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**GUEST NAME: MS. NOMSA MARCHESI – DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE PARTY –
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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 Ms. Nomsa Marchesi from the Democratic Alliance Party who serves as a Member of Parliament; she sits on the Portfolio Committee of Higher Education, Science and Technology and joins us in our series covering perspectives from women across different political parties in the country. Welcome to the show!
MS. MARCHESI	Thank you Dr. Amaleya, thank you for having me.
DR. MALKA	Ms. Marchesi, over the course of this series we have spoken to female parliament members from the DA, EFF, FFP, ATM and IFP, who have shared their views as women serving in parliament. Previously you served on the Portfolio Committee for Basic Education and now you're serving on the Higher Education, Science and Technology Portfolio Committee; please tell us about this portfolio in respect of some of your tasks and specific targets that you want to achieve in this term.
MS. MARCHESI	As you said, you know, I was on basic education previously, whereby I was responsible as a shadow minister of basic education for the Democratic Alliance, that has been a foundation for me to be able to have a better understanding of how to drive, you know, policies and also how to have issues that specifically have an impact on the ground. Now that I'm on Higher Education, I have been allocated to be responsible for TVET institutions. What I intend to do and what I have observed, you know, the one thing that I have realised is the fact that the curriculum that the TVET colleges currently have does not really translate to what the intentions are from the department to ensure that our adults, young adults, end up in jobs and they are able to be of any influence or take part in the economy of the country, so my aim is basically to maybe look at that and influence the curriculum because at the end of the day what we need to see is, you know, graduates from the TVET colleges being able to access the job market, to be able to influence our economy, to be able to have start-up businesses and also to be able to create jobs, which is not what is happening currently in South Africa. So that is something that I intend to do and I think it will be good also to look at models from different countries, like for instance in Germany, what they have is programmes whereby students who decide to go to TVET colleges, they go even way before they get to matric, like round about grade eight, then they move to TVET colleges whereby they are exposed to technical work so that, you know, not only do they learn academically but also they are exposed to the day-to-day of how the businesses or whatever business or whatever area that they would like to enter into, that they understand it, so I think that's something that as South Africans we have to look at.
DR. MALKA	TVET is such an important aspect and any form of let's say higher education post your basic education is essential in terms of being able to become

	economically productive citizens of the country.
MS. MARCHESI	It is, the one thing that we have been blessed with as a country is that we're a young nation and we need to be able to tap into that; it's not only, you know, what our current government is focusing on, which is our natural resources, we need to be able to identify those who have a mind like a very technical mind and can be able to assist, you know, and come up with innovative ways of being part of the technology that we are seeing around us. We cannot just be biased of technology, we need to have a role that we can play in being participants of creation that is out there and innovation and I think, you know, when I look at somebody like Elon Musk, I say sometimes like you know it's good that he left South Africa because I don't think he would be where he is now, but at the same time it shows that, you know, that our capability as South Africans that we can, if we are given an opportunity, we can be able to achieve a lot and at the moment I think we are suffocating our young people, they're not providing them, they're not giving them opportunities that they could actually be able to be part of new ways of doing things and be partakers into an economy that is driven by technology. Without technology we wouldn't have been able to do what we're able to do, for us to be sitting now and having this conversation.
DR. MALKA	Sure and a few points there, I mean one perfect case in point in terms of us having this dialogue made possible because of technology and secondly, I was reading a newspaper article, in fact at the end of last week, which indicated that only 6% of the South African population has a university degree. So in that, if we think of the extent of our population, that 94% of our people do not possess a university degree and qualification, having a TVET diploma this is one leg up the rung, it doesn't stop you in the future from pursuing another degree or qualification down the line, but it gives you a leg up into something which is practical, which is artisan, which gets you on the ground running and either into your own practice as an entrepreneur and business person or joining another firm that specialises in your focal area. Ms. Marchesi you've been a member of parliament for several years now; please can you share some of the responsibilities that come with being an MP?
MS. MARCHESI	You know being an MP is actually very interesting because not only you drive legislation in parliament, but you have a perspective from the ground, of what's happening on the ground and at the same time you have the ability and the power to be able to motivate and influence policies that can be realised by an ordinary person on the ground. So, being a member of parliament, it's something that it shouldn't be taken for granted, you have the ability to change the course our country to the better and how do you translate that policies and also not only to policies but to be able to implement what can actually be realised on the ground. So what I do, basically, is that as you might know on Monday's is usually our constituency day whereby we have to interact with the voters, see what the issues are and those is what you bring to parliament when you go back to parliament, you know, you have to do your motions, you participate in debates, but what is most crucial is being in a committee and being able to voice the concerns of your citizens. In committees you have also an opportunity to speak directly to the minister, so we have that, we have the privilege of that and you forge also relations with the different stakeholders. It's not a very easy thing because the option that I had for instance in Basic Education, I was able to influence the work that our teachers do, because my concern was that, initially, was the fact that you know, during protests the schooling basically stops abruptly, let's just say for instance if the teachers decide to go and protest, that's what I'm talking

	about and you know, despite the fact that the teachers have a right to be able to protest, at the same time you know, that you know there is some kind of guidance and I was able to do that, but only in hostels. So those are kind of things that we do as members of parliament and they basically translate to us having a better life, having opportunities out there and also, you know, protecting your citizens as much as you can as a member of parliament.
DR. MALKA	That was a fantastic context with great illustrations of the work that you're doing and how you're able to effect change, which I think must be one of the most rewarding options, being within the structures that you participate in, is that you are driving meaningful change and making an impact in people's lives
	AD BREAK
DR. MALKA	Turning towards the Democratic Alliance as a party itself; what is the party's policy regarding representation of women in its structures?
/+MS. MARCHESI	The Democratic Alliance believes that there has to be representation across the board. We have to have gender representation, we have to have geographic representation, we have to have cultural representation and also we have to look at, you know, the different ages as well, because also we believe in the ability of youth, so those are things that we always have to be cognizant of, you know, when we make decisions of who are going to be our representatives in all these different spheres. No list within the Democratic Alliance goes through without those different aspects being ticked and marked before it can actually be...the list can be approved, we have a good representation there.
DR. MALKA	So there is conscious criteria in place, now, tell us about your journey into politics.
MS. MARCHESI	I don't personally have a political background, but politics have influenced....will influence you, I mean they influenced me when I was at school. It was in the eighties when everyone was protesting and whether you are part of it or not part of it, it just...you eventually will be drawn into it, so, it was just after the 1976 protests and basically the fabric of our school system was basically falling apart because of, you know, the struggle that we were experiencing and also the awareness. I think mostly the 1980's our children were very much aware of the fact that, you know, the education that's still being offered, that it would not really be opening doors for them and that's when, you know, you saw the escalation of protests throughout the eighties, as a matter of fact, I had to leave my school in 1986 to go to Wedela High School, which is in Carletonville, which was seen as more of a conforming kind of young people who were not part of strikes, because I grew up in Bloemfontein and literally every day we had protests. We had protests continuously and there was no way that you could actually have an opportunity to say, you know, there's a normal day at school, so that was a concern to my parents because my grandmother believed that I cannot sit on the table and be able to debate my struggles without education, so she had a different mindset as compared to the mindsets that was in my school, that was prevalent in my school where it was like no, if we don't have freedom there's not going to be any education that is going to take place in our school. So that was basically the struggle that we had as the children of those years.
DR. MALKA	And that gives you firsthand insight in terms of what it takes of school disruption with regards to your own education and I'm sure that must have influenced your choices and decisioning within the basic education sector to try to ensure that kids have continuity in school.
MS.	Yes, it was, I mean like for instance now with the Covid pandemic that we

MARCHESI	are seeing now, it that it was a very difficult decision because at that time I was, in 2020 I was still the shadow minister of basic education, so the decision for the children to go back to school was the most difficult decision that I had to agree with because it was basically deciding of what is important and also how do we continue and given the fact that South Africa is not like, you know, the first world countries that have the type of technology whereby children can stay at home and be educated from their homes and in their own comfort and away from the virus itself. So in order to be able to have that kind of continuity we had to make a decision to say let's make sure that our schools are safe, let's make sure that, you know, we follow the protocols of the Covid-19 protocols, that was the most difficult decision that we had to make and I think everybody was terrified, we were all terrified you know, but that was something that we needed to do as a country, unfortunately.
DR. MALKA	Education seems to have played a critical role in your life and you eventually went on to hold a BSc in microbiology and biochemistry; please tell us what led to that aspect of your journey as well and how, moving from let's say a period of intense disruption, you went on to fulfil your academic accomplishments?
MS. MARCHESI	Yes, Dr. Amaleya, as I was telling you earlier that I had a choice to basically choose the subjects when I was in grade eight, I decided that, you know, I'm going to be doing biblical studies and geography, because most of my peers and my friends, everybody was like that's what we're going to do, we're going to do biblical studies because all you have to do, you have to read and write what you've read and that's it, you don't have to really think about it...
DR. MALKA	...taking the easy way out...
MS. MARCHESI	...basically that's what it was, it was taking the easy way out and I came home and I said, you know, that's what I'm going to be doing and my aunt, because I was thinking, you know, I need to get good grades, I need to, you know, to have...when I finish my matric I have to have good grades and my aunt was like there is no way, going forward, no-one in this house is going to be doing biblical studies and geography, you are going to do mathematics and science and you know, physical science, those are going to be your subjects and I was like but they are so difficult, you know, I haven't been doing that well, you know, I've been an average student when it comes to mathematics at that time and she said no, I'm taking you to a school whereby you are going to do physical science and at that time I was already at grade twelve, but she kept me on doing maths until grade eleven. So in grade twelve she basically moved me because of also the distractions within the school that I was attending at the time, then she took me to the school that I spoke about in [Wedela] and when I got there she was like she's going to be doing physical science and everybody was like how can she do physical science at grade twelve, she's going to find it to be so difficult and then eventually they accepted me to do physical science and mathematics. It was difficult, but that is something that, you know, she decided that I should do and I had to do what she said I must do, because for her she had it all planned out to say if you have physical science, you might struggle to pass it, but eventually you will make it, if you make it then the doors are going to open for you and that's exactly what happened. I did a BSc whereby, you know, my main subject was microbiology and biochemistry and when I finished, in the last year, when I finished then, I basically got married and my husband got a job in Ireland and I was able to get a job in a pharmaceutical company, coming to think of it like, you know, it was just as easy as that, just purely because I decided to do

	<p>mathematics and science and I went on to university to study BSc which was science subjects. Then eventually, like out of that then doors started to open for me, I even came back to do pharmacology, to study pharmacology because of my exposure in the pharmaceutical industry. So I have to say that education for me has been a stepping stone for me to achieve, you know, what I have achieved, not...and the fact that I ended up in politics, it's not because I studied political science, but it's because like you know, at Democratic Alliance they identified and understood that, you know, I have something to share and to contribute as well within the political sphere. So, it's one of those things and I think it's one thing that we have to take seriously as South Africans, to say that you know, sometimes you have to go through the hard way to be able to achieve, you know, you have to put yourself out there and try the most difficult, but as long as you know what is your goal and what you need to achieve and also it saddens me to see that, you know, during the pandemic that South Africa was not talking about, you know, producing or even doing research in vaccines. We are not taking the space of development in science and purely that I think is because of, you know, the decisions that we make as young people, that we want the easy way out, that we don't want to be challenged and I think that also translates to what our current government is also about, to say you know, we are just going to be consumers, we are not going to be putting money into research and innovation and we need to occupy that space. We have the ability to do so much as human beings, because we are able to think, you know, we are able to work hard and those are things that we are not tapping into and also, just as I said that, you know, we are a very youthful nation and I think we're not taking advantage of that and within the pharmaceutical industry I believe that, you know, we can have a lot if we were to really look at it as an avenue for us to create jobs or maybe the mindset that, you know, as Africans we are unable to do these things. We cannot be part of science, why, I think we are all the same as human beings, we are able to achieve and do...if we are given opportunities we can achieve so much and it's really, like as I say, that it really saddens me that you know we are not taking advantage of our current situation and we are not really partakers, because if we were able to be part of producing a vaccine as a country, we would have been able to produce for Africa.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>At this point we wouldn't be only having four hundred thousand vaccinated. I think your story, for me, highlights a number of very interesting points, one very, very key take-out though, is the fact of having the correct influence when you are younger, when you are at that critical point of decision-making regarding the subject that are going to shape and frame your future, that that is so essential because hearing all of your achievements and accomplishments today, where would you have been if you had gone with geography and biblical studies; certainly not pursuing a career in pharmacology, probably unlikely to be having your second career as a politician.</p>
AD BREAK	
DR. MALKA	<p>What I wanted to ask you, given your experiences and your intense interest within the education space, is that how do you see education as an instrument of empowerment for women?</p>
MS. MARCHESI	<p>Shew, education is very, very important. Not only is it important for us to be able to achieve, you know, the different subjects, I might actually move away from your question but I think that's something that I would like to bring forward is the fact that schools have the ability to shape and mould us to be better citizens and I think that's something that we haven't really looked into, you know, how are you able to, not only to be an achiever</p>

within a classroom, what are you bringing to the society. What kind of a citizen are you going to be when you grow up, I mean even yourself Dr. Amaleya, when you say that, you know, you started this talk show about women, it's because you have been able to identify the problems within the system itself, but now how many of us are able to do that. You know, when I was in, you know, being a member of parliament you also travel because you need to see what other countries, you know, develop themselves and also you know, their education system, because that was always my interest; one thing that caught my attention was the fact that, you know, in Taiwan they have a subject about being a citizen, what kind of citizen they want you to be, so that subject it is given from early on, when you start school, from grade R up to grade twelve. So initially it's understanding who you are, that's what they teach you, who, the human being that you are and how to understand your space and how to protect your space and then it goes on to say, you know, who are you within your own household and what is your responsibility in your household and who are you within your community, what kind of citizens you are. How do you spend your time doing things for other people, not for you, but for other people, you need to be able to think of other people at the same time, you need to think, you know, how can I contribute to an NGO; how can I, you know, allocate my time to ensure that like you know another person has a better life and those kinds of things and that is something that we are lacking as South Africans. We don't have that kind of responsibility as a citizen, all that we are thinking of when you get into your class is can you learn one plus one, how fast can you do that and can you pass at the end of the year and how well do you do in grade twelve; those are our priorities, finish and done with grade twelve and that's it and what happens to them is basically up to them and I think it, well our education system has to go much deeper than that, we need to be proud of the citizens that we are. We cannot have a situation whereby you go into a township and everything is literally falling apart, there's no respect for the environment, you know, there's no respect for you know, making sure that, you know, the garbage it is put in a trash bin or even, you know, not only that, at the same time it's also if you become an official within our....a government official, taking your responsibility seriously and understanding that, you know, the garbage has to be picked up, because like you know, in Bloemfontein for instance when you go around, you see garbage everywhere. It's not only the garbage, but it's just a lot of things, like you know, how do we build and mould our citizens, our young people to be better citizens because at the end of the day you can have a government that is the kind of government that you have, that is corrupt, you know, that only looks after themselves, but if we were better citizens, we would first of all be able to say we need to change our government and get a better government and if we don't like the one that we get, we get rid of that as well. That's one thing, a responsibility as citizens, knowing the importance of voting and knowing the importance of removing a government that is not working for you and also knowing what is your role as a citizen; what are you supposed to do, because we cannot always at government to say the government has to do one, two, three, at the same time you are not, you know, pulling your socks on your side. You need to be just as responsible, but I think it's not, I cannot entirely blame it on us as South Africans, I think our education system fails us in the front; who do we want to be, are we building a society that's just concerned about, you know, consuming or a society that is just concerned about being the best in terms of performance but not really also trying to nourish us as a country so that we are not only about, you know, achievement but also

	<p>making sure that the person next to you, you know, your community, your brothers and sisters, also they are uplifted. If I'm responsible for my neighbour, in making sure that my neighbour achieves, then my neighbour is not going to come into my house rob the little that I have; I don't have to build high walls to protect myself from a neighbour. If I am conscious of what is needed within a society and community, then we all have a better life and also a better chance to be able to achieve and to be successful.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Yes, education is so much more than just about subject matter, but it's about nurturing good, positive citizenship so that you have individuals that grow up accepting responsibility for themselves, almost demanding it from others, so that we have productive, cohesive society. Ms. Marchesi we're nearing towards the end of the show now and one of the questions that I'd like to ask you is about your personal journey and factors for success. Many of our guests who've reached tremendous achievements throughout their lifetime speaking about discipline, focus, faith and values; in your opinion, what have been some of the key drivers to your success?</p>
MS. MARCHESI	<p>I think my key driver is, you know, who do I associate myself to and who do I allow to influence my journey and basically who do I surround myself with and also, you know, the sense of family, I think for me those are the critical, you know, building blocks that have helped me to be who I am and also obviously my faith, you know, as Africans we all like very much, you know, rely on our faith and I think that is something that is built into our system, it is in our DNA. Being also a woman and I mean, my grandmother, if I were to say that my grandmother was, she grew up in a family of twelve women, she saw herself as the head of the house despite the fact that her parents would have liked to have their firstborn as a male, she basically took that role and so she basically influenced and she's the one that showed everyone in our family that a woman can literally do anything; there's nothing that prevents you from doing anything, I mean I think outside of the box in everything that I do and I think that is because of the people that have been around me, including her, as I said you know, my aunt as well. In my family everybody, like you know, had some kind of qualifications even way then in the sixties, we had nurses, we have teachers in my household and I think it's having the right people within your space and also understanding who you are as a person and also, you know, having the goals, you know, because in life you need to have goals and you always have to try to achieve those goals and I think that was one of the drivers because when you have a clear understanding of where you want to see yourself and what you want to achieve and not be influenced by negativity around you, then you can achieve a lot and I think that's basically what influenced where I am and that's what continues to influence me. Today, I think I influence my son quite positively as well, I make him do things that he never thought that he would do, you know, he's studying medicine at the moment and he never thought that he would be able to do that, but like it all starts with believing in yourself and also having people that believe in you. You know, somebody was saying that, you know, you have to surround yourself with people, when they see you their eyes should shine to see you, people that are just happy to see you, those are people that think of you as somebody that has a lot to achieve, even if you don't think like that of yourself, but you know, you have to have people that believe in you and trust that, you know, that you have a lot to achieve and I think everybody has that, we all have that ability, all we need is an opportunity.</p>
	<p>What I can say is that like, you know, we always have to try to have the</p>

	networks of people that you can find that can help you, so those are what actually has helped me throughout the years to be able to be where I am today.
DR. MALKA	That's a great recipe, surrounding yourself with people who want the best from you, people who are going to influence and push you, not necessarily give you the easy way out. Form strong family foundation, faith and targeting goals to knock them out the park and keep rising up the rungs of the ladder that you've chosen. Finally, as we close out our conversation and in honour of Youth Day, which is celebrated on the 16 th of June, please will you share a few words of inspiration that you'd like to pass onto girls and young women in the continent that are listening to us?
MS. MARCHESI	What I can say, you know, to young girls, especially in this continent; there's no better gender that I admire like the African women in this continent. I think there's something that we always seem to miss about African women, it's the fact that you know, we can be able to rise and also to break the ceiling. As soon as you think of yourself as small, then you will not be able to achieve anything and I think we have the ability to achieve so much. We need to look at our different legislations across the continent and also compare, I think South Africa has one of the best constitutions and also we have got one of the best legislations when it comes to women and yet we are unable to implement and see the results from those legislations, so that is our hurdle as South Africans. We need to really interrogate those legislations and those different policies that are there, they cannot just be on paper, they need to be realised, needs to be implemented, so I would challenge South African women and also across the continent to say you need to speak up, you need to look at the different policies and I think young people must fight, you must take your space and have more, you know, you have more influence if you are there and speaking out. So to the young people I want to say rise up, occupy the space and make that change.
DR. MALKA	Thanks for that message, which is for me, one which is about really utilising the legislation and the policies that have already been established, they exist, there's no need to go and establish new policies; make use of what you have currently, also look to other markets to see what they have and try to enforce those for implementation, they were created for a purpose and that purpose is to make lives better and open opportunities and doors of possibilities for women. Thank you so much for joining us today; it's been a pleasure to host you.
MS. MARCHESI	Thank you so much, it's been such a pleasure talking to you.
DR. MALKA	PROGRAMME END