



Speaking notes by Mr. Fish Mahlalela, Deputy Minister of Tourism during the graduation ceremony of the Food and Beverages Services in Cape Town

15 February 2023

Programme Director, let me congratulate the Department for such a sterling work, as we celebrate the outcomes of such a rigorous and tenacious skills development Programme, today.

It is overwhelmingly so great to be part of this memorable event, a graduation ceremony where we reward and recognize outstanding hard work and sheer resilience of human spirit.

We all gathered here this morning to celebrate and congratulate all students who completed their studies in Food and Beverages Services.

I strongly believe and hope the Department will take note of, that more emphasis should be put on tangible outcomes than mere outputs, our strong determination of progress in this regard, should be eventually in finding placements for these students.

The National Tourism Sector Strategy and the Tourism Human Resource Development Strategy empowers our Department to implement skills development programmes to support the sector's developmental objectives.

The impact should be in addressing skills shortage within the Tourism Hospitality Industry and respond to the sector's detrimental socio-economic challenges posed by COVID 19, through the provision of training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations, including COVID-19 protocols targeting unemployed and retrenched youth.

Furthermore, our skills development programmes are expected to create temporary jobs for unemployed people through implementation of EPWP, focusing on youth, women and people with disabilities thus contributing towards poverty alleviation through the payment of stipend.

Moreover, provide temporary financial relief through payment of stipend and support to business's capital recovery as a result of company closures, job losses/ retrenchment; thus, contribution to economic recovery plan.

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 to mitigate the impact of triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

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

Through these programmes, we are 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.

Our efforts to drive transformation in the tourism sector that is aligned to the targets set out in the BBB-EE Tourism Sector Code and the UNWTO Sustainable Development Goals will be in vain, if we fail to facilitate access to business resources, information and opportunities for capacity building for women and youth in tourism.

According to the UNICEF report, governments and businesses are being urged to address global skills gap and decrease youth unemployment. It notes that there is a disconnect between requirements of education and training systems.

I therefore call upon our youth to seriously take up all available opportunities being provided by government as quick fixes and short-cuts to economic empowerment has not provided a sustainable solution to the socio-economic challenges facing our country.

We are as government believing that without education, efforts to provide jobs, better health facilities, water, electricity and other needs, will not be sustained. Indeed, our economy needs relevant skills to be stimulated.

Many of our youth today stands at the border-line between the past of oppression and repression and the future of prosperity, peace and harmony. It is therefore in your hands to make this great nation proud again

In conclusion, Programme Director, the Department is once again grateful for the ongoing support from our partners for the dedication and commitment to go above and beyond the expectations, as well as the team in the Department under the leadership of DDG Mmaditsonki Setwaba for working together to make this programme a success

Let me take this opportunity to also congratulate all those among us whose hard work, dedication and determination will be awarded today.

I thank you all.