

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Annual Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture
Nelson Mandela Foundation
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Video Recording Script

May I offer congratulations to the Nelson Mandela Foundation for the hosting of the 18th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture. I also wish to applaud the apt choice of the theme *“Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: A New Social Contract for a New Era”* which resonates so profoundly with the times we find ourselves in as the global community.

I deliver this message on behalf of Nelson Mandela University and wish to thank the Nelson Mandela Foundation for the opportunity to share in this event and to offer this message of support and solidarity.

The Covid pandemic that we are facing as one world, has brought into sharper relief the gaping fault-lines of social exclusion and inequality. Ironically, this time has also demonstrated our inter-connectedness as humanity. Now more than ever, is it laid bare to see how the decisions we make and the actions we take - or do not take - as individuals and leaders, affect all of humankind beyond our organizations and beyond borders.

These times call for judicious leadership. At the core is the criticality of clarity of purpose about the shared future leaders envision for those whom they lead. The anchoring bedrock must be joint pursuit of a more just society and a more humane world. This is the heritage that Nelson Mandela bequeathed to us. Leadership in these times also calls for humility, centred foundationally on the belief that none of the solutions we need to deploy to create a better world, can be achieved in isolation.

To evolve a gentler, kinder and more caring world, we need to mobilize and harness the lessons of Madiba: to lead with humility and as part of a collective. How we lead must be sharply focused on how to overcome inequality, and specifically gender inequality. In this quest, we need to evolve new forms of equality.

Young people must be centered, as the future world is theirs. The youth must be active in getting to know Mandela, assessing and re-assessing with interpretive hindsight the legacy being received. As the Nelson Mandela University, we commit to our knowledge project and intellectual endeavours to contribute to a better world, by seeking novel ways

to purposefully and continuously advance equality, inclusion and social justice. We do this knowing that Mandela would have wished us to be critical and forthright as we undertake this work.

As the University we are truly honoured to be partnering with the Nelson Mandela Foundation to advance the work of Mandela, to excavate his legacies. We pledge to create the space at the University, for coming generations to continue to explore and harvest these wisdoms, to strengthen our unity of purpose for a new and more humane global compact.