

PROGRAM DATE: 2014-08-22

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY WOMAN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MINISTER MOLEWA - MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA (INTRODUCTION)	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 (GUEST SYNOPSIS)	Today we're talking to Minister of Environmental Affairs, in South Africa, Edna Molewa and she has been Minister of Environmental Affairs since 2010. She was the former Minister of Social Development and she's the Provincial Chairperson of the African National Congress Women's League in the North-West and she has been a member of the Provincial Executive Committee from 1996 and a member of the African National Congress Women's League National Executive Council since 2003. And today we are at the Women's League, quarterly conference and we bring the show to you from Pretoria and I believe to add to your achievements that you are now Acting President in the interim of the President and the Vice-President.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Yes, that's correct. Yes.
DR. MALKA	Congratulations So we now have Our first female President of South Africa.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Thank you. Thank you. Indeed, yes. It is good that it happened. Actually the swearing in was on the 1st August.
DR. MALKA	So right in Women's Month.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Right at the entrance of Women's Month.
DR. MALKA	Congratulations. Minister it's great to have you on our show and I must share with our listeners that exactly a year ago I had the honour to be with you on etv Sunrise launch of Women's Month in 2013.
MINISTER MOLEWA	That was a great show. I enjoyed it. Thank you so much. You came up with such brilliant ideas. I still remember here.
DR. MALKA	I enjoyed it too. It was a great introduction into our efforts with Women's month but I can't believe how quickly the time has flown.
MINISTER MOLEWA	It feels like five months ago.
DR. MALKA	Minister, today you hold one of the highest positions of office in government and you as such in that role have become a role model for millions of women and girls in our country. Can you please share with us a few of the landmarks in your career and when you understood that politics would become a big part of

	your destiny.
MINISTER MOLEWA	<p>Let me start with that part of politics becoming a big destiny. I think for all of us as women, probably also men in South Africa. We all started from very humble beginnings and the road was, at the beginning of that road was just to engage in the struggle against apartheid and therefore because we were masses and masses operating at different levels that was a major objective. Never did anyone of us I think, even at the time look up to a time where one would be Minister or the MEC or whatever. Personally, I never had that in mind. All I had in mind was to fight this very awful system and in the process we then you know traversed. I then went into the Trade Union movement which was my background and then also became the first Vice-President, actually we're calling it Deputy President of a Trade Union movement that was known as CAWUSA then, now it's SACAWU, South African Commercial and Catering Allied Union of South Africa which operates in the space of retail, shops, retail industry, in particular. So that then, you know one thing led to another until at the time when you know, we became, just by being elected as first Vice-President we then stayed within the structures of Cosatu but I must say even at the founding of Cosatu conference I was there, so one of the founding members of Cosatu.</p>
DR. MALKA	Right at the founding.
MINISTER MOLEWA	<p>Right at the founding, yes. But besides that, you know that we're multi-faceted you can't operate only at a Trade Union level without having a base at home. Because after hours, you become a community member. I was then participating in the structures of the civic organisations then but also in the underground movement. That's now for the liberation struggle. There was those who were operating from outside, that is the former MK, uMkhonto we Sizwe that is now the army liberation of the people. There were those who were operating from inside, obviously opening up ways and up to the time of Operation Vula when people were to come back into the country. I was a participant serving under a unit that is called Inchabele Unit. We were serving in different units and then obviously at community level when we're dealing with issues about prices, taxes and so on. All those bread and butter issues through the civic movement and then of course, very importantly and most importantly I served also, back then there wasn't a women's league operating as you know the labour movement. I mean the ANC as a movement was banned.</p>
DR. MALKA	The ANC was founded in 1912 but in terms of the ANC's, Womens' League it only really came into being.
MINISTER MOLEWA	<p>Forty years later. Actually that was a time when women were even for the first time allowed to join an organisation and have their own organisation and be elected in the structures and the leaders, yes. But back then, you know, there was an organisation called Federation of Transvaal Women, which was operating inside the country because we had to find mechanisms of operating inside the country, aiding those of us who were outside and our leaders who were outside. It's structures like those and the structures like the UDF, United Democratic Front that we were a part of. And all those you know participation then groomed, you know, us all. I think that many people may probably underestimate the level of education, the level of</p>

	training you undergo, under those circumstances.
DR. MALKA	And an incredible amount of organisation.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Absolutely.
DR. MALKA	In the time that you were doing all of this we didn't have the platforms of technology and communication that we have today.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Definitely and you had to really be there and organise big meetings at times of the whole community, without cell phones, without, with only faxes and what do they call it, this thing that we just used to receive messages only.
DR. MALKA	The beeper.
MINISTER MOLEWA	The beeper was not even there. It came much, much later during the process but all those you know all those organisations, I think also the spirit and willingness of the people in the country, and how everybody had one vision and we were all sharing that. There was you know, those in between who would say, no, you know it's wrong to fight. It's wrong to do that but there were just a few of them because we all knew that the system is bad and we all had to fight the system. So as a woman, I knew that you had to work three times harder than men and that's quite important because if you don't you will always be left behind. So you've got to, how shall I put it, prove yourself in a way to these colleagues of yours and these comrades of yours but also at the same time you had to be home and bear children. I have four children. One of them was actually born, at the age of three and a half months I was taken away from him. He was still suckling at night at three am and then the next time I saw my child was walking, almost a year and a half later. Ja you then have those circumstances, the home front of keeping the fires burning, ensuring that the children do not just go wild and they just grow under care and also getting trained to become good people into the future, adults that are really responsible. So all those things are not quite easy. I'm saying I think that is where the real training comes from. Leading up to now, I think up to the time when one got into Parliament it was so chalk and cheese. It's right it's just a different platform and a different operation because we now have to put into practice what we learned what we had been fighting for and naturally I don't forget this. Our leadership took certain decisions amongst them. I am just picking on one was to do away with that which was called the weapons for mass destruction. That was the first Bill that I passed when I became a member of Parliament in 1994 and I was the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee. I didn't even know what this thing is. What does it have to do with the people who are hungry there, that have been fighting for such a long time. What does this mean? We then had to learn and definitely learning on our feet and being the Chairperson of Trade and Industry Portfolio Committee, it's facing business, learning new culture of how business works and understanding how we can actually just navigate and ensure that we assist those of our people who would require small business's development and obviously in that process, what we've been looking for is transformation, transformation, transformation in everything that we do. What is in it for women? Where are women in these structures? In these

	boards of IDC, Industrial Development Corporation, where are women and you know those kind of things, ja.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	Now picking up on our discussion I think South Africa with the ANC has gained tremendous achievements in the last twenty years of democracy, particularly concerning women's representation in Parliament but unfortunately in the last of election we lost power from moving from 44% of women towards 40% and although the decline wasn't necessarily the ANC's fault of losing women representation but rather it was the low representation from the other parties who gained power. Do you think that perhaps women have to decide, with all due respect, for politics and gender equality, that that should be first on the agenda of every woman no matter what her race, religion, culture, socio-economic class because only when we've achieved 50% representation of women across the board when we have that equality component can we have the luxury, I believe of putting political opinions first.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Well I think that maybe I should start with that question of putting political opinions first. It is important to note that wherever women get together to fight for a particular cause we actually very often don't see political boundaries, cross party lines and let's just start with the 1956 march led by the ANC Women's League back then, here in South Africa. It was in the federal form. It really was joined by about 20 000 women from all walks of life, from different political affiliations and so on. So once an idea has been conceived that has got where we have got commonality we all get together. We often see this happening in South Africa now when there is abuse of children and women. No women from another political party would stay away and say, no it's not my issue except in representation. Now precisely the point you raised. We think that there is, well let's just say, it's actually a fact that we have quite a pool of women with capacity and capability throughout South Africa. Those who have been through this training that I was alluding to naturally gained the experience so we have no doubt that there is a pool of women who can actually represent South Africa in Parliament in all the structures. Then the issue is how do other parties get that representation. We saw that traction and what retreats possibly come in and this is the reason why last year there was an introduction of what we call the WEGE Bill where women empowerment and gender equality had to be signed for by the President. I think the President would still be studying that because there were certain issues that were raised by other people. You see once the President has got to assent to a Bill, he has got to ensure that there is no possibility of sending that back either through Parliament through cause or something like that. So, yes, that was the intention to get at least a bit of a movement forward. You see the WEGE Bill was saying that they should be an incremental approach by a particular party but it didn't say 50% tomorrow. But over time especially in the private sector where there is no movement at all.
DR. MALKA	In the private sector since we sat a year ago and I look at the figures, quite honestly, there really has not been much change there. There is still exceptionally low numbers on women within private sector particularly in CEO positions and on Boards of Directors. There was a study by the Business

	Women's Association South Africa in 2012 across JSE listed companies and it indicates that only 3.4% of CEOs are women.
MINISTER MOLEWA	That is scandalous indeed. I think it's worrying.
DR. MALKA	And when we've got aspects like the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill to try to accelerate representation. What is your intake on that? How can we fix things in the private sector?
MINISTER MOLEWA	I think like I was saying that we join hands with women in private sector. It is important that we really work much harder in ensuring that women who are in politics because we are representatives of the people join hands with the women in the private sector because we believe that more often than not they find themselves lonelier amongst those dark suits. If you were one or two, yours being as usual to work three times harder than them and you've got to be proving yourself and obviously with the lens that people look at women through they then see a weaker element. In private sector it is still like that. So this is a different field. It's business it's not a space for sissies or for weaker people and I think those are the real issues that pertains to what we mean when we talk about the patriarchal tendencies because you really look at people with a patriarchal lens and then this woman can't be fit to be here, can't be fit to be an MD, can't be fit to be an executive of some sort and so on so we need to come in and this is what the WEGE Bill was trying to say. That we would then require plans from everyone in the society and employers and these executives also to say, how are we working on and ensuring that we bring, and we not asking people to bring people who may not be knowledgeable but at least on merit and they should work on that merit. We do know that people, women with merit do exist in those sectors just that they are not found. When we look deeper we will be able to find them and the Bill was trying to get people to actually feel a little compelled to do something or implement it.
DR. MALKA	and I think about what you are saying and this is the sentiment that I picked up with numerous conversations that I have had with other women, it's not about women proving themselves. They have already proved themselves with one another, they know they have the capabilities but it's about being able to change the mindset on the other side that that is where the resistance is.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Absolutely. Absolutely, that is where the resistance is and in fact this is what we understand about how a patriarchal mind functions because if you resist just on the basis that I think this person is not suitable whereas you have not given this person a chance. Very pre-conceived ideas. We have seen women, married who are thrown into the deepest end then they swam. The South African government, woman Minister in the Defence, very difficult portfolios and they are making it. Education I mean our Minister, education, just Basic Education she has just turned that whole education system around and moving on. I mean it has been proven, where else did they learn to be Ministers. Is it just by being thrown into the deepest end because you have meticulous fingers and a mind that functions with logic and you'll get there and this is how we making it. So let these other ones in

	private sector also be given that chance and that debate I think needs to be mounted more and more because the more we keep quiet is the more people think, that it's okay to do it.
DR. MALKA	It's using our voice. And do you think that part of that will help by having aspects like the WEGE Bill in place because let's face it nobody likes to give up power. Nobody likes to take their piece of pie away but by having an active legislation in place that is something that promotes equality and empowerment.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Absolutely and it promotes it very nicely. It's not saying have 50% tomorrow, it says present your plan of how you get there. This WEGE Bill will then make the executives to begin to look where they say they can't find somebody and then know that these people are actually there and they are existing. How do we bring them on.? Even if it means that they put them in a programme that really just to satisfy their egos because with women already they have met that satisfaction.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	Going back to our point of advice that you would give girls to follow in your footsteps should they choose to pursue a political path? What would you say to them, the girls our young girls in society, planning their future prospects?
MINISTER MOLEWA	When we were young we never used to have technology as advanced as it is right now. We now have social media. We have different kinds of communication. We also by the way have over abundant opportunities. For me and for all of us I think, in the ANC, in particular we say education first. It is important that it will then help you unlock all the doors. Then your capability natural will come in but acquire education. For the young generation, no matter how tough it is, let them please realise that we spending a lot of money, sky reaching number one in South Africa because you realise how important education is. But yes, with that, let's not rush into politics. If you get into politics because the situation is quite different from, we got different training. With the younger generation they have got to go and study Political Science and master that and then even practise and the practice field is not provided for like we were provided for with so the changes that have happened require that people brush up their mental status so that they can then be able to comprehend through education and be certificated and qualified for them to knock everywhere and be anywhere and that is what I want to encourage our younger generation's women that yes we are role models in political space, they can make it too and they really need to study and because we were not provided with the opportunity of going through the schooling and classes and universities, majority of us, they have. They have very many careers to choose from. When we grew up there were only three potential professions, police, teacher, nurse. That's what you could be. We never knew about engineers and so on. They have over abundant opportunities.
DR. MALKA	The sky is the limitation with which you could achieve.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Absolutely.

DR. MALKA	And I think that what you've mentioned now, I think is one of the most important things when we talk about this year with women's month we are celebrating the 60 th anniversary of the Women's Charter. These are all elements, foundations that have been put in place for helping the next generation build from and as you said this information, this knowledge has been provided by the administration for young people to start building on.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Precisely and as we celebrate the 60th Women's Charter it's important that, perhaps the starting point must be that what were these women thinking back then when they put this Charter in place because it does say that this is our guiding document and our guiding principles are contained in that. Where do we want to be into the future and those things are spelt out in economics and social, all the spheres of life. In the Trade Union movement where do we want to go? How do we really want to ensure that we are part and parcel of this society going into the future? So all those are spelt in there and as the young generation, young women in particular understand the Charter, we will live the Charter we want to strive for what it actually provides and therefore we will not go wrong. It is important that we are guided, you know wish for anything that we come across.
DR. MALKA	No, there is a strategic vision.
MINISTER MOLEWA	Absolutely it is a strategic vision so you make choices on the basis of where the country is going and with this whole information we are there to back them, to serve as role models, as mentors on a continuous basis. I am mentoring some three children right now and they come from time to time we sit around and say, how did you make it, how do you ensure that you have become a fully-fledged person who really right from appearance you make sense and then you make a statement so that you can then whatever you present later follows your appearance and those kinds of things. Those are the issues that we are discussing and it is right from there.
DR. MALKA	Mentorship is so important especially with the knowledge that you've got to be able to impart and give back, and now turning to your role within the environmental affairs sector can you share with us if there are any specific milestones that you want to achieve in this new term of office? For instance, is women's representation in the ministry one of those priorities?
MINISTER MOLEWA	We are very fortunate indeed that environment function is fairly new in South Africa. Before 1994 it was not holistic. We had biodiversity. As it is right now, South Africa is the third mega diverse country of the world. Third after Brazil and Indonesia. A lot of work was done around that. A lot of work was done around conservation. Environment as a three pillar approach t of development has not quite been looked at and I think even up to the time when I started in this ministry there has not been a complete holistic look at how one can view and should view environment. It is our natural resources that are a base for life, providers of life and all those resources without which there won't be any economy. There won't be any social development and following that therefore there are three pillars of development that has got to be based on environment as a pillar. Secondly, is an economic development and the social development. Meaning that we've got to utilise our resources in a sustainable manner. That is how I am

	<p>moving the ministry now towards that a direction so it's not just about a projection of a plan in the interest of the people in the interest of economy but that we must all utilise this in a sustainable manner so that we grow. We have women, young women as a younger latecomer of a department. My department is led by a very able woman. She was the DG of the year, last year.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Congratulations.</p>
MINISTER MOLEWA	<p>Thank you. She works hard. If she walks in here you won't think that she is such a dynamite. They always come in small packets and other people you know there are quite a few at deputy executive level we have almost 50% qualified specialising and the specialisation in these different fields of environment. The oceanogram is headed by a man but immediately after there are women. In the space of waste management there are women. We have sent many of them and we have given bursaries. We continue to give bursaries and ensure that they really train. One of the programmes that I am very proud of which we really want to nurture and take through is a programme that we call Groen Sebenza. Groen meaning green, sebenza meaning work. We are working for green. It's a programme where we have taken in 800 young people. Over close about 600 plus of them are graduates.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>University graduates.</p>
MINISTER MOLEWA	<p>University graduates. Some even with post graduate qualifications who are not able to find jobs in South Africa. We took them in. We looked at the various institutions across the country like your South African National Biodiversity Institute which is our body in all the parks of the country, in organisations such as the WWF, World Wildlife Fund and so forth and so forth and negotiated spaces for them, for them to be mentored there. They are now under stipend. We are paying them through a programme, funds coming from Jobs Fund which is in the Presidency and is being distributed by finance and treasury so that programme runs for a period of three years and those who are artisans are two years but we're getting them to just be there, and really develop their, brush their skills and be mentored, sharpen their ability and we have seen, really, really fascinating the day we were welcoming them and launching this project you could see confidence that oozes from those young women, most of them are women, 60% of them, oozing out and they're creative, thinking about what can be done through a problem like this one. This tenuous problem and find solutions. So they are there. Quite a number of them have already been placed about 58 of them who now have got permanent jobs and we see this programme as a training programme avenue for them.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>That is a great initiative because it is providing them with the work experience and knowledge. I think that that is a significant initiative that has been funded through the department and into the country.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">AD BREAK</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>In closing the discussion and in light of South African Women's Month can you please use this platform on Channel Africa to send a message of hope to all those women in Africa who are listening to the conversation and possibly due to their</p>

	<p>circumstances gender equality may not be first on their agenda and rather their focus is on the daily struggle of taking care of their family, raising the children, putting food on the table as a more pressurizing reality so could we just offer a few words of wisdom and hope.</p>
<p>MINISTER MOLEWA</p>	<p>Just using an example of looking back where we were as South African women a few years ago we had our grandmothers, our great grandmothers. I have already said that. Those were not even allowed to join an organisation. Those were not even allowed to go to school. It was said that you educate a boy child and not a girl child. They really went through difficult times for our own sake and there we are. Here we are today. We've transcended because we knew that we are walking on the shoulders of women, strong women who led this way and really suffered for our sake to get better opportunities for us so it doesn't matter wherever you are in any part of the continent, in a village or in a country where women's rights are still being looked down upon. It doesn't matter where you find yourselves, yours is to develop. Just one thing, confidence and then try and acquire education. If you can't try and learn at work, learn through others really just see how the doors will open. Ours must be to want to succeed and that just the desire to succeed carries you through so much. Just a mixture of that with confidence will carry you through whatever difficult time you are into. It is never too late. Tata Madiba said, "it's not over until it's done". So we will get there, all of us.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Thank you very much, Minister Molewa. It's great to have had you on our show today. I appreciate your time.</p>
<p>MINISTER MOLEWA</p>	<p>Thank you very much.</p>
	<p>END PROGRAM</p>