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GUEST NAME: TENTH PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT ANNUAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE (MIDRAND JOHANNESBURG)

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	Today we're at the 10 th Pan African Parliament Annual Women's Conference which is celebrated in Midrand, Johannesburg, which is looking at the role of Parliamentarians in promoting international and regional human rights instruments, especially those related to women and youth, peace and security and female genital mutilation, in order to achieve the demographic dividend.
DR. MALAK	Joining us is Ms Baleka Mbete who is the speaker of the National Assembly in South Africa; she was also the Deputy President of the country from 2008 to 2009, she is the National Chairperson of the ANC and she has served as Secretary General of the ANC Women's League. Welcome to 'Womanity'.
MS MBETE	Thank you very much and I also welcome the opportunity to interact with the listeners.
DR. MALKA	You have been in the political space for many, many years; can you share with us some of your career milestones specifically in relation to women's development?
MS MBETE	Let me first of all just mention that as a girl, a young girl growing up in the fifties I had the fortune to be exposed to women's activities and campaigns of the time when there were leaders like Dorothy Nyembe and I remember that in a local area in Durban, where I was growing up as a child, I observed women's meetings and passions and I could tell that my own mother was playing a role there, she was taking notes, so I think some of those small unimportant images remain in one's mind. But later on, as a young woman I joined the ANC in my twenties and at that time I had left the country and so one of my first activities in the ANC was as the Secretary of the women's section that was operational at the time. In exile, as we called it, you know, when we were not operating from South Africa and I lived in Tanzania at that time and so even my own first lessons of leadership of activism were in relation to women, women's issues, the interests of the ANC in ensuring that some of us focused on issues that were of most importance to women. And so at the time there were many young ladies who had come out in the 1976 uprisings and therefore we as the leadership at the time of the women's section outside South Africa, had to look at issues relating to that part of the communities of the ANC and therefore give guidance to the ANC in relation to women and positions that we proposed the ANC had to take that were about women; in particular young women.
DR. MALKA	Earlier today in your opening address, you mentioned the inauguration of Ellen Sirleaf Johnson of Liberia; why is it that we don't have more women in positions of leadership? We've had Ellen Sirleaf Johnson from Liberia, we had Joyce Banda of Malawi, you yourself occupied the position of Deputy President; don't you think it's time that we see more women coming to the forefront and striving for political leadership and leading countries?

MS MBETE	<p>I definitely agree with you. I believe that women have been very modest to start with. We ourselves tend to come across as though we believe only men are meant to lead and that is not true. When I look at my own organisation; the African National Congress, 105 years ago when it was formed, there were such great women as Charlotte Maxeke whom when we read about her today, you really just say she should have been the president of the ANC; she could have been but realistically, culturally, in terms of the development of society at the time, people were not ready for that, had not thought about it, had not thought it is feasible but of course so many years after we have moved on and in fact there are many men who also encourage the development and the pushing of women into leadership positions. So I think things have changed, attitudes have changed; I think people are more ready, even men are saying so and therefore I think we are now at a point where even young ladies looking at an Ellen; having been in power in a country that had been ravaged by war, such as Liberia had been, those young ladies now have an example and hopefully many more of them will be ready to come forward and will feel confident in themselves that they can do it.</p>
DR.MALKA	<p>And although I highlighted Africa for a moment, I think that from our perspective in general, that within the political space we have achieved far more than some of our western counterparts, so if you look towards the USA etc., and one of the things that I read from the International Parliamentary Union in terms of women's representation, we have Rwanda leading the way with 64% representation in parliament; we're not too far behind from a South African perspective at 41%; I think we're round about ranked sort of 8th/9th, depending on the levels, but...</p>
	<p>...absolutely</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...but yet when you start to look to countries like the USA or the UK, the last time I looked the USA was ranked something like 80th; how is it that so-called first world countries are almost so far behind in comparison to developing countries in Africa?</p>
MS MBETE	<p>Maybe they should answer that question because indeed, I mean when a country is so-called developed you expect that one of the ways in which that development must be realised is by the level of the women in their society are able to actually occupy...of course Hilary was ready, I must say, and I mean to tell the truth what both Obama and Clinton, her husband, said about her, that nobody had been as ready as she had been because even they themselves, when they came into office had not been as exposed and as experienced in government, in international relations as she was and therefore the fact that of course in the world we live in, in reality, people will focus on what they believe are weaknesses and therefore Hilary unfortunately didn't come in. So I think that society must talk to itself; they must ask themselves what's wrong with them because really in as far as other areas in terms of the infrastructure in that place and therefore the freedom of women to be able to be involved in other areas of life than going to get water from the river and bringing water back and cooking and all of those things that women in our societies are still, the majority of women are still faced with, because in South Africa much as when you are in Johannesburg you can be fooled; women out in the rural areas are still faced with a lot of difficulties of the everyday management of their family lives.</p>

DR. MALKA	And when we think about it at least 50% from a South African point of view of women are based in rural communities. But moving a little ahead and I know that in this session it's all about looking at economic empowerment of women; I was saddened to see that only 44% of our working age population of South Africa are employed, but the piece that perturbed me the most was the fact that 80% of them are in low-skilled positions, which means they are more subject to poverty, earning a lower income and positioned lower down on the ranking in terms of opportunities for achievement; what role do you think education plays, both from a point of view of understanding the workplace but also developing intellect?
MS MBETE	I think you are spot on because the reality of the history of our society is an issue that we must take into account as we look into these issues. To start with, most of society that was never given opportunities were actually the female part of our society. Women were the ones in any family; if anyone is going to be prioritised to go to school, to go to train for involvement in various sectors in society or in the economy in general, those would be men, those would be the boys in the families: The girls would be oh this one is going to be married to somebody one day and therefore we as a family cannot afford to train her or to spend this money in sending her to school and therefore the boy would be prioritised because the majority of our families simply, really were always struggling to survive and therefore in that struggle for survival women were the least of the priorities of any family, especially predominantly in the black community. So that's the reality of the past we are coming from. In the past in South Africa, in fact in the black communities if you were lucky as a girl from a family that was able to send you to school, you would then have very few opportunities or opportunities. You were either able to become a teacher or become a nurse. Very few black communities were able to afford to send their girls to school and in particular to higher education, so that's the reality we are working with in terms of the society we are dealing with and from which we have to pull out and uplift and prepare future leaders to be involved in various parts of the economy, let alone in leadership broadly in the society. So that's going to be something we have to improve on for some time and hopefully in a couple of decades we will be able to have done with that.
DR. MALKA	It plays back to almost the very first point that you were talking about, that we've got to change socialisation; we've got to undo stereotypical views of what women are expected to do and what men are expected to do and in a way, male privilege. One of the things which again I think the ANC is a perfect example is quota systems, so in terms of having a straight down the middle 50/50; what's your view of quota systems in general, not necessarily within the political space, but also going into other sectors of society?
MS MBETE	I think you know sometimes we make believe we are able for things to be different and almost like saying your ideal is something you must start to practice, when in fact you have to do the best with what you have. So what I am saying is that for me it has been shown in practice that quota systems are a useful way of changing the situation and making the point to society that women are actually as able as males are, given a chance and therefore I commend quota systems because it also helps us to gauge the progress we have made or that we are making and so quota systems have been useful but you can't depend on quota systems forever. There must come a time when you have been able to prove the point and you have been able to bring up a lot of women so that in fact society can see that wow, women can be even better leaders or better activists, better practitioners of whatever area of life in which they have been given a chance to lead.

DR.MALKA	And lastly I know that you are busy and you are off for another appointment, if I can please ask you just to share a few words of inspiration to our young women growing up on the continent?
MS MBETE	I want to say to the young women growing up on the continent; the sky is the limit. Young women must go for it. Any and every gift that the creator has given you; utilise it. We have fought the fight, we have fought the struggle; women like Ellen Johnson Sirleaf have shown that it is possible, so young women of Africa go for it.
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much.
DR. MALKA	That was Beleka Mbetse who is the Speaker of the National Assembly in South Africa.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	Today we're recording from the Tenth Pan African Parliament Annual Women's Conference which looks at the role of parliamentarians in promoting international and regional human rights instruments, especially those relating to women and youth, peace and security and female genital mutilation in order to achieve the demographic dividend and joining us in this segment is Babirye Veronica Kadogo who is an MP from Uganda and also a member of parliament for the Pan African Parliament. Welcome to the show!
MS KADOGO	Thank you. I am VeronicaPan African Parliament from Uganda but in Uganda I'm on affirmative action, I represent the women and I am so privileged to represent the least and the unprivileged group. My government has made sure that the women have a big percentage in parliament, which is really a very big achievement because we have issues which we have to push for the women and we also have to push for the inequality, the injustices and also to fight for the young generation as women.
DR. MALKA	And you're right, we have got such a young population in the continent, we've got a good proportion, I think well over 60% are youth and of that at least 50% of them are women so they're definitely a vulnerable group and a group which we need to promote and take care of. Can you tell us more about some of the initiatives that are underway in Uganda regarding women?
MS KADOGO	The biggest initiative which are underway is educating all the women because before that the women were not privileged to go to school because of the poverty so the parents were preferring to take only the boys, not the girls, but government came up with a programme of educating and free education to all children, so this one.....but both the boys and the girls to attend school. But as a woman we should keep advocating for this free education because when the education is not free to all children the parents they decide only to educate the boys and they leave out the girls, so governments need to give out free education to all children otherwise if they don't do that the parents will still discriminate of the children.
DR. MALKA	You're totally right and I recall reading a UNESCO report where they estimated that for every additional year of schooling that a girl undergoes she has an opportunity of an increase of 10% on her income and the other components in that on educating women, it's obviously it's not only about educating herself, but it's about creating all of these benefits for her family, giving back to her children; what are your views?
MS KADAGO	In fact the Ugandan's or the Africans have realised that when you educate a girl you have educated the whole village or you have educated the whole nation so they are finding it very interesting in educating the girl, but the problem was being resources, so the resources the parents have been preferring only to educate the boys but with the initiative of the government with free education, now all children are having privileges and

	<p>when it comes to human rights, the parents have been preferring the children to do the domestic work and even also to carry on other commercial work like farming and...so that the girl child should remain at home to go to be.....labour and leave the boy to go and further his education, but at least with advocacy of the children and also with the law, we have the law which protects children, the law.....then we have the law of saying that all children should stay in school because there is free education, there is no reason why a childstays at home so we try to legislate on it.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So moving forwards now from the education aspect, one of the things which the conference has highlighted is about legislation and I was quite keen to hear about the dividend demographic, almost as this divide that is happening where if we continue to have prejudices against women they get further behind in pay, they get further behind in promotions of opportunities; could you share some of your views on that?</p>
MS KADAGO	<p>There are certain professionals which have been having bias towards the women especially the engineering profession and also the ICT profession, they have been preferring to employ the men compared to the women and this is really endangered the women professionalism because they feel that women can't do better in engineering; they feel that the women don't have enough time to concentrate on ICT which is really wrong and it is really disadvantages our people but time has shown that again women are good performers once given those opportunities.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So we need to get women in place, having that exposure and creating in effect a role modelling view and also demonstrating, I guess, to our men folk that women can achieve too. On that point of role modelling, you're a member of parliament not just within the Uganda space but also elected within the Pan African Parliament, and as such, you're a role model to many women, so can you share with us a little bit more about those responsibilities?</p>
MS KADAGO	<p>With Uganda we have a law to do with gender.....that whatever we do the gender issues must be there, even in regard to employment; if they are employing like five people the gender factor must appear there, that's why you see like us, the representative from Uganda Pan Africa requires five people from each country but at least here we are five women and there are two boys making sure that the gender issue is fair. So I would also appeal to other nations to copy a leaf from Uganda because the women, we must continuously to fight for them because they have come a long way and they have not reached where they are going.</p>
DR.MALKA	<p>And talking about the long journey, I know that women have made tremendous achievements if we cast our mind back historically; can you share with us some of the gender challenges that you encountered and how you overcame them, more from a point of view of giving people who are listening to us, that mindset and opportunity of how to overcome challenges?</p>
MS KADAGO	<p>I've really come a long way because first of all I'm a politician, a politician who is educated at the level of Masters and from the highest university in the country called Makerere University. In Uganda when to reach a university, especially when you're a girl, it means that you have sacrificed so, so many things and you have gone through a lot and it means that you must have gone through good schools, which good schools you are in boarding but are being in this school, commuting long journeys, most girls drop out because you can't walk long distances and in walking long distances you have challenges; you have men, you have so many tormentors along your way so you can only reach far when your parents can afford to pay for you school fees in the boarding. For me I went through boarding</p>

	<p>schools and at the university level of course the girls were few compared to the boys because of the dangers that the girls go through and then after finishing university I was retained by Makerere University and I worked there for five years before joining politics, but as a woman I realised two things; the woman when you are very successful, again you have challenges, you have to do everything in a rush; you have to get married in time but a man can get...can take his time, you have to get married in time. Again you have to look after the family as well you are looking after your job so the responsibilities you know can affect your job if you are not very serious or your job can affect your family if you are not balancing the two issues. So my success is about balancing; balancing work and balancing family life but it's really hard to do two things at the same time wanting to please both sides.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Yes achieving balance is a real challenge; no doubt. And lastly if I can ask you to please share a few words of inspiration which you'd like to pass onto young women and girls who are listening to us today?</p>
MS KADAGO	<p>The young girls you should always stand high and you should always be confident of yourself because once you are confident about yourself you will go further and no-one will stop you and nothing will stand in your way.</p>
DR.MALKA	<p>Thank you so much for joining us today and we wish you all the very best when you return back to Uganda in terms of implementing all of those gender based activities and legislative components.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You have been listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' and we have been talking to Babiye Veronica Kadago who is a member of parliament in Uganda.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">AD BREAK</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Joining us next is Haidara Aichata Cisse who is the Chairperson of the Pan African Parliament Women's Caucus; she is originally from Mali and ran in the country's presidential nominations in 2013. Welcome to the show!</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>One of the questions that I'd like to ask you concerns the fact that tradition is not static because culture has been something that is highlighted where we are going through changes; instead of people using culture as an excuse or religion as an excuse to perpetuate almost the subordination of women, what are your views about culture and its changing?</p>
MS CISSE	<p>Thank you very much, I think that one of the biggest problems we have today is the problem of culture. People confuse female genital mutilation (FGM) with culture and religion and so as a parliamentarian my opinion is if we as parliamentarians with the assistance of civil society can raise a positive awareness, we can reach our objectives against FGM. Nowadays, those from a cultural background who mutilate young women and little girls are now aware of the consequences of FGM because later on there are women who are pissing on the floor (women suffering from urinary incontinence), there are women who are unable to get married, there are women who can't have children, so we can explain it in an awareness that these are the consequences of FGM and some women also lose their husbands, only because their husbands realise that they were mutilated and no longer want them. So it is a serious problem; the problem of culture is serious but at the same time it is a problem that can be solved. Why do I say that? In Mali 10 years ago, you couldn't speak about FGM, but today we are talking about it freely in the media; we talk about it in the National Assembly. There is already a project of protection with the Committee of the National Assembly for Little Girls Against FGM. I think the problem lies more on awareness. There is a problem with projecting the laws, suggesting the laws and voting laws, but implementation of the law is more complicated; the law is difficult to monitor. It is easier to monitor what</p>

	<p>people are doing in the field if we go there; discuss with people and show them the consequences; I think that is more important; not more important than the law, the law must be there but laws must be accompanied by raising awareness because what we can have with awareness, we don't necessarily have with the law. For some people as soon as we talk about laws they are ready to respect them because they should not follow the laws, it is like you are taking a stick to beat them.</p>
	<p>There is an important phenomenon we address today. One of the ladies spoke about it in her module; she spoke about the behaviour of parents, midwives and nurses during birth and birth registration. They know now that today there is an awareness campaign and mobilisation of the world to stop this practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). They no longer accept to leave their girls to reach the age of five, six or seven years old because these girls can talk and report. The girls are gathered for mutilation, it is only behind closed doors when they hear that they will be mutilated. Generally, in some villages and in some circles, they prepare girls in groups to avoid being reported. They mutilate them at birth when the child is still in maternity ward, therefore it is a necessity to have complicity with midwives, nurses from hospitals up to the house. This is work, a big job to do. I think that today there is a small improvement concerning this cultural perception.</p>
DR MALKA	<p>And my last question is; you are very, very passionate about what you do, about making a difference and about ensuring that there's implementation. We heard earlier today that there is rolled by the state in terms of looking at respect, protection and implementation to effectively inculcate women's rights. The message that we had is that parliament must step up in their various countries to bring this change about; what would be one point or two points to drive implementation that you recommend?</p>
MS CISSE	<p>Yes, we talked about justice; we talked about respect and implementation, for me I think it is three movements together. Respect is respect of commitment when we take commitment we have to respect them. What have we noticed? It is for example in the Maputo protocol, the majority of the countries ratified it, therefore it is an application but to apply it there are some countries who always find excuses of a way to say "oh no, not me, not my constitution". So we must first respect this commitment and once we respect it then we will be able to do what we have to do, But also, if we don't do it, as a female parliamentarian, as a Pan African Parliamentarian, as a president of parliamentarian women and at the same time president of parliamentarian women of G5 Sahel, I think we have a role to play to call upon our governments with courage. I think that if we are not courageous we cannot do anything. We must have political courage to work because when we discuss the future of African people, when we discuss the future of little girls who have just been born, I think we shouldn't look back about what people might think or whether I will get imprisoned or if I will lose my position; that is the rule of the game.</p>
	<p>I think that if we are not courageous, we cannot do anything. We must have political courage to work, because when we discuss the future of African people, when we discuss the future of little girls who have just been born, I think we shouldn't look back... about what people might think, or whether I will get imprisoned, or if I will lose my position ... that is the rule of the game.</p>
	<p>Once you have decided to defend a cause, you do it without looking back, whatever happens will happen and when you do it with passion, and you</p>

	have the support of passionate people, you can only succeed because they can't imprison everybody, they can't ban everybody. It is the rule of the game, this is not an easy action but it is the way it is.
	It is not easy, it is not pleasant but if we fight...let me give you an example out of this subject: We were in Belgium previously, I proposed a problem to the Europeans that we didn't understand why they made a report on Kenya and now the Kenyan Electoral Commission says it isn't good, and the constitutional court says it is not good, that means they made a mistake (gave incorrect information). So why are you always coming to our countries to make observations and why Africans can't for instance go to Germany to make observations?
	They answered: it is not us, it is our Head of States who have asked us. I said it is a mere excuse. "We are for our people, not for our countries so from the moment where you can come to us and we can't come to you? We will also do a resolution so that you no longer come to our countries". But the following day when we came back with a decision, stating that from now on when there are elections in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, that the European commission should not observe, they immediately said that, "African countries will also be able to go and observe elections in Europe". That is to say that we must just have the courage.
	There is a delegate whom I addressed this issue with before coming to the chamber and he said to me that I talk about the things that make people furious, those things won't go anywhere, we have to have results.
	So I am determined and I want determined people behind me to encourage me, I don't need to be pushed because I am already forward but who will follow me? I think if we do things with courage and determination, with this issue of Female Genital Mutilation, if we say to ourselves even though we belong to a different culture, a culture that is involved in mutilation, a culture that will never agree that we talk about FGM or stop it, that I also can't talk about it because If I talk about it they won't vote for me next time, then we won't reach our goal.
	We must deal with the consequences and be aware of the consequences, because sometimes there are things we are scared of, but when you dare to push further, you have good results in the end. It is the same thing with the intrusion of so called super powers with our personal issues. As long as we shift blame and say it is the grandfather, it is the elder brother, the father, nothing will move, even your child if you continue beating him up every day one day, they will rebel.
	So we must have political courage, everything I've mentioned summarises to having political courage. When we have that, it will open all doors.
DR. MALKA	Thank you. That was Haidara Aichata Cisse who is the Chairperson of the Pan African Parliaments Women's Caucus.