

PROGRAM DATE: 2016-11-10

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: NTOMBIZANELE SITU: PARALYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST

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 Cape Town is Ms. Ntombizanele Situ otherwise known as Zanele Situ, who is a multi-gold medal winning athlete specialising in javelin, discus and shot put with a sporting career that began in 1988 spanning almost three decades, if I were to list all of Zanele's achievements they would take up half the show. She has won numerous national and international competitions, set world records, participated in three Paralympic Games taking her to China, Australia, the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, France, Qatar, Brazil, to name a few.
DR. MALKA	Welcome to the show Zanele!
MS ZANELE SITU	Thank you.
DR. MALKA	Zanele when I was doing the research on you for this show, as I mentioned in the introduction I was left speechless as I read through some of your achievements, a few of them I'd like to share with our listeners. In 2000 Zanele was awarded with the Order of Ikamanga in Silver for outstanding achievements during the Sydney Paralympic Games and she served as a role model for all South Africans. In 2003 she was selected as Sports Ambassador for South Africa at the ICC Cricket World Cup. In 2004 she won the Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award; between 2009 and 2016 she received the Maties Sports Colours; in 2014 she was a finalist for GSport's Woman of the Year with a Disability; she is currently ranked third in the world in Javelin in her class; she received an award from the Minister of Sport in 2016 for Outstanding Performances and most recently Zanele was the Flag Bearer of Team South Africa for the Paralympic Games in 2016. That is an impressive array of achievements in comparison to any sports person in South Africa. Zanele please can you share what drives and what motivates you?
MS ZANELE SITU	For me to me to get involved in sport I started when I was in special school then I saw a lot of different activities anyway something to do also for me to keep me busy then I start slowly as a activity without knowing that one day it will take me far to make me to be known by a lot of people around the world.
DR. MALKA	In that journey so you said that you started in special school, you were exposed to a lot of activities, what made you pursue this particular set, so to drive forwards on the javelin, the discus and the shot put, what were some of the factors that drove you?
MS ZANELE SITU	As I said I didn't know where..how far it will take me, I was just doing them, enjoying to do sports around the school. I did challenge myself you know, I didn't really like to go out for the competitions, I did just enjoy to do it at school just for fun, from there I really....it was a struggle for me to go for the competition because I did refuse a lot to go outside for competition, then I did go in 1988 after a long time because I really didn't want to travel so from there I take it slowly but I was still enjoying it 'till now.

DR. MALKA	So part of this was about you believing in yourself, you were doing it really for the love of the sport, for your own benefit and eventually people managed to tempt you out to go and compete which I think the world is very glad that they managed to achieve that. Now athletics, particularly the events that you participate in, Javelin, discus, shot put, it requires certain elements to reach success and those include things like sacrifice, perseverance, single minded focus, can you please share with us some of the few landmarks or milestones in your career?
MS ZANELE SITU	Somehow it's difficult sometimes to really say I did just start here, everything it has got a start because also my start was a very slow start, also something I was also trying to understand a lot more about myself on a wheelchair, also to understand a lot of different people with disabilities so for my involvement it was also something that will take me away from the wrong friends, from the fights so I say it is something that can take me away from the wrong doing things but not knowing that it will take me to be a better person around the people I live in and also getting the people around to help you to make you a better person.
DR. MALKA	You mentioned some of the challenges from being in a wheelchair and having to understand how it affects your life, how it affects other people's lives and how they respond and react to you, can you tell us how...because you were born able bodied, can you just tell us a little bit about the journey of how you became disabled?
MS ZANELE SITU	I just got sick, it was something like getting weaker so I stayed in hospital for many years and from there it's when I came back I went to a special school but even there when I was still young I did love to do sport, to see something and try to do it. I was always challenging myself then also when I've got in a wheelchair, it's not something that it came to my mind that now I've changed I'm in a wheelchair I will never walk again, it didn't interfere with my life but when I see a lot of people on a wheelchair, on crutches with a different disability from there I learn a lot in my mind, if this person can do something you know all those starts, even the physio's all around they are helping all the people to try, to try to do something on their own, it was a big thing to me, then I was learning a little bit also, the ups and downs also when you have got a disability it's like you're getting differ from the other people so you have to learn a little bit also the way to talk to people, the way will you receive when somebody is saying something to you so those things you have to learn, slowly you learn anybody can change anytime.
DR. MALKA	Thank you for sharing that because it's about almost reliving your life over of the lessons that you learned as you were growing up able bodied and then having to navigate and change things when you became disabled.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Multi-gold Medallist Paralympian, Ms. Zanele Situ.
	AD BREAK
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 are talking to Multi-gold Medallist Paralympian, Ms. Zanele Situ. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter@WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment of the conversation we shared some of Zanele's many achievements throughout her nearly three decade long career; we spoke about how her journey into competitive sport evolved from the love of sport; how sport helped her understand herself more and helped manage her disability and utilise sport as a means of motivating herself to succeed beyond her disability.

DR. MALKA	Zanele competing at the forefront of international competition has given you fantastic insight into what it takes to get to the top of your game and more importantly how to stay there. Do you think that some of those same principles of getting to the top apply to business and life in general?
MS ZANELE SITU	<p>I will say yes as long as you work hard to reach the top or the position you wish to reach. As long you also go with the understanding because when you go up with the other people, you don't go up alone because you also work with other people like the coaches, the physio, the doctors even the people around you and your family and they are your supporters so anytime you go higher you don't leave those people behind, you don't go higher alone, you don't forget them down there because those were the first people who were there for you to reach the top so when you are at the top there you have to also look out of the people who around you who are also still down there so help is needed for you to be there you were helped so you need to also stretch your hands to those people who are still down there, also when you're up there the spirit is also needed to work with, it's not a good thing to do something to reach up there because to work with the coach, the team, the physio, everybody around you it's also a mission because there are the days you don't really feel like, the days that you have a misunderstanding so you try by all means to sit down and listen to each other as a person everybody do have the bad days so it's all about the spirit you have among the people. Some people I understand they don't understand you when you're there training the people able bodies, even if it's not able bodies, some of the people with a disability they don't understand and as a person you also don't understand, you sit down the those people, slowly once a day get understand each other to know a person and you know somebody's needs to help each other then the next time when you're there you're there for everybody then you know this person's problem is this. It opens your eyes also because you never know when you can get a disability and if somebody comes with a child with a disability so you can manage to work with all the people as long you manage to open your heart to sit down and understand all the people around you.</p>
DR.MALKA	I think that the role of support systems as you've mentioned and outlined have been incredibly important contributors to success and I also think that sometimes we tend not to think about it but you've highlighted the importance of not only being physically fit but also mentally fit, that the mind makes a huge contribution to things. Zanele being in sport and you've mentioned that in effect you have this great camaraderie between able bodied as well as disabled sports people and that it's almost a case of levelling the playing fields, I'd like to ask you which sportswomen have inspired you and why?
MS ZANELE SITU	<p>I don't know whether my answer will be right when I say people who have been especially the women, especially those who were raped firstly and they managed to stand up, those people who were tortured but they managed to stand up and also hold other people's hands to show them the right direction and the people with the disability is those who really struggles from the beginning to understand the disability they have. People have got their children with a disability and they manage to take care of those children to make them better people for the future. People who have got cancer, people who have got HIV, those women I admire them, those people I admire them. It's not really about, for me it's not about a special person who do something for me but those people I admire, those people who are out there who also understand the other people's problem to make them understand like the social workers and the local people around so those people I admire them, I can't really go with a special name for a special</p>

	<p>somebody because on my side it doesn't have to be so and so because I know this person, those people I don't know them but those people I admire their work because people they can help me but I won't keep their name, I will keep that there was a person who really helped me to reach here, those people I admire you, those people who are like you guys they are on the studio to reach out the people who doesn't know that they are the future in the world, they can do something better, I admire you guys because we don't know when we are out there how do you hear somebody from the radio and how do we get to use those people to be on the radio to make us strong that when you do something you can share with the other people because on my side it's like I never thought that I can make the other people to think I can do something for the world to admire me in future or to inspire people, so those people I've got a big thanks for them because each time I learn, each time I thank because to reach anything it's about the people, people do make you someone, you work with the people to reach somewhere.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It sounds like people have been incredibly important in your life and that you as personal traits have got strong elements of empathy and compassion and although you have spoken about some of the people that you admire, you are certainly someone that we admire and it's our job to utilise this platform for you to share your voice, for you to share your experiences to touch all of those people who see you in terms of your performances and all the challenges that you've had to overcome in order to get to where you are today.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Today we're talking to Multi-gold Medallist Paralympian Ms Zanele Situ.</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 802. Today we are talking to Multi-gold Medallist Paralympian Ms Zanele Situ. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter@WomanityTalk.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>In the previous segment Zanele spoke about some of the factors of remaining at the top and how through hard work how that applies to other areas of our environment whether that is in the business world or in the personal world; she also spoke about the importance of support structures as enabling systems as well as the importance of a positive mindset and being physically fit to achieve in the sporting environment. She mentioned her admiration for people who have overcome setbacks to surpass their challenges in order to succeed.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Now Zanele one of your mottos and a powerful statement that I read from you is that you said "if you can dream it you can achieve it" and I think that that motto brings a message of hope, inspiration and upliftment which helps empower people to take complete control of their lives, to realise untapped potential, fulfil both material as well as their spiritual destiny. Can you share with us some of your personal experiences behind this motto of "if you can dream it you can do it"?</p>
MS ZANELE SITU	<p>Me as Zanele I'm merely a person who loved to do the challenges because when I started to become used on wheelchair I was used to doing everything like when I'm at home, when the people are not there I am left alone in the house I will wheel around and try to reach the things that are far from me because every time when they leave they put everything close so that I can reach easier then every time I will try to reach the things that are far from me, even in sport wise I try by all means to try to do those sport things that more people they're doing especially with the able body to try to see if I can't do those things, I can't do those exercise so a lot of things because I remember when I was still also young my parents both</p>

	<p>were doing the handwork, they were good with handwork, knitting and sewing, embroidery so when they are not around I will steal their thing and try to do embroidery and the knitting and everything so every time where I don't reach I always try by all means to put my nose in there even if it is outside when my brothers and sisters are there we play then few minutes they go outside the gate, I will make sure that I will reach outside the gate, wheelchair or no wheelchair I will reach outside the gate, if it's downstairs I will go down the stairs it doesn't matter how, I will rather crawl down the stairs I will rather crawl up the stairs to make sure that I can reach everything, so slowly to do those things I did manage to do a lot of things then it's where I noticed that if you can think of something try hard to do it, try to do it and fail and do it again because when you are a person you do fall now the problem it's one, after you fail how do you wake up, you sit down you wait for the people to come and wake you or what are you doing, do you try because they don't have to come there and lift you up so also those things I learned that if I ask for help I must also meet those people half way then I noticed that by doing that you do the work easier for you and for the other people, next time when you ask the help from the people it's easier for them to help you because they also see that you are helping them. As the people who also I've got for many things for him to do, lot of things for us then the other thing how do you do the thing you ask from God, do you want God to do that for you or do you want God to help you to do that, to get work because if you want God to give you work and yet you don't wake up and go outside and ask for work, he will never bring the work to you, you have to go out there. Any help you need you go out there to people and you cry for help and the people they do help you, they don't do the things for you so from there anything I do slowly I manage to reach somewhere then I noticed you dream something and you do it and you do it and you will win because even at school, if you fail you go again, you try your best, you win.</p>
DR. MALKA	You're so right and if you don't try you don't have a hope in being able to achieve something it's putting that first thought, that first action into motion.
MS ZANELE SITU	Yes, yes.
DR. MALKA	Now Zanele recently you've just been in Brazil, Rio where you were selected as the Flag Bearer for Team South Africa for the 2016 Paralympic Games which again is another extremely impressive accomplishment and that leads me onto my next question, what's next for you what are your plans for the future and are there any specific things that you want to accomplish?
MS ZANELE SITU	<p>I will say my mind is still on sports, I still would love to carry on with sports because on the other side I think on my mind I have this thing that the other people when they see something it's how they get inspired to do something so I hope by doing this I'm doing for many because I love it so I hope the other people will learn that if they want to do something, they focus on that, they do that with all their love because I'm doing sport because I love it, it's not that I'm doing it because people are admiring Zanele to do this, you have to do this nobody said I have to do it, nobody pushing me to do it I push myself to do it that people are just helping me to reach the goals I wish to reach.</p>
DR. MALKA	And whilst staying with that aspect of goals and I've found this a very inspirational conversation, you've spoken about people who have helped you, you've spoken about the belief in yourself, one of the questions that I ask all my guests on this programme is about the things or factors that have contributed to their success. Some people speak about hard work others talk about

	perseverance, some speak about their family whether it's their mothers or their grandmothers, what would you say have been some of the key drivers in your success?
MS ZANELE SITU	For me it's my family. My family do really support me because anything I do I do with love and I work hard for that so the people who are helping me it's the people who help me to do what I love. Those people they are there to help me not there to do it for me so I will try by all means when there is somebody who is helping me to work more harder, anyway for instance in 2000 I was coaching myself to reach Sydney, now I've got a coach so there is also a big difference, physio side, sports side, the doctors you know so they are helping me, by helping me it's easier also for me to push myself forward, to work hard to reach where I want to reach because at the end of the day it's about me it's not about the coach, the coach is there to help me because if I also not work with the coach I won't have the coach so if somebody is helping I try by all means to also help that person to make the work more easier.
DR. MALKA	It's give and take from both sides and what you give out you gain and I know that from a coaching point of view when your students are rewarding you with their achievements that's thanks enough. Now Zanele could you share with us some of the pivotal moments, important moments or special moments when you were growing up?
MS ZANELE SITU	When I grew up I grew like all other children my family was not a rich family so my parents were really struggling to take us to school but they did do their best for us as a children to go to school 'till I got sick, even then I was also not at home I was at school full time. They didn't treat me like, they didn't treat me specially, they didn't....nothing changed them to not treat me like all the children in the house I was also not special in their house I was like all the others. I was doing every work I was used to do in the house, doing the washing, anything I can manage to do I was doing in the house so for me to reach the school to do sports they were also supportive as long I'm doing something, as long I'm like all the other children, they wanted me even I'm at home to be out there with the other children to play with the other children, they never have something that I must stay indoors or I must stay in the yard because now my life is changed so there was nothing changed I did do everything like all the other children, even if I have to get a hiding I get a hiding like all the other children and then they motivate me, they encouraged me to do sport to carry on with sport, even now my sister she is always there for me and my brothers they are there for me to encourage me to anything I do I must do it they are there for me although my parents, I don't have a parents anymore but they're still there supporting me.
DR. MALKA	So family has been an important aspect of your life from a point of view of stability, encouragement and normalising everything. Now lastly Zanele we are unfortunately coming to the end of our show could you please share with us a few words of wisdom which you would like to pass on to all the young girls in the continent that are listening to us?
MS ZANELE SITU	Lastly I would like to say especially to the parents, it doesn't matter which side able or not.....if a parent will start now to be there for our children to take them to the place they can get a time to play to do something when they're still growing. Sometime I understand the more of the people who are outside towns who are in the rural areas, we struggle to get all these type of things, the places that have got the children are playing different activities, it doesn't matter there are the things that the children are doing, you take your child there so that your child must learn

	<p>something to do something because that will help the child in future. There are a lot of children who are running around in town they have got nothing to do, we are also encouraging the children because we are sending them to buy the beers, the drugs, the...all those things so if we can keep the children to send those children to buy those type of things we'll make our children to grow to help also the children with the disabilities that they can be put them involved to the other children to get used to the other children to do something for themselves, they can go far. The problem we as the parents we don't care about our children, we don't think that as a person you can build the nation and also as a parent you don't think that the next day you can become a disability person through the accident, through the drugs and everything, those things you can't change when you are already have a disability say now I wanna do this, if we try those small things now it's easier when you have got a child like that, a disability also that it's not the end of the life because some of the people once they get a disability even when they are older they do kill themselves, so when you have got a disability there is life in anything you have got, there is life and also as long as you also take the advice from the other people or also you get the help.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you very much I think that's really important that parents start to take responsibility to build the next generation of the nation and to encourage their children to embrace sport and good citizenship to participate meaningfully in their lives in the future. Thank you very much for joining us Zanele it's been an absolute pleasure to have you on our show and we wish you every success in the next journey or leg of your sporting career.</p>
MS ZANELE SITU.	<p>Thank you.</p>
PROGRAMME END	