

Equipped to speak on leadership in Africa

A BACKGROUND in town and regional planning has equipped Thulani Gcabashe for the role of Eskom chief executive — not only because of what he knows about infrastructure, but because of what he has learnt about people's needs.

The combination of technical know-how and community awareness has bred a deep sense of the mission that Eskom must fulfil if it is to make a contribution to sustainable development.

Gcabashe will feature as one of the top speakers this week at the Eskom African Business Leadership Conference, with the theme "Leadership for Prosperity".

Gcabashe believes leadership is key to achieving development goals.

"Why is the question of African leadership so important in a world so fast globalising that some political analysts are predicting the collapse of the nation state as we know it?" Gcabashe wrote last year in an article that appeared on MoneyWeb.

"We as Africans have relied for far too long on Western models of leadership and this has undermined our agenda for the renewal of our continent. Our challenge is to systematically identify factors that make it possible for Africans to perform at the highest level."

Eskom has spent a lot of time and money researching, analysing, capturing and recording all the available principles and characteristics of leadership, with particular reference to Africa. What the organisation has learnt is being incorporated in programmes for managers.

Leadership vision, determination and skills are priorities to create an enabling environment for economic, social and environmental sustainability, says Gcabashe.

He joined Eskom as the Durban distributor and soon became general manager of Eskom International in London.

In February 2000 he was appointed chief executive designate and took up the position in November 2000.