

PROGRAM DATE: 2018-08-24

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS LYDIA SINDY CHIKUNGA – SOUTH AFRICA’S DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

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 in studio today in Pretoria is South Africa’s Deputy Minister of Transport; Miss Lydia Sindy Chikunga. She has been involved in politics since the 1980’s and held various positions in many African National Congress structures, including the ANC Youth League and ANC Women’s League. She has been a member of parliament for over ten years and served on several portfolio committees including housing and correctional services and chairing the portfolio committee on police. Welcome to the show!
DM CHIKUNGA	Thank you very much and good morning to your listeners.
DR. MALKA	Deputy Minister you’ve been involved in South African politics for many years and you’ve held various positions; can you share with us a few of the landmarks in your career and when you realised or understood that politics would be such a big part of your destiny?
DM CHIKUNGA	I am a daughter of a Lutheran Church Pastor so I grew up in an environment that is religious, but my father understood that there was something wrong in South Africa and from time to time as we pray and as we sit together he will share with us the abnormalities that existed then in South Africa. The fact that we were staying alone as blacks and many of the people at some stage surrounding us would be working in the farmers houses and farm areas and sometimes paid nothing and we therefore grew up understanding a little bit that there was something wrong with what was happening in South Africa, even if we were too young to really grasp and understand exactly what that was. So when we went to school, primary...I went to primary school it was in a church and it was a lower primary school up to standard four and all classes were in that church.
DR. MALKA	So you had multiple classes happening....
DM CHIKUNGA	...in one....
DR. MALKA	...simultaneously in one venue....
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly, exactly, with only two teachers. You can imagine how that must have been disturbing but we had to do it because it was the only school that we had and then from grade...I mean standard four you would then proceed to standard five if you go away from home to stay elsewhere. So I went to Epangweni to stay with a white German family, they were missionaries and that is why I can greet somebody in German – guten morgenbecause I learnt it from them but I was also very young at the time. So I completed my standard six and then proceeded to secondary school. So what it means is that from a very tender age you are not at home. At the time when you should be learning from your mother how to cook, you are no longer with your mother. When you start menstruating you are away from home so you don’t know what is happening, as a matter of fact when my sister-in-law was at the hospital to

	give birth to one of his sons I was sent there to visit her and they made me to sleep in the area where awaiting women were sleeping and many of them gave birth at night, so what I observed being a child....
DR. MALKA	...gosh....
DM CHIKUNGA	...was that there was pain, there was blood, there was a child. So when I started menstruating I had this dysmenorrhea and so it was pain, then there was blood....
DR. MALKA	...did you think you were having a baby?....
DM CHIKUNGA	<p>...I then expected a child (laughs) and that's how bad it was because you are not with your mother to probably tell you as to what is happening so you don't know, I really expected a child and I was crying because I thought I was too young to have a child but I didn't know as to how a woman gets pregnant, all that I had seen is paid, blood, child and that was it. But at school when we went to secondary or high school we had teachers that were activists and I participated in a drama that was called, it was a child was working in...for a farmer and abused by a farmer, got pregnant and had to run away or else the farmer was going to kill her. As it was actually happening in the areas where we were; that opened my mind to say this is it, this is what my father used to tell us, this is the abnormality. These people work in those houses, the madam works somewhere, the white madam is being driven by the farmer to work so that she is at work for the whole day and the farmer comes back to abuse these black women in the house and he knows that at four o'clock then he will drive to fetch the madam, who also is abused in her own way, because she'll never come home unless the farmer fetches her from work and therefore whatever that happens in the house she's not there to see. Once the woman is pregnant she is sent to the mountain, many disappeared, so it became very clear in my mind that this is what is happening when I participated in that drama and for me it said it cannot be allowed. That's when one began to participate in the structures and said these people, some whom I know for sure by name and person, who disappeared in the mountains because they were young women working in the kitchen and all that; it became very clear that it's because of this which I am saying and it can't be allowed to continue. Many of them were very intelligent we were with at school but they did not exist today because of that; so that said to me there is something very wrong in South Africa and it caused a lot of us to participate, to fight the system so that those people who have capacity and potential to be better people can actually be better people. Then when I went for training at Edendale Nursing College, then I joined the DCO Makiwane Youth League, it was actually the Youth...ANC Youth League but at the time ANC was banned and anything about the ANC, if you called the name ANC you would actually be arrested. When were taken one of the questions as part of the interview that was asked was to say do you know Mandela? If you said you know Mandela you are not taken; if you say uh Mandela? Even if you do not pronounce that you don't know Mandela you would therefore be taken, so it was a political question asked as a way of recruiting nurses so when we were interviewed that question was also asked do you know Mandela? We say em Mandela? Who is Mandela? You don't want to say I don't know or I know Mandela because you feel like you're betraying your cause if you say you don't know Mandela and just that was enough, then you are taken into nursing training and that's where we then joined the DCO Makiwane Youth League and we attended classes and at that time I was really active. We would use time because at some stage you would therefore have to do home</p>

	<p>visits as part of your practical's; instead of talking about health issues we will be spreading the gospel of whatever that DCO Makiwane wants you to spread. I remember in Maritzburg, in fact not even Maritzburg, the government, whether it was a policy or whatever but instructed principals that they must enrol all black matriculants and their subjects must be enrolled at standard grade. What that meant is that no black child would go to university because your standard grade will never make you get a university exemption and we had to go out, door to door, instead of talking about health issues, to tell people and families that don't allow that to happen because what it means is that we're not going to have black children going to universities, even those universities that were meant for black people, your Ungonye and others and it became a successful campaign because when those learners went to school and principals were saying no, you're going to enrol your subjects in standard grade and they said no, I want the higher grade and it was through the campaign of the DCO Makiwane. So we were now actually participating knowing exactly that if we were found, first we would be dismissed from training and that's it, but we were doing it.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>But you could also preach the agenda that you were supposed to have been talking about door-to-door. That's so brilliant in terms of the ways in which you were able to access homes and to provide the right type of messaging in order to support people moving forwards in the struggle.</p>
DM CHIKUNGA	<p>Exactly, you would actually have had a time in the history of South Africa where no child was able to go to university – no black child – was able to go to university and we took that up as a campaign and we ran with it, successfully so. So there was huge resistance at school; principals saying register, learners saying we're not, we want higher grade. So at the time I was personally clear that there's something seriously wrong and I'm actively participating to fight the system that renders us useless in our own country and not able to access anything. I must also say that at the time, for a black child, you would only choose careers such as teaching - I didn't want to be a teacher; nursing - I wasn't sure; being a clerk or a policeman, those were the careers that were available to all of us. If you wanted to go to Wits University for instance, you had to get a permission from the minister for you to get access to Wits University for you to study as a doctor and you had to get a special permission for you to access that and therefore if you think you're coming from a family that would probably not know how to get all that and so on, so the easiest route was to either be a teacher, to be a nurse, to be this and that; even that, being a nurse, you would have to be accepted at a black only nursing college, for instance Edendale. You would not be accepted in any other mixed racial college, so it was that, but one thing good about it is that you would then write the same examination and the training, the curriculum was the same, but you are operating from a background that is not the same because the other one that you are competing with its someone that has received the best quality education...</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>...resources....</p>
DM CHIKUNGA	<p>...exactly and the resources and you are seeing a laboratory for the first time at a college. Even the choice of subjects, I mean my subjects; I wanted to study maths, so it was maths, biology; there was no science teacher therefore we could not study science, then it was geography, history and then the languages. So the combination would not make it possible for you to study whatever that you want to study. If you don't have science you cannot actually be a doctor or study medicine because you don't have</p>

	science, you require science for you to access that, so the subjects themselves will channel you to particular careers than other careers.
DR. MALKA	Deputy Minister given everything that you've shared today and this reflection on the devastation and the abnormality that our society was going through, but having lived through that and lived through a position now where people have got an equal standing or equal opportunity; do you think South Africa is in the right place to what you imagined it would be after investing those efforts to drive the change?
DM CHIKUNGA	There's a lot that has changed in South Africa. The very fact that I can send my child to any school, to any tertiary institution, for the very fact that today children teach us about careers. They still teach me, even today about careers that I used never to know they exist and they are there for our children to pursue and for me that says there's change and I mean a big one for that matter. For the mere fact that my child can go to university and get.....for the child to study and complete his or her degree or whatever diploma; for me that is important and that is why personally I value education very much because I know it today that the type of education that I received, its primary and secondary education, what difficulties I am experiencing even today because of that education; I know for a fact.
DR. MALKA	So the handicap of not having, whether it is early childhood development, whether it is being given the right type of nourishment, environment....
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...subjects...
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...has a long-term impact that you can probably never overcome.
DM CHIKUNGA	That you can never overcome but you can manage to live with and probably achieve to say there are things that maybe it will be difficult for me to change, however, I can live, what is it that I can do to live normally and probably to achieve even more with those handicaps; what is it that I can do. Probably from our side, at some stage as a family we stayed in a very small Lutheran Church mission surrounded by farms, it was only five households and then the rest were in the farm areas; there was nothing that was motivating you to go to school in any event. We went to school because we were children of the pastor, that was the only motivation, otherwise you completed your primary...your lower primary school, then you've got to look for a man to marry you, that was the whole thing and it was possible because some of our school mates would be at school for six months and six months they are in the farm so they will start one class for two years and therefore by the time they completed they are already old, so it was possible, but we were in the mission and that we were from a pastors family motivated us. It made us to go to school, to go to secondary school, but when you come back because nobody knows as to who you are in love with, you are given names, because if you are a woman the culture and the tradition is that you must have a man you are in love with and that man must be known in the community; if it's not known then it means your character is not a good one, so we had to live with that and completed and we went to secondary school. I still go to that community, even now, because it can only be somebody who stayed in that community that knows the community, it is in KZN, nobody knows about it, not even people go to the community when it is election time but to develop that community nobody knows about it, I go to that community, I talk to whoever, to the

	<p>municipalities to say let's go and deliver toilets to that community; they hardly have toilets even today as we speak. But from that community a sister was produced, that's where I started, a registered nurse was produced and for that community that was a huge achievement because you would have ended up being nothing. Out of that community a nurse educator with a master's degree was produced; so I'm not talking about the Deputy Minister, I'm talking about my own qualifications out of that very community. The point I will always make to young people to say what you are today should never determine what you will be tomorrow. You can change something that looks very bleak and dark and without any future and change it to be something good. Nobody, none whatsoever, I can take you there now, you can never think that out of that community a Deputy Minister, of Transport for that matter, can actually be produced, but this is the Deputy Minister that comes from the area that is callednot known to anybody in South Africa other than myself because I did at some stage in my life live in that community.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Deputy Minister thank you for sharing your personal journey, your story there, the passion and being able to, as you say, it doesn't matter where you start from, that you are able to change and direct your own life but at the same time inspire that community of what is possible.</p>
DM CHIKUNGA	<p>Exactly.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Now you're Deputy Minister of Transport and in the transport sector, offline you mentioned that South Africa has 750,000 kilometres of roads; that we are ranked tenth in the world in terms of our coverage area, but the transport sector tends to be a male dominated environment and when I looked at some stats SA Data from 2014 women made up only 18% of transport sector employees and on our show, I must say, I've been incredibly inspired by having ladies like the likes of Anora Fakude or Kile Kwanana from bussing and construction or some of our airline pilots, which really shows that women can make a mark, but is there enough being done to encourage women to pursue viable careers in the transport sector?</p>
DM CHIKUNGA	<p>We're doing a lot and we're starting from a very low base. First in the transport sector, the careers there, historically were never meant for blacks, even for men it was white men and not white women, it was men and that is why today we have white men that are ageing, you don't have white women that are ageing within the transport sector. So careers in the transport sector were meant for men and white men. So that's where you begin, to say how then do you bring first black everybody and then women, whether white, black, whatever, to bring them on board; that's the first thing and the second one is that the careers in transport are not known, that's another matter. Somebody who goes to university to study civil engineering will study civil engineering because probably people talk about it a lot, but in transport you have transport engineering, you have aeronautical engineering, you have maritime engineering and people even today they still do not know about those very specific transport related careers. You have your transport logistics, you have your transport management and so on, courses that are very specific. When you talk about for instance aviation, people think about pilots and that's it and pilots in South Africa are all men because they were in the men trained by the army and that is the Airforce, so it was men and it continues to men. To transform that it calls for conscious decisions taken and that is what we are doing as the department, we have our budget, I think we are second to the Department of Higher Education and Training to fund training at a</p>

	very high rate and when we do that as the department first, excluding our state owned companies, we then say 50% of that must be women.
DR. MALKA	So you've made a categorical call, 50% entry....
DM CHIKUNGA50% of that must be women and to an extent that if you like you can even say more...the 50% is the minimum requirement, you can have 60% it doesn't matter but not anything less than 50%.
DR. MALKA	It's interesting you say that, we had an interview some time ago with one of the delegates from Australia and she said in one particular town where they'd been looking at the demographic composition of their police force, that they saw it was just too many men and they said that for a particular period they were only going to take women....
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...and she said obviously there was a kickback because you know how can you only take women but she said the only way to address this change and to drive and achieve transformation...
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...is by introducing quotas so that we can fix this imbalance.
DM CHIKUNGA	Exactly, that's the only way; if you don't do it it's not going to happen. We have our air traffic navigation academy where we are training our air traffic controllers, we have said 50% of your intakes must be women and we also have said, from myself, maybe because I am very attached to rural women and I've said they must include rural women and rural whatever recruits. You must go to rural areas, if you can't go there we'll go there for you and recruit from rural areas and specifically from farm areas as well and the farm children, those that dwell in farm areas, they never get access to this information, they don't know these things exist.
DR. MALKA	So you're making sure that this is as inclusive as possible for participation....
DM CHIKUNGA	...that's exactly what we are trying to do. So we are starting from like I've said, from a very low base; if you're talking about for instance aviation pilots for instance, the figures are shocking because in South Africa for instance we have up to 20,000 pilots, but of those 20,000 pilots 18,600 are white and the majority of those they are men and therefore to bring in other racial groups it actually says you have got to at some stage to say we are not taking pilots, black...I mean white pilots, we are training other racial groups as pilots, but when you do that the challenge in South Africa is that the academy's that are training pilots are privately owned so you can't dictate to them.
DR. MALKA	... 'cause they are commercial enterprises....
DM CHIKUNGA	...yes, they are privately owned and that is why we are even visiting universities like Wits University that has a unit that is training aeronautical engineers to say to them how possible or impossible it is for you to begin training pilots? If they say yes, we will even as the Department of Transport come and say.....can you fund that programme so that we begin to have institutions that are training pilots in our terms. The minister has actually been saying let's again look at talking to again Airforce to say can't you continue to train pilots, but of course today it will be said the Airforce cannot train pilots for commercial aviation, so you have all those issues which we think it's something that we need to look into because if we continue depending on privately owned academies we're not going to transform this industry, particularly the aviation industry. It only happens in South Africa. In other countries, even in Africa, you have a number of black pilots and we don't have a record of air crashes in those

	countries, like we do not have in South Africa, which we're very proud of, not to have any record of commercial air crashes. We do have challenges in the general aviation section, but even then we have put some regulations and I think we are stabilising that.
DR. MALKA	It's a standardised industry globally...
DM CHIKUNGA	...it is...
DR. MALKA	...within that space....
DM CHIKUNGA	...it is....
DR. MALKA	Can you tell us a bit more about the South African Network For Women in Transport?
DM CHIKUNGA	This is one other organisation that was formed by the Department of Transport itself, it was launched on 31st October 2008. It's South Africa's Network for Women; its aim is to provide platform for women to own companies I mean and be part of enterprises that operate within the transport sector. It has a constitution that established it, it has membership, it has chapters; it has the leadership. Provinces have leadership at that level that accepts members to join and we have categories of membership that can join; I can join Sindy Chikunga CC and I might be aspiring to operate in the transport sector as a company; I might already be operating within the transport sector. We might join as a co-operative, less than ten members, and as a group therefore and operate within the transport sector. We might join as associate members where we are a company but not operating within the transport sector, but we probably admire or would want to operate within the transport sector at some stage. So it's these categories of members that we can actually join as members of SANWIT. We want SANWIT to be strong and to exist because if we call women, for instance I've always said; if you call women to a summit and we talk about opportunities; it's Sindy, it's yourself, and somebody else; after the summit we go back to our homes and then what? And then what? But if we call them as members of SANWIT, with the leadership from different provinces, we say these are the opportunities, we invite your banks that must fund them to say this is what you must do.
DR. MALKA	So you're bringing together a whole range of stakeholders...
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...that satisfy holistically in the industry....
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly.....
DR. MALKA	...so you've got the right resources in place, all at hand, that you can make things happen.
DM CHIKUNGA	And there are people that on a daily basis are responsible for it in the form of leadership who, when we leave, they will then be able to go back to the provinces and say we are members of SANWIT, these are the opportunities that we have. For instance, with the issue of rural roads, we're saying those even need to be maintained, some will have to be paved. Who is going to make those bricks for the paving of those roads because indeed we have got to pave some of the roads, it will not be all of them, who is going to make bricks for the paving, for the marking of those roads, for everything, for the cutting of grass and we are saying women must do that and therefore they must form co-operatives, they must come as individual groups...I mean companies and do it through SANWIT so that whoever is deciding, there are people that will say you are not going to appoint just men only, we

	are here, we are companies, we can do it, we are operating within the transport sector, appoint us.
DR.MALKA	So you provided the opportunity...
DM CHIKUNGA	...yes...
DR. MALKA	...said exactly what is being needed....
DM CHIKUNGA	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...and they can then move forwards....
DM CHIKUNGA	...if they are saying...if we are saying we have a company that is making trains here in Ekurhuleni women in SANWIT must go there and say we will want to provide you with chairs for those trains, we will want to provide you with whatever that you are going to use in those trains and they can do it if they are organised. They will not be able to do it if they go there as individual companies, but if they go there as SANWIT and say for this we demand it must belong to us, to women, then of course that will happen, then they tender like anybody else, they follow the processes, they tender but of course there is some set aside of women in transport that are already operating or that are joining so that they can operate within transport.
DR. MALKA	And particularly with what you're saying because quite often we hear about these quota elements but it will be for the soft things, for catering, for flower arrangement; this is the hard core infrastructure elements where they're going to make money out of it.
DM CHIKUNGA	Exactly, in fact we're even looking at having companies for professionals. Women who are engineers, women who are lawyers, who must advise; who must be consultants within the transport sector. If we're talking about PRASA for instance with all of the billions of rands that they must spend when...as they repair the infrastructure, they build the infrastructure, the signalling, making those coaches and all that, they definitely need lawyers, they definitely need engineers, they need these professional women so we need those companies that will operate within the sector as professionals, as consultants from women but of course you need others that will maintain those train stations, that will clean those train stations, that will provide the toilet paper in those train stations so it cannot be that we will continue to buy toilet paper from whoever, we have women that can actually can make toilet paper and that is what we are talking about when we we're talking women empowerment, we're talking about SANWIT being that organisation that on a day-to-day basis; I'm sitting here right now being interviewed I'm expecting a SANWIT woman to be doing something for SANWIT, when I leave this one I go to another meeting for instance so I can't be doing things for SANWIT, I'm not a businesswoman but we have women that are in business that must do these things. Where they meet challenges; they need political interventions, we are there, we tell them we are just a phone call away from you; we will jump when it comes to issues related to women empowerment.
DR. MALKA	I think the South African Network for Women in Transport sounds like a fantastic organisation that is hands-on and making things happen. Deputy Minister we are unfortunately running out of time so turning more towards a personal perspective, one of the questions I ask all my guests is about some of the things that they feel have contributed to their success, so if you could share with us what have been some of the key drivers of your success?
DM CHIKUNGA	One thing that I believe I am, I am hard working. I wake up in the morning, I have to do something and to finish it, so whatever that I start I

	<p>must finish. I don't like a situation where I start something and don't finish it so anything that I start I must finish, that for me helps. I'm hard working, I'm God fearing; that makes me again, despite all the things available to ask but not to think of stealing because in the evening I must go to my God and say here I am, thank you God for the day and I can't say that sitting on a stolen chair or a chair that I bought using the money that is stolen. I always appreciate the fact that at the end of the month I still get a salary, that sometimes is better than the salary of other people, it's not a lot I must say, but at least it enables me to live comfortably than other people and for me I thank God for that, I would not want to add anything, so I'm comfortable with what I do. So what keeps me going is my connection with my God is my hard working. You know I tell people nursing prepares you for anything; going to work at seven and going off at seven, seven, seven shift working prepares you for anything. When you go out and people think you are doing....you are working very hard you might actually be feeling that I have not even started, these people think I'm working hard, I've not even started, as a matter of fact I think today I was trying to take it very cool and they think I'm doing hard and when you therefore go all out people think you are like fire and that keeps me going. My success in life has always been about my hard working. I did it when I was a nurse, there are many....I worked....I liked working in labour ward, there are many Sindy's that I gave birth to; they are my children. When you are a good nurse in labour ward whoever woman gives birth to a child will want to name them after you because you treated them very well...</p>
DR. MALKA	...that's a beautiful legacy....
DM CHIKUNGA	<p>...and I had quite a number of those, so when I then taught student nurses midwifery for instance, I will cover the curriculum and go beyond that and teach them my own experiences in life to say there are things that we'll never find in any book but that work for you in labour ward to save the life of a child, I will share with them. I will identify areas where I can give to students to study for themselves but I will identify subjects that require me to ensure that they know; bleeding for instance after and before delivery, it kills many women, you would never leave it with your student midwives to study on their own because you want to be sure that every midwife that completes, that passes through you, knows exactly what to do when a woman bleeds before a delivery because it threatens the life of the baby, but when a woman bleeds after delivery you have just few minutes to save that life or else the woman is going to die because the bleeding is now been an empty uterus and it's now pouring and death can actually happen at any time and you are going to teach your midwives so that they know exactly that at that time if you were flying before delivery....you were running before delivery, after delivery you've got to fly to save that life or else you're going to lose that woman and you can never live....I mean lose a woman who is...because of pregnancy. Pregnancy, it doesn't matter whether it's the fifteenth pregnancy should never kill a woman, I always told my midwives that no woman should die because of pregnancy and I like that. That has been me, I would work throughout the year I will do everything possible so I believe my strength is in my hardworking, if I don't do anything, I don't work, I don't read, I don't study, I don't do extra work then it's not me.</p>
DR. MALKA	That's a fantastic character trait and lastly as we close out today could you please give us a few words of inspiration that you would like to share with young ladies listening to us?

DM CHIKUNGA	The life might be difficult today but should never determine your future. You might actually be the answer, not only for yourself but for your family as well, for your community. All that you have to do today is to say what is it that I have? You might have nothing like property, dresses, shoes, but you have your brains, use your brains, they will determine your future, they will give you that which you might not have today and live a better life.
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much, it really has been a pleasure and privilege having you on our show today to share your life story and some of the important elements that have made you tick and also your words of inspiration “use your brains”.
DM CHIKUNGA	Thank you.
	PROGRAMME END