patricia de Lille at the Youth Skills Graduation Ceremony

15 June 2023

Deputy Mayor: Overstrand Municipality: Cllr Lindile Ntsabo

Deputy Mayor of the Theewaterskloof Municipality, Cllr John Michels

CEO of the Tourism and Business Institute of Southern Africa, Ms Zakiyya Murtuza Peerun

Department of Tourism officials

SETA representatives

Host employers

Our guests of honour, the graduates

Members of the media

Good morning, goeie more, molweni, dumelang

It is my great pleasure to be here amongst our young people, our assets in tourism for this Youth Skills Programme Graduation ceremony.

Days such as this excite me as we are making an investment into our tourism sector now and for the future.

Our young people are not only the future, they are also the present jewels of our nation and we must do all we can to support them to overcome adversity and rise to their full potential.

I want to take a moment to congratulate you all for successfully completing the Food Safety Quality Assurers course.

You can all be proud today that you have empowered yourself and you have taken up an education opportunity, that heroes like Hector Pieterse died for.

Tomorrow we observe Youth Day, a day where we celebrate our youth. It is also a day when we remember the sacrifice of a young schoolchild, Hector Pieterse who was one of the first casualties of the 1976 student uprisings.

Young people like Hector Pieterse and Ashley Kriel and many others must continue be honoured for the ultimate sacrifices of their lives so that our young people have the education and freedoms they have today.

In our democracy, young people have greater opportunities to become chefs, doctors, engineers and anything they want to be.

The sacrifices and deaths of our young anti-apartheid activists reminds me of a quote which says “after tragedy comes triumph” and it speaks to overcoming adversity and reaching your goals.

This is the message I want to share with our young graduates today, that it does not matter what adversities and challenges you face, you can reach your goals and you can reach your full potential.

It does not matter where you come from and how you grew up, it is about how you take up a cause, how you stand up against injustice and how despite whatever may go wrong, you never give up and you keep going to achieve your dreams.

There is nothing you cannot do, there is no dream you cannot achieve, I simply say to anyone, if you have a goal, be prepared to work hard.

When opportunities come your way, like this course for skills development for the tourism sector, grab it with both hands.

All of you here today were presented with a skills training opportunity, you took it up, and today you are graduating with new skills and job opportunities or better job prospects.

We have made this investment into you as young people because we understand that opportunities are hard to come by and we need to give young people a helping hand.

We need to provide the skills that are needed in our economy to help our economy grow.

Tourism is a major contributor to our economy and if we keep investing in the right areas – such as the upskilling and education of our young people – we will grow tourism’s contribution to the economy even more.

You the young graduates here today, are part of that growth.

The Department of Tourism has commenced with skills training programmes in all 9 provinces for this new financial year.

For the 2023/24 financial year, the department has budgeted over R73million to train an estimated 1 696 learners in the various skills development programmes across all nine provinces.

This is an increase on the R69million which was spent on young people for these training programmes in the last financial year.

The budget is allocated nationwide for the five skills development programmes, namely, the Food Safety Quality Assurers Programme, Food and Beverage Training, CHEF/Professional Cookery, Wine Service Training and Hospitality Youth Training (Fast Food Services) Programmes.

This allocation in the department's budget is a tangible investment into the future of our young people which helps them acquire skills and job opportunities while assisting with the development of the tourism sector.

The programme is being implemented in all 9 provinces. In the Western Cape, it was implemented in the Overstrand district with 21 learners recruited from Hermanus and 21 learners from Gansbaai.

This course is also being implemented in all other provinces with 50 learners recruited for the three-month Food Quality Assurers Training and Wine Service Training in each province.

In addition, between 100 and 165 learners will also be recruited in various provinces, per province for 12-month courses in Hospitality Training, Food and Beverage Training, Food Service and Professional Cookery Training.

We will continue our contribution to skills development which supports economic development and empowerment thereby contributing the recovery of the tourism sector and the country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan.

All of the graduates here today have successfully completed the three-month Food Safety Quality Assurers Skills Programme.

The Department implements skills development programmes in line with the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy, to strategically support the tourism sector's developmental objectives.

The training further promotes inclusivity of previously disadvantaged participation nationwide and the recruitment and selection of participants considers the geographical spread of district municipalities, with a particular focus on villages, towns and small dorpiess.

The programme is implemented under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) wherein participants are paid a stipend and their training covers 30% of theoretical learning and 70% of the workplace exposure to acquire practical experience within the relevant workplaces.

The Department appointed The Tourism & Business Institute of South Africa (TTBISA) as an implementer to manage the implementation and training of unemployed youth on Food Safety Quality Assurers Training Programme in Western Cape.

The beneficiaries were trained on food safety practices and procedures: NQF level 1 (19 credits, Personal hygiene and food safety practice NQF level 2 (26 credits) are accredited with Food and Bev SETA and Customer services skills programme NQF level 4 (24 credits) accredited with the Culture,

Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, Sports, Sector Education Training Authority (CATHSSETA) specific to the food industry.

All learners here today completed the Food Safety Quality Assurers programme on the 5 June 2023 and in terms of the gender spread, 33 were females and 9 are males.

Some of the graduates were able to secure employment at tourism and hospitality establishments such as Bientangs Cave, Biga Bakery, Best of Asia, Tolbos Bistro, AGS Gansbaai, Buitesteen and OK Foods.

I want to share two testimonials from two of the host employers who employed some of the graduates.

It makes me beam with pride to read what the employers are saying about our young people and I want to encourage all our graduates today, continue to work hard at your jobs and go for gold.

An employer, from the Tolbos Bistro in Gansbaai said that graduate Genevieve Pretorius helped in a part time capacity at Tolbos Bistro in Gansbaai since February 2023.

The employer said: "She has been a tremendous help in the kitchen as cook and is very innovative trying new recipes and dishes. Her plating is also very attractive and different. She signed up for the Food Safety Assurers program in March. Many of her skills are due to the program provided. Skills such as the storing of food and we implemented some of the rules regarding waste."

"Her knowledge of food safety improved during the course and was the basis in the bistro and kitchen. She is very positive about the course and eager to learn more. She gave her all during the course and it is reflected and visible in her assignments she submitted. She is an asset to the food Industry and as the owner of Tolbos Bistro, I have taken the decision to offer her permanent employment". END QUOTE.

This is truly wonderful and heart-warming to hear and this is why we have this programme, to give young people an opportunity, help them find employment and assist the growth and development of the tourism sector.

Another employer from OK Foods Gateway said about two graduates: "I am the Head Chef at OK Foods Gateway. I was a mentor for Lelethu Letabola and Sandisiwe Sidono. They were both fantastic and did very well. They asked many questions and they learnt all the recipes very quickly and showed interest in learning more. The girls impressed us and we were privileged to have them join us". END QUOTE.

While not all graduates secured immediate employment, the qualification will assist them to apply for jobs at other establishments or provide learners with an opportunity to study further for a full qualification.

It is up to the learners to prove themselves and secure a job opportunity with host employers but the training service provider also facilitates placement of learners and helps them to apply for jobs.

Learners can also use this qualification and the credits to enrol at other institutions for longer and more advanced courses in fields such as cookery, the food and beverage and hospitality sector.

I wish to once again congratulate all our young people who have graduated from this training today and wish them all the success with their journeys and careers in tourism.

Thank you also to the service providers and all officials involved in delivering this skills development programme, let us continue to serve with passion to enhance our beautiful country's tourism offering.

Thank you and God Bless.

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Issued by:

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