



UN Secretary-General António Guterres today met with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven on the fourth day of his visit to Sweden, during which Dag Hammarskjöld has been a constant presence.

In a joint press conference with Mr. Löfven, Mr. Guterres commended Sweden for playing the role of a “bridge builder” and working to “reduce tensions” in the Security-Council. He also said that Sweden was a “pillar of multilateralism”, an important provider of development aid, with more than 1% of GNI, and “the best donor” of humanitarian aid.

He commended the Swedish Government’s climate action plan, which he said should serve as a model for the world’s biggest contributors of CO2 emissions.

The meeting with the Prime Minister rounded off Mr Guterres’s visit to Sweden. Friday he attended an informal session of the UN Security Council, on Dag Hammarskjöld’s farm in Backåkra in Skåne in southern Sweden. It was the first time the Security Council annual retreat has been held outside the US.

On Sunday, Mr Guterres delivered the annual Dag Hammarskjöld lecture at the University of Uppsala the hometown of the second UN Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General described his predecessor Dag Hammarskjöld as his “fundamental inspiration,” who should be regarded as the “central reference” point for the ideals of the United Nations today. 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 in Uppsala, the childhood home of Dag Hammarskjöld.

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.

Noting that globalization has provided enormous benefits to humankind in wealth; he pointed out that it has “ increased inequalities in a dramatic way.”

“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.”

“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.”

Photos: : Moa Haeggblom/UN News centre

Guterres praises Sweden as a “bridge builder”

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