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GUESTS: KAMINA JOHNSON-SMITH - JAMAICA'S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE; 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 in Sandton, South Africa, at the 10 th BRICS Summit held under the theme of BRICS IN AFRICA – Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution is Jamaica's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; Kamina Johnson-Smith. Welcome to the show!
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	Thank you so much for having me, good morning!
DR. MALKA	Minister, by profession you are an attorney at law, with approximately 15 years at the Jamaican bar. In 2014 you opened your own law firm after serving as Company Secretary and Head of Corporate Affairs and Projects of Cable and Wireless Jamaica Limited and then in 2016 you were appointed to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica; can you please tell us about your shift from law to politics?
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	Well it wasn't so much a shift as a gentle transition because the fact is that while in 2016 I was appointed Minister, it is in fact my third term as a senator, so it has actually been an aspect of public service that I have incorporated into my life since 2009. I think that the two work well together because a good understanding of legal structure and legislation; how it is drafted, what...the problems that actually manifest in daily life when things are not clearly expressed, these are skill sets that I think help phenomenally in being a strong parliamentarian.
DR. MALKA	And that dovetails into one of the questions that I'm going to ask you a little bit later in terms of the skill set and how that balance looks at understanding of opportunities to change legislation if need be. So staying with your current role, as minister of foreign affairs and foreign trade; what does your work entail and are there any specific milestones you want to achieve in this term?
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	Okay. What's actually interesting is that I'm not only Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and I will mention the first woman to hold that role in Jamaica, as this is a gender programme, but I am also leader of government business in the senate, so I am charged in that role with being responsible for the governments legislative agenda, setting their...ensuring that each week we pass the laws and the regulations that are important to the governments priorities. In respect of foreign affairs and foreign trade I would say we have a broad range of initiatives which we wish to undertake, but if I'd highlight three, I would say the launching of our national foreign trade policy; we felt it was important to ensure that we have a renewed and modern, fitful purpose national trade policy and action plan and that has just been approved by parliament...sorry,

	<p>approved by cabinet and will now be tabled in parliament in short order; so implementation of that is one of my priorities. The finalisation of a national policy on our Diaspora; how it is that we incorporate, engage and empower our Diaspora as well as harness their economic and human capacity for national development, that is another priority, as well as a national consular policy which should standardise the ways in which our different missions across the world are...how they service the needs of our nationals who live overseas and set expectations, both for service delivery and for what our people can expect from our missions overseas as we are a small economy with limited resources. These are three of our priorities.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And given all that you've said, maybe a small economy, but we're all talking on a global level, on a global scale on these collaborations of populations living across the world.</p>
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	<p>Absolutely and it's ironic as we look at treating with our Diaspora overseas also we are here in South Africa are feeling a great sense of the reality that we are also a part of Africa's Diaspora and engaging here through BRICS, through ACP as we have for many years, these are ways in which we strengthen that link and we hope to strengthen those links through our bilateral discussions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and between your president and our prime minister later today.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Besides your official portfolio, you also have a keen interest in governance, education, youth and gender affairs and you have successfully tabled parliamentary motions regarding public sector governance as well as the re-integration of teen mothers in the formal school system and I'd like to talk a little bit about the re-integration of teen mothers and I think it's such an important view, that just because someone is pregnant or just because someone has had a child it can't impinge on their life going forwards and they shouldn't be denied these opportunities. I mean education, world over, we hear studies from UNESCO where an additional year of schooling equates to a 10% greater yield in income, it also shows benefits in terms of reduction in mortality rates, looking at how women improve or how they manage their fertility rates as well; so could you just tell us a little bit more behind this?</p>
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	<p>Sure, this is a matter on which I became quite passionate having learnt of the issue at a UNFBA conference some years ago, several years ago, when I was in opposition and a spokesperson on education and youth and it struck me that the economic cycle that we were in and that we were placing ourselves in by not treating with the issue of adolescent pregnancy was just shocking and it appeared that we needed to change the conversation because my understanding from discussions with stakeholders in Jamaica and elsewhere, was...seemed to be that every time the topic came up it became a moralistic discussion and not a discussion whether about human rights; a or b; the economic realities of the cost to an economy of a woman who are unprepared for children, having too many, the statistic that it is quite clear that a woman who's education is...or child who's education is interrupted by pregnancy is more than likely, I think it's three times as likely, to have repeat pregnancies and to not enter the formal economy. The ramifications for that to our developing economy are exponential and changing this conversation to one which perhaps removed some of the more sensitive and personal and subjective discussions helped expand a broad range of persons or include rather a broad range of persons in the discussion and helped I think people to see and rally around the fact that it's a necessity. It's still a controversial issue to some extent but we were able to ensure that there</p>

	<p>was policy change and recognition of the fact that it was in fact an important economic indicator, adolescent pregnancies, and that it needed to be addressed. The good thing is that Jamaica has been maybe light years ahead of some other countries by having an organisation, Women's Centre Foundation of Jamaica, that have been trying to integrate young girls, for years, that had been integrating for years and offering some remedial training to them once they had gotten pregnant; they could go to them and get support. But the issue was that they were having an uphill battle getting the girls back into school, so the issue was we needed the education system to change its policy to recognise that they had a right to their space because another inequality that was produced is that boy was never excluded. It was only, you know, these are not immaculate conceptions but the girl would be excluded and be seen of course you know in this sort of bearing the sins of Eve, as if pregnancy is contagious and not looking at the realities that these are actually socio-economic issues that have to be dealt with more holistically and educating girls is of infinite more value than punishing them.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It's like being able to rationalise an argument which crosses these moral boundaries and moral boundaries can't supersede logic.</p>
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	<p>No absolutely and sometimes it's a function of changing the conversation. I think that one of the things that we as women who advocate for empowerment and different rights is that we must also be careful to allow our narratives to develop and not become so rooted in a particular point of view or way of expressing that right that changing needs, changing messages, changing ears and changing persons at the table are not able to be absorbed in the conversation to move more of us forward.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>I mentioned earlier about your legal background and clearly it is an advantage in being able to pursue and challenge legislative changes, now our programme 'Womanity – Women in Unity' as you may have gathered by the name is all about gender equality and it's increasingly becoming a global focus and sometimes one issue that tends to be controversial is about gender quotas in the workplace and it's not universally accepted, yet, with interviews with I'd say some of the African Continent's famed female leaders from former president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma; they argue it's a necessity to promote equality and increase the ratio of women in decision making roles; could you please share your perspective on legislation in terms of driving behavioural change?</p>
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	<p>Right, I may not be the best person to ask because Jamaica was one of the countries, in fact we were found by the ILO in 2015 to have per capita, the largest number of women managers in the world. We are...80% of our supreme court judges are women; 50% of our appellate court judges are, and I think maybe 80% of our resident magistrates which are the local level and the largest segment of the judiciary, are women and these are all areas which have been predominantly, well dominated by men for years. We have tertiary institutions that are graduating, an average of 64% women, in fact our largest university graduated 75% women and there's some who actually say that this is causing a social dissonance to...well it is causing a socio-economic imbalance and some even say making it harder for women to find partners who they view as true partners in life building. So we are looking at issues in terms of our male drop-outs in school while we also look at empower of women. There are issues that we believe, by the way well I must say it's upfront that our policy of our national gender equality policy which we passed in 2011, when we also entrenched freedom from discrimination under the sub of sex, that policy provides for</p>

	<p>30% minimum of women in the senate and it also provides for us to work towards 30% otherwise; on public boards etc. In practice we now try to get one third in the public board sector, most of all permanent secretaries, that is the highest administrative level in government, are women and this has happened by continuous promotion or rather a fundamental belief in the importance of education and the fact that our women and our girls are well educated from primary all the way up and in fact are more likely to stay in school than boys. So there's a foundation that once that is created we feel that once there are no barriers there is room for upliftment and that is what has been manifesting in Jamaica.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>It's certainly been a positive benefit seeing this pipeline of development, going through their education, opening those opportunities and then embracing those opportunities. Now staying with the gender agenda; building female leadership capacity is incredibly important for the future of women and if we look at even the things that you've mentioned now, you're now seeing women occupying roles which were traditionally dominated by men but one area is when we look at heads of state and to be frank there have not been many female heads of state. Jamaica has had a female head of state, Portia Simpson-Miller, Australia, Julia Gillard, in Africa we've had Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Joyce Banda – Malawi, Theresa May, Angela Merkel, but they're literally a handful. What is your opinion of female leadership in politics and do you think more countries are ready for a female president or prime minister?</p>
<p>MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH</p>	<p>Well I think that the world is ready and not so much that the world is ready, I think that the world needs more female leadership. I think the fact that you're able to name, to run off a list of female leaders shows that there are not enough, that we are not enough, but in terms of a country's readiness, that is...that's sort of the crux of democracy in that a country elects the leaders which it wants to see at the forefront and an important part of that process I think is for us as women to ensure that we are moving ourselves, empowering our sisters, opening doors as we move up and keeping them open, so when a door is open for us we have to keep the door open and help other young women through so that there is this pipeline, because as people see, as....because it requires a cultural shift in many other countries that don't have them it is because the culture needs to shift and part of that culture shift is men and women, men and women seeing women as leaders. So it is not...from my perspective, it is not something that could or should be legislated, it is something that must come through empowerment, through visibility, through good old public relations. I think that this is one of the areas where NGO's play a great role as well in advocacy and in training. One of the things, one of the programmes that we have which I think is just fantastic in Jamaica is called Women's Leadership Initiative and Young Women's Leadership Initiative. So what it does is it tries to help girls from secondary level see themselves as leaders and it encourages them, instead of running for like PR and secretary in their student council which are in your class monitoring system, and those are great and valuable positions as well, but run for president, don't only run for vice-president, run for president, you know, don't seek to limit yourself or to only see your male colleagues as the leaders because they see themselves that way already because that's how the books, the socialisation, that's how it runs. We have to therefore implement programmes like this one, so it takes youngsters secondary and tertiary levels and involves them in training and mentorship so that they see themselves as leaders, they run for the positions which makes them more likely to get involved in politics when they leave school and that is part of the cultural shift as well. Getting your peers to vote for you and to</p>

	select you when you're young or rather when you're still in school and it becomes a mindset that permeates through society as you then graduate and that I think is part of how we get there. Cultural shift, ja.
DR. MALKA	Everything we've spoken about today reminds me of this almost ethos of rewiring. So we've spoken about changing the moral perspective when we're looking at issues of teen pregnancies or adolescent pregnancies and how it is always the girl's fault; we're also now looking I think more importantly about how we can transition cultures and for women to see that the sky is the limit. In closing the conversation today, could you share a few words of wisdom to our young ladies that are listening to us?
MINISTER JOHNSON-SMITH	A few words of wisdom. Believe in yourself; work hard; nothing substitutes for hard work. Make sure you do your research. Understand the context within which you're operating, within which you're speaking, within which you're engaging and ensure that you are prepared, nothing beats preparation. Don't try to wing it because it looks cool. If you need notes, carry them, if you need to discuss before, discuss. Understand what works for you and how it is that you are your best self, at the end of the day you can be anything you wish to be if you just work hard.
DR. MALKA	Fantastic, thank you so much.
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	Joining us now 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. 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?
DEPUTY PM NANDI-NDAITWAH	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; 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 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

	<p>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, your responsibilities are the same.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>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 leaders?</p>
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	<p>They are not. There 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 "<i>future is female.</i>" 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.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>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?</p>
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	<p>In a way because the only session which I attended 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</p>

	<p>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.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So we're going to see the benefits of BRICS extending not just to the BRIC nations but also in those outreach programmes across the rest of the continent.</p>
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	<p>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.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>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?</p>
DEPUTY PM NANDI- NDAITWAH	<p>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</p>

	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.
	PROGRAMME END