



Chapter One of a New Property Management Story in South Africa

IREM LAUNCHES ITS FIRST CHAPTER IN AFRICA

By Leah Misbin

When IREM chartered its 15th international chapter last year in South Africa—the first on the continent of Africa—it represented much more than the establishment of an official IREM presence in that country. It symbolized a movement to introduce professionalism to and raise the stature of a sector of real estate in that country that is unregulated, unstandardized and undervalued.

The IREM South Africa Gauteng Chapter was officially chartered in September of last year when IREM’s Governing Council, meeting during the Global Summit in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., voted unanimously for its approval. Present to receive the charter at that time were 10 IREM Members from South Africa, together with representatives from South Africa’s Department of Public Works (DPW) and the South African Institute of Black Property Practitioners (SAIBPP).

“This is a very proud day for us,” said Saul Gumede, a long-time CPM Member and the first president of the new chapter.

“We have been working for a long time to establish ourselves in the South African market, and now with the support of IREM, we really believe we can change how property management is viewed and regulated locally.”

Five months later, in February of this year, the celebration of the new chapter moved to Johannesburg with IREM President Don Wilkerson, CPM, on hand for the official in-country launch. “I see huge potential here,” said Wilkerson, speaking at the event that was well attended by key representatives from DPW, the private real estate sector, academia and the press. Wilkerson noted, “There is such passion and dedication in our members here, they can’t help but succeed.”

Speaking about his 20-year journey to start an IREM Chapter in South Africa, Gumede became emotional as he declared, “My persistence has paid off. Having this local representation here in Gauteng Province, an outpost at the tip of Africa, will benefit not only our professionals here, but will serve as a starting point for much more.”

The CPM education and credentialing program is being delivered through

Official chartering of the IREM South Africa Gauteng Chapter at the 2018 IREM Global Summit.





Witswatersrand (Wits) University in Johannesburg, and today there are 46 IREM Members, including 17 CPM designees, in South Africa.

The continued rollout of the CPM program comes at a time when South African real estate companies are finding the pool of qualified property management professionals to oversee their investments very shallow. “It is a real challenge here,” said Professor Sam Asazu of Wits University, in speaking to the South African financial publication *Business Report*. “The Wits program was developed to provide practical property management education, but we can’t do it alone—this is where IREM comes in.” This message was reinforced by Professor David Root, head of the School of Construction Economics and Management at Wits. In his address at the chapter launch, Root cited the need to improve standards of education in the property management field, stating that “property management doesn’t really have the best reputation in the industry,” and highlighting the importance of designing “programs that are internationally competitive,” such as the CPM program.

The themes of improving professionalism and advancing skills resonated throughout President Wilkerson’s trip to South Africa, which included a visit to

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—SAUL GUMEDE, CPM, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE IREM SOUTH AFRICA GAUTENG CHAPTER

IREM supporters, new CPM Members and Candidates gather at the local launch of the South Africa Gauteng Chapter in Johannesburg.

DPW in Pretoria. Minister T.W. Nxesi, head of DPW, continued his support of IREM by inviting the agency’s employees to a presentation about what IREM has to offer. “DPW has made a commitment to making sure our employees have the right skills, and we see IREM as a pathway for this,” said Lydia Bici, DPW head of training.

Wilkerson also met with Pareto, a real estate company and major financial contributor to IREM’s Johannesburg program in 2017 and 2018. “Pareto strongly believes in IREM. We have already seen the proof in our own employees who we sent to the program and now hold the CPM,” said Pareto CEO Malose Kekana. Meetings also were held with other major players in the South Africa real estate market, including Broll, Growth Point, Redefine and Excellerate/Cushman & Wakefield.

Vuyiswa Mutshekwane, SAIBPP chief executive said in speaking to *Business Report*, “It has been very encouraging to see how enthusiastically the industry has embraced IREM and pledged their support. Professionalizing the property industry is important in ensuring sustainable transformation. We are proud to be partnered with IREM in driving this process.” ■