

## Dag Hammarskjöld and the United Nations Library as a Library Promoting Peace

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Libraries fulfill today's mission on behalf of tomorrow. While all of us who manage large research libraries, especially large national libraries, know that we have all-consuming responsibilities to acquire, organize and service collections relating to our national patrimonies, I think most of us also realize that we have no more awesome and challenging responsibility than the preservation of that patrimony - so that future generations will know where they came from, and know what mistakes to avoid, or at least have fewer excuses when they repeat the errors of their forebears. Indeed, perhaps the most important function of all libraries is to preserve human memory. And the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has a unique role to play in helping humankind remember, and learn from, the history of the great institution it serves. Thus I have chosen to use the few minutes allotted to each of this morning's panelists to lead us to think about ways in which preserving memory is both a generic mandate for all libraries and a special imperative for the library whose 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary we celebrate here today.

I'm certain that many of us, in thinking about the special concern and obligation this very special library has for the perpetuation of peace in the world, have been reminded of Santayana's well-known observation that those who are ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it. This well-known concept is true, but what does this truism mean, truly mean, for *libraries*? What

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