



**SPEECH BY MR FISH MAHLALELA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF TOURISM DURING
THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR
CHEFS IN MOKOPANE, LIMPOPO ON 24 FEBRUARY 2023**

Programme Director

Mr Rodgers Monama – MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism

Chef Keletso Molaotse – Executive Chef, Park Inn Radisson Polokwane

Chef Kelly Fowlds – Limpopo Chefs Academy

Chef Tommie Hurter – Limpopo Chefs Academy

Mr Sipho Ngomane - Chief Director Department of Tourism

Esteemed Graduates

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Programme Director, education doesn't just make us smarter. It makes us whole. Therefore, it is my singular honour and a great privilege to address you today.

We all gathered here to celebrate you, our learners. You have distinguished yourselves through hard work and sheer tenacity to achieve better for your future. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. says, "A man's mind stretched by new ideas, may never return to its original dimension."

Congratulations to all you for completing your Chef qualification at an NQF Level 5 and professional designation levels.

These achievements are a byproduct of a great partnership between ourselves as Department and the Limpopo Chefs Academy.

My emphasis on the skill development programmes in the Department is to focus more on the outcomes rather than outputs, to work more for the numbers passed to find placements in various establishments around the country.

This is one weakness as a Department that we still need to sharply address.

Government is faced with multiple challenges including triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. This unfortunately gives rise to competing demands hence as government, we cannot train the number of young women and men that we require.

The budget speech by the Minister of Finance on Wednesday, alluded to these and clearly indicated that a growing economy is key to eradicating these challenges.

President Cyril Ramaphosa in his SONA described how three years ago our country was devastated by the worst global pandemic in our living memory, many lives were lost, companies closed and jobs were lost, tourism was neither spared, it was hugely affected.

But, today our economy is larger than it was before Covid-19 and so is the emergence of green shoots indicating a strong recovery of the tourism sector.

At the same time Limpopo Province has its own fair share of challenges, recently the outbreak of measles and the rise of casualties on the N1 road, put a lot of strain on the resources of the Province and clearly dampen the spirit of the visitors.

Our partnership with the Limpopo Chefs Academy, enables both of us to better understand our challenges and create a more enabling environment in which partnerships can flourish.

More importantly, partnerships build capacity to be more effectively through awareness-raising, partnership skills training and mentoring.

The main objective of the programme is to take learners through the RPL process to obtain a Chef qualification at an NQF Level 5 and professional designation levels.

This is based on the National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning which provides for the implementation of RPL within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

Through this Policy is possible to work collectively towards demonstrably changing 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 Department conducted a skills audit and developed the Tourism Sector Human Resources strategy in 2017. The skills audit revealed that there is a lack of mobility and career progression in the workforce within the sector.

The slow career progression for many tourism workers could be attributed to 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 Limpopo Chefs Academy to implement the RPL programme on behalf of the Department. Limpopo Chefs academy is a chef school and an accredited assessment center.

So far, a total of about 60 students have been trained through the programme and 57 have graduated on over two years of implementation.

The famous Chef, Gordon Ramsay once said that being a chef never seems like a job, it becomes a 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. I encourage you to treasure your career and nurture it. A Chinese Proverb says, learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

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.

We as government, we play 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. An investment in education pays best interest. I wish you well in your future.

Let me lastly, express our sincere appreciation to the Management of Limpopo Chefs Academy for such an outstanding work.

I thank you all