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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

**GUEST NAME: MS NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH – DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
NAMIBIA**

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 today in Sandton, South Africa is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Co-Operation of Namibia and also the Vice President of Namibia's ruling party SWAPO; Ms Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah. Welcome to the show!
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	Thank you for hosting me.
DR. MALKA	It's always a privilege to host a leader like you who's lit the torch that lights the path for so many women, particularly in Africa, to make their respective journeys possible. I'd like to start by talking about your political career which started in 1966 when you joined SWAPO; you left Namibia for exile in 1974 to Zambia, eventually returning to Namibia in 1989 where you have risen through the ranks and assumed ministerial roles in foreign affairs, women affairs, information, broadcasting as well as environment and tourism. Can you please share with us a few memorable moments of your early career and when you understood that politics would be a big part of your destiny?
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	I did not really understand the politics to be part of my destiny, however, when... I grew up in a very big family, we were family of 13 children and I'm born and grew up in rural Namibia and as you know in the African culture the whole village is one family and in growing up there you start to realise what should you do for your community. That time of course Namibia was not independent, starting from the late 50's to the 60's, that is the time when in Africa there was a movement for liberation which was starting and Namibia was not spared so there were those older than us who were involved in this colonial resistance and they started organising meetings, particularly after Sundays and as young people you go there and you listen and things that they are talking they are the ones you are experiencing at home, for example I...we had one of our brothers who he did not go to school, the others went, but this one opted to go for a contract labour system and when you are told that our people they go for contract labour system they are poorly paid, they are not properly taken care of and then now you have this brother; when this brother comes back after 24 months basically with one small bag, a suitcase, and not really offering much, you just wonder what is happening and then now you are listening. So to me that has really helped me to raise up and be part of the resistance to fight for independence and that has been guiding me until then when I went to school, the time when 1966 I moved from my village home and then when I went to the boarding school, very young of course. I had to go to the boarding school younger because you see my parents, my father was a pastor and we went to the Sub A so early so you were able to progress. I remember at our six we had only standard two and when I finished standard two I had to repeat because they said I was too young to go to the hostel so then the following year again I was going to repeat, but there were these missionaries who were coming for outreach medical service, when she was informed that I

	<p>was going to repeat for a second time they said no, I'm going to take her up. So that is how I went early to the boarding school and that was a missionary school, Anglican Church, so and the Anglican Church, particularly in Namibia, that St. Mary's Anglican Church is seen to be the birth place of colonial resistance, particularly in the northern Namibia. So that is how my political career has developed and even when I joined I was at this school until then when finally the SWAPO Youth League was established at the Tanga Consultative Congress which was in Tanganyika; Tanzania then, now then the wings were established like the SWAPO Youth League, the Women's League, the Elder's Council. So then we formed also a branch back home in Namibia and at that point I was then elected or appointed by my colleagues to be the chairperson of the SWAPO Youth League in Ovamboland at that time. So that is how my political career started and then we start now our mobilisation work, then when I was arrested, that was '73, and upon my release I was then given 3 years suspension, so when I was then released I was then that time teaching unqualified teacher. But you see when you are on a suspension for 3 years it means you should not do any political activities for that period and if that happens you'll only be locked in for 3 years, you don't need to go to a court or anything. Then lucky enough that was the time also there was a coup in Portugal, you remember the Coutinho Coup and things changed in Angola but of course Angola was not yet independent, however, because of the coup in Portugal things were a bit okay so that's why in 1974, together with my four comrades, we left the country. It was a long journey but I was a group leader, it's obvious; being the chairperson of the SWAPO Youth League in the Ovamboland and you are in a group of this and they recognise this leadership, so we took the journey; that's how my political career is developed.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you so much for sharing that story and evoking such rich memories of your passage looking at community, being raised with 13 children in a family and then following on to pursue your political career. Now looking back at all the years that have passed; do you think that Namibia as a country is in the right place that you had imagined it to be now, after all those years?</p>
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	<p>Yes. First when I participated in the liberation struggle through SWAPO, the aim is to liberate the country and even when I went into exile the aim is to liberate the country, so I'm so happy, I'm satisfied that Namibia is today independent for the past 29 years, going to be, and the people of Namibia can now decide on their own destiny. Of course there's nothing that does not have challenges and you have to accept that when we were fighting for independence the international solidarity was so strong. The international support was so strong but with Namibia's independence we have to do everything on our own and the history of our colonisation has really hit into the core of what would one need for development and that is education. So we...at the time we got our independence we had a very big skill deficit. Of course we tried; when we were in exile SWAPO had education senders, particularly in Angola as well as in Zambia. Some Namibians were accorded scholarships to friendly countries to study in different fields, Namibia being a Trustee of United Nations; you remember there was the UN Council for Namibia which was like a government for Namibia under the UN, so they also looked into this issue of education and that's why the United Nations Institute for Namibia was established in Lusaka, so they train some of the people who are now occupying critical position in the country, however, the majority of Namibians remained in the country and that skill deficit is still haunting us, regardless to the fact that when we got our independence we had priorities education, health, housing and agriculture and at the time of independence we had to bring together eleven different educational systems which were based on ethnicity. Up to now we are on the process of reforming our education, again, Namibia is not an island, we are part</p>

	<p>of the international, economic and political system, but here I want to emphasise on the issue of the economic system. When the whole world is now experiencing recession it is also affecting us seriously. The time we got our independence in 1990 that is the time like HIV/AIDS was really haunting the whole world but we faced it, we have to thank the US President's programme on HIV/AIDS that we have benefit, the US AIDS programme because the first years it was really eating even into our health sector because you had so many people had to be admitted, you needed medication of all different types of illness, as you know that whenever the person is HIV the opportunity diseases comes in, so it was really getting into us and affecting a lot of our developmental programmes but we managed with that support of the US AIDS programmes to handle it, but there was that shortfall, because even the life expectancy had to go down and we had to deal with those challenges. With the current world economic recession unemployment is a problem so we have young people who are unemployed, some with qualifications and this is also a problem of guiding...career guidance, so you might find some of the fields like administration, human resources development; they are flooded, but then you have fields which are needed for innovation purposes, for growing the economy which don't have the necessary skills and some of the investors, when they come and they feel you don't have the skills then they have to bring in. So this is...we didn't want it to be at that level but we are facing those things and we are looking into them, how we can address them because with the resources that we are having, with our population of 2.3 million, at least we would be able to take care of our citizens. We did the best we can do under the circumstances and that's why Namibia is now regarded as an upper-middle income but we have a challenge for the gap between those who have and those who are on the other hand; when we got our independence the economic system was on one side on those who were more advantaged and the majority who were disadvantaged but we did not got independence and say we have to share everything so we had to do it systematically, hence that gap we are talking about, but we are really in the process to try to close that gap. So we are okay, we have peace, we have stability, we are managing our economy, we are managing our finances but we could have been better; if we didn't have the skill gap, if we did not come in at the time when HIV/AIDS was really getting into many countries. So as you are planning then there are always some intervention that comes in, but currently our president, he has declared poverty eradication and under the Harambee Prosperity Plan the nation is now rallying over that and to see how we can bring about prosperity in Namibia.</p>
DR.MALKA	<p>Thank you for giving us the brief history in terms of the progress of how the country has moved from attaining its independence to start addressing issues of capacity and looking at the re-distribution or up-skilling of certain environments and needs in order to take the economy onto the next level. AIDS and HIV is one of the most devastating diseases to cause rife across the continent and one of the most vulnerable population groups to be affected by it remains women and you have been very pivotal in terms of advocating the protection of the rights of women as well as children and I'd like to quote from one of the speeches that you gave at a UN global leaders meeting in 2015 where you said "<i>Namibia commits herself to continue to sensitise our people to fully embrace the critical role women play in society</i>" part of those interventions have included establishing a ministry of gender equality and child welfare to spearhead mainstream gender issues. Gender responsive budgeting, increasing the number of girls participating in both primary and secondary education as well as the national gender plan of action; can you please share with us some of the positive outcomes of these interventions?</p>

**DEPUTY PM
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Yes, I think here I must admit that I might be selfish and self-centred; self-centred in terms that I'm a woman and I cannot compromise in as far as advocate for women empowerment, women's rights and of course as a woman I'm a parent, I'm a mother and I see when I'm just looking at people as they are moving on the street, for me they are all my children and it's even more touchy when they have not reached their mature age, so that's why I have been and I will continue to advocate for the rights of women, women empowerment and the rights of the children. I was even given a good opportunity when the founding president gave me a chance to establish the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare. I recall my first statement when I was appointment as the Minister of Women Affairs and Child Welfare, I say that when it comes to the children we have to make sure that pre-primary school is brought back, is to be made part of the...our educational system. I'm very happy that that policy has been adopted and they are now being phased in. Pre-schools are in the private hands and they are not accessible to the lower income group or to those who have no income and if your child did not go to a kindergarten or a pre-primary you cannot compare with the other, so they are disadvantaged, so this is why I found it critical that it should be part of the educational system and I am happy it's there. As for the women, we have the National Gender Policy and it's because of this national gender policy that you find that gender is being mainstreamed in all government activities. When it comes to representation, currently the Namibian Cabinet cannot accept any board to be appointed which is not gender balanced, so any minister try to think he can....he or she can take a chance, they cannot make it and I'm so happy with our current minister for Women Gender Equality; she's very alert when it comes to that, so those...what I said that time is now manifesting itself if one looked at all the boards of parastatals that there is a gender balance. Similarly, when it comes to gender budgeting...because what really gender budgeting simply means is when a ministry is looking at their budget they have to answer a question; to what extent does this budget impact in the life of a woman. I remember one time our minister of works confronted me and say you say we should do gender budgeting, now we are having a budget of transport...I mean of works, where we have construction of roads, construction of buildings; are you telling us that we must have women who are part of the construction or what do you mean with your gender budgeting? I said that's one of them, they should be part of the construction but the gender budgeting is for you, you have to think when you are putting up a road, you must try to understand because in some areas you have women who are having their products and they need to take those products to the market so you must see where it can make an impact. So if your road is going now to make it easy for the women to bring their product to the market, for me that's gender budgeting because you are helping these women. For example; you are designing a town, and that town does not have facilities, even if for want to change the baby and so on, it is not helpful because you are now making the women to be confined at her home because the town is not friendly for them to be there. So those things are really happening there and another area is not only now in the public sector, even in the private sector they are becoming gender conscious, so you find all these debates, so it's really paying off but we cannot say all is done, we still have a long way to go because the attitude and the attitude is not only attitude of men towards women, you also find attitude of women to gender issues. You have to deal with people's mentality and people should not think that simply because you are a woman you are gender aware or you can understand the whole concept for gender mainstreaming and gender activities. So that's why now we are saying we must try to bring on board both men and women. I remember when I...when my mother was alive, we went home and I had my young boy, my son and the girls

	<p>were pointingmahangu, which you know traditionally is a women's job, now this boy came and grabbed and then start pointing; now when my mother came there she was so furious and then he say what are you trying to do, is this your mother's gender things that you want to bring into my house? So it's not an easy thing at all but I'm happy as to what we are doing, Namibians are becoming gender conscious, some make it a joke, you can see it when it's serious but for me as long as things are happening they will get used to it. Sometimes you find when women are appointed people say you are wheel barrowed, when you were not elected, maybe you were appointed by the president and for me I say I have no problem to be wheel barrowed because I know when I am there I am going to do the work. What I want is to be given an opportunity and I tell my fellow women don't be discouraged by those who are saying you are wheel barrowed, personally when I first became a member of parliament, to be elected or to be appointed as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, I was not on the first list of SWAPO at independence after the UN supervised the elections, but the president appointment me among the six and for me, I don't feel bad about it because not everybody with the qualification, with the capacity can be elected because the number of people to be elected is so limited and what I can bring on the table. So whether you are elected, whether you are appointed, the responsibilities are the same. So these are the policies that are now working, we have also adapted the married person equality act because in Namibia the time of independence if you are married you are a minor to your husband, you cannot put your husband on your medical aid, you cannot put your children on your medical aid, so once you are married and even if your husband does not work and I have seen this, I experienced it myself. When I became a deputy minister of Foreign Affairs my husband was unemployed and we had one child, so when I applied for medical aid for myself and wanted to include my husband and my son, I received a letter that you are married, therefore you cannot have any dependents in your medical aid, your husband and your children do not quality. When I received that letter I wrote I think a six page letter, I say I am a breadwinner; you are not a breadwinner....</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Deputy Minister and I read somewhere that in Namibia there was a census in 2011 and 2013 that 44% of households are headed by women, so women are effectively breadwinners.</p>
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	<p>Yes, when you are not married it's okay, you are a breadwinner, but when you are married that time, you cannot be a breadwinner. However, I made that letter, the issue was discussed; today it's abolished. So things are moving very well, now women are happy, even the salaries were not the same and how we also discovered that the salaries were not the same; one of our ministers, that time she was the minister of localand housing, Dr. Libertine, we were in parliament and she was sitting next to her colleague who's a man and that time people were receiving cheques, now she just peeped and she saw that her cheque was lower than the minister who was a man's cheque, she grabbed it and said no, no, no let me see what is happening; then she also made a case. So from there the salaries were put at par in the government, so policies are moving as far as women's empowerment is concerned.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>But it seems it needs to be experienced by individuals like yourself and other women who are leaders to take charge and say we're not tolerating this type of inequality, we require parity. Deputy Prime Minister one of the things that I wanted to ask you; you are a female leader, the Prime Minister is a female leader; we have very few female leaders though when we look across the African continent; last week we had an interview with former president of Liberia; Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; we've had Joyce Banda of Malawi, but we've had very few female leaders; do you think that the time is right now for countries across the continent to accept more female</p>

	leaders?
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	They are not. They are not many who are accepting but time has to be made; time has to be made to accept female leaders but if you look at what is happening, there are many things that are telling you that it seems that some communities, some societies are not ready for the female leaders and that is why the trend is moving very slow and Africa has to find a way for taking the lead in order to make our people realise that time has come. The other time I was listening in our television, there was this young girl who was top grade 12 learner and she was asked what does she think now that she came on top; I like her response because she says the “future is female.” So for me the world, the society, the people must make to understand that the future is female, so I’m seeing some good signs coming but you know that nothing good comes easy and what is happening now when you see women in positions of responsibility, the way they perform, for me that is a guarantee that men countries, men societies will be convinced that time has come for women to become heads of state in government and you are seeing this from other community activities. You are seeing women coming up as pastors, things which cannot be thought of before, more women becoming traditional leaders when you talk about Africa, more women becoming heads for corporate institutions, which was also rare, like in Namibia the law we found in place, which we have to abolish, does not allow a woman even to become a board member of a company unless you have the permission from your husband but that is no longer existing. Now when you are having all of those it’s a good sign that we are now heading to a point that communities and society will come to accept that, really, the future is female and we can have female national leaders.
DR. MALKA	That’s such a fantastic point “the future is female”. One question that I’d like to ask you is you’ve been attending the BRICS Summit, the 10th Summit which was held in Sandton, South Africa; could you give us a few of your thoughts in terms of the outcomes of the summit, if it fulfilled your expectations?
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	In a way because the only session which I attended which is the outreach but the most important thing is the declaration that was passed and all the pronouncements that were made by the BRICS Member States. What is really important for me which came out is that the BRICS Member States wants to reach out, particularly focusing on the South South Cooperation and that is a very great call, particularly for Africa, when we look at the Agenda 2063 whereby we want by the 2063 for Africa to become an industrialised continent and with the programmes that the BRICS are putting up will help there if implemented the way they are being mentioned, like now concentrating on infrastructure development, concentrating on industrialisation; that is very, very important and it also came that the host, which is the current.....of Africa also brought on the whole issue of gender mainstreaming and that is very important because we cannot really talk about development if women are excluded and if we want to mainstream gender in the activities of the BRICS and all its partners, that is for me a very important element and it will give us hope that something concrete will come out of the co-operation between the BRICS among themselves and the outreach they want to do for Africa and other countries and continents who were invited to participate in the BRICS meeting.
DR. MALKA	So we’re going to see the benefits of BRICS extending not just to the BRICS nations but also in those outreach programmes across the rest of the continent.
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	Exactly, that is what it is because I think this one was the first to have a high number of attendance outside the BRICS because the last one they were only doing about BRICS Plus, now it’s BRICS Plus and African Outreach, so every time there’s an expansion, so I think that’s very important.

DR. MALKA	Thank you very much for your comments. Deputy Prime Minister as we close out our conversation today could you please use this platform to share a few words of inspiration or wisdom to our young ladies that are listening to us on the continent today?
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	You see what I will tell the young people is that first you can be what you are by believing in yourself. At the same time, you need to be sensitive to others because people’s feelings, if put together, becomes also your feelings. So that’s why when you are in whatever position you are because as human beings everything you are having is a critical responsibility so there is no responsibility that you can say this is one is higher because each responsibility is required in your life and when you are applying yourself in everything that you are doing, you must always try...you have always to know that you are doing it for your people, for your country, for your region, for your continent and for the world and that is really going to make you move through. You must also try to be....I say you must try to be critical of yourself as well because what...what we see outside is what we have inside. Now if you are critical of yourself and not to try always to be on defensive, then there will be a lot that will come out and that will give you the strength to move forward. Don’t always...don’t have what they call negative energy, so see yourself as part of the solution to whatever is in front of you and definitely you can be part of that. That’s why I even reject this word when you say “women and other vulnerable groups” we should not be seeing ourselves as women as vulnerable. We are not vulnerable, we have the power and we must use that power. So if that vocabulary can be eliminated to call women vulnerable, who makes us vulnerable? So because the words that are said can work into your mind, so we have women are a powerful force and that powerful force should be a guiding principle to the younger and to the elder and we are created for a purpose and that purpose we must bring it out, it’s ourself, it’s in us and nobody else can do it, so I’m really encouraging the young people that we must be focused, that is very, very important, you do not do things for any appreciation, you do things because you believe it’s the right thing to do and when you believe it’s the right thing to do, it’s the right thing to do because your conscience is the one that comes out but if you are trying to be diverted from what you want to do, then it’s a very unfortunate situation. So I believe the future is female and when the future the female are there, the future is very bright and female are the people who can hold the world together as they are the ones who brings life to earth, there’s no way they cannot hold this world together because they’re the world themself. Women.
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much for that really powerful, practical message on the future is female and women need to think differently about themselves and make the world think differently about women.
NDAITWAH	PROGRAMME END
DR. MALKA	