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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY- WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: THOKO DIDIZA – FORMER RSA MINISTER, CURRENTLY HOUSE CHAIRPERSON PARLIAMENT

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity – Women in unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary South 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	Joining us in studio today is Ms Thoko Didiza who has served as Minister for Public Works of the Republic of South Africa from 2006 through to 2008. Prior to this appointment she was Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs from 1999 until 2006 and Deputy Minister of Agriculture from 1994 through to 1999. She was a Member of the National Executive Committee and National Working Committee of the African National Congress and currently she holds the position of House Chairperson in the National Assembly of Parliament in the Republic of South Africa.
DR. MALKA	Welcome to the show.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	Thank you very much, and to your listeners, good morning.
DR. MALKA	What has kept you going for so many years in the political arena?
MS THOKO DIDIZA	I think it's the passion for the work I do. Firstly, I don't regard it as work more than a commitment towards social change in our country, in the continent but also globally. Also encouragement in knowing that what one represents. It's not just a local struggle for women's emancipation, but it is a global struggle and a continuous one at that because we have not achieved all what we have set ourselves to.
DR. MALKA	Yes it is ongoing and I had a conversation previously with Miss Geraldine Frasier Moleketi and she was saying to me that from an activism point of view we've gone through various phases in the past with liberation but we will always have a struggle to contend with and it is just about addressing new issues.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	True.
DR. MALKA	Now in your new term as House Chairperson, what does that entail?
MS THOKO DIDIZA	Actually let me just first explain that there are three House Chairs. You have got the House Chair for Committees, you then have the House Chair for International Affairs and then you have got the House Chair Internal Arrangements, which is the position that I hold which really deals with – I would say – is the soft issues in any

	<p>administration because I deal with members' interests which would include the tools of trade for members, what will support them to do their work effectively, but also deals with the issues of members training. For instance, if there's a new tax law you would have to appraise members about what the implications of that are to themselves but also what are the implications to the various constituencies that they would work with in terms of their committees. There are also issues where they are intersectoral. I would make an example for instance with respect to housing development. Housing will have to work together with the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation for the provision of Sanitation. They would have to work with the Department of Local Government to ensure that their land is secure, there is also services provided so that when a unit, a house is built, it can actually have all those services. So, in terms of budget allocation Water Affairs and Sanitation will have its budget, Housing will have its budget so there will have to be communication to ensure that in terms of the timelines that such departments have, you know, indicated that they would want to achieve, they would have taken those into consideration.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>There's got to be a co-ordinating effect of being able to integrate everything together across those different departments.</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>Precisely. That's why in the executive, maybe for me to use my past experience having operated there, you have got clusters which brings different ministries together that work largely on the economic sector, on the social sector, crime and justice. That formula allows for collaboration and integration amongst different departments. Also in parliament you have got those clusters that operate to ensure that even at a portfolio committee level there can be some engagement among different portfolio committees so that in their functioning they also support the work of the executive effectively.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you for explaining your new role. I think it offers incredible insight into the workings and keeping things in line within the parliamentary situation.</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>Well thank you.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Turning to more of the focus of this show with us being a gender based programme, women constitute 52% of the South African population. They are a significant demographic group in society and their rights and their needs must be recognised and attended to and most likely they are best addressed through various government directives. In our 2014 elections, we had approximately twenty-five million registered voters. Nearly fourteen million of them were women but there still doesn't seem to be a direct approach from various political parties in South Africa to actively target this group. What is your perspective on that?</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>Well I must say that that is not just a South African challenge, it is a global challenge. If you look prior to 1994, you had a very important mobilisation and an organisation thereafter represented by the</p>

	<p>Women's National Coalition and part of the mobilisation was precisely the conscious realisation that if women collectively cannot work to advance their interests, they may be easily forgotten. Until the women mobilised themselves under the umbrella body of the Women's Coalition in 1992 and asserted their rights that one; starting from the representation in search of their agenda for the negotiation as well as drafting the principles to support the constituent assembly, that if there are two members of the party, it must be a woman and a man.</p>
DR. MALKA	So we have a 50/50...
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>And we were able to achieve that through that mobilisation. We had a minimum programme as women across political spectrum, across religious sector, across class to appreciate that if we didn't work together we were not going to succeed. The second achievement prior to 1994 was that through that mobilisation we were able to insist that the equality clause be embedded in the constitution, but thirdly was being able to produce the charter for effective equality in South Africa. It was done in two ways – one; it was a focused research but the other was participatory. We built up a hype but also consciously asking women to think about themselves, their situation and what needed to change. I think this gave us a platform around which the issue of women's emancipation did not just become a side issue, but became integral in terms of the transformation of our country. What happened thereafter, I think we have been able, in my view, to make sure that we don't lose those gains. We have been able to ensure that in the representation across the board, not just in the political spectrum. Gradually one of the issues that I think as a country we have had to grapple with was do you concretise the instruments for representation, such as quotas? And I think that's where we have not yet in my view been very firm. We have been able to assert that at different political party's level. I know within the ANC we started far off from 30% in 1991 conference. We went on and on until we achieved you know, to assert it in the constitution of the party for a 50% representation. We won that battle. In part, by ensuring that consistently within the party the issues of women's rights as human rights, you know, has always been at the centre of the debate. There are obviously challenges which, in my view, are challenges that as women we have to deal with. How do we have confidence among ourselves? 'Cause if you said correctly more than half voters were women. That would be the same even when you look at different parties.</p>
DR. MALKA	Yes, because it is a representation of our country.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	But the question is, at that level, when women nominate candidates for parliament, do they have confidence in nominating women?
DR. MALKA	I think that's an important point.

MS THOKO DIDIZA	I think for me that's part of the challenge.
DR.MALKA	And one of the things that I contend with as well from women representing the majority of voters. In South Africa we account for two million more than our male counterparts. From an education point of view versus the ratio of tertiary education graduates, women account for 60% versus men at 40%, so we are more educated in effect than men. But yet there is elements of discrimination that we experience and when we look at it from a political point of view, if women could just use their electoral power more and to participate, I think, in more democratic forms whether it is voting on school boards, community forums and actively participating, they'll have a chance to change the landscape of the country.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	For me the other thing is for women to appreciate that entering the political environment, they themselves need to introduce changes rather than accepting the frame that we have found that this is how politics work, because I think that's what gets intimidating.
DR. MALKA	So forming it from as an active stakeholder, participating in terms of what she needs for herself and her family.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	Precisely. If you look when we went in parliament in 1994, for me that was a very interesting period because here we came into a very masculine environment, I think there was one women's toilet so we had to actually change the environment to make sure that, you know, this parliament contends with the fact that there are now women. Secondly, in terms of the programming of parliament, ensure that that programming takes into consideration that taking the breaks must be aligned with school holidays because now we want to spend time with our children. Children I don't think before factored in any parliamentary programming because, oh ja, it was all men, women would look after the kids.
DR. MALKA	It was the wife that was doing the job.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	Exactly. But also six months in Cape Town and six months in the administration didn't bother whoever thought about programming of parliament because they would shift everybody. A lot of their spouses were not working but we had to actually bring in a new reality that this is a changed environment. You have got mothers who are parliamentarians. Thirdly, the issue of Productive Rights, we had to ensure that this new legislative environment post 1994 contended with the fact that productive rights, even for parliamentarians, can't not be an issue. They are a factor because the majority of us went in there while we were still at our child bearing age. I will remember two of my kids I got them while I was a parliamentarian. First as a Deputy Minister and the other when I was a Minister and I didn't feel ashamed about it because being pregnant is not a sickness. It doesn't inhibit me to do the work.
DR. MALKA	No, it's part of the course of life.

<p>MS THOKO DIDIZA</p>	<p>And I think that was also an affirmation for a number of women to say you can do it. I think for me it's about how do we change the political architecture as women, such that it does not intimidate us. I mean I have seen it while I was the Minister of Agriculture when I was trying to understand why a lot of women who didn't want to move beyond the level of Deputy Director General to a DG position. Some of them felt it was too demanding in terms of time it would have taken more of their time from their families. So I think it is about looking at those things, how do we change them for women. You look at the local government level for instance. You do have women who are mayors, who are counsellors who are very effective and successful in their work but a lot of women look at their environment and think whoa, a bit harsh you know, sometimes you have to contend with all these negative statements from the media and how do you deal with it. But that also, in my view, requires how do we strengthen the women's movement so that it's not only a few of those who have taken a leap either in politics or in the private sector, but how do you continuously groom a cohort of women who will continue to actually participate in these structures and see them as any environment where women can participate. I mean one of the slogans that we had from '92 towards '94 was that "the woman's place is wherever she wants to be", because we wanted to change the psyche not just of women but also of society.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>I like that slogan.</p>
<p>MS THOKO DIDIZA</p>	<p>But also understanding that it's not for the sake of it. You know if you have got half of the society not being able to make an impact in how society is governed, how society operates, actually you have undermined your own democratic processes as a country because half the society is you, you don't even know. So for me it's important that our society appreciates the leadership role, the contributions that women can make in the development of society but also the different styles. I always say it's very interesting because when it comes to leadership styles of women in the boardroom, men are quick to say oh women are emotional when we are said to be speaking at the top of our voices but when men bang the table and they are angry in a meeting that's not seen as emotional, I mean really.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Yes, it's the same coin, just a different side.</p>
<p>MS THOKO DIDIZA</p>	<p>Exactly.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Heads or tails.</p>
<p>MS THOKO DIDIZA</p>	<p>And I think we need to become comfortable with that.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>We must be and the reality is that men and women are different but they bring to the table diversity and complementary benefits. We've got advantages, we've got disadvantages and it's about working together in a more cohesive manner.</p>

MS THOKO DIDIZA	Certainly.
DR. MALKA	We will be right back after this.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	If you've just tuned in, we are talking to Ms Thoko Didiza, House Chairperson in the National Assembly of Parliament in the Republic of South Africa. We would love to receive your comments on twitter @womanitytalk. Now continuing our discussion...
DR. MALKA	You'd mentioned before about changing the political architecture and to better suit the needs of women as well as men in society and I think that one of the areas that I am particularly proud of from a South African point of view, is that we have 41% female representation within our government structures and according to the Inter-parliamentary Union, we are now ranked tenth in the world. What I also thought was interesting was that other countries in Africa like Rwanda and Senegal hold first and sixth positions respectively, but when we look at so called first world countries, the likes of America (USA), they are only eighty fifth in the world, the UK is sixty fifth and France forty eighth. It makes me and I think any logical person ask why is there such low representation of women in first world countries? But for you as a politician and having experienced the transformation that has taken place in South Africa and for a country which consistently pursues equality, what's your point of view on the matter.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	To be honest without in-depth research I cannot put my finger on it as to why you would find such low representation. Is it because political participation is not seen as of interest? I wouldn't know, because these are, as you say, established democracies. You wouldn't say that there are any legislatives, uh legislations rather, that are inhibiting for women's participation, but the question is, is it the weakness of the Women's Movement that has made those countries not to have pressure in forecasting on women's issues and more in particular women's representation, I wouldn't know. But what you'd find in our country and in the continent in particular, I think there's a level of consciousness among women that they are an important stakeholder for the development of their societies. So women have actively chosen to participate, they have continuously strived for participation, not again for their own sake, but also to improve societies in various aspects.
DR. MALKA	And do you think that part of that is to do with the liberation struggle where we had men and women positioned as equals and they went in as comrades in arms where there was equal responsibility, that that has cascaded across into our democracy from a political perspective?
MS THOKO DIDIZA	Yes, but I think it's important also to look at the journey because for me it's a very insightful journey about women's leadership and

	<p>women's mobilisation. If you look at the African National Congress, my party in particular, you had women even when the talks about the formation of the ANC was still in its incubation, if you look at the 1912, even pictures, you had women from the churches, professionals who were part of that formation, but women were not given membership of the ANC. But did they sit back? They didn't. People like Charlotte Maxeke continued both theoretically in actually articulating the gender struggle within the political frame. When people talk about Maxeke they talk about this heroine but don't talk about her contributions scholarly and what she had done. She was also an organiser and a mobiliser. She mobilised women around social issues that were affecting women at the time. They finally formed an organisation the Bantu Women's League and I think it was at that time that the ANC realised that if they keep these women out the fold they will continue being an uncomfortable irritation, I suppose, so better bring them into the fold. But that didn't make women activists in the ANC Women's League in particular, conformists. They continued even within the ANC to pursue the struggle for liberation but also for women's liberation. They never, you know, sat back and said okay now we are part of the party and therefore you know, women's issues are secondary. They continued to work even across political spectrum, across class. The Federation South African Women in 1956 is another case in point, where the ANC Women's League worked with other women's organisations in pursuit of the liberation struggle, but more importantly, of women's emancipation struggle, even internationally. My own view is that women have been very conscious in the continent about the need for pursuing women's emancipation struggle. You look at, I mean I always say people celebrate the Organisation of African Unity. I do celebrate it, it is in important, but before the OAU was formed in 1963, in 1962 women formed the continental body PAWO - the Pan African Women Organisation - older than the OAU.</p>
DR MALKA	<p>Woman always seem to be slightly ahead of the game, whether it's about the Charter preceding the Freedom Charter, we had the Women's Charter.</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>Women's leadership has been very conscious about their role and place in society but also what they can bring and looking at issues of society and what they as women can contribute. I look at today we have got a woman commissioner in the African Union - the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosasana Dlamini Zuma. Already in looking forward she has not said we dump the economic programme which is NEPAD but she has challenged countries to say let's think beyond the now and have a long term vision to say as we celebrate 50 years of the Organisation of African Unity, what do we envision this continent in 50 years? But for me, she could have done that by having a few technical committee people and present it to the heads of state, but true to being a woman, she did it her consultative way. So for the whole year there were consultations with women, there were consultations with youth, with Arts and Culture, everybody else who feels they have been a part. So that programme</p>

	in terms of its ownership is not going to be just a programme vision in 2063 of the heads of state, but the different constituencies that were party to its formulation will see themselves in that programme and therefore, they will work towards its achievement and for me, that's one of the contributions that women bring in any leadership.
DR. MALKA	And you have touched on a very important point there concerning women and leadership. I think that leadership is a really important function for the future of women in terms of building their capability and enhancing their contributions to the economy and we have all seen that we have had significant gains in terms of women's representation within the parliamentary space. But interestingly, the Business Women's Association South Africa conducted a census in 2012 of Johannesburg Stock Exchange Listed Companies and I know that these figures tend to mirror other studies across the world, but they showed that only 21% of managers were women. What do you think we can take as learnings or be able to apply the same principles that are being used in government, into the private sector to increase levels of female leadership?
MS THOKO DIDIZA	I will take your question even further maybe in trying to understand what has made the change in the political environment? It is because of women's movement and women activism which I think is the same spirit, in my view, that we need to take into the private sectors. That women must lead those struggles because as we all know it is about power. Power can never be handed on a platter, nor can it be negotiated. You have to find a way in which you alter the power game and looking at what you have, numbers as such, and looking at how you could use those numbers into actually changing the environment. Don't expect that somebody – some CEO will come and think oh ja.....
DR. MALKA	He's not going to hand it over.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	But also one of the things for me, which I think at a political level have been very well, it's not making the women's emancipation struggle as only a women's issue, but its bringing it in the centre of the table so that both men and women must contend with it. But also you know it is to help men to appreciate their role in oppressing but also their role in liberation. How can they be part of the liberation movement? And I think it's important to make sure that in dealing with the gender struggle in our society, we don't leave men, you know, and only take an oppositional stance, but how it's how do you also mobilise them and conscientise them about the need for change. The other issue is how do we as women utilise our role as mothers in ensuring that we produce a new breed of young men that will become part of this society? At times we on our own, we perpetuate certain stereotypes. When young people are at the age of let me say six/seven that can now take their dishes to the sink. What do we do? We say to the girl, can you please take your brother's plate to the kitchen?
DR. MALKA	So we are perpetuating certain elements...
MS THOKO	So part of those things is the things that we need to re-learn as

DIDIZA	women, to undo.
DR. MALKA	But on that note as well, I think that re-thinking in terms of gender equality, it sometimes touches sensitive points, whether it is culturally, religion and tradition. Do you think we'll come to a point where we'll be able to overcome those issues for the sake of women's development?
MS THOKO DIDIZA	My sense is that we can and probably we need to unearth and maybe do some work – research - to look at certain changes and shifts that have happened in our society. I mean I remember growing up having a woman in pants was like taboo. But where are we today? It's no more an issue. To have a woman who is a traditional authority, a Chief was unheard of, but today we have. And for me I think that the gains we have won, to ensure that we don't lose those gains, it's how do we able to ensure that we utilise those, you know, instruments and institutions we have put in place to actually advance gender equality in our society.
DR. MALKA	And legislation is absolutely vital and if we consider currently we've got the South African Women Empowerment & Gender Equality Bill, which is undergoing various revisions and consultations. But ultimately its intention is to be able to position and achieve equality for women across the board, whether that is in the public space or in the private sector. Do you think that legislation like this will help close gender gaps?
MS THOKO DIDIZA	It will but for me it's also about the application thereafter. Most of the time, one of the things I had to contend with when I was a minister, we went through our legislature review, got some gender experts to look at them, which one was not gender sensitive, how do we change it and so on. You then end up with a very gender neutral legislation, which is good, super, that's all what we need. But how do we make sure that in its application, as a legislation but also your policy instrument and your programmes talk to the different needs of both men and women. I would use a very small example with regards to access to finance. So a woman farmer, even a woman professional, you go to the bank with all the equality clause that there is in the constitution and in the financial legislation, you ask for a loan, the first thing they ask are you married. You say yes. What is the type of marriage. In community of property, they say we need your husband. And you sit there and you say we fought for equality, we have an equality clause, but how does its application in a marriage of in community of property, you know, places itself.
DR. MALKA	Because the same rule doesn't apply to him when he goes into make those applications, whether or not he is married in community of property, he is not asked those same questions but we confront it and I have experienced it as well.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	So what I am saying is that at times it is the application of the law. Similarly, I mean I remember one time when SABC wanted to change its programme "Calling All Farmers" to sometime during the day because they thought it was too early in the morning and they needed to change it. So, I said to them maybe allow us to do a little bit of

	<p>discussion with farmers to see whether or not the time at which you want to change it would be acceptable and we wanted to use it as a test case to actually show that at times the gender neutrality may miss in the application of a particular programme, policy or legislation. So we went and had a meeting with these farmers, both male and women. It was very interesting. The house was split in half. Men were indifferent, they didn't care from whatever time, it's changed to what time and all women equally, they just said no. So we said what would you prefer the time to be? They said before news time or a little bit after news time in the evening. It was quite interesting, so we said reasoning? They said you know that's why those men are indifferent to whatever time because 05:00 am they are still in bed. I have to make sure that he has his breakfast, he has water. At that time I am up. The children have to go to school, I have to prepare the kids their lunch boxes and so on, so I would never have time to sit and listen to radio. During the day I am in my fields. Afternoon I come back I have to see to the kids coming back from school and start to preparing supper. The only time I can be able to listen to anything will be just before news time when I am eating my dinner.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And the other dynamic that you have raised there, it sounds as though she was also a filter to her husband or partner within the farming environment, that she was the one that was taking in the news information and relaying it across.</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>Yes, even though it may not be exactly the same, you will see it when you go to farmers' meetings. One time I actually asked, I said you know, you guys if you want to meet with the minister, I see you. I have never seen any women farmer. If their Agricultural shows its largely women, I mean it's largely men rather, I said when do you ever go to the farm? And every time I ask them where are your wives... oh ja, she's at home. Basically that woman manages the farm. The man becomes a political activist you know to argue with government about this law or that law so, half of the time he is not at the farm the person who really runs that farm is the woman, who is not even given an accolade of being a farmer. So it is those issues that in the application, will emerge and I think as women's leaders in positions of leadership, those are issues you have to be conscious about. So when you look at this application of law, you need to think in your psyche how will it lend to women? What are those things that I would need to factor in to make sure that women can also benefit from this legislation maximally?</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>We will be right back after this.</p>
	<p>AD BREAK</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>We're talking to Ms Thoko Didiza, House Chairperson in the National Assembly of Parliament in the Republic South Africa. We would love to receive your comments on twitter@womanitytalk. Now picking up on our discussion....</p>

DR. MALKA	<p>One of the areas that I read in terms of your self-development is that you consciously pursued your academic education in tandem with your political career and I consider that education is a vital tool to empower individuals, both from a point of view of their self-development, but also in terms of contributing to their societies. And even basic levels of literacy and numeracy have shown profound benefits, particularly from a woman's point of view on her well-being. UNESCO indicated that benefits include greater control over fertility rates, reduced child mortality, improved health management and poverty reduction and indicated that an additional year of schooling equated to yielding a 10% increase on her earnings. Do you think that we as a country are doing enough to educate our next generation of women, especially in underprivileged communities?</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>I think we do, as you said earlier Amelya, the statistics that we are looking at in terms of tertiary education and the access both for men and women and the performance, it indicates that we have got more women, firstly in terms of entry, but also even their performance has increased. My sense is that what our government has done particularly giving more support to basic education, to make sure that you capture a lot of young people into schooling, it's a very important one. But beyond that, given our socio-economic situation as a country, to actually have support, you know like having food at school, you know school nutrition in my view has been a very important and an added benefit to ensure that you can have more and more children in school. At a tertiary level the support in terms of National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)</p> <p>..... I know there is a complaint that it is not enough but it has actually gone a long way to ensure that children who come from disadvantaged communities who wouldn't have been able to access tertiary education today, they are able to do it. And what I have found interesting is that where a majority of women have actually gone through schooling and tertiary schooling level, they actually would educate their siblings. I am not saying men don't do it, but in majority you will find that a lot of women will do that to make sure that a lot of their siblings would actually benefit from their own education to be able to also get through to school. And a majority of women put emphasis into education. I mean in their budget they would do everything else but they would make sure that school needs are the first that are met, you know, in the household.</p>
DR. MALKA	Priority for the children.
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>So for me, I think as a country we have done what we could. We could still do more, you know, to ensure that we encourage more and more people to make sure that they actually take education seriously. Not just for themselves alone but also for the contribution into their society. You raised an important issue about I continued studying even while I was a minister, I mean part of the reality is that I believe in life-long learning because things change. If you look at the world today, it wasn't like when I was growing up, but also if you look at</p>

	<p>technology, technology changes very quickly and these are the applications you have to utilise in your working environment so you have to develop yourself otherwise you would be redundant in the work environment. For me it was also about decision making, I mean I was a Deputy Minister in Agriculture, which is an economic sector. So how would I have coped if I didn't empower myself in understanding, you know, economics? Informing yourself about the sector in which you have to operate in, expand your knowledge of it. If you are in a decision making position it enables you to look at things differently because while your professionals within that environment will empower you with knowledge, will give you the necessary recommendation, you must also be able to have an independent mind to reflect on the issues because you don't only look at the administrative or the technical issues, but you also have to have the balance in terms of the political issues. Not just in your local environment but globally and be able to say what will the impact of this decision be today, not only for South Africa but also the interlinkages that are there between what we do and what is happening outside? So it became important then, it becomes important even now in the area where I am in.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>We are coming to the end of our show now. In closing the discussion, can you please share a few words of wisdom and inspiration that you would like to pass on to women in Africa that are listening to our show.</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>What I can say is that South Africa is part of the African Continent. The issues that affect South African women are similar to those issues that affect women in our continent, in different ways. We talk about issues of violence against women, that remains a challenge across our continent. We speak about issues of equal participation and equal representation, we have still have got a long way to go, not just South Africa but continentally. So what it actually means for me is that it is necessary that we need to find linkages around which we can continue to engage as women beyond our national borders in ensuring that we can actually build solidarity and for me I think that's a strength that we have, not just because of our numbers but also because women are able to engage and interact and we need to be able to build networks that would put us in good stead in dealing with some of these challenges. We now have got a continental parliamentary African Union. There is a need for women's parliamentarian within that AU to actually find common objectives around which they can work together as women parliamentarians of the continent, to pursue those issues that still continue to affect women.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you for that important message. It's been a pleasure to have you on our show today.</p>
MS THOKO DIDIZA	<p>Thank you.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You have been listening to Womanity – Women in Unity on Channel</p>

	Africa, the voice of the African Renaissance and we have been talking to Ms Thoko Didiza, House Chairperson in the National Assembly Parliament in the Republic of South Africa.
	END OF PROGRAMME