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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: HELEN ZILLE – PREMIER OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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 today from Cape Town is South African Politician Helen Zille, she is the Premier of the Western Cape; a member of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament; a former leader of the South African opposition party, the Democratic Alliance and a former Mayor of Cape Town; she is also a former journalist an Anti-Apartheid Activist. Some of her accolades include being selected as World Mayor of the Year in 2008 from a field of 820 candidates and being chosen as Newsmaker of The Year in 2006 by the National Press Club.
DR. MALKA	Welcome to the show!
HELEN ZILLE	Thank you very much Amaleya it's good to be with you.
DR. MALKA	Now your CV reflects key points in the history of our country and already at a young age as a journalist, an anti-apartheid activist, you were instrumental in voicing protest to the former government atrocities which later, as a political correspondent for the now defunct Rand Daily Mail, you uncovered the story behind Black Conscious Movement leader Steve Biko's death in 1977. In the 1980's you were also involved in NGO's and were a member of several anti-apartheid organisations. In the 1990's you joined the Democratic Party which changed its name to the Democratic Alliance. Can you please share with us some of the pivotal moments in your life growing up and what influenced you in those years?
HELEN ZILLE	Well it's always difficult to see a pivotal moment until you're looking through the rear view mirror and indeed looking back I've analysed a lot of the pivotal moments of my life in my recently published autobiography. I think the most formative factor in my life was my parents and their values and their commitment to democracy and non-racialism and their abiding hatred for any form of discrimination, so that was what I grew up with that is what I drank literally with my mother's milk and it was the context in which all the discussions in our house was held and that really shaped my interests, my focus, I grew up in a highly politicised household because people understood and my parents certainly understood that unless there was a fair constitutional or framework and the rule of just law, we couldn't have a just society. So that was very pivotal in my life that kind of upbringing of which I was completely oblivious at the time, you don't really realise how your parents are shaping you until they've already done it. Then another pivotal moment was I suppose getting my degree which was important and then being accepted as a cadet journalist on the Rand Daily Mail, that was really spectacular because it opened a whole new vista for me in the field of journalism and having a very good mentor in my editor Allister Sparks. So I think many of my pivotal experiences have been when older people who are wise and visionary have inspired me and in a way taken me under their wing, as Allister Sparks did and trained me as a journalist, so that was an enormously important experience in my life, and then I left journalism but got very politically active and I suppose that was

	<p>another critical dimension and then perhaps the biggest turning point in my life was marrying my husband and starting out on my particular journey with two wonderful sons, being very involved in their primary school and then that plummeting me into the political arena, the formal political arena that I'd never anticipated or aimed to be in. So all of those are pivotal moments you know life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans and the important thing is to recognise an opportunity when it presents itself to you and use it and looking back you often see it as a pivotal moment.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I think you're absolutely right and really importantly the effects of almost I suppose the enablers in the community that you find yourself surrounded with as you're growing up, you mentioned the influence that your parents played on you, but how they had almost I suppose became innate, it wasn't something that you were conscious of that it was something that they were doing and developing you.</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Yes absolutely you know when you're growing up you think everybody grows up like that or this is quite normal but in fact looking back I realise how exceptional it was.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And with that lens as you've grown up and all of the moments that you've lived through in your life, do you feel that as a country we're in the right place as you had imagined in the early days?</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Well I think we're in a much better place than I could have ever have imagined even at the dawn of our democracy in 1994. It's quite exceptional what progress we have made and when I say that I don't mean that the governing party is doing a good job or that our president is leading us well, on the contrary, what I do mean by that is that our institutions and constitution is showing itself to be robust; that our key institutions are largely still strongly independent and fulfilling their functions; that we're getting a much more balanced democracy or government changing hands through the ballot box, through the vote of citizens taking their responsibility seriously, so that is all reason for celebration and for extraordinary democratic progress.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And democracy is obviously something that we continuously aspire for.</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Well yes I mean you know democracy is never complete. Every single generation has to engage the struggle again and ensure that we give it content and define it and my definition of democracy is institutions and systems that puts checks and balances on power abuse and that is what we're busy doing in South Africa.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>True and I'd say also from a democracy point of view as we pass the baton onto new generations there will be new issues to uncover, they're not having the same fight and struggles that the past had experienced but they've got new problems to overcome.</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Yes every generation has its struggles and its issues and it's very interesting to look at the dynamic of history to see how cycles of peace and cycles of conflict interact with each other in the unfolding canopy of history and the story of the development of human beings. So this is of course very interesting and exciting and to do your best for the time that you're around, to add to the cycle of progress and peace and hopefully prosperity for all, it's a great privilege.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And whilst we're talking in the same vein of leadership, our programme 'Womanity – Women in Unity' is all about gender equality and I'd like to explore some of your opinions on various subjects relating to women.</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Yes.</p>

DR. MALKA	Firstly being a female political leader in Africa sometimes touches on sensitive points like culture, religion and tradition, in your experience do you think that women leaders face different challenges to their male counterparts and are they are they judged differently?
HELEN ZILLE	You know Amaleya to be quite honest I don't feel that I was ever judged differently and that's a very unique experience I know because most other women don't agree with me but I have to be honest to my experience. I did the best job I could wherever I was and although I felt an incredible burden raising two small children and trying to have a career and lots of involvement at the same time was absolutely exhausting, I didn't feel that the outside world judged me any differently, which was wonderful. In the DA I've always been judged, I hope, for my contribution and my ability to add value and I hope everybody's judged in that way, but I found the most oppressive aspect in terms of women's role in the political process goes back to our biology. We have babies and the fact that we have babies really puts an extraordinary additional burden onto us if we choose to exercise that freedom in our lives because as a mother of young children it is enormously challenging if you want to be a decent and contributing mother, if you want to be a present mother, if you want to be there for your children, but if you also want to do a full-time job that has a career you literally work day and night to be both and very few people can take that pace and so women stand back for a couple of years, let's say five, six or take part-time jobs or sometimes full-time jobs and never quite manage to get back at the same level that they left I've found so that is a huge, huge setback, obviously most women in Africa are single parents, or I would say many, many, many women in Africa are single parents and that puts an absolute additional burden on women which means that they are so scrambling to provide for their children and fulfil all of those functions that I've spoken about, that having the kind of career that politics is, which is relentless 24/7 stuff, is almost impossible.
DR. MALKA	So in that vein how did you manage to juggle it because I'd say this is a problem which doesn't just concern politicians but even in the corporate ladder if you miss out on a couple of years you're never really able to catch up effectively.
HELEN ZILLE	Yes I think some women are able to catch up effectively but very rarely, especially if you still, for let's say five or ten years have a critical dual role, and I do believe it is a critical dual role, I think that mothers and fathers should be there for their children. The reason that I managed it was many fold, first of all I have a very supportive and sharing husband which is absolutely critical. He doesn't have the old gender divisions of what women do and what men do and he was a very present father and very supportive of me and took my own career as seriously as he took his own, which was critical for us. Then I had domestic help, it wasn't 24/7 of course, it was an ordinary decent working day but that made a big difference and I had my children in good childcare from when they were very young, literally six months, which many people were highly critical of ,but which I had to do, A because I needed to work to supplement the family income because my husband was a junior lecturer at the time and so I had all of these wonderful things going, also I can work very hard and I don't need much sleep so that was the very important, I suppose, intrinsic trade that I had brought to that situation which meant that I could work almost through the night quite often and then be there for my children during the day.

DR. MALKA	Well I think to be successful requires a number of enabling factors whether it's support from a spouse, whether it is domestic help or help from extended family to develop and ensure that women's careers don't suffer because of having children which is a fundamental part of life and sustaining our life force.
HELEN ZILLE	Absolutely, there's no question about that.
DR. MALKA	Could you share with us some of the cultural differences and challenges you encountered during your career and what would be your advice to women who face these same types of challenges in the future?
HELEN ZILLE	Well you see we're becoming a multi-cultural world. The world is definitely shrinking and although globalism may be on everybody's hit list it's irreversible, frankly. We're becoming the same global village and we will be crossing cultures everywhere so I think it's a great privilege to be in a country where we have a lot of practice at doing that and we have to be open minded, we have to be very accepting and celebrating of what I call the perception of otherness and we have to try and coagulate the core and the best values of all cultures to build our unique South Africanism that then has a huge amount to contribute to world culture. So I think we need to be able to cross boundaries and I learnt that very early. I was raised in a very traditionally German home 'cause my parents were refugees from Germany and I interacted with very poor people because of course being refugees my parents had absolutely nothing, they had to start literally from the bottom and build up a life and I've been able to cross all sorts of different class barriers, cultural barriers, language barriers and often you feel a bit outcast at the beginning but then you learn to know who you are and then you feel comfortable crossing those kinds of barriers, so I would strongly urge people not to put up a wall when faced by cultural challenges and differences, but really be open to the new experience and true to yourself in interacting with it.
DR. MALKA	I think those are very poignant words of wisdom.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Helen Zille, Premier of the Western Cape.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	You are listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the voice of the African Renaissance and we're talking to Helen Zille, the Premier of the Western Cape.
DR.MALKA	In the previous segment she relayed the political influence from her household which had shaped her consciousness growing up; we also spoke about key enablers in one's life ranging from a supporting and sharing partner to understanding and realising the contributions of both spouses in a relationship and the importance of their career, we also spoke about the increasing movement of globalism as well as celebrating perceptions of otherness and being very conscious in terms of navigating across borders, across boundaries and being open to the diverse society that we face ourselves in from a South African context and also from a global context.
DR. MALKA	Now turning towards more of a conversation on addressing perspectives of empowerment, what are your views of women's empowerment and gender equality legislation?
HELEN ZILLE	Well if we want genuine women's empowerment we have to make sure that every little girl can get an education and can make choices that empower her life. I say that freedom is the opportunity to live a life you value and I don't think that you can live a life you value if you're a mother by fifteen, if you've had no education or prospects for economic freedom, if you remain dependent on social grants and on the goodwill of the father of your children who may or may not want to be with you and so to really liberate

	<p>women what we need to make absolutely sure of is that girls go to school, that girls stay at school and that girls have a chance of tertiary education before they make their own autonomous decisions about who to partner with an whether or not to have children, until women have control over that aspect of their lives, the thrust towards genuine empowerment of women is going to be very limited indeed. Currently the whole thrust talks about quotas at the top and ignores the millions and millions of women who have no chance of even getting on the first rung of the ladder. If we enable all women to get onto that ladder and hold that ladder firmly so that they can climb it, many, many more women will come out at the top. What we first have to address is young girls dropping out of school. We have to address the sexual predation that so many young girls face from peers their own age but often inter-generationally which is a really shocking phenomenon in our society. We have to face the fact that our social norms on what is appropriate to do with young girls are falling apart and we have to resurrect them, I mean having sex, even if it's consensual with an under-aged girl is totally unacceptable and we as a society with parents and institutions and values and norms need to ensure that every possible young woman has the opportunity to finish her education before she makes an autonomous decision to have children because that is empowerment, education is the only ladder out of poverty for a woman and if you are trapped in no education and have to live on a social grant, which has to be limited because in fact the number of people on social grants is far higher than the number of people actually working, almost double in fact, that creates an impossible situation and so people who live on social grants will be always in poverty. Our job is to grow the economy, get more people into the economy and I genuinely believe that if we solve the supply side of doing that, with educating women, we will transform not only the prospects for girls and women but also transform our whole society.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>You're absolutely right and statistics continuously probe and say that when you educate a woman it's not just the woman that you're educating it's education of her children because a more empowered woman wants to ensure that the lives are better for her children, she will be able to provide for them more beneficially, she is more likely to take care of them optimally from a health perspective, so education is incredibly important, but I think at the same time another really important point that you raised is about the social norms and the fact that achieving empowerment and equality for women it's not just a one-sided gender view but we also need our male counterparts to come to the party too, we've got to....it's a case of give and take, it's not.....to help develop the state of equality.</p>
<p>HELEN ZILLE</p>	<p>Yes absolutely you know, so many men are threatened by strong, autonomous, independent women, it is amazing and in fact it's often the root of, as I understand it, domestic violence. I've never experienced domestic violence myself, not in my own marriage and certainly not with my parents ever, so I can't imagine that kind of context but I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that when men feel disempowered in the world they often take it out on the women that are closest to them and what is a very effective trigger for men feeling disempowered is an autonomous and strong woman and we have to change that focus on the world. Men are not weaker just because the women may have better jobs or earn more money or whatever that is, in fact, everybody whatever their sex needs to be able to be who they are and I really like the movement that often has men playing the primary role of homemaker and women playing the primary role of career professional, that makes all kinds of sense to me, not as a fixed a pattern but as a pattern that suites certain people who are true to</p>

	who they are and do not feel threatened by those inverse social relations, if you will.
DR. MALKA	And I would almost say it goes back to your point in terms of diversity and embracing the cross border dynamics not only of culture but also not allowing stereotypes to pervade and to realise that you can be multiple things, you don't have to be dictated to by society.
HELEN ZILLE	Absolutely I mean entirely and what we need to do is bring all our children up to...in that search of who you actually are which is a very difficult thing when you're growing up to find out who you are. Social norms and expectations and peer pressure and peer affirmation are such huge strong forces when you're growing up that yourself and who you are actually gets lost in the process and our role needs to be to enable all our young people to get educated with the keys skills but also crucially to find out who they inherently are and have the courage to live that.
DR. MALKA	Now as a leader you joined the Democratic Alliance and you served the party and during that process you have climbed higher and higher up the political ladder, becoming the Mayor of Cape Town and leader of your party and have built a reputation as a strong woman who fights for her beliefs and I must say in the history of running this particular programme I've seen many remarkable women like you and I often wonder that if women like this, who've contributed to society in so many ways to bring about positive change had focused on gender equality that perhaps collectively this is something that we could have eradicated and made gender inequality a scar of the past, what's your view?
HELEN ZILLE	I think that it's probably more complicated than that. If it is true, which I think it is, that our biology is the root cause of much of the gender assigned roles and therefore gender oppression in society, then we're going to have to look at how we deal with that biology for a resolution of that. Now obviously not all women want to have to get out, carve their way in society in the way that the rest...others of us do, I mean my job is a living nightmare for many people although I personally love it and I wouldn't do anything else if I had a choice, so it's each one for him or herself. The great tragedy is that so many people can't realise their dreams for themselves and can't live a life they value because of the assigned roles and so what we need to do is ensure that, as I say I keep coming back to this, young women get educated, they don't succumb to the peer pressure of sexual exploitation by men and often by much older men, even though it seems convenient at the time because the guy will pay for you or give you money or give you the things that you want at that particular moment in your development process and that you will see the long term and that you will see the longer vision, but that requires really good parenting and really good social institutions that can defend and uphold women's rights and especially very beautiful women have a much tougher time because it's so much easier for them to succumb to all of these siren calls as they're growing up, which look as if they are easy options but become very difficult options in the long run.
DR. MALKA	The working world in the way it was constructed and we've spoken about the biology of women and men and how that has defined and assigned certain roles and duties to people, I would say has been designed around what I call "men's hours", which typically ran through an eight to five scenario but as a result of that society is almost losing half of its best multi-taskers from the workforce because of traditional expectations for women to reform their work timetables according to family needs, what's your perspective of this and do you think in the 21 st century that it's now time that we do some restructuring to accommodate women's multiple roles or in fact look at men coming to the party

	and taking up and assuming some of these family responsibilities?
HELEN ZILLE	Well I think it's not a question of either or it's a question of both and. I think staggering work hours makes all kinds of sense not only because of domestic duties but because of traffic jams and a whole range of other things. There are times when people need to be in the same space at the same time but technology has actually limited that necessity because you are always in touch wherever you are whether it's by the social media or by Skype or whichever other way that you want to be in touch so that makes that much easier, but I think it's a question of both and, I think that when men and women decide to have children and it needs to be a conscious decision, it mustn't be just some kind of off-the-cuff accident that you didn't mean to have happen and of course you know we can't always control that, but we need to get to the point where 99% of pregnancies are thought about, planned and actually wanted because that is the root cause of a lot of other things and when men and women decide to have children together they have got to understand that it is a lifetime commitment, that you have to then put yourself second and work out ways of putting your children first and that is a huge shock for many men and women who suddenly find shew I've now got this new person in my life who is completely helpless and yet all powerful over me and if you don't really want it and you're not prepared to make the sacrifice for it, it's very, very difficult on both the partners in the relationship.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Helen Zille, the Premier of the Western Cape.
	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're talking to the Premier of the Western Cape, Helen Zille.
DR. MALKA	In the previous segment we spoke about the importance of education as a means of empowerment for women to help them make better choices to be more informed in terms of breaking out of cycles of poverty. We also spoke about looking at the differences between men and women from a biological perspective in terms of their assigned roles and the need to restructure working environments, for men to take on more responsibility from a family point of view and the enabling functions that technology have provided to us.
DR. MALKA	Premier Zille one of the questions I ask guests on my programme who've made tremendous achievements in their respective fields of expertise is about the factors that have contributed to their success. I know earlier on that you spoke about the role of your parents in shaping your consciousness but can you tell us in your opinion what have been the key drivers to your success?
HELEN ZILLE	Well I've had a lot of opportunity but I've also used that opportunity and I can recognise opportunity so when a door opens I can see it opening and I go through it. I think the second thing is that I'm prepared to work very, very hard and I don't complain that women have to work harder than men I just know that if I want to achieve something I have to put in the effort required to do that and I put in that effort and that's also a legacy of the way I was brought up, my parents said stop complaining, work harder and that was always a very good lesson. You were never allowed to be a victim in my family, not of anything and that was also incredibly important, so when things go wrong in life you don't sit there and say oh poor me, you say what can I do and how hard can I work to overcome this and that's a really good attitude to have. I really didn't know that I was being shaped with this attitude and again looking back I see that I was unconsciously. So being able to work really hard and not seeing myself as a victim of anything

	<p>was crucial. As I said I've had fantastic opportunities, I married an enormously facilitative and wonderful and supportive husband and I've been blessed with two wonderful healthy children, you know if I'd had a disabled child for example, it would have created a completely different context for me and for my responsibilities towards that child, so it's been a great, great series of blessings and a lot of hard work.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Now many people are exposed to opportunities but I think the harder option is about determining when to recognise those opportunities and when to open the door, can you tell us a little bit about some of the examples that you've experienced?</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Well I've found in life that when you do every job properly your next opportunity opens, let me give you an example. I was a young journalist with many others. I used to cover courts because that was what you had to do in your first two years of being a young journalist, you had to cover the courts and there were many young journalists covering the courts because that's what we had to do and there was a lot of competition for the good stories so I would work extra hard, go earlier in the morning, go through the court rolls, find what I thought was the most promising stories and get really good ones, some of which lands on the front page which was a big achievement and then at night after work, because I was interested in politics, I used to go around with a political reporter to cover meetings and to learn how to report those meetings in politics and so eventually when opportunities came up I think my senior saw this is a person who is prepared to go the extra mile, this is a person who is prepared to really put a lot of effort into her work and so I'd get the next opportunity and when Allister Sparks had to send somebody on this pivotal story of exposing the lie around the Steve Biko alleged hunger strike, he picked me. Now it was an absolute tragedy for South Africa and a tragedy for the Biko family obviously, but when Allister Sparks picked me it was an opportunity to show what I was made of in the field of journalism and so people only picked you and only give you an opportunity because you've worked very hard at other times to show that you're worth being given an opportunity to and so all of these things add, so you can create your own opportunities by working hard on everything you do and seeing everything you do as an opportunity to move to the next level.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you for sharing that story and for sharing your two key areas of being exposed to opportunities, being able to recognise when a door opens and take the opportunity and applying hard work to fulfil it for more opportunities.</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Yes absolutely and you know I've seen....one of my most stunning experiences was when I went to a community, a very poor community where we'd just built a new library and we'd built the new library about three or four years ago and one young kid at the school did very, very well and got several distinctions and lived in a shack, so I said how did you do it and he said to me when the opportunity of a new library came I could sit in the library every afternoon and study and didn't have to go home to the one room where the TV was blaring and it was impossible for me to concentrate, so that young kid saw the library as a huge opportunity and not many others did and he then got a number of distinctions in matric and could fulfil his dreams.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Well that's fantastic and it shows that when you have those opportunities that success is there for the taking.</p>
HELEN ZILLE	<p>Yes absolutely.</p>

DR. MALKA	Now in closing the discussion today could you please share a few words of hope or a statement to pass on to women in Africa that are listening to this show?
HELEN ZILLE	We in Africa are living in a very exciting century. Africa has a large number of young people with huge potential, massive natural resources and the last good farming land available in the world. We have everything on our side, what we need to do is build excellent accountable government and strong institutions that prevent power abuse and that empower individuals and most especially the young women with an education, with a vision for the future of the lives, with the ability to make autonomous choices about with whom to partner and whether or when to have children so that they can shape their lives and live lives they value. If we get those things right, it really will be the African Century.
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much for that important message and for joining us on the show today.
HELEN ZILLE	It was a great pleasure Amaleya and thank you very much for having me.
	PROGRAMME END