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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MAJOR GENERAL YVONNE BOTSHELENG – HEAD OF FAMILY VIOLENCE, CHILD PROTECTION AND SEXUAL OFFENCES UNIT – SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICES

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. M1ALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity – Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA	Today's discussion we are talking to Major General Yvonne Botsheleng who is the Head of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit in the South African Police Services and we will be calling it FCS for short; additionally she is the Chairperson of the SAPS Women's Network.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Thank you very much and I also appreciate your invitation, thank you Doctor.
DR. MALKA	I think let's kick off by talking a little bit about the unit that you head, so if you could please explain what the function is of the unit; I know that you are the national head which if I recall correctly you are responsible for 176 different divisions across South Africa, which is an incredible task.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Okay thank you Doctor. I'm the head of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Investigators like she indicated in the country. In the whole country we have 176 units that are responsible for investigation, particularly for crimes against women and children. These units can be reached by all South Africans
DR. MALKA	So in terms of South Africans if they experience a crime or something that is being perpetrated against them within that environment, so whether it's an act against women, they can then connect with each of those units across the country.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so, they are placed in terms of cluster model; each and every province have got their own units, depending on the size of the province.
DR. MALKA	So the more densely populated a province is, the greater the number of units.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Exactly and also they're scattered, those provinces that are very scattered like the Eastern Cape have got more units than any other province in the country because Eastern Cape is a very scattered area, they've got 27 units. Here in Gauteng at least we have 22 units; in Western Cape they've got 25 units and KZN and so on and so forth.
DR. MALKA	And within each of those units, how are the units structured?
MJ BOTSHELENG	The units are structured in terms of we've got both operational and support. Under the support there are people who are supporting us in terms of investigation; we have got forensic social workers that are employed by the South African Police Service, particularly to deal with crimes against children, specifically children who are below 10 years. You know children sometimes it's difficult to disclose whatever the problems they came across or the traumatic incidents, specifically the rapes. Now these social workers are well trained social workers, they've got their own qualifications in terms of their profession and they deal with children and their responsibility is for the assessment of children to provide testimony in court and also to provide reports at court.
DR. MALKA	So they assist and they support the children in terms of them being able to talk about what they've experienced?

MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so.
DR. MALKA	And they obviously go with them if they have to go into a court environment to assist and communicate.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Exactly.
DR. MALKA	The unit that you're responsible for, it's a very serious unit in terms of the crimes that are committed against people; how are you finding the changes with regards to reporting, the frequency of incidents and have you seen a decrease in certain crimes or increase in others?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely as the FCS or in the FCS environment we are not only responsible for reactive, we are also responsible for proactive action and we go out and educate the community about these crimes or crimes against women and children and ever since then as...we are experiencing an increase in terms of reporting, particularly the sexual offences, but one can say the moment we get more reports in terms of sexual offences but also the successes are very high. There's a good story to tell about life sentences that we are producing. So ever since the re-establishment of these units in 2010 up until their financial year that ended in 2013, on the 31st March, we managed to secure 1,187 life sentences and I'm talking particularly about life sentences not about other sentences. There are very good sentences that we produce also like 25 years, 79 years and of course I must really thank our justice cluster department like Department of Justice, Social Development because we work together with those departments, that's why we are getting so good convictions.
DR. MALKA	And in terms of those great conviction rates and the types of sentences that are being handed down to criminals, are you seeing that that is now starting to make criminal...reduce criminal activity because they understand what the consequences are of their actions?
MJ BOTSHELENG	I really do not want to say they can reduce or they are reducing this criminal activity. We are experiencing...honestly speaking we are experiencing an increase but particularly in terms sexual offences. That is why as the FCS we are going outside to go and sensitise the community about these cases. We even sensitise them in terms of the procedure of investigation; how do we preserve or we have to preserve the evidence, what they can do, where to go in order to report these cases.
DR. MALKA	And with the education initiatives that you're running in all of the communities; what are some of those programmes; can you share some details on them?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Yes we have awareness programmes that we go together as the SAPS. We've got visible policing also, that is solely responsible for the proactive action so we go together with the visible policing, we go together even with other departments in the justice cluster system to the community and educate the community about...
DR. MALKA	...so it's an integration between departments...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...it's an integrated approach, definitely, so we even go to the churches, we are invited by many churches or many churches invited us.
DR. MALKA	Which are very strong from a community level.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Exactly and the communities are appreciating that because some of the information the community was not aware of it.
DR. MALKA	And do you leave behind leaflets or is it just discussions and training programmes?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so, we have leaflets that we leave with the community also to go through.
DR. MALKA	We'll be right back after this.

DR. MALKA	You are listening to ‘Womanity – Woman in Unity’ on Channel Africa, the Voice of the African Renaissance, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band.
DR. MALKA	We are talking to Major General Botsheleng who is Head of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit with the South African Police Services.
DR. MALKA	Major General in your career you have taken a very interesting career path, the police service environment would be one which is typically classed as a male dominated environment; can you please tell us what your experiences have been as a woman entering this field?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Thank you very much once more Doctor, yes indeed, SAPS as you know, it’s a male dominated area but now there’s a lot of improvement in terms of bringing more women into the SAPS, particularly at the senior positions. Myself I travelled a long route in the SAPS. I’m now...I started when I joined the police in 1989 and I went through all the ranks in the SAPS. Whilst I was also working that other side I tried to develop myself and empower myself in terms of education. I studied my diploma in Policy; I studied the BTech, being the degree in Policy, thereafter I went outside to study Governance and Political Transformation, I registered it as the Masters, that...I graduated as a Postgrad...
DR. MALKA	...congratulations....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...National Diploma, PostGrad for Masters in Governance and Political Transformation but now currently I’m busy finalising my Masters in that line. To come back to your question to say how do I find it; yes, it was not an easy road to come where I am right now. To be in an environment where dominance it’s male, you can ask yourself a question, but through perseverance and ensuring that I...ensure that as a woman I have to know that...these other men have to know that woman also, we are equals, we are equals now. Remember 50/50 of government...that government is talking about and that is what our National Commissioner is striving for...
DR. MALKA	...yes and I...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...and actually I want to congratulate SAPS because now we’ve got many women now, I think we are standing at about 30% of women in senior positions right now....
DR. MALKA	...women in senior positions SAPS is at 30%....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...we are standing somewhere there....
DR. MALKA	...and in terms of women representation across the entire South African Police Services; what is the ratio?
MJ BOTSHELENG	It’s still growing, we are still building towards that, but initially like I indicated, most of the people were men but now more women are coming into the SAPS, particularly coming to my own environment now where I am the Head of the FCS. Yes, one can really indicate to you that most of the investigators that are investigating these crimes against women and children are male but I think it’s due to the traumatic nature of these cases because some women feel like really, being a mother and seeing...looking at this young child, for an example...
DR. MALKA	...so they empathise and they almost imagine themselves being in that situation with their children....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...yes, exactly, but we are working towards improving that situation. We’ve got more women, very committed and dedicated women and women in this environment, honestly speaking, to be quite frank with you, they’ve got passion for their work, they are working tirelessly these women. They are working over the weekend, Saturdays, and they are so positive to be in this

	environment.
DR. MALKA	So it becomes a life calling, it's no longer just a job.
MJ BOTSHELENG	It is indeed a life calling, it is not just a job.
DR. MALKA	And I want to go back to your successes because I'm a firm believer in terms of education and clearly you have developed your career in conjunction with your academic and self-development; do you see that as being key ingredients for success?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Of course yes, education is the key to every door or to all doors and I'm encouraging our young women outside, specifically in the SAPS, to say SAPS women, please let us study. There is what we call lifelong learning, let us study, but it does not necessarily mean if you study now it's a licence that you can go up; you must also couple that with hard work, hard work pays.
DR. MALKA	And experience....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...and experience and perseverance as well, there are challenges along the road. Of course no-one have ever told us that the road is going to be easy.
DR. MALKA	And I believe that the South African Polices Services has developed and started its own university in the Western Cape; can you tell us about that?
MJ BOTSHELENG	...ja, it's a good story to tell honestly speaking. Our Minister, former Minister Nathi Mthethwa and the National Commissioner launched that, they are working in conjunction with the University of South Africa; it's something good to tell. They started this year in January, we've got even students there directly from the SAPS but the wish of the National Commissioner actually is this university is open for other African countries, ja.
DR. MALKA	To invite people just from the SADC region or from the entire continent?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Yes, we've got students who registered for BTech in Policy, their degree in Policy
DR. MALKA	That's a significant achievement and it really shows development into people.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so...
DR. MALKA	...and one of....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...it's something to celebrate actually....
DR. MALKA	...yes I think it is certainly a good story to tell and we must be proud of the achievements that this service is making because investment in the people is an investment in the community and society and the whole economy of the country.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Actually and I want to congratulate our dearest National Commissioner Riah Phiyega by giving birth to this baby.
DR. MALKA	So did she start the initiative?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Exactly, she is the one who started this; she gave birth to that.
DR. MALKA	Well she deserves fantastic congratulations..
MJ BOTSHELENG	...she deserves that, she deserves that.
DR. MALKA	And on an educational level and talking about training, I know that there is an initiative called...I believe it's SARPCO; the Southern African Regional Police...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...Police Corporation....
DR. MALKA	...Corporation; are you involved in that process?
MJ	We are as the SAPS we are involved, even in training we've got our own

BOTSHELENG	policy officials who are providing training to other countries, African countries in this. We are part of that, whether with the successes operations and everything, we are part of that.
DR. MALKA	And is that initiative to standardise police services across the region or is it about boosting more insights and advancing people?
MJ BOTSHELENG	It's about both and also co-operation, remember crime does not have boundaries. Crime from Nigeria can also escalate to South Africa, there's the kind of multisignal approach that we are looking at, we want to take to build this kind of relationship to say criminals we are here as the police in this continent.
DR. MALKA	So you've built up a policing network with....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...yes...
DR. MALKA	...all of the countries....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...definitely so.
DR. MALKA	And how are you finding the role of technology in connecting and being able to communicate and keep in touch with what is happening as you said for example some happening in Nigeria, something happening in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa....?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Well we have our own Interpol also that connects us with all these countries. Yes indeed, technology we are working on that, but it's not a train smash, it's not a problem thus far that one can say really it is an inhibitive factor.
DR. MALKA	But you're finding it one of the tools to help keep everyone connected...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...exactly, exactly.
DR. MALKA	And whilst we're on the subject of networks, one of the areas which you are the Chairperson of is the SAPS Women's Network; my understanding is that some of the aims of the network include forging strong bonds between women in the South African Police Services, ensuring that women in leadership roles help mentor those at lower levels and that women perceive themselves as equal to their male counterparts. Therein the network offers a strong support structure for female employees in the South African Police Services which will help facilitate the career advancement in the service. Can you tell us more about that, how it functions?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Oh okay Doctor. Yes, in my environment, that is Detective Division, I am the Chairperson of the Women's Network. As the Women's Network, this baby also, even though it's now...it has grown because we started with the Women's Network in 2003 as the South African Police Service, it's for women empowerment. We empower other women, but...
DR. MALKAand empowering women within the service...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...yes within the service but we are not necessarily only looking at empowerment alone, we also care about crimes against women and children. We work together with women empowerment and as women empowerment and as FCS. We go to the community and educate the community about crimes against women and children also and women network is not also working alone. Men also came on board to say here we are as men for change, we can't allow to be beaten by women; we stand also for women to fight against whatever that other people are doing against women or on women.
DR. MALKA	It sounds like there's a very supportive community...
MJ	...exactly, exactly...

BOTSHELENG	
DR. MALKA	...within the force...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...we are working with men for change....
DR. MALKA	...that's wonderful news...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...yes...
DR. MALKA	We'll be right back after this.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	You are listening to 'Womanyity – Woman in Unity' on Channel Africa, the Voice of the African Renaissance, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band.
DR. MALKA	We're talking today to Major General Botsheleng who is the Head of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit of the South African Police Services. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanyityTalk.
DR. MALKA	Major General Botsheleng, South Africa has put out the Women Empowerment and Gender Bill; can you share some of your perspectives on the Bill.
MJ BOTSHELENG	I fully support South Africa's Women Empowerment and Gender Equity Bill, more for that it has, in terms of its different sections, it has some sections like women's economic empowerment and gender based violence, because this bill, though it is just a bill that the parliament has passed, meaning that the new administration will have to look into this now for it to be active enough. These different sections, it intends, the bill intends to legislate on issues such as women in leadership as a call for government to say 50/50. It also advocates for economic empowerment of women and if women are economically empowered they can be able not allow to themselves to stay in the abusive relationships like sometimes some women find themselves to be in those kinds of relationships. This bill also provides for better opportunities for women, it also advocates for abuse of women or one can just say gender based violence. So as South African Police Service we are not an exception, as one of the government departments we are also compelled to adhere to that call and SAPS is doing exactly that. If maybe I may just highlight to you....
DR. MALKA	...please do....
MJ BOTSHELENG	...I want to say thus far SAPS in terms of women in top management or senior positions that we call senior management, we are standing at 34% and SAPS also in 2001 it formed the gender desk and then in 2003 that's when the Women's Network was formed in the SAPS to advocate solely on issues of women, particularly women's empowerment in the SAPS and I believe I'm part of this development because in 2003, as a woman, I became the first Station Commander of Bainsvlei in the Free State and...
DR. MALKA	...that's a significant achievement and I can imagine that during that time, particularly in the early 2000's that there would have been a lot of resistance in a way in terms of women coming into the force and specifically being at high ranking positions.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so and for that matter I was the first African to be there, first Station Commander there, particularly also being the first woman. It was really challenging, I was really confronted by a lot of resistance, particularly on male employees because it was for the first time they see a woman sitting from that seat commanding them and being the station commander and in 2004 I proceeded now being promoted to another level at the colonel level or the superintendent level to become also the first female station commander in Seloshesa Police Station, that is in the Free

	State.
DR. MALKA	So you broke through several glass ceilings in your career and so far have paved the way for other women coming into the police services.
MJ BOTSHELENG	I'm telling you and really I persevered and I can say that perseverance really paid me and to proceed Doctor, in 2010 I also established two clusters. The one I established....the first one I established in February, that is in Edenville that cluster and I was the first cluster commander there to establish this and in June/July I proceeded to Lichtenburg cluster to also establish that cluster, being the first person to establish that and a woman for that matter.
DR. MALKA	Major General can you just expand on what the clusters are?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Okay, the cluster it is a manageable area whereby you will be able...you will be managing two stations, not only one police station. For an example, it depends on the size of the area of the cluster, Edenville I was managing four police stations including the cluster office.....and in Lichtenburg I was managing eight police stations, so it depends on the area size of that particular province. So I was accountable or I was leading close to eight men who were reporting under me as the station commander, so the station commander report at cluster level and then the cluster level is the extension of the provincial level.
DR. MALKA	So in terms of the initial challenges, obviously that was something you encountered coming in and you had that initial resistance with the people under your command...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...yes....
DR. MALKA	...but subsequently over time I'm sure that your powers as a leader have come through and mitigated the factors of being a woman and gender being the main component that people see.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so and in the end our colleagues or my colleagues being particularly men, along the run, or along the way, they understood it clearly to say really, this is about service delivery and this is about women empowerment, that is why I was saying to you that I'm also a product of this women empowerment.
DR. MALKA	And I see that the Women Empowerment Bill is something which will go forwards for the rest of women coming through into the ranks.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Really, really we'll have to go forward with that and I'm encouraging other women also to really pull up their socks. They must also capacitate themselves, they must also be open and able to take whatever challenges that they come across because with me I never resisted or refused when I was called to come and be in this seat. Thank you so much.
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much Major General Botsheleng for sharing your opinion of the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill in South Africa and the strides that you've come through in terms of your career and how this bill is going to further other women in the future.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Definitely so, the ball is in our court as women...
DR. MALKA	...yes it is...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...so let us stand up and be counted.
DR. MALKA	We'll be right back after this.
AD BREAK	
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DR. MALKA	We're talking today to Major General Botsheleng who is the Head of the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit of the South African Police Services. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	In our discussion so far we've spoken about the infrastructure, the functions of the FCS Unit specifically, we've talked about the role of education in terms of development of women's careers, we've spoken about how women have started to come into the police services and the support mechanisms that are available to women in the police services, but let's talk about almost why we have a police service, which is about protecting people, it is about prohibiting criminal activity and your perspective, if you can talk about the roles because we've got to understand that yes, the police service is there to provide a support mechanism, to be on call when something goes wrong, but at the same time we need to start addressing what happens at a community level on their responsibility with regards to criminal activity.
MJ BOTSHELENG	Thank you very much once more Doctor. Yes, as the police or as government, we cannot make it alone; we therefore need the society also to come on board. As parents, we are all parents remember, as parents let us take responsibility in terms of the upbringing of our children. Let parental role prevail 'cause nowadays it's like some of the parents, not all of them, it's like some of them have given up in terms of parental rule. They will talk about rights of the people, yes we know, in terms of our constitution we have rights, but rights goes with responsibility. We need to talk to our children not to just expose them to danger by walking on the street, early hours in the morning, go into the taverns because some of the rape cases that we receive, some emanate from that, some substance abuse have got an influence, so...
DR. MALKA	...so it's about teaching greater morals into society...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...exactly, exactly...
	...with parents taking responsibility for the educational aspects for their children...
MJ BOTSHELENG	...exactly, we need to work together and let us stop pointing fingers, let us all stand together and ensure the safety of our children; particularly our children.
DR. MALKA	And what types of interventions are you seeing happening in terms of trying to get closer with people to take more responsibility?
MJ BOTSHELENG	Obviously the intervention that is happening, it's working together with the community as the police. Working together as different government departments. That's why I said working alone or soloship will take us nowhere. We have to work together, educate each other, help each other because even ourselves in terms of our investigation, we need information from the community, without information from the community it will be difficult for us to prove our cases in court. We need their co-operation.
DR. MALKA	Absolutely yes, you're 100% right, without having the input from the community then we can't get the convictions that are required. In closing today's show, could you please share some words of wisdom that you'd like to offer to women listening to the programme on the continent?
MJ BOTSHELENG	To all women on the continent listening to this programme, I'm saying to you there are lots of opportunities ahead of us. The ball is in our court to play it, so let's stand up as women, let's empower ourselves, let us capacitate ourselves. I want to quote a well known author, George Washington Carver and I quote to say "what you are is God's gift to you and what you make of

	<p><i>yourself, it's your gift to God."</i> Let us ensure that we must know that everybody it's in this earth or world for a reason and women, let's also study, let us learn. That is what we call lifelong learning; let us continue to learn. Know that what...no matter how much you know somewhere, somehow, somebody knows something that you don't know. That's what I can just encourage our people to do. Thank you so much.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I think that that's a very powerful statement and for people to be aware of and to take responsibility for themselves and others and I'm also reminded of a quote by a famous author, Helen Keller, who said; "<i>Do not think of today's failures but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task but you will succeed if you persevere and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles.</i>" Thank you very much Major General Botsheleng, it's been a pleasure having you here and for explaining to us more about the work that you're involved in, for the important work that you're involved in, and the progress that your unit is being able to deliver into our communities and into the country and into the continent.</p>
MJ BOTSHELENG	<p>Thank you very much Doctor I am humbled by your invitation, thanks.</p>
	<p>PROGRAMME END</p>