

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA LIBRARY ON THE  
85<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE DONATION BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER TO  
ENDOW THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS LIBRARY**

**Geneva, 10 September 2012**

Director-General Tokayev,  
Mr. Michael Rockefeller, great-grandson of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.,  
Ambassador King of the United States,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here on this 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic donation of John D. Rockefeller Junior to the League of Nations Library.

At the time, Mr. Rockefeller said he made the gift based on the conviction that “peace must finally be built on the foundation of well-informed public opinion.” This powerful statement rings true today.

It is fitting that we are naming this room after him. I thank the family for donating the portrait of John D. Rockefeller that was displayed at the Rockefeller Foundation for 65 years. In offering this generous gift, Mr. David Rockefeller said he hoped it would serve as a reminder of his father’s generosity – but more importantly his conviction that strong international organizations can help create a just, equitable and peaceful world.

The Rockefeller family has lived up to this conviction, providing immense support for the League of Nations and the United Nations over the years. The original donation to this Library was particularly significant. Even today, the interest provides approximately \$150,000 every biennium to this wonderful library.

That makes it possible to care for its many priceless historical treasures, including a signed copy of the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations. This Library is also the home of the original letter from Alfred Nobel announcing his intention to create the Nobel Prize and the Official Transfer of the League of Nations to the United Nations.

This collection is so important it is inscribed in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register.

This Library also safeguards more recent history, including the Universal Declaration and Covenants on Human Rights, with original letters from Eleanor Roosevelt and René Cassin.

I applaud the mission of this Library to serve international understanding. I am deeply grateful to all the staff. You make an enormous contribution through your help for researchers and citizens who are interested in the UN's history and work.

I personally want to thank the Rockefeller family for my own office – and the entire United Nations campus on the East Side of Manhattan. When Rockefeller's donation of the land was announced in the General Assembly in 1945, the Hall was filled with loud applause. The United States Ambassador cheered Mr. Rockefeller's "magnificent benevolence."

I am deeply grateful to the esteemed members of the Rockefeller family and the Rockefeller Foundation for continuing the noble tradition of supporting international organizations devoted to peace.

As recently as this past June, at the Rio+20 summit on sustainable development, the Rockefeller Foundation and the UN Global Compact launched a new Framework for Action to help meet social and environmental needs.

The Rockefeller Foundation is a shining example of global philanthropy. In a few minutes, we will open an exhibition which shows the importance of philanthropic contributions in history and connects them to today's success stories.

I have seen these successes in my travels around the world.

In Africa and Asia, contributions to health initiatives are saving lives. In the developed world, philanthropists are mobilizing action to protect the environment. And globally, many help sustain United Nations initiatives for peace, human rights and development.

My action agenda for my second term places great emphasis on just these kinds of partnerships and platforms. I hope they will be the wave of the future.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

This Library traces its lineage from the past century – but it is also moving forward into the future. As a modern centre of excellence, this Library contributes to the Foundation's goal of informing citizens who can make a difference in our world.

Let us carry forward this mission for another 85 years and beyond.

Thank you.