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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MINISTER BATHABILE DLAMINI

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)	Joining us in the studio is South Africa's Minister of Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini who I will briefly introduce. Minister Dlamini was appointed Minister of Social Development in November 2010, having served as Deputy Minister for the same portfolio since May 2009. As a member of Parliament in the National Assembly, she sat on the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees for Correctional Services and subsequently Social Development. From 1998 to 2008, she held the position of General Secretary in the ANC Women League and on the academic front, she holds a B.A. in Social Studies from the University of Zululand. Welcome to the show, Minister.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Thank you very much, Doctor.
DR. MALKA	It's such a pleasure to have you join us. Minister, you hold vast experience in Social Development from 1994 through to 2004, as a member of Parliament, you served on the Social Development Portfolio Committee. You were Deputy Minister of Social Development from May 2009 up until October 2010. You were appointed as Minister of Social Development in November 2010 and re-appointed to this post in our National Elections on the 26th May 2014. Can you please share with us, is it your strong sense of duty or your passion for this field that has kept you for more than twenty years in this portfolio?
MINISTER DLAMINI	I think it's passion. Well we have to perform our duties to the best of our ability, more particularly, if you are a woman you have to make things happen and work four times more than a man before you are recognized, but I think I have not been driven by wanting to prove myself. The most important thing is that I want to ensure that everyone feels comfortable, more particularly, children but also, I think, some of us have been growing with, have seen social development changing gradually.
DR. MALKA	It's been an evolving process.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes, because when we were elected as MP's in 1994, there were ten departments, the National one, there were more than ten, actually and then Provinces, as well as the TPV states. So there were many departments that had to be integrated and then, secondly, we were Welfare and Population Development and then thereafter, the ruling party said, we must take a developmental approach so it should not be only welfare. It should be about Welfare Social Security and Integrated Development, also one of the most exciting times was when grants were introduced because they were only received by plus minus, three million

	people.
DR. MALKA	And I believe in October we are at, sixteen million are receiving grants in South Africa.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes, yes more than sixteen million and what is important is that eleven million is children and that says that we are moving forward towards fighting poverty and trying to ensure that our children are growing up properly, but one other element that has come in that is going to make a spectacular improvement is early childhood development because government has decided to take over early childhood development. It's going to be a public good. There are many things we are trying to change as we grow as government because we have experience of twenty years which gives us an opportunity to change the way we were doing things.
DR. MALKA	I think that, that experience is really played through and it shows an entire development of where we are today, twenty years later after our first democracy. Now, Minister, you've been in the business of politics for a long time now, can you please share with us a few of the landmarks in your career and when you understood the politics, was a big part of your destiny?
MINISTER DLAMINI	I think if I look back I was part of the Youth Club in my church, in Pietermaritzburg and we were very active and we then decided to form an Imbali Youth Organisation with the help of those that understood Politics and then we formed our organisation which became an affiliate of the United Democratic Front. And then what was different about our organisation is that it had a sister organisations, like, COSAS???, at the time and SANDCO??? in universities and we worked with the civic organisations so even at school, high school level there was activism. At home, activism, even Institution of Higher Learning University, there was activism so it was a full or all round life. You did not take a break because you were at university or you were at home, there was a break.
DR. MALKA	So it was integrated in everything.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes, it was part of us and I must say it was difficult at times and we did get support from well-respected members of the community, some of them are no longer here with us.
DR. MALKA	And so there was strong support for the youth?
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes. In the community and very, very strong support, not just weak support but also we worked with people that believed in understanding politics, people like Skhumbuzo Ngwenya, Son of Man, Thusi. They ensured that we understood what politics was and that we were not the only ones who were struggling, there were women who were part of the struggle but the ANC was an internationalist organisation. It had support throughout the world, sanctions and everything. Again, there were women who were hiding, former MK members in their houses and our leadership, Oliver Tambo were busy out of the country, mobilising the whole world to understand our struggle. So I think if we did not have that opportunity, we would not be where we are today, understanding of the Freedom Charter, but also just simple things, when we were in our meetings, we would read the newspaper and explain and have discussions and a very robust debate on the issues and that assisted us to deepen our understanding of, firstly, how to discuss and debate, agree to disagree that

	made ...
DR. MALKA	It's sensitive.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes.
DR. MALKA	And very challenging.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes and sometimes you would read about Thandi Modise, who gave birth in prison, Nomvula Mokonyane, who was arrested with a baby. You will hear about Baleka Mbete, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Mam Shoppe. Mams Perepere, Ruth Mompate and more particularly, when it was the year of women because the ANC, once declared a year as year of women and that showed commitment by the leadership of the ANC to women's emancipation. At the beginning, women came to cook in the meetings of the ANC and then later you have those that had the capacity of ensuring that some were recruited to the ANC, like Charlotte Maxeke, the first President of the Bantu Women's League which was a front runner of the ANC Women's League.
DR. MALKA	She sounded like a woman who was well ahead of her times in her days.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Ooh, yes.
DR. MALKA	Very advance with her thinking.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Very much advanced, just the thought of forming an organisation because the ANC was formed in 1912 and then I think in 1913, she said, ahah, there is no way we are going to remain behind. We have to form an organisation and more particularly, because women in their nature, they're managers, they can multi-task, they strategize and implement.
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	Now, picking up on our discussion, Minister, when we talking about leadership and we know that from an ANC, point of view, that it has been very strong in having it's fifty-fifty men and women. Is women's representation and growing female leadership in your ministry, one of the priorities on your agenda?
MINISTER DLAMINI	It is. It's one of my priorities. I must also say that it's a difficult mission.
DR. MALKA	Can you elaborate?
MINISTER DLAMINI	In departments, people that are senior, are men and then you try and bring up women and sometimes you see that this woman is not given an opportunity and that has actually made me to try and ensure that the next layer of leadership in the department is a woman. I believe in mixing people, those that are out of the system must work with those that are in the system and we must pull them up together, more particularly, in Social Development. You do need people that are not social workers because work there is strenuous.
DR. MALKA	And you have a very diverse portfolio?
MINISTER	It is very diverse and one other thing that I've learnt is that, that you are a woman does not mean that you are an activist and believe in gender

DLAMINI	equality. Others are just about positions and they always dangle a carrot in front of us because they want more money, others are very much committed. So others get elected, or, I mean to say, get appointed and they don't do justice. They look at their friends, not at the ones that perform to the best of their ability. So those are all the things you have to look into and sometimes, be firm and also when it comes to issues of gender equality, you have to, like, I think two years ago I organized a dinner for men in the leadership, just to come and talk to them and say, you cannot do this and this and that and then what we are organising right now, is a gender course for them.
DR. MALKA	Gender course for men?
MINISTER DLAMINI	For men. We have to start at some level so that they understand when they do their work because our work has a lot to do with gender, children, women, vulnerable groups so they have to understand these issues because they help you to be sensitive and know how to handle some of the issues.
DR. MALKA	Minister, you spoke briefly about gender equality and I think that gender equality is increasingly, a global focus and South Africa's Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, it's currently undergoing consultation and review, obviously with the new Ministry in place, but in principle it's aim is to promote and achieve a quality for women across the board. What are your perspectives and do you think that legislation can improve gender gaps?
MINISTER DLAMINI	Let me start by saying, what we have today was fought for, women were part of the struggles. It's not something that we got from the train.
DR. MALKA	We earned it.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes. Women fought from all fronts in the country, some were in the army. Lindewe Zulu, Iyanda Lolo, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula and others. They were there in the trenches. So it's not a favour, others died, refusing to give information to the police, very young women. So it's not a present. It's something that we fought for. Now, when we talk about gender equality there's always a mistake of, firstly, those that think that women have to be empowered before they occupy positions and when they are not empowered to occupy positions. So it's like they were cut for positions or were cut to take a responsibility of some of the truth and I think, what is happening in the country, presently, is that the new dispensation has come up with women that belong to the middle class and those that are the elite, but you have the majority of the women, very poor and that is why social development, human settlement, water, electricity, education, agriculture, land and many other departments that just focus on women and they deliver services that enable women to be free. That enable women to take decisions about themselves, for instance, early childhood development, that gives women an opportunity to take decisions about whether they want to work or not. Issues of health rights, you take a decision about whether you want a child or not.
DR. MALKA	Well, I know, for instance, Unicef have done several studies and one of the things that I recall, was that they said, that from an education point of view, for an additional year of school that a girl's placed in school, that she receives from an income point of view, a 10% increase on what she can expect to receive. She has greater control, in terms of her family rights, and the number of

	children that she chooses and the children that she bares grow up to be more benefitted from her experiences and from her education from health and other benefits.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Now what is important is to ensure that we radically transform the lives of ordinary women as the President has said and those are the women that are going to ensure that our children are not poor, moving forward but also you cannot be able to fight your struggles for gender equality on an equal footing as long as the majority of women want practical gender needs, practical water. There must be water at home, there must be electricity at home so that I can cook for my children and I must have a kitchen. You see, elite women say, a woman's place is not in the kitchen and ordinary women still want a kitchen so we need to focus on those women, well those that have specific gender needs are also impatient but what is most important are ordinary women because they are on the ground, they look after children and they bear the brunt of poverty and the face of poverty is a woman. So I strongly believe that as much as they can make laws they must be implementable and they must go hand in hand with norms and standards and communities must be mobilised to understand the loss so that they work for them. I look at a woman but also I know that a man are part of this society and what is responsible is that we must not always be the ones who talk about a violence, they must also at some stage say, not in my name.
DR. MALKA	To take ownership.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes.
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	Now, continuing with our discussion. Are there any specific objectives that you want to achieve this term?
MINISTER DLAMINI	This term, I would like to see social development being accessible to the poor and that I want to see our work integrated.
DR. MALKA	Across the different government departments?
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes. I want to see strong programmes of alcohol and substance abuse because this is killing our nation. It is killing our children and it's like someone stood there and said, South Africa, experience this so that you can never move forward. I see it as an attack and as a serious attack to the struggles of Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Lillian Ngoyi, Wilton Magwie, Harry Ngwala and all other leaders. Solomon Mahalangu, who fought for the liberation of our country. It's a big insult because they never had their youth.
DR. MALKA	They sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country.
MINISTER DLAMINI	Yes. So young people must do the same, see how they contribute towards improving the quality of lives of our people. Yes, transformation is always a difficult period but we must all ask ourselves, what we can do for our country. Also issues of violence against women and children but I think my pet subject has always been early childhood development because the apex priority of this government or administration is education, so if you prepare children from birth, by the time they are at Grade 12 they are

	<p>able to stand on their own and also the research that has been done by other countries says, children that start at an early childhood development level are very strong. They're able to differentiate between wrong and right and just at their style of living is far different from those who did not go to ECD. My younger brothers went to ECD and I didn't and you can see the difference between me and my younger brother. So even the way they read, the way they talk, the way they are able to think and drill things down shows that long ago they were advantaged, puzzles, squares, shapes and everything. We never went through that. We just started at first year, started writing without having practiced and be expected to write your name without having written it before. So ECD is my pet subject.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Now Minister, turning to your political career. You served as Secretary-General of the ANC Women's League from 1998 to 2008 and that's one of the longest serving Secretary-Generals for the ANC Women's League. Can you please share with us what impacted you the most during that term?</p>
MINISTER DLAMINI	<p>I think firstly, I am humbled by the confidence that women put on me and when I was elected I think I was very young. I remember when I started working in the office, Mama Adelaide Tambo came to me, I was wearing a blue tight, and a top, a T shirt and she came to me to say, You, you are the Deputy-Secretary General now, you can't come to work like this and I said, I looked at her and then she said, what if we have international guests? What are they going to say about you? That in itself, brought a big change in me. I wasn't wearing earrings. I wasn't carrying a handbag. They just changed my life and with Mam Bertha, Nonsiviwa, Mam Winnie, but also I had a great opportunity of working with great women leaders of this country who also were always prepared to take me through the processes of the ANC but also helped me to understand women's issues at a sophisticated level because sometimes you will think you understand women's issues when you don't understand them. Some of the things I learnt is that if are the Secretary-General, you like the engine of the organisation. When something wrong happens, everyone fights you. The present speaker of Parliament, Baleke Mabete told me that, hey, you must never cry in the open, in front of everyone, you must just stand up quietly and go to the bathroom, cry and come back and be strong. She was also the Secretary-General of the Women's League. The first Secretary-General of the Women's League after the unbanning of the political organisations. And then when something good happens, everyone owns up to that. Sometimes you write reports, you prepare and they just thrown out of the window. Those are the things that strengthen you. But also the issue of 50%, fifty-fifty, we fought for that and it's in the Constitution of the ANC. The issue of the CGE, Commission for Gender Equality. We fought for the CGE.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Could you just expand on the CGE? What does that stand for?</p>
MINISTER DLAMINI	<p>The Commission on Gender Equality, but even before that, women had done a lot of work. The Women's Coalition that marched to the negotiations because women were not represented there. That was great work and also mobilisation of women under difficult circumstances. I know that women leaders used to come to our Province which was very violent, at the time, but they were brave enough to come and mobilise us. The formation of the progressive Women's movement, also there we</p>

	<p>worked with a number women, professionals, intellectuals, ordinary women, members of Parliament and we tried to ensure that we have the Progressive Women's Movement, which was going to focus on minimum programme, a minimum platform of action, focus on the issues of violence against women and children because those issues cut across. At the beginning, we thought it would be just the progressives only, but other women's organisations came to say we want to be part of this movement,</p>
<p>AD BREAK</p>	
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Now, continuing with our discussion, Minister, you've been involved in a huge transformation, particularly, in terms of women's development and I would like to ask you a question that I pose to all of our guests, every August, in South Africa we celebrate Women's Month and during that period we reflect on the years and the progress that women have achieved. In your opinion, what areas do you think we still need to build on the most to benefit women in the future?</p>
<p>MINISTER DLAMINI</p>	<p>I think as South Africans, the most important thing that we need to learn, women, just women, that some of the issues touch us all and we must unite on those issues and then leave those that divide us and that will help us have a very strong voice and a very strong muscle and if you don't agree on something, one other thing, I believe in, is that when we have a conference and there is a woman that is going to be elected, I don't work against that woman. If I don't believe in her, I just shut up. Keep quiet because others believe in her but also as time goes on that woman can learn a lot because also women learn very fast. I think one other thing that is important, is that, usually when we fight for gender equality, people think we want to be like men. We don't want to be like men. We want to remain being women but we want to be equal. We want to remain women. I don't want to be like a man. I don't but I want each and every man to know that we are equals.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>We want to have equal rights, equal opportunities and not be denied those opportunities.</p>
<p>MINISTER DLAMINI</p>	<p>Absolutely. We want to take our own decisions. People must not think for us and I think the most important thing is to be able to use one of the gifts that were transferred by our grandmothers, our great leaders to us, being able to interpret everything, to a lower level so that it can work. I think that is what kept our families together, who lived under very difficult circumstances but women have always been able to translate things and make them work for them. I think that we need to keep that and make it work. For me those are basic things that women have to do in order to move forward, support. Support is very important, even if you don't love me, you don't believe in me, when I'm under attack, I need your support.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>I think that's a very, very important sentiment and statement on the support.</p>
<p>MINISTER DLAMINI</p>	<p>You see, once you get elected or appointed as a Minister, people think you are no longer a human being and when you've done something wrong they want to walk on you and destroy you and finish you. And we all make mistakes, even if you are a leader, you make mistakes and I want women to, if they can pick up the phone and say, Bathabile, this is wrong, you can't do this. I don't want women that are going to write about me on Facebook or tweet or WhatsApp. No, I want women that are going to build me and even if I am no longer in that position, women must continue</p>

	<p>to build me, because I am a human being and one good thing that I've learnt from the ANC, which I have deeply thought about it. The ANC does not throw you away and that is why I strongly believe in support. You do something wrong, you get your punishment, you get integrated back into the structures and then if you again perform very well, you are again give an opportunity. And that can also contribute towards a forgiving nation. I think South Africans are not a forgiving nation. I think it's because of where we come from and what we should be doing now is to work towards that so that we can live in peace not fight with people every day and you see those things when you talk to your parents. When you talk about the issues of parents, chastising children, they fight you straight away because that is how we were grown up.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It's a defensive attitude and approach as opposed to looking at what are the positives out of it.</p>
MINISTER DLAMINI	<p>Yes.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I think that's something that comes with maturity and it comes with education. It comes right back to where you were talking about that early childhood development and how it sustains us, grooms us, as individuals to become mature, capable, responsible adults that can think logically. Minister, we are running out of time. It's been such a pleasure having you here. Can I ask you in closing, can you share a few words of inspiration, that you'd like to pass on to young girls and women in Africa that are listening to our show today.</p>
MINISTER DLAMINI	<p>You must never give up and if they have a vision, they must try and ensure that no-one distracts them from that vision. For me, that is the most important thing and even if a young woman can have a child, she must not sit down. She must stand up, go back to school so that she can support her child. For me, that's also very, very important and ensure that you can conduct your life properly, in the first twenty-one years of your life, so that after twenty-one years, everything comes naturally and I want to repeat, if you commit a mistake, it doesn't mean the end of the world. It means challenges and you must be able to face those challenges and not allow anything to take you away from your life or to take your life away from you.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you, Minister. We'd love to hear more from you in the future to hear how things have been developing within the Social Development Department.</p>
MINISTER DLAMINI	<p>Thank you. Thank you.</p>
<p>END PROGRAM</p>	