

'Women can lead the way'

By Tshepo Mongoyal

DEVELOPMENT of women in Africa could help to alleviate poverty on the continent and increase its economic growth.

This is according to Ndidi Nwuneli of the Leader Effectiveness Accountability and Professionalism who is among African women leaders attending the Eskom African Business Leadership conference starting this Wednesday. The aim of the conference is to provide a platform for leaders in business and Government to discuss issues ranging from poverty alleviation to economic growth.

Nwuneli said some solutions to Africa's problems lie in the hands of women because of their intelligence to manage the issues of intangibles in society.

"Women must have a voice in shaping politics that affect them and channelling human and natural resources to create wealth. They must serve as influential participants. This means not just political leadership but also business," said Nwuneli. "But as long as there is little division of responsibility at home, gender stereotypes prevail and abuse continues, women are going to find it difficult to attain leadership positions," said Nwuneli.

The South African Government had placed a strong emphasis on gender representation, with 13 women ministers and eight deputy ministers. The African continent had also shown its commitment by electing Tanzania's Gertrude Mongella, as the first president of the newly established Pan African Parliament.

Adele Thomas of the With Business School said women leaders contribute to the diversity by bringing a different dimension to traditional thinking.

According to Yvonne Muthien, MTN Group corporate executive, women have demonstrated they are skilled negotiators who focus on creating win-win situations and harmonious collaborations, a much needed quality on the African continent.