

'Whites feel excluded'

JOHANNESBURG — South Africans must work together towards the economic empowerment of all "truly disadvantaged [citizens], most of whom are black", former president FW de Klerk said yesterday.

He told the African Business Leaders Forum that the white population could not provide the numbers of skilled workers, professionals and managers that a growing economy required.

Inevitably, and quite rapidly, the economy will reflect the make-up of the population, he said in a speech about challenges facing South Africa in its second decade.

"But the economy will not grow satisfactorily if we do not appoint people with appropriate skills whatever their race, if we interfere with the ability of companies to manage their affairs or if we dilute property rights.

"Many whites publicly express politically correct, but qualified, support for transformation while they privately educate their children to work overseas. The result is that too many whites are emigrating, either overseas or inwardly into their own communities.

"They are withdrawing ... and not making the contribution to the broader society that they could make and I believe would dearly like to make," he said. *Sapa*