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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS SUSAN SHABANGU - SOUTH AFRICA’S MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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 is South Africa’s Minister of Social Development, Susan Shabangu, an appointment that she has held since February 2018. Prior to this role she served as Minister of Women in the Presidency, she has also served as Minister of Mineral Resources; she was Deputy Minister of the Department of Safety and Security and Deputy Minister of Minerals and Energy from 1996 to 2004. She is a member of parliament; she is also a member of the African National Congress’s National Working Committee, as well as a member of the MEC for the ANC. Welcome to the show Minister!
MINISTER SHABANGU	Thank you very much.
DR. MALKA	Minister, when we initially met you were Minister of Women, now you’re heading the Department of Social Development, which is the custodian of social protection and many people know that the department oversees social assistance programmes. We spoke earlier that there are twelve million children that are being supported by grants and there are another five million people, whether they are in the disability space or pension space, so seventeen million people are receiving grants of one form or another. But the department also does extensive work with different programmes whether it’s early childhood development, tackling substance abuse, gender based violence; can you tell us a little bit more about some of your key programmes?
MINISTER SHABANGU	Thank you very much and welcome to the listeners and sharing them about social development. I must say that it’s a huge portfolio. It’s a portfolio which covers various areas which intend deal with poverty alleviation and I must also say mainly our responsibility it’s more to address issues of the vulnerable people, you know, when you talk about persons with disability, it’s our responsibility, when you talk about early childhood development, it’s our responsibility. Also in terms of children, in terms of the Children’s Act, we are the custodian, so we have a very large scope of our responsibility but the critical one which is very important for us, as part of poverty alleviation and making sure that we are able to move forward, it’s the issue of social protection for our people and that covers people with disability, old-age pensioners, we cover also orphans, foster-care grants; we also look at vulnerable people. So it’s all those issues which are covered under social development, so when you look at all that and say what is our responsibility as Social Development? Our responsibility it’s to uplift the life of the vulnerable and that’s our beneficiary, that’s our client; the vulnerable. So as Social Development we move from a premise now to say we also provide welfare, but very key for us, we are no longer social welfare where we come from, we are now social development, so it becomes very key for us to define that portfolio within the space of developmental approach. So that’s why as we give relief, we also make sure that people are able to find their footing and be able to be much more productive

	again.
DR. MALKA	It's an important shift, one from dependency to sustainability, and offline we spoke about some of the programmes that you're starting out, looking at for instance forming partnerships with Google to start training pilot programmes that children can learn coding so they can participate in our 4IR or 4 th Industrial Revolution world.
MINISTER SHABANGU	I think it's a very important programme, as I say, we talk about development. If you look at where we are currently we have for instance providing child grants to twelve million children in South Africa and as you know that one of the biggest challenges that we are facing is teenage pregnancy and most of them are of school-going age and they are dropouts and you know because of the background where they come from parents become very irritated and upset to say we're trying to change their lives and give them and make them better than them but most young girls unfortunately, not because of their own doing, they become victims of early pregnancy. So I believe that it's important for us to say with all these young people falling pregnant, education being the key to everything in our world, we've got to give them a second chance, we've got to look at what opportunities we can create, that is why we are looking at the private sector; in partnering with them and making sure that they can be skilled, they can go to universities, improve their educations for them to be able to take over and to be responsible in the upbringing of their children. But also that we also mean they will also be able to take care of themselves, they can be able to contribute to the economy of the country and they can be assertive. So it's very much important for us to make sure that we continue to skill, up-skill and the re-skilling as part of a continuous work of us as Social Development when it comes to our own beneficiaries, but also looking at other young people. As you know that we are also responsible for substance abuse, so it's one of the areas which we are going to relook at when we go to the sixth administration, in a big way, because it's one of the major challenges for us as a country and it affects, whilst there are old people, but young people are victims of substance abuse and it also means therefore, if we are not going to look at the substance abuse in a different way and being able to have partnerships, work with everybody; the churches, civil society, business, in really trying to make sure that we deal with the challenges of substance abuse. I must also say, I have met, for instance, with...what do they...ABInBev which used to be South African Brewery, I've told them for instance, that in the Northern Cape one of the biggest challenges is substance abuse, mainly alcohol abuse. So I've spoken to them to say we need to partner with them to help us in a programme in making sure that our young people they can help to rehabilitate, but also not only that, even if they drink, people must drink responsibly, so that will be a part of the partnerships we are going to form. So we have a lot of religious sectors; people who want to partner with us and are interested in various programmes but also we think everybody has a role in our country, including in the area of development, they are very key, what kind of opportunities can they bring and we partner, then we can change the lives of our people. We also talk about old people by the way. We are also responsible for old people, but I'm also proud that we have a programme of old people; elderly persons. They form their clubs and they have various activities, some play soccer, I think you know that in Limpopo there are teams there and they compete and we always have a competition on an annual basis. They sing, those who are good in singing, they participate in singing, they do exercises at different times, so all those make sure that you have a healthy community, you make sure that they are able to live, but

	<p>also be busy because as old people sit at home and do nothing they become frail but it also stimulates them mentally by being active and being involved in various activities. So I think as social development to support such programmes for elderly people and it helps us to make sure that they feel that they are part of a society, they are part of a community, so these are the issues which we are looking at. Where we are right now, we are also looking at the social comprehensive...no, Comprehensive Social System in our country; it's all about making sure that everything has a social responsibility. We are reviewing the current policies where we will be able to build a much more bigger pool of a social protection floor where nobody can be left out. Everyone can contribute with pensions, the Road Accident Funds are being reviewed, the whole issue of UIF; how best can we expand that no-one is left out and cannot benefit. So these are some of the issues which we are really looking at when we come to the sixth administration as Social Development. So these are the key issues. When it comes to ECD, we're working with the Department of Basic Education because we believe that as a country we need to move towards the readiness of the children to start at school. So that is why we're working with the Basic Education in making sure that Basic Education can start developing a curriculum, not a curriculum that starts at a later stage, but starts very early, at the first one thousand days, because the first one thousand days talks about the development of the child from birth to the age of being ready to go to school. So it's all that and part of those responsibilities is that we are Social Development and when it comes to practitioners or your educators when it comes to that level, Basic Education must take responsibility because they must make sure, right from the early development of a child, the child gets ready to start going to school at grade zero. So if we work with Basic Education and some of the policies which we'll be looking at and being able to start phasing in and making sure that small babies, as they get nurtured, they are being prepared and ready to go to school, but also, when they've got challenges social workers must assist to pick up challenges. For instance, if the child might be having challenges at home, it's the responsibility of the social workers, working with Basic Education, in making sure that immediately they can identify those problems; abuse of children can be one of the priorities in assisting to really identify problems at an early stage, then the social workers can assist and say how best do they refer and work with other stakeholders in making sure that the wellbeing of those children is taken on board.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>The Department seems so integrated with not just other government departments, but in terms of organisations, corporate; humanity within the country to make things operate and work effectively and taking a view of almost from cradle through to grave.</p>
MINISTER SHABANGU	<p>Exactly.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>One of the issues and because we are a gender-based show, is you also deal with gender-based violence; you've got shelters in place, can you tell us a little bit about how some of that operates?</p>
MINISTER SHABANGU	<p>Well it's very important, first, before I go to the shelters and what we offer as Social Development, we must thank our President, last year November for hosting the Summit on Gender-Based Violence, but also committing in making sure that we don't have programmes which are not funded because that has been part of the weaknesses we've had for a very, very long time. We have good programmes, but if there's no funding, they are of no use so we are happy that the President when, as we speak, really committed to say</p>

the country will make sure that gender-based violence becomes a priority and the Summit once created a small working group to re-look and revisit all other policies and programmes which we have as a country and taking them forward and making sure that the whole issue of gender-based violence is addressed accordingly. Some of the services which we are offering as Social Development it's your White Door shelters; these are places for women who are abused in making sure that they can be protected because some need temporary shelter as they deal with their cases but also as they have to run away from the abuser, so those are the shelters which we offer, the service we offer to women who have been abused. But also part of that it also makes sure that if you deal with, you know, the issue of maintenance, also we are responsible for it with gestures and the bulk of the women, some of the challenges they face it's because men refuses to maintain and hence they become abused, so they have to be removed from their families. So those are some of the provisions or services we offer to women and we also offer counselling on a regular basis, we have social workers who are able to participate in our system and as you know that as a country we also have Thuthuzela centres which are part of programmes which ensure that abused women can get service. We know that people can say we're not very strong when it comes to our justice system or judiciary, but we are saying these are the issues which the current Working Committee, Presidential Working Committee is looking at to say how best can you strengthen those institutions, including our legislation. But the key for me is that whilst we talk about providing shelters, we also have to empower women, because if women are empowered in education, if women are empowered in being able to take care of themselves, in being able to get jobs, being able to be educated, then that on its own will make them much more stronger and assertive. So these are the programmes as Social Development we are working on, that is why we are working with private sector, we're looking at other government departments in trying to say how best can we have integrated approach in the empowerment of the women. But I must also say as we deal with that, we also have to work with men's organisations because it's very, very important. We have to continue striving towards striking a balance because there's no society which is constituted by women. We have a society which are both men and women, so the whole issue of power relations, we have to play a role in managing that and therefore by managing that we must also make sure that men or young boys are also empowered so that they can be confident and compete fairly, but if we are going empower women alone it will continue to threaten the lives of women because the men will always say they don't care about me, this society does not care about me and they become violent and they use their masculinity to address the problems. So these are the issues which I think are fundamental for us as a country but also as Social Development and we're talking about a developmental state, therefore everyone has to contribute. That's why the vulnerable, those who are able to empower and take them out of the quagmire, we've got to do that and make sure that they move to the other streams or to the other areas in taking care of themselves, because if we do that it will also make sure that both those people who are empowered can contribute to the economy because any country, for its sustainability, it's about people being active in the economy. That's why the issue of making sure that young girls are given a second chance as they drop out of schools, become a critical component of the empowerment and you know I always say for those who drop out of school because of one reason or the other, but mainly because of pregnancy, it becomes important

	<p>for us to pick them up and help them to self-confidence and for them to be part of the mainstreaming, because if we don't do that, we're talking about the 4th Industrial Revolution, so, we're talking about robots, robot tricks and all that, if we don't empower them it means they are going to disappear within our rudder as a country and the next time we pick them up it's when they are old and that's not correct. So we must make sure that we take a conscious decision by coming up with empowerment mechanisms for our young people, both girls and boys, because if we don't pick up the boys, the boys end up being victims of substance abuse and then they become involved in all manner of wrong things. So the balance for social development becomes very important because it's about picking up the society and being able to address those who are vulnerable and being able to make sure that they are back into the mainstream of our lives and I must also say the issue of gender-based violence, the current presidential working group, I'm very happy, they are also looking at the gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and how best do you make sure that the programmes we have, the issue of gender responsive budgeting is going to happen in our country because we come up with good programmes as I have indicated; no money. So, where we are, we hope the sixth administration will really make a different impact, you know, for the past 25 years we've been in that space; good policies, good programmes, but always shortage of funding so as we move forward and talk about the empowerment of women, I hope we'll see a big difference. I know for instance that in government, especially as the governing party, as we move to the sixth administration we're going to see a real 50/50 programme where our list, if you're looking at the ANC list currently, it talks 50/50. It's 50% women; 50% men. So that it's very important because it's a consciousness decision to say don't leave men or don't leave women out because somebody decides they are lesser important. So if we are able to take them along then it's part of transformation, it's part of change, it's part about the role of women in society without really saying somebody must wait for them by being conscious to say if you don't do it we're not going to walk together and in that I want to say to all other parties, we hope they are going to do the same.</p>
DR. MALKA	It's a responsibility that should be upheld.
MINISTER SHABANGU	Exactly.
DR. MALKA	<p>Minister thank you very much for giving such a comprehensive overview of the Department, what it's doing, of looking at the future of women, where things are progressing to. Last week South Africa called upon members of the United Nations Security Council to work on a concerted effort to comprehensively deal with violence against women, which is one of the most pervasive human rights violations during times of conflict and South Africa has emphasised the country's belief that violence against women is a serious crime, as you've indicated we had the gender-based summit last year, and that it warrants more urgent attention and decisive action from the international community. This appeal rightly calls for the international community to condemn violence against women but it almost seems as though society is placing greater emphasis on trying to comfort existing victims rather than using every effort to prevent the next victim and you said it earlier in the conversation, everything is about education. Change starts with education, whether you're young, whether you're old; what's your opinion on education as a tool to change people's behaviour towards women?</p>

<p>MINISTER SHABANGU</p>	<p>Well I must say that education becomes the key tool in changing attitudes, in changing mindsets and what we have seen for instance, we've seen more violence in the education space and it's a big concern for us as a country, where teachers...there's a lot of abuse of teachers, especially lady teachers. So, it's...the transformation of our education needs to start talking about the empowerment of a child, not only the girl child, including the boy child's attitudes because we come from different backgrounds and some of the people, even our terminology and our language tend to be promoting violence and it also tends to promote patriarchy, you know, for instance what we normally do as parents, it's good when a boy child fights but it's bad when a girl child fights or a girl child beats a boy, you say no, you don't beat a boy, you are a girl.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>But a boy can beat a girl.</p>
<p>MINISTER SHABANGU</p>	<p>The boy can beat a girl. That entrenches patriarchy right from early stages; it also encourages the boy that the boy must be stronger than the girl. So it's our terminology, it's the language that we use which we also have to factor in and that goes to the areas of where there is war in different areas, when you talk about peace processes, that's what makes that man believe in a war situation they've got the power over women and they continue to abuse women; women become victims of rape. Hence as South Africa our role in most war torn areas it's about making sure that our own forces understand that they are there to protect and assist women in the empowerment processes and make sure that they don't continue to be victims of those wars and because most wars women are the ones who become the most victims. So South Africa has really contributed within the war torn roles, if you go to various areas; DRC, Sudan, they've contributed in peace building and the protection of women and that's the role we want to see as South Africa, which we continue to play, protecting the vulnerable and making sure that the women when they get displaced they get protected because most of the time they are the ones who continue to be abused by the rebels in war torn situations, including the soldiers who are supposed to be protecting them. So our role in the war torn areas within the UN Security Council, we've seen that it has contributed in the empowerment of women and as a country we have also made sure that when our own soldiers are found to have committed such acts, we take action as a country, so it shows how serious we take issues of abuse of women, it's not about internally only, it's also about in any space we play a role we are going to make sure that we are decisive and we are going to condemn not only verbally but also we will take action if one of our own becomes involved in any abuse of women. So we welcome that and we will continue and strengthen our missions when it comes to those areas in making sure that women become a priority, they get empowered, but not only that, they get protected.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>...protection...and the sad reality is that women and girls in particular fall prey to sexual offenses, whether it is in war torn countries or whether it is unfortunately closer to home, it's estimated that 90% of sexual offenses are committed against women and almost 30% of those crimes go unreported. In the last ten years, from 2008 through to 2018, there were 584,497 sexual offenses reported to SAPS and in direct response to that statistics, there was a recent conference on women's rights which announced a new training initiative across the continent which aims to empower women and girls by providing them with the skills and know-how to defend themselves against attackers and more importantly to build their self-esteem, to know that they are more than capable of both protecting themselves as well as people around them. Having heard these statistics on</p>

	sexual offense crimes, what are your thoughts about the importance of teaching women and girls how to defend themselves to prevent them from becoming victims, instead of just relying on our current practice where we're teaching men to respect women as equals?
MINISTER SHABANGU	I would say it's not this or that, it's all of these instruments we need to put in place because whilst we're training them to defend themselves, we also have to train men to respect women, we also have to make sure that they get educated, that women are not their boxing bags. These are women, these are human beings. So that's why the issue of balancing the training, the psychological impact of having men being also educated in respecting women goes the same way whilst we train. So we need every tool in making sure and recognising that women can defend themselves but also men must respect women because it's not about masculinity, it's also about psychological. We've got to prepare people to know, that's why the education at school level becomes very, very important in factoring the factor that young boys must respect girls...young girls and they must understand that they are equals, they don't see them as men being better than...or young boys being better than girls and women or girls being less intelligent. So, that's the biggest challenge we have and that is why even our system as a whole, it will also take police to empower it because if we think that it...for instance there's the whole mindset which says abuse of women must be dealt with by a police woman; I don't agree with that. Every police must be trained and be ready to assist at all times. If women come and report gender-based violence, every police has a responsibility to respond accordingly and be able to make sure that they give a service which can bring relief to the woman and the woman must be satisfied, not that because it's only women police. All police. There' no police who comes into that space and says I'm going to make a preference; I'm going to deal with men, no, when you serve, you serve to service a society, you serve to service a community, both men and women, so you can't say you make preferences. If you do that, you are in the wrong space.
DR. MALKA	And hearing your answer here I see this as this is the responsibility of individuals, of women, of men, looking at the tools that they have but also the responsibility of our social structures and governments to either protect women or to make sure that these types of things don't continue to be perpetuated.
MINISTER SHABANGU	Exactly.
DR. MALKA	Minister, we're coming towards the end of the show and I'd like to ask you...one of the questions I ask all my guests is a bit more on a personal reflection is what have been some of the factors that you consider to have contributed to your success over the years?
MINISTER SHABANGU	Well I think part of the success is to be sensitive to challenges faced by our society as a whole and one of those major ones which makes me to be what I am is the issue of the empowerment of women and the protection of women. But also the key for me, it's about building women who can be confident, who can be assertive, but sometimes when women are assertive they say women are arrogant. They are not arrogant. They are expressing themselves, they are confident, they are ready to deal with any situation that becomes very important and my own success it also talks to about being able to be humble. When you are humble you are able to be receptive to challenges faced by society as a whole, especially women. I must say, for me, the issue of violence against women, I'm very sensitive to it because growing up in a space of patriarchy, it makes and sharpens your sensitivities and how you respond and see the issue and challenges faced by

	women in our society. So I would say that's what makes us, but if you are humble and always ready to serve, because if you serve, it's about being able to listen to all challenges facing our society and being ready to contribute in changing the lives of vulnerable people in our society. So that's what I would say makes me what I am today.
DR. MALKA	And what would you say has been one of the biggest lessons you've learned in your career?
MINISTER SHABANGU	Well in my career it's been to learn to listen because if you are not capable of listening and ready to help, you will not be successful because the jobs we are doing or the job I am doing it's about being able to serve all the time and by serving it's about serving the vulnerable which includes women and that is why my portfolio now it's about serving the vulnerable, which includes even people with disability, which I'm very excited, you know, last week we signed the African Union Protocol on Persons with Disabilities Rights and we've acceded to that, as government we've signed it. The sixth administration we have our parliament will have to ratify that. It also shows progress we are making as South Africa even if we are not there.
DR. MALKA	That sixth administration sounds like it is going to be a very special period of mobilisation and implementation.
MINISTER SHABANGU	Exactly, I agree, we've got to go back to our drawing bag, bring all the policies, which some of them we have not implemented, but it's about the next five years, implementation, implementation in changing the lives of our people.
DR. MALKA	And lastly, as we close the conversation today, we are now in Africa month, could you please share a few words of inspiration or wisdom that you'd like to pass onto young ladies listening to us?
MINISTER SHABANGU	Well I would like to say to not only young, and old women in Africa, to say this is a very important month but what we need to bear in mind which we tend to forget, before the formation of the organisation of the African Unity, the Pan African Women's Organisation was formed a year before. So it's very important and key to show that women continue to be leaders in any struggles and that's why Pan African Women's Organisation, for us as women we must not abdicate our responsibility in making sure that Africa realises that women have always played a critical role in our struggles.
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much Minister.
MINISTER SHABANGU	Thank you.
DR. MALKA	It's been a pleasure having you on our show today and thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule.
MINISTER SHABANGU	Thank you very much and welcome again for giving us and especially myself this opportunity to talk to the African community.
DR. MALKA	PROGRAMME END