

## **Attending a side event on the involvement of the civil society in the monitoring of the SDGs**

The 2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development has gathered people from all around the world and I'm happy that I have been able to be part of this important gathering of the United Nations thus far. I am looking forward to the upcoming chances to listen and discuss issues and the measures that are being taken to battle each of the problems that specific countries are now facing within the bounds of the implementation of the Sustainable development goals (SDG).



*(L to R): Damon Ashcraft with former Minister of Environment of Romania, Mr. László Borbély*

On the evening of July 17, 2018, I was able to have the opportunity to attend a side event titled [Involving the civil society in the monitoring of the SDGs](#). Because of the UIMF goal to bring

mountains from behind the curtain and bring it into view with the other issues that seem to fill nearly all of the stage, this was a great opportunity for me to listen how similar tasks are handled by members of the Romanian Ministry of Environment and the European Economic and Social Committee from Romania.

The First speaker at the side event was the former Minister of Environment of Romania, László Borbély, and one of the first things he said set the tone for the rest of the meeting. Laszlo posed a question that everyone should ask themselves “What are we doing to have a sustainable life?”. I imagine this was the question that was asked when the council organized themselves in 2015 and decided upon the 17 SDG. He then stressed the importance of the last goal, Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals. This point was stressed because this is the only way to accomplish the previous 16 goals.



*Special pin from Romania about SDGs presented to Damon Ashcraft by former Minister of Environment of Romania, László Borbély*

Later in the meeting one of the mottos that had been embraced by economic council in Romania was mentioned, “Keep healthy what keeps you in great health”. Being from the state of Utah, one of the things that I thought of was the mountains that surround my home. The same

mountains that supply a large amount of the water for the population in the area. This just went to reinforce the importance of our presence here.

I felt that this meeting was significant to attend because in one-year Romania will be the president of the European Union and they will be the ones to bring the SDGs to the forefront of the European environmental agenda. And to close the meeting a remark was made by Linda McAvan, the Chairwoman of Development of the EU, she said that we don't want the SDGs to just be warm words, but something more.

*Damon Ashcraft, Vice President, Sustainable Mountain Development Club*