



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## THE FIRST SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS NETWORKING BREAKFAST IN D.C. WAS A SUCCESS!

Diaspora Africans gathered for first Professionals Networking Breakfast for Southern Africans

Silver Spring, MD September 5, 2014

This weekend Southern African Community USA (SACU) hosted the first Southern African Professionals Networking Breakfast at the Marriott hotel in Silver Spring. The event attracted a little over 30 professionals, entrepreneurs and recent college graduates who came together to learn networking skills and to network with each other. The networking event took place as a part of SACU's annual Southern African Reunion Weekend, an annual event that celebrates Southern African culture in the D.C. metro area. It was a perfect complement to other events that SACU hosted during the reunion weekend which included a Southern African themed fashion show, picnic, and party. The 2014 Southern African Reunion ended on Monday September 1<sup>st</sup> with a Professionals Networking Breakfast.

The free event was attended by a diverse group of professionals, entrepreneurs, job-seeking recent college graduates and retirees alike. Also in attendance were SACU Directors, SACU Advisory board members and the diplomats from some of the Southern African embassies and the Press corps. Non-Southern African Countries represented included Gabon, Liberia, Nigeria, the Caribbean, Sierra Leone and the USA.

SACU Co-Founder and Director, Omega Tawonezvi hosted the event and opened it by explaining that the networking event was the first step in series of programs that SACU has designed to encourage, empower and improve the Southern African Community who is trying to navigate a new country. The guest speaker, Mercy Chogugudza then explored the challenges Southern Africans face when navigating corporate America and how to effectively network to address those challenges. She encouraged the audience to be true themselves by not trying too hard to imitate American copying accents, work ethics and the like because one risks the danger of typecasting themselves as a follower. Additionally, highlighting ones difference may work to your advantage as companies valued diversity. Chogugudza also advised them to "brag" about themselves in spite of coming from cultures that are community based and look down on self-promotion. She advised that working hard and waiting for someone to recognize them was not sufficient for career advancement in the USA. Lastly, she advised attendees to have an "accountability partner" – a person who would ensure that they did not remain stagnant in their career. Chogugudza is an HR executive with over 20 years' experience who is originally from Zimbabwe. She has an MA in Human Resources and an MBA in Business Administration.

The Southern African Professionals Networking Breakfast was organized by Southern African Community USA as part of its Southern African Reunion Weekend. SACU is a non-profit organization representing Africans from the countries of Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The weekend was successfully met SACU's goals of uniting and empowering Southern Africans and friends of Southern Africa which are a part of SACU's mission and objectives. SACU Co-Founder and Director Sitinga Kachipande (Malawi) had this to say about the weekend:

"We are glad that we were able to provide a platform where Southern Africans can network and feel empowered in their careers. SACU is planning to host the first Southern African Business Expo next year and is encouraged by the turn out, support and positive feedback.

For more information about The Southern African Fashion Show USA and SACU, visit: [www.southernafricancommunity.org](http://www.southernafricancommunity.org) or email: [info@southernafricancommunity.org](mailto:info@southernafricancommunity.org).

## Southern African Professionals Networking Event Photos.



Photos 1-4: SACU's Professionals Networking Breakfast guest speaker Mercy Chogugudza speaks to professionals from across the region. Photo 5: (L-R) SACU Director & Co-Founder Lisa Netha, attendee Chem, SACU Executive Director and Founder Rachel Nghiwete, and SACU Director and Co-Founder Siyanda Masiza, Photo 6: SACU Director and Co-Founder Lisa Netha (r) talks to attendees.

Complete photos for all the weekend events can be found at: <http://southernafricancommunity.org/sacu-gallery/>