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	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity– Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates women's milestone achievements in their struggle for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy and much more.
DR. MALKA	Joining us today for our feature on International Women's Day, is Judge Jacqueline Henriques, who is a Permanent Judge of the KwaZulu-Natal Division of the High Court. Welcome to the show!
JUDGE HENRIQUES	Thank you, Dr. Goneos-Malka, thank you for having me on your show.
DR. MALKA	It's so nice to see you again.
JUDGE HENRIQUES	Same here, likewise.
DR. MALKA	Judge Henriques, thinking about International Women's Day, it's origins seem to have been around the 1910s, and when I look at good old Wikipedia, they indicated that in 1914 an international women's day was held on March the 8 th for the first time in Germany, and it was dedicated to women's rights to vote, which was only achieved in 1918, and honestly, I can hardly wrap my head around the idea of not having the right to vote, or for that matter, any other rights and I think that in the field that you are in and the discipline, the ability to reform laws and abide by them has led to changes and has given us our rights. So, in consideration of International Women's Day, what are some of your thoughts around this year's theme, which is for all women and girls; rights, equality, empowerment.
JUDGE HENRIQUES	In my opinion, I think there is a global recession currently with regard to the rights of women and especially young girls. In some of the research that I have done, at present around 72% of the world's population live under authoritarian rule. So, for example we have the Taliban who have taken over in Afghanistan and are suppressing women's rights, America as you know has recently decided to end the ability of women to obtain an abortion unless there are medical reasons for same. It seems to me that to some extent, in as much as we have all these instruments and have made great strides, we seem to be going backwards. I think that we must keep going, we mustn't lose momentum and that no-one is left behind in keeping with the theme of International Women's Day. There is some hope, I must say, some countries have made a concerted effort to bounce back so to speak and have become fully-fledged democracies again. In the research I have done some of those countries are Bolivia, Moldova, Ecuador, Slovenia, South Korea and Zambia, and I think it's a good step forward for the protection of human rights generally, but especially for the rights of women who suffer tremendously under authoritarian and patriarchal rule, but I think as with the theme of all the international women's day conferences that have been held, International Women's Day has to be powered by the joint efforts of all.

DR. MALKA	Regression is such a concern for me and thinking about some of those examples that you've given, the Taliban and Afghanistan, watching it roll out in our current time of life was just so tragic for me to think that this could be happening.
JUDGE HENRIQUES	Especially given the strides we have made, and that is why I say, it just seems that although we have taken ten steps forward, we have taken twenty steps back, which is quite a sad indictment on us I think, as a human race.
DR. MALKA	It is and when I consider International Women's Day, it's not just women's day in one country, it is reflective of the whole globe and it should for me be about a call for gender equality, and in consideration of your role, how do you see the role of the judiciary in advancing the rights of all women and girls, especially ensuring equal access to justice?
JUDGE HENRIQUES	Look I think we have one of the most fantastic constitutions which recognizes and requires a break from the past. Our values, well the founding values in our constitution, are human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism. As a judge we have a constitutional duty to take into account all those foundational values when we preside in a matter, to balance rights and interests, but especially to ensure that the vulnerable are protected. So, for example, people with disabilities, women and young girls, as well as our elderly, who we also forget about. You know, we have made great strides as a judiciary, I think, because there are some judgements that, as you know, have emanated from our courts where it has shown a significant victory for women and young girls. I am thinking specifically of the recent judgements in relation to, well they are not recent, but the two judgements that come to mind relate to the traditional leadership, which involved the appointment of a female to step into the role of leader of a community, and in the second one, which gave recognition to Muslim marriages, where you had the women's legal trust step in and take that case all the way to the Constitutional Court, it started in the Western Cape Division, but that gave recognition to Muslim marriages and rights emanating from that. We have also seen, and I know I have done it, and a number of my colleagues have done it, the take a girl child to work programme that is run by various organizations, but the other thing we have also participated in is mentoring young students and university students, and I think that is our role. As you know, we are also a signatory to some of the most significant international women's rights instruments or treaties, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, our regional treaties, such as the Protocol to The African Charter and Human and People's Rights, and then the Rights of Women in Africa, which is referred to as the Maputo Protocol. So, I think where we as presiding officers have an opportunity to draw on these instruments and implement that in recognition of equality, specifically gender equality, we have an obligation to do so, and we have the constitution which allows us to do this, and I think that's where we can play the role as a judiciary, both a lower court and a higher court judiciary.
DR. MALKA	Those are really important points. One thing that I wanted to ask you though, because having legislation, having acts in place is one thing, the other thing is

	for citizens and the public to put it into implementation. How are you seeing the let's say, I don't know, the ball is in motion or actions being taken into effect to help drive implementation and practice?
JUDGE HENRIQUES	I think that is where we are sorely lacking, and I think that's where most of the work is needed. I think we are failing in educating women and young girls, especially women in the rural communities, about their rights, about what instruments they have access to, but also what organizations they have access to, and for me, if you look at all our legislation, it's there but I don't think we effectively use it. I think also there is a huge role to play by NGOs and other community organizations, for them to assist in literally spreading the word and letting people know there is recourse for them and there are avenues for them to explore.
DR. MALKA	Because if you don't know, you don't know.
JUDGE HNRIQUES	Exactly, you can't enforce your rights if you don't know what they are, and you don't know what parameters you have to work in.
DR. MALKA	And lastly in this segment, the theme emphasizes inclusivity, so for all women and girls; how do we ensure that conversations around women's rights and empowerment include those marginalized groups, as we just said, women in rural communities or women with disabilities and other people who face multiple layers of discrimination?
JUDGE HENRIQUES	Okay, I think in court matters I have already mentioned the role of NGOs that they play, and similar organizations, and we have seen them step up with the two cases I have mentioned. I also think that the government, in deciding on policies and laws for women, must address directly NGOs or researchers who have constant contact with these women, so that they can be heard, and they can argue on the suitability or otherwise of what government wants to implement. I must say, we have seen a lot of strides, I have in the alternative dispute resolution arena, with mediation, I am a huge proponent of it, and I attended a conference with stakeholders, including traditional leaders and community members, and they have literally gone into the rural communities and they have had the buy-in from traditional leaders, where these women have been trained to resolve disputes and traditional disputes in their own communities. So, a start has been made in that arena in my view. The other thing that I think we forget about is that we have an entire department for women, youth and persons with disabilities, and its mandate when I read up, was to lead on social economic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities, through mainstreaming advocacy, monitoring and evaluation and they, from what I could establish, go into areas, they collect data, monitor what is transpiring and I am hoping that that department will engage with stakeholders, go to the communities, your rural communities, deal with NGOs that deal with people with disabilities. And also, I don't think we do enough to assist women or people with disabilities, even youth with disabilities, I mean if I think of a simple thing like making a building wheelchair friendly, we don't even do that, I mean that is just for me a basic thing that we need to do and you see people come into a building with stairs, there is no wheelchair access, and members literally picking up the wheelchair and taking them up the stairs. So, I think we have got to start

	with the little basic things to ensure that there is reform, and to ensure that their voices are heard.
DR. MALKA	Thank you for sharing your insights, as always are incredibly valuable, we appreciate you joining our segment on International Women's Day and wishing you all the best for International Women's Month.
JUDGE HENRIQUES	Thank you very much and the same to you and your listeners.
DR. MALKA	That was Judge Jacqueline Henriques, who is a Permanent Judge of the KwaZulu-Natal Division of the High Court sharing some insights on International Women's Day.
DR. MALKA	Our next guest today is Professor Beatrice Opeolu, who specializes in Environmental Toxicology.
DR. MALKA	Prof, thinking about the theme for International Women's Day, which this year is described as, for all women and girls, rights, equality, empowerment, and looking at the dynamic of environmental justice and gender equality, we know that environmental issues disproportionately impact women and girls, especially in developing regions. How can we ensure that environmental policies and sustainability efforts prioritize gender equality and the rights of women?
PROFESSOR OPEOLU	Thank you, Dr. Malka for this invitation, I am honoured to be here. Priority, priority, priority, you know, most of the issues, not just environmental justice, most of the issues that women and girls face in communities, in societies persist not just because of cultural issues, but also because of the political willingness to put in strategies or interventions that will remedy or mitigate some of these issues, and I will try to break it down a little bit. In our homes for example, let's start from our homes, at least African homes, it is the role of the girl child to cook for the boy child. We don't teach our boy children to clean after themselves or wash their own clothes, to cook for themselves, and so as they grow up, instead of looking for partners, they are looking for mothers that will pack their lunch boxes, that will clean them and all of those, that is first. So, we have to be intentional from that stage of people's lives that in this world you have got two pairs of hands and whatever the physiology we come out from the womb is, is not what we need to function or to do things, it is no more the physiology most times. Perhaps if we want to lift a heavy thing, we need the masculine physiology, but most of the things we do not need the physiology to do them, we need a brain, you need all of these other features to do that. That is the first one. So, we have to be intentional at home and everywhere we are. The other thing, I believe so much in the power of education, formal or informal. So, what I don't know, I can't give. If I don't understand that what I am doing is not right, I continue to do it, so we need to put in structures into the spaces that we are to make sure that people are really educated and aware of actions, whether it is littering the floor, you just finished a bottle of Coke and just threw it away, or you just do things, people need to be aware and if they are going to be aware, then the educational structure is one of the things I am trying to build and put out there and that these solutions and of course other services, the curriculum that we are running in itself. I am a scientist, I believe in the power of science, ah but the science and the education we are offering, we need to overhaul it for contextual relevance. For example, Nigeria still

	teach ‘A’ for Apples. There is no apple tree in my country. A for Apple, and then what the Nigerian child considered apple, is not an apple that is the picture. So, you put the apple, the Nigerian child buys in the market and the apple that is apple together, the child is already confused at that point. Then the sound of A and Apple, is A in Yoruba alphabet, and A is not the A in apple in English. So, it is a confusion. So, the curricula itself and when we get to higher education, science will tell me that if you have a tablespoon of salt in a glass of water, it is saturated add four more tablespoons, then it becomes super saturated and if you add water, a certain amount of water, you dilute. So, in essence the science we are teaching is already saying the more the water, the more dilute the salt concentration in the salt, but when we put it into context, then you assume that if there is rainfall on a stream then the contaminants and pollutants there gets diluted, but when you put it into context in Africa where there are no paved roads, where people throw things on the floor, then that science needed to be taught in that manner. So, education is the force, I mean from the home front, the formal/informal educational system and the political will of people in power to be intentional about transformation, I think that is key. Those are the key three points I will say at this point.
DR. MALKA	Those are three very important points. Following through with the aspect of science, because that is your space, you are a female scientist in leadership and you for instance have been the past president of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC), which has approximately 6,000 members, that’s a huge accolade and responsibility and achievement, but the challenge is that many women remain under-represented, well rather, women remain under-represented in environmental science and decision-making roles. What more do you think can be done to break these barriers and empower women to lead in climate change, sustainability and scientific research?
PROFESSOR OPEOLU	I think the fear of failure of many women is an important one, so women seem to doubt themselves more than male counterparts. There is a joke that if there is a call for, that there is a position somewhere, the male colleague will look at 10 points and say okay, I have seven out of 10, I think I am qualified, but the woman is getting nine out of 10 and it is this one little thing there that she does not have and they say oh no, they won’t take me. So, that’s a reason why there are not many women there, and sometimes when women that are bold to take the step, when they get there they get all the bashing, for lack of words, from front and back you know, it seems scandals follow women more than men in the world that we are and other women are scared to put themselves in that, because you don’t know will we come out, will you chase you out of the door, disgrace you kind of. So, we need more confident women, women that are self-confident in their own skin and they know their capabilities, but we need capacity also. How do we build, and I am just trying to put the factors that are responsible for that, and sometimes the rules are not enforced the way they should be, because I know there are laws saying this number of women should be here and that, but those who are in law they will say there are no competent women sometimes. And also, the women in leadership also, there are some women in leadership that should be intentional about raising other women, so if I leave this space tomorrow there should be a woman somewhere that I am proud of that I have raised as my mentee that can do most of the things that I would be doing. So, for

	me that comes with intentionality and when I identify one, I don't let them go, my mentees know that. Sometimes I impose myself on them also, as their mentor, once they show the willingness to work with me. So, intentionality is key, and the rules and the systems and women just have to support women, and we have to be intentional about that. One of the things I am doing is fostering those spaces where women that come together and I guess this is a point where I can also tell you that the women leaders in the Higher Education Summit is coming up in September in Johannesburg, we welcome all women to come there, to come meet other women leaders from all over the world and let's work with them and see how it is done. Thank you.
DR. MALKA	Thank you for highlighting some of your important insights, so looking at challenges on the home front, looking at formal and informal education, looking at political will and having the confidence to drive forward. As we close out this segment, please share a few words for women and girls around the world about their role in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future.
PROFESSOR OPEOLU	First and foremost, every woman out there, understand that you are special, you are important, you are enough, you are good, you are great, you are smart. Don't take anything less. You might not be a professor, you might not be a vice chancellor, it doesn't mean that there is something that other people don't need that is in you. You just need to dig deep and find that thing and excel in that thing, that is the first. And for the leaders out there, those that have had the opportunity to attain whichever level they want to attain, understand that the sky is so wide for every bird to fly and to thrive, that the other birds are flying right there with you doesn't mean your wings will be clipped, the more the merrier. Enable other women to be able to get there and to the younger ones, mentoring and sponsorship is a two-way thing, it is not a one-way thing, there has to be the willingness between the two of you in that partnership and enjoy it. Learn from mentors, mentors learn from your mentees, be that mentor that you didn't want in your older generations, be that particular person to them and guide them through. They don't necessarily have to go through the pains you went through for them to attain your position, make it easier for them and they will have a better world if we promote and in our lifetime, if every woman in leadership positions promotes and sponsors just one woman, imagine what we will have in the world in the next decade or two. Thank you very much.
DR. MALKA	What a powerful message, thank you very much for sharing. That was Professor Beatrice Opeolu, who is an Environmental Toxicologist Specialist.
DR. MALKA	Our next guest is Marine Scientist, Dr. Lara Atkinson, who specializes as an offshore marine scientist with SAOEN Egagasini.
DR. MALKA	Dr. Atkinson, can you please share with us what International Women's Day means to you?
DR. ATKINSON	Thank you very much Amaleya. International Women's Day is, you know, there's a lot of days dedicated to people in the annual calendar these days, but International Women's Day is special because I do still think in the world we live in, it is important to stop for a moment and just to recognize how far we have come in recognizing women and their achievements, whether it is scientific, social, economic, cultural, political, whatever aspects it is, but women have really risen in these fields and have made the

	world a better place, I believe. I am a woman, but I do believe that they have, and I think it is important to stop and recognize that and emphasize the value of gender equality and what this has brought to the world. So, I think it's a great day to stop and celebrate.
DR. MALKA	I also feel it's very much an opportunity of reflecting, of how far, what our gains have been and also what opportunities we still want to seek.
DR. ATKINSON	Absolutely, I mean, where can we still go to, we're just sort of in the history of time, of human time on the planet, we are still in early days with recognizing women and their role, the importance of their role, not just as women figures of mothers, but actually as having an important contribution to society.
DR. MALKA	And where we've got International Women's Day as sort of this all encompassing sphere of celebrating women, or getting that point of reflection, what are some of your views about other types of women's days that are celebrated, and in particular given your field, I'm thinking about International Day of Women and Girls in Science, which talks about awareness obviously of woman in the field, as well as access to opportunity.
DR. ATKINSON	Yes, that is also true, I was recently on a research expedition over the International Day of Women and Girls in Science and it was a very multi-cultural, multinational expedition, where we had a lot of women on board and on that particular day we actually arranged for everybody, well not everybody, all the women on board to gather on the bow, on the front deck of the ship and we had a moment holding up our flags, trying to showcase the diversity of where all these women have come from, but it wasn't only with science, it wasn't only the science women on board, but it was including those that support the science being done, and that was a really important message to convey is that, even if you are not actively involved as being a scientist, there are so many women in the careers that support scientists doing what they do. And that was something that I really did want to convey, is that I feel that these moments in time, these days, that sometimes pass very quickly or with a short little social post, but for those women and girls out there who are aspiring to be involved in fields, whether it is science or other valuable careers, to just remind them that they too have every ability to achieve any career that they desire to achieve. They must never feel that they, as a woman, cannot do a career because there is no such thing as being held back because of your gender.
DR. MALKA	And with that recent expedition you did, I understand that there was incredible diversity in terms of representation of women from different countries within the African continent, so you've got this opportunity of people who look different, people who are women and sometimes if someone doesn't see, and I know it's a limiting view, but if you don't see an image of yourself or somebody that represents you, it's hard to imagine that you could be one of these people.
DR. ATKINSON	Absolutely, that is very, very important, and that is why we aim to really diversify our women in science, we need to have representation from all backgrounds, from all racial groups in showcasing that you too, from your classroom in grade 10 or 11, no matter what colour you or which social setting you are in, you can become a marine scientist, or whatever else you want to become, and it is something that we take into account very seriously in SAEON with our Education Outreach programme. We work

	with previously disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape and even though I do sometimes participate in those events, we truly try to bring through our younger generation of women to showcase, because the learners relate better to those individuals than to me, and it's simply a passing of the baton and I am very proud to do that and empower that next cohort to share their experiences.
DR. MALKA	Staying with this theme of empowerment and education, we still find that there is an under-representation of women going into STEM subjects, so science, technology, engineering, mathematics fields. What progress have you seen from your side in terms of gender equality in ocean research, and is there anything that you feel still needs to change so that women have equal opportunities in this space?
DR. ATKINSON	Interestingly Amaleya, in marine science we actually have seen a huge influx of women coming into marine science and it's been very welcomed, I think we have been working quite hard in the past to take away that stigma that marine science is a man's field and only men can do it. We have currently a very strong cohort of women marine scientists leading the pack, there are still men involved of course, and there are still male leaders, but there is a very strong cohort of women in marine science, but there are obviously still some old fashioned perceptions and I do think that we are working hard to change those perceptions that only men are able to be in this field of science. I do think marine science may be one of the shining examples, in South Africa certainly, to showcase women and their achievements and how we do a really good job out here in marine science, there's nothing that stops us from getting out to do what we need to be doing. So, I think it's very welcomed and enlightening and can be a good example for other science fields.
DR. MALKA	It's a great success story and it also speaks to potentially some of the interventions that you've done in your outreach programme of creating awareness and making marine science attractive for women.
DR. ATKINSON	Certainly, I have to say that when I have engaged with some of these high school learners over the past 10 years even, often the ones who are the most receptive and ask the most questions in those engagements are the young girls, the young women. So, I don't know whether we've just developed a really strong cohort of women that are willing to ask questions and willing to put their hand up and really engage, or whether the men are potentially deviating into other fields, and I can't quite tell that, I don't have a big enough sampling number or strategy to be able to see that, but the women are definitely at the forefront.
DR. MALKA	Wonderful news, I hope the enthusiasm continues, and with that thought process, in consideration of the fact that over 70% of the earth is covered in water, I would imagine that this should be a good source of employment and empowerment in that space. Coastal and marine environments provide livelihoods for millions of women, especially in Africa; how can scientific research and conservation efforts support economic empowerment for women and girls who depend on the oceans?
DR. ATKINSON	Yes, that is a tough question and as much as the ocean takes up 71% of the globe, of our earth, a lot of that is obviously unpopulated, it's vast open ocean space. So, often it is unseen and it isn't always as valued, but truly the health of our planet relies on sustainable conservation efforts of our

	oceans, as well as our land, but our oceans are equally important, and without the research that we do we would not be able to provide any advice of, for example, what areas are most effective to conserve versus to allow harvesting, because you can't protect everything. You need to have areas that are more important to protect than others, and you need to allow sustainable use of the natural resources. So, all that research that we are busy doing allows more informed decisions as to what areas can have sustainable harvesting versus what areas are really delicate, sensitive areas to conserve and minimize impact, and from that kind of work that we are doing, I do believe that we will, well if we get some political uptake, we can allow women who rely heavily on ocean resources, long-term job security, which is really what they are aiming for. Women who are working in the fish factories, women who are harvesting from the rocky shore, selling products that are harvested from the oceans, they need that job security. So, without that resource to harvest, they will not have job security. So, I do think a lot of the work that I do looks at sustainable resource use and I hope that that is trickling to the decision-makers, which is always our goal, is up the value chain.
DR. MALKA	There are so many layers, everything is complex.
DR. ATKINSON	Absolutely, very complex.
DR. MALKA	And lastly, as we close out today's conversation, as a woman who has led groundbreaking marine research, what message do you have for young girls who dream of exploring the unknown, whether it's science, technology or any other space?
DR. ATKINSON	The message I have for women and girls out there is that it is really up to us to change the perception of those who may still archaically believe that a woman can't do certain jobs. It is up to us to get rid of this perception by going out there and showing that we can do whatever job or career you dream of doing, we can do it. It requires dedication, it requires passion, but we can do whatever we want to go out there and do and to trust in themselves and their passion and let that passion shine through and their ability of doing that work will be recognized and valued. I want to send that message out to them and just don't give up on your dreams, it's important to follow your dream of what you want to do.
DR. MALKA	Thank you for that wonderful message, it's been a pleasure to host you, and have a wonderful International Woman's Month.
DR. ATKINSON	Thank you very much Amaleya and the same to you. I hope that the sharing of your research and work that you do gets conveyed as clearly as you have allowed me to share. Thank you.
DR. MALKA	That was Dr. Atkinson, who is an offshore marine scientist with SAEON Egagasini
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