

Two vie for business unity control

■ Unemployment, poverty high on agenda

Wiseman Khuzwayo

THE RACE for the presidency of Business Unity South Africa (Busa) is on between a black economic empowerment (BEE) businessman and a black professional woman from a traditional white business.

Speaking from Tanzania where he is attending the World Economic Forum on Africa, Busa chief executive Jerry Vilakazi confirmed yesterday that only Sandile Zungu and Futhi Mtoba had been nominated by Friday.

The election will take place on Tuesday at Busa's annual general meeting, which will be addressed by President Jacob Zuma. The successful candidate will take over from Brian Molefe, the outgoing chief executive of the Public Investment Corporation.

Vilakazi said Zungu and Mtoba would be the only candidates unless another emerged from the floor of the conference, which is allowed by Busa's constitution.

Zungu is a businessman who has cut his teeth in the BEE environment. He is the chairman and founder of Zungu Investment Company,

which has a diversified portfolio. He sits on the board of the International Marketing Council as well as the BEE Advisory Council, which was recently appointed by Zuma.

Mtoba is the chairwoman of Deloitte Consultancy and is a former Business Woman of the Year. She was nominated by the Business Women's Association.

Busa represents 56 business bodies and associations. One of its members is Business Leadership SA (BLSA), which represents big business leadership in South Africa.

Busa says its vision is to be a unified and fully representative organisation that contributes to a vibrant, transforming and growing economy in South Africa.

BLSA says one of its core missions is to facilitate an effective dialogue between business and social partners.

However, the Zuma administration has snubbed big business and the president has never met the chief executives and chairmen of the top corporations and multinationals since he came to power. This is in stark contrast to former President Thabo Mbeki, to whom BLSA had open access.

BLSA chief executive Michael Spicer told Sunday Independent recently that the organisation had approached the government for meetings, without success.

One of the organisations nominating Zungu is the Black Management Forum.

Its president, Jimmy Manyi, said: "The part played by black business in Busa is work in progress. We need a black president who has a strong association with BEE so that black business can be meaningful in Busa, which is still largely consisting of white business. Zungu is a BEE businessman - for us this very critical and a deal breaker. This is not a personality issue but criteria."

Analyst Duma Gqubule said the Busa president had to be someone who would be able to work with all the stakeholders and develop a clear vision of an economy to eradicate unemployment and poverty.

"This is a political appointment, balancing the books is not very important. The person must be able to manage the internal divisions between black and black and black and white. The outgoing president (Molefe) was invisible," he said.

