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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: LUMKA YENGENI – PARLIAMENTARIAN & CHAIR PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE LABOUR

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 on the line from our Cape Town studio today is Mrs. Lumka Yengeni who is a member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Labour. It's a pleasure to have you on board; can you please share with us some of the responsibilities that come with chairing the Portfolio Committee on Labour?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	Yes doctor, I think it would be important for me to just give a brief background of what are the processes before we start working in the committee. As you know I am from the ruling party, it holds its congresses every five years and in those congresses the resolutions that are taken that are aimed at improving the imbalances of the past that resulted into unequal society, in short those resolutions of the ANC conference is about delivering services to the people and after that is done it is then the responsibility of the government to craft those resolutions into implementable policies or programmes and then the parliament kicks in because parliament has to make the legislations, where there have to be legislations that's the role of the committee to pass those legislations and even before passing those roles, the parliament has to make it a point that it has consulted with the public widely, in particular those who will be affected by the implementation of that legislation and also the parliament has a responsibility to see or to do oversight, meaning that they must ensure that this implementation of that particular legislation is followed to the letter because if it's not followed then it's like there we have legislations that are good but are not bringing anything to the people, so our role is the oversight.
DR. MALKA	It's absolutely vital that we have the governance, that we keep good checks and balances and that everything is in order, and can you tell us, are there any specific milestones that you want to achieve during your term of office?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	Definitely, in his state of the nation address, the president of the country who is the president of the ANC made a call that there should be investigations as to how the national minimum wage can be established in South Africa and that responsibility was given to the deputy president of the country Cyril Ramaphosa to lead it through the social partners in NEDLAC and that is done, but on our side as the committee because NEDLAC is an entity of the Department of Labour, meaning the department that we as the Portfolio Committee on Labour do oversight on it so we then ourselves made our own investigation so that when the matter comes to parliament, or when there are queries at any stage by the public, or stakeholders at least parliament is ready it knows each and everything and when it comes as well parliament will be ready to question if they have to question somewhere there and there, if they have to contribute or to add

	<p>parliament is ready, so it is our own legacy as the Committee Portfolio on Labour that the national minimum wage must be established in our term because if that is done it will make a difference to the lives of the working poor.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It is a significant undertaking and a very important one at that and part of the Department of Labour's practices and activities, it aims to play a role at reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality through the various sets of policies and programmes that have been developed in consultation with social partners and those, the three areas that I have as being highlighted are to improve economic efficiency and productivity; for employment creation; to eliminate inequality and discrimination in the workplace and when undertaking law making and establishing policies, I wanted to find out is there a gender lens or a gender perspective that is applied to take into consideration the different needs of men and women, or are these policies treating people as one irrespective of their gender?</p>
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	<p>That's a very important question, you see the, in our constitution, Section 3 of our constitution says that people must be, all people must be equal before the law, irrespective of the gender affiliation and therefore the Department of Labour, in whatever it is doing, in its laws that have been passed to parliament they always take into consideration that there is a challenge, or there are challenges that are there in the workplace that we have inherited and they are still there so we do have laws that are dealing with those inequalities, like for instance the amendment that we have, that have been made in the Labour Relations Act is to ensure that all people are equal before the law in the sense that for the same work performed at work by all workers there should be equal payment, but also there should be a question maternity when it regards to women, those interests that are particular or specific to the women that at times become or are used against women, they are there so that women are protected in the process of executing their duties.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Those are all extremely logical and rational points particularly the fact that there should be equal pay for work of equal value, irrespective of your gender and that when it comes to elements such as maternity benefits that there is a slight variance. Mrs. Yengeni one of the areas that I find is that our working world has been designed what I describe as "men's hours" where in effect society is losing half of its best multitaskers from the workforce due to some of the traditional expectations from women and it has become necessary for women to reform their work timetables to incorporate their family needs, what is your view of this?</p>
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	<p>It is true that the work contracts world over are mainly designed by men because of the historical phenomenon whereby men are the ones who are on the top echelons or who are occupying the highest positions, who are in the management level and as they designed those contracts they are only interested in the profits not in human beings because those people who are designing those work contracts are fathers, are brothers, are husbands but when they designed those workers they forget about that, it's all about profit, they become slave drivers, however, in South Africa we do have laws that are protecting women, we are, I think I've dealt with this issue because women at workplace they are discriminated as women because of what I've said that the laws or the mainly the contracts that are done there are mainly done by men and it's only for them. That is changing in South Africa more especially when you look at the government sector and in state institutions, you do have African groups who are dominant there, however, even there you'll find that there are very few women that are there but at</p>

	<p>least they are doing their best, you look at what the president is doing, all the presidents starting from president Mandela, they make it a point that when appointing their cabinet they have women who are ministers, not just deputy ministers. They are trying even now, there has been appointment of women judges so we are trying but we are not yet there, we need to work hard to be there, women must unite and then because even if the laws are there that are supporting us, if we are not ensuring that there is enforcement of those laws, those laws will just be there.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Mrs. Yengeni two points that I think are very important there, the first one is when you were talking about that men in upper management are the ones who have been designing and coordinating contracts, the fact is that most of those men have got wives running their households and they have been doing the elements for their family section so they haven't really had to consider the other factors, the softer functions that women have to incorporate into their multiplicity of roles and then the second point that you raised is in terms of how much progress we have made as a country in particular from a government point of view where we've had presidents who have been very strong and very forward thinking and progressive in terms of having a more inclusive approach and having women reach higher positions and to enforce, in effect, to try to get to our 50/50 even split.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Today we're talking to Mrs Lumka Yengeni who is a Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Labour.</p>
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DR. MALKA	<p>You are listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the voice of the African Renaissance on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band, also available on DSTV Channel 902. Today we're talking to Mrs. Lumka Yengeni who is a Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Labour. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter@WomanityTalk.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>In our previous segment Mrs. Yengeni highlighted some of the tasks of the Portfolio Committee on Labour and mentioned a very important factor which is part of her term and wanting to take responsibility on and that is about establishing the national minimum wage; we also spoke about the various aspects of legislation that is incorporated and the use of legislation. Now continuing with our conversation, Mrs. Yengeni although women constitute 44% of the South African workforce, approximately 80% of the female labour force occupies low skilled positions and that was according to findings from Statistics South Africa both in 2010 as well as 2014, what is your intake on this and is there a plan to improve this situation such as promoting free education or training for women?</p>
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	<p>This is an important question doctor, we need to speed up the pace of transforming the workplace so that it can equally benefit all workers, irrespective of their gender affiliation because despite the skills and development of women, that does not transform into grooming of the number of women who are occupying higher positions, the number is still low so we need to do more in terms of ensuring that there are trainings and it's not just training because in most cases people are trained and after being trained they are not placed, so we need to look at the type of training that we get that we ensure that after those training people are placed somewhere so that they can get experience because in most cases at times when you are looking for a job they are looking for experience and you can have training, without experience it becomes difficult for you to enter in the market.</p>

DR. MALKA	So we need to have greater follow through, it's not just about training someone it's that they're equipped to deal with the situation and have that knowledge, but it's a follow through almost part of the value chain that they go from being a graduate and being absorbed into the workforce.
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	Yes.
DR. MALKA	And in terms of beyond our educational elements, what other areas do you think that we can do to help bolster and move more women through the workforce?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	It is, I think training it is important because if you, we are not concentrating on training and improving the skills that the women have, this will going to continue the undermining of women and...in terms of work and also being put in higher positions. It's not going to stop so the most important thing for me is that women must be skilled, they must have something that shows that they are equally competent to their man counterpart so because at this stage it's not going to be easy for us to just move and just want to be put or given opportunities of work because we are women, we must be given opportunities to work because you know there is a potential for a person to be able to do that work and without training it's not going to be easy.
DR. MALKA	I agree with you and staying with our vein of looking now towards the other 20% of women, in corporate South Africa at senior management level, according to the Business Women's Association of South Africa's 2012 Census of Johannesburg Stock Exchange listed companies, women accounted for 21.4% of executive managers; 17.1% directors; 5.5% chairpersons and only 3.6% of the JSE's CEO's, now considering women represent 52% of the South African population they are significantly underrepresented in both leadership and managerial positions. Taking learnings from the public sector, as we mentioned in government where women are well represented, how do you think we can improve on the representation of women in leading roles in the corporate and private space?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI 17.44	You know it is true that women in those... in the private sector are really going to nowhere, it's a drop in the ocean when we have to look for women in the management position or in senior position where decisions are taken, it is really a drop in the ocean but what it.....you know the passing of an employment equity act in 17 years ago was a response to a call by both the Congress of the people that was held in 1955 that culminated in the drafting of a document that we have a policy document of the ANC that we have today, the Freedom Charter and also our constitution that we are all equal before the law, so it is...and also it is important that we make a follow-up on the legislations that we have passed, that are enforcing the equity in terms of workplace so if we are not ensuring that we are enforcing that, we are not going to go anywhere with this, it's going to remain the same. It's good that the government is leading by example but we have to enforce it to the public sector as well because despite the fact that we have graduates, we have people.... a number of people, I mean we have a very big large number of women who are graduating every year but they are nowhere, they are not going anywhere, they are joining the most of them are joining the army of the unemployed and there is no excuse from the private sector why these people are not absorbed or why these people are not going up to the higher echelons in our economy. So we have a responsibility as women to make a follow-up to enforce, to fight what is there for us in terms of the law to be implemented.

DR. MALKA	And you're absolutely right, women actually make up more, I think approximately a ratio of about 55% more women graduate than men from university so women are in effect trying to equip themselves from an educational point of view, so that's self development, and as you say we have to take more strides and embrace the legislation that is there and that is meant to support us and to use that in effect to help us within the private sector. Mrs. Yengeni what areas do you think we need to build on the most to benefit women in the future?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	I think unity amongst women is important so that whatever struggles that we wage in terms of changing our status in this...economic status in this society, be it at home or at work, you do need that unity of women so that we assist each other, we advise each other, in that way I'm sure we will be able because in the process we will be teaching each other or assisting each other to go for certain trainings that are going to change our status.
DR. MALKA	And do you think that in reality 50/50 representation can be achieved in the private sector?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	In the private sector it clearly shows that it is a challenge even at this....you don't even talk about 50/50 you'll find 2 women out of 10 management people, a number of 10 where 7 or 8 will be male, so but if it's enforced it's something because at this stage it's not really enforced but I think the ruling party it does it in its own structures as a political organisation and it does it in parliament and if they can do it I think it is the responsibility of the ruling party through its government to ensure that this 50/50 representation is also matched by the private sector, difficult as it is, it can be started gradually. It's not, it might be not easy to do it as it is easy to do it in government but they can still do it.
DR. MALKA	And to your point the ANC has had 21 years of evidence and proof of having the 50/50 ratios of women representation and for that to cascade across into the private sector that would definitely be a bonus. Mrs. Yengeni one of the areas that we've been speaking about from a woman's point of view is I think the fact that women have to multitask, the fact that it's not just about attending to the needs that they have within their work environment but it's also all of the things that they have to take into consideration of looking after the home, looking after the children, what's your view?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	I think this...the multitasking or the ability of the women to do to multitask, it's something that has been imposed by the society on its own because if you look at the chores that the woman has to do, she must work, she must look after the kids, she must run the household and you have a partner at home, you know the way this patriarchy norms and traditions, we should do away with them because it would be easy for women if you have your partner at least also it's....you are not asking for a roster in the house where you say today it's me whose going to...but at least you need someone who can assist, you know, if you are not there at least there is someone who can assist so for me this multitasking that is only on women, yes we do it because we grew up in a society that does it but we have to do away with it, we should work together, the kids are brought by two people on earth not by one person and if the responsibility is there to be shared they must be shared but of course, as I've said, we are not saying that we have....that time table in the house that says that today it's you or today it's me but it must be something that comes from the bottom of one's heart because at times someone will be early from work and we are still at work but that partner of yours will be waiting for you to come back to cook, yet you are both from work you are both tired, you still have to look after the

	homeworks of the children, many other things that could be shared but because of the upbringing and the norms that we have inherited from the society, these things all these responsibilities tend to be, you know, shifted on the shoulders of the women, which is not fair. Yes, they do them.
DR. MALKA	You're absolutely right and time and time again in the conversations that I have with women the whole issue is about patriarchy, that we have this socialisation that needs to be readdressed and in effect almost rewiring society of their expectations and going through to reiterate your point it is about having the partnership between a man and a woman with regards to the upbringing of their children and maintaining the household chores that it should not just be left to the woman to tend to them.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Mrs Lumka Yengeni, Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Labour.
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DR. MALKA	In our previous segment the focus of the conversation was largely on women in the workforce, how greater efforts have to be made in terms of transforming the workforce, we looked at training, education and experience as being critical factors and we also looked at more of a softer issue that has a high impact and that is about patriarchy. Mrs. Yengeni we're now going into the last segment of this show, one of the questions that I ask all my guests on this programme who have made tremendous achievements in their respective fields concerns the factors that contribute to their success, some speak about perseverance, others talk about hard work, some speak about their mothers, can you please tell us in your opinion what have been the key drivers to your success?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	Again when it comes to my success or to be where I am today I am a living product of the ANC. I grew up from the units which are today called branches of the ANC, undergone a number of trainings at home and abroad, political training, during the time when the ANC was unbanned and it is those trainings and the deployments that I have been given to do that has produced me. It is not myself of course, when I'm given a task I am a person who does it to the best of my ability. I think it's a combination of that, of the training and for me liking what I'm doing, my work, that's what has produced me or moulded me to be who I am today.
DR.MALKA	Mrs. Yengeni staying with elements in terms of drivers of your success, can you share with us who have been the strong women in your life?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	The first name that comes to me its comrade Mama Winnie Mandela. You know I joined the struggle in 1976, during the 1976 Soweto Uprising and that mama has been an inspiration because she was harassed by the apartheid machinery but at the same time she was able to look after the family and look after the husband who was behind the bars. She has gone through a number of things, being tortured but able to carry on and not even fall and none of the persecution that she received, be it burning her, put her somewhere there, she remained herself and resolute in whatever she was doing so I got inspiration, even long before I met with her, when I was arrested as I was a student, even if I was in the cells I would think of that lady and say who I am, here I am, I'm a student who does...I don't have kids I don't really have responsibility but there are people that you are looking up to who are really inspiring you to be better revolutionaries tomorrow, so to me she is the best.

DR. MALKA	Thank you for sharing that touching memory with us and whilst you were growing up can you tell us about some of the pivotal moments, the factors that influenced you in those years that had a big impact on you?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	You know I grew up in a very small family and I grew up without a father. My mother was a domestic worker who looked after us and in most cases I would be looking after the kids and work. I think because of that background it was easy for me to be recruited in the ANC of course you start with student movements and then you're recruited in the ANC and all its alliance partners so I think poverty experiences and life and also being tortured at a young age it strengthens one to you know, believe that really this system that was dominant at that stage, it was a system that had to be removed because the experience in the hands of you know, well built matured men dealing with young students and torturing them at times to death, so that did not make one to retreat, that's what made me to believe that if they could go to that extent of killing, torturing people it's clear that what we are fighting for it's worth it so we also needed the same determination for a better South Africa.
DR. MALKA	And after all that you've endured in the past, do you think that South Africa is in the right place today?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	I think it is in the right direction. We do have political power in our hands but what is a challenge is that the economy is not in our hands, it is still in the hands of the few so political power alone is not going to redress the economic challenges of the past easily so that's why even the ruling party, the ANC when it says this is the first stage of our, of our democracy, we're still in the process in the national democratic revolution because we have not yet gone where we want to be, so that's the first stage but we still have to make it a point that we gain economic power, which is a process.
DR. MALKA	It is and with every challenge I think the point is about trying to identify the right solutions to overcome them. Mrs. Yengeni we're now coming to the end of our discussion, in closing the talk today could you please share with us a few words of inspiration which you would like to impart onto all those women who are listening to us on the continent today?
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	What I can say is that women are a very powerful force. Women are leaders and the responsibilities that have been entrusted on us, whether it was accidentally some of them, but they have made us to be better leaders and when we decide on something we do that, so women must think big. We must go beyond of thinking about quotas or we must work hard to prove ourselves that we are equally capable like men, be it in the workplace or outside and this is what we are doing every day, I mean in every struggle, it doesn't matter where you are the majority of people you'll find women they are everywhere and they are leaders but the fact that they are not leading from the top, very few that are on the top, it should not discourage us, I think we should try more and think bigger, you know, and be united as women not only as women in that country but across you know, across our borders and in that we will easily part or break this chain of patriarchy that is still affecting many of us.
DR. MALKA	I think that's a fantastic mantra which I hope that everyone will adopt, to think big. Mrs. Yengeni thank you so much for joining us today.
MRS. LUMKA YENGENI	Thank you doctor.
	PROGRAMME END