

Call for African business to take social role

ESKOM Development Foundation director Joe Matsau says African business leaders must play a more active role in promoting social and economic development in their countries if they are to haul the continent out of the quagmire of underdevelopment and deteriorating quality of life.

Speaking at the media launch of the second annual Eskom African Business Leaders Forum, Matsau said Africa remained marginalised in the global village.

The forum, to be held in Johannesburg next month, seeks to address leadership issues in Africa by creating a platform for proactive and practical responses to challenges facing the continent.

The forum will be attended by business and political leaders from 19 African countries with keynote speakers being former President FW de Klerk, former Botswana President Ketumile Masire and the chairman of the AU Commission, Ouma Konare.

Matsau said businesses such as Eskom needed to take more responsibility for the societies they operated in if Africa was to achieve sustainable growth.

"Eskom's role is not only about lighting the continent but enlightening it as well.

"If every business takes responsibility for the societies they operate in, Africa can be rescued.

"We are convinced that this will end the scourge of underdevelopment that afflicts our continent," said Matsau.

Everest Ekong, publisher of Business in Africa magazine, said an explosion of conflicts continued to undermine prospects for an African renaissance. He called on business leaders to take the initiative in human upliftment and poverty eradication.

Ekong said bold and imaginative leadership could turn Africa from being a continent ridden with conflict, poverty and disease into a vibrant commercial place.

"African tertiary institutions

DEVELOPMENT

By DINGILIZWE NTULI



LEADERSHIP: Joe Matsau wants businesses to drive sustainable growth in Africa

should offer leadership studies in their courses to address the leadership challenges facing our continent," Ekong said.

National Ports Authority general manager for ports and corporate affairs Nozipho Sithole said the authority was the gateway of trade in Africa and could easily become the catalyst for economic investment in the continent.

"We believe that as we continue to engage and implement efforts that will improve the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the borders separating our countries will erode to allow our people to come together."