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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: ADMIRAL EMILY MASANABO – DIRECTOR OF NAVY TRANSFORMATION

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	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	Joining us in studio today is Admiral Masanabo from the South African Navy who is currently Director of Navy Transformation which addresses transformation from a gender point of view within the Naval Services. Welcome to the show.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Thank you ma'am, I really appreciate being in the studio.
DR. MALKA	We're glad that you took the time out to come out today and talk to us and I think starting right at the very beginning, Admiral you were born into a large family, you're one of six children and you were raised in Wallmansthal in Pretoria by your mom, who was a domestic worker after your father passed away at an early stage in your life; you then went on to matriculate in 1987, in 1988 you joined the ANC and became involved in the community on issues of social wellbeing, can you please share with us some of those memories of when you were growing up, of what influenced you during those years
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Ja, I have so many memories of when I was growing up, some good and some bad, however, the most memorable time of my life is when I was just a little girl. My family and I lived happily in a beautiful plot of land in Wallmansthal which my parents had inherited from my great grandmother whom I don't know if I can say co-incidentally, I was named after.
DR. MALKA	Well that's a strong lineage coming through from the matriarch of the family and I think it's a point of honour.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	...and from what I'm told whatever I possess, they think that I have, you know, inherited.
DR. MALKA	Her characteristics.....
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Of course... and on that land there were residential rooms, many of them that we had rented to many families. There were also an open space whether you call it a space or an area, where all the kids used to play.
DR. MALKA	So it was a very communal environment growing up and a close community.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Exactly. As we were playing this one afternoon, enjoying ourselves, a number of....actually we saw a number of orange trucks driven by white men approaching us and they made their stop in our yard, looking furiously angry, murmuring in Afrikaans, we were astonished as we were still small and our parents were not at home. These men jumped off the car or their vehicles and conducted an inspection in the houses. A few minutes later they went back to their trucks and they came back pulling this humongous chains that we used to refer to as "bobbejaans", they tied our houses and you know they took that and hooked it on a tow bar, they went back to their cars, drove their cars at the same time

	pulling and dragging the houses until our homes were completely destroyed.
DR. MALKA	That is a terrible ordeal and especially when you're so young.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	When they were satisfied that everything in that area was destroyed they left.
DR. MALKA	So the homes were all demolished and that was whilst parents were away, there were no adults, it was just the children that were left there, and what happened when everyone returned?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	You know before I don't even know what happened afterwards but what I can tell you during that time that everybody was in tears, crying, screaming firstly because we didn't know what had happened and why as we were kids, but secondly because we inherently knew that we had just lost our homes. Later on that day as it was getting darker I watched my older brothers pulling out, you know, poles, blankets and you must remember this poles were attached to the corrugated iron, in an attempt to build us shelters for that night. We stayed in those shelters until each family found an alternative accommodation in different areas. So the whole community was scattered, then, what I still remember, my mom came back and took us to Hammanskraal, her aunt, so that we can stay with her.
DR. MALKA	That's a very touching story Admiral but it must have made you feel very angry, I'm sure, at the time and it must have had a tremendous impact on you.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Ja and ja, that is a memory that lives within me 'till today.
DR. MALKA	But moving on from that point, which is a long time ago, but still a very haunting memory to you, in 2010 you broke your own glass ceiling within the Navy and you were promoted to Director of Navy Transformation, can you take us through a few of the landmarks in your career and when you understood that being part of the Navy was a huge part of your destiny?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Firstly, what influenced me most was mom's determination.
DR. MALKA	Your mom's determination so she was a strength, a force.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	She never ceased to try harder to better our livelihoods when she had just lost her beloved husband, our father. I remember, I think my father passed on in 1972 and that thing was between '72 and '73 so it was not even a year or so.
DR. MALKA	So she was dealing with the loss of her husband, the loss of the family breadwinner and still holding onto the family, six children to manage that circumstance.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	She was able, through her hardship, to provide us with food and she even managed to buy her own stand even when she couldn't sleep at night knowing that tomorrow could be worse than today and another thing, it was the miracles that was performed by God in my life, even in the darkest of times He was and still is able to lift me up. Secondly, the pain and the suffering I endured due to the political unrest that took place when I was growing up has left an irremovable mark on me and lastly, the reason I wake up every day is because, like my mom, I can't stand or bear to see my children or anyone I come into contact with live through that kind of life I have experienced and in terms of the career, I have achieved a lot, countless landmarks.
DR. MALKA	What would you say would be the most prominent ones that stand out for you?

ADMIRAL MASANABO	You know as I was drafting my notes I realised that in most of the things that I fared I was the first, the first, the first, the first.....
DR. MALKA	First woman?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	I want to say I was amongst the first African females to be integrated into the South African Navy during 1994 and on that intake I was the only female to be appointed as the Naval Police.
DR. MALKA	And when you say you were the only female to be appointed within the Naval Police, how large is the Naval Police?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	By then it could have been more than a thousand people, or approximately ...
DR. MALKA	Well a handful of women out of a thousand people
ADMIRAL MASANABO	...from the research that I have conducted in the Naval Police they only had three females by then.
DR. MALKA	So women were tremendously under-represented at that point.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes and it went on for a very long time and besides that Amaleya, I just want to share with you all of my achievements, not all, just a few.
DR. MALKA	Please go ahead.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	I was awarded the best academic learner or student in the advanced investigation course conducted under the auspices of the University of Pretoria and the Military Police and later I was appointed the first female Senior Investigating Officer in the Military Police and then in 1996, was it 2006 I was appointed as the first African female to be in the rank of a Captain in that intake, not in the whole Navy, only in that intake and then appointed the first female to be the Senior Staff Officer in charge of Fraud Prevention and Corruption Prevention and the Inspectorate General in the Department of Defence, and then, I was also appointed as the first female to act as a Senior Staff Officer in charge of Policing and I was re-appointed as the first female to be the Senior Staff Officer in Police Intelligence.
DR. MALKA	Those are a lot of firsts.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Very.
DR. MALKA	And I think that what's important, particularly in our show, is that for women and young girls that are listening to us to understand that when you break through on those firsts you're breaking through those glass ceilings, not only for yourself but also for the legions of girls and young women to follow through in your footsteps.
DR. MALKA	We'll take a short break.
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	You're listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the voice of the African Renaissance, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Admiral Masanabo from the South African Navy and currently Director of Navy Transformation. In our previous conversation Admiral Masanabo shared elements from her childhood, particularly the traumatic experience of when she was growing up and the devastation of her home, but also talking about the resilience and the strength of her mother and how that held her in stead... in terms of her career moving forwards. She also highlighted some of the many firsts that she achieved in terms of breaking through those glass ceilings, not only for herself, but for other women following in her footsteps. Admiral if you can just touch on, before we carry on with the next section, a few moments in terms of your new position and I think that there are some valuable insights into making that achievement?

ADMIRAL MASANABO	Becoming a Rear Admiral, Junior Grade marked the greatest point in my career thus far.
DR. MALKA	Can you tell us a little bit about that, some of the experiences for instance I know that it is a, and we'll talk about the, it was a very male dominated sector but I understand that in this position you are managing both genders, you're managing members of different ranks and it's only really possible when you have the support of women and men to make your job effective
ADMIRAL MASANABO	This appointment gave me the power and the ability to reach the people that needed to be reached, it also gave me the ability to change their lives.
DR. MALKA	From a point of view of their career progression?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes, in terms of their career progression, in terms of their motivation, in terms of their encouragement, the coaching and mentoring.
DR. MALKA	Well it must be a very rewarding experience on a personal level as well, knowing that you've been able to touch so many people's lives. Now as we've touched briefly the Defence Force has traditionally been stereotyped as a male biased field and like other sectors in South Africa, we as a nation have been very conscious about driving gender transformation and I read a report in a 2011 parliamentary briefing that in 2010 there was a target to increase female recruits by 40%, is this still the case and how is gender transformation progressing in the navy?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes, Amaleya, it is still the same.
DR. MALKA	Targeting 40%?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	...40% at the entry level and at the senior management it's 30%.
DR. MALKA	Okay, so we've got different targets as we go through the hierarchy?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Different, yes, as we go up because we need to build to have a bottom up approach.
DR. MALKA	And what are some of the mechanisms that you use to attract more women into the military or into the navy in particular?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	You know the career opportunities that we have number one, number two we've got a marketing strategy whereby our HR people go out and do exhibitions and you also have open days like the Navy Week and also I've seen that you know just wearing your uniform and walking around, people just love that.
DR. MALKA	That is such an important point and it reminds me a few months ago we interviewed Annabel Vundla who flew former President Nelson Mandela and she said exactly that, when she was wearing her uniform and she was walking around, could be on the street it could be in a rural community, she said you started to see the lights going off in children's eyes on wow, you're a pilot, wow you're a woman and you're a pilot, can women really do that and I imagine that a similar experience must happen when young children see you and recognise that they can reach those aspirations.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Wherever I go, when I am in my uniform you know, young children, school children whether male or female, they always stop me they want to know are you a pilot, what are you, what uniform is this and I always tell them that yes, I'm a pilot, I'm also a captain of the ship, I'm a police, I'm a traffic officer, I'm actually everything but this uniform is the navy and there are opportunities in the navy, but you need to make sure that you go to school and to take maths and science, don't run away from that because currently that is the environment that we need to fill.
DR. MALKA	And what are some of the careers, I read there's divers, there's submariners, there is sailors, what are some of the opportunities available in the navy?

ADMIRAL MASANABO	Let me start with sailors. Sailors is a term that is being used for all the people in the navy, we are all sailors because we operate in ships in the navy at sea and then we have divers. Divers are those people who are supposed to be having this ,you know, actually I can say they are the core of the navy because they are the ones who go out in the sea, they search for mines, they search for wrecks if they have the capability or the ability to detonate they can come back and detonate the mines, if there are wrecks they must come back and report but in each and every situation it must be reported to the ships so that when the ship goes out the coast or it is clear out there.
DR. MALKA	And that falls under the responsibility of the divers?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes. They must know how to swim, they mustn't be afraid of water because there life is down there, those are the divers.
DR. MALKA	A very important function in the navy.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Ja. The submariners are those who work in the submarines.
DR. MALKA	And I know that in the past there was some controversy in terms of women becoming submariners because of the nature of the vessels, access to water but as everything evolves and things become more modernised that's no longer an issue, is it?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	It's no longer an issue and you know if I can tell you, last week when I was Saldanha, being invited for the dinner....to be....
DR. MALKA	And Saldanha is on, just for our listeners, Saldanha is in Cape Town on the coast.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes, where we do our basic training. I was told that they are no longer having that challenge of you know, sharing with their male counterparts the same toilet, the same showers and the same bed, but they have a roster who goes first and thereafter the next person will go, they respect each other's privacy, when one goes on duty if it's a male, he will wake up go on duty and the next person if it's a female will go on to the bed.
DR. MALKA	So it's very much about equality and that's manifested itself into the operational aspects of the navy.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes and now I thought of GI Jane because you know when they wanted to isolate her they would say "this is a man's world you will see how you can survive there" and she made sure that she cut her hair, she showers with them facing the other direction and she made the training.
DR. MALKA	I think that's a wonderful example that everyone can relate to. Now Admiral Masanabo South Africa with the ANC has gained tremendous achievements along the last 20 years of democracy concerning women's representation in parliament and the years that women struggled is reflected on the progress that we've achieved, I always find that our history defines our present but our present defines where our future is going, in your opinion what areas do you think we need to build on the most for women to benefit from in the future?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	First and foremost I believe that education is the most treasurable and important foundation that we need to build in the future.
DR. MALKA	And I know that you've got a strong emphasis on the maths and sciences field.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes, the reason why we want to do that is to assist women in making sure that they are being equipped with skills to be innovative and competitive and also they are part of the problem solvers and not the problem creators.

DR. MALKA	I think that that's a very important point because once you've been able to be part of the solution then you can identify with particular problems and fix them to make sure that they work correctly. Looking back at your impressive resume you've highlighted, for instance some of the many firsts that you've achieved, but apart from your career success you have always been involved in the community on issues of social wellbeing, you had a decision to move your studies to BA Law but due to your passion for people you felt that you would better represent the oppressed people and at the same time you were one of the first women to join into the military police branch and since then you fulfilled many positions that are usually reserved for male counterparts, it seems that your strength comes from your compassion, what is your intake on it?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Okay, for me I personally believe that I have the ability of being empathetic and benevolence and this comes from the experience of pain and discomfort of going to bed hungry for many days and sometimes having to go to school without knowing what to eat but I never stood there or find myself standing there in the road asking or begging for anything.
DR. MALKA	So you had a lot of pride and also with the empathy that you have being able to relate to other people to help them out of their environment.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes, yes, that is what I did and another thing that I can say is the influences for my compassion are philosophies such as "Ubuntu", "I am because you are"....
DR. MALKA	And that's one of the unique factors within the South African culture of Ubuntuism and I think that it's a very important part of our culture that sometimes we neglect.
DR. MALKA	We'll take a short break.
AD BREAK	
DR.MALKA	You're listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the voice of the African Renaissance, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band. Today we're talking to Admiral Masanabo from the South African Navy who is currently the Director of Navy Transformation. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter@WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	Now if you've just tuned in, in our previous discussion Admiral Masanabo was talking about the various career opportunities that are available with the navy sector, talking about how transformation has progressed for instance that we now have a 40% demand to try and get female recruits from the bottom up and a 30% demand within the upper echelons of the naval structures and importantly she emphasised education as a key foundation skill, particularly in the maths and science field to help stimulate and drive innovation for young ladies to become problem solvers in effect. Now moving forwards Admiral, today you've clearly become a role model for many women and that has been part of your endeavours through hard work, your perseverance but you've demonstrated that through personal sacrifice anything can be achieved. Can you share with some of the gender challenges that you experienced and that you overcame in your career?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Fortunately for me Amaleya, I can safely say that I what I went through was not due to gender discrimination and I do believe that it was just a race thing because I think my assertiveness and boldness have drawn a line that men know never to cross.
DR. MALKA	So your own personal characteristics have been what has helped you succeed in your career?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes.

DR. MALKA	And those are strong elements, so being assertive and being bold and not backing off of things.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	
DR. MALKA	Definitive. Would you have any advice to pass onto girls who are possibly considering pursuing a career in the navy?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes.
DR. MALKA	What would you recommend or suggest?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	I would say opportunities in the navy are so immense but number one go to school as I have said, don't leave school. If you want to grab the opportunity with both hands make sure that you go to school and after that make sure that you don't join the navy as your last resort. Join the navy because you want to and you'll love it because the navy is not employment agency, we fight at sea, we win at sea and we become unchallenged at sea and if you do, I'm telling you, you will drown, excuse my pun.
DR. MALKA	But you've been in the navy for a very long time, you've obviously got there's, in terms of the opportunities, there's career longevity and I think it's a wonderful platform in terms of being able to defend and honour one's country. Admiral our programme is all about gender equality and increasingly it's become a global focus as has building female leadership and it's evident in terms of the various roles that you've occupied that female leadership is important to you and it's important to the future of our young ladies growing up in the country and also on the continent, what is your perspective, how do you see female leadership whether it is in the navy, the military, parliament or any other field for that matter?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	My dear I just want to tell you one thing that women in whole world run their own businesses and most importantly they manage or they head maybe for the lack of a better word, their household single-handedly and they do it very well and research has shown that women are good communicators, at work or in the organisation and also they can motivate other people, they've got that empathy towards people and there is a saying that says "you educate a woman, you educate the whole nation".
DR. MALKA	Very true and we've seen that in terms of women receiving, UNESCO for instance talks about a 10% increase in a woman's salary earnings for every year that a girl is in school, that the series of benefits in terms of the upbringing of her children, how they're clothed, how they are fed, how it impacts on their health and that is all stemming through from education and when a woman is more educated she it turn educates her children. Admiral you've spoken a little bit about empathy as one of the key characteristics in terms of your factors of success and part of your character, one of the questions which I ask all of my guests on the programme who've made tremendous achievements in their respective fields, is about their factors of success, so what they feel has stood out to help them achieve and become the person that they are today, what would you say are some of the factors that have made you who you are today?
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Honestly I believe that due to what I have gone through when I was growing up and I can safely say the coaching, the mentoring that I got from my mom and as I was seeing her, you know she had this helping hand, she didn't want to see anyone suffer even if she didn't have much, sharing, so for me, the compassion, the benevolence not I don't want to see anyone I come across with suffering the way I did because I know

	that it was not a nice thing so I make sure that people don't go through what I went through.
DR. MALKA	So compassion and empathy are your key drivers.....
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Ja. Yes.
DR. MALKAand I've found what's interesting about what you've said it's not only about something that has been done for you but rather it's about what you can do for other people and I think that's a very selfless way of, a selfless philosophy.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Yes.
DR. MALKA	Admiral Masanabo we're now coming up to the end of our show and in closing the discussion I'd like it if you could please share a few words of inspiration to pass on to women in Africa who are listening to our show.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	My words of inspiration are short and they are the words of a young but brave woman, Malala Yousafzai, and she says let us wage at glorious struggle against illiteracy, poverty, discrimination and gender normative let us pick up our books and pens, they are our most powerful weapons.
DR. MALKA	Very important words and echoes everything that you've said throughout our conversation today emphasising education as being the key point for women to uplift themselves and empower themselves.
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much for joining us today, it's been wonderful to have you here and we look forward to hearing from you in the future in terms of your next set of achievements.
ADMIRAL MASANABO	Thank you very much for having me.
	PROGRAMME END