

Guterres hails predecessor Dag Hammarskjöld as 'my reference and my inspiration'

[Secretary-General António Guterres](#) on Sunday described his predecessor Dag Hammarskjöld as his “fundamental inspiration,” who should be regarded as the “central reference” point for the whole United Nations ideal today.

Delivering the annual [Dag Hammarskjöld](#) Lecture in Uppsala, Sweden, the childhood home of the second UN Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres said Mr. Hammarskjöld made the “supreme sacrifice” in September 1961, when he died in a plane crash in what is now Zambia, while trying to negotiate a complex ceasefire agreement.

“The values that he fought for[...] make him a fundamental inspiration for us all, that want to pursue the same goals, the same objectives, with reference to the same values,” Mr. Guterres said.

He said that even more inspiring than Mr. Hammarskjöld’s personality was that he had been “not only a man of action, not only an extremely sophisticated diplomat” but also “a man of culture.”

“And that is probably what is today more lacking in statespersons, and in high-ranking officers of international organizations like the UN, is that strong link to culture,” added the UN chief.

He recounted that his predecessor had called poetry an “indispensable complement to diplomacy” quoting the Swede as saying that “the diplomat, like the poet, works with words – transposes words – using them as a key although not necessarily a master key.”

Turning to today’s world and his own diagnosis of some of the fundamental problems facing society, Mr. Guterres said that his predecessor had noted the same dangers of nations turning inwards, as opposed to looking outwards, and placing their faith in multilateralism.



UN Photo/MB

Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld in March 1954.

“If it’s true that globalization has provided enormous benefits to humankind in wealth; in trade in the increase of a huge middle-class; in the increase of the time of life; in the reduction in absolute poverty; the truth is that globalization has increased inequalities in a dramatic way,” said the UN chief.

“Many are the losers of globalization in the rust-belts of this world” he said, adding that an environment had been created now where faith in multilateral bodies like the UN “has been dramatically reduced.”

One of today’s great conundrums is how to build trust in the idea that there are solutions to the world’s current problems and challenges he said.

“The problems of our times are global problems that can only be solved with global solutions, but there is a certain trend for isolationism that was mentioned by Dag Hammarskjöld with all the consequences we are witnessing today.”

The lecture is given each year by an “outstanding international personality” in memory of the former Secretary-General, and co-organized by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

[Climate Action Special Envoy Bloomberg](#)

pledges \$4.5 million to help UN fight climate change in line with the Paris Agreement

The UN Special Envoy for Climate Action, Michael Bloomberg, announced on Sunday a contribution of \$4.5 million to the organization's Climate Change Secretariat, the [UNFCCC](#).

The billionaire philanthropist and former Mayor of New York City, pledged last June to make up the Secretariat's funding shortfall, caused by US President Donald Trump's announced withdrawal from the historic 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.

The contribution will go towards general operations, including assisting countries to meet targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions in line with the accord; agreed by 193 States in the French capital.

In late March, the United States Congress announced that it was cutting funding for this year to the UNFCCC by \$4.5 million; from \$7.5 million, down to \$3 million, according to a media release from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Mr. Bloomberg made the announcement of his contribution on the CBS television programme, 'Face the Nation', saying that "America made a commitment and as an American, if the government's not going to do it, we all have a responsibility."

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres said via Twitter](#) that he was "very grateful to Michael Bloomberg, not only for his generous support to the United Nations, but also for his global leadership on climate action."

[The UNFCCC said that](#) with many contributions from signatories to the agreement still outstanding and "a decline in voluntary contributions" the funding was arriving at "a critical time".

It "strengthens UN Climate Change's capacity to support developing countries" and allowed more "strategic outreach to promote climate action among stakeholders including cities, regions, business and civil society," said the Secretariat statement.

The UNFCCC's Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, said that "when countries adopted the historic Paris Agreement to limit global temperature rise, they also recognized that achieving that goal would take broad-based global climate action in all sectors, public and private."

"I welcome this generous contribution from Bloomberg Philanthropies as an important, practical recognition of our need to work together and to step up our response to climate change," she added.

Mr. Bloomberg added that despite the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and funding cuts, he was confident that the US would “meet its commitment by 2025 to reduce greenhouse gases by an agreed amount, and if we do it, hopefully other countries will do it as well.”

[UN chief condemns fatal shooting of International Red Cross staffer in Yemen](#)

The UN Secretary-General has condemned Sunday’s killing of a senior staff member working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Yemen, who was attacked while travelling in a vehicle on the outskirts of Taiz.

[In a statement](#), the ICRC identified the victim as Lebanese national, Hanna Lahoud, who was in charge of the organization’s detention programme in Yemen.

“Mr. Lahoud was rushed to hospital where he died as a result of his injuries. The colleagues he was travelling with were unharmed in the incident,” said ICRC.

The UN chief said [in a statement](#) released through his Spokesperson, that those responsible for the attack must be “apprehended and prosecuted”.

“The Secretary-General expresses his deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the aid worker killed and expresses his solidarity with the President and staff of the ICRC,” added the statement.

Mr. Guterres also emphasized the need for all parties to Yemen’s bloody conflict – which has left 22 million in need of aid – to protect humanitarians providing lifesaving assistance.

ICRC’s Middle East Director, Robert Mardini, said: “We are all in shock. Hanna was a young man, full of life and was widely known and liked. Nothing can justify Hanna’s murder and we are in deep mourning for our friend and colleague.”

Mr. Lahoud had worked for the ICRC – an independent global humanitarian organization that offers protection and support to all victims of violence – since 2010, in different field positions and at its headquarters in Geneva.

Outrage and 'revulsion' voiced by UN mission in Afghanistan over latest suicide attack

A suicide attack on a voter-registration centre in the Afghan capital Kabul which left at least 30 dead on Sunday, has been condemned by the UN mission in the country, [UNAMA](#).

"The UN family in Afghanistan feels a deep sense of revulsion at today's outrage," [said the head of the mission](#), Tadamichi Yamamoto, adding that "the killing appears to be part of a wholly unacceptable effort by extremists to deter Afghan citizens from carrying out their constitutional right to take part in elections."

Sunday's attack took place when a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt, blew themselves up near the election facility in the west of Kabul – an area mostly populated by Shi'ite Muslims, according to UNAMA.

Special Representative Mr. Yamamoto expressed his deep condolences to the family and victims, and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

News reports said that the ISIL extremist group had claimed responsibility for the bombing, and many women and children are believed to be among the victims.

Voter-registration began last week for parliamentary and district elections scheduled to take place on 20 October.

UNAMA said that since then, "there have been a number of violent incidents around the country against the centres where citizens are required to sign up for the upcoming ballot."

Two police officers were shot and killed by armed assailants at a registration place in the city of Jalalabad on Thursday, and gunmen also torched a centre in Ghor; abducting electoral and security officials.

They were released the following day.

'We need accountability' to end the

crime of chemical weapons use in Syria, says Guterres

UN Security Council members need to find a way to unite and punish anyone found to have used chemical weapons in Syria, in line with international law.

That was the message [on Saturday](#) from Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaking to reporters in Sweden, where he is hosting a retreat for Council members in the home which belonged to his predecessor in the 1950s, [Dag Hammarskjöld](#); and inspirational leader of the world body, who was tragically killed in a plane crash in what is now Zambia, in 1961.

Following the [recent alleged use](#) of chemical weapons in the formerly-besieged Syrian city of Douma, and previous instances verified by the UN since the brutal conflict began, Mr. Guterres said that a way had to be found to end their use.

“We cannot go on living with impunity in relation to what has been happening with weapons that should have disappeared from the face of the world,” he said.

In response a question on whether the 15-member Council had a roadmap for a solution to end the conflict now in its seventh year, the Secretary-General said that “everything” needed to be put on track, and there was “still a long way to go” to achieve unity.



Photo: Moa Haeggblom

Secretary-General António Guterres and the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council in Backåkra, Sweden. Photo: Moa Haeggblom

The UN chief added that the closed-doors session in Sweden provided an opportunity for the Council to prove that it “can be effective when it is united.”

“The problem is that in many aspects, we have not yet been able to have a united Security Council,” he added.

Quoting former Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, Mr. Guterres said that “more than ever, the world is one world” and mankind does not have “the right” to allow new and old divides to cause so much suffering and pain.

“To do the right thing is to overcome contradictions, to overcome differences and to understand that we all really must work for what is really one world,” he told reporters.