



NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL TRAINING AUTHORITY

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PRESS RELEASE

The **National Industrial Training Authority [NITA]** has launched its Floriculture Skills Upgrading Curriculum.

The programme which targets the flower sub sector industry was unveiled by the Director General of the National Industrial Training Authority Mr. Paul K. Kosgei on 12th September 2014 at the KWS Training Institute, Naivasha

The Floriculture Skills Upgrading Program is tailored to the level and type of skills required by the general workers in the sector. The government through NITA, together with training providers, the private sector and other stakeholders worked together to develop the curriculum to ensure harmonization, standardization, quality of qualifications and competencies, and portable employable skills in this sub-sector.

The sub sector was represented at the function by the *Agricultural Employers Association*, the *Kenya Flower Council*, the *Horticulture Crops Development Authority*, the *Federation of Kenya Employers*, *Egerton University* and the *University of Nairobi*. Also represented were: ***Oserian Development Company Ltd, Finlays Horticulture Ltd, and Fontana Ltd.***

Speaking at the launch, the Director General Mr. Kosgei said that Floriculture is Kenya's second foreign exchange earner and that NITA was determined to support its national economic position and its critical global competitiveness in order to ensure its

sustainability through the provision of the sector's workforce access to quality, relevant and affordable skills development.

In developing the sub-sector, NITA is committed to providing focused training in collaboration with quality training providers and industry by building a critical mass of skills and expertise and apt curriculum, he added.

He pointed out that the background to the development of the programme can be traced to certain drawbacks observed by employers in the agricultural sector. Noting that whereas these employers contribute the most into the Industrial Training Levy Fund, there lacks commensurate benefits to the employers in the sector. The reason for this condition had been noted to be due to non-availability of appropriate training programs for the sector's general workers who comprise the largest portion of the workforce, he said.

Mr. Kosgei explained that the program has been developed as a way of ensuring that the sector benefits from the levy contribution through available courses, but also as a means of equipping the workers with skills that will contribute to Kenya achieving vision 2030 in the nation's human resource development.

He said; 'the sector now has the opportunity not only to up-skill its workforce for enhanced productivity, but also be able to seek and receive reimbursement on the training costs incurred. The workers would also benefit through performance improvement under a standardized, harmonized program with a nationally recognized certification'. This, added, would allow employability across different organizations with the possibility of upward progression at the workplace.

The Director General explained that level 1 of the curriculum of 96 hours with its four (4) modules was piloted in 2013 in three farms: Oserian Development Company Ltd in Naivasha, Finlays Horticulture Ltd in Timau, and Fontana Ltd at Salgaa. The piloting lasted 16 weeks with sessions of three hours a day for two consecutive days a week. A total of 90 employees benefitted, 30 employees nominated from each farm under a NITA entry

requirement. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology delivered the training while Egerton University conducted the assessment. All the training costs were paid directly to the assessors and the training provider by NITA.

He emphasized that this training can only be conducted at the employer's premises for a more hands on approach as well allowing the employees easy access to the training at a more affordable cost for the employer.

He said that employers in the sector may henceforth nominate employees to undertake the program under the existing training guidelines and seek reimbursement of the incurred training costs as per the reimbursement procedure.

Mr. Kosgei said that this program's impact will be evident in raising the living standards of the trainees, increasing the profit margins of the farms as productivity is enhanced, and raising higher the quality of the Kenyan flowers on the local and global market.

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