



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Address by Tokozile Xasa, Tourism Deputy Minister, at the Limpopo Tourism Buddies
Learnership Graduations, Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane**

1 November 2016

Programme Director,
Executive Mayor: Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng of the Polokwane Municipality
Mr. Seaparo Sekoati, MEC: Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
DDG Morongoa Ramphele
Service Providers
Host Employers
Learners
Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's events mark the end of but one leg of a journey that is still far from over. After the graduation fanfare and photo opportunities have died down, an even more serious leg of the journey begins where each one of you graduating today have to now go out into the world of work and find your place.

Ask anyone who has been working for a long time and they will tell you that the world of work can sometimes be an uneasy place to find yourself. To survive in this world you not only need to be fully prepared with the right mind-set but you also need to make sure you possess the relevant skills as well.

Ladies and gentlemen it is perhaps it is fitting that one starts by providing some background information to this Tourism Buddies learnership training programme that the National Department of Tourism initiated. The Tourism Buddies programme is an experiential hospitality training programme targeting unemployed youth of South Africa as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) of the Department of Tourism.

The objective of the training programme/learnership is to train the unemployed youth to enable them to acquire skills and gain the valuable work experience needed to enhance one's employability in the hospitality and tourism sector. The National Department of Tourism implemented the first phase of the training to a tune of R39 million in the 2011/2012 financial year.

In that year, a total of 800 unemployed youth were enrolled into a 2 year training programme which was accredited by CATHSSETA and is recognised by the hospitality and tourism related sectors from hotels to lodges. In the current financial year (2016/17), there will be 2000 learners trained in the programme nationally. The total budget for the programme is R115 million and the programme started in June 2016. This learnership programme takes place over a 12-month period with students having a choice between a National Certificate in Food and beverages NQF level 4 and a National Certificate in Accommodation services NQF level 2.

Essentially the learnership programme is composed of 30% theory work while the bulk of the training (70%) takes place in the workplace for which the learners were placed at various hospitality establishments around the Limpopo province. With an approved budget of R24 750 000 for the 2014/2015 financial year, 500 learners from across the Limpopo province were placed at various hospitality establishment to begin the learnership. An even split of 250 learners each, for the National Certificate in Food and beverages (NQF level 4) and National Certificate in Accommodation services (NQF level 2) was realised at the beginning of the learnership.

Of the 500 students that started the respective learnerships, 194 have successfully completed the Accommodation services National Certificate while 56 learners dropped out due to various reasons.

With the National Certificate: Food & Beverages learnership, of the 250 learners that started the programme, 195 learners have successfully completed the programme while 55 have dropped out due to various reasons. While some of the 111 learners that dropped out of the programme did not provide reasons for having done so, those that did give reasons cited workplace challenges and pressure, better opportunities and a loss of interest in the programme among the main reasons.

It is also important to mention that of the 389 learners graduating, 349 of them will receive CATHSSETA endorsed certificates while 24 will be receiving a statement of results as they were not found to be competent in all the unit standards.

Other youth training opportunities provided by the Department include the;

Food Safety Assurers Programme;

The Food Safety Assurers Programme is a scientific discipline aimed at handling, preparing, and storing food in ways that prevent food borne illnesses. This includes a number of routines that should be followed to avoid potentially severe health hazards.

Wine Service Training;

The Sommelier training was piloted in 2012 to a tune of R11 million to train 200 unemployed youth from the townships in the wine tasting field.

The National Youth Chefs Training Programme;

The NYCTP 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 department partnered with South African Chefs Association (SACA) to implement the programme.

These are just some of the programmes available for you to take advantage of and I want to commend you for the perseverance you have shown in making it this far despite the many obstacles that were experienced along the way, this only goes to show that you are equally invested in the realisation of a bright future for yourselves.

I wish to thank the 90 host employers that participated in the Tourism Buddies Programme in this province by opening their respective establishments as workplaces to provide the learners with the practical training they needed to compliment the theory training they have received. Some of the host employers have even put their money where their mouths are by committing to provide some of the learners with permanent employment opportunities in future should such opportunities arise.

A word of thanks is also extended to the various local municipalities in this province that played an active role in the project by assisting the department with identification of venues for training and by taking part in the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings.

Municipalities also assisted with the recruitment and interviews of learners. These municipalities also assisted with the identification of relevant host employers within their respective municipalities and the subsequent placement of learners at the workplaces.

The National Department of Tourism also worked closely with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) in making sure that the project becomes a success.

LEDET assisted the department with identification of local stakeholders and host employer engagements in terms of learner placement.

In the 2015/16 financial year, 2950 learners were trained with a budget of R140 million. There were 2654 learners that graduated. In the 2016/17 financial year, there will be 2000 learners trained in the programme. The budget for the programme is R115 million and the programme started in June 2016.

To all of the graduates, I wish you all of the best in the pursuit of your chosen field of study and you can rest assured that the Tourism industry can offer you a fulfilling career.

I thank you.