

PROGRAM DATE: 2020-08-27

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS HLENGIWE-MKHIZE – DEPUTY MINISTER – PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

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 on the line today is Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons With Disabilities, Hlengiwe-Mkhize, who previously served as Minister of Higher Education and Training, Minister of Home Affairs, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Deputy Minister of Higher Education in her earlier role in 2010 to 2012, Deputy Minister of Correctional Services and she is also the former Ambassador of South Africa to the Netherlands. Welcome to the show Deputy Minister!
DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE	Oh thank you very much also for an elaborate introduction, you know, I was thinking as you were talking about what I did to pursue the gender equality agenda in all those positions, thank you very much.
DR. MALKA	Deputy Minister you have really worked across almost half of our portfolios, so we look forward to hearing how you have managed to pursue the gender agenda in those various portfolios and we will touch into that a little later. Importantly, August is celebrated as Women's Month in South Africa and I always feel that it's this period to reflect on the gains as well as looking towards the future of what those possibilities are. This year's theme is Generation Equality – Realising Women's Rights For An Equal Future, so reflecting for a moment on the past; in your opinion, what would you say have been some of the important equality gains that women have attained?
DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE	It's important to reflect on health and reproductive rights and say we, as of today, we can talk to clinics which are specifically established to set women the right to abortion, you know, childcare and so on, but also when you look at the electrification programme, we always say what has happened access to electricity as against carrying wood and making fire on the ground, women have been relieved to a great extent on that burden as even women in rural areas and informal settlements, some of them have access to that. We look at education as well, you know, we have statistics which shows us that if you look at basic education, the number of female pupils has increased, in universities I think it's even exceeded that of young men, so those are some of the gains. I mean we hear of a few women now who are succeeding in playing a leadership role in the boards and of course the numbers are fewer, but I think already we can say there are ways of showing that it's doable.
DR. MALKA	Health, reproduction rights, electricity, education are all absolutely critical and I often think as a woman today that we almost should be in a position where we take these things for granted, but it is important to know that we have had to fight for these rights, which actually are human rights and should be accessible to us anyway. I know that the journey and the fight for equality is certainly far from over and this year on Women's Day President Cyril Ramaphosa announced four important actions, and for our listeners I will highlight briefly what those were. Action One is to expand access of women to economic

	<p>opportunities. Action Two; to support women who operate small or micro businesses, including the informal sector. Action Three is to speed up the process of giving women access to productive assets, such as land, and Action Four is to ensure that women are safe from gender based violence in the workplace. Given that you represent the portfolio that includes women in the Department, how do you see these actions materialising?</p>
<p>DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE</p>	<p>You know, of course we are in this era of Covid-19, we cannot go out and meet with people, but basically what we are able to do is to hold webinars. Just on Friday we had one, you know, where we were with the Civil Society Organisation, leaders of the Women’s Business Association, the UN Women and quite a number of respected bodies, where we were saying how do we realise these noble objectives, given the fact that we’ve come a long way since 1994. For instance the Action One we spoke about, it’s even protected in the constitution, socio-economic rights and we have had quite a number of good legislation which was meant to protect or to ensure that the redress in terms of, you know, women accessing economic opportunities, but it hasn’t worked. So I don’t think today we can say we are looking for new policies or the new legislation, the big question that is facing us is how do we ensure that programmes from today onwards, they meet the criteria that is in the constitution and the legislation for equitable access to opportunities and that’s a big debate we are having and we are also looking at what has failed; why have we failed, and we realised that for instance with good policies like triple BEE, we allowed for too long men, black men, to dominate the scene, accessing opportunities on the grounds that they’ve included in their deal, business deal, women, youth and persons with disabilities and also nobody is able to monitor the actual beneficiation once the project is rolled out. So what we are saying is that we have to use the lever, the legislation, the policies to deliberately create opportunities that are earmarked for women and go all out looking for them, preparing for them so that we can begin to count the numbers of women who are owners of business, who are in the cooperatives and women who are growing SMEs.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Deputy Minister, do you think that, I know that we have fantastic legislation as you said, this isn’t about trying to drive and develop a new policy because we have good policy out there; do you think as a possible way of measurement is through improved monitoring and evaluation of holding people more accountable as one mechanism to see who the beneficiaries are, who the owners are and secondly, something that is a bit of a challenge for women than men, is the aspect where not only will a woman want to embrace and open her own business, but she also has to contend with looking after her family, looking after her household, almost the non-paid labour, so, she’s got to juggle between these elements; what is your view there?</p>
<p>DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE</p>	<p>You know I would say African women from historical times they have developed these capabilities and they tend to transfer it from generation to generation. I mean when I grew up I knew that my mother was overall responsible for running the family, in other words all of us, the six of us in my family, we go to her for our basic needs and I knew that my mother could make clothes for other women, pinafores, scarves and many other things that she used to make and then I knew that on the Sunday she will go to church and I knew that during the course of the week she will go out to areas actually selling these things, but at the same time, you know, of course she was lucky that my father was very close to those family chores and she had support. So you know what we think is needed, is to ensure that we hold them by the hand so what is needed is government support,</p>

	<p>the starting point for empowerment is government investing at it and when I say government I mean all spheres of government, starting with national, the provincial and the local, our women get in as they are, with good support, I've mentioned how they can multitask because I want to say with good support they will flourish because they've learned over years from generation to generation to work hard, to dedicate to a cause and to be generally reliable in whatever they are doing and not dropping the ball as a man will easily do it, if it's too much, he will choose not to support a child or to help with the household, but women so they have over years really proven to be resilient and dedicated to family life, community life as well, it's them and generally, you know, much stronger in terms of integrity and all those high values of providing leadership at a family level and a community level.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And on a practical level, when you talk about support, what types of support do you envision and where can women realistically access this support from?</p>
DM HLENGIWE- MKHIZE	<p>Well you know in our...you know now as we are evaluating, we have had webinars where we have in the house people from treasury and other departments responsible for the economy of the country and what we have realised is that even, you know, National Treasury, where the procurement officer is sitting at a national level, luckily we have had her in the room, we have said first of all the tenders should be written so that they are accessible to ordinary people in South Africa. A woman who has been standing on her own is able to produce, she has a bakkie, can put cabbages or spinach or tomatoes and go and sell it even to another province, in a truck, if you look at our tender documents, they cannot access them. You know, when we started talking you mentioned that I was an ambassador in the Netherlands, I was so impressed, I met with one organisation and they showed me a tender where when you are applying, they say as a Dutch person if I am applying to set up a plant in a developing country, I could be given a million Euro's, but if I succeed I will only pay back 50% of that, but for me what struck me was the way they have learned to simplify the tender document. In our case it's really not yet written for the people I am talking about who have been left behind, who are excluded, it's not accessible and so those are some of the things we have said, but also we have said we need flexibility, you can't say if I have an event in an informal settlement in Diepsloot, then I must as a government official, I must go to the National Procurement database and if there is no-one from Diepsloot, then I am forced to take somebody who may be is far away from Diepsloot and the women in Diepsloot they will be in a meeting with me and they start as asking who is cooking for you, we are service providers here. So there are many things that we have to do to realise that we have different categories of people in society and the majority of those who make us to be highly unequal, we have to target them, we have to have earmarked policies which are aimed at ensuring that we bring them closer to where opportunities are, rather than to continue alienating them further and further.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thanks for highlighting some of the enabling elements that the Department has invested into and is advocating to help propel women's economic empowerment more fruitfully and productively. You mentioned earlier, using the phrase 'the African woman and her capability and her capacity' and the reality is as South Africa we are Africans, we live on this wonderful continent; how do you see collaborations with your counterparts in other gender ministries across the continent and are there any significant projects that you're working on?</p>

<p>DM HLENGIWE- MKHIZE</p>	<p>Well you know here, now, in South Africa, we have an office of UN Women and you know that office is really a catalyst in the sense that I suppose, you know, through the use of a webinar, we have had opportunities to engage a little bit more with other women from across the continent without thinking about travelling to Kenya, travelling to Nigeria, travelling to Rwanda, but within a short period of time, able to share more and discuss what will be possible. Of course the rallying point these days has been the economic architecture post Covid-19 and so also the free trade....Africa Trade zone that the AU has come up with has compelled us to say let's talk to women in other parts of the continent because there we might be able to collaborate. For instance if I am in the flower business, I need to talk to women in Kenya who have done this with success over years, if I am in textiles, I need women from Ghana and Nigeria and so on, when it comes to final inclusion, using technology, I need to talk to women in Kenya who have succeeded through a special financial technology to include women to access financing and so on. So there are these new opportunities that really are compelling us to have a conversation, because if we don't, then this free Africa Trade zone, I hope I'm calling it correctly, which is being championed by a Zimbabwean. a successful business person, we are not going to be competitive there, men will dominate the scene and their goods from all over the continent will be marketed and they will have access to bigger markets and we'll be left behind. So, hence we have seen a need of sharing notes and of talking and making sure that we get to know each other. But of course, you know, with the president, President Ramaphosa having committed himself so much to gender equality and having this opportunity of being the Chair of the AU, he has clearly said there are two things he will be championing throughout the continent, that is women's economic inclusion and GBV, gender based violence. So, you know, that moral and political authority, it has energised us and it has really given us that hope that it's all in our hands. If we put up a fight, we have somebody at the helm of leadership within the continent who has made our struggle seen and it's very rare, normally men will think about other things that they will focus upon, peace and security, and many other so-called important things, but here we are, in 2020, we have this advantage which we want to exploit to the fullest.</p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>I think that is such an important endorsement, having our leader, being a man, talking about women's issues, publicising them and lending his full support to it. We've spoken about some of the economic components and also about digital media as being this fantastic tool of being able to create our global village of bringing people from Nigeria, bringing people from Kenya, bringing people from South Africa together in one environment as a virtual space as opposed to physically going through there. We also know that gender based violence, and that was part of Action point four, as being able to ensure women are safe from GBV in the workplace and with our programme being about gender equality, it does highlight some of the statistics which should concern all of us and to help our listeners become more aware; within the South African landscape in the last ten years, from 2008 to 2018, there were 584,000 sexual offences reported to SAPS, the challenge is, though, that 90% of sexual offences are committed against women and it's estimated that 30% of those crimes go unreported, so we are potentially looking at a much larger figure; what are your views on how to help address the scourge of GBV in South Africa?</p>
<p>DM HLENGIWE- MKHIZE</p>	<p>Yoh, that has become a big one. You will be aware that in 2018 we had that historic seminar where young people from universities across the country demanded to see the president and spoke openly about their</p>

	<p>experiences of gender based violence and I'm lucky that with my background in higher education I continued to work with the organisation Higher... which assist the Department of Higher Education in addressing gender based violence. So, basically it's a big issue which we believe it's linked to where we come from and where we are. You know this thing of patriarchy is a big problem, because it has created over many decades, a generation of people who believe they have power, like men have power over women, men should control women, men are fathers, women are children, I'm talking about older women. So with gender based violence then it tends to be the end of result of beliefs and attitudes that do not recognise women's rights as human rights and unfortunately these dominant views have been perpetuated throughout the system. Our school system has not aggressively said since 1994, since you want to create a non-sexist, non-racist, equal society then what do we do, how do we make sure that our curriculum supports that dream. So we have not really consistently made sure that pupils, when they enter schools, boys and girls begin to confront the privileges of patriarchy and the attitudes, the prejudice, the stereotypes that go with it. You go to places of worship, it's the same, whether you are thinking about the interpretation of the bible or of the Koran or of Judaism, people just continue to allow a male domination in these spheres and even in the workplace, you know, the small number of women sitting in boards and being the heads, like CEOs or chairs of those multi-national companies, it creates a problem for us, we end up with gender based violence. Some cultural teachings where, like in some areas we have been to Lusikiki where a man can take a school girl and talk to her family and say I want to marry this one; it's still happening today. So that's why we are saying we have this now document which is called National Strategic Plan, but it's not...it has got pillars, but it's not going to automatically solve the problem, we have to mobilise coalitions at a societal level, beyond the district development model, at a committee level, street level, home-to-home, family-to-family, church-to-church to say these are changes that we are making which will ensure gender equality and realisation of women's rights as human rights.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Deputy Minister I've heard all of your thinking, your rationale, looking at ways of how to create this change and often a thing which almost, actually it doesn't almost annoy me, it does annoy me, is the fact that we almost have to have this issue of socialisation, that the older generations it's as though we can't change their mindsets and they continue to perpetuate outmoded thinking. The fact is that culture can change, culture is dynamic, we can move ahead, we can forge new paths, there's ways of undoing patriarchy, but it is so important on how that learned behaviour of children and adolescents attitudes towards women is manifested and influenced in their formative years so that when they become adults they think, let's say in the correct way of how women should be treated, of honouring women's rights as human rights and within the youth space it does fall under your department's responsibility. So what role do you think the Department could play, given that you straddle youth, women and persons with disabilities to help positively influence the youth's attitude towards women and girls as equals?</p>
DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE	<p>Well for instance, you know, since the youth division is back from the president's office to our office, we have said during their youth month, they should use their power of ability to immobilise the matters to really interrogate, confront these socialisation matters, you know, we have said to them they have an opportunity in ten years time to have created a generation that is no longer thinking in the old fashioned ways of male domination as the norm, so that's the assignment was given them, they are</p>

	<p>finalising, they are consulting throughout the country, talking to youth in rural areas and in informal settlements and those who are connected through technology, really there are programmes all of them, we do believe if they can be geared towards redress of ensuring that in their conversations they are the ones, the champions who will be the first generation to end this problem. We do believe in ten years time they would have contributed substantially to the scourge of gender based violence because nobody would think they own a woman, nobody would think if a woman wants to terminate a relationship, then it means I must kill this person.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>So we have got a medium to long-term view which, hopefully, will help readdress the way that women are perceived and with that being embraced by our youth, it's up to them to look at how they influence older generations as well as the generations that come after them.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You are listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the African Perspective, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 metre band. Also available on DSTV, channel 802. Today we're talking to Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Hlengiwe-Mkhize. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter:@WomanityTalk.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Deputy Minister, we have touched briefly on the impact of Covid-19 as this awful pandemic that has had massive consequences on both the social landscape as well as the economic landscape and women obviously are impacted significantly on several levels from poverty, ability to work, maintaining childcare, etc; what types of solutions have you been seeing take place to enable women in South Africa to adapt to life and let's say it's never going to be truly post-Covid, but it's about learning to live with this condition and disease that we now have in our midst?</p>
DM HLENGIWE- MKHIZE	<p>You know in our conversations through our webinars we have said Covid-19 has laid bare the fault lines in society. From the time when President Ramaphosa announced the lockdown regulations, what we saw in big numbers were women going to the streets looking for food parcels, soups, so the highest levels of hunger that people did imagine before, people didn't realise that even those who are working, they are not earning enough to be able to survive without a day without going to work. So that's what we saw and it compelled us to, you know, government has been developing work streams to us to deal with Covid-19, we really had to, you know, go to our officials, go to actually all the work streams so that the one dealing with food parcels, the gender agenda is at the centre, the one's dealing with grants, we showed them how women are affected in particular and the ones dealing with economy we made sure that we showed them where they prioritise to support women and businesses, they don't only start thinking about SMEs but they start thinking about informal traders, women selling vetcakes along the street for years, using the proceeds there to educate children, to look after the family. So really, I mean what we have done it has helped a lot, hence there was even that special grant that they thought about to say if even it is for six months, the poorest of the poor who are not benefiting from any of the grants, if they could be supported, hopefully then as we open the economy people can be able to go back to work, that these women are low-level workers in any way. So all of those interventions have really been to ensure that women cope through this difficult time, but above that we have been saying, post-Covid-19, starting from what we are doing today, we can no longer do the things we did yesterday and hope to get different results. We have to structure our</p>

	<p>economic architecture differently for different results, having in mind special empowerment of the inclusion of women deliberate in the economy, from accessing finances, land ownership, being given skills to access 40% of our procurement and so on and so on. So we are monitoring closely whatever is being done by different departments through supply chain management and asking the same question; what percentage is going to go to women and for South Africa what has been good again, our president has said ministers or [inaudible 0:35:07]secretaries, meaning director generals, their performance appraisal will also determine whether they manage to empower women through economic inclusion. So we, I think the commitment and the seriousness that has been shown at the highest level today, it's likely to give us different results.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Deputy Minister, all of those interventions that you mentioned really seem to be trying to create meaningful change and not just be political or policy rhetoric. We are unfortunately running out time, there are many more things I would have liked to have asked you, but in honour of women's month and you are going to be our last show for closing women's month, could you please share a few words of inspiration that you'd like to pass onto women in the continent that are listening to the show?</p>
DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE	<p>I think the time is now, as we anticipate the evaluation of sustainable development goals, the time is now for all of us, hold each other by hand, connect and do things together so that we succeed with all the goals but also I think if within the continent as women, we are lucky that even the African Union, when it comes to gender equality, has moved. They have taken the issue beyond talking but they are looking at implementation per country, which creates a competition of some kind and I suppose those are the gains we have having had a woman in the calibre of Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the Chair of the AU, she set a tone and created a fertile ground for what we see today. We are in a position to see the benefits of our democracy, but of course as women, we should be vocal against things like corruption, we should promote, ethical leadership and we should be the champions of equality in all respects, including issues of the LGBTIQ+ community, persons with disabilities and so on and in that way our countries will reap the benefits of democracies that we have fought for over many years, all of us.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you for that great message of one of unity, of utilising our voices and we live in a democracy, so let's use that democracy to our advantage to achieve what still needs to be done. Thank you so much for joining us today it's been a pleasure to have you on the air.</p>
DM HLENGIWE-MKHIZE	<p>Thank you Amaleya, I appreciate it.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>PROGRAMME END</p>