

From the margins to the centre...

Naledi Pandor *Doctor Honoris Causa*

presented by
Manuel Heitor

FCT- Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Lisbon, 14 July 2017

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It is my privilege to present today Naledi Pandor for her Doctor Honoris Causa at NOVA (Universidade Nova de Lisboa).

The honorary doctorate is an honorific title granted to distinguish a learned person whose knowledge and wisdom were considered exemplary and today we have the privilege to have with us one of those unique world leaders in education and science policy. And I'm particularly proud that an outstanding person, such as Naledi Pandor, has been "recruited" among the faculty of NOVA.

Naledi Pandor has been unique in fostering an inclusive approach to science, technology and economic development, **bringing to the centre of our attention all of those in the "margins" of knowledge driven societies** and knowledge-based economic activities.

To understand the unique role of Naledi Pandor in Africa and at a world level, we must understand that, above all, ***Science is a common good***, therefore belonging to everyone, and everyone must benefit of it. Following the recent UNESCO's 2030 Agenda for Open Science, its universality, coupled with the capacity for change, provides science with the ability to cross political, cultural and psychological boundaries towards sustainable development, if policy leaders have the ability to full understand the role of science in society and related complex relationships.

This process requires leaders that understand and activate the challenge of opening up the scientific process as a whole, reinforcing the concept of scientific social responsibility, through engaging not only the scientific community, but also society in general, increasing knowledge and the recognition of social and economic impacts of science.

The message conveyed to the world by Naledi Pandor is so deep that calls our attention to better understanding her grassroots. She received most of her education in exile and matriculated at *Gaborone Secondary School* in Botswana. Daughter and granddaughter of great masters in a rather backward looking South African society, Naledi grew in a strong political and family debate within a continuous and hard fight for freedom.

Her mother, Fikile Matthews (1929-2002), was one of the first African women to attend Fort Hare University to read Science. Her father, Joe Matthews (1929-2010) was instrumental in starting the Youth League of the *African National Congress* (ANC). He ultimately led the Youth League while still at university. Joe Matthews was a close friend with Nelson Mandela and the President of ANC in exile, Reginald Oliver Tambo. Both were students of the legendary Prof Zachariah K. Matthews (1901-1968), grandfather of Naledi Pandor, who was responsible for crafting the *Freedom Charter* and which is still the blue print of the vision of the ANC. He exercised a major guiding and moderating influence on African political history in one of its most crucial periods in the last century. Above all, Naledi Pandor and her siblings were taught under the principles of tolerance, of humanity, and of a clear separation of *right from wrong*.

Naledi Pandor is married to Sharif Pandor and they have four children and two grand-children.

But the leadership of Naledi Pandor and her unique role at a world level needs to be recognized upon her hard working career. By understanding scientific knowledge in its true holistic dimension, contemplating its diverse components and dynamics, she has been able to help all of us capturing the

fruitful and regenerative function of scientific knowledge. Her master lessons to engaging capacity, to promote knowledge and its sharing and social appropriation have been acknowledged at a world level.

I would like to acknowledge three principal characteristics of Naledi Pandor:

1. As an **educator**;
2. As an **activist and social entrepreneur** towards the public good;
3. As a **policy maker** in science, education and social and regional development, leading to sustainable development.

Naledi Pandor obtained a BA in History and English at the *University of Botswana* in 1977 before leaving to the UK where she graduated with a MA at the *University of London*. Back in South Africa she was awarded a MA in Linguistics at *Stellenbosch University* in 1997. In that year she also obtained a *Diploma in Leadership in Development* from the *Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University*.

Naledi Pandor is a teacher by training and has been involved in education in various ways along her career. Above all, she was a teacher at *Ernest Bevin School* in London in 1980, when she was in her mid twenties. From 1981 to 1984, she taught in Gaborone, Botswana and from 1984 to 1986, she was a lecturer at the *Taung College of Education* in North West. Between 1986 and 1989, Naledi Pandor was a senior lecturer in English at the *University of Botswana* and from 1989 to 1994, she was a senior lecturer in the *University of Cape Town*.

Following South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, Pandor was elected to Parliament, and in 1995, she became a Whip and then Deputy Chief Whip of the ANC, when she was forty. She also convened the Sub-Committee on Higher Education in the Education Portfolio Committee. In 1996, Naledi Pandor was appointed as member of the *Cape Technikon Council*. In August 1998 she became the Deputy Chairperson of the *National Council of Provinces (NCOP)* and in 1999 she was elected Chairperson.

In addition, Naledi Pandor has recently performed leading political roles as follows:

- 2000: member of the ANC National Executive Committee and a member of sub-committees on education, communications, archives and political education.
- 2002 – 2004: Chancellor of *Cape Technikon*; member, Council of the *University of Fort Hare*;
- April 2004 to May 2009: **Minister of Education**;
- May 2009 to October 2012: **Minister of Science and Technology**;
- October 2012 to 25 May 2014: **Minister of Home Affairs**;
- Since May 2014: **Minister of Science and Technology**.

But there are many other reasons that clearly justify and, above all, make this *Doctor Honoris Causa* very unique and prestigious for NOVA and Portugal.

Under Minister Pandor's leadership, South Africa has become a catalyst for developing scientific capabilities across the African continent.

Naledi Pandor once mentioned: "We have an unfortunate legacy inherited from the former education system of our country, which discouraged black learners from taking mathematics and science for matric. I am calling on you all to reverse this legacy by taking these subjects in order to change the situation".

The unique role of Naledi Pandor has been very important in Africa to show that economic growth is a long-term project and that the role played by innovation should see an incremental increase. The case

of South African innovation for energy security, poverty alleviation and health care funded through the Technology Innovation Programme are clear examples of her leading role in Africa.

Under her leadership, South Africa has made numerous contributions to building science structures in organizations such as the African Union and the Southern African Development Community, to strengthening the science granting councils of other African countries, and to expanding the role of the Global Research Council.

Naledi Pandor has been arguing for decades about the role of science to reduce inequality and income inequality. For example, her role has been very important in addressing critical issues for social change, in that scientists and innovators in Africa still need to work harder to put the continent on the map and in-line with global standards.

She said: "...The issue that confronts us today is what can we do to reduce inequality,... a worrying inequality. We don't publish; we don't have a significant numbers of PhDs and we are not innovative enough. We don't even have new products and we also don't introduce services. We come off rather dismally."

Naledi Pandor has worked tirelessly to connect research with sustainable development goals. She is leading numerous efforts to promote research capacities of young and emerging scientists, particularly female scientists. For example, under her leadership, the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) was promoted to fight against brain drain from South Africa. The program, established in 2006, is designed to attract and retain excellence in research and innovation at South African public universities through the establishment of research chairs at the institutions.

Quoting Naledi Pandor: "Science does best when it's done in collaboration. [...]. South Africa has a duty and will not enjoy freedom if not with the collaboration with brothers and sisters in the continent, particularly young people."

Naledi Pandor also led the implementation of South Africa's Ten Year Innovation Plan and the National Research and Development Strategy. She initiated and hosted Science Forum South Africa in 2015, the first event of its kind in the continent, aiming to provide a platform for debate on the role of science, technology and innovation in society, as well as to promote international science partnerships.

In the last few years, Naledi Pandor has been the main driving force leading to establishing the *Square Kilometre Array* (SKA) demonstrator Project, the world's largest and most sensitive radio telescope. Key economic benefits from this investment will be the leveraging of foreign direct investment from the SKA Organisation. SKA will be able to detect an airport radar on a planet tens of light years away and exceed the image resolution quality of the Hubble Space Telescope by a factor of 50 times. And it is expected to produce science that changes our understanding of the universe. In other words, for the first time, Africa is going to participate in a significant scientific project, which will result in global research infrastructure located in the African continent.

I should also acknowledge the unique role of Naledi Pandor over the last year in cooperating with Portugal to promote a new holistic and **integrative approach to knowledge on space, climate-energy, oceans and data scientific areas and related issues in the Atlantic**, fostering conditions to provide the world with more science, more knowledge and more scientific culture. Her role in the high level meeting we organized in Azores in April 2017 was remarkably important to help us understanding the way to foster a new world research agenda on "**Atlantic Interactions**" and to establish the **Atlantic International Research Center (AIR Centre)** as an intergovernmental organization.

Naledi Pandor is an outstanding woman committed to scientific advancement and cooperation not only in her own country, but with a global perspective. It is under this context that she received many international awards.

These include the *Grand Cross of Merit with Star and Shoulder Ribbon of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany*, one of the highest possible recognitions in Germany. That specific award honours her commitment to promoting German-South African relations, particularly through scientific and technological cooperation.

Naledi Pandor was chosen by the *American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)* to receive the *2016 Award for Science Diplomacy*, not only for integrating science in policymaking within her own country, but also for her advocacy for young and women scientists by supporting initiatives that encourage international collaboration for both groups.

Today, with the *Doctor Honoris Causa* of Naledi Pandor, we are launching a new era of scientific collaboration between South Africa and Portugal.

Again, Naledi Pandor has been unique in fostering an inclusive approach to science, technology and economic development, **bringing to the centre of our attention all of those in the “margins” of knowledge driven societies** and knowledge-based economic activities. Her lessons should be present in our everyday actions!

I’m particularly proud that Naledi Pandor has been "recruited" among the faculty of NOVA.

Manuel Heitor
Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education, Portugal

Ms Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor is the Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa a position she has held since 26 May 2014.

She has been a Member of Parliament since 1994 and a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress (ANC) since 2002.

Academic Qualifications

Ms Pandor matriculated at Gaborone Secondary School in Botswana in 1972.

She holds a Masters degree in Education from the University of London obtained during the period 1978 and 1979. She also holds a Masters degree in General Linguistics obtained from the University of Stellenbosch in 1997; a Bachelor degree and Certificate for Continuing Education from the University of Botswana and Swaziland obtained between 1973 and 1977; a Diploma in Education from the University of London obtained between the period 1977 and 1978; a Diploma in Higher Education, Administration and Leadership from Bryn Mawr Summer Programme in 1992, and a Diploma in Leadership in Development from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University obtained in 1997..

Career/Positions/Memberships/Other Activities

Ms Pandor was a teacher at Ernest Bevin School in London in 1980. From 1981 to 1984, she taught in Gaborone, Botswana and from 1984 to 1986, she was a lecturer at the Taung College of Education in North West. Between 1986 and 1989, Ms Pandor was a senior lecturer in English at the University of Bophuthatswana and from 1989 to 1994, she was a senior lecturer in the Academic Support Programme of the University of Cape Town.

Ms Pandor served as chairperson of the Union of Democratic Staff Associations at the University of Bophuthatswana, Mafikeng from 1988 to 1990 and she was chairperson of the Western Cape National Executive Committee of the National Education Coordinating Committee from 1991 to 1993. During this time, she was also a member of the ANC's Western Cape Education Committee.

Ms Pandor was also ANC chairperson for Athlone Central branch and executive Chairperson of the Desmond Tutu Education Trust and chairperson of the Western Cape School Building Trust. She served as deputy chairperson of the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa from 1992 to 1995; and later as chairperson of the fund. She also served as deputy chairperson of the Joint Education Trust Board of Trustees from 1993 to 2001.

As a member of Parliament, Ms Pandor served on the Portfolio Committee on Education and as convener of a sub-committee on higher education in 1994; she was ANC whip in the National Assembly between 1994 and 1995; and ANC deputy chief whip in the National Assembly from 1995 to 1998.

Ms Pandor has also served as deputy chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP)

from 1998 to 1999, and as chairperson of the NCOP from 1999 to 2004.

In 2000, Ms Pandor was a member of the ANC National Executive Committee and a member of sub-committees on education, communications, archives and political education. She also served as Chancellor of Cape Technikon between 2002 and 2004; and she was a member of the Council of the University of Fort Hare during the same period.

From April 2004 to May 2009, Ms Pandor served as Minister of Education and from May 2009 to October 2012 as Minister of Science and Technology. She was appointed as the Minister of Home Affairs again from 4 October 2012 to 25 May 2014.

Source: Ministry of Science and Technology