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**GUEST NAME: MS MBONI MOHAMMED MHITA – TANZANIAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT – HANDENI RURAL PARTY**

<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	Today we are broadcasting from the studios of the Pan African Parliament in Midrand where we are doing a special feature on female members of parliament from different countries in Africa. Joining us today is Mboni Mohammed Mhita who is from Tanzania; she is a member of parliament with the Handeni Rural Party and she has a special focus on youth. Welcome to the show!
<b>MS MHITA</b>	<b>Thank you.</b>
DR. MALKA	It's a pleasure to have you here, to begin with, could you please tell us a little bit more about your roles and responsibilities in Tanzania?
<b>MS MHITA</b>	<b>First of all and should I say first and foremost I'm a wife, a daughter, a sister to some, a friend, but most of all I'm a representative of a constituency known as Handeni Rural. I'm a member of parliament representing that constituency in Tanga region but also have been a Vice Chair for CCM Youth League which is the youth wing of Chama cha Mapinduzi and previously have been the Vice President of the International Union of Socialist Youth. Then soon after I was elected as the Deputy Secretary General of Pan African Youth in the East African region. So as you can see I've been.....myself more on issues that have to do with youth.</b>
DR. MALKA	It's such a needed space and I recall, I think it was last week, I was doing an interview with someone and we were talking about the fact that by 2050 we'll probably have around about two and a half billion as a population in Africa; 70% or more are going to be under the age of thirty.
<b>MS MHITA</b>	<b>Well, we don't even have to reflect on twenty years from now; we're talking about 2019 whereby more than 50% of the African population is our youth, so I think it's something that has to be dealt with as of now. Having a population of more than 50% being youth makes the African continent a youth continent whereby the youth need to be given opportunities, the youth's voice needs to be heard, young girl child needs to be given equal rights. So it's supposed to be a priority as of now.</b>
DR. MALKA	When you look at your focal areas, one point that immediately jumps to mind is all of those people; we've got to look at what's happening from an economic point of view to sustain them, we've got to think from an educational point of view to equip them with knowledge. We've got to think that we are a globally connected world, that some of our other markets, be it Europe or other environments, they've got an ageing population and how we stand to benefit. What are your thoughts?
<b>MS MHITA</b>	<b>We have different continents; we have America, we have Asia, we have Africa but when we talk of Africa our challenges are quite different. It's very hard to compare a youth in Africa as compared to a youth in America or a youth in Asia. When you talk of youth in Asia they're not talking of technological issues, you know, they've advanced themselves to having technical issues, but when you talk of a young child or when you talk of</b>

	<p>youth in Africa, we are still talking of clean toilets; access to clean toilets. We are still talking of access to jobs and one of the greatest problems we have now is; well our leaders have done a tremendous job when it comes to education 'cause most of the countries now, and I would like to specifically talk of Tanzania, our president; President John Magufuli made sure that education is free so as not to leave anyone behind. So education as of grade one to form four; basically from primary to secondary is free so that everyone has access to education, but here comes another problem. We have a lot of people in schools. We have an increased number of graduates, but we do not have enough jobs to accommodate graduates, so that is a problem in Africa, not only Tanzania, not Kenya, not South Africa and what's the problem? Our education systems.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>When you say that from an education point of view, do you think that we're focusing on the wrong type of education because we've got a generation that is going to come into a very, very different world from the world that you and I entered when we entered the workforce?</p>
MS MHITA	<p>Yes, I might say that. Sometimes the education systems and curriculums need to change based on the current situations because as we are talking now, we need more people who will be able to be self-employed but our education systems do not mentor and prepare the graduates or the youth for self-employment and what happens? They graduate and expect they'll be hired the next day, not hired first year, second year, third year, they get frustrated. Why? Because mentally they thought acquiring a degree equals having a job, which isn't the reality. Yes you can have a degree, but you will still need to have some extra acquired experiences or educational or vocational trainings to be able to collaborate whatever that you have graduated on and that extra knowledge that you've also acquired for you to be able to enter into this mainstream world.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So we've got to focus more from an entrepreneurship point of view and if I look at things from a South African context, within our ministries we've got a specific ministry designed for small/medium enterprise; do you think that that is part of the solution of rolling out where you...government has made a conscious commitment by creating a space and saying here, we've got a small business ministry, that if that kind of model were to be rolled out across the continent that that would invigorate entrepreneurships and going into business as being a viable career opportunity?</p>
MS MHITA	<p>Oh yes, I think we should congratulate the South African government for taking such an initiative 'cause I think that needs proper attention. Small businesses would definitely need a separate either be it department or a ministry or a facility or a unit that deals with small businesses. So I'm sure they have taken a stepping stone towards dealing with the problem in the African region which is...surely is a time bomb 'cause through unemployment that's what...that's how we have young soldiers, that's how the youth are being used and exploited. That's how the youth...we see youth moving from Africa to the Mediterranean countries that has to do with them being unemployed.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>As a gender based programme we're really keen from the perspective of looking at women and girls and earlier in the conversation you spoke about the girl child; are there any particular programmes in Tanzania that are really designed to push girls and women ahead?</p>
MS MHITA	<p>Oh yes. First of all I would like to congratulate the minister responsible for health and gender in Tanzania; Honourable Ummu Mwalimu who is an activist herself, before being a politician and before being an MP she was a pro-girl child activist, so you can see that the president surely did appoint</p>

	<p>the rightful person for that ministry. She has a lot of campaigns, especially with the parliament, before the ministry; let me start with the parliament of Tanzania. We did fundraising to help a girl child where MP's came up with fashion shows, came up with different activities and the money that was collected, which was close to 200,000, to make sure that we support girl child in rural areas. First, for them to have clean toilets. To have access to sanitary towels. To have access to schools 'cause we have some girl child in Africa who do not go to school simply because they are in their menstrual cycles. They just...they miss school. So as you can see the parliament has taken some initiatives, the ministry is taking some initiatives as well, especially with the minister sponsoring most of the girl childs in schools, making sure that once they graduate they go and have proper education in universities.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It's interesting that you raised the point about looking at sanitary protection during menstruation and I think that that's such a critical factor because if you look at it, on average a girl would be home for a week every month, but when you look at it over the grander scale of things, that could mean absenteeism from school from 25% of your year, which, you could never catch up with.</p>
MS MHITA	<p><b>Very true; that's the gap that we're trying to fill, that a girl child does not miss access to education simply because she is in her menstrual cycle.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Whilst we're on the topic of girls and you've spoken about your minister of gender who is clearly a role model in the work that she does as an activist and getting to her level of achievements; in your opinion, how do you think role modelling benefits young women?</p>
MS MHITA	<p><b>Well first of all, as humans, we like more practical things than theoretical things. We like to see and believe, you know, rather than just reading. So yes, being a role model or role modelling does have a major factor in influencing people 'cause people get to see okay, so this is a real person. The real person that I adore has gone through so and so stairs, yes, she's not a hero simply because she has not fallen; she has fallen but she was able to stand and go on. Okay, she's a woman but she's managed to be in top positions be it in business, health sectors; be it in politics or any other environment. So I think it does have a major factor and it's one of the things that some of the women who have somehow managed to penetrate in positions or areas whereby they have influence; they need to know that they have a big obligation, that yes, you have made it there but you have not made it unless you are able to pull up more women. And how do we pull up more women? From making sure that yes, we pull women but we make more Mboni's from, you know, in schools and I have a lot of girls in schools they keep on saying oh Honourable Mboni, oh Sister Mboni we want to be like you. I tell them no, I pray that you get to be more than me, 'cause I also would wish to be more. So aiming to be just like where I am would not be you fulfilling, you need to have bigger goals, you need to say I want to be way, way higher and way, way bigger than you.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And that's such a lovely expression, I always think it's about standing on the shoulders of people who've gone before you, so not only will you see further, but you will go further.</p>
MS MHITA	<p><b>Yes I think you are very right when it comes to that.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Our programme is all about gender equality and increasingly it's absolutely a global focus, we've even got within the sustainable development goals a specific goal Number 5 for equality but taking into consideration the various challenges and successes that women's legal rights have had over the last few years; do you think in reality that attaining a 50/50 representation is possible?</p>

MS MHITA	Yes, where it comes to Tanzania we are in our 40 something, so it's one of the countries in the African regions who has done...which has done very good, but Rwanda, they've reached 50/50.
DR. MALKA	I think they've gone beyond 50/50.
MS MHITA	Yes that's what I'm saying so, it's not a matter of it being impossible, but they've done it. Tanzania we are in our 40 something. I'm going there, we have an election next year so I hope the number will go high and actually the president appointed five judges last week and four of them were women, four out of five - and he said I did this just to show you guys that women, we have a lot of competent, capable women out there. So having such a president who would choose and appoint four judges out of five as women, I think when it comes to 2020, yes, Tanzania will reach 50/50.
DR. MALKA	That's a strong commitment, it really shows the belief in women, I mean being a part of the judiciary; that's the highest level within any land and it goes back to the point where we were talking about role modelling, if you can identify and say this is a judge, I can be that too.
MS MHITA	Very true. One thing that we're supposed to look at here is when women being able to have the capacity. Yes, we do have women with capacities but what we are facing now is some of government's failing to adopt or to accommodate those women. Yes we can see more women in positions in governments, but if they are lucky enough to be in governments and have presidents and have leaderships that acknowledge women's capacity. It's not that women are not educated; women are educated, even if it's a small number but we have women who are educated but you don't see the number reflecting in the realities unless you go to Rwanda, unless you come to Tanzania, unless you go to Kenya; those countries I'm very sure of because it's the East African block and I'm very...quite sure South Africa will..South Africa has a woman speaker as well, as you can see, a very tough and powerful woman. So some of the women are just lucky enough to be in countries of which the systems and the presidents and the leaderships do acknowledge women's leadership and do want to accommodate them. So giving them opportunities, 'cause some women, yes, are educated, but they don't have access to that opportunity to even been seen and heard. Ja, so there's still a big job; something needs to be done especially with our heads of states. We need to have heads of states pioneers as role models to some of other heads of states to show them in my country I've done it; you can also do it. Checks and balances within heads of states.
DR. MALKA	But on that point about heads of state, obviously, in terms of influence, obviously in terms of being able to make the appointment you've got the power to make those appointments to ensure that you've got your portfolio or demographic profile that you choose to have, but I'm frustrated by the fact that we don't have enough female heads of states and when we look at the landscape today as a continent, at the moment we only have one female president; Ethiopia.
MS MHITA	We had a female contestant who was running for presidency in Nigeria. I think only one and I think she withdrew. I really felt bad. Not that I was supporting her or not supporting her 'cause at the end of the day who I support remains to be in my heart but I would have really wanted to see a woman going all the way. Either she wins or doesn't win, but herself as a woman being able to be amongst those men or having that slot; she needed to do justice to it all the way, for fellow women in the world. Some of us in Tanzania we were like oh my God why did she withdraw herself, you know, we wanted her to go all the way for womanhood. Winning or losing only

	<p>God knows based on what...how she was prepared, you know, followers and everything; that's politics, but, she needed to do justice to womanhood, going all the way. It was not about her, it was about all the women. Some of us we were cheering for her from the Eastern part of Africa; a woman is there, you know. Tanzania we have a female vice president; Mama Samia; very strong woman. Who knows, after twenty five....we won't have a female president in Tanzania so hence, at least we now do have a vice president who is a woman; yes we are taking lead but I think it...women need to have a common agenda now, we need to support each other. Africa; the voters are women. All these presidents depend on women voters so we should ask ourself if it's the women who put these men in power, why can't we put our fellow sisters and mothers in the presidential offices? We can, but we need to sit down, have a common agenda and make sure no, no, no, we need to have more female presidents.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You're absolutely right, having that common agenda.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Today we're talking to Mboni Mohammed Mhita who is a member of parliament in Tanzania. We would love to hear your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>We've spoken about almost our ambitions for women on where we want to go from a future point of view, we've spoken about education as a means to equipping them; we've spoken about looking at changing the education system so that children are...or youth are learning the right kind of things to get ahead. So, if we can look and reflect a little bit on some of the obstacles that are stopping women from getting to those goal points. One of them that I look at is that globally women around world undertake most of the unpaid labour, which is obviously essential to keeping the household running; they've got to cook, someone's got to clean, someone's got to look after children but according to UN Women, women carry out two and a half times more unpaid housework and care work than men; as a result not only have they got less time to participate in the labour force or work longer hours; how do you think we can promote a more equitable distribution of the unpaid workload?</p>
MS MHITA	<p>First of all we should see why did women specifically had to be regarded as people who are supposed to do the workload, unpaid workload? History. History and our religious beliefs. All religions, you know, position a woman as part of...or a parcel that came out from a male, you know, a weaker version of a male, you know, so that does have a major role in our mentalities and that's why I have seen in certain parts of the world, a woman can be abused but it will be people who will go to her that no, no, no, no, you know the person who abused you he's honourable so and so; don't talk because when you talk you're going to spoil the image; not even thinking how whatever action has damaged the lady's self-esteem. But no, no, they're not looking at the woman; they will be looking at the man. Why? Because the man is the bigger picture in the image, that is one, but two; I think we still have a few number of men who think differently. We have a lot of seminars; gender seminars, women empowerment seminars and we still have some few men who come and listen. So I think as we are going towards a woman's day we should take this women empowerment agenda not only as a feminist thing only for women; we should now incorporate men so that they have a common understanding that no we're not fighting you; we're looking equal rights. We don't want to be above you; we're just looking for equal rights. So yes, I get to...for instance I work I'm an MP. My partner works as well. He gets to travel, I get to travel, but again, I had to go through two failed relationship, one a divorced marriage at a very young age. Why? Because I was not an image</p>

	<p>of a typical Tanzanian woman and some people will just be gossiping, no, no, no, you know, yes she's gone to school but she's too busy, she doesn't know how to care for the house, she doesn't know how to care for her husband. No, no, no, no, no, I do my part, he needs to do his part and collectively we need to do our part. Mentality; we have to change. It won't change now because we have been raised in the era whereby we were believed that if two of us, my husband and I, if one has to quit job it has to be me. Why? Because I'm a woman and a person won't even come with another reason they will just simply say you're the woman so, you know, you have to stay at home and raise the kids, you know, they need to come up with a proper argument. I don't mind quitting my job to raise kids but I won't quit just because I'm a woman. No, no, no, no. So I think this should be our common agenda whereby what is the African women reflection we need in 20 years from now? We are the ones who that change that mentality to our kids. And it is changing.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>What you've raised and you've lived this experience directly is something which I've heard repeated quite often on this show is how do you navigate, how do you have to contend with tradition, culture and yet live in this modern day world of being a successful woman, still respecting some of the cultures you want to keep but not being constrained by them and as you said, we've got to change these scenarios for the future generations; how do you think we can do that?</p>
MS MHITA	<p>Well from how we run our houses now, but to be able to teach our young ones, male and female, 'cause as I see it women empowerment is not only about women; we're supposed to teach our sons how to treat women. I was privileged enough to be married now to a husband who would voluntarily do housework and I would feel bad because my previous relationship it was not like that. But he understands. He says no, you've just arrived, you were away, no, no, no, I will just do this. It's okay. So that way you know that person has been raised by a prominent strong woman and yes his mum was one of the female activists so uhuh she did her job well by telling to her son that you're my son but this is how you're supposed to treat a woman. So it goes both ways. To teach women on how they're supposed to be treated and not to settle for anything less. Know your worth. You just don't receive what you're offered, but receive what you know is rightful and worth yours and for men, they should be taught how to treat women. If we do that, if we take that as our agenda, as an ongoing...just the same as you teach a child how to use a pot; teach them how to treat a woman. Just the same way you teach a girl how to apply makeup; teach her how she should be treated, how...what she should allow and what she should not allow; what she should accept and what she should not accept. Ja.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Those are two really important perspectives of looking at the dynamic from both ways of how you expect to be treated and how you grow up and the socialisation aspect of children. One of the things that we spoke about was making this conscious awareness of looking at equality between men and women and that women's empowerment is not just a woman's job, it means bringing both genders to the party. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March women across the world celebrate International Women's day; in your opinion how do you think days like this help furthering the women's agenda?</p>
MS MHITA	<p>Well, first of all, it's a day that women get to network. They network, they have topics but I think most of all should be a reflection of where do we come from, where are we and where do we intend to be going. I think I would have...if it was me I would have really wished that would have been the main agenda this year; where are we, where are we coming from and</p>

	<p>where are we heading and through the networking of course we will get to see or hear from women who have been there and done that, our fellow mothers and grandmothers and the movements of making sure that a woman is heard because even where we are now some people did work for this and I think we need to appreciate their work, but of course it would be also good for them to tell us their challenges for us to rectify them and better the movement for a better future of women empowerment but we have some very few slots of positions for women and that has raised..... or should I say jealousy, you know, because people always ask why do women fight women at times? No, women are not cold hearted, but it's just that, you know, there's a time that you'd have five slots and four males, one female and another female would think that out of those five slots, okay the woman is just offered one not knowing she could work with the woman who's up there and we could have two women, three males. It's always the woman fighting the fellow woman so that the woman goes down so that she goes up, not knowing no we could have more women up there. So I think we need to network and make sure now that a friend of a woman is a woman.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So pulling a woman up with you as opposed to doing a replacement scenario. We're coming towards the end of the show now and this is where I turn to ask my guests who've all made tremendous achievements in their respective roles about some of the factors that they consider have contributed to their success; so in your opinion what would you say have been some of the factors that have led to your success?</p>
MS MHITA	<p><b>Consistency and perseverance. I've run, I've fallen down, I stood up and run again. It has not been very smooth and I always tell people no one said it would be easy but definitely it's going to be worth it and you'll thank yourself later for not giving up. Just don't give up. You're very close to achieving what you want to achieve than where you're coming from. So consistency and perseverance. I've been consistent because I've had a long-term goal; I knew what I wanted, therefore, my life has been small, small segments of me going through, acquiring or fulfilling my dream. So we should not, you know, allow anything take us out of our main aspect or the dream and again dreams without actions will always just remain to be dreams. You need to work on your dream. Be perseverance and be consistent. Keep on going, keep on going, you'll make it.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Those are great qualities and as we're in this reflection period, can you tell us who have been some of the strong women in your life?</p>
MS MHITA	<p><b>My mother. My mother was very strong, she still is very strong, she was a deputy minister for tourism in Tanzania and I remember as I entered mainstream politics, there was a day that I got some very abusive words from one of the male leaders and I started crying 'cause those were very abusive words and I took my phone and called my mum and I was still crying and she was so worried, she was in a meeting, she stood and went out. She was telling me what is going on? I said mama so and so told me that I'm so and so, you know, and she said this should be your first and your last time calling me while crying 'cause I stood out of the meeting because I heard you crying and I thought something serious has happened. Are you crying because you think whatever he said is true? No. Then why do you even cry, maybe what he said was true that's why you're crying. I said mama no, she said no, no, if it's not true then don't cry, that is one. Two, never show anyone you know the access to see your tears. Go to a wash room, a bathroom, cry, wash your face, come out stronger, but only when it's really, really necessary but calling me when you are crying when</b></p>

	<p>someone just said such a stupid thing, don't ever call me again. Call me when you have something very important to tell me. I said mama this is very important, she said no, no, you would have just called me later when I'm done with the meeting. Women we have to work, she said you stood me out of a meeting because you were crying because someone give you some ill, ill negative comments? You don't cry over ill negative comments. If someone says you can't do this because you're so and so, do it ten times more. Prove it to them that you can do it. So that statement has always, you know, taken me forward. When I think of it I start laughing and sometimes I tell her mama do you remember you once told me this? She's too strong. So I think she is one of those women who you might even think that she doesn't go through problems because you don't even get to see the problems but she used to tell me no, no, no, I'm human, I get problems, I get obstacles, they shake me but I just manage to bounce back and sometimes I would be hard, I would come across challenges in politics and I would tell mamma I think I'm too weak because you know this really shook me, I'm crying. She said crying is human, you know, I would have been surprised if you're not crying, you know, humans go through different phases. We get to cry, we get to laugh, we get to be happy, we get to get sad but the main thing is to bounce back and do whatever you're supposed to be doing.</p>
DR. MALKA	I think in addition to your perseverance and consistency you need to add resilience.
MS MHITA	<b>I think so, I think I will add it; resilience, very true. I will call her later and tell her that.</b>
DR. MALKA	Now lastly, as we close our conversation today, could you share a few words of inspiration or wisdom that you'd like to pass on to young ladies listening to us?
MS MHITA	<b>First of all to all the young beautiful ladies out there, you need to believe in yourself. You wouldn't need anyone to tell you that you are capable. The first true friend is your inner voice. If you have failed yourself, if your inner voice tells you that you can't do it then you've definitely failed yourself because that's the only person that needs to tell you that you can do it and that means you need to work on your confidence levels. You're supposed to love yourself so much to the extent people would say you're selfish. There's no harm in being selfish, loving myself, you're supposed to love yourself, then people will grow to love you. It starts with yourself. If you trust, if you love and if you believe in yourself and if you're confident in yourself it will reflect in the outside just how it is in the inside and there more people will be more confident in you, more people will be more loving in you, more people will be trusting in you and people will be giving you access to opportunities and everything. So I think that's all I have to say.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much and thank you for sharing your time with us today.
MS MHITA	<b>Thank you very much; thank you for having me in your studio.</b>
DR. MALKA	<b>PROGRAMME END</b>