

Your Excellencies,
distinguished guests,
dear friends,
kära Hans,

allow me to start with a quote from the person, in whose commemoration we have gathered this afternoon. In 1957, Dag Hammarskjöld stated:

“We know that the question of peace and the question of human rights are closely related. Without recognition of human rights we shall never have peace, and it is only within the framework of peace that human rights can be fully developed.”

Unfortunately, these are not more peaceful times than half a century ago, when in 1957 the United Nation’s second Secretary-General articulated this view. But gone are the days of a bipolar Cold War, in which impunity reigned. While justice often remains a remote goal locally, nationally and globally, the jurisdiction and the legal instruments in international law have made advances.

The continued organized crimes by warlords, militias, terrorist organisations but also institutions of states and governments against people remain a festering wound in the moral and ethical consciousness of those who base their firm beliefs on fundamental human values as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention. But the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the UN War Crimes Tribunal represent new initiatives prosecuting culprits and at times even sentencing them for their criminal acts. Gone are the days when perpetrators merely had to be politically high enough to get away literally with murder. The trial against the Bosnian leader of the Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, as well as the indictment against the Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir are just the latest cases in point, even though they remain contested cases in the pursuance of more justice. They nonetheless draw attention to the fact that at least parts of the community of states continue their search for seeking to take perpetrators to task. They have much more than merely symbolic relevance by creating legal realities.

Dag Hammarskjöld would have welcomed this development. On the day 48 years ago he died in the early morning hours after the crash of his plane near Ndola in then Northern Rhodesia. Among the students who paid tribute to him as a steward during the funeral ceremony in

Uppsala's Cathedral was Hans Corell. Like Hammarskjöld he studied law at Uppsala University. As an Ambassador and Under-Secretary for Legal and Consular Affairs in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs he in 1994 again followed the footsteps of his role model when he moved for the next ten years into the international civil service at the United Nations as Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the Legal Counsel of the United Nations.

When asked if he would be willing to honour this sad anniversary he did not hesitate a moment – despite the fact that he returned only hours ago from the Dean Fred F. Herzog Memorial Lecture he presented in Chicago on the international prosecution of heads of state for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. He suggested to share with us his reflections on Dag Hammarskjöld's address on "The International Civil Service in Law and in Fact", which the Secretary-General had delivered at Oxford University on 30 May 1961. Less than four months before his untimely death.

As Hans Corell will remind us almost half a century later, Dag Hammarskjöld's conviction and the values and norms he lived and died for remain as relevant today as they were then.

Hans, the floor is yours.