

Postal Address
P.O. Box 1329, Rivonia
2128, South Africa

Physical Address
270 George Road,
Noordwyk, Midrand, 1687

Contact
Call Centre: 0860 100 221
Telephone: 011 217 0600
Fax: 011 783 7745



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: 22 May 2025

CATHSSETA Empowers Artisans with Culinary Skills to Address Poverty and Inequality

CATHSSETA is proud to announce the inaugural graduation of 164 learners who have completed the *Occupational Chef Qualification Programme, NQF 5* – a transformative initiative aimed at tackling youth unemployment through relevant, practical training in the hospitality sector.

This is the first cohort of CATHSSETA graduates who completed the one and only Chef Artisan programme, following the conclusion of the “Decade of Artisan”, a Ministerial flagship that was launched in 2014. The graduates come from diverse backgrounds and in various districts in the Provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape, Limpopo and North West, with part of the graduation ceremony held in Durban on Friday, 16 May 2025.

The second graduation ceremony will take place as follows:

- **Date:** Wednesday, 28 May 2025
- **Time:** 14:00 – 17:00
- **Venue:** Radisson Blu Hotel, Sandton, Gauteng

Each graduate is driven by a strong desire to better their own lives and uplift those around them. Their journey through the programme is a testament to the power of education and skills development in breaking cycles of poverty and fostering meaningful change in communities.

The programme, funded by CATHSSETA, has equipped participants with vital culinary skills aligned with industry standards, preparing them for real opportunities in the hospitality industry. Notably, **three exceptional learners** were awarded the chance to enhance their

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expertise through international training — gaining invaluable global experience that will further enrich their careers.

“CATHSSETA remains committed to playing a pivotal role in addressing unemployment by providing relevant skills training. We believe that this programme will open doors to new opportunities for our graduates and contribute meaningfully to the growth of the sector,” said **Mr Marks Thibela**, CEO of CATHSSETA.

It is important to note that the National Development Plan, 2030, sets an ambitious target of producing 30,000 artisans per year by 2030. This is further detailed in the National Skills Development Plan, 2030 (NSDP), which requires Post School Education and Training Institutions to identify and increase the production of high-demand occupations. In response to these directives, during the 2019/2020 financial year, CATHSSETA funded 164 learners for the Chef qualification, which is an artisan programme, that allows participants to exit with a portable qualification that enables them to compete globally.

Furthermore, the *Decade of Artisan* initiative aims to promote artisanship as a viable career path for young individuals and encourages more young people to pursue technical courses instead of the generic management courses. It seeks to address the shortage of skilled artisans in the country and to support strategic infrastructure projects—another initiative in which CATHSSETA is deeply involved.

Media Invitation

Members of the media are cordially invited to attend this momentous occasion and help share the inspiring success stories of these determined young individuals. Interview opportunities will be available with the graduates and **CATHSSETA’s CEO, Mr Marks Thibela**.

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For media enquiries or to RSVP, please contact: Poshy Damane

Mobile: 060 534 4781

Email: nosiphod@cathsseta.org.za

This event reflects CATHSSETA's continued commitment to driving social and economic progress through inclusive and impactful skills development.

End of Release