



Transcript Forum:

***The Presidential Succession Battle: Woman For
President***





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Mr Dumisani Nyalunga (DDP)

President Thabo Mbeki recently remarked that the next president of the country should be a woman was received with mixed emotion across the business and political arena. Those labelled as pro-Zuma who are convinced that this is a plot to permanently exclude Jacob Zuma from the political race has viewed the statement with cynicisms and suspicions. The call for a woman president has also been heavily criticised by the Trade Union Federation COSATU and other labour movements. They all dismissed Mbeki's proposal to be succeeded by a women.

Critical questions that will be explored include, amongst others;

- Is the succession debate damaging to our democracy?
- Is the political atmosphere in South Africa conducive for a woman president?
- Why has the president been accused for publicly announcing that the next president should be a woman?
- Is the proposal for a woman president a plot to prevent Jacob Zuma from becoming the next president of the country?
- Is the gender orientation in this debate important at all when considering that other countries have female presidents?
- What are the gender implications of the debate? Are they rejections motivated by gender stereotypes?

- Is the time not OK to rectifying the electoral system to allow electorate to directly elect their president?

Mrs Kristin Palitza

Tonight's event has been themed The Presidential Succession Debate: Woman for President. If I were to answer the question my response would be of course why not? Why should gender be a disqualifying factor? The debate about presidential succession should be one around qualifications and not one around gender. Yet during the past months in South Africa the question who will be up for the presidency has also largely become a debate around gender. The question should never be to vote for a man or a woman. It should always be who would be the best leader for this country for the next 5 years. What does the candidate stand for and has he/she ran her previous office effectively and responsibly. So perhaps the question arising from the Presidential Succession Debate actually is South Africa ready for a woman president. In this case my answer would be, maybe unfortunately, I am not so sure.

Over the past months voices have been heard that find it unacceptable to have a female president in South Africa. They do not argue that a certain female politician does not have the skills or the qualifications to head the country. No - they simply state that a woman cannot do it. This is clear case against discrimination - discrimination against gender. Any form of discrimination is unacceptable either in race, religion or in this case gender. The tolerance of discrimination impedes on the free say and democratic environment that South African's have fought for.



In this short presentation, I have briefly sketched out why women's political participation is important. What has been achieved so far in terms of gender, equity and politics and what challenges women politicians still face when operating in what is seen as a traditionally male arena.

So why do we need women in politics. Women's political participation is a fundamental pre-requisite for gender quality and genuine democracy. In the Southern African Development Community Region, SADC, women constitute the majority of the population and it is therefore in line with the democratic practices that they be represented in proportion to their numbers or at least in equal number to men. It is essential for women to be represented in political structures to ensure that their interests are taken into account. But, it is sad reality that women and their political interests have been marginalized because men monopolise political decision making structures and men's voices dominate those structures.

Worldwide women face obstacles during their participation in politics. In 2005 the rate of female representation stood only at 16% globally although this figure has increased in recent years, minimal progress means that the ideal of parity still remains distant on a global scale. The good news is that some countries have made major strides towards gender equity in their parliament. There are 19 countries with women making up over 30% of their parliament. The five countries with the highest percentages are Rwanda, which almost half of all parliamentarians being female, followed by Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. South Africa follows in the fifteenth position with

32.8% female representation in parliament.

Another positive statistic is that of the 50 legislatures with most female members worldwide, 11 are in Africa. The deputy presidents of South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are women and five members of Sudan's new post war cabinet are women, a significant increase from the last one. The changing political climate in Africa works well for women. The last couple years have been milestones for women politics. We now have three female presidents worldwide, Angela Merkel - Germany, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf - Liberia and Michelle Bachelet - Chile. The elections have been ordered as progressive examples for the global community especially on issues of democracy, gender, and women's rights, poverty alleviation and support for rural space and more equitable multi-lateral system. During the electoral campaigns for the presidential elections in the DRC, thirty three candidates have already emerged and four of them are women, making it the first time ever in Africa that this many women are running for a country's highest office. These are the positive developments of recent years, and still despite the numbers of women in politics increasing, their voices somehow continue to be obscured. Why is that? Does political influence translate into empowerment, in improvement on the status of women and how do we make things real.

A shadow of recognition is still caused by the old feminist joke about how the first woman is standing on the stage about to be sworn in, her hand on the bible held by her husband. Her mother in the audience nudges the person next to her and says you see that women up



there, her brother is a doctor. It is a sad reality that males should still select which women are promoted within party structures in parliament. They decide who sits on what committee and who gets the speaking time in parliament on what and when. Wendy Brown an American Political Scientist and Gender Activist comments and I quote “more than any other kind of human activity, politics has historically borne an explicitly masculine identity. It has been more exclusively limited to men more than any other role or endeavour and has been more intensively self consciously masculine than most other social practices”.

Politics is in broad sense about differential access to power both material and symbolic, about who gets what and how. So the social construction of gender for example what constitutes masculine qualities and what constitutes feminine qualities, is actually a system of power that assigns greater value to the activities associated with masculinity and gender stereotypes, established leadership as a masculine activity. Women have won the fight battle for the vote but their access to power and the public sphere are still limited. The reality is that women spend more time working than men. Women are accorded less status for what they do while men increasingly accumulate control over power and cash resources in the public sphere, so that today’s most power and wealth is on the side of men.

Statistics from the United Nations have revealed that women comprise half of the world’s population but carry out two-thirds of the world’s work. Yet they earn only one tenth of the world’s income own less than one hundredth’s of the world’s property and their voices

continue to be poorly represented in positions of public and political power. Democracy requires parity of representation and there cannot be a true democracy if women are virtually excluded from positions of power. Also, the validity of all male decision-making comes under question in a democratic system. There cannot be equitable resource allocation without the participation of women in politics and in representative numbers. Women comprise half of the potential talent and ability of humanity and their under representation and decision-making is a loss for society as a whole.

A balanced participation by women and men in decision making would produce different ideas, values and styles of behaviour suited to a fairer and more balanced world for both men and women. Considering that 52% of the South African population is made up of women and that there are 1.2 million more women on the voter’s role than men, it would make sense to have half of the seats in parliament taken by women. One mustn’t forget that when women make it in politics they are still confronted with the masculine model of politics. In many cases they lack political party support and have no access to quality education and training to enter into the high rank of politics. Political life is organised from male norms and values and in many cases even for male lifestyles. Unequal gender relations do not cease to exist at the door of the various legislatures. Women not only have to battle sexism but also have to wrestle with the conflict between home and work. For example working hours and working practices in many private and public institutions continue to present women especially those with children with huge challenges. In most cases these gender



specific problems are amplified by general lack of institutional support. We have to move to a society in which the care of children is more equally shared between men and women and where employers respond to the need for taking families into account, through the promotion of paternity leave, to just give one example.

The road ahead is still very long before institutional power is shared equally between women and men in government and corporate arenas. The persistence of a predominantly male culture, in most organisations, makes it difficult even for those women, who have penetrated the glass ceiling, to ensure that their voices are effectively heard and acted upon. Also it is important to note that the numerical representation of women does not necessarily imply that women's voices are actually heard. What's more, not all women regard themselves as having the responsibility to represent women and therefore advance women's interest and rights. Unison therefore knows that simply increasing woman's fear of seats in parliament alone is not the entire solution. It does not guarantee that they will make decisions that benefit the majority of women. Despite the quota, ensuring women are represented in parliament; female politicians are instruments of their parties and do not speak or act independently. What's more quotas often constitute a glass ceiling beyond which women cannot go unless they engage in additional struggle. Quotas can only level the playing field on which women battle for equality and this is already happening in some countries.

Recent studies have shown that women parliamentarians in Finland for example have initiated legislation which benefits

women and other disadvantaged groups more frequently than men. Recent studies in the US also indicate that female legislators tend to focus on such issues more than male legislators, and this is how women can transform politics when they get into the arena and this why we need women in politics. We cannot just rely on men to put women's rights, childcare, women's health, reproductive rights, sexual harassment, equal employment benefits, discriminatory laws and practices against women, violence against women and other family issues, as top priority for men. They have not done so in the past. Even support of men does not attend to women's issues with the same zeal and understanding as women. Women's net, an online venture to advance women's rights around the globe, insist that "it is only when there is a critical amount of women in all their diversity in every country of the world, in both appointed and elected decision making positions, in an all international bodies that gender positions will be addressed in the political agenda and the goals of equality, development, peace and human rights for all can be realised".

The entry of women into politics therefore broadens and redefines the political agenda and it transforms the very nature of politics. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, agreed with this when he said that there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play an essential role. When women are fully involved, he notes, the benefits are immediate. Families are healthier and better fed and their income, savings and investments go up. He also adds that, I quote "what is true of families is also true for community and in the long run of whole countries". In South Africa it



is an undeniable fact that women's access to political influence and in decision making, in both the public and private sectors, has improved significantly since the country's first democratic elections in 1994. Successive leaders in the ANC have recognised that the country's liberation role remain incomplete, until women participate fully and in an equal footing, at all levels of society. In 1981 already, Oliver Tambo announced that, and I quote "women have a duty to liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and role of women in society".

From the onset, when the ANC formed the new government it acknowledged that there had been systematic marginalisation of women during a succession of apartheid governments. It also recognised an urgent need for corrective action to empower women. The new government said that it was determined to reflect this empowerment drive in the national, provincial and local spheres of government. This sentiment was clearly captured in former President Nelson Mandela's inaugural speech when he said, "it is vitally important that all structures of government including the president himself, should understand this fully, that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of repression". What Mandela made clear is that equality for women is not a narrow interest, it is critically important for both women and men and it is essential to the long-term development of the country. Yet it took time to turn these goals for gender equality from theory into practice. Almost a decade after Mandela's inaugural speech, President Thabo Mbeki noted in a state of the nation

address in February 2003, that the government had failed to achieve the necessary progress on gender equity. This was a call for even faster and more effective implementation programmes to facilitate women's empowerment.

Our government has not only sought to increase the number of women ministers and deputy ministers but a significant number of them have been appointed to non-traditional key positions such as foreign affairs, minerals and energy and public service and administration. When Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was made South Africa's deputy she rose to a higher political office than any other woman in the country's history. By appointing her, Thabo Mbeki signalled the possibility that South Africa can have its first female president in 2009. When appointing Mlambo-Ngcuka he said, and I quote "this will give us the opportunity to further strengthen the participation of women in the executive and that is what influenced the decision we took". His comments have added an additional element to the already emotionally charged presidential succession debate in the country. He has opened up a gender debate, within the succession debate.

So the questions that South African's need to ask themselves, are perhaps why do South African's not seem to be ready for a female president. Has South Africa's deputy president reached the glass ceiling and how can we break it?

Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza

When Dumisani phoned me to request that I consider giving a talk today, I was very excited because the issue that is being discussed is one of my pet issues. Preparing for this talk, I realised just



how ill equipped I am in terms of skills that I have acquired over the past years. As a social justice activist, I want to talk through what I feel most comfortable with which are my skills around being a behavioural pattern analyst rather than a political commentator.

I want to take you back to the time when Mr Mandela announced that Mbeki was going to be deputy president. I am not too sure whether you are going to remember that time, but you will probably remember how you all individually, the groups you were in and the people around you, responded. You will probably remember that there was a lot of dissatisfaction amongst people, because he was a choice that nobody expected. Looking back to that time we did not have as much tension, as what we do now, when there was talk about the possibility of a women president. Taking you back to a year ago, when Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka the deputy president, was appointed, the noise that erupted. We may need to get back to this issue again later on why there is now the tension and uncomfortable feeling, when before when we had similar situations in the country, there was not as much noise.

I have decided to title my paper The Battle of the Succession Debate. The more I think about the issue, the more I get confused. As an Analyst I think about why we are concerned and what we are worried about. Normally, I like to speak to ordinary people to get their comments, but due to the time restraints I was unable to do this. I have instead looked at the media. The media is a mirror of a society and to a certain extent - there may be some arguments with this - it does largely influence and reflect that society has

patterns. I would like to take the media aspect back to a year ago, and check on what people have said ie. Editors, political parties, trade union organisations, individuals and columnists. I would like to share my analyst results on what I have noticed the nation is saying.

Even before the succession battle was spoken about, I recall when I spoke to people in shopping centres, about the uneasiness around the appointment of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. There seems to be a lot of anxiety amongst us, as well as excitement, speculation, conspiracies to name but a few. Where is the real problem?

- Could it be the absence of an undoubted contender
- Dissatisfaction with Mbeki's leadership style
- Fact that Phumzile is a women and the first to hold such high office and we don't have models to look back to
- Perceived to be holding JZ's position
- The fact that she is the wife of Bulelani Ngcuka
- Could it be the controversy around all-gate and travel-gate,
- Or that the possibility of a female president is more of the problem.

There are many conflicting issues. We seem to be twinning Phumzile with JZ and are failing to divorce the two and at the centre of this we seem to be putting Mbeki as the person who is



making the problem that have arisen. It worries me that slogans, songs and the booing has happened to certain people especially Phumzile. We have never worried ourselves about questioning the policy of how the country's president is appointed. We have over time, put Mbeki in opposition to other democratic leaders and are looking at what is happening in other countries. What is really at the back of our minds is the fear that a female may rule us.

It is amusing how the DA leadership is hand in hand with SACP and COSATU. Do we all agree with this because of the fear that we could have a female leader? We have also had problems with Mbeki's personality, in that he doesn't smile enough, he has not been seen with his wife a lot in public, his governance style is too aloof, he is territorial. Amazingly, this is also his second term. The debate about his governance and leadership style has intensified when talk about a possible woman president comes to the table. What worry me are the confusing and conflicting statements about Phumzile. She is definitely not a saint, but I think we have been too hard on her. She was hailed the most successful minister, competent and committed. This has come from the Editors, and people writing to them. I am not too sure whether the all-gate and travel gate had anything to do with the doubts of her leadership. As soon as she became deputy president we stated questioning her leadership skills, inadequate experience, not being senior enough and also not being in the same camp. This comes from the same editors, so this is getting very confusing. Confused as to what we want, why are we having this discussion. Why did we not worry about this so much when Mandela was

president? Why bring it now, or could it be other factors not in the open or could it purely be that it is a woman.

Are we trying to dig up as much as we can therefore preventing her from getting into highest office? None of the people suggested are saints. I would like to take you back to the time before Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was in office there was a long list of people that could be there. Fascinatingly the list was very long, taking into consideration the women who were in various ministerial positions (the speaker lists various women) and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka was not one of them. Then amazingly she was made the deputy president. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma was part of the list as well, but was not as strong as the others. Then we wanted to say that it would have been better had it been someone else. As soon as she was in office we started bringing up issues that we hadn't thought about earlier on.

In conclusion, just think that these are issues that you have contributed by being silent, and I believe that if you are silent you are part of the problem. By being vocal in the media, and in the streets are we saying that we are not ready for a women president. It is difficult to say whether we are ready for this, as part of us are not sure what we want. From the messages over the past year in particular, in the midst of criticism, appears bitterness, speculation there is ambivalence. A part of us is not sure what we want despite the fact that we have a problem, but where is the problem. It turns to one direction in that it seems we do not want a women president for reasons that we do not know and are not clear about. We fear what is different because we haven't had one



before. Could it be we fear of our own incapacities, because if she comes into office it may show how incapable we were as previous leaders?

Mr Dumisani Hlophe

I am not here in the capacity of being a Chief Director; I am here in a personal capacity as a Political Scientist, as someone who has followed political activities and development in the country. So whatever I say it is not a reflection of an official person, but speaking as I see it for myself.

The succession debate for me is very complex, and I don't think the question of a women president is an issue. I would not entertain it as women have for ages had leadership skills. When Margaret Thatcher became the prime minister she did lead that country in one direction or another. If I was addressing a Christian Forum I will basically say that Jesus Christ the Saviour in this world, came through a women. When he died and rose from the dead, the first person that he saw was a woman, Mary Magdeline. He gave her instructions to go out into the world and say this is what must happen. So even historically, reading some of the scriptures in the bible they will tell you how women were powerful behind the kings. So colleagues the issue is not whether women have the capacity to lead. The question is have men outgrown their patriarchal tendencies to except this fact? So the question should not be, are woman ready to lead?, but should be, do we have men in society who have grown emotionally intelligent enough to accept women as leaders?.

If you want to bring it closer to the present, ask about the ANC and NEC

(National Executive Committee). Is the top leader of the ANC, ready to accept that women can lead? For me this is where the question is. Look at the history of the ANC; one of core people was one of the queen mothers in Swaziland who donated money to the ANC, in the very early stages, because women do have a vision. Are they ready to accept the leadership by a woman and to follow? I will not speak much on this issue, because for me it is a patriarchal issue. Men must just put mirrors on their patriarchal tendencies - put a mirror on the ANC and NEC.

What I am going to do is to go through the complexities that the succession debate has assumed. I don't think it is going to colonise the country but it is a necessary debate. It has become too complex and I think it has been clouded as a focus on personalities. If I were to deal with the question of succession, the first thing that I would look to would not be personalities, not individuals. My first points of departure would be:

- Where do you want this country to go in terms of development, in the next ten to fifteen years?
- What policies do you want to put in place to deal with the question of the power?
- What role do you want to play as a society in the African continent?
- What role and how do we position ourselves in the global affairs.
- How do we tap onto the opportunities of globalisation to



make sure that South Africa benefit?

If we say here that we want to drive to Jo'burg, one of the first things we have to decide on is how soon do we want to get to Jo'burg, then we can decide on the car, and then the driver. In this debate people have started with the driver before they established the car and where they want to go. For me that is highly incorrect. We should begin by saying where do we want this country to go in terms of a variety of issues. Once we have established that, we begin to say which movement or organisational political party is best suited to take us to this destination that we want to get into and once we have decide, we can begin to say who is the best person to lead us in this process, within this particular organisation.

For me it doesn't make sense. It is interesting when you pick up on the media, and I understand why the media does this. I have been a political Editor of the Sunday Times at some point and one of the key focal points that they have is to put a face to a story. So it makes sense why the media always puts some face to a story about succession, because a story in the media must have a face and the higher that face in society the better.

If I were to manage the succession debate this is where I would start. In this point of time the whole issue for me is clouded. There are issues of ideological measure for example, and the witness of these ideological questions is that they are being personalised. So the assumption that Jacob Zuma is a more down to earth man is close to the issue that he is closer to the people and engages with the poor and such. This is not an

ideological position. For me this is a serious mistake. When the ANC transformed, Jacob Zuma was there. He was part of that leadership, he was part of the development of gear, part of the policies that are being implemented by the government right now. So far as ideological status is concerned, what does it mean when you have a significant part of the labour movement beginning to say this is our man, what explains that? It is highly clouded on the fact that people have gone to a person instead of the issues. I think the most positive thing that probably has come out of the whole drive around JZ becoming the president, is the fact that his following has dealt with the tribalistic tendencies. So if you go to certain areas you will find a significant number of people that follow him.

We are also confusing issues, we are sometimes mistaking sympathy for JZ with support for presidency. A significant number of South Africans may think perhaps that this man has been unduly treated within his own movement. Does that necessarily amounts to support for presidency. Since we chase after individuals and personalities, we lose some of these nuances. Hence for some people when the president begins to say that the next president should be a woman and if there were no political tensions around succession, it would be one of the best steps made. When you have a situation where a group of people say that a certain person should be the president, then there are implications when you say that a certain individual should not be the president. This statement has been clouded in controversy. If it were said in peaceful times with no political tension, no succession tensions, then I believe that it would be a woman but in this



particular point it subjects itself to controversy.

The other issue that clouds this succession is the issues of organisational nature versus personality issues. It becomes difficult to tell whether a particular leader, within either labour movement, when he speaks is representing a particular labour constituency or is it him just talking. This is another question mark emerging. The same thing would apply to the youth league when the leader talks around this succession issue. It is not clear anymore whether it is a group talking or personal comments. Referring to the media on top of these issues you have mentioned, the media is going to be poor regarding the reflection of this issue because it perceives to be loaded with tension.

One of the issues that I am beginning to realise is that there are too many centres of power within the ANC, which makes it difficult to ascertain who is to become president. It may be that the ANC themselves are not homogeneous on this issue. At least publicly the ANC has not come out to articulate that this is the person who we endorse. I am also not convinced that within COSATU there is only one voice, speaking on this particular matter, in terms of the endorsement of the next president, similarly within the youth league. Within the women's league there is no voice at all, the ANC women's league is just quiet. There is also a league of Black businessmen that are also becoming a major force within society. There are too many centres of power, so much so that there is this attitude of wait and see particularly from the business side. It is dangerous and I think somebody will be set up to fail if there is one particular constituency in

society that pushes for one person to become the president. Since, when this person becomes the president you do not become the president for one party you become the president of the country. When you lead the country you are leading an institution that is a subject to competing for attention by various sources in society. Even if one is elected by the masses, when you get there we, as the elite want your attention, as there are certain things that we want you to do. The ability to juggle different classes is another issue.

One of the other issues coming up strongly when there is an outgoing leadership is that people see an opportunity, an opening to make an impact of some source. If you look forward to 2009, President Mbeki would have vacated his seat. Looking at the ministers from 1994, there will be a strong possibility that many of them will not return as cabinet ministers. There is a vacuum that is emerging; you will have people as individuals positioning themselves. In the last few months there has been the question of decentralisation of power in the office of the president. The time is right, there is an opening to engage in particular issues and take a particular direction. If you ask me the question regarding decentralisation of power, I think it is extremely tight to the question of succession. In my view the issue is not whether the power is centralised in the office of the president or not, but rather what is the power being used for. I am sure if this power were being used for the ideals and objectives of what the communist party stands for, there would not have issues with COSATU. The exercise of power has not been used to advance the issue that they want, so it becomes an issue. The question how does COSATU



and the SACP begin to participate in the ideological debate within the tripartite alliance and therefore influence public policy. That is the issue as far as I am concerned, and this is right moment to raise the issues. One crucial point that is emerging out of this succession question is that the ANC has not really transformed / managed the transition from being a liberation movement into being a ruling political party. There are fundamental differences between both in a typical liberation society such as ours.

Some of the questions around succession and transition call for political management issues. I don't think that the ANC has consciously undertaken the process that says, do we become a normal political party as any other open liberal society, or do we stick to our liberation transition. I am not convinced that this has been done successfully in the past. The US do not care who becomes president as long as there are legislations and policies that maximise their participation in the economy, to maximise opportunities. I really don't care who the next president is, but reassure me that the laws and policies makes it easy for me to participate in the economy of this country in any livelihood, this is what matters. I get the sense that we are still personally inclined and interestingly, if I looked for a preferred president, I would look at someone like Armando Guebuza, the Mozambiquen president. He has been part of Frelimo, the liberation movement, he fought against colonial imperialism, he liberated Mozambique with colleagues, he was part of the cabinet; a businessman. He has proven himself to generate wealth and he is a millionaire even though the country is so poor. He has characteristics for fighting for

liberation, knowing what empowerment is all about and I believe an interesting combination. Out of all the succession issues we need to look at the question of continuity. Where does the real power lie in the relationship between ANC government and ANC organisation; this is a thin line. The succession debate, I don't think will split the ANC. One of the crucial factors that ANC has managed to build over the years has been to brand the ANC as a phenomenon and not around individuals, and this is a very powerful thing. You can differ with your colleagues but commit to the ANC.

Comments from the floor

Is it not for South Africa to introduce the constituency based electoral system coupled with the presidential based electoral system.

Answer by Dumisani Hlophe: Combination would be ideal. South Africa being a young democracy with history of inequalities and is a significant need for transformation. I don't think a presidential electoral system would do, but should be constitutional based.

How can we move the debate to issues that affect the country in terms of development other than personalities?

Answer by Dumisani Hlophe: much of the debate is in the public eye, and as mentioned the media always wants to put a face to a story. There is another debate to this approach, and media needs to be convinced that there are specific issues. I want to believe that forums such as these should collate discussions, circulate and therefore influence the thinking of society.



One problem has come up in our discussion. The president said that the next president should be a woman and not that it would be a woman. He meant desirably it should be a woman.

Answer by Dumisani Hlophe: It is made in context. There is a tradition and culture that people must follow to become president. A president has to endorse a future president, and should be the last to pronounce the gender or sexual orientation or class of the next president.

Thoughts why women's league is so silent.

Answer Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza: my immediate reaction is because Winnie Mandela was pulled out of that structure. She is one person that has been ill-treated by the country because she is a woman, and debatable, but who made Mandela. Every action cannot be based on one person.

Answer Mr Dumisani Hlophe: I don't think they are a strong organisation. They lack charismatic and lack organisation coercion.

COSATU is not present when they accepted the invitation - why? They have a big voice in the media and then when there is an opportunity to present in public forum where they are vulnerable, they are not here.

Answer by Dumisani Hlophe: I don't think it is because they are not willing but believe they have a genuine reason.

With regard to whether South Africa is ready to have a women president. Given the history where men dictate terms, are we then leaving the race

open? Are we now putting male and female on an equal footing to compete, or are we saying because women are ready that we should focus on women?

Answer Mrs Kristin Palitza: Hopefully South African's will be ready. The next president needs to be decided on the basis of skills, qualifications and the best person to take South Africa forward with plans for the future. Must ensure that they do not hit a glass ceiling that disables them from being in the race.

Is the current political climate right, conducive to the masses participating in either direct democracy or representative democracy?

Answer Mr Dumisani Hlophe: in South African history there is contradiction. Modern type of democracy adopted is knowledge based. You need to have a set of skills and knowledge in making legalisation and public submission in the making of policies. Majority of South African's are not skilled.

What are the other two speakers comments on a woman president issue.

Answer Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza: It is policy that the president can appoint and dismiss as he sees fit. Response from the nation reflects the values we hold. There is fear of change. Not necessary towards an individual but because of history and skills. There is a need to look at bigger picture and the values being portrayed. How have lives of people changed and the impact of change for the better.

Answer Mr Dumisani Hlophe: There has been an instance where there were 8 women in a 10-man organisation and a man was still elected to lead them.



This is another angle; we can also look at whether women feel ready.

If we were to follow the example of US, don't you think it would be suicidal to pick just anyone as president considering we are a third world country, our efforts made in participating in the global arena and trying to rebuild our image.

Answer Mr Dumisani Hlophe: First two presidents we had were strong. Mbeki was called to get things done. Weak presidency may not deliver. Pros and cons on strong presidents. Some people in the ANC say anyone can be a president, as long as you are carrying out the mandate from the party, and that there are advisers on policies. I don't believe so.

Kirstin said she is not sure whether South Africa is ready for a women president. You mentioned that you want women to have more seats but limiting their empowerment.

Answer Mrs Kristin Palitza: Misunderstood me partly. I do believe women are ready but as a nation I am not sure. I was asking for equal representation in parliament, but it does not mean that women's voices will be heard. We need women's issues to be taken seriously.

Your analysis on the succession debate seems to revolve around the media. Will the manner in which the presidency will be elected not negatively affect the result of that person?

Answer Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza: Media refers to all media, and I also have dealings with the public. Media have a huge influence on what the nation

believes. Let the people in the ruling party decide on the succession. There is confusion that the president has not said that a woman will be president. We are fearful that the deputy will be the next president but this is not necessarily so.

Regarding how to manage the succession debate: Around the local elections in Kwazulu Natal we had inter-political party violence vying for positions. In the run up to the 2009 election we can face a similar kind of violence. Is the ANC organisationally strong enough to manage that process or should we prepare that things could get out of hand.

Answer Mr Dumisani Hlophe: One of the challenges ANC faces at the moment is political management. The contention is that once all these issues have been sorted out and someone has been appointed, and that the movement has endorsed this person as the next leader, the movement will then move into one coercive organisation. If JZ is made president, this person in the first few months will have to face perception and have image cleaning to do. He will have to prove himself/herself and also show that he was not made president by default.

Given Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka credentials don't you think questions surrounding her are on the basis that many people perceive her appointment as a reward for her husband's role in implications around Zuma. We have seen oppositions merging, but it is not unique. Why should you see this kind of associational backing as a resistance to woman president giving this scenario?

Answer Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza: if you look at what she has done for herself,



and not include her husband she has been a success. It is not uncommon for society to conflate issues to satisfy their agenda. We have a tendency to dig up bad news. Opposition parties' coming together has happened but it is very rare. The analysis is they fear of the unknown. We need to discuss these issues otherwise we will not develop as a democratic society. The difference is what we are fearful of.

Final comments from the speakers

Mr Dumisani Hlophe: Lets look at where we want this country to go and then who is right to lead it.

Dr Thenjiwe Magwaza: We need to discuss these issues otherwise we will not develop as a democratic society. The difference is what we are fearful of.

Mrs Kristin Palitza: Would like to encourage debate, as this is healthy for a democratic process. Opinions will be looked at and tolerated in a different way and as such would not promote splits in the party. Surface on the problems and look at what promises they are making for the next five years and make them accountable for those promises.