

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities

Raymond Mhlaba Institutional Public Lecture 2026 Speakers

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Ms Sonja De Bruyn is a member of President Ramaphosa's Advisory Council on Investment, and she was previously a member of the Presidential Working Group on B-BBEE in President Mbeki's administration. She was appointed to National Treasury's Jobs Fund in 2025 by Minister Godongwana. In 2019, Sonja was appointed to JP Morgan's EMEA Advisory Council, which recently wound up its activities. She has almost 30 years of transacting and corporate finance advisory experience in Mergers and Acquisitions in South Africa and internationally, as well as latterly, in Private Equity since 2016. She is the Founder and Principal Partner of Identity Capital Partners, a women-led investment firm based in Johannesburg. She was previously Executive Director of Women's Development Bank Investment Holdings (2002 – 2007) and before that, Vice President at Deutsche Bank, primarily based in South Africa and working in their London and Tokyo offices as well (1997 – 2002).

Over the last 25 years, Sonja has served in various Board roles initially as a shareholder representative and since 2005 also as an Independent NED. In the listed space, she is on the Board of RMB Holdings (previous Chair), and she is the Deputy Chairman and Lead Independent Director of Remgro Group. In the unlisted space, Sonja is Chairman of Total Energies Southern Africa. She retired from the Boards of Rand Merchant Insurance and Discovery Group in 2021 and was previously on the boards of Ethos Private Equity, FirstRand, Anglo American Platinum, Mr Price Group, Nestle South Africa, and the National Empowerment Fund (a South African DFI).

In 2010, Sonja was named one of the Class of Young Global Leaders by the World Economic Forum and has been awarded and recognised by the Black Management Forum and by the Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals (ABSIP Woman of the Year 2014).

RESPONDENTS

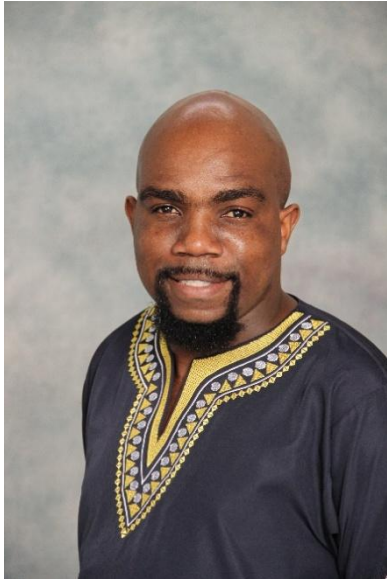


Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardill is currently the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund for Technical Assistance and the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Report (UPR) at the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. She also serves on the boards of the MTN Foundation, Afro Barometer (Ghana), the GBVF Fund, and Phenduka Literacy (for primary school pupils in grades 6 and 7 in Alexander Township). Until recently, she was Chair of the Council of Nelson Mandela University, the UN Global Compact SA, Mercedes-Benz SA, and AngloGold Ashanti. She was interim Chief of Staff and special adviser to UN Women in New York and Pretoria, respectively. She also served a 12-year term as an independent expert on the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Nozipho served as SA's Ambassador to Switzerland, Liechtenstein and the Holy See as well as Deputy Director General, responsible for Human Resources and the Foreign Service Institute in the South African Department of Foreign Affairs (now

DIRCO). A 4-year tenure as Corporate Affairs Executive at MTN Group exposed her to executive leadership in the private sector, both at home and across the continent, and to the challenges of creating a human rights culture in business.

Her own company, Ambassador Bardill and Associates, advises companies on integrating race, gender, and sustainable development into their business strategies and on building cultures to end sexual harassment, bullying, and GBV in the workplace. She has written articles on these subjects. Inspired by the desire to document the lives of women in leadership roles across the continent, and the silence imposed by lockdown during the COVID pandemic, she self-published *Write to Speak*, a collection of 55 personal stories of women leaders across 23 countries in Africa.



Dr Welcome Kupangwa is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Family Business Unit within the Department of Business Management at Nelson Mandela University. He holds a PhD in Business Management and has over a decade of experience in higher education as a researcher, supervisor, and academic mentor. His scholarly work focuses on family businesses, values-based leadership, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, with a particular interest in how organisational values and indigenous philosophies, such as Ubuntu, contribute to long-term business resilience and sustainable development. He has published in leading national and international peer-reviewed and rated journals and has presented his work at numerous academic conferences. His scholarship has also received recognition through multiple Best Paper nominations, including two award-winning conference papers (hosted in Belgium and Namibia). Dr Kupangwa actively collaborates with scholars and industry partners on projects addressing contemporary business and societal challenges. His expertise has led to invitations from leading organisations, including the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber and Standard Bank, where he has contributed as a speaker and facilitator on topics related to entrepreneurship, sustainability, and responsible leadership.