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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA – AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND

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 in Pretoria is Ms Helene Budliger Artieda, she is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland as well as Mauritius. She is also the Observer to SADC (Southern African Development Community). During her career she has served in Lagos, Havana, San Francisco, Strausberg, Lima and Borgata. Welcome to the show.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Thank you very much it's great to be here, it's quite an honour and a privilege, thank you.</b>
DR. MALKA	We're so glad you could join us. You are the Ambassador of Switzerland to numerous countries within the SADC territory can you please share with us some of the work that you do as an ambassador in these areas?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Yes, as you can imagine it's quite a large portfolio actually that my team and myself have to look after. In short, we have to strengthen the bilateral relationship between Switzerland and the Southern African region. I would say that we're foremost an economic mission but when I say an economic mission we're not only here just to defend Swiss interests we also have an economic development team at our embassy, we have a trade, a Swiss Business Help, a trade point so for us it's really, it's really a partnership approach. We want both of our countries to do well or let's say the Southern African region and Switzerland and we're here to foster the relationship.</b>
DR. MALKA	And I'd imagine it's looking at SADC as a block so it's not just about how you deal with one country on an individual level but trying to get that scalability across the segment.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>That's exactly right although I must say South Africa is of course our most important partner and if South Africa is doing well I think that has definitely a positive impulse and influence on the whole region so most of our resources we would dedicate to South Africa, but for us it's always important to scale-up our success stories that we might achieve in South Africa and transport them throughout the whole Southern African region and if possible even throughout the whole continent.</b>
DR. MALKA	And if I recall correctly I think South Africa in terms of GDP is probably ranked second or third in the continent so first is obviously Nigeria and then it's between Egypt and South Africa on the next ranking.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>That is absolutely right and I must say for us South Africa from Swiss perspective is by far the most important trade partner on the continent so South Africa is really, let's say our top priority.</b>
DR. MALKA	And I would imagine that when you're talking about solutions in a regional approach that it's more of an immersive approach as opposed to trying to import philosophies and apply them to the region.

<p><b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b></p>	<p><b>Absolutely. First of all Switzerland is a small country huh, in size, we're quite an economic power house but we've never had colonies or any of that in our country so for us it's absolutely the partnership approach and we also must feel that we're welcome, we're not, we're not...it's not in our mentality to impose ourselves so we like to partner up with countries and regions, we're very pragmatic people so we typically want to do it in an area where we also feel that we can bring something to the table so this is actually our approach.</b></p>
<p><b>DR. MALKA</b></p>	<p>And that's so important to have impact. Are there any particular milestones which you want to accomplish during your term of office in the SADC area I mean South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mauritius?</p>
<p><b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b></p>	<p><b>Well you always have a bucket list huh, as an ambassador and it's...my bucket list is quite long but let me just maybe focus on two areas that I would feel that are absolutely crucial. One is and it actually goes into the, into the, into a similar arena one is the vocational educational training, you know in Switzerland I think it has been the success story and has had a great impact on a number of things. We have a very vibrant and active small medium enterprise scene in Switzerland and I'm quite convinced that these small medium sized enterprises are the guarantee to when, you know, when the world economy becomes more difficult they're a guarantee of stability, those are usually the businesses that will hold onto jobs and if the economy is doing well will create jobs and if you want to contribute to that small medium size economy landscape I think vocational educational training is absolutely key and especially if I look at young people and in South Africa and throughout the region actually you have an incredibly high unemployment rate so I think this is really something where we cannot bring the Swiss recipe unfortunately, it's not that easy, it's not like just copy our recipe and do it but I'm sure that we can really bring expertise, we can bring skills, we can bring people if needed to the discussion and probably also let you know in what we have failed so that hopefully you do not copy our mistakes, so that would be one and then the other thing that we're very active in and I am very blessed because I have a science and technology office at my embassy, it's the whole science and innovation and research arena and when I say we're an economic mission I also would include this because it's all about, it's not like research just you know for the sake of creating red papers, it's really research to market and for us very much as well garage to market, so the whole entrepreneur, how we can gather kids that has great ideas into the market, access to capital, access to buyers, access to a business plan that makes sense and so on and so on and so I think those are maybe the top two things on my bucket list.</b></p>
<p><b>DR. MALKA</b></p>	<p>I think those are really high priorities and if you look at it from a South African point of view pushing through on small/medium enterprises is really a strong drive, we've even got a department for small/medium enterprises....</p>
<p><b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b></p>	<p>....correct....</p>
<p><b>DR. MALKA</b></p>	<p>....to pursue it.</p>
<p><b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b></p>	<p><b>And I'm happy to report that that department the minister has been recently twice in Switzerland so we have quite a good and fruitful conversation but we've also partnered up with for example South African Innovation Summit that's very much an institution I would say that works on the garage to market, we're their international partner for this year and so far it's been really, it's been really a great experience and it's you know it's not so much like what I as ambassador would like to achieve, it's really,</b></p>

	<b>for us it's really a group effort and we're really here to hopefully make a difference huh.</b>
DR. MALKA	And there's a wonderful expression which I know the Netherlands utilise as well which is "co-creation"...
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Exactly, exactly....</b>
DR. MALKA	....fusing partnerships that really bring results and to apply learnings both within the country that you're in but also to hopefully take back some of that knowledge from that host country back into your own environment.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>You're absolutely right we've hosted very recently together with the National Research Foundation an innovation workshop and we've invited some of these great entrepreneurs and I must tell you I mean, I was just blown away by the amazing creativity and I mean not you know like nonsense innovation, really stuff that will make life easier here in South Africa but also in Switzerland. One idea was security related and security being kind of an issue in South Africa we immediately said as an embassy team this is an idea that we have to look into and we're hoping to meet that young woman and even as an embassy we're ready to buy that product and that service so I was, it was really amazing and this is, I must tell you, part of the job that I really enjoy.</b>
DR.MALKA	I totally agree with you I think it must be very rewarding to see those type of efforts come through to fruition. Now Ambassador this programme, 'Womanity – Women in Unity' it's a gender based show and as such it all concerns gender equality and women's empowerment. One of the areas I think that is part of women's empowerment that is really important is about leadership and having women in leadership, what is your view of women in leadership at the moment?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>I have a mixed image I must say, huh. Often I'm very much encouraged if I look at colleagues, let me tell you I'm most impressed with my female Ambassador colleagues here in Pretoria we have a vibrant network, I must say the solidarity is amazing and if I look at these women I gain a lot of hope, the same as I meet on a weekly basis fantastic African women, may it be in academia, may it be in business. I don't know if you're aware but South Africa their ambassadors to Switzerland have been, with one or two exceptions, mainly women since 1994 and if I also look at these women I'm fully impressed and those are the days where I feel that we're getting somewhere and if I look...and the same goes of course with the numerous women that I know also in Switzerland and worldwide and then sometimes I get a bit more concerned when I look at how women still huh, and that is probably particularly true in Switzerland have it much more difficult huh, because they have numerous roles in life, they're mothers, they're professionals, they're wives and they have to struggle huh, with this multitude of tasks and some women of course manage to achieve it and then I see others that struggle quite a bit and there I'm often a bit less optimistic because it is a complex world, you know, if you're a professional if you're at the top of your organisation there is such a huge flow of information and you know the speed of things, so it's really difficult to be on top and then at the same time you have to struggle a family and you also or a wife and a partner and in the end I think we all also want to have time for ourselves because we want to develop as a person so I think in this fast pacing world I sometimes get a bit, get a bit more worried if it's not too much huh, and I think we have to look into how we can alleviate the situation of these women. There are of course also men that have to handle</b>

	<b>a number of roles but if I look around myself it seems that it's still women that do more of the juggling than men.</b>
DR. MALKA	I look at this quite often and it's something that we speak about frequently on this show and I know that women tend to do a lot more multitasking whether that is pushed through from demand and the expectations, but I think one of the I suppose the areas that is underdeveloped is having an appropriate support structure, being able to perhaps outsource some of the work that you have taken on yourself because to be quite frank there's 24 hours in a day, you cannot get more than 24 hours a day so you are limited on a capacity point of view. In your opinion turning towards the professional side of things and women in top positions as we look at it from a leadership point of view, why do you think there're so few women at the top?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Well I think it's a variety of things unfortunately it's not a black and white issue where...because that will be easier to fix if we all knew what the reasons were and it was so obvious. I think it's really a number of things and you know before I became ambassador here I used to be the Director General for Corporate Resources at the Foreign Ministry and I had many responsibilities but one was of course the personnel policy huh, so getting women to the top was very much on my agenda and I don't want to talk into stereotype but often if I would even offer, phone up a woman or speak to a woman and would offer her a position I got a feeling that women have to ponder much more than men if they're willing and able to take so to speak the next step in their career and I've, it speaks to this multitasking, there are, apparently when women have to decide if they really want to reach the top they have to factor in many more elements, so it seems huh, than men, the family, what will my husband or my partner say and so on so there often I found that women were much more hesitant and they were often much more serious in their analysis, like will I be able to do a good job.</b>
DR. MALKA	So self-evaluation.....
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Self evaluation, not having probably the confidence in being able to jump to the top, getting worried about the hours, the long hours that you often have to put in, the availability is of course a concern when you deal with politics and you know, you have to go to parliament so it's not like well no I can't because now I have to, my child is sick or whatever, so there were always a number of elements huh, that most o women at least in the Swiss Foreign Service had to consider and not that men didn't, I mean as I say it's not black and white of course men also had to think of their families when offered a posting abroad and so on and so on, but I got a sense that it was still nevertheless easier for men to accept this type of responsibility so I guess that is one and then B..I can't really say how it is in South Africa but in Switzerland a woman that does like a top career and then maybe gets help to educate her children or has help that will stay at home with her children, there is still I mean society looks...can look a bit weird at you...like being a bad mother...</b>
DR. MALKA	Judgemental....
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Judgemental and I often also had conversations with colleagues and I must say I don't have children huh so I never had to go through that but I often had conversations with women in top positions where you know they were really, there was a conflict huh, am I a bad mother, am I missing an important part of the childhood of my children and everything and again, I'm repeating myself of course men also go through, modern men at least, go through that type of thinking but society of course in Switzerland at least accept that the man has to put in long hours, does service trips,</b>

	<b>business trips and whereas a woman I think you risk critical eyes huh on your situation.</b>
DR. MALKA	Well thanks for sharing that because it really shows it is not just the view and the ambition of where you as an individual, as a woman want to achieve and what you've got it's also about taking into consideration the other factors in your life, the responsibility of the people who fall under your domain and then the other issue is as you've rightly said, it's being judged by society so you can't just look at it as a microcosm on your own environment but it's what the broader public unfortunately thinks of you.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Ms Helene Budliger Artieda who is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mauritius.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
DR. MALKA	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 802. Today we're talking to Ms Helene Budliger Artieda who is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mauritius as well as being Observer to the Southern African Development Community.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of this show we spoke about Switzerland's emphasis in terms of economic development as well as trade partnerships and the ambassador's intent on her bucket list, we spoke about two of the high priorities which really focus on driving small/medium enterprise development as a sustainable factor within the African economy on a whole.
DR. MALKA	Ambassador I'd like to ask a question, almost giving a comparison between South Africa, Switzerland and looking at parliamentary ratios, one of the things that I've always detected is in terms of parliamentary figures across the world but particularly in Africa there is really a high representation of women, on the business side globally those numbers fall to probably the mid 20% but from a South African point of view female representation in parliament stands at 42%, Rwanda 64% and they lead the world, Senegal is sixth position at 43% but when I look at leading countries like the USA they rank in at only ninety sixth with 19% representation of women, the UK forty eighth, France in sixtieth position and I really struggle with this question on understanding why there is such a low representation of women in these first world countries, do you have any insight that you could share with us?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>I'm afraid not and the numbers are actually not great in Switzerland either, it's very diplomatic of you that you're not quoting our numbers. Honestly I think it's a generational issue, I really would hope that the numbers would go up. In Switzerland they're not good, they're not good on the business side and they're not good in political representation either. It has improved, thank God, throughout recent years and this I must say because two of the many parties have actually said, I don't think that they, I'm not quite sure but I don't think that they installed like a quota but they've really made an effort to improve on their lists female, the number of female candidates and it's the Socialist Party and it's the Green Movement in Switzerland and I thank God, I must say, through the efforts of these political parties the number have increased.</b>
DR. MALKA	So what would you say is the general state of gender equality in Switzerland?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Yeah it's a very mixed picture huh. If you look at the top so to say, government we've managed to...we have a seven body government only, seven ministers in Switzerland at one time we actually had a four/three majority for women that has changed again but at the very top of Swiss politics I think we've managed huh, that gender is no longer an issue but</b>

	we've only managed quite recently huh, it's not an achievement of like twenty or thirty years. Parliament the numbers are not good and board memberships the numbers are not good and we're actually discussing a system of quotas for board membership, opinions are very diverse huh, on if this is the way to go, if mandatory quotas is the way to go. You look at the Norwegian Model they have quotas, they've been successful....
DR. MALKA	Yes, and they're at 40%....
HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA	Ja but again huh, Swiss people we're more of a liberal society traditionally so the rules and regulations and quotas for everything is kind of something that we would probably look...even women I guess...would look quite sceptical and the career I had I was often men suspected that I only got the job because of the quota huh, because it was high time a woman would become director general in a foreign ministry so often women also shy away of that discussion huh, I don't want to be considered as just because of the quota I managed to....so it's really, it's a difficult discussion and I....
DR. MALKA	It's a very sensitive issue and also...
HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA	.....it is, it is....
DR. MALKA	....psychological it's almost well I have got here because I deserve to be here on merit, not because of my gender.
HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA	Yes but then you have to be quite centred huh, for me I always took it in advantage that most, not...I can't say most....but that many men in the Swiss Foreign Ministry thought...felt that I got there not because of my merit but because of the quota, for me it was a total advantage huh because they would always underestimate me, let's say maybe the first few times that they've met me so for me I really turned it into an advantage but it's...psychologically of course something that you have to quite be quite in line with yourself to go through, to go through experiences like this where everybody you know just thinks like, okay quota.
DR. MALKA	I think that's a really interesting view of being able to turn the tables to your advantage on that issue. As we spoke earlier in terms of the pattern that Switzerland plays on its roles when it comes into different countries and very much about having a partnership ethos and being pragmatic about its achievements and what it can deliver. Switzerland is renowned for assistance to many aid organisations and across the world; can you tell us are there any particular development programmes that you've got in place for women in Africa?
HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA	Oof, now that is really a big, big, big question. We are very much present on the African continent with actually two... three types of development programmes. One is the Humanitarian programme huh, you know topics like food, security, shelter and there for us we will always focus on the vulnerable first and unfortunately I must say in any crises humanitarian crises it's the women and children that are actually vulnerable because men left the village, the household, women are often affected by violence so there is a, of course there is always a focus on humanitarian crises and you're certainly aware that not only on the African continent but throughout the world there is currently a high number of humanitarian crises and this is actually, this itself also represents a certain danger to the effectiveness of our other programmes because we have to focus so much money, resource and effort on litigation with this humanitarian crises...
DR. MALKA	And I'd imagine it's ....the priorities are continually changing because you can't really predict when a crisis is going to occur....

<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Exactly, exactly....</b>
DR. MALKA	...and you have to re-divert
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>....exactly,</b>
DR. MALKA	....resources and drawing them away from another area of need.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Absolutely and of course since the humanitarian crises you're, I mean you're actually talking of not developing a community or a region, you're actually talking of saving people's lives so of course there is...one can immediately sense the urgency to take action and then we have a number of countries that we're present in Africa with our let's say more traditional development cooperation programmes and there again our focus is health and also of course women's health, education, access to education, poverty reduction and so of course naturally there will be always a focus on women and then the third is the economic development programmes and there we are very focused, our presence is very focused in Africa, we have two priority countries one is South Africa that's why I've mentioned my economic development team at the embassy, well my,... no it's an economic development team at the embassy and the other country that we're active in is Ghana. Whenever we see an opportunity again there to create job opportunities for women that will have a priority for us.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thanks for sharing some of those development programmes.
DR.MALKA	Today we're talking to Ms Helene Budliger Artieda who is the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mauritius as well as being an Observer to SADC.
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DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of our conversation Ambassador shared with us some of her opinions and thoughts in terms of where first world countries rank from a gender equality perspective, remarking that from a Swiss perspective the gender equality is not at a state where one would like it to be in our current climate; she also spoke a little bit in terms of her professional career where she managed to turn a weakness of having a gender quota in place into a strength which she took advantage of and was very successful in her role.
DR. MALKA	Ambassador turning towards more of a personal perspective, one of the questions that I ask all my guests on this show who are, they've succeeded in their respective field whether it is politics, business or any other discipline is about some of the factors that they consider have contributed to their success. What would you say have been some of those factors that have driven you to success?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>I think there are two that I would like to mention. During my posting in Lima Peru I've met my husband and I know that I'm on a ....I know this is a show about women and I'm on a slippery terrain when I pay contribute to a man but I must really say for me my husband plays an absolute key role. He's been rock solid behind me, he's always supported me in my career and I suspect that we would have much less issue if women across</b>

	<p>the globe could count on the support and it doesn't have to be a man it can be of course also just the support of a partner that does not constantly question you in your career decisions and so on and just you know, rides along huh, and this has been very much the case of my husband so I would say I would not be anywhere close because I also had kind of an atypical career within our ministry, I wouldn't have been able to do it without the unconditional support and love of my husband and the second and probably turning point in my career, sorry to report was again a man, was superior of mine many years back, who turned out to be a mentor huh, in a sense that he saw certain abilities of mine that I actually kind of had not discovered myself at that point and he really gave my career a decisive push and he did it in a very unpretentious way you know, it's not like we had constant conversation on like you should do this, you should, I see you, you know, it was not like a mentorship where we would very structurally meet it was just...he did it in a very natural way in giving me tasks that you know at first I would say like me, you want me to do this and then he offered me a promotion, I became his deputy, he was quite an age older than me and when he retired he really campaigned for me to become his successor and this is when I became the chief financial officer at the foreign ministry, as you can imagine totally a male dominated arena actually in all other ministries there were only men holding that position so I would often find myself in big meetings being the only woman and I must say I probably would have never applied for that job on my own huh, it's just really this man by the name of Fritz Kreuner that you know at one point said I think you're the person and that really campaigned because I was kind of not the obvious choice</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You know what I think from what you've said is women I think have been campaigning for gender equality for a long time on their own but the reality is that it's not a journey that women can continue and campaign for by themselves. When you have got male support that are also supporting the drive for gender equality and advocating it, I think that's when we will start to see greater successes in the equality space.</p>
HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA	<p>And I fully agree and since I've had such a strong support by my superior at that time, you know, being the director for Corporate Resources I often felt that I should repeat what he has done for me, I should repeat it with hopefully with more than one woman because I was in the position to do it so I saw often my role as you know like in these big meetings with the minister and the secretary of state where we would have to decide who should become the next ambassador to country X, I always felt it was my role to pull out of the hat also women contender huh, and I was not the only one doing that but I think I was probably more credible than other people at the table since I was often the only woman at the table and I know that men our foreign ministry do the same, they really, they really promote women, they give women these opportunities and before I you know, we spoken a bit quotas and so on and so what makes me hopeful is that often, very often these women they really did a fantastic job and really...once they say yes I'm in for it then they're really in for it and they've done a fantastic job, I can't say that I've been ever let down by one of these women that I've at one stage championed, be it in my own directorate or be it when we were talking about nominations of ambassadors.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And you know when we're reflecting on some of the earlier parts of our conversation when you were talking about sometimes there was a reluctance for women to take on more responsibility and in now when you've just shared</p>

	when you've never been let down, I think it's about taking that first step.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Yes absolutely. I think it's a thing of generations and I'm hoping that naturally we will get to a point where this type of radio and TV, as much as I enjoy it, should not be longer necessary.</b>
DR. MALKA	Until we get to a point of gender equality these conversations and dialogues have to continue because we're not at 50/50 yet.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Exactly.</b>
DR. MALKA	Unfortunately we are coming to an end and rapidly running out of time, may I ask you in closing the conversation if you could share a few words of wisdom or inspiration which you'd like to pass onto all the young women who are listening to us today?
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>I feel that I'm a bit too young to share with them but I can just tell you what I've been doing. I think A it's important that you're focused on content and then you will succeed. I think it's one of my favourite saying and my team's probably going like oh not again, but "never leave the high ground"....</b>
DR.MALKA	..."never leave the high ground"....
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>..."never leave the high ground" that has helped me a lot through maybe some struggles that you might have, power struggles on your way to the top. I think a strong ethical compass is quite key and do what you love, be a woman don't try to be a man, be a woman because there's a lot of strength in that as well. That will be it I guess, huh.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much. It's been such a pleasure having you on our show today and we wish you all the best for the remainder of your term and hope that you can come back on this show and share more of the developments as you continue with this term of office.
<b>HELENE BUDLIGER ARTIEDA</b>	<b>Thank you very much I enjoyed it very much.</b>
	<b>PROGRAMME END</b>