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PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS DOROTHY TEMBO – DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR –
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE

| SPEAKER | TRANSCRIPTION |
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| 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 from Geneva in Switzerland is Ms Dorothy Tembo who is the Deputy Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, which is the joint agency of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations, whose goals include strengthening the integration of the business sector of developing countries and economies in transition into the global economy. Welcome to the show! |
| MS TEMBO | Thank you very much for having me. |
| DR. MALKA | To begin with, you have a Zambian heritage and having grown up in Kitwe I always experience a degree of nostalgia when I engage with someone from Zambia. Your career has been focused within the trade sector and taken you from the southern to the northern hemisphere and from dealing on a national level to a global one. Please will you walk us through some of the key milestones in your journey? |
| MS TEMBO | There are quite a few elements that I thought were critical in terms of setting the stage in you understanding where I am. I grew up as a happy child in Lusaka, which is very close to Kitwe and therefore you know very much the landscape there, so I am very much a Lusaka person with parents who were both educationists. Having drawn inspiration from them that I needed to ensure that I equip myself with education because that is what will determine what my future was. You know graduating from university it was very clear that I needed to still start my career process in Zambia and for me at that time there were two things that I really admired; either law or economics. I preferred to take the route of economics, so coming out of university I quickly joined the civil service and at that time again it was a real honour for one to actually join the Zambian Civil Service, I joined the National Planning Commission in Zambia where I was an economist dealing essentially with the budget process and that process actually is one that enlightened me to what was pertaining in as far as the majority of people were concerned. |
| DR. MALKA | And that is such a critical component in any country; setting its budget. |
| MS TEMBO | Absolutely, but it also gave me a very clear understanding in relation to the lives of the people that we were sitting at the table planning for, who themselves may not necessarily have been there to express their needs and be sure that their response was, you know, was one that was aligned with their aspirations as well and it gave me thoughts as to what do I want to do going beyond in terms of how I could support the people, but linked to that was part of my private life development. Three years into working I got married, started a family against a backdrop of you being expected to be a wife who is very supportive of a husband, my aspirations remain very much ones that we are at home and trying to work in the environment that I was in, but as fate would have it, I unfortunately lost my husband five years after getting married and was left with two young |

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| | <p>children, one in grade two, the other in the third grade and for me that dramatically changed how I needed to perceive life and how I would approach because automatically I was taking up more responsibility for my children, for my career, but in a very strange way it also gave me the opportunity to open up my thinking to see how I could reposition myself in this new context, perhaps going beyond my own country. That was the beginning of my consciously moving towards progressing my career in a way that I could go beyond Zambia.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>That is a very brave move to make, leaving your family background, because we all know how much one relies on support structures to allow you to go on and fulfil your ambitions, so that was a very courageous move.</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>It was not easy, quite difficult in the beginning, because in the early stages I was split between working on the regional side, I was based in Botswana for a few years but my children were still back home in boarding school, so trying to balance that and being available for the children to spend quality time with them to understand that they may have one parent but I am still there to, you know, fully support them in a way that they expected to the extent that I could was quite a challenge initially. So from SADC then I moved on to look at bigger prospects, my thinking behind this was more of I have the national perspective, I do understand what is going on at that country, let me have a better sense of the context within the original setting, understanding experiences of other countries and beyond that I then elevated it to the multilateral levels. So it was a deliberate progression moving from national to regional to multilateral context and it has been one fulfilling experience that has broadened my scope. Why is this important for me? At the end of what I am doing I am going to go back to my country and I do hope that I can still contribute, bringing in all this experience that I have acquired to be able to support my country from whichever perspective that would be. I think I have acquired a lot of experience from the private sector, you know, development side, some experience in as far as entrepreneurship is concerned and for me to support my fellow Zambians in this particular aspect or area would be really some way of giving back to those that enabled me to do what I have done today.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>It's such a wonderful circular attitude where you have gone through this progressive cycle, as you say, looking at things from a national point of view, through to a regional point of view, through to a multilateral level and then ultimately ending your career going back and being able to contribute to people and further their development by providing a stepping stool of your experiences. At the moment you are with the International Trade Centre and its mission is to foster inclusive and sustainable economic development and contribute to achieving the United Nations Global Goals for sustainable development. The ITC works towards creating trade for good, can you briefly tell us about the core goals of the ITC?</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>You have rightly pointed out we are a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation, as such, we are all about fostering the attainment of the sustainable development goals. We are eight years away from reaching the milestone that we had set for ourselves, but of course within this context we are also aware that we have had huge challenges coming before us, particularly in relation to the impact that COVID-19 has had on many, many countries, that said, I strongly believe that we should not in any way be slowing down the efforts, but rather doubling those efforts, because the need has become even greater as a result of this. So where is ITC in all this? We have been recognised as one of the</p> |

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| | <p>institutions that will be able to contribute in the sphere of trade, but unless we can practically be able to deliver and make that difference on the ground, our motive will become questionable and what we are trying to do as the UN family and ITC in particular, is to make sure that we are moving in a very practical way to support the efforts on the ground to realise the objective of the attainment of the sustainable development goals. So in short our goals are ones that are very much earmarked towards ensuring that trade does act as an engine for growth and we are driven on this by making sure that trade is not only happening, but that it is also inclusive, it is sustainable and at the end of the day that we allow people to prosper.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>When you speak about inclusivity, practicality and sustainability, the fact that you want to be real and having a force to be reckoned with on the ground, can you expand on a couple of trade projects that have had an impact on various countries in the continent, but with a particular emphasis on women?</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>Let me start by explaining that in as far as we are concerned we are more about working with micro, small and medium enterprises, to enhance their competitiveness and be able to facilitate their being able to trade and indeed by doing so that we are ultimately working towards that integration that I have spoken about. So we provide the technical assistance in as far as this particular area is concerned and we do this in three different ways; one it is the national level, two it is at the regional level, three, in Africa's specific context it is also at the continental level which I think provides tremendous opportunities. So we are working at these three levels knowing that, you know, all these are building steps towards a bigger objective of the continent through the Continental Free Trade area. Second point I wanted to make is that we have been in existence since 1964, that is fifty plus years, and much of the work that we have done is actually on the African continent, 70% of our interventions are in Africa, so what we have been doing over the last fifty years is really working with these countries on the continent. What is it that has changed? I think a lot of our initial work was at national level, so we were helping countries initially to do a lot of needs assessment to better understand their context, but what has happened now is we have moved more onto the implementation side of practical projects and here we have had very good support from different funders that help us to do our work. Some examples include the work for instance we are doing in the Gambia, which is perhaps different from what is being done elsewhere and here we are connecting vulnerable migrants and displaced persons, what we are doing there is addressing root causes of migration and of course actually through the work we are doing, discouraging those that are also wanting to move outside the continent. We have trained over 6,400 people, connected over 2,600 jobs, this is a project that has been in existence the last three / four years. We also have regional projects such as the one that we are undertaking or implementing in the East African community and here we are working with the member states of the East African community, working with them on value addition, working with products that include avocados, coffee and many other products related to that. In as far as the women are concerned, we have a special initiative that we call the She Trades Initiative, which is about connecting three million women to market and we achieved actually this milestone last year and we are building on this to try and progress that particular target.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>Wow, well done! Often we hear about things where we have got policies in place and we are waiting or the implementation to happen and here you are</p> |

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| | saying you have already achieved your milestone of being able to connect three million women. Where are they based, throughout the continent, in a particular geographic region? |
| MS TEMBO | Throughout the continent, we are working with women throughout the continent. I must also say that it is not only about the initiative, the way we have adopted our approach to project development, we do have a gender scorecard there and each project must show exactly what they will be doing in relation to supporting women. So across the board this is the case. |
| DR. MALKA | And that's another factor which you have said is so important, is the way that you are managing the project, the way that you've got targets in place and that there is this gender scorecard, what gets measured gets done, so we have to be definitive about what we put on those scorecards to track them. |
| MS TEMBO | Absolutely and I think the additional point that I would like to make there that it is not only us, it is also about the beneficiary countries. In the last four / five years I have seen an increased interest from the different countries that almost each beneficiary that we speak to wants to do something about gender. I think often what we have established is that they have challenges in terms of understanding how they can concretely do so and this is where we come in, we will provide the tools to do the necessary assessment because data has been a very challenging aspect for most of the countries, they have not been able to have that disaggregated data that can give them an understanding of their context and what accompanying actions would be, but more so on the interventions. |
| DR. MALKA | So what is next for She Trades? |
| MS TEMBO | It is a continuing initiative, we have not stopped because we have reached three million, three million is only a drop in the ocean as we would see it, what we would like is that we continue developing She Trades hubs in the different countries because that is the only way you can have a sustainable way of addressing this. Good enough that we are doing it from Geneva, but even better when we do it at the country level, we are working with different partnerships, strong partnerships that are able to respond to the different country needs, South Africa is a case in point, we are moving forward with establishing a She Trades hub there, so far we have this in ten plus countries, which we are hoping to build on. As an organisation we have already taken the step to engage with the African Union, we are working currently supported by GIZ with fifty women business associations. What was very interesting is that, you know, the framework had already been agreed to and perhaps even signed by some of the member states, the question being posed to the women associations, very few had actually been involved in the process, so what we have agreed with the African Union is that we double up our efforts in terms of supporting the advocacy and awareness creation around this specific women's initiative, but as an organisation we also did recognise that we had to go beyond the single or regional interventions that we were making and as such, we have reorganised ourselves to come up with a very comprehensive one trade Africa programme, which is essentially going to be building on the efforts that we have made, but it is one that is also intended to have greater outreach, to have larger programmes that are interlinked and are able to provide opportunities for businesses to thrive and take advantage of the opportunities created with the 1.2 billion market. |
| DR. MALKA | That's where our future lies. We've been talking about very positive issues, but if I reflect, when I looked at some recent unemployment statistics coming |

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| | <p>out of the South African market, just for example, almost 50% of the eligible working population is unemployed and I think that we have got to do a mindset shift of going away from the view of a job is going to be made available to me, to creating jobs, to creating trade, to being dynamic and entrepreneurial and accessing this market of 1.2 billion people.</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>Excellent point, excellent, I think we really have to, in my view, important that we continue to move on the path that we have been moving on, but I think as a continent we need to start thinking outside the box. We need to make sure that we are creating those opportunities and it is not only through, you know, making sure that there is a factory here, if I am to give an example, which then provides the employment, the potential employment, which is good when it happens, I am not saying it is bad, but at the same time we should be very much working on addressing issues related to entrepreneurial skills but also addressing the other aspects that will enable the youth in particular, be able to access the resources that can enable them to start businesses. They can be innovative but that will come to nothing if we are not able to address the financing for instance, if we are not able to address within the context of the Continental Free Trade area, provisions that speak to the needs of the small players and can facilitate business because often times I think when you look at the structures of many of our regional frameworks, they are very much focused on enabling the big plans. So you are looking at big businesses, you are demanding excessive paperwork for the trade to happen, we just have to get away from that and try to see how we can facilitate. In particular we also need to address very specific concerns of women; I cannot have access to a loan because my husband has not agreed to sign on, really it is ridiculous, should you be asking me for collateral of the level of a house which I don't own, are there ways we can come up with blended financing that enables the small players to also be able to be integrated and have that opportunity to be able to do that and that's precisely what we do within the context of the She Trades for women in particular.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>You're absolutely right, we cannot have this approach of a one size fits all because the big fish are still going to be the big fish and the small fry are not going to get any opportunities, or worse, they're just going to be left there for the scraps and not have that opportunity to go ahead, cater for their niche where they are the specialists and they are the experts in their field.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>Today we're talking to Ms Dorothy Tembo who is the Deputy Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, which is the joint agency of the World Trade Organisation.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>Ms Tembo we have been talking a lot about trade, naturally, particularly on the continent and more so in terms of trade from a woman's perspective and being able to participate economically. We have also highlighted some of the challenges that women experience, the reality is that women still have numerous issues to contend with and these global gender differentials still need to be reduced. Gender equality, particularly in the African continent touches on sensitive points like culture, religion, tradition; do you think it will be possible to overcome these points for the sake of women's development and how can we do this?</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>I think it is a very, very important question in my view. I perhaps come from a perspective of saying gender advancement and the cultural aspects, what is it that I see there? For me I see two complimentary aspects and I will explain why. It is indeed important and you rightly point out as to what is pertaining in terms of the gender gap, the World</p> |

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| | <p>Bank has told us that it will take us 135 years to really try and catch up and if we translate maybe the unpaid work that women have endured in GDP terms that that really comes to a considerable amount as well, but at the end of the day I think there are two things; important we advance the gender side or the gender development dimension, but at the same time I look at where we are coming from as a continent and I say to myself, culture, it is an integral part of our society, it defines our communities, would we really want to get rid of that by way of advancing gender or would there be ways that we could actually work with the cultural aspect and adapt them to take into account what needs to be addressed within the context of advancing gender. Our societies; I look at the fact that we do have very influential women that are actually positioned in the cultural context in a number of cases, who are also very much part of the decision-making process. If I take for instance the South African scenario, I look at what happened during the period of the struggle and who was involved, there were many women that were involved in that process who played a critical role in terms of ensuring that that struggle was won and indeed we are at the point where we are. They were still coming out of, in some respects, the cultural setting that we had, I think for me the issue should be what is it that makes it difficult within the cultural context to enable gender advances; are there ways that this can be addressed and leveraged in a way that it pushes us in a better direction? So, I don't think it's an issue of having one and getting rid of the other, but how can we bring these two together, adapting them to the current context. It is not an easy task I should acknowledge, but we have to work progressively towards doing that.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>If it was easy we wouldn't have this 130 years ahead of us to try to attain equality, but I think, if I reflect briefly on our conversation today, the conversation has really been about progress and change. We know that culture is dynamic, we know that culture can change and why can't things blend, compliment and advance in the right way for women so that they have equal opportunities?</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>Part of it, as you have said, there is no knowledge on the part of many, many women in terms of what is happening, what could potentially be their benefits that are greater than what they are currently enjoying and if that is the case then we have to try and double-up our efforts in terms sensitising people around the objective of, you know, trying to get them to be in a better position by way of integrating them into the economy, for them to be able to do that they will have to do some kind of work, either working for themselves or working for someone, they will have to understand that some of the cultural demands will have to be readjusted. I give you an example; in my culture, when a woman gets married, it is assumed the man takes full responsibility, so you as a woman, for those that are really traditional, you should stay at home, cook for me, wash my clothes, look after the kids and I don't want to hear from you telling me I want to advance myself career wise, I need to be given time to go to school and what you do by the way doesn't count, at the end of the month it is me who is bringing in an income. Those are the fundamental issues we have to deal with and I think we have made some progress in some respects in that some of the chiefs in some of the areas that we live in have understood these issues and are progressively trying to sensitise their communities to understand that there has to be some kind of shift, this does not in any way undermine the core cultural aspects of your society, that understanding I think has to be there and I think we all have to find ways of sitting at the table. Those cultural aspects are there and they do</p> |

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| | <p>exist and we collectively have to work towards addressing them and minimising all these elements that, you know, make women be so sidelined and really non-existent in many cases. If we can make steady progress and here I come back to your earlier point of results, when you are implementing your project you shows the results, you are able to justify the course of action that you are taking. We did have one project in Kenya where we were working with vulnerable groups and there in particular many of them were women. We ensured that we were capturing all the results as we go in terms of the income earnings, what they did with the income, for some they were actively reinvesting and starting new businesses, but it was amazing how much ownership came round that project to the point that in the end we were able to step aside because they were able to form a social enterprise that they could take forward. We gave them the opportunity to value-add and be able to connect to niche markets in Europe, so that is just one example what could potentially happen, but slowly we have to make that effort.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>That is true empowerment and being able to tell their story and being able to share their story, importantly, is showing what you do but also showing what women can do when they are given the right types of resources.</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>They have proved beyond reasonable doubt their capability, give a woman that opportunity she will run with it and they are the best payers of loans by the way, we have established that.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>I hear that so often, that should just make good business sense on being able to ...</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>... absolutely ...</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>... give a loan because you know it's going to come back to you. I wanted to ask you if you could share with us a couple of women who have been important change agents within Zambia?</p> |
| MS TEMBO | <p>This is a collective effort as I always see it and coming from different spheres, I think over the years I have seen a number of great Zambian women that have made contributions to making that change, we are not yet there but they have been able to not only raise the awareness, but people starting to rally behind that and moving into action. We still have a long way to go, but I can name from the political side, we have those that actually were part of the struggle that saw Zambia becoming independent. At the political level we saw ladies like the late Mama Kankasa and the late Mary Fulano who were part of the Central Committee under the First Republican Government led by late Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. On the educationist side we have people like Petronella Chisanga and Mrs. Jennifer Chiwela, who by the way was my second grade teacher and she is still at it, she is still at it. We have strong gender activists such as Sarah Longwe, late Lucy Sichone, we had Emily Sikazwe who were leading on the push against the third term presidential bid that was being put forward by late president Frederick Chiluba and the women were very strong on that. Private sector side we have Dolika Banda, Mizinga Melu, Mukwandi Chibesakunda and many, many more. In my own organisations we have many, many Zambians in the UN who are doing it for Zambia and beyond. What is important for me is that beyond this we are able to tap from those that have perhaps reduced energy and are more in their retired phase, I see that's where perhaps the link becomes a little bit weaker, I think Zambia is progressing in the right direction but there is still a lot more to be done.</p> |
| DR. MALKA | <p>We're coming towards the end of the show now and one question that I ask all my guests who have made tremendous achievements is about some of the</p> |

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| | factors that they consider have contributed to their success. So if you can please share with us what you consider have been some of those elements that have helped you achieve your ambitions? |
| MS TEMBO | <p>Perhaps I could say my starting point was my mother. Like me, she was widowed when I was seven years old, but what she could do in terms of supporting eight young children was amazing, so for me that was my starting point and in a way the cycle repeated itself when it came to myself, but I had somewhere to learn from, but aside from that, generally she was a very, very driven woman, but what has helped me is also having clarity in terms of my vision. I think oftentimes we have situations where people have never really thought in great detail about what is it that they would like to be, how they would achieve that and what you would have to do to make sure that that happens. So, in my case I think at an early age I knew that I wanted to work with people and I wanted to work with people in a way that I was supporting those that were less privileged than myself and the path I took was anything that would help me as a stepping stone to do that. I was also lucky to have actually not only women mentors, I had men that champion women's cause. I had a particular minister when I was at the Ministry of Trade, then Minister Patel, who was very, very focused on promoting women and making sure that he gave equal opportunity to the women as he did to the men folk within the institution and it was not only me, it was a whole range of women that were within. The only condition he gave was that you were dedicated to your job and you did your very best, so in all that we have we should remember also that there are men out there who are championing the women's cause, but going beyond that, perseverance, because it is never, never easy. I will just by way of quickly sharing; there was an instance where when I was Chief Trade Negotiator, I went to a particular meeting and what was being proposed was really not going to, in my view, to be helpful and in the view of my government too because we were of that similar position, that we needed to better or to further enhance our negotiating structures in a way that we are able to confront the new demands of a relationship with the European Union, which demanded reciprocity. I made a proposal, I was objected to, not because what I was proposing didn't make sense, it was more of where is this woman coming from who is coming to want to control us, we have been running this process and I just couldn't understand that people could actually have the courage to come up to me and tell me oh, you are very powerful, you just want ... and I am trying to explain, here is the logic, here is what it would do for us. Eventually we had to find an alternative way of getting exactly the same proposal approved, but because it came perhaps from a fellow man it was ... this is the reality of what you are dealing with. I could have at that point been very discouraged, but for me I saw in it an opportunity for me to be able to show this is not about my gender, this is about what we as Africa want as a continent and how we can collectively work together to achieve that. We have to persevere and ensure that it happens. I look at the situation now from when I was there in 2011/12 somewhere there, completely changed, you have a lot of delegations led by women and they speak their mind, they are able to get their point over, but it took a lot of dedicated time to making sure that people and alliances actually, that worked very well for me, because I had other women in delegations who were not necessarily leading the delegations, but talking to them, establishing that bond, making them understand where we are coming from and even speaking to some of the men folk in the other delegations, but it is you understanding what partnerships or alliances you can forge</p> |

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| | that will get you to your objective as well. |
| DR. MALKA | It's the networks and the connections that make things happen, its progress. We are unfortunately running out of time, so if I can please ask you as we close out today's conversation to use this platform to share a few words of motivation or inspiration with women and girls who are listening to us on the continent? |
| MS TEMBO | I grew up in a context where the opportunities were limited. Where we are today the opportunities are much, much more. Of course there are issues that need to be addressed and we will continue our fight in making sure that we get to a point where these are addressed, but as a young woman, I think what is key is that you know what you want and believe in yourself, believing in yourself is an integral part of the success that you will attain. There is no limit to one's potential, when driven by one's passion about what one wants and the young girls are the determinants of their success in their lives, this is all I can say. We are here to support them, many, many other people that can also support, there is also a lot literature these days that can support that aspiration. Many mentors out there that can actually work with the girls, let's go for it. |
| DR. MALKA | What a wonderful message, there are no limits. Thank you so much for joining us today it's been a pleasure to host you. |
| MS TEMBO | Thank you very much. |
| DR. MALKA | PROGRAMME END |