

## H.E. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio (Portugal)



Born in 1939, Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio graduated in Law from Lisbon University in 1961. As elected head of the Students' Union of the Lisbon Law Faculty, he became a leader in the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Portugal, which was eventually achieved through the Carnation Revolution (1974) and the establishment of a liberal democratic constitutional regime in 1976.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, Mr. Sampaio took numerous cases to the courts of the dictatorship, defending political prisoners and exposing the abuses of the police. He defended, on a *pro bono* basis, several victims of state repression. He also defended human rights as a member of the European Human Rights Commission of the Council of Europe from 1979 to 1984.

From 1976 onwards, Mr. Sampaio became a consistent supporter of the consolidation of Portuguese democracy: as a Member of Parliament; as Speaker of the Labour Party; as Deputy Minister for External Cooperation; as Mayor of Lisbon from 1989 to 1995, and, from 1996 to 2006, as President of the Republic.

As President, Mr. Sampaio did much to communicate a democratic and modern image of Portugal and for its international recognition. He is a strong advocate of the European integration project, actively supported its enlargement to all democratic countries in Europe as well as to Turkey, and played an active role in engaging ordinary people, in particular youth, in public debates on European affairs. He oversaw the handover of Macau to China and strongly backed Timor-Leste's independence. During his two presidential terms, he participated in almost all debates related to challenges currently facing the international community, including HIV-AIDS, drugs, human rights, children's rights, and other issues.

As the UN Secretary-General's first Special Envoy to Stop Tuberculosis from 2006 to 2012, Mr. Sampaio has raised the international visibility of the scale of the disease and its impact on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. As the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations from 2007 to 2013, appointed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, he set up an important UN forum for dialogue and cooperation against hatred and violence and promoted common action at local, national and regional levels to meet the challenges of cultural diversity across the globe.

Most recently he has been involved in two main fields of action: as a member of the Global Commission on Drugs Policy, he has been advocating for major reforms of drug policy; he

has also launched the Global Platform for Syrian Students, a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at providing emergency scholarships to Syrian students that allow them to resume their university studies.

Mr. Sampaio holds several Portuguese and foreign honours, including:

- *Doctor Honoris Causa*, by the Universities of Aveiro (2008), Coimbra and Lisbon, (2010), Porto and King's College, London (2014);
- Charles V European Award '2004, by the Fundación Academia Europea de Yuste;
- *XIV North-South Prize Award (2008)*;
- VI International Prize *Sevilla Nodo Entre Culturas (2011)*, awarded by *Fundación Sevilla*.