

Low wages behind African brain drain

THE International Organisation for Migration estimates that 20 000 skilled Africans leave the continent every year for jobs in developed countries.

It says the primary cause of this brain drain is the "unreasonably low" wages paid to African professionals.

At the annual Eskom African Leaders Forum in Johannesburg this week, Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad quoted the or-

ganisation's estimate that Africa has more than 250 000 professionals working in developed countries, and spends \$4-billion annually to recruit and pay 100 000 expatriates.

Pahad said this was a "strange and wasteful way" of dealing with the brain-drain problem.

"Measures have to be taken to offset existing incentives for highly educated people to emigrate. It is incumbent on us to strengthen the socioeconomic base of our

people in terms of living conditions, education and health."

Eskom chairman Reuel Khoza said African leaders must introduce practical programmes of action with timelines and deadlines to improve the continent's conditions.

Khoza said an oil refinery run and managed by Africans should be developed in Nigeria. He said Nigeria's gas should be channelled into powering the electrification of West Africa. — *Dingilizwe Ntuli*