

**FOCUS: ESKOM AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS FORUM**

# Forum has sights set on concrete goals

Focus is on building personal leadership skills, productivity and profitability, writes **Graeme Addison**

MOBILISING the private sector throughout Africa to build prosperity remains the main theme of the Eskom African Leaders Forum. The forum holds its second conference on October 13 to 15 in Johannesburg.

The forum, established a year ago, concentrated on good corporate governance, efficiency and social responsibility. It will now take the prosperity theme forward by focusing on leadership skills, productivity and profitability.

The conference, which will be held at the Sandton Convention Centre is designed to help leaders in the private and public sector understand how to grow their organisations and apply new ideas about African leadership.

African business culture is distinctive because it is based on African humanism and communal relations. These values strengthen the competitive position of organisations by

building solidarity around group goals. The recognition of the worth of every individual encourages the creativity necessary for innovation.

One of the objectives of the forum is to explore, develop and apply these values in a way that benefits businesses and the society in which they operate.

American, Japanese and German business cultures each have their own clear characteristics in terms of work ethic, efficiency and corporate citizenship. African business leaders believe that the elements of a unique African management style are to be found in traditional culture.

Champions of this idea in Southern Africa include the top leadership of several major businesses including Eskom, MTN, Honeywell and the National Ports Authority — all sponsors of the upcoming conference.

The two-day forum is a follow-up to an inaugural gathering a year ago

when the participants agreed to hold further meetings to sustain the growth of African leadership in principle and practice. The 2004 forum will be hosted by Business in Africa magazine and is supported by organisations in 17 African countries.

This year, delegates will meet in the spirit of common purpose: to seek African solutions for African problems. There is consensus that only through restoring African self-esteem can African nations prosper and develop as global players. The forum is aligned with the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad).

The inaugural forum, held in October 2003, concluded that African business leaders in the public and private sectors realised that through the Nepad initiative, African governments are increasingly engaged in expansion of infrastructure and continued social, political and economic