

**PROGRAM DATE: 2016-02-18**

**PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY**

**GUEST NAME: XOLISWA TOM – PARLIAMENTARIAN & CHAIR PORTFOLIO  
COMITTEE ARTS & CULTURE**

<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>TRANSCRIPTION</b>
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 today is Mrs. Xoliswa Tom who serves as a member of Parliament to the National Assembly for the African National Congress and is Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Arts & Culture. Welcome to the show Mrs. Tom.
<b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b>	<b>Thank you very much and compliments of the new year.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you, likewise, we wish you all the best for this year, I think 2016 is going to be a very important one.
<b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b>	<b>Yes it is very important.</b>
DR. MALKA	Mrs. Tom can you please share with us a little bit about your position as Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture, so for example what your tasks are and what the Committee aims to achieve?
<b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b>	<b>The Committee of Arts and Culture is like all other committees in parliament, it has a responsibility of being an engine of the National Assembly. We are established as a committee to facilitate oversight and monitor government through scrutinizing legislations, overseeing government action and interaction with public. This oversight function that we do focuses primarily on the overseeing of the actions of the Department of Arts and Culture and our duties include consideration of the annual reports and the Auditor General's reports, in fact what happens is that initially we look at the strategic plan and the annual performance plan of the department, that is our basis because we look at what they are saying they are going to do and we scrutinize that, we interrogate that, we ask questions and thereafter we look....we monitor if they are doing what they set out to do initially and throughout the financial year the committee ensures that it calls in the department and ensures that each department spends taxpayers money appropriately and the Department of Arts and Culture some people think that it's a department that is there just for dancing and for traditional music and all that stuff but there is more than that within that department. The work of the department is very complex.</b>
DR. MALKA	I found that the heritage component to be particularly intriguing but if you can please elaborate on more of the roles and the work that is undertaken in the department?
<b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b>	<b>Yes, heritage is part of the work that the department is doing and the National Film and Radio Foundation falls under that department and as I said earlier, the National Heritage Council and also the performing arts, all the performing arts institutions you also find museums under the department and although libraries are a mandate of provincial government, national libraries and all other libraries that don't fall under the auspices of the provincial government, are a responsibility of</b>

	<p>the Department of Arts and Culture. Be that as it may, government felt that if you are talking libraries you are talking a very important entity that is...that plays a role in the empowerment of communities so the Department of Arts and Culture gives a conditional grant to the provincial departments so that they can have a rollout on libraries so that they can rollout this plan on libraries, so that as a result of that a lot of places that were disadvantaged and did not have libraries should have libraries, especially the rural areas, so that is one other part that is important, a role that is played by the National Arts Department. Also the ten South African Language Boards is part of this department and that entity, they have in fact 28 entities, the department has 28 entities and if you can imagine the work that they have to do because they have to monitor those entities because 80% of the budget of the department goes to entities, so it's very important that the department does it's work of monitoring and overseeing these entities.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So the committee plays a very dynamic role in terms of engaging and making sure that the department fulfils its obligations but at the same time also interacting with the public and ensuring that those public interactions are facilitated.</p>
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<p>It's very important for parliament because we...it encourages community participation, so it's very important for society to participate in the work of the National Assembly and through our work as the committee we ensure that the department also have community participation, they can't just take decisions on behalf of their stakeholders, they have to ensure that stakeholders are involved in policy formulation, stakeholders are involved in the processes of making laws so as the committee we ensure that this happens.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Mrs. Tom this year Channel Africa celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we are commemorating the struggle era as pre 1994 and I understand that one of the outputs for the Department of Arts and Culture is about increasing public awareness, especially amongst our youth of today, about our history during the apartheid era and it reminds me of a comment and a question that I was asked on a special programme covering the unveiling the new Nelson Mandela statue at the Union Buildings, regarding the lack of youth's knowledge about this period, can you tell us what interventions are taking place to achieve this target such as education plans, lectures, museum visits or anything that is about preserving our history and helping inform our younger generations of the past?</p>
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<p>I think what's very important here is for us to realise that when you have freedom it does not mean that you lie back on your bed or on your couch and expect things to come to you. When you are free there is double responsibility, you have to work harder than you did before, you have to go out there and get more information more than you ever did before because information is power and I...for you to get to know things you need to read. The Department of Arts and Culture has a strategic plan that is in a booklet, in a form of a book. It has an annual performance plan that is in a form of a book and all these documents are the tools that the society should use to understand clearly what the Department of Arts and Culture is about and what the Department of Arts and Culture is planning to do so that society can be able to say they said during the first quarter this is what they are going to do, have they done it, have they not done it, if they have not done it why? I think it is important for society to take their role and not just wait for things to come to them and those documents, as I have said, have all the</p>

	<p><b>information and it would assist people to go out there and ensure that they get these documents and the minister of the Department of Arts and Culture is central to the implementation of outcomes 14 of the NBP which speaks to a nation building and social cohesion and central to this process of building a socially cohesive nation, which is an ongoing process and not an event as you may know, we need to understand and acknowledge where we come from and to acknowledge that we are now at the phase of the freedom and acknowledge the fact that freedom means that we to work harder.</b></p>
<p><b>DR. MALKA</b></p>	<p>Mrs. Tom I often think that our social elements and cultural elements are under-looked because they're not as tangible as other entities you know, if we're talking about economic development you can see tangible outcomes, but in reality this is one of our most important aspects because it is the fabric of society, it's what glues and connects us together and without that functioning properly we will never have a cohesive society. Mrs. Tom can you tell us a bit more about some of the tasks that fall within the committees scope, earlier you mentioned the Language Board, the National Arts Council and the National Film and Video Foundation?</p>
<p><b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b></p>	<p><b>And as I said there are a number of entities that fall under the, under the Department of Arts and Culture, like I said earlier even your National Film and Video Foundation and if you look at film, it's only now because if you go to a rural village people think that this thing, film are about Johannesburg, about these big places, you can never have a film out of a village, you can never have this, you know, this fancy documentaries from villages only now that people are beginning to realise that even where we are at .....village, at .....village in Alice we can be able to tell our story and our story can be seen in a documentary, our story can be seen in a film so this is how central this department is to ensure that people begin to hear their stories so that when you know where you're coming from, definitely you will be able to chart your way where you're going, so it's important and as I mentioned earlier, the South African Heritage Resources Agency, when you talk about heritage, you have the heritage liberation roots and this roots shouldn't be something that come out of the minds of people, shouldn't be something that is perceived but it should be something that has the people, the peoples stories, for instance a village there would be an old lady who will have been harbouring .....from the movement and no story is being told about that old lady so when we talk about our heritage roots we need to start from where the people are, people telling their stories so that our stories can be recorded and our stories are not lost, our stories are told even to generations to come because I believe it's very important, this department as we think as the Portfolio Committee should be at the centre of society because it has to do with who we are and what has happened and where would like to go, so I think it's central it serves all these aspects of us empowering each other with knowledge and as everybody knows, knowledge is power, if you know you are powerful.</b></p>
<p><b>DR. MALKA</b></p>	<p>And I think it's vitally important that when we're talking about preservation of our culture it's all about being able to, and especially when we're looking at the film entities or other mediums which help preserve and chart the different identities.</p>
<p><b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b></p>	<p><b>Yes.</b></p>

DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Mrs. Xoliswa Tom who serves as a member of Parliament to the National Assembly for the African National Congress and is Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
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, also available on DSTV channel 902. Today we're talking to Mrs. Xoliswa Tom who serves as a member of Parliament to the National Assembly for the African National Congress and is Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter@WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of the conversation Mrs. Tom highlighted the various aspects and the roles that the Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture performs and some of the different entities that it includes whether it is from the Language Board to preserving our heritage through to the National Film and Radio Foundation. Mrs. Tom 'Womanity – Women in Unity' is a programme which is about gender equality and increasingly equality is becoming more and more a global focus, and as such building female leadership capacity is important not only for the future of women in Africa but also across the world, how do you see the representation of women in the outputs that the Department of Arts and Culture produce?
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>In the development of arts and culture, in fact, I think the government that is led by the ANC have made it clear that women there should be 50/50 representation of women and men in whatever structure, so this is what as we do our oversight, this is what we look at, at the department because we, departments are....they have you know different levels of employment, you have your top management, your management and so forth, so what we do you'll find that a lot of women are in the lower levels but the Portfolio Committee what we do is to ask the government department to give us the details of how women are represented in all the areas of the department and we feel, and we put pressure on them if we feel that the representation of women is not as it should be.</b>
DR. MALKA	And what do you think we can do to ensure that the representation is adequately addressed, you mentioned that you apply pressures, what types of pressures do you put on?
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>In fact when...every time I think it's that there on your advertisement when you advertise, where do you advertise, are you only advertising in those papers that are only read by a certain sector of women or do you advertise at all levels because there are national newspapers, there are provincial newspapers, there business newspapers, there are local newspapers so we encourage the department to advertise in all the newspapers so that people at all levels can get the opportunity to apply to the department, if they do qualify, and also although ours is an oversight function as the constitution puts it, because as the Portfolio Committee we don't implement but we oversee what the departments are doing. We are really ask relevant question because oversight is about asking the right questions for departments to respond to, so what we do is we ask the right questions to the department and we show them where we feel that they are lacking and they do respond, we make findings, we make recommendations and in most cases they do respond to the recommendations that we put forward to say that we see, we have found that in this area you don't have representation as it should be so we are making the following recommendations and this is what we give</b>

	<b>to the department through the house as well because what happens is that as a committee you're an extension of the house so whatever you, whatever findings and recommendations you make have to pass through the house so that the department can deal with them because you are not just there as Portfolio Committee but you are an extension of the house.</b>
DR. MALKA	And oversight is incredibly important because it provides that level of governance to ensure that there is a push and that questions are addressed when things are not running the way they were supposed to be run and aspects, I know you said that we don't..... you don't deal with the implementation aspects but it is about ensuring that what is said gets done. Mrs. Tom together you're chairing the Portfolio Committee of Arts and Cultures and you deal with issues which affect every South African citizen's life for the better in the years to come, and in effect you've become a role model, you've provided evidence to many women and girls in South Africa that with hard work and personal sacrifice a lot can be achieved, can you please share with us some of the responsibilities that come with being a member of parliament and having such a demanding career?
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>One .....that I have felt personally is that you have to give of yourself. You need to do more than you can, you give of yourself when you are a member of parliament. You don't have time to yourself, you don't have time family, you need to always respond to what the people need and I think what's also important is for us to work, wherever we are, be it at church, at home, in the streets, at the mall because people see you and they would like to ask questions and you need to respond to the questions. Sometimes people not understanding that you are not in the department but you oversee the department and you can't just say no I'm not in the department, I'm not implementing, you can't say that, you need to find a way of assisting people and sometimes when people don't succeed in whatever they want, they blame you as a person but what I have learned is that you don't take anything personally, you just do the best that you can to assist people.</b>
DR. MALKA	But that's a very challenging skill to have to not take things personally.
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>I know.</b>
DR. MALKA	But I suppose it's something which comes with the role and the job and being a public servant.
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>Even in our committee the officials from the Department of Arts and Culture can tell you that every committee, as the members of the committee, as the members of this multi-party committee, what we tell the officials that here we ask questions and sometimes these questions will be robust, we're not fighting with you don't take it personally, because we want to understand because we are here as public representatives, we want to understand so that we can make people understand. We may ask awkward questions but it's not about you but it's about us wanting to understand so that we can be able to make people understand because this is what we are about as public representatives, to make people understand, to assist people to understand.</b>
DR. MALKA	And to do things from a collective point of view as opposed to an individual.
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>Yes.</b>
DR. MALKA	Can you share with us some of the gender challenges that you've experienced and have overcome during your career?

MRS XOLISWA TOM	To be honest I have not ever experienced much negativity, much gender bias or much biased negative attitudes. I've always had support, may that support be from my family, from my husband, from my male colleagues and I've found strength in that because even in the present committee that I'm chairing the whip of the committee is a man and the support that he is giving me. We have about 4 or 5 men counterparts from different parties, they are so supportive, even in my previous job I've never had a direct you know, direct negative attitude. I've been lucky in my life I may say to always have positive energy from male counterparts.
DR. MALKA	And I think that one of the success elements is about having positive enablers around us to support us in whatever endeavour that you pursue and turning for a commentary towards our younger generation, what would your advice be to girls who want to follow in your footsteps and pursue a career in the political arena?
MRS XOLISWA TOM	<b>I think one most important thing for me is for our young people to be grounded, to find your centre and be grounded in it. To know exactly what you want from life and during this dispensation, in our freedom, as young people you are able to become whatever you want to be so be grounded because if you are not grounded you will fall for everything. We need young people who know exactly what they want out of life and young people who are not selfish, who don't want things for themselves but want the whole society to progress, wanting the whole society to win and if you want the whole society to win you have to work hard as an individual so that you win because if you win your family will win, if your family wins the community will win, if the community wins the whole of society will win, so our young people should be grounded and have these principles that have hard work, they must work hard and not think that everything is going to come on a silver platter, that doesn't happen in real life you have to work hard for everything and for our young people to be prepared to share whatever .....they have may it be knowledge, may it be material things but to share them with other people, when you share things with other people you become richer, not in money but in spirit and when you're rich in spirit you are able to do a lot of things that people who have their spirit dead who could not do so this is my advice to the younger generation, find your centre and be grounded in it.</b>
DR. MALKA	I think that's very welcome advice and speaks about the laws of abundance.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Mrs. Xoliswa Tom who serves as a member of Parliament to the National Assembly for the ANC and is Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture.
<b>AD BREAK</b>	
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DR. MALKA	In the previous segment Mrs. Tom spoke about the push in trying to achieve our 50/50 representation between men and women both within the corporate space as well as within the public sector and we also spoke about the advice that she would provide and offer to our younger generation in terms of pursuing their career of being grounded and finding their centre. Mrs. Tom

	<p>we are now going into the last section of our conversation today and one of the questions that I ask my guests on this programme who've made tremendous achievements in their respective fields is about the factors that they consider have contributed to their success. Some people speak about hard work others talk about perseverance, in your opinion what have been the key drivers to your success?</p>
<p><b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b></p>	<p><b>Maybe you will read from what I am saying what has been contributory and so I think the decisions that women make it takes one decision to ensure that a certain destination is reached because in my own case I want...I always say that if a woman called Mrs. ....and her husband hadn't taken a decision to give my father a chance who was sacked in 195....in 1960 from the ..... hospital because he was involved in the activities of the ANC, he was sacked from work having four children but it took Mr. Dr. ....decision that gave my father an opportunity to bring up his children so it takes one decision and I usually say it took a decision of a woman to put Tata Mandela, the world icon, where he was like his mother taking a decision to take him after his father had passed away, to take him to Chief.....to say take my child and look after him so that he can have this influence, so women can make decisions that can change the world because those decisions will change the children, the children will grow up and be adults that lead society, so I believe that if women today can think when they are taking decisions and make those decisions that are going to change society for the better and also my mother has played a very critical role to tell me to share whatever I have with other people, to be humble, to be able to be raised by everybody and I think I take my hat off for those women who have made me who I am today and also in work, I worked for the council of churches for a number of years and .....was key in making young women, I was a young woman at the time I am no longer young now, I was a young woman at the time but she made sure that young women who were working in the council of churches during that time were empowered so that at the end of the day they play part to change society for the better and young women...and women who were young then like Mrs. Phumzile.....and Toko Didiza and other women who were empowering women I mean those women were good and I think I learned a lot from them at the time.</b></p>
<p><b>DR. MALKA</b></p>	<p>And it's about passing the baton, it's giving that knowledge back to the next generation so that our knowledge base grows and we walk on the shoulders of the giants who have walked before us.</p>
<p><b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b></p>	<p><b>Yes definitely this is what we need to do and to encourage our young women and to ensure because here in East London I have been thinking of a project that is going to assist young women, especially those who are from rural areas, for them to have this serious transition between coming from home, getting away from home and getting this independence, to have the balance because they come from rural areas, come to East London to get a degree or a diploma and when they get here everything is...there are parties, there are taverns, there is all these things, there are all those things and how do you balance between what you found here and what you're coming to get so I really would like to have that project of assisting our young people because some of them are pregnant as we speak, some of them dropped out, some of them are drug addicts and they are young, 17/18/19, they just need this advice they need this space where they are going to balance their freedom with responsibility so that... I do really need to have such a project that assists</b></p>

	<b>them during their stay away from home. The second year great we're cleverer and they'll be streetwise and know how to deal with these things but that first year I think is crucial for them to get to know how to balance freedom and responsibility.</b>
DR. MALKA	I think it's a very important project that you are going to undertake and address that transition period of moving from one life into another. In closing our conversation can you please share a few words of inspiration that you would like to impart to women in Africa who are listening to the programme?
<b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b>	<b>As I said earlier it takes one decision for the change of everything so I think as women we need to take our rightful place and make...and not be afraid to make those decisions and I think I would like also to recognise the tireless work that women do because women work tirelessly, they actually do all the work that sometimes is not even recognised. I want to tell women everywhere that you are the champions, you are the champions of the poor so keep on doing this, wherever you are no matter how little, but do whatever you can to change the present situation and change it for the better. Women you can do this.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you Mrs. Tom for women being champions in society. It's been a pleasure talking to you today, thank you very much for joining us.
<b>MRS XOLISWA TOM</b>	<b>Thank you very much.</b>
	<b>PROGRAMME END</b>