



SPEECH BY MR FISH MAHLALELA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM DURING THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR CHEFS IN DURBAN

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Programme Director - Chef Shaun Smith
Chef Fatima Stanley - Principal: Master Chef Culinary Academy
Chef Sindi Mbili -
Ms Mmaditlonki Setwaba - DDG Department of Tourism
Mr Siphon Ngomane - Chief Director Department of Tourism
Esteemed Graduates
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Indeed, I am excited and I hope all of you today are excited to be part of this instalment of the RPL graduations, following the ceremony held in Cape Town earlier this month.

The ultimate aim of education is the quest for the attainment of holistic development of an individual.

Our government has over the last 30 years sought to use education as a tool to create equality, employment and fighting poverty, having witnessed the worst injustices of apartheid using education as a tool to perpetuate inequality.

Our basic education outcomes are steadily improving across a range of measures. The latest matric pass rate, at 82.9%, is the highest ever. And with each new year, learners from no-fee schools are accounting for more and more of the bachelor passes achieved.

At the same time, fewer learners are dropping out of school. We have increased funding for poor and working-class students in universities and TVET significantly over the past five years.

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 and lack of access to funding.

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.

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 Master Chef Culinary Academy here in Durban.

The successful placement of these learners in various establishments will constitute a remarkable achievement and it will also test the success rate of our skill development programmes in the Department.

We therefore do not have to spare any effort in addressing and achieving this outcome.

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 Master Chef Culinary Academy, enables both of us to better understand our challenges and create a more enabling environment in which partnerships can flourish.

More importantly, these partnerships should build capacity to be more effectively in producing workforce that could be absorb by our growing economy.

The main objective of this 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 skills audit led us to the development of 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 Master Chef Culinary Academy 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 Master Chef Culinary Academy for such an outstanding work.

I thank you all