

**MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE OFFICE OF MR MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK,
MINISTER OF TOURISM AND SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM**

MINISTER LAUNCHES PROGRAMME TO TRAIN 800 YOUNG CHEFS

Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Minister of Tourism, today launched a new programme which will train 800 young people from across the country to become professional Chefs.

The National Department of Tourism will invest R25 million in the 2010/2011 financial year, with a further R5 million budgeted over the remainder of the programme. As part of the National Youth Chefs Training Programme a total of 800 South Africans between 18 and 35 with a matric qualification who are currently not employed and have a passion for cookery and the hospitality industry will be trained.

“This programme encapsulates a number of elements that are of particular importance to the continued growth and success of the tourism sector in South Africa. Firstly, this programme is aimed at job creation, which is a key priority for government and the tourism industry,” Minister van Schalkwyk said at the launch held today at the Hospitality Training Academy School of Culinary Art in Randburg, Johannesburg.

“Secondly, the foundation of the programme is training and skills development – in this case Professional Cookery or qualification as a professional Chef, which has been identified as a scarce skill in South Africa.

“Thirdly, the programme is focussed on young people. We all recognise that job creation is of particular importance to our youth, and I am proud that our Department is playing an active role in the career development of the youth.

“Fourthly, and also very importantly, the programme entails a partnership between government and industry. I cannot emphasise the importance of such partnerships enough, particularly in the tourism sector. The sector is very reliant on successful interaction between the public and private sector. If we want to realise our vision of further expanding tourism as a key driver of growth and job creation in the economy, close interaction and successful partnerships will be vital.

Minister van Schalkwyk said tourism has now been positioned as one of the key drivers of economic growth in South Africa and a pivotal element of

government's growth path, which is aimed at addressing amongst others unemployment, inequality and poverty. The growth path sets an overall target of growing employment by five million jobs by 2020, thereby reducing unemployment by ten percentage points from 25% to 15%.

"I consider the innovative programme we are launching today as a wonderful example of a partnership between our department and industry aimed at reaching our collective goals. It addresses the challenges of job creation and the development of scarce skills through targeted investment in a project which will produce qualified chefs of the highest calibre," the Minister said.

"The NDT relies on capable and recognised organisations as partners and we are pleased to be working with the South African Chefs Association on this initiative. We believe that this partnership will provide the trainees with the skills, knowledge and experience to gain sustainable employment in the hospitality and tourism industry and one day become leaders and innovators in their own right," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

The South African Chefs Association is a professional culinary association with a proven track record of over 35 years of experience. It has more than 4 000 members in every type of professional catering activity, five established branches throughout the country and access to more than 50 training providers nationwide.

"The tourism sector is especially important for the creation of employment, as it also presents opportunities for self employment and entrepreneurship and contributes to rural and urban development. We believe a diversified and developed hospitality industry will ensure a sustainable foundation for socio-economic advancement.

"I would like to urge the hospitality industry to open their doors to the South African Chefs Association for the placement of the learners in terms of experiential learning. The success of this programme depends on sustainable public private partnerships we enter into now and in the future and I believe we have already established excellent relationships to build on in this regard," Minister van Schalkwyk said.

The NDT will fund the project through its budget for Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) initiatives. The programme will train a total of 800 young people in all nine provinces from 2011 to 2013.

In the first phase of the project, the beneficiaries will be trained in the National Certificate of Professional Cookery NQF 4. This qualification is recognised by all cookery and food related sectors.

In the second phase beneficiaries will receive training for a National Diploma of Professional Cookery NQF 5. Thereafter they will be placed with different hospitality establishments for an extensive training programme. On fulfilling all the requirements of the programme the trainees will be registered as professional chefs by the South African Chefs Association. The breakdown of students per province was influenced by provincial demand, the availability of training providers and the availability of placement for experiential learning. The following number of students will be trained per province:

- Ø Gauteng – 230
- Ø Limpopo – 30
- Ø Mpumalanga – 30
- Ø Northern Cape – 30
- Ø Eastern Cape – 60
- Ø Western Cape – 180
- Ø Kwazulu-Natal – 180
- Ø North West – 30
- Ø Free State – 30