

**PROGRAM DATE: 2018-03-08**

**PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY**

**GUEST NAME: MS LILLIAN PLOUMEN- DUTCH POLITICIAN WITH THE LABOUR PARTY & MS MARISSA GERARDS – AMBASSADOR OF THE NETHERLANDS TO SOUTH AFRICA**

<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>TRANSCRIPTION</b>
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 is Ms Lillian Ploumen who is a Dutch Politician with the Labour Party, currently serving as a member of parliament in the Netherlands; she was the former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Co-Operation of the Netherlands; prior to this she was Chairwoman of the Labour Party and in terms of recent recognition she was made a Dame in the pontifical order of Saint Gregory the Great; she was also awarded the AlettaJacobs Prize for her commitment to and successful endeavours for the rights of women and girls all over the world. Additionally she won the Macchiavelli Prize for creating She Decides; a global movement for women and girls to safely exercise their rights to decide what they do with their bodies. Also joining us is the Ambassador of the Netherlands to South Africa, Ms Marissa Gerards. Welcome to the show!
DR. MALKA	In this panel discussion we'll talk about some of the catalysts that have been driving women's rights. A month ago, in February, it marked the Centenary Anniversary of the Suffragettes with women's right to vote in Britain and on the 8 <sup>th</sup> March, which we celebrate today, it's International Women's Day. South Africa has their own independent women's day on 9 <sup>th</sup> August, but the theme for International Women's Day this year is Press For Progress which seems to be a motivation of calling for unity and colleagues in communities to think and act about what they can do for gender inclusivity. Last year's theme was Women and The Changing World of Work plan at 50/50 by 2030. From your perspective what does International Women's Day mean to you?
MP PLOUMEN	<b>Well it's a day of celebrations but it's also a day to remind ourselves that the struggle is not over, the struggle for women's rights, and so it's both I think...we all need to have a party, I think women should celebrate the success a bit more than we're doing and on the other hand it's also a day that we can come together and strategise and think about what needs to be done. In the Netherlands we celebrated, you know, throughout all of the country and the good thing is it's not only about women; men and boys are also more and more included, which I think is very good, so I always look forward to it.</b>
DR. MALKA	And from your perspective Ambassador Gerards?
AMBASSADOR GERARDS	<b>Yes I think it's also a very important day and it's an international day so it's also about international solidarity, you can compare notes, you can help each other, but I'm also really inspired by your August month and your own women's day that you have here in South Africa, where you commemorate the Women's March to the Union Building so long ago already. You have a whole month of celebrations but also of discussions and you really put things on the agenda, so I think we still need it.</b>
DR. MALKA	So we still need a women's day because we still haven't addressed the inequalities in effect.

MP PLOUMEN	<p>There you go, I mean there's a gender pay gap in many countries of the world; women's potential is under-used, which is not good for women, but it's also not good for societies or for the global economy and there's still violence against women; sexual violence against women is still rampant in many, many countries and so this last issue is one that has been more on the table in the past month because of, for example, the Me Too Movement and I think it's really important that we continue to talk about that, how difficult that conversation might be.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And there's numerous reports which look at various gaps from a gender perspective; the latest World Economic Forum on the Global Gender Gap Report for 2017 monitors it across four dimensions; economic participation opportunity, education attainment, health and survival and the fourth one is political empowerment and when I looked at the data, the education gap seems to be moving well, expected to reach parity in thirteen years since the 2016 study, but the main areas of weakness seem to be in the economic sector and political sector which at this rate are expected to close at 217 years and 99 years respectively. Now I think legislation and quotas are a couple of interventions that can accelerate progress but what are your views on how we can close these gaps because we won't be alive by the time they are supposed to be closed?</p>
MP PLOUMEN	<p>The gaps are quite depressing actually and I mean even my daughter is not around in 200 years time so we really need something to speed it up, so to say, and my country is really not doing well on that index. There's African countries like Rwanda who are doing quite good and we're lagging behind and that is caused by I think 1/3 of our parliamentarians are women, so that's not good. My party, the Labour Party, we have a policy that we want to have as much men and women on the list so we have equal representation and I always jokingly said you know we're doing this for the men actually so that still have you know some opportunities, but...and some other parties are doing that but all-in-all there's not enough women but the thing is you see that replicated at the level of the local councils and those are...those are ways for people to make career in politics. You start locally and then you, know, you consider...you can do the right things and you might want to be elected on a national level, but if women do not start at that local level then it will be much more difficult you know to also be active on a national level, so I really promote this policy of equal representation on lists of political parties. I was never in favour of quotas in the business sector and I have to say that, you know, I changed my mind because it's going too slow, we tried every strategy that you can think of and we still have this gap that's too big, so I really changed my mind and said, you know, let's do quotas and we've seen it in a few Nordic countries where it's working out very well and the argument that, you know, women are not good enough or are not trained enough; that's just not true. We have a database of hundreds of women in the Netherlands created to show that there's a lot of talent out there.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>The challenge is that when people are in their environments they tend to hire people that look like them, that sound like them, that have the same experiences and it creates all of these biases, but I fully support legislative components and also quotas 'cause I believe that when you get to that point of parity, then the quotas can fall away, but until we get there women need a ticket to the game.</p>
MP PLOUMEN	<p>And again I mean if you look at research that has been done, the evidence says that the more diverse your teams are, the better they perform and so even if you...if you don't think that, you know, women's rights are something that you would support, okay, then you know do the rational thing and make sure that you have a diverse team.</p>

DR. MALKA	And say it fulfils the bottom line because there are financial benefits.
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>That's it.</b>
DR.MALKA	We've got a lot of issues that still need to be addressed as you've raised; in your opinion what areas do you think that we need to do to build on the most to help benefit women in the future? Because these aren't new issues, they're old issues that we're grappling with but clearly what we've been doing either hasn't been enough or we've been using the wrong strategies.
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>What's most important? Well two things come to my mind; first of all I think really equality; make sure that women go to school, go to university and that we really run this planet together, I mean we live on it together let's run it together as well to make sure that you have women in government, in parliament, in the boardrooms; I think that's very, very, very important and the other thing that comes to mind is gender based violence which is something which is so appalling, the domestic violence, we really have to do something about that and also living in your country here in South Africa, I'm even more confronted with this huge problem.</b>
DR. MALKA	It is a massive problem, we heard some of the narratives yesterday at the closure of the She Decides Campaign, which were quite frankly shocking and for me not only about the experiences that a person has to go through when they are attacked, but also what really hit home for me was what they have to confront when they're trying to lay a charge; how they have to deal with hospitals, the first...almost the first line of defence seemed to be so wrong and just not welcoming and almost making you not want to report an incident.
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>Well this has been, I think, a key problem for many, many years and in the Netherlands we have been working on this issue for a long time, training police for example, helping policemen to understand you know what it...how difficult it is for women to come and report that they've been raped or violated and we try to make the judicial system responsive to also to these forms of violence and what many people do not fully grasp I think is that women who have been violated and who had to go through violence, they themselves feel ashamed, there's no reason for them to be ashamed, but that's something that you know society kind of, you know, puts them through and so if people are not able to talk about this; have an honest and frank conversation about it, it will not go away and so the responsibility that police officers and doctors and hospitals carry is huge because they are often the first person that a woman talks to and if they respond in a good way, that is very helpful, but if they don't it makes it even more difficult for a woman that had to go through horrendous events already, so ja, it really needs a lot of work and a lot of talking.</b>
DR. MALKA	And it almost seemed that you have to end up reliving that experience again, first when you're going into the hospital, then when you're presenting to the police, then when you're going court....very, very traumatic. MP Ploumen, in 2017 you conceptualised She Decides in response to the reintroduction to the Mexico City Policy, also known as The Global Gag Rule, by the new American Government; a measure that forbids American Government Funds to be used by organisations making safe abortions available or open to discussion. She Decides has just celebrated its one year anniversary with the ministerial champions gathering in South Africa and numerous events were held around the world; please tell us more, share the She Decides story....
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>..yeah...</b>
DR. MALKA	...how did it begin?
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>Well real change begins with someone thinking, you know, this needs to be different or we will not accept this and this also is how She Decides started.</b>

	<p>When President Trump signed that policy I knew that it would have enormous negative impact on many, many women and girls all around the world because programmes and organisations that provide information about safe abortion also provide in sex education, provide maternal services and all those services will also be cut off and so we know that because of this policy you don't get less abortions, you get more abortions and you get more unsafe abortions with all negative consequences for women who need to undergo that and so I thought we cannot let that happen and when I went to the.....I was a minister at that time and so when I went to the office on Monday morning and sat with my staff I said you know we have to do something, we should try and create a fund to get the money that is lost by the decision of President Trump...</p>
DR. MALKA	...and when we're talking about the money that's lost...
MP PLOUMEN	...yeah...
DR. MALKA	...how much...
MP PLOUMEN	...oh yeah...
DR. MALKA	...are we looking at here?
MP PLOUMEN	...there's different estimates but let me say it's at least six hundred million dollars a year, which is....
DR. MALKA	...six hundred million a year....?
MP PLOUMEN	<p>...a huge amount of money, so I said you know, it's a huge amount of money I don't know if we will get there but let's see, you know, let's just start and so my staff said you know maybe you should consult first with other ministers and maybe you should consult, you know, with your prime minister and I said no we're not going to consult with anyone, we're just going to do it, because if you start talking...some initiatives get better but I just knew that this one would take forever to be created and we needed a movement now because it was very urgent. And so that's what we did, so that was Monday morning, on Tuesday we released the press statement and so I gave this small interview near my home because there was no other time slot available, in the freezing cold in January, in Amsterdam it's very cold at that time and so...and then it took off by itself and there was a lot of interest from international media, from the Aljazeera to the BBC and many, many people started calling, emailing and colleague ministers were also calling me and saying, you know, we want to be part of this and so the first ones were the Belgians and the Luxemburg's, of course our neighbours. The first African country to join very, very soon was Cape Verde and well we end up now with more than sixty countries being part of the initiative ranging from of course South Africa to Mongolia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Canada...well you name it, everyone is a part of it and so we raised over four hundred million Euros, so four hundred and fifty million dollars already and that's quite amazing and it's of course about the funds that was..that we needed but it's also about amplifying the voices of women on this issue, you know, you are the only one who gets to decide if you have sex, with whom you have sex, if you have children, how many, and you're the one that needs to be able to decide and that's what this is all about and it's...it's amazing to see how much support it got, ja.</p>
DR. MALKA	Well first I...congratulations, I think...
MP PLOUMEN	...thanks...
DR. MALKA	...it is absolutely fantastic and in terms of target you're almost...well you're over two thirds...
MP PLOUMEN	...yeah...
DR. MALKA	...you're pushing through to nearly 70% of target; do you think that having this campaign running, having funding sourced from different environments where

	people are really involved in it is going to be sustainable and almost say okay we don't need your money US?
MP PLOUMEN	<b>Ja there is....there's a few ways in which to get funding for these issues. One is we get some money from Gates, there's an anonymous donor who gave fifty million dollars, there's governments, there's people like you and me donating whatever we can miss and then there is the opportunity to work with governments as activists and ask your own government to free up more money for these services within their national health budgets.</b>
DR. MALKA	So it becomes local, it becomes national.
MP PLOUMEN	<b>Ja and then it's of course sustainable and this is also one of the reasons why I really wanted it to be a global movement because I mean here in South Africa it's South African women and men who can hold their own government accountable, that's not up for me, and so if everyone can do that in their own...in their own local or national context that will in the end be super sustainable. We're not there yet and that's okay...</b>
DR. MALKA	Well it's a young movement...
MP PLOUMEN	<b>...it's...yeah it's a very young movement yeah but you know I'm very ambitious but I mean to be frank with you if...if you had said to me one year ago that I would now be in South Africa, that South Africa would host the second She Decides Conference, that we would have this massive support all around the world, I would say you know well thank you ja I hope it will be like that but I don't think so, but here it is and so for an initiative to take off by itself, it's very rewarding. People call me the mother of She Decides which I think is a very...very nice title and so I'm also happy, like you know mothers do, to watch out but also to let go and have it's...make sure that it gets its own life and where other people also can play an important role.</b>
DR. MALKA	Movements are important but keeping the momentum to sustain them I think is almost more important than starting it...
MP PLOUMEN	<b>...I would agree yeah.</b>
DR. MALKA	What do you think needs to happen to keep the energy?
MP PLOUMEN	<b>Well the thing is this question of course was one that I also asked myself last year; how can we keep the momentum and in a way it's women all around the world who have made sure that there is this momentum, so there's young activists from the Philippines who speak out during radio shows like this one, who speak out in youth clubs, there's the Belgium Deputy Prime Minister who takes every opportunity to talk about She Decides, so it's really I would say responsibility of everyone who feels part of the movement to keep it going. We also....someone, a civil servant in the Netherlands came up with this great idea to have a She Decides day, so March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the She Decides day and on that day there were events all around the world, as you already mentioned, from Mumbai to Amsterdam, from Johannesburg to Dakar and I think if a movement is strong then it keeps the momentum that it really needs and it's us that keep it going, yup, but I agree, if it's only a one-time-shot it still can be relevant but for women to be able to decide for themselves is something that, you know, it's a human right, but we're not there yet so it needs to be continued.</b>
DR. MALKA	Ambassador Gerards you raised a point when we were talking about what could benefit women most in the future and you spoke about equality but you also spoke about education and I'm a great believer that academic education is a key element for progress and development amongst women around the world; what's your opinion on this and also do you think that education helps trigger women to take a more active role in society as they become aware of the injustices around them because previously and they've just accepted things as

	being the norm because they didn't know any better, but by now having learnt and understood or being exposed to different experiences....?
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>Yes no absolutely. I think that's key, I think if women if they study, if they have good education there's also good professional careers and I think if there are more women in boardrooms, if there are more women in parliament and government it's good to have them in the networks because I think if you don't have them in the networks it's also more difficult for women to enter. So I very much believe in that and also I think because we are educators of our own children so if you are educated it is the other thing that you pass onto your children I think and you also broaden their view on the world, so I think it's absolutely key. Make sure that kids and boys and girls that they do get the right education, absolutely.</b>
DR. MALKA	And that aspect of education is not just about the material you learn in books, it's also about the behavioural components on how you can ensure that your children are going to behave appropriately so men are going to have respect for women in their future lives as opposed to being in a cycle of violence and not behaving accordingly.
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>No absolutely. No I think our parents, I mean I just listened to your story, how your parents were so important for you. I think my mom was also very...my dad as well, but my mom especially I think because she was a social worker and when she got married she was working for the Social Service of Amsterdam in the city of Amsterdam and when she got married she got fired because in those days, in the 50's, as a woman working for government as soon as you got married you got fired because you were stealing the job of a man in the reasoning at that time....</b>
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>...yeah who had to provide for his family...</b>
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>...who had to provide for his family...</b>
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>...we're sorry....</b>
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>...yeah, I'm sorry to shock you, yes and so was my mom, so she did find another career somehow but that kind of anger that she felt, you know, I think she really encouraged me to make sure get your education you know, love men please do, but don't be dependent on them, make sure that you are independent and that you find your own way. So I think for me my mom has been very important and I could...and listen to you there's also your parents...</b>
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>...they were, ja...</b>
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>...ja so in that sense I think you know if...the girls of today are the mom's of tomorrow and the same...</b>
DR. MALKA	...exactly...
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>...with the boys with the dads, so education is key.</b>
DR. MALKA	Ja, couldn't...couldn't agree with you more.
DR. MALKA	Today we're talking to Ms Lillian Ploumen, a Dutch Politician with the Labour Party, currently serving as a member of parliament in the Netherlands; she was the former minister of Foreign Trade and Development Co-Operation of the Netherlands and is founder of She Decides. We're also talking to the Ambassador of Netherlands to South Africa, Ms Marissa Gerards.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
DR. MALKA	You are listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the African Perspective. Today we're talking to Ms Lillian Ploumen, a Dutch politician with the Labour Party, currently serving as a member of parliament in the Netherlands; she was the former minister of Foreign Trade and Development Co-Operation of the Netherlands and is founder of She Decides.

	We're also talking to the Ambassador of Netherlands to South Africa, Ms Merissa Gerards. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter:@WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	There's been lots of movements that have happened in recent years, we've spoken about She Decides; one of the others is HeForShe...so established by the UN which invites people around the world to stand together to create bold and visible change for gender equality and what I liked about it was that it's actively approaching men to stand up and I think part of the challenge is that the struggle for women's rights has always been around a struggle for women by women and it hasn't been inclusive enough; how do you think we can create mass influence around men in the world to bring about more change?
MP PLOUMEN	<b>The movement has to be more inclusive in the future. Of course if you struggle you first have to struggle with the people that you feel safe with, that you feel are your friends and your allies, but we're ready of course, to engage men and so there's the HeForShe Campaign inviting also global leaders to speak out; male leaders to speak out for women's equality and then you see more and more programmes in the social domain in many countries that are targeting women and men and so for example also the She Decides Campaign that stands for the rights of women to decide for themselves, there's a lot of men who are involved, sometimes because they're doctors or nurses but sometimes because they are activists and they do understand that if women and men are equal the world will be a better place and so it's true the movement has to be inviting, on the other hand, I would encourage everyone of goodwill to say hey, I want to join and I want to do my part.</b>
AMBASSADOR GERARDS	<b>What I really thought was impressive here in South Africa, in your own country is Not In My Name, where the men went to the streets and said listen some of the things that are happening here it's not in my name that men are doing this, so I thought it was also something very powerful.</b>
DR. MALKA	It is very powerful because I think that...and you're so right that we end up stereotyping and blanketing blame across everyone but there are a lot of good, honest men who love their daughters, love their wives, love their families and want them to excel and be the best and protect them.
AMBASSADOR GERARDS	<b>Absolutely.</b>
DR. MALKA	There's also been the Me Too Movement which MP Ploumen mentioned earlier. Time's Up, which is publicising sexual harassment and many, many actresses have confessed to being victims of harassment; what do you think about these campaigns in terms of being harmful or helpful to advancing women's progress?
MP PLOUMEN	<b>I think the campaigns are very, helpful...</b>
DR. MALKA	...helpful...
MP PLOUMEN	<b>...ja because they take away the shame and...from the women and put it...put the blame on men. I was quite shocked that in the media industry there are men who really misuse their power over young actresses or performers to sexually harass and intimidate and sometimes even rape them and so for women to have to be so silent about this for many years, I mean these are world famous actresses who did not dare to speak up and I do think it's helpful. It's helpful because it helps women who had to go through such an experience. It's empowering because the message of the Me Too Movement is you know I'm not going to go through this again and you my sister, you also do not have to go through this again and it helps others to be more alert on what they see or what they think they see and what they maybe should report or just, you know, reflect on, so in a sense I</b>

	<b>think for everyone, including me, I mean of course I try to be as alert as possible but I might have missed something and so the Me Too Movement really encourages us to look into how the difference in...how the difference in power and how the wrong power balance, what that creates, and so if we have more powerful women we will have less need for a Too Movement but as it is now we do need it, ja.</b>
DR. MALKA	One of the things that struck me is that how quickly it happened, how quickly it gained momentum; what do you think was the reason for igniting it so rapidly?
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>I think because it happens so much. I think so many women recognises this, you know, and it goes from jokes that are not funny up until you know really raping women and it's in the workplace I mean that's what we're talking about and it's about power and we were just talking about the fact that it's so unequal you know in the workplace because top positions are mainly filled by men, so I think it went so rapidly because so many women recognise it and so many men got maybe also a little uncomfortable on ummmm. I think it was very good, I think it is very good, also to make sure that we all know what is acceptable and what is not, let's discuss it...let's discuss it you know maybe men and women look upon it very differently and I think that discussion is very, very helpful.</b>
DR.MALKA	But it seemed to have opened the door and as you said this has been happening for many, many, many years in an industry and I don't think that the media industry is unique.
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>No absolutely.</b>
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>Probably not, no, I think it's in every workplace and everywhere where the difference in power is too big or too....things happen it seems, I mean I cannot imagine why you would do something like that but there are men out there who are ready to misuse their influence and their power and so the conversation like the Ambassador said is as important as the call so to say, because some men would say you know are we not even allowed to you know flirt or.... yeah of course, I mean I love flirting myself, but that is really a different thing from you know moving into my private space and touching me in a way that is really not appropriate and I think if you do something like that, if you touch another person, a woman in a way that is inappropriate you just know that you're doing it, I mean you just know it and so that's why I think men should also really look at their own behaviour and women hopefully are empowered now to say you know please do not do that, I don't like it, so I do hope that that will be the longer term impact of the Me Too Movement.</b>
DR. MALKA	Good. Well I think that anything that is moving progress forwards and helping advance women's story is good. Ambassador Gerards I've known you since you arrived in South Africa and you've connected women from all sectors of society and just last night you hosted some of what I call South Africa's living legends, so from Sophia De Bruyn to Gertrude Shope to Brigitte Mabandla, Lindiwe Mabuza, etc., they are ultimately South African female stalwarts and importantly from the Malibongwe Conference which happened 28 years ago. Also you'd managed to gather ministers from Denmark, from Norway, from Finland, to name a few, and everybody has bought into campaigns like the She Decides Campaign at this level and supports them; how do you think we can really and truly direct that energy and the change and drive it into grassroots movement so that we see a difference and an impact on ordinary women?
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>Make sure I think also that these women meet each other and you also need a little time to do that I think and so I think it was a good start yesterday. It was good to have people from different parts of society because what we</b>

	<p>tried to do yesterday was both to connect the north and the south but also the grassroots and the women in power, the ministers, the vice ministers, the MP's as well but also young and the elderly, you know, the wisdom but also the energy and the creativity and I think it was one meeting of two hours is not enough to really do something about that so I think we will need a follow-up meeting and get the young female leaders as well because I saw some very impressive female leaders in Student Movement for example. But also in civil society, also in the townships you see very strong young women and we're going to find them and we'll make sure that they talk to one another because I thought also...I don't know I think it was Hlengiwe Mkhize said it, she said that in the struggle and in exile there was so much international contact between the women of South Africa and the women in other parts of the world but also the men, you know, the men and the women and she said sometimes I'm so sorry for the younger generation because they don't have that opportunity as we did, so that was also something that made me think on how can we as embassies also make sure as also the younger women get in touch with other ideas and with international movements and so I think it was the first of a few more to follow.</p>
DR. MALKA	I think that maybe there's an opportunity for other talk programmes and....
	...yes...
DR. MALKA	...dialogues of bringing those generations together and looking at the multiplicity of
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	...let's see you have six microphones here, shall we make a deal? We get...
DR. MALKA	...and we have call-in lines too....
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	...oh so let's have a few of the legendary women here and a few of the young student leaders and I would love to be maybe the fly on the wall when you have your programme. But let's bring them together.
DR. MALKA	Well you are certainly the connector. We are unfortunately running out of time today, I would have loved to have had more opportunities to engage further, but if I can ask you as we close out if you can give us a few words or your message for women's day, so firstly to you MP Ploumen.
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>Celebrate. Celebrate what we have achieved over the past decades and celebrate the right that we have to speak out and take the opportunity to speak out on the causes that you want to fight for. It's an international women's day, it's an international movement and so I will be in the Netherlands but also thinking about, you know, all the women around the world who are in solidarity, so it will be a great day.</b>
DR. MALKA	And from you Ambassador Gerards.
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	<b>I'm going to quote now, my role model, my former minister, MP member of parliament and my friend Lillian Ploumen, stand up, speak out and reach out and also reach out to men I think, to men and women.</b>
DR. MALKA	Stand up, speak out and reach out. Fantastic. Thank you both for joining us today and sharing your perspectives on International Women's Day.
<b>AMBASSADOR GERARDS</b>	Thank you.
<b>MP PLOUMEN</b>	<b>Thanks.</b>
DR. MALKA	I would like to wish everyone a happy women's day and to use the words of a legend who we celebrate his 100 <sup>th</sup> birthday during 2018, Nelson Mandela, who was also a great feminist and to borrow from one of his women's day speeches back from 1996, he said <i>"as long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaningful contribution to society progress will be slow. As long as a nation refuses to acknowledge the equal role of more than</i>

	<p><i>half of itself, it is doomed to failure.</i>” With those words I hope that we can all Press for Progress as indicated by International Women’s Day 2018 theme; motivate, unite with friends, colleagues and communities to think, act and be gender inclusive. Happy Women’s Day!</p>
	<p><b>PROGRAMME END</b></p>