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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS NOZIZWE MADLALA-ROUTLEDGE – FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH

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 South Africa's former Deputy Minister of Defence and former Deputy Minister of Health, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, who more recently founded Embrace Dignity; a women's human rights NGO. Welcome to the show!
<b>MS MADLALA-ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Welcome Dr. Amaleya and congratulations on running this show!</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you very much; we're proud of being on the line for seven years and having the opportunity to host approximately three hundred and fifty fantastic women such as yourself to date.
<b>MS MADLALA-ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Thank you, I'm delighted to be invited and to participate, in fact as I was saying in one of my emails to you, I know many of the names on your list, so I am delighted to be part of this programme.</b>
DR. MALKA	Well we're glad you can join, let's say 'the club', as it were, being part of 'Womanity – Women in Unity'. Thinking about some of the women who have been on the show before and looking at the past, recently we did a programme on Heritage Day which addressed the past and looked at some of the women whose dedication and sacrifices have ensured that we enjoy freedoms and rights that we have today and thinking about your past, you joined the underground African National Congress in 1979, participated in establishing the Natal Organisation of Women and became its Chair. In 1990 you became a member of the Executive Committee of The Women's National Coalition; you contributed to work on the status of women and empowerment and thereafter you became a member of parliament, serving for fifteen years. Firstly, when did you realise that being part of politics and serving South Africa would become such an integral part of your life?
<b>MS MADLALA-ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Thank you so much for that question, I will come to an answer but I just wanted to first acknowledge the role of women in my own life, the stories of ordinary women who joined and led the struggles in our country and around the world. I read about women not only who kept the home fires burning during the time of migrant labour, when their husbands were taken away to work in the mines, but also of women in rural areas organising our land dispossession. I read about Queen Nzinga of Angola, a ruler who set her people free. In our own country I heard about Charlotte Maxeke, a pioneer for women's liberation, who was the first black South African woman to graduate from university, she's a great inspiration and for that matter I proudly tell people that my middle name is Charlotte; identifying myself with Charlotte Maxeke, she led many protests that we celebrate today. I've heard of Wangari Maathai of Kenya and the Green Belt Movement, she was a woman ahead of her time. I have met and read of Victoria Mxenge the human rights lawyer who paid with her own life for our freedom. These stories of courage and resistance are a source of hope</b>

	<p>and inspiration and we must indeed celebrate them every day and honour the sacrifice women made and continue to make. I was fortunate to go to Inanda Seminary, a girl's school started by a woman; Mary K Edwards, in 1969. Born a Quaker in Ohio in the United States, Ma Edwards as we called her, even though when I got to Inanda she had long passed, volunteered to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and was sent to Natal as the first missionary of the newly founded Women's Board of Missions. At Inanda she introduced academic subjects, domestic science, modern methods of agriculture and at the age of 80 started a nurses training programme. She pushed constantly to raise the intellectual standards of the school, despite prejudice against higher education for African girls. So Inanda Seminary with its one hundred and fifty years of history has a proud reputation for educating black South African women who have gone into the world, expemplifying the schools motto "Shine Where You Are". So I was privileged to go to such a school with dedicated teachers, all women initially, not only who trained us academically, but also trained us to be active citizens. So that was the beginning for me, at 16 I was introduced to Steven Bantu Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement. At Inanda they organised the Summer School, the programme organised at the Mahatma Ghandi Settlement nearby to raise our political awareness and teach us about community service. So that was the beginning for me and I was lucky, I consider myself very, very fortunate that I tell the story that my mother, my late mother, a teacher herself, was very certain that what she wanted for me was a good education. She didn't even have an address for Inanda Seminary, I remember that she wrote on the envelope Inanda Girls School and somehow the letter got there. So that was for me, a very firm foundation laid by my mother and the school.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>It sounds like a fantastic foundation that set you up; your thinking, having gone through and let's say a progressive education in an all girls school with some ambitious teachers who really believed in women being able to rise to their full potential and then, at 16 as you said, being introduced to Steve Biko and the Black Conscious Movement.</p>
MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE	<p>Yes and that grew and developed when I was at university. Initially I went to the Natal Medical School at the black section of the Natal Medical School, also known as [UNB], this school was created during the apartheid era for training black doctors. It became a site of struggle and a home for social activism. There are many of our leaders today who were at the University of Natal Black Section, one of them Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, Miss Gugu Khumalo and many others. So this was itself a place of growth for me, a place of political awareness. I joined the South African Students Organisation and became active in its work opposing apartheid; the inferior apartheid bantu education and also organising around student issues. So the light had been kindled at Inanda where they made me aware of the inequality, the injustice, so by the time I got to university I was already very, very like an absorbent sponge, ready to learn and to be part of the contribution to changing the situation in our country.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And looking at being able to change the situation of the country, can you share a few of the landmarks in your career and why these are so significant?</p>
MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE	<p>So having participated as a student in student politics, it was natural for me to progress into joining a political organisation outside of the university. Initially I joined the Black People's Convention created by Steve Biko and others, but unfortunately when organisations were banned and when Steve Biko was killed in 1977 it meant I could no longer participate through those</p>

	<p>structures. So then in 1979, when I was invited by a former activist who had gone into exile, to join the South African...to join the ANC, I undertook this although at that time the ANC was a banned organisation and it was very dangerous for anyone to be known to associate with the ANC, especially inside South Africa, but I was determined to continue the work of liberating, of participating in the national liberation. As part of the ANC I formed a secret cell and through this secret cell I was introduced to a group of women at the University of Natal and you heard, I think a week ago from Julie Wells, the group that she and others had formed, to revive the history of the Women's March to the Union Buildings in 1956.</p>
DR. MALKA	Is this where there was a pictorial collection of the movement?
MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE	<p>Yes, they organised the photo exhibition of the Women's March and it was at a time when it wasn't easy to organise a political gathering because there were very repressive laws from the apartheid regime, so they organised this as a cultural activity. I had not myself heard about Lilian Ngoyi, I had not heard about the Women's March, so that was a very important time in my history, in my political development, to get to know about these women and you are aware that we are building on a very rich history where women resisted and did not accept their fate as was determined by colonialists rule and apartheid rule. It was a source of great inspiration for me to read Hilda Bernstein's book 'For their Tears and for Their Triumph' or maybe it's the other way round 'For their Triumph and for their Tears' because this particular book introduced me to women from KwaZulu-Natal, Gladys Manzi was one of them, Bertha Mkhize and Mary Kipe and a couple of others, who to me were ordinary women, perhaps like myself, but who had grown to become leaders. This was of a great inspiration for me as we continued our work and the work that they had started.</p>
DR. MALKA	Now that we are in 26 years of democracy and you were an instrumental part of getting South Africa to this point of achieving our national liberation, do you think that as a country we are in the right place that you had imagined pre-1994?
MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE	<p>We are privileged as a country that we had at a point in time a leader like Nelson Mandela who after many years of imprisonment came out to persuade us to agree to come around the table and sit with our oppressors to craft a new country. At that time, in 1990 when he came out of prison, South Africa was moving very quickly towards being a bloodbath, I was personally myself in KwaZulu-Natal and we were caught up in what had become intense and violent, black-on-black violence, which was started by the state, the apartheid state, so it was very, very important at that time for us to agree to negotiate peace in South Africa. Obviously of course we may at that time perhaps have been too excited by the change and did not take into account the very specific nature of that transition and to make sure that we brought about the transformation that we had desired, the freedom that the people desired. Of course in itself it was a victory that we could now vote in a national democratic election in 1994, I think my mother was about 63 when she voted for the first time in her own country, we were very delighted that there was now going to be a black president and we were part of the new parliament, but of course the journey has now emerged to be a long struggle as Mandela had put it, but also in the process I think we have somewhat lost our way, as we see now emerging in the media and through the Zondo Commission, all of the corruption that has happened which has diverted the money which would have brought about some...which would have taken us a long distance towards achieving the goals that we had set for ourselves, I mean when we said a better life for all, when we said houses, homes and security for all, these are the things that</p>

	<p>had inspired our struggle, that people had died for. So at this point in time I think it's a very important time for us to assess where we lost our way and to make sure that when we have elections we are careful about who we elect as our leaders, but also not to give up our power completely because I think what we did looking back to the time of transition, we dismantled the mass democratic movement, we dismantled the Women's National Coalition, we dismantled a whole lot of people's organisations which are very crucial in any democracy because even though we have elected leaders who are representing us in government, in parliament, we need to have a very strong voice outside of government that holds our leaders accountable.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>When you talk about aspects like that, of some of the movements being dismantled in favour of one large movement to drive the momentum in order for it to happen, in a lot of the conversations that I've had many of the women on the programme, they said that that has had a negative impact on women's equality, because it meant that women's equality wasn't a core focus and let's look at all of the other aspects that have impacted on that, from gender based violence, to a whole host of other ills. So as a woman, do you think that we've done enough in this process to help women achieve gender equality?</p>
MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE	<p>I think when we were organising pre-1994, pre-liberation, we became very, very much aware of the need to organise women around specific issues that affect women and we were wanting to make sure that these issues are integrated into the broader agenda, into the National Liberation Movement Agenda and of course there was some resistance to this coming from, I think a misinformed understanding of a staged revolution, you know where first you must unite only to deal with issues of race, then other issues like economic injustice will follow, so at that particular point in time we had to fight hard for women's issues and women's demands to be integrated into the National Liberation Agenda, and in fact through unity, through uniting above class and gender and race, we were able to build a very strong movement which produced the Women's Charter for Gender Equality. That particular charter drew on the Women's Charter of 1954 and was a reservoir of demands coming from women, which were integrated into our constitution. We had then a very strong women's movement and many of the leaders, women leaders, who went into parliament like Frene Ginwala, Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Pregs Govender, came from this movement and what we needed, and at that time I think we were quite aware that this was important, was to continue to have this strong women's movement supporting the leaders as they went into parliament, because you know these institutions were created by men and we needed to transform them as we got into them in our numbers, but to do that we needed also to have support from the women's movement, because they were aware of what it was that we wanted to be changed in our country. So even as the leaders, women leaders went into parliament these institutions needed to, you know, continuously be reminded to change, to transform in order for it to respond, for these structures to respond to women's demands for this was is a very important part, in fact, in any situation, numbers are important and this question has arose even during our early days because suddenly there was a change from 1% representation of women in our parliament to 27% at that time, now of course that representation has improved tremendously to close to 50% representation in parliament and in the government. But as we were looking at the numbers we were also very, very, aware of the fact that it's also about the agenda, it's the issues that the women bring into these institutions, it's not only just a matter of numbers. So this continues to be an important factor, even as we look at women leadership everywhere.</p>

DR. MALKA	Thinking for a moment about women’s movements cultivating and pushing through with women’s specific agenda’s, what do you feel that we have in existence today, in South Africa, as something that is equal to the types of movements that you had pre-1994 to galvanise and have a focused agenda for women?
<b>MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Okay you’ve raised a very important point which I should have commented on, gender based violence and we also add femicide. This is a key issue around which women have united in our country. Obviously of course we have women coming from different sectors, whether it’s in the trade unions, whether it’s professional women or women in the civic movement, young women, older women, you know, women of all colours, we experience gender based violence, it therefore is important for us to unite and organise ourselves and speak with a strong voice, which is what I think is happening now. So I see women, whether they are in academia as you are, or in the media, needing to pick up what, in that sector, are the issues that arise for them. In the struggle we began by sitting around the table and asking women what are the issues, what are the priority areas, issues for you and of course we learned that there were issues that could be grouped as practical women’s needs and strategic gender demands and that was very important for us because it then allowed us to say okay, let’s organise around those issues because people will come into your movement if the issue that you are discussing affects them. They have to feel that this is something that is close to home, which therefore they need to be part of changing. So that continues to be the case even today, even as we sit in our different spaces, in our different corners, whether it’s in the media or at the universities, it’s important to identify these issues and to organise around them and then we come together across this divide and make representations to the institutions that hold power, but it in our own situations where we are, we must be part of making the change.</b>
DR. MALKA	And if I’m not mistaken, you have been developing some policy work in that area specifically around femicide and gender based violence?
<b>MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>This is a priority for all of us in this country because as the president has said, with Covid-19 we have a twin pandemic when you look at the pandemic of gender based violence and it will destroy us as a country if we do not act together. Specifically for me I was fortunate to be part of a structure in parliament called The Women’s Caucus, we started to identify these issues and we work together with women in civil society who focus on these issues and they informed our legislative agenda so that even as we were looking at the Domestic Violence Act, they were assisting us, bringing their professional experience into making sure that the law is designed in such a way that it responds to the issues. Obviously presently there has been a need identified for us to strengthen these laws and the changes that are happening now with the bills in parliament have also come about from practitioners on the ground saying this is not working, the Domestic Violence Act is not sufficiently being implemented, the criminal justice system is not transformed sufficiently enough to understand when women come to report cases of rape there needs to be a change and the criminal justice and the practitioners in the criminal justice system need to be better trained. Also one of the suggested amendments in the Domestic Violence...in the Sexual Offences Act is requiring that we maintain a sex offenders register and keep it out there so that people are aware of people who have, you know, been found guilty of a sexual offence. Now in the area where I work we look at very specific aspects of gender based violence and this is violence that women in the sex trade are experiencing. To start with,</b>

	<p>our own understanding is that this violence is systematic, it's the vulnerabilities that the women experience in society which drives them into the sex trade, to start with, and then inside the sex trade itself there's intrinsic violence. It's an exploitative industry, it's an industry that makes a lot of money for some people, but not for the individuals involved, the women who are being prostituted in the industry, who often come out severely traumatised by the experience, some of them come out addicted to drugs and alcohol and our position therefore is that our intervention to end this gender based violence is supposed to focus on ending the demand, because we believe that without the demand there would not be the supply, but also we believe that there has to be a strong programme supporting women who want to exit the system of prostitution. We need a very strong programme that keeps the women and girls at school so that when people come out they make more informed choices, these are choices informed by opportunities that have been made available. When we speak to many survivors of the sex trade, they tell us this was not a choice they would have made had there been other choices, so our position is that we should not criminalise people who have been made criminals by the very system that our country or elsewhere in the world has allowed for women's bodies to be commodified, rather we should focus on the perpetrators, we should focus on those who are exploiting this situation.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>You've certainly highlighted a new lens of gender based violence through exploitation, one which I would say we haven't really considered on the show previously. We looked at it from aspects of more from domestic violence as incidents as opposed to exploitation.</p>
MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE	<p>Yes and we thank you very much for opening this space for us to be able to share what we have learned. Embrace Dignity is ten years old now and we've learned directly from the lived experience of the survivors, women who inform us, who work with us and our approach is one that is not judgemental, we listen and we learn from them and we are very pleased that our country has now taken the step to have researched this area using the South African Law Reform Commission and we have looked at the report of the South African Law Reform Commission, which was commissioned by government, and we are happy that the Commission's report actually understands the issue and has totally rejected the idea of decriminalising prostitution. We are happy that the government is committed now to tabling some bills in parliament and we're going to be participating in this process. We have, fortunately, examples from other countries and I was going to mention something when you were asking about female leadership, the Nordic countries that really led us internationally in terms of their structures of their government and their parliament, they achieved gender parity way before many countries have and in fact Sweden has declared itself as a feminist government and that's a very important thing to do because it actually says every policy they pass will go the gender lens, what is the impact of this policy, from power relations between women and men, it's a very important starting point. So Sweden, in 1999, passed a law on adult prostitution that looked at it within the broader lens of as fighting gender based violence and they came up an example, which many other countries are emulating, where they decriminalise only those selling sex who are focusing on ending the demand. So the buying of sex is criminalised, pimping is criminalised, exploitation in terms of commodification of women's bodies, is criminalised. So this is, I think, a very progressive way of looking at it and we think that South Africa should carefully look at this example, especially in our context of high levels of unemployment, which is a driving factor, high levels of</p>

	<b>gender based violence and remaining high levels of economic inequality, because even though our country has achieved so much, we are still a very unequal society. We are one of the most unequal countries in the world and this is driving much of this vulnerability that I am talking about.</b>
DR. MALKA	South Africa certainly, as you say, we have made a lot of progress and we have no doubt made significant achievements, but there are still a lot of challenges that remain. You've spoken about Sweden, you've spoken about the Nordic countries as a whole and a lot of our guests have also spoken about them in terms of the positive attributes and their drive to attain an egalitarian society. Obviously, we are in a completely different environment, completely different geography with varying circumstances; what do you think that we need from a South African point of view, to help get us to a point of a more egalitarian society?
<b>MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>I am quite aware that our context is different, but I think we are moving very strongly, leading up to 1994, towards ensuring the building of an egalitarian society. Even when you look at our constitution, the rights that are incorporated and protected by our constitution talk about equality, gender equality, social equality, economic justice. What we need to do as a country is to continue on that trajectory, on identifying what are the factors that are deepening our inequality, that are deepening poverty. So even as our country looks at its recovery from Covid-19, this is an opportunity for us to say so how has Covid-19 affected women and men differently, whether we are talking about women owned businesses, whether we are talking about women's roles in the home, in society as a whole, how can this economic recovery then be used as a stimulus for moving us towards greater equality as a society, both in terms of economic equality and social equality. I know that presently our cabinet is meeting, they are having their Lekhotla, they are looking at the policies of the ANC, I think it's a very important time now in our country, especially with the leadership of our president, who was there, in fact who led the negotiations with the ANC and other parties and was there when we adopted our constitution, to actually be the leader and the strong voice for the achievement of the goals outlined in our constitution. Our people are ready, I think they want to participate, we want to see crime and corruption being dealt with, we want to be part of rebuilding this country and I think this is important for all of us to not only look at what the cabinet will do, but to look at what we each can do to change the situation for the better in our country. I think we all have a role, your own role, in highlighting the role of women and that legacy is an important part of that because if we don't look back at our history to see what examples we have of courage, of leadership, we then might think there's no hope for the future and yet we have so many examples where people acted courageously to make a difference. I think about Charlotte Maxeke as an example I made earlier, you know, going into a foreign country to acquire a degree and be the first black South African woman to have a degree is one of the fantastic examples.</b>
DR. MALKA	Listening to everything that you've told us and reflecting on this aspect of transformation, you demonstrated that pre-1994 the apartheid legacy, South Africa managed to overcome, drive change, become a democratic country, this theme of transformation shows that things are possible, that we can drive change, that it's not just about government being encumbered with this task, but it's also about us as ordinary citizens taking on our own responsibility and playing our own part and being responsible to be the change that we want to see. Ms Madlala-Routledge, we are unfortunately running out of time, so if I can please ask you, in closing our conversation today, to share a few words of

	inspiration or wisdom that you'd like to pass onto young women who are listening to us on the continent?
<b>MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Thank you very much. My favourite quote is by Audrey Lorde, an American writer, feminist, womanist, librarian and civil rights activist, when she said, and I quote "When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I'm afraid". I use this as my motto because it's not always easy to stand up and take action, the most important thing is to use your vision, to use your power in the service of your vision, whether you are afraid and I have another quotation very quickly from Mandela, who said "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the strength to overcome fear" and those two I think are very important as we look at our roles going forward. I particularly wanted to encourage young women, I remember watching a documentary where Gloria Steinem, who is a feminist and leader in the United States, was asked if she was ready to hand over the baton to younger women and I liked her response because she said no, no, no I'm not handing it over, but I'm sharing it, because to me that actually said even when I've reached my age, there is still a role but I must use my power and my strength to encourage others.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you for sharing your bravery and the words of courage, it's about being able to be resilient and endure and not be afraid of doing the right thing.
<b>MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Thank you and looking up to you, I really appreciate your strength, your leadership and I see you are doing your second PhD, you've received many awards, you are an example and mentor and I wish we could all build our strength to making sure that every girl and woman has an opportunity to be the best that they can be.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much for your words of inspiration and for joining us on the show today, it's been wonderful having you on board.
<b>MS MADLALA- ROUTLEDGE</b>	<b>Thank you so much.</b>
	<b>PROGRAMME END</b>