

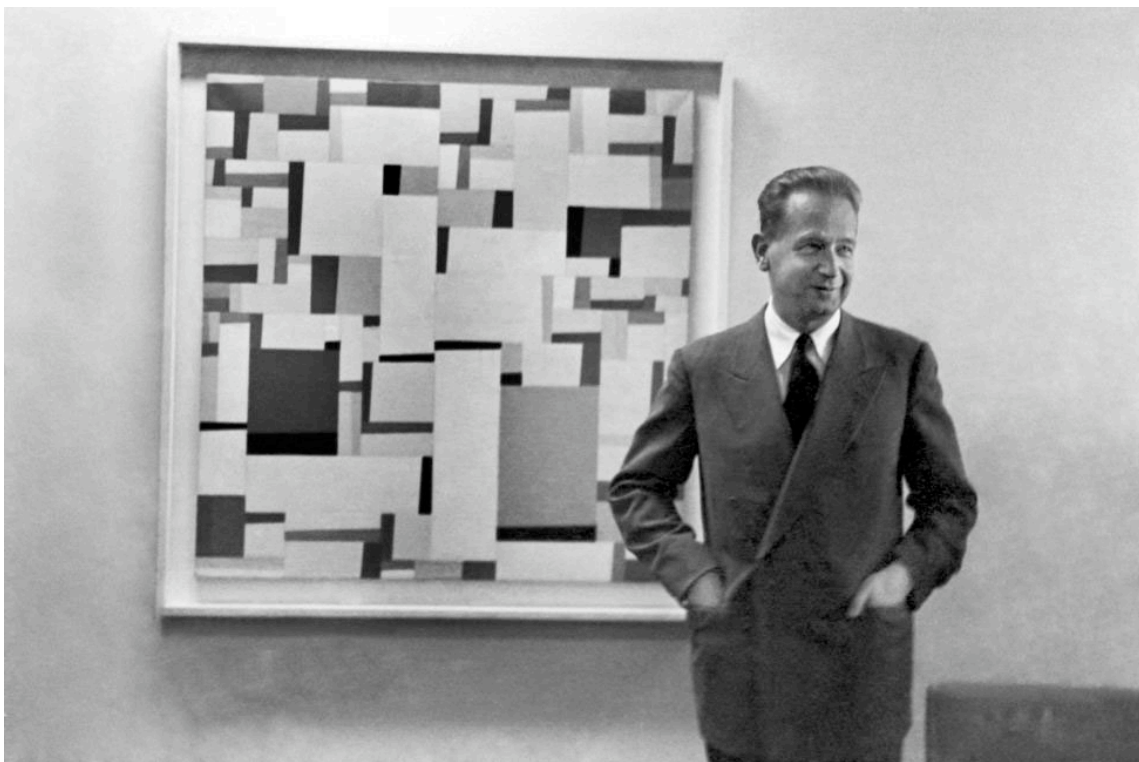


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Ban lauds courage and conviction of former UN chief Hammarskjöld



Former UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld in March 1954

22 September 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today paid tribute to Dag Hammarskjöld, the former United Nations chief whose life and work continue to serve as an inspiration 50 years after his tragic death while en route to negotiate peace in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

“I will always be inspired by Dag Hammarskjöld’s example of courage and conviction,” Mr. Ban [said](#) at a high-level event held on the margins of the 66th session of the General Assembly to remember the legacy of the Organization’s second Secretary-General.

Mr. Hammarskjöld led the UN from 1953 until his death in 1961, when he perished with 15 others in a plane crash in what was then known as Northern Rhodesia – now Zambia – while en route to Katanga in the DRC to negotiate a ceasefire.

Mr. Ban said he was encouraged by the theme of today's event, which focuses on the late Secretary-General's legacy for UN preventive diplomacy in the 21st century.

"Hammarskjöld articulated the very concept of preventive diplomacy," said Mr. Ban, who dedicated his new report, "Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results," to his predecessor. The report was discussed at a Security Council meeting held today on the same topic.

"He spoke about how to use the preventive capabilities of the UN 'to forestall the emergence of conflicts.' He knew that the UN was best placed to carry out what he rightly called this 'arduous and time-consuming' work.

"My own efforts in preventive diplomacy have benefited from an understanding that has grown among Member States since Hammarskjöld's time: that calming tensions is far less costly in financial and human terms than coping with the effects of violent conflicts," said Mr. Ban.

"Yes, there are risks. Yes, the challenges are evolving. But I share Dag Hammarskjöld's abiding belief that preventive diplomacy is a constant and essential work in progress."

Today's commemorative event also featured the participation of current and former UN officials involved in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, negotiating peace agreements, and standing up for women's rights and human rights.

Michelle Bachelet, the head of the UN body dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women known as UN Women, said that Mr. Hammarskjöld showed courageous leadership and guided the UN to be a mechanism to empower governments to prevent tensions before they escalate into war.

"In Asia, Africa and the Middle East, he personified the power of dialogue in alleviating conflicts," she stated. "His dedication to the pursuit of peace and progress, his talent in easing tensions and his personal commitment to establishing more independence and effectiveness in the post of Secretary-General have all been infinite sources of inspiration for our actions as UN officials, as political leaders and as human beings."

The discussion, moderated by former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Marie Guéhenno, also featured remarks by former UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and former Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Bertrand Ramcharan.

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