

THE HOT SPOT

Continent 'needs new leadership'

AFRICAN businessmen at last week's second annual Eskom Business Leadership Forum stressed the need for the continent to breed a new generation of leaders, said a statement sent to **Business Day Africa**.

Speakers at the forum in Sandton, South Africa, said Africa could benefit if it had a leadership "propounded on solid African values conducive to an Africa operating within the globalised world".

On the New Partnership for Africa's Development, (Nepad) speakers insisted on the need to market the initiative through an Africa-owned, internationally renowned media platform.

WHAT THEY SAID

COMMENTATORS

DESPITE progress that African countries have made in embracing democracy, in developing technology infrastructures and seeking peace rather than conflicts, Africa's own people — and the western world's — still hold perceptions about leadership that perpetuate the notion of a "dark" continent, says Ndug'u Gathinji, chairman of the Nairobi Stock Exchange.

"Several perceptions should be challenged to grow leadership in Africa. One is that we in Africa do not have what it takes intellectually to turn the tide in the continent," he says.

Another perception that must be changed is that any individual leaders or nations can succeed on their own in the quest for a change in leadership style.

These perceptions, says Gathinji, have been shaped by the leaders themselves and the community at large as much as they are the result of colonialism and continued pressure from the west to make Africans believe that the way forward is through them.

"What Africa needs now is a



Eskom chairman Reuel Khoza

new generation of leaders that is free from colonial hang-ups, that is bold and focused, and sees the past as a reference point of what not to repeat."

Reuel Khoza, chairman of South Africa's electricity utility, Eskom, says that contrary to an old adage that natural leaders are born, not made, they are born and then made.

But the key leadership challenge on the continent is that too

few leaders are emerging. "We should breed them — they won't just appear out of the blue."

Khoza says this can be done in a number of ways, including teaching leadership theory at school, and developing leadership centres within the major corporations.

"Africa also needs to develop leaders anchored in the continent's tradition for an African environment to meet African challenges," says Khoza.

Lemmy Abedule, regional GM of Honeywell Process Solutions Africa, writes that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) is still a "high level political movement" that does not affect the lives of the average person.

He feels Nepad needs a more effective publicity and marketing campaign to reach its target beneficiary market.

This will be possible only through an internationally-renowned, Africa-based media platform, which should include a media monitoring apparatus to counter "historically negative reporting sold into the world market by international media organisations".