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GUEST NAME: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY COMPILATION - AMBASSADOR FIONNUALA GILSENAN; AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE; DEPUTY MINISTER CANDITH MASHEGO-DLAMINI

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	In recognition of International Women’s Day, which is celebrated annually on the 8 <sup>th</sup> of March, today’s series takes us around the world to hear international voices from ambassadors and high commissioners from different countries who have featured on this show. The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day is <u>Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a Covid-19 World</u> .
DR. MALKA	I think it’s worth bearing in mind that United Nations Women states that “gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth”.
DR. MALKA	Joining us on the line today is the Ambassador of Ireland to the Republic of South Africa and Mauritius, Ambassador Designate to Botswana, Kingdom of Lesotho and Zimbabwe, Fionnuala Gilsean. Welcome to the show Ambassador!
AMBASSADOR FIONNUALA GILSENAN	<b>Thank you very much it’s lovely to be back on again!</b>
DR. MALKA	To begin with, in your opinion, what is the significance of International Women’s Day and its relevance today?
AMBASSADOR FIONNUALA GILSENAN	<b>I mean the thing that I really like about International Women’s Day, particularly for those of us who are committed to the work of gender equality which we do 365 days a year, is that it’s a time really for reflection that helps us to, you know, look back at how far we’ve come, you know, over the last year or even longer. I also think it’s really important for young women because it isn’t always the case that young women understand the struggles and the successes and sometimes can be very focused on the challenges and the problems, but it’s good to remember that we actually have made progress and International Women’s Day is a day to celebrate that progress, but it’s also a day to look at the kinds of challenges that we have and as women to really begin to strategise collectively on how we deal with those problems into the future. So, I have to say it’s a day I really like and I like to do something on that day, you know, be involved in some way in something that’s very particular to International Women’s day.</b>
DR. MALKA	And do you have any particular plans on how you’re going to celebrate or commemorate the event?
AMBASSADOR FIONNUALA GILSENAN	<b>This year I’m hoping to gather some Irish women in business operating in Gauteng and surrounds to have a conversation with them about the kind of businesses they’re engaged in, the kinds of issues they’re finding for women in leadership and just look at building a network of Irish women and Irish linked women, so there are South African women maybe who studied in Ireland and just try to pull together a group of women that I haven’t met before and particularly in these times when it’s difficult to meet, trying to find constellations of smaller groups of women that you can meet will be</b>

	<b>important and then we'll also do something internally in the Embassy to mark the day. We have quite a strong women's staff at the Embassy and it's always important for us to mark that day as the staff at the Embassy of Ireland.</b>
DR. MALKA	And this aspect of networking is so critical for women, particularly when it comes to the business world, it's something which we see time and time again that women are not so good at doing, but perhaps that is a benefit out of Covid which is forcing us into Zoom screens and Team meets to improve our networking capabilities.
<b>AMBASSADOR FINNUALA GILSENAN</b>	<b>Yeah I think it's really important because it comes very naturally to men because they spend time out in the world, whereas women are often balancing a lot of different requirements between home and work and friendships and extended family, so finding time to network is really important because there's a huge value in that for women and there's a huge value in it for everyone, that's why men spend time on the golf course. So it is really important for us to build those networks, to build those connections and that allows us to share experience and strategise around the kind of challenges that face, you often find a solution in a conversation with somebody that you hadn't expected, just merely through meeting somebody that is not in your usual kind of immediate or extended circle, so it's really I have to say, a thing that I think is extremely important and should be encouraged by those of us who can convene these kinds of groups.</b>
DR. MALKA	And thinking about the nature of leadership, this year's theme is Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a Covid-19 World; it really emphasises the role that female leaders are playing in pursuit of the quality. As a female leader, in the short-term, what types of mechanisms do you think could be used to reduce the inequalities that women still experience?
<b>AMBASSADOR FINNUALA GILSENAN</b>	<b>I was thinking about this and, you know, just looking at the broader theme for International Women's Day this year is around, you know, challenging gender inequality and challenging maybe misogyny and calling out behaviour that we see and I think that that's quite important because there is a lot of experience of discrimination that you meet on a daily basis and for reasons of politeness or you know, that you just don't feel comfortable, you don't feel confident; you don't call that out and I think that that's really a role now for men and women, is to actually challenge gender inequality when they see it and when they hear it and I think that that's something that's quite important when it comes to gender based violence because we all know the silence that surrounds gender based violence, particularly in the domestic sphere. So I think having the courage to call out is extremely important as a short-term mechanism. The other thing that I would say is that, you know, women's organisations are extremely important, the more isolated you are the more vulnerable you are, so connecting into women's organisations and trying to find those, I mean sometimes there are networks but sometimes there are actually organisations that allow women to have strength in numbers and to understand better the kinds of challenges that they face is really important and again that analysis comes from jointly looking at the problems that we encounter and then understanding the root causes of those problems and that in turn allows you to develop strategies that are meaningful. So I would say for me they are some of the things that are quite important in the short-term that we need to engage with, there are many more, but just to highlight a few.</b>
DR. MALKA	Of course and the ones that you've proposed are very actionable, anybody can call gender inequality out when they see it, it's not something that is going to

	take a tremendous effort to go and implement, it's simply seeing things, hearing things and calling people to task.
<b>AMBASSADOR FINNUALA GILSENAN</b>	<b>And what I notice now as well in popular culture, so I think this is a big advantage for young people and, you know, I notice more now watching TV shows and so on that actually these things are called out when people say "that's not cool" and it's kind of, you know, it's actually providing a language for young people to address these issues, perhaps I would say a language that maybe we didn't have when I was younger and it's a huge advantage to have that happening in popular culture because you can take it much more easily and integrate it into your social interactions with people and I would say the language is quite important, you know, that that's the first...it's the first point at which you can challenge people. Actions usually follow language, so it really is something that, as you say, everybody can do and everybody has the power to engage in that challenge and calling these issues out.</b>
DR. MALKA	Ambassador, Ireland has been known for some of its prominent ladies, the likes of Mary Robinson come to mind immediately; can you please use this platform in honour of International Women's Day to share a couple of stories or features about women who have made important changes or rather have been important change agents in Ireland?
<b>AMBASSADOR FINNUALA GILSENAN</b>	<b>Yeah I mean it's really hard to talk about change in Ireland and women leaders in Ireland without talking about Mary Robinson because she's been so influential in terms of the issues that she has aligned herself with from early on, you know, so Mary Robinson was very influential in Ireland even before she became president, she campaigned very strongly for family planning rights for women, she campaigned very strongly on equality for gay and lesbian people and these are issues that, you know, in the 70's and 80's nobody in Ireland wanted to, you know, address those issues and then the way she used her presidency was extremely innovative, you know, the presidency in Ireland is a non-executive role, so largely the space that you operate in is symbolic and she just opened up the presidency to, you know, to ordinary people, she engaged with community groups, she engaged with people who were marginalised within society who didn't have voice and she demonstrated how you can use your leadership position to really make a difference, without necessarily having political power as such, but having the power of I suppose it's political power with a small p and its social capital and it's educational capital and it's intellectual capital that was all deployed to make a difference in people's lives. The other person I wanted to mention who won't be known internationally is a woman called Catherine Corless and she is really the epitome of an ordinary person, you know, she lives in the West of Ireland and she gave up work to look after her four children and she developed an interest in local history and in kind of thinking back in her own childhood, she remembered these kids who were kept in an institution, who were the children of unmarried mothers and she did some amazing historical research about those children and particularly she was conscious that many had died unrecognised, but in fact you know, the story was largely forgotten, largely suppressed and over a great number of years she maintained a commitment to uncovering the truth about those children and in turn the truth about what their mothers suffered and I think that that was an incredibly important contribution to Irish society, because if you don't know your past, then it's very, very difficult for you to ensure that the same kinds of things don't happen again and so she made a tremendous contribution and I just wanted to mention her because internationally she won't be well-known, but she's an example</b>

	<b>of an ordinary person who decided that she wanted to make a real difference to the lives of women who had suffered in a very grand way.</b>
DR. MALKA	It is an important contribution, especially in Irish society of being able to have people recall their history so that they can move forward with their present. And lastly, Ambassador, in celebration of International Women’s Day, please can you share a short message for girls and women who are listening to us?
<b>AMBASSADOR FINNUALA GILSENAN</b>	<b>You know I think when I was studying and was lucky enough to do gender studies, the thing in gender studies that I liked the most was this idea of women’s agency and I think that it’s because so often I grew up in a narrative of women as victims or women as second class citizens, women who didn’t have power and when I was introduced to this concept of women’s agency, the idea that women actually do have power, that you do have the possibility of changing your own circumstances, I found that incredibly liberating. So I suppose I just want to remind people, I want to remind women and girls in particular, that it’s important to remember your own power and you know even if that power is limited by the society that you’re growing up in or the circumstances that you have, economic circumstances or otherwise, but still, there’s always some room to express your own power and your own agency. So that would be my message; remember you have agency.</b>
DR. MALKA	Wonderful message and thank you, it is really about uplifting your spirit as you go on. That was Ambassador Finnuala Gilsean of Ireland to the Republic of South Africa and Mauritius, Ambassador Designate to Botswana, Kingdom of Lesotho and Zimbabwe.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
DR. MALKA	Joining us for our next segment in our Special Edition on our Compilation for International Women’s day is the Ambassador of Senegal to the SADC region, Ambassador Safiatou Ndiaye. Welcome to the show Ambassador, it’s great to host you again.
<b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b>	<b>Thank you Dr. Malka it’s a great pleasure for me to be your guest in this wonderful show ‘Womanity’, thank you for inviting Senegal.</b>
DR. MALKA	Absolute pleasure. Ambassador to begin with, the theme for international Women’s Day this year is “Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 World”; it aims to celebrate the tremendous efforts that women and girls around the world are playing in terms of shaping a more equal future, as well as recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, it also aligns with calls for women’s rights to decision-making across all areas of life; what are your perspectives of the theme and how can we not only encourage more women to assume decision-making roles, but also for them to be accepted in these positions?
<b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b>	<b>You know this pandemic Dr. Malka was something of course terrible, we all know that, but terrible mostly for women. First of all I would like to recall the heavy consequences that women around the world suffered during this crises, in fact in this time of Corona virus, women suffered disproportionately because they were taking care of themselves, far from infections, but taking care also for their families to protect them from the infections, but economically speaking, the situation of course is the same all over the world, men and women generally work in different sectors, but in the service sectors hard hit by the current crises, women are over represented, they work as receptionists, housekeepers, flight attendants, waitresses, hairdressers, etcetera and in especially in low income countries many women work in the informal sector and therefore do not benefit from social protection, unemployment insurance or any other kind of support,</b>

	<p>that’s why it was really hard for women in some areas. And also the weight of domestic tasks is very complicated for a woman, between men and women within a household, normally we share the task, but in normal times and under prevailing special norms women and girls take responsibility for housework, maintenance and care for family members, but it is very likely that the burden of these tasks during this pandemic has increased for the women, because first of closure of schools, some of them were obliged to take care of their kids at home. The quarantine, they were obliged also to take care of the elderly in the house, the growing number of sick people around their communities; women were obliged to take care of all these and the situation is likely to cause many women around the world to quit their jobs because they couldn’t continue to handle all this and since that teleworking is not possible sometimes, most of them they end up being at home facing a lot a lot of problems. But however, we must still salute the strong mobilisation of women during this pandemic. Already in terms of communication they have been present everywhere, using all digital communication platforms, but also community radios, as in Senegal, awareness has been done in several local languages, this is also the case in many countries around the world where women have made their voice heard in the global struggle, that was globally, Dr. Malka, my point in that question concerning global leadership.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Certainly, I mean women have been hit because they operate a lot in the informal sector, they operate on the frontlines as essential workers and all of that has a compounding effect with this view of doubling up on home chores or home labour that plays a strong role in this space. From a Senegalese perspective, many societies on the African continent are patriarchal and that has really impacted negatively on progressing equality for women, yet interestingly in some areas of Senegal, there are matriarchal cultures; can you tell us about some of the practices and what the benefits have been for women in terms of equality?</p>
<p><b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b></p>	<p><b>Yes, as in other African countries, matriarchal culture exists in certain regions of Senegal. One of the main obstacles to gender equality of women, the shift from historical matriarchal system to patriarchal, however, it should be noted that Senegal has made significant progress in terms of taking charge of the gender parity. First of all I would like to recall that the right to vote for Senegalese women was granted on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1945, in other words, the battle was won very early in this regard in Senegal. Then since 2010, the law establishing absolute parity between men and women in all fully or partially elective institutions had been passed and I’m very proud to say that I’m a member, I’m still a member of that board. With this law it’s the establishment of the healthy and objective competition, social justice and the recognition of the importance of the position of the involvement of all women to meet the challenges of construction and development in our country. Also, on January 2020, His Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal officially promulgated law number 2020/05; Criminalisation, Rape and Paedophilia in Senegal. Before this law rape was considered a simple offence punishable by five to ten years in prison, from now on, the perpetrators of rape and paedophile act will be tried in the Criminal Chamber and face a sentence of up to life imprisonment and it’s for women and children a big, big step forward. This means that notable acts have been taken in Senegal in the area of women’s rights and equality.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>With these types of acts that have come into place and when you’re talking about attaining the opportunity to vote in South Africa, the majority of women as a population only got that opportunity in 1994, but nonetheless, from a Senegalese</p>

	<p>perspective with these types of opportunities, it really must have empowered women in Senegal; so could you tell us about some of the trailblazers or change makers that have left a mark in Senegal?</p>
<p><b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b></p>	<p><b>With great pleasure. My example today will be Ndjeumbeut Mbodji. Ndjeumbeut Mbodji was a queen in Waalo; Waalo is in the northern part of Senegal. She was born around the 1800's and she died in September 1846 and as a queen she was also resistant to colonial penetration. A woman who was fighting, leading troops and who even went up to accepting to get married to the Emir of Trarza, from the Mauritanian side because of the slave trade, there was too many slave trades and seeing that her empire in the Waalo was weak in front of the Emir of Trarza, of the Mauritanian side, she accepted even to get married so that we can have this agreement. Ndjeumbeut Mbodji was also very involved in politics at that time already in Senegal; she organised a lot of elections, even though a woman as a queen couldn't be the one leading the community, she was the one responsible for the nomination and election of at least two Waalo Braks, the Brak who was the king at that time, she was the one who was in charge, because the noble council of electors in charge of electing the kings in this family would have been briefed by Ndjeumbeut Mbodji to appoint at least her preferred candidates, that's one of the key roles of a woman in Senegal since really a long time. Ndjeumbeut Mbodji was one of the monarchs of pre-colonial Senegambia who resisted hard to colonial administration. She was also seen as a strong and powerful woman who brought her country and her people together by agreeing, as I said to you earlier, to marry the Emir of Trarza to ensure security in her kingdom and her people. She died in 1846 and up to now we are celebrating Queen Ndjeumbeut Mbodjie and even her sister, her younger sister who came after her, Lingeer Ndaté. When you go into our history files you can discover a lot about these women who are the pioneers really of fighting, there are a lot of them, it was just an example that I choose today.</b></p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>And that's something which I admire from African history in particular, the role of women in peacekeeping, where they would marry into tribal...tribes where there was conflict and she restored tranquillity between her tribe and the tribe that she married into and I think that's something which is very different if you think about it from a Western perspective, when we were being colonised as a continent, it was very much about conquering as opposed to uniting.</p>
<p><b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b></p>	<p><b>It was a big sacrifice I think that these women was doing to make sure that they will protect their people, but women are continuing to make sacrifices, still, up to now.</b></p>
<p>DR. MALKA</p>	<p>Indeed we are, hopefully those sacrifices will pave the way for the women that come after us and make their life easier and if we assume it as almost our debt and our burden of paying forward. Ambassador, as we come to the end of the segment, please could you use this platform to share some words in recognition of International Women's Day.</p>
<p><b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b></p>	<p><b>Yes, on this moment of celebration of the International Women's Day I will say Women's International, Women's Month actually, I would like first to congratulate all the women of the world for their countless efforts that they're making on a daily basis for the survival of their families, on the key positions they hold with bravery and self-sacrifice and then I urge them also to remain more mobilised for the defence and safeguard of their interests, wherever they are. The world needs today more than ever, more educated and committed women than ever before, because the challenges are still numerous and they, like men, must provide solutions to the problem, which arise not only for the present generation, but also for those</b></p>

	<b>of the future and I would like also Dr. Malka, to take the opportunity to congratulate you personally for this tremendous work you are doing, giving an opportunity to all women from wherever they're coming from, to have this wonderful platform to share their views, to raise their voice, thank you for what you are doing.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thank you so much Ambassador, we appreciate that compliment.
<b>AMBASSADOR SAFIATOU NDIAYE</b>	<b>My pleasure.</b>
DR. MALKA	That was Ambassador Safitou Ndiaye of Sengal, who represents Senegal across the SADC region.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
DR. MALKA	Joining us for our next segment in our Special Edition on our Compilation for International Women's Day is Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperations, Ms. Candith Mashego-Dlamini.
DR. MALKA	Deputy Minister, the 8 <sup>th</sup> of March is International Women's Day, where women celebrate across the world; how do you see the role of female leadership, whether it's in the business space, academic, government or any other field for that matter?
<b>DM MASHEGO-DLAMINI</b>	<b>Well this year's theme is really a very critical one, more so we have experienced the Covid-19 almost twelve months, as you said, and now women in leadership really needs to strive to achieve the better things during this difficult time. So, we are looking forward that our women as they are celebrating the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, our women must really come out in all their numbers, whether in webinars or in zoom and all that, so that we discuss the women taking space in the Continental Free Trade Area, the women taking space in the community in terms of the coming up with the better vaccines that is an African vaccine and the women taking space that they are taking the vaccines because most of our woman as it stands now, they are frontline workers, majority of them are frontline workers and these are the people that need to work tirelessly for us so that our lives can be safe, but their lives must be saved first before our lives are saved. So as the vaccine is here now, in South Africa, and the South African programme is ready to vaccinate the frontline workers, I plead for all our women to take the vaccine so that their lives can be spared for us.</b>
DR. MALKA	That's a very important message because it has that ripple effect, you've got the frontline workers who are actively seeing patients, you've got women who then go back to their homes, attend to their families....
<b>DM MASHEGO-DLAMINI</b>	<b>...yes...</b>
DR. MALKA	...and from a leadership perspective, the challenge that always strikes me is that across the world we have got very, very few women who are heads of state, but yet, if we think about some of the women who have led their countries from a Covid-19 environment, the likes of Sanna Marin, Angela Merkel, Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand; these are all women who are demonstrating exemplary leadership; how can we strengthen female leadership qualities to see more women coming up and occupying leadership spaces?
<b>DM MASHEGO-DLAMINI</b>	<b>Well I think we need really to make sure that we give space, you know in Africa we have got culture, we have got religion and we have got beliefs and all these things, but I pray that one day African communities will realise that all the things that are put on our table in front of us, all the things that are done and these are done properly, all the things that are implemented properly even in government, it is because of these woman that when they</b>

	<p>are doing the community work they are thinking about their children, they are not thinking about their stomachs. So most of our women are not corrupt, this is a sector of our population that needed to be given space for a better service delivery in our communities, especially in Africa. We're quite aware, we read a lot about this one's corrupt, taking the money from government and doing this and that, arresting this and that, but there's no name of a woman who has just disadvantaged poor communities and tried to enrich herself, so the community of Africa and South Africa in particular, they must realise that and start to make a good choice when they elect leadership.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And Deputy Minister, you are a leader, you occupy a very important role for the country and for the continent; can you tell us a little bit more about your personal journey and some of the factors that have contributed to your success?</p>
DM MASHEGO-DLAMINI	<p>Well my personal journey was not that good one, I cannot appreciate it because I joined politics and I was a teacher and a politician at the same time and also, I had women whom I see as good leaders, the women that really mentored me to be what I am, women the likes of the late Winnie Mandela, the late Albertina Sisulu, may their spirits rest in peace of course, they have contributed in my life to be what I am today and my feeling is that I need to transfer what I am today to other young women so that they really can understand that if you are a woman it really takes strength and commitment for you to contribute in the entire society, in the community and also in the country. So I really appreciate the mentorship and the growth that I received from these women and other women that I didn't mention, definitely they were my role models, they were my teachers and they have made me what I am.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And in honour of International Women's Day, could you please use this platform to share a message?</p>
DM MASHEGO-DLAMINI	<p>Of course in honour for the International Women's Day, I just want to say women, wherever you are, in whatever corner you are, whether in the rural or urban, I know that some of our women they are so devastated, they are almost really looking around because of this Covid that they can't really do anything, I am still saying to them, life it's still there, please let's contribute to our economy, let's contribute in growing our children in a proper environment, let's teach our children good manners, let's help our children to study because it is very difficult to study during this Covid-19, all of us women, let's give support to our children and to our teachers who are teaching our children.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you very much for that message and we wish you a happy Women's Day.</p>
DM MASHEGO-DLAMINI	<p>Thank you very much, thank you very much and thank you to the listeners.</p>
	<p><b>PROGRAMME END</b></p>