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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2022 - PART 1

MS ALEXANDRA ABRAHAMS – DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE; MS ZANDILE MAJOZI –  
INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY; MS LIBRADA ELA ASUMU – EQUATORIAL GUINEA  
AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH AFRICA

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 for our special feature on International Women’s Day 2022 is Ms Alexendra Abrahams from the Democratic Alliance, who is a Member of Parliament and serves on the Portfolio Committee of Social Development.
DR. MALKA	The theme of the United Nations International Women’s Day 2022 is “Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow” and this theme recognises the contribution of women and girls around the world who are leading the charge on climate change, adaptation, mitigation and response to build a more sustainable future for all. What are some of your views regarding this year’s theme for International Women’s Day?
MS ABRAHAMS	<b>Well thank you for that question, I think it is a great theme for this year’s International Women’s Day. I think living in Cape Town for the majority of my life, my entire life, climate change is not something that can be dismissed anymore, we are starting to see weather behaviour patterns that we haven’t seen before, so it is really something that can’t be ignored anymore and I think driving gender equality in this context is just so, so important because we see time and time again how women within their households alone create that healthy conducive environment for their children. So by capacitating and empowering women just in the home or in the workplace to focus on climate change, it is really important.</b>
DR. MALKA	You work in the social development space and in that environment unfortunately there are a lot of vulnerable people. Climate change impacts everybody, it doesn’t matter where we live, what our social conditions are, what our economic conditions are, but for vulnerable people I would say the impacts are more compounded. How do you think we can help reduce gender inequality to build a more sustainable future?
MS ABRAHAMS	<b>So, you know, a very practical example and something that I can even just take from my own life when we are speaking about this gender inequality, was that it is also something that is just so ingrained in some women, the way you were raised and grew up and I didn’t realise this until we were having this discussion now, but at Christmas lunch and after every single Christmas lunch growing up, my sister and I automatically get up immediately after eating and start clearing the plates and start the dishes while the men are still sitting down talking and it is something that you don’t even realise that you are doing because you have been doing it for so many years that it has become a norm, but I think an important part here is to actually break these stereotypes and that is how we bridge this gender inequality gap. I mean who is to say that the women can’t sit down after Christmas lunch and the men get up and start clearing away</b>

	<b>the plates and going and doing the dishes. So I would really focus on breaking these stereotypes and then acknowledging when you are in the middle of it, the way I have just done at my own family Christmas.</b>
DR. MALKA	Challenging gender stereotypes is certainly a critical factor and to unlearn some of this ingrained thinking that we were socialised in our upbringings of what men should do, what women should do and who should do what, but breaking down those gender stereotypes and thinking afresh and inclusive. In celebration of International Women's day, please will you share a message for girls and women that are listening to our show?
<b>MS ABRAHAMS</b>	<b>So I would like to share maybe, you know, just four principles that have worked in my life and this is in no particular order, it is just as I remember it. So a big one for me is the grass is greener where you water it; we often find ourselves longing and wanting for everything else than what we have and just to be appreciative and to nurture where you are in your life and what you have in your life and you will soon discover that it is greener where you work and where you water it. Another one that I like to live by is that if you are the smartest person in the room, you are in the wrong room, so always find people who stimulates your mind. Then it is also important to surround yourself with the right people, people who are going to build you up and not break you down, people that give without expecting anything from you in return, I find very important and then just the last one is to show kindness to whoever is out there, you have no idea what the next person's struggles are in their life, what they have been through in their life and with this pandemic so many people have lost loved ones, have lost their livelihoods, have just lost and it costs you and costs me absolutely nothing to smile at the next person or to greet or just to acknowledge the person for the human being that they are . So thank you.</b>
DR. MALKA	Thanks for that practical message; anybody can do any of those points and make their life better off as well as impart some joy and kindness to others. That was Ms Alexandra Abrahams from the Democratic Alliance, who is a Member of Parliament serving on the Portfolio Committee of Social Development, joining us for our special on International Women's Day 2022. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
DR. MALKA	Joining us now on the line is Ms Zandile Majozi from the Inkatha Freedom Party, who is a Member of Parliament and serves on the Portfolio Committee of Communication as well as Police.
DR. MALKA	In your opinion, what is the significance of International Women's Day and its relevance in today's society?
<b>MS MAJOZI</b>	<b>International Women's Day is very important and even the theme is very important but what we need to focus on is that we are not faced with these issues when only it is the International Women's Day, but we are faced with these issues every day, and we must be able to tackle women's issues every day. So I think going forward with the theme of 2022 it must be something that lives within us every day, it must be something that we talk about every day. It must not be something that we will do as a dialogue or a seminar or a bookend of that day and then it is done, because then it will not serve the purpose, because the purpose of this is as women we are the backbone of our society and our needs, challenges and victories should be the focus of a daily life., so we must be able then to have that platform of women's issues every day, it must not be something that should take place only on certain days when we celebrate International Women's Day and so forth. So particularly women in rural</b>

	<p>areas, in those communities, they need to have such platforms as well; how to mainstream their lives into making sure that every day they live within what they want to do and they are able also to contribute within the economy and within the agriculture, how do they grow as well, because then we must look at what develops them within their space where they live in in their environment and be able to take that upon and make sure that they do greater things in their own societies. Women in agriculture are not provided enough opportunities, there especially in the rural areas, it is even better for urban areas, although there are issues as well that they face, but the focus must also go to these women in rural areas to make sure that we speak about these issues and we are able to conquer some of the issues that they are facing because it is not like they are unable to take care of their lives, they are, they just need to have that <b>mainstreaming of their development.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>For rural women in particular, when you think about aspects of agriculture and how they are doing farming within their own environments, they are most definitely impacted by climate change. What happens if rainfall fluctuates, what happens if there is a drought and seeds don't germinate or that there is something wrong with the arable land as well as livestock, those are certainly challenges that they experience and for things to become sustainable, this is where issues of climate change need to be addressed at a very real level.</p>
MS MAJOZI	<p><b>Yes it is true Doctor, I think issues of climate change must be addressed and as much as I said they need the same opportunities that they would give to these major agricultural companies that will be there, they also need the same, even if it is not climate change only. Even with the pandemic, they were affected by the COVID-19 and it was difficult for them to even maybe go and sell within the streets because at some point we were at level 5 lockdown, you can't go out, you can't do anything, which means you cannot provide for your family at the same time, because these veggies and fruits that you grow are the ones that put bread on the table, you know, and we must be able to see such issues and be able then to help in, but also zoom in within the government structures that how then do we help these women. Zooming within the organisations that are there which are able to help within problems of such climate change or COVID-19 pandemics, how then do they get help, how do they get funding to make sure that they are able to grow within their agriculture and be able to provide for their families and yes, the mechanisms that are there, there are many mechanisms that are there, it is just that opportunities are not given to these other women who have got small nanyana businesses, street vendors and so forth and once we give opportunities to them they will be able to grow as well and be able to provide more for their families. What is stopping us from making sure that if there is a Shoprite in that area and there is a woman who has a chicken farm, what is stopping us from saying Shoprite you must buy from this woman your chickens, because the very same society is the one that comes in that Shoprite to buy the groceries there, so that the economy then revolves around that community and they are able to grow as well. If veggies, I must provide that, we must be able to speak to Fruit and Veg, Fruit and Veg you are here, you benefit from this society, so these women who have small [nanyana] companies or who have small [nanyana] businesses, must be able to provide you with fruit and veggies so that also their economy would evolve around that, once we get that out there, it will be very easy for us to be able to bridge the gap.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>The opportunities are there, it is a case of being able to open those</p>

	opportunities for women to access them and to participate in our economy and thinking about this as a circular economy, everyone has a role to play and everybody has an option to contribute and participate in it. Lastly, in celebration of International Women’s Day, please can you share a message for girls and women that are listening to the show?
<b>MS MAJOZI</b>	<b>Usually I would draw my inspiration from our fellow South Africans and women executive director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, that woman is a phenomenal woman and no country prospers without the engagement of women. We need women representation that reflects all the women and girls in all their diversity and abilities and across all cultural, social and economic and political situations, this is the only way we will get a real societal change that incorporates women in decision making and as equals and benefit us all. In closing to again maybe quote from a US First Lady Michelle Obama; “Am I good enough? Yes I am.” Mrs. Obama wrote On Becoming and this is what I would like to leave with all women and girls listening to the show that yes, you are enough, yes you are you and yes everything that you do is enough and it must be known and shown within our own societies.</b>
<b>DR. MALKA</b>	What powerful words. That was Ms Zandile Majosi from the Inkatha Freedom Party, who is a Member of Parliament serving on the Portfolio Committees of Communication and on Police, joining us for our special segment for International Women’s Day 2022. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter: @WomanityTalk.
	<b>AD BREAK</b>
<b>DR. MALKA</b>	Joining us next for our special feature on International Women’s Day is Equatorial Guinea’s Ambassador to South Africa; Ambassador Librada Ela Asumu. The theme of UN Women’s International Women’s Day 2022 is “Gender equality for a sustainable tomorrow”.
<b>DR. MALKA</b>	Ambassador please can you express what International Women’s Day means to you?
<b>AMBASSADOR ASUMU</b>	<b>Thank you very much for the second time for your invitation, I really appreciate it in this special occasion of the Women’s Day. I want to highlight, (I was writing some notes), how important is this day because we are talking about equality, equality as opportunity, I really have to insist on this, as opportunity to have the choice of giving your life a sense for you. That means pursuing your career, your personal development, (if you want), becoming a mother, (if you like), of the many children of your choice and so on, it is about equality in this world that we have to be in balance. It is not against men, I insist, it is not an international day against men, it is for women and that needs to highlight a women’s life, women’s point of view, women’s perspective, women’s focus, women’s lives in general. I am also very focused on this day on the leadership, I think leadership is very important for women, it is related with the same thing I said before; leadership in the way you conduct your own life, to start by that, because I think you cannot lead anybody else if you do not lead yourself. That means you have the decision of really having the conscience of what you are doing, what you are doing it for, what are the outcomes that you are expecting and what is the final goal you want to achieve. For that I disagree a little bit on the sense of leadership as sometimes something we gift to women, it is not just a question of being in a high level position, you can be in a very high level position and still don’t live your life, that means you are under some kind of struggle because in your mind you think you are a second class citizen as women. So whatever you do, you need the approval, it is not the approval that I mean</b>

	<p>certainly we need to make some things that you have to approve it, it is not in that sense, it is the moral sense of approval by the community, by the people, by the family or whatever it is, for you to be really conscious of what you are doing is good, without having your own mindset as the lead of your actions, that is what I understand by leadership for this International Women's Day. I also talk about commitment as a process of doing the same thing all the time in the good term, that means being committed to help women to become - just to become - let's start with somebody. So helping another woman to become is a commitment, it is not just a question of doing things because of the spotlight that can place you, but doing it because you really believe it is good for this balance that we are looking for for all of us and the last thing and not the least important, but the last thing I have highlighted is the work. Work, I think it is like the miracle, it is the most important for me celebrating the International Women's day and we add it as the Working Women, but we can go to define what is work, because anything how we think that work is just the process of doing something by people to make some changes, this must include housewives for example, because when we talk about workers, we don't take in mind the people that work inside houses, that they are doing things that changes people's and they are doing things that help another woman to fulfil their goals. So it so important to give this highlight to these people are not really in the focus, but they are also doing great because of their duties, their commitment, their leadership in what they are doing that another people like us, who are in the public sphere, we can be more visible and we can reach our goals, because we can go back to this question of being superwomen, we could not be superwomen even half percent if we don't have the help of another woman doing the things that we are supposed to do ourselves. So for me this International Day I can just summarise in these four words; work, commitment, leadership and equality. The theme for this year is for the sustainability; it is really important, because without balance it is not sustainable. We are just trying to carry everything on our shoulders, it is impossible, it is very heavy and it is not sustainable, one time we will be tired, too tired that everything that we have built will just fall down. I think it is very important just going side-by-side, just moving forward, the world belongs to all of us, the world deserves that we push hand-to-hand to really achieve a better world for everybody; for women, for men, for children, for everybody, it is very important.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you for sharing your perspective of International Women's Day and those four elements that you speak about are incredibly important that all build upon each other, from work and the wide interpretation of it as a source of empowerment and enablement for others; leadership and not just leading others but leading oneself; commitment to help other people advance and importantly, equality. Ambassador part of our previous conversation we spoke about the fact that sometimes we can have legislation in place, but if we have cultural components it doesn't necessarily mean that legislation will be implemented for equality and over the years there have been numerous international instruments to help promote gender equality, like the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. One of the things that I can't help but thinking, whilst we have this legislation in place, unless men are involved in gender equality, it always seems a woman's problem and not society's problem; what are your thoughts?</p>
AMBASSADOR ASUMU	<p>I think it is a question of let's say a kind of acknowledgement of the real situation of society and even a perception, a very wrong perception. I am going to give you an example that it doesn't have any relation with that,</p>

but I want to use it. I was in a kind of a lunch with some colleagues speaking about private and public sector and one of the persons said the public sector is very useful because they serve the society and the private sector is very selfish because they do only for having incomes and having the company's owner's money, that is all, and I said that is a very wrong way of seeing the things and the perception. Private creates employment, this employment creates a standard of life for the people that are working in this company, a better standard of life for the clients of this company, a better standard of life for the providers of this company, so it is a very good chain and everybody has the profit in this process because you have a machine. So going to this women issue; it is a very wrong perception thinking that first of all what I said before, a balance is against men, it is a very wrong perception. A balance is not against anybody, it is just bringing somebody who is down to the top so we can be equal, we can work together. Having women always as the ministers of social affairs and women's issues is a good thing, for me at the beginning I was thinking it was a good thing, I was even upset to think that there was a man possibly, minister of social affairs and women's issues, it could be very strange, but now that I know more what it is about, I realise that maybe we have to put men to understand what are the specific things that women face that that are specific on women. I said the last time that I discovered that I was woman with thirty years old, so a man can never discover that women have specific issues, if me as myself, a woman, I discovered that I was that with thirty years old. So that means there is some work to be done to explain that we need some specific answers and some specific responses, some specific things to be done for us, because we have some specificities that nobody else has than women. So I think there is some work to be done and we have to be more focused on explaining that and making the evidence on what we are saying, instead because women we also sometimes we are so passionate, I don't know if it is correct, on this defending women rights that we forget that if we don't explain what that means exactly, nobody will follow us and I think we have to explain what this means, women's rights, what is the rights we are talking about, what are the differences in the reality. We are talking about cultural barriers, yes, there are some cultural barriers, there are very good things in the culture, I think everything that people are repeating for ages, for decades and so on, it becomes a culture, it is not anything than that, that means if we make just a situation analysis or we can find that this specific thing is causing this specific damage for the people of this gender, at this time we can return to the facts, but just talking about this is that cultural barriers is not good, it doesn't have any sense, because it doesn't give any specific outcome that we want to really make to improve our lives. You have to go sometimes to figures, for evidences and see the solution, the possible solution. Let's take an example; when in a family we have a child a boy and child a girl, and you try to explain to a person that if the boy is younger push your finance, just try to invest in the girl that is 12 years or 11, than the boy that is still 3. If we give it with calculations, sometimes we have to go to calculations, make the calculations from 12 years to 18 or to 20, how long it takes and 3 years, so 20 how long it takes, if you invest in this person you have 7 years of investment, if you only invest in this you have 11 years of investment. You have these 7 years of investment this person will start to produce also for this person, so you will do maybe 50%, the girl now an adult will be 50% and you have more, your 50 and your 50 for the boy that is still 3 years. You have to explain it simple but with specific details, with calculations, for allowing the people to think

	<p><b>about yes it can give the change for the family investing in girls instead of just saying we have to invest in girls education, for example, it is not enough. We have to go with the evidence, with the samples and with the outcomes that somebody can see this will bring to this, it is easy, for me it is easier than just making theories.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>That is such a brilliant example and one that is so pertinent in all of our communities; demonstrating the economic outcome and justifying why to invest in the girl who is, in this example, older because of the benefit that she is going to provide to the family and in turn help the next generation. Ambassador please can you give us a few words as we close out our conversation that you would like to share for International Women’s Day?</p>
AMBASSADOR ASUMU	<p><b>Oh, there are some things I have been repeating for many years, so it is just again, let’s take it very seriously, it is not just a joke, it is a commitment, for me this is your women, it is a commitment, it is not just a fashion moment or a spotlight moment, it is a commitment, it is not one day, it is all the year, it is all the life of commitment. So we have to do and we have to react and we have to feed our children for this balance I am talking about. Women we have a lot of responsibility in our communities, families, societies and in politics, everywhere we have the responsibility, but we have to be focused on this balance, on this evidence base, doing things and if we have one day a man dealing with the social affairs and women’s issues, why not, I will say why not, but let’s scale him before on what are the specific things that he must deal with, otherwise they will not give any outcome. I think that we have to be committed in doing the best for our communities and to lead our lives and to lead our people. Women, we are the 50% of the other side, so we have to do it hand-by-hand, it is not against men, I insist on this, don’t go against men, because we are partners, we are in this world for a partnership to share everything and more the responsibility and stay focused on you and your career and your life and lead your own life, without that it is just actress moment, it is a film. Let’s make it to happen and let’s keep being committed. That’s all.</b></p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Thank you for that great message. That was Equatorial Guinea’s Ambassador to South Africa, Ambassador Librada Ela Asumu.</p>
	<p><b>PROGRAMME END</b></p>