

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

2020-2025



Vision

The Dag Hammarskjöld Library as an ecosystem, the United Nations Knowledge Commons, with open physical and virtual environments conducive to UN knowledge discovery through the provision of a coherent, unified and holistic online and onsite customer experience for those we serve.



The Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *Credit: UN Photo*

Mission

The United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library connects Member State delegations, UN staff, researchers and world citizens with credible information/data, facts and human knowledge about and for the UN. It provides a trusted foundation for facilitation, dissemination, use, access to, engagement with, and preservation of information and knowledge in support for the work, principles and purposes of the United Nations.



Dag Hammarskjöld Library

Values and Principles

The Dag Hammarskjöld Library abides by the principles reflected in the New York Pledge (<https://bit.ly/2H2Y5H2>). The Pledge was submitted by the Library to the UN Library and Information Network for Knowledge Sharing Forum (UN-LINKs) and the Steering Committee of the UN Secretariat Libraries. The Pledge was adopted by all UN Secretariat Libraries and entered into force in September 2019. The document is available in the six official languages (<https://ask.un.org/faq/270963>).

The Dag Hammarskjöld Library as a curator of UN produced, interdisciplinary content of direct benefit to global scientific research, also abides by the values and principles underlined in the roadmap towards a global science commons, agreed among 18 eminent advocates of Open Science in New York, on 18 November 2019. The outcome document is available in English (<https://bit.ly/2v6ppBn>).

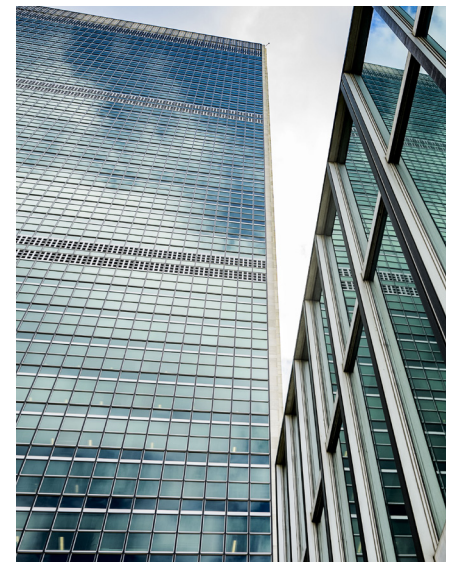
Our Environment

Since 1946, the United Nations Headquarters Library has been the flagship library of the Organization. On 16 November 1961, shortly after the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, the newly-completed Library building, following a donation of the Ford Foundation, was named the Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL) in honour of his commitment to the creation of a beautiful and modern space for a Library. The Library serves primarily delegates of Permanent Missions and UN Secretariat staff. In its long history, two significant events affected the core functions of the Library. The capital master plan (CMP), the name given to the project to renovate

the United Nations Headquarters complex in New York which ended in 2013, altered the Library fundamentally. As the New York Times [reported](#)¹, the Library could not use several of its spaces for its community engagement activities. Coupled with the debilitating effect on UN printing services caused by hurricane Sandy in 2012, the UN Library found itself on a path to swiftly change information services from print to digital, while re-envisioning its services and programmes. The shift to digital, without completely abandoning print-based services, was expanded through leveraging several digital tools and introducing a suite of electronic offerings available to audiences inside and outside the United Nations premises. In 2017, this shift furthered with the release of the UN Digital Library, a central repository to host the digital output of the United Nations currently available in fragmented manner across unconnected databases, websites and other online resources. Today, the UN Library serves and reaches an online audience of approximately 670,000 clients per month. This audience is expected to grow in the next five years, as our digital presence will be adjusted, our audience engagement programmes expanded, and resources and services, including mobile and machine learning technologies, evolve. This Strategic Outlook is the culmination of the 2025 Working Group, a four-month, Library-wide collaboration with more than 75% of Library staff participating in a rotating fashion. It recapitulates and elaborates on the Library's core roles to preserve the written, public record of the United Nations so the UN can tell its story, to enhance the visibility and application of UN research, and to advance UN values through active engagement with the global scholarly communications community.



UN parliamentary documents ready to be catalogued.

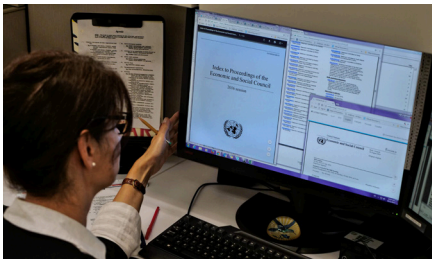


The Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the Secretariat at UN HQ. **Credit: Manuel Elias**

1 Available online: <https://nyti.ms/39cABv2>.



The Library training room.



Preparation on the latest edition of the Index to Proceedings is underway.



Discussion about the Library's budget.

Perspectives & Risks

Financial

Licensing access to digital content coupled with budget constraints leads to limitations on the diversity of content available by the Library. In the next five years the Library will endeavor to diversify its digital collections and include a plethora of open access content of established research value. To achieve our strategic goals, seeking funds based on sound project proposals will be imperative.

Customer Experience

The demand for research and reference from delegates, UN staff, and researchers from around the world will increase considerably in the next 5 years. As digital technologies evolve, and online content grows exponentially, user experience will change dramatically. ICT is critically enabling the user experience, but the user experience is more than a technology-driven change. In redesigning services, user experience must be incorporated at the onset. Achieving knowledge representation in a user-friendly way, mitigating for the online fragmentation of the UN's digital footprint, necessitates the complete digitization of the UN's print, historic record.



Internal Business Process

The need for advanced analytics and metrics in the next five years will increase. A coherent information technology and knowledge ecosystem to manage the UN's digital content and the pragmatic use of relevant standards (pragmatism over purity of standard) will be paramount. Obtain executive support to drive an information governance program for the evolving UN digital information commons is an essential step. Strategic goals are to be achieved employing cross-functional working groups and appropriate project management methodology.

Learning & Growth

The Library will build new expertise through planning recruitment and mentoring, and re-skilling through aligning the training budget to strategic goals. The increasing availability of quality, free online courses that respond to current business imperatives and emerging requirements will be promoted. A community of practice and the suggested creation of a UN Knowledge Network have reciprocal benefits for the Library.

CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

DOCUMENTS
OFFICIELS
SESSION 37
1963

SUPPLÉMENTS
6-14

CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

DOCUMENTS
OFFICIELS
SESSION 37
1964

SEANES
SR. 1314-15

CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

DOCUMENTS
OFFICIELS
SESSION 37
1964/65

37:2
ANNEXES



Strategic Goal 1 :

Create the United Nations Research Platform

1. Create a unified, online and onsite customer experience for delegates, UN staff, researchers, world citizens.
2. Enhance the visibility and applications of UN research.
3. Expand online, and diversify in-person, modular training.

Intended Outcomes

User experience exercise, employing surveys, audience segmentation and focus groups. A single source for the UN's public output on a federated infrastructure unlocking the potential of comprehensive analytics, metrics and impact estimates. A designed, maintained and regularly evaluated United Nations Research Commons, an online platform connecting disparate research resources and content using the UN's web content management framework, and open source, discovery services. UN content of research value for diverse policy making and information/data intensive research, including analytics. Content offered on UN themes of interest (filtered and browsable collections) and shared with credible online aggregators. UN knowledge represented in a user-friendly way, including visualizations. Re-usable, online and in-person training and tutorials on UN themes. A dedicated research report service. An ICT enhanced, collaborative work environment. Research services beyond UNHQ. Library focal points/liaison teams for UN Secretariat Departments re-established. Research reports provided to appropriate parliamentary committees and the public, with independent, objective analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the United Nations. Analytics/metrics on research uptake.

(Previous page)
The Official Records for ECOSOC
available within the Library's
collection.



Strategic Goal 2:

Build a robust, multilingual United Nations Central Repository

1. Create a sustainable and distributed network of open UN repositories as the foundation of a global UN knowledge commons.
2. Ensure holistic, permanent, open access to born-digital and turned-digital parliamentary documents, publications² and other UN content of research value.
3. Enhance UN digital information stewardship.

Intended Outcomes

Shared UN information governance. Curation and preservation for UN content of research value facilitating diverse policy making and information/data intensive research, available to all. Interoperability across repositories, communication within the network and distributed processing. Re-used and pragmatically created metadata for born-digital UN content. Trained metadata creators at the point of content origin. Open APIs, web browser extensions, unique identifiers, versioning control, document digital signature (immutable UN record), address link-rot, open and closed analytics/metrics at scale – quantitative and qualitative. Information services and alerts for mobile or device neutral environments. A trusted digital repository (ISO 16363/TDR).

² Employing access levels, a 5-year embargo applies to digital files of United Nations sales publications. Full metadata records are available in the UN Central Repository, however links to full-text point to the UNiLibrary (<https://www.un-ilibrary.org/>), a service managed by the UN Publications.

Strategic Goal 3:

Preserve the multilingual United Nations public domain heritage

1. Accelerate the digitization of multilingual, UN parliamentary documents and publications produced prior to 1993.
2. Increase the upload of turned-digital UN parliamentary documents to the UN's central repository.
3. Actively seek funds to support digitization operations for important print documents in dire-condition.

Intended Outcomes

Sustainably funded operations for outsourcing digitization of important print UN parliamentary documents in dire condition. Re-used and pragmatically created metadata for turned-digital UN content. Modern digitization equipment in the Library. Upgraded digital platforms to host turned-digital content workflows. Off-site storage for digitized content with services such as scan-on-demand, reference (find content as well as find-in content, on demand), quality control, metadata creation, standardization, text summarizers.



A library assistant examines a UN document in microfiche format.



Sorting and filing all documents and publications in the collection.



A librarian reviews the map collection.



A librarian provides information about library services at an info booth.



Attendees listen to presenters at an Insight Series event.



The Digital Library team meeting about the UN Digital Library.

Strategic Goal 4:

Establish the United Nations Knowledge Network

1. Re-envison the historic Depository Libraries programme into a UN knowledge network.
2. Align Library institutions with the United Nations in supporting and contributing to the realization of United Nations sustainable development goals, and the promotion and protection of human rights.
3. Build expertise through the management of a community of best practices.

Intended Outcomes

UN Association of Word Libraries proposal approved by the UN Publications Board. Collaboratively designed, developed, launched and regularly evaluated Association. Updated internal UN administrative instructions reflecting the new Association and the abolishment of the UN Depository Libraries Programme. Simple interface digital platform, formulated discussions/queries. Shared information management best practices. Varied support for members. Contributions to the UN Story from the field. Extensive visibility for Association Members inside the UN; nurtured connections with existing interest groups (UNAI member Libraries, IFLA, LIBER, ALA etc.). Annual Conference of the Association in UNHQ concentrating on the intersection of UN themes and modern digital information management.



Strategic Goal 5:

Communicate the value of the Library, engage and lead beyond the Library

1. Increase awareness and usage of Library knowledge resources and services among defined internal and external audiences.
2. Enhance the participation of Permanent Missions to the UN in Library collaborative knowledge sharing events.
3. Strengthen the Library's engagement with the UN system and the wider scholarly communications community, and develop strategic partnerships.

Intended Outcomes

Library communications and marketing strategy. Customized communication and knowledge products. Events aligned with the calendar of the UN Department of Global Communications. Library impact stories, annual booklet. Research bites instead of info-bites for the Library's social media presence. A stable, viable and expanded UN System Electronic Information Acquisitions Consortium, incorporating cost recovery and co-financing. Increased Library participation in fora and online interest groups. A registry of Library partnerships. Enhanced Library partnerships within the open research field.



Strategic Goal 6:

Identify, develop, and experiment with innovative technologies and approaches to anticipate change and optimize resources and internal processes

1. Increase instances of experimentation with natural language processing.
2. Retire information management systems with a view to achieving a coherent information technology landscape.
3. Optimize metadata creation for purely digital workflows and open metadata/thesauri/indexing to the web.
4. Expand the use of open access content, open-source software, credible open knowledge resources and open research initiatives.

Intended Outcomes

A coherent information technology ecosystem. Improved cost-benefit analysis. Information analysis workflows optimal for the exponential increase of UN digital output. Open metadata/thesauri on the web through linked-data formats. Open resources gradually alleviating the burden of subscriptions, without sacrificing content quality.



The Dag Hammarskjöld Library in the morning light.

CONTACT THE DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD LIBRARY

United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library
First Avenue at 42nd Street
New York, NY, 10017, USA
Phone: +1(212) 963-3000
Email: library-ny@un.org

Operating Hours:
Monday-Friday: 9am - 5:30pm
Saturday-Sunday: Closed

(Back cover photograph)
The card catalogue in the
2nd floor reading room.

