

Closing of the Centenary Celebrations of Nelson Mandela
Panel on “Moving the Mandela legacy forward in Academia: It is in our hands”
Nova Rectory, 5 December 2018



From left to right (convenors and speakers underlined, panelists in italics): Nuno Ferrand de Almeida (*NFA*), Isabel Capelo Gil (*ICP*), João Sáàgua, Mmamokwena Gaoretelelwe, Jorge Braga de Macedo (*JBM*), Francisca van Dunem, Jorge Sampaio, Teresa Pizarro Belezã (*TPB*), Vitor Alexandre de Albuquerque Leitão, Karabo David Modise, Maria Isabel Milheiro Fontes Cabral Monjardino, Luís Brites Pereira (*LBP*).

Introduction and summary by moderator (*JBM*): When, at 72, Madiba addressed Boston high-school students, his concern was exclusion from education as a limiting factor of development, with negative consequences on culture, peace and science. Good education equips future generations with professional and technical skills as well as a sense of justice - which is how Academia can change the world for the better. The panel's milestones were Mandela's 70th birthday celebration at Wembley Stadium, as the cold war was ending, his marriage to Graça Machel on the day he turned 80 and the "it's in your hands" message on his 90th birthday. I shared two quotes. First, earlier this year, the previous Prime Minister of Portugal said: "Mandela predicted and acted on conciliation and unification, as it is through gathering with generosity that we are able to add and go further". Second, his honorary membership of the Lisbon Academy of Science - where his wife was elected as a lusophone member ten years ago - emphasized the value of peace and paid him a "tribute that is serene, authentic and grateful".

The panel jumped from literary studies to law, biology and economics over disciplines, so as to capture the interactions between culture, peace, science and development. *ICP*, Católica's Rector, and *TPB*, former Dean of Nova's Law School, emphasized Mandela's humanism in an adverse cultural context, and governance innovations such as the Truth Commission. *NFA*, UPorto, described the intense collaboration of his famed Research Center on Biodiversity and Genetic Resources (CIBIO) with South African universities. *LBP* invited two students from his Global Business course at Nova SBE and one from Engineering at ULisboa to evoke what Mandela means for them and concluded with the quote "of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying". *JBM* read messages from Rohinton Medhora (CIGI) and Edward Kannyo (RIT), remembered the September 2008 Lisbon Declaration on Science for Global Development and evoked the memoir by his deceased friend Joëlle Bourgois, *Mes cinq ans avec Mandela*, 2011.