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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: AMBASSADOR OF NORWAY – TRINE SKYMOEN

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hi, I'm Doctor Amaleya Goneos-Malka. Welcome to Womanity – Woman in Unity. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African women's milestones achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, social economic class division and gender based violence. Joining us on the line today is the Ambassador of Norway to South Africa, Ms Trine Skymoem whose work in the foreign affairs ministry has taken her across the globe from Oslo to Abuja to New York to Belgrade to Vienna and now more recently to South Africa, Botswana and Madagascar. Welcome to the show.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Well thank you so much and hello to all your listeners and it's an honour to be on your show.
DR. MALKA	It's an absolute pleasure to have you as our guest. Ambassador you have served your country for almost thirty years in and during that span have held various positions. Can you please share with us the few of the land marks in your career?
TRINE SKYMOEN	Thinking back err, I think there are a few postings or experiences that I've had that, that have really made a, a big impact or impression on me. Um, when I was in my third posting err in Abuja as you mentioned, in Cote d'Ivoire, I was twenty eight years old. A very young, inexperienced diplomat and I must say the women that I met in Ivory Coast, you know I met them, they were strong, no nonsense women, don't mess with me, you know proud women. I was so impressed. It was such an inspiration to me that I have carried that with me uh, uh, you know in, in, in the following years. Uh a completely difference experience I had when I was posted in uh Belgrade, this was in the nineties, and there was a war going on in, the, the former Yugoslavia ja, and during my time there I had participated in meetings with the president of the country. He, he was later charged with err, err crimes against humanity, responsible for the deaths of thousands of people and I was sitting there in the meeting with him watching him, you know smoking a cigar speaking about his countries position of power and then I thought but Mr President you are responsible for what is happening to so many thousands of people, ordinary people and yet you sit there in ????? comfortably in your chair but then there was one things that I realised and that is if you going to make peace you have to talk to those who hold the power whether you like them or not. That was a very important lesson.
DR. MALKA	I think with power always comes great responsibility especially when people are involved and there needs to be a certain degree of empathy and responsibility for your citizens not just for yourself.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Definitely, but you know there are some who do not take that responsibility. Um, but they still have the power and as um peace keeper negotiators, mediators you have to deal um with the people who do hold um the power. So um, that was, that was an experience but you do see people go for the positions of power not to serve the people but to serve their own interests. But I must say there is a third element in my career that has made a, a profound impression on me and I've been, I've been fortunate enough to serve three ????? prime ministers and the prime minister's office in Norway is very small office. We about 63, 60 people so

	<p>you get to observe very closely you know how the very top err, sort of political power err, of the country and you see what a tremendously tough job it is, but what I saw was, was perhaps contrary to the person I mentioned earlier, the prime ministers treated everybody with respect, be it a president, a fellow prime minister, a secretary or the driver. So we all felt that we were part of a team you know because err, we were in quote, members of the team who always delivered and we always did our best, we always tried to do our best. So that, that was an important lesson.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And I think that also talks to the differences from a cultural perspective, it sounds as though Norway is very much a egalitarian society where as your experience in Belgrade that was more from a, from a authoritative domain of power.</p>
TRINE SKYMOEN	<p>Ja, that, that's correct and err I think you realise from what I say which one I prefer. And Nor, Norway is a very egalitarian err society. Um you do see ministers go to work on their bikes, you do see ministers pushing, you know male ministers pushing the, the trolley's the little kids err, on a Sunday err, err walk and not only on a Sunday but also on the Monday morning on the way to, to work, they take their kids to the kindergarten first. It's a very egalitarian society.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Staying with the theme of ministers, I recall from a previous conversation that we had and I, I would like it if you could relay that story to our listeners, in terms of one of your ministers coming into office and really setting the, the standards from a gender equality perspective.</p>
TRINE SKYMOEN	<p>Yes, that speaks actually err about what I feel what we need to do when it comes to gender equality and that it that both women and men need to take responsibility for achieving gender equality. But it was in, in the ministry of foreign affairs um, in the old days uh, there used to be a tradition you know that you had to work long hours to show the boss that you took your job seriously and you really wanted to achieve something. Um, and so people stayed long and especially the men stayed longer because they didn't have to pick up the kids um at the nursery. Uh and the ultimate was really to watched the news together with the foreign minister, I mean that then, you were really on, in the in, in crowd so as to speak and that was at 7 o'clock err at night. And in comes this male minister who knows about this tradition of course that excludes err, to a large extent, ???? women and he said you know what you are very welcome to come to my office and watch the news but I'm not going to be there cause I'll be home with my family and I think that was a, that was really a game changer because it, it gave a very strong signal to the women, but also to the men that it's not what you achieve but what you do that counts, not the number of hours that you put in.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Quality verses quantity.</p>
TRINE SKYMOEN	<p>Yeah, quality does not always correspond with the number of hours you put in. What happens is of cause that it doesn't necessarily means that you only work until four o'clock and then, you know, you have the rest of the day off. But it gives you, it gave us the flexibility to say okay we can pick up our kids from school, from nursery, be home with them and if need be, we'll put in a couple of hours in the evening to catch up if there was something we had to do. But it was the flexibility and the signal, I see that you all need to um shoulder the responsibility not just on your job and not just on your family but both. You know by getting that signal he said it, it should be possible to do both and that's a very important for gender equality.</p>

DR. MALKA	Thanks for relaying the story. We've spoken about your past land marks in your career. Are there any specific mile stones that you want to accomplish during your term in, in South Africa.
TRINE SKYMOEN	I've been here two years now um and what I see um is ???? South Africa is such a wonderful country and it's such a diverse and, and, and a, and a contrast, lots of contrast in, in the country. But what I see is that nowhere in South Africa um, we have a common interest in, investments, in economic growth, in job creation uh because err th, that will serve both Norway and da, and South Africa if we get err Norwegian companies for instance to invest in South Africa. So if I can achieve bigger Norwegian investments, bigger Norwegian business engagements in South Africa I would be very happy. And I will also very happy ???? to share our experiences and, on gender equality um, I'll be very happy to share that as well um because that's a, that's a big pre-requisite for economic growth.
DR. MALKA	Norway is well know the world over in terms of its gender equality initiatives. Do you have any specific development programmes that will address women's development in Africa?
TRINE SKYMOEN	Let me just say first of all that one of the main focuses for our development corporation programme is to empower women because it makes political sense, makes moral sense and it also makes economic sense. Um and I know that um our prime minister for instance, whose a women, um her main focus is education and especially education for girls because that's what we need for uh economic growth. If you educate the girl you educate the whole village and if you look at the statics, actually there was one study that was uh done in sixty countries and it shows that the economic loss that these countries had was from not educating girls at the same levels as boys is 90 billion US dollars a year. That's a lot of money.
DR MALKA	That's an astronomical amount, 90 billion dollars per annum.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Ja. And all these countries together, but, but also if development grows at the currently we will have to wait until 2086 before all rural African girls err, get access to secondary education. And I think that we as the world uh cannot afford to wait that long um and we see the women development gender equality is really top on the agenda of the World Economic Forum of the African Union and United Nations. Um because I err, it just makes economic sense as well..
DR. MALKA	Yes!
TRINE SKYMOEN	????
DR. MALKA	Yes, as, as you said it's economic sense, it's political it's moral.
TRINE SKYMOEN	I think that it's, there are many things that one can do err in addition to, to education which is really, which is really a key, key factor. Um I'm just mentioning one thing that you do here in, in South Africa, you have a corporation uh, uh a programme together with the University of Cape Town um and the International Association of Women Judges where we want to promote women in South Africa's judiciary. Um the judiciary is a very powerful state function and it is um under men dominate to a significant degree and, and the ??? I think the ???? of female participation in the judiciary it will make it more representative and it will probably make it ??? to special circumstances that many women were under and I think it, this is also an area where we Norway, err we I mean we are lagging behind as well we uh, we just had for the first time ever a

	<p>female Chief Justice of the Supreme Court since march this year but the policy court itself is only seven with the twenty seven Court Justices who are women and overall it's 61 percent ??? are men. We also need those same programmes. Its capacity building and promotion for female judges to feel they should and are confident in seeking leadership positions. And also for the leaders to see that they are very qualified and should be recruited.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Those are uh, uh incredibly important comments and remarks and earlier this year we did a series on Lady Justices in South Africa and one of the things that struck me was how few there are. So I think it's a great programme and initiative you doing in co-operation with University of Cape Town and the International Association of Judges.</p>
TRINE SKYMOEN	<p>Can I tell you something that gives me hope.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Please do...</p>
TRINE SKYMOEN	<p>This week, um we also worked closely together with ???? you know the, the foreign ministry, the South African foreign ministry on educating female, women peace mediators because we see that we need women in peace processes if you going to have um lasting peace but we also now, we also embarked on a programme that um that is aimed at uh capacity building for young leaders in mediation, in negotiation um and this week uh earlier, just a few days ago um there was a capacity building programme for four young student leaders that we support. And my, was I impressed by the young women female students that attended this course, they ??? I'm a little bit going back to what I said about, you know when I first came to, to Ivory Coast and met the strong women, these, these young women they are articulate, they are leaders already, they are leaders of ????? movement, the have experience in negotiations, they have experience um in real ??? of the biggest student movement in Soweto uprising forty years ago. And when you see these young women uh how strong they are and how capable they are it is just fantastic. It just, it just makes me proud, you know, it makes me proud to be a women uh and to be, and to be able to watch this new generous of, of women um and I'm sure that they will have you know they will have high level ???? afterwards. They give me hope for the future.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Today we're talking to the Ambassador of Norway to South Africa, Ms Trine Skymoem. We would love to received your comments on twitter at Womanity Talk.</p>
<p>AD BREAK</p>	
DR. MALKA	<p>You're listening to Womanity – Women in Unity on Channel Africa. The voice of the African renaissance, on frequency on 9625 kilo hertz on the 31 meter band. Also available on DSTV channel 802. Today we are talking to the Ambassador or Norway to South Africa, Ms Trine Skymoem. We would love to receive your comments on twitter at Womanity Talk. In the previous segment of the show the Ambassador shared some of the aspects of her career from her placements in Cote Dujé to Belgrade and in her home country of Norway. We also spoke about some of the development initiatives in terms of programmes in Africa for women development from greater investment potential to economic growth to job acquisition. Ambassador Womanity, Woman in Unity is a programme which all about gender equality and in our previous segment you mentioned briefly that gender is on top of the agenda for the World Economic Forum as well as the African Union. Building female leadership is important for the future of women not only in Africa but around the rest of the world. How do you see female leadership?</p>

<p>TRINE SKYMOEN</p>	<p>Well I would definitely want to see more uh females in leadership um positions. I think that what we see uh, we spoke earlier about the loss that you have if you don't educate, you know the economic loss that you have if you don't educate young, young girls to the level of young boys, but did you know that Sub-Saharan African could add 700 billion US dollars to its economy if women were to play an identical role in the market to that of men. That's also a lot of money. And I think if we can look at how we can increase female participation um in business life um in parliament, in all walks of uh of society I think that we will see that we will all get, we will gain from it. You know some, some, I think there are some perhaps men who, who are afraid that if women are given more power, the men would lose their power, you know that, that is not ???? game this is gender equality and, and women empowerment is something that we all gain from and I think that's, that's important to keep in mind. Um it makes our society richer and better and that is something which we all gain from. Sometimes we have to take measures, you know, we have to, we cannot just wait for it to happen, we have to make it happen.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>You're hundred percent right there and looking at the economic potential 700 billion US dollars again, that's another enormous figure. You spoke about having women's representation and leadership within parliamentary space as well as in the working environment. And I think to a large extent Sub-Sahara Africa does re, really well in terms of its female representation in, in the parliamentary space but the world over, women in leadership it seems to be static. It, it sort of sits on approximately the, the twenty two, twenty five percent mark. How do you think we can shift the dial? Do you think it's about introducing quotas? What's your opinion?</p>
<p>TRINE SKYMOEN</p>	<p>I think that legislative or other measures are useful uh in order to ???? in the shorter term because as I said if we had, if we going to wait for it to happen by, by its self, it's going to take, it's going to take us years. If we carry on the way we do now uh it will take seventy nine years to achieve gender equality in the work place. That's 2095. So we can't afford to wait then that long.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Ne, neither you nor I will, I think not be around in that period and I would love to see this moving in my life time.</p>
<p>TRINE SKYMOEN</p>	<p>Yes. Exactly. Exactly. But you know there are things that, err its sometimes controversial um but it helps. I will give you an example for what we have done in Norway.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Please do.</p>
<p>TRINE SKYMOEN</p>	<p>And that was in 2006 um we introduced a law that said there has to be at least forty percent representation of women or men you know if, if there are more, more women than men on the boards on all companies listed on the regional stock exchange. So it meant that all the boards had to have at least forty percent women and the business community said, oh no, no, no we can't do that it's, it's going to, we would love to have women there but you know they are not competent um women are not qualified. We have tried find them and you know, we, we there are just enough, not enough qualified women. But now with this law they had to find the women and you know how they found them, they were forced to look beyond their old boy's network. You know what I mean it's, it's a, you look for a leader and you look for somebody like yourself and because they were mostly ma, male leaders, they looked for other male leaders but this time they had to beyond their own network.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>And often we find on boards what we tend to find is you'll the same name popping up across different organisations so they do, they do tend to keep it within a club.</p>

TRINE SKYMOEN	What happened our case was that in ??? the business, the business community thought that this was going to happen, so they had to deal with it, and they had to uh stop overlooking and side lining capable female candidates. At the same time the business federation took responsibility and they said, okay we're going to introduce a programme that builds the capacity, finds the young err or not so young women who are eligible to be board members and let them go through the programme, capacity building, confidence building and then we create a network of female candidates for boards positions so that the men come back and say, there are no candidates and we can say well yes there are, because they are here. We have this pool, we have this network. By doing that you also increase the numbers so that you avoid a situation where it's just the same ones who are..
DR. MALKA	Yes!
TRINE SKYMOEN	It's not, it does, it's not something that can happen overnight that good measure like this I think they can happen more quickly than it would have otherwise.
DR. MALKA	I think quota setting, I think you know some people have got uh their views against it but I think when we looking at trying to accelerate and push a movement forwards that practically that is the only solution but as you say it's making sure that we have people who have got the right capability to take on those responsibilities.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Ja, and, and hopefully you know we can uh we will reach the situation where it is no longer necessary.
DR. MALKA	Exactly.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Have these kind of quotas and, and to have these kind of measures but to achieve that uh you know in, in not in seventy nine years but maybe seven years or ten years. I think some additional measure is, is uh a called for. We had a new government, change of government in 2013 and back in 1981 uh we had our first uh female prime minister and when she presented her government in 1981 for the first time ever there was fifty percent of the government was women and what has happened since is any prime minister who is introduces a new government cannot have less than at least forty five percent women on there, they don't dare to because this was a novelty and it was there to stay. So showing by example that it can be done, it also means that others need to sort of ????? forward, and now we have a female prime minister we have a female defence minister, female finance minister, fifty percent of government ministers are women. But the good thing about it is that you don't really think about it when a new prime minister comes out and presents a government, it's not a big deal that there are fifty percent women and that the three most important positions are held by women. So that's the stage we need too you know we, we need to reach that stage um but as I said sometimes we need sometimes extra push forward. A kick in the butt. Whatever you think of it.
DR. MALKA	Yes and it, it needs to be normalised and the way that, and I believe I, I believe I and forgive me if, if I don't pronounce her name correctly but was that Grow Harlebruntlung...
TRINE SKYMOEN	Yes indeed. Oh I'm impressed you've remember her name.
DR. MALKA	She served, she served three terms I think.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Ja..

DR MALKA	And I, I think that's significant for any one whether you're a man or a woman.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Ja. No definitely and uh and as I say she was the first one. She served for a very long time um and that is, that is also one important, you know, you need to have those examples of women who are successful that you know. And there were young kids at the time, when she had been prime minister for, throughout their life time. There was a little boy who asked his mother what can I do when I grow up and she said, oh you can be anything my son, you can be a lawyer, you can be a doctor, you can be and engineer, you can be a prime minister, you can be whatever you can and he looked as if, at his mother, but can a man be a prime minister.
DR MALKA	Oh wow, that's beautiful. That's, that's really showing the tables turned.
TRINE SKYMOEN	So, its, it's you know it's by example. I, I, I love that story and it's a true story, so I can tell it.
DR MALKA	And Ambassador taking into consideration the challenges and successes that women's legal rights have had over the last few years and we mentioned briefly the, the impact of, of female role models. What areas do you think still need attention with respect to women?
TRINE SKYMOEN	I think that we have achieved quite a lot and in the political sphere and I think that we, we still need to do a lot in the business uh environment as I said. Um, but what I think is most important is that we reach the stage where both men and women take equal responsibility for family in the home. Uh because what, what we see is very often women are asked to take leadership positions and then its complained that afterwards you know that women don't want leadership positions, but, but what we often forget is that women sometimes and very and not just sometimes but very often have a double responsibility because they also have the responsibility for the family and the home. So we need to, we need to put in place I think measures err and again I'm back to measures, I would say to encouragement, you know that these traditional roles might change and I see that we, uh Norway for instance we have slowly introduced measures that encourage men to take more responsibility at home and it works. We have for instance um one year, uh one full year of paid parental leave when your child is born. Um and I say parental leave rather than maternity leave um because ten weeks is exclusively for the father and what we see is that sixty eight percent of the men do take their share of the parental leave.
DR MALKA	That's an incredible benefit uh and I think a lot of men and women listening to us would, would love to have those same benefits. Those are all incredibly important enablers because it does, it allows for that contribution for women to participate in the work force. For men to take on some of those family responsibilities and to a certain extent its negating some of those typical stereo type uh views that we have on, on a gender level. Today we're talk to the Ambassador of Norway to South Africa, Ms Trine Skymoem. We would love to receive your comments on twitter at Womanity Talk.
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	You're listening to Womanity – Women in Unity on Channel Africa. The voice of the African renaissance, on frequency on 9625 kilo hertz on the 31 meter band. Also available on DSTV channel 802. Today we're talking to the Ambassador of Norway to South Africa, Mr Trine Skymoem. In the previous segment the Ambassador shared with us some of the development in te, in Norway in terms of accelerating development for the participation of women how we can reduce the horrendous gap of a seventy nine year delay until

	women to catch up to men. Whether it's about the introduction of forty percent representation of women on boards of listed companies in Norway to looking at to men and women taking up equal responsibility in terms of parental duties and the uh very attractive parental leave of up to a year that people are entitled to. Ambassador now turning towards more of a personal note, one of the questions I ask my guests on this programme who've all made tremendous achievements in their respective fields of expertise is about the factors that have contributed to their success. Some talk about the way they've been bought up, others speak about perseverance and hard work. In your opinion what have been the key drivers to your success?
TRINE SKYMOEN	To my success. You know I'm, I'm just doing my job. I've been, uh I've been very fortunate uh to get job uh, as to serve my country. Where having to be able to do that in, in several other countries it, it is really a it's, its, it's, I'm really fortunate to be in this position. I grew up in a small village, I had three sisters, we were four sisters altogether and my father was the local plumber in the village and my mother was uh secretary and throughout our um childhood you know there were always political dis, discussion, there was always you know, both my mother and father were politically um active um in the uh local community and they were in, interested in world affairs. I, I can still remember, it was like an awakening for me and I was fourteen years old and I actually think it was in my, my uh confirmation party um, so it was a party where you know the extended family were all present and this was the year that Norway um had to, it was going to decide about a referendum whether or not to join the European Union or the Common Market as it, as it was, as it was called then and now we have seen of course uh over the last uh few weeks big discussions that have taken place in Britain the United Kingdom whether they would leave the European Union or not, so I think it was such a huge, hugely important discussion in Norway at the time and at the age of fourteen you're not well, you're not ????, but what was tremendous was that err at this party ????, this was the old days so you know the female members of the big family were in one room and the males in another room err and the males were discussion politics and I sat with the men and I spoke I, I, I, I was given, given the opportunity to speak you know thru, about uh well what I thought uh what Norway should do but although I was tremendously effected I was listened to, you know I felt that somebody was actually listening and valued my uh opinion. That was a tremendous awakening. It doesn't have nothing to do with the fact that I was, I was a girl because we were never bought up to think you know that girls were different from boys in that sense but I think as a young person to be given that opportunity and to have the grownups listening to me...
DR. MALKA	I...
TRINE SKYMOEN	That was very important.
DR MALKA	I think that says a lot about Norwegian culture and society on, on the values of, of people regardless of, of how young one is that what you have to say matters. It's important to you and that people will listen.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Yes it, it was and uh, uh for me it gave me confidence.
DR. MALKA	Yes.
TRINE SKYMOEN	It, that what it, ???? you know it, because uh there was no, there was no obvious reason, you know why I should end up in regional diplomacy and end up as an Ambassador but I think that fact that you, you ar, you, you

	gain the confidence from, from people giving you the respect and the space. I think to me that was very important.
DR. MALKA	And what would you say had the biggest impact on you to make you the person you are today?
TRINE SKYMOEN	Oh, I again I think I had to go back to my, to my parents, my mother and father because they always said that you should always respect everybody equally. You know it doesn't matter if it's a king uh, uh or you know uh, uh drunkard lying on the side of the street, everybody deserves respect and I have tried to live by that. I don't know if I have succeed um but that has been a very, very important lesson for me because all people are important, you know equally important and you know, we di, we began with gender equality um and we discussed it a lot and girls are equally important to boys and should be given that same possibilities and the same opportunities and, and if we as person with some influence can help them in achieving that then I think that is a big, big, big reward for me as, as a professional and a human being.
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much Ambassador. It's been wonderful having you on our show today.
TRINE SKYMOEN	Well thank you so much for ha, for having me. It's a very important programme that you have. Thank you so much for letting me participate.
DR. MALKA	Thank you and be sure that you voice will be heard from our millions of listeners uh, across the world particularly in the continent. You have been listening to Womanity – Woman in Unity on Channel Africa the voice of the African renaissance and we have been talking to the Ambassador for Norway to South Africa, Ms Trine Skymoem.
END OF PROGRAM	