

## Learning about UN from Ms. Hawa Diallo



Working Together: Making a Difference.

Department of Public Information Non-Governmental Organizations

Before Ms. Hawa Diallo and Mr. Felipe Queipo, two representatives of the United Nations Department of Public Information (UN DPI) came to Utah Valley University (UVU), I just heard people talk about the “UN” without even knowing what it was. The UN is an organization that helps maintain international order. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 we had the privilege to have them come and speak to us in our comparative politics class. What I found interesting from the presentation of Ms. Hawa Diallo is how close the UN is. Everyone at the UN comes from all over the world, and comes together to meet on common ground, all working for the same important issues. Ms. Diallo talked about her journey from her start at the UN to where she is now.

Ms. Diallo said that she has extremely great experiences working for the UN, and meeting the people that she has met through her network while working at the UN. She talked about all the different institutions of the UN and the different types of positions that she has had, and what they have to offer there. She talked about the work that the UN has done on the ground level in order to help, and arrange trips, and to assist those in need. The UN recruits people from all around the world, and the number of women has increased immensely. Peacekeeping operations is a department under the UN, and she spoke a lot about this, and the requirements that are needed in order to become a peacekeeper.

A lot of the students in my class asked about the job opportunities that are offered at the UN. Ms. Diallo said that the UN needs to have individuals to do economic, and social work globally, not just in New York City. She talked about how we need to think about the UN global role, and not just as a building in New York, but as a global organization. However, she did talk about how the UN is really going through a transitional period, where they really are trying to work through social media, and she mentioned that the UN has lost a lot of positions. Over the years of her working there, she said that she has learned to appreciate the differing cultures, and governments that she has experienced, and extend herself in different ways.

What I think that I enjoyed most from Ms. Hawa is that she really pursued her dreams. Born in Sierra Leone, she was brought to the United States, and moved to New York City with her family. She received a green card, and went to school like everyone else. While in school, she applied to become an intern at the United Nations, and she got it when she was only 21. Ms. Hawa was a tour guide her first few years of working for the UN: after that she was able to pass a test that qualified her to become a peacekeeper. She was asked to move to Nairobi, and before her bag was even packed, she was there. While there, she helped with problems of urbanization, and was able to provide youth life skills just teaching them things that can help them with the basic things of life. She was there in the habitat department where the UN taught them how to build shelters out of the materials around them. What she did in Nairobi was basically to teach these kids how to be resourceful, how to get jobs and most importantly how to survive. In her Kenya trip, she advised the youth to become resourceful, and she actually said that if you didn't speak Swahili they wouldn't hire you. Ms. Hawa said, that they had research centers partnering up with governments, and the private sector. Those centers would help gain the youth credibility through certificates that helped them show that they are qualified to get jobs. Ms. Hawa said that the UN is very research based, and it is really telling about the type of people they are.

I am very happy that I was able to hear Ms. Hawa speak about the UN. I really didn't understand what the UN was until we had this talk. She really opened up my eyes to the possibility of working at the UN someday. The UN creates opportunities for all those that are involved, and I find that amazing.

*Mckenna Gifford, Utah Valley University student*