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Speech given upon the celebration of the Alchemy project contract between UCP, Amyris and
AICEP

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Mr. Prime Minister;
Ministers;
Secretary of State;
Ambassador George Glass;
Ambassador Domingos Fezas Vital;
Dear John Doerr, Dear John Melo,

It is a true privilege to sign this cooperation agreement with Amyris and the Portuguese State before the Prime Minister of my country, the Ministers, and all of you, not only for what this means for Portuguese-American relations in translational research in biotech, but also because it is an expression of Portuguese universities' capability in contributing to global innovation and economic growth. And it is highly relevant that this is being done here in Palo Alto. Not only because this is the site of the most successful innovation alliances in the world (bringing together in perfect pitch universities, venture capital and companies), but because it was not very far from where we are today that it all started, two years ago, with a dinner conversation at John Melo's home. There, a visionary project began to take shape crafted by a common vision about the role of science for the greater good of humanity and the sustainability of the planet and an uncommon determination to get things done and bring together the research capacity of two leading institutions, UCP (Universidade Católica Portuguesa) and the global biotech company Amyris.

If we are here today, celebrating a new stage in Portugal – US relations, we owe it to John Melo's visionary commitment and the relentless persistence of a whole team at Amyris, UCP and AICEP. And this could not have been done, Prime Minister, without the full support of the Portuguese government, whom I dearly wish to thank. Allow me as well to particularly acknowledge Luís Castro Henriques, President of AICEP, and the work of his remarkable team (Filipe Costa, Rita Araújo) for keeping with us all the way. And finally, a word of thanks to the teams of scientists, legal counsels and strategic planners at Amyris and my colleagues from UCP, who are here today. Kudos! We made it!

This is a remarkable instance of R&D diplomacy, that will strengthen the ties between the US and Portugal; but it is also an innovation alliance reflecting the transition from a production-based to a bio-based knowledge economy, requiring the exploration of synergies between universities, knowledge centers and businesses both to optimize the process of going to market, and as a way of maximizing efficiency in resource allocation and enabling the scaling up of increasingly sustainable production streams.

In the 17th century, the father of experimental methods, Francis Bacon claimed that science is about contributing to the relief of man's estate, in 2018, we all know that a sustainable development model for humans and the planet requires investment and stewardship for research.

Universities are the focal point of a new economic model that is no longer simply based on manufacturing and commodities but is driven and led by those who own intellectual capital. This clearly requires stronger links between business and academia, it means that businesses must tap the resources available in universities more effectively and universities must be flexible in catering to the changing business demands.

And in fact, this is the story that UCP has been successfully telling since its founding, creating bridges with business with a vision that life-changing science requires a partnership with forward-looking entrepreneurs.

UCP introduced Biotechnology to Higher Education in Portugal, when it created the School of Biotechnology in Porto 35 years ago, and is particularly relevant that we celebrate this anniversary with a new knowledge partnership with Amyris leveraged by the Portuguese State through AICEP, a partnership that will turn the School into a key hub for biotech in Europe, and with a vision that through UCP's and Portugal's privileged connections with Africa, this knowledge alliance will be able to make use of science to improve the lives of the population in that continent.

Let me sum up briefly the affordances of the Alchemy project for global science and innovation growth and most specifically for Portugal and for the two partners:

- It boosts UCP's research profile in biotech and with Amyris allows for the creation of a research hub in the north of Portugal that will energize other actors across the system (universities, businesses, industry);
- It creates new high value jobs, providing places for highly qualified researchers and strengthening the capability of Portugal to not only attract but retain talent;
- It contributes to profile Portugal as a country that supports research-intensive innovation, enhancing the country's ability to attract knowledge-driven investment.

It took drive, the commitment of all stakeholders (UCP, Amyris and AICEP), a certain degree of boldness and persistence to get things done well, with ambition and as quickly as possible. And if we agree with psychoanalysts that we need to revisit the original scene to find closure. Well, we are back in Palo Alto, back at the beginning and ready to get things done. Let's roll.