

African leaders needed for African challenges

IDEALISM has an important role to play in shaping Africa, but it must be an idealism tempered by pragmatism. So says Reuel Khoza, chairman of Eskom, who will deliver the welcoming address to delegates of the Eskom African Business Leaders Forum.

Khoza represents Eskom and the Nepad Business Group (South Africa), as well as the black empowerment private equity and investment group, Aka Capital. Known for his robust views, Khoza maintains that the continent has enormous potential for growth — given the right kind of leadership.

“We have to develop African leaders

anchored in African tradition for an African environment to meet African challenges, and equip them with requisite skills and competencies to handle the paradoxes and challenges of their times,” says Khoza. “It is a leadership that does not consume seed capital but invests for the generations to come.

“A leadership that bridges the schisms and cleavages wrought by religious, tribal, social, ideological, economic and political diversity that characterises much of Africa’s politics.”

The African conception of ideal leadership is characterised by probity, humility, integrity, compassion and human-

ity, says Khoza. This value-centred leadership is based on the philosophy of Ubuntu, or African humanism.

“We believe in the ability of Africans to rebuild a vibrant, productive African leadership spirit, and produce leaders who are role models in many spheres of human endeavour,” he says.

For Khoza, the idealism inherent in restoring Africa to itself is a necessary part of economic revival. In an Africa whose intellectuals are nurtured by native founding principles, innovation and industry will forge ahead, based on native technology and skills, combined with the best universal practices.



PRAGMATIC IDEALIST: Eskom chairman Reuel Khoza

Determination and interaction

UNDER the theme Leadership for Prosperity, the gathering of Africa’s top decision-makers in Johannesburg is an ideal platform for business interaction.

Last year’s inaugural event brought together leaders to share their experiences of business leadership in Africa, and their deliberations concluded with a statement setting out goals for the future.

Good leadership, said a communiqué from the African Business Leaders Forum 2003, is a central factor in the success or failure of nations, companies,

public sector institutions and local communities.

Sound leadership development strategies should not be confined to business, as they are equally important in the public and civil society sectors, it said.

The goal is to ramp up the commitment of the private sector throughout Africa to leadership training and strategic planning for sustainable development under the Nepad banner.

This year’s conference includes a number of case studies and other presentations regard-

ing transformation in organisations, with the intention of imparting practical guidelines for change and growth.

The conference aims to be highly interactive, with a live television debate on leadership in Africa on the SABC’s Channel Africa on October 14, as well as a featured debate on the purposes of the forum as a body and as a platform for dialogue.

The forum is not all business, however. Friday October 15 is set aside for the Eskom African Business Leaders Golf Day, along with organised tours.