

Discussing mountain activities with Mr. Mastrojeni during HLPF 2018



Mountain Partnership
Partenariat de la montagne
Alianza para las Montañas

Members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU) had the opportunity to meet and have a conversation about promoting mountain cause with Mr. Grammenos Mastrojeni, a member of the Italian Foreign Ministry and current chair of the Mountain Partnership steering committee at Vienna Cafeteria inside of the UN compound on July 16, 2018. Mr. Giorgio Grussu from the Mountain Partnership Secretariat's (MPS) under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) attended the meeting as well. Meeting was organized by Rosalaura Romeo from the MPS, and as a UIMF delegation member responsible for protocol, I was fortunate to be involved in working its details and logistics since the beginning. Our initial goal was to have a meeting at the FAO-UN office with Mr. Lucas Tavares and his colleagues, but Rosalaura Romeo suggested to meet Mr. Mastrojeni instead, because Lucas and his team were extremely busy with representing FAO-UN at HLPF. Mr. Mastrojeni's visit to HLPF was related to the presiding at the side event on mountains as well and it was a great opportunity for our team for the first time to get acquainted with MP high officials. We both agreed with Ms. Romeo's suggestion and thanked her for arranging the meeting.

It was a very good experience for me to arrange the meeting and indicating where we will wait for our VIP officials. Café Vienna is located near the Conference Rooms 4, 5, 8 and is very crowded. This required for us to arrange a table and seats at Café by coming there a half hour in advance.

And we were able to do that and look around at the audience which gathered there for lunch: diplomats, NGOs representatives, UN officials and many others.

The meeting was mainly focused on the Mountain Partnership's goals for the future and what is being done to advocate for mountain communities right now. I found the meeting to be very substantive and relevant towards our goals back at Utah Valley University (UVU) to contribute to the implementation of the mountain targets both in the state of Utah and globally.

I was also keenly interested in the opinion of the high officials of the MP about role civil society and educational institutions play in the advocacy of mountain targets around the globe. It was somewhat disheartening to hear that not many educational institutions and civil society organizations here in the United States have taken up the cause of sustainable mountain development, but this provides an interesting avenue for the UIMF and UVU to be at the forefront of sustainable mountain development advocacy in North America.



Mr. Mastrojeni (second from the right) and Mr. Grussu (first from the right) receiving their gifts from the UIMF delegation.

One of the ways as Mr. Mastrojeni told us civil society and educational institutions like UVU can help the mountain cause is to start a dialogue among other local universities about sustainable mountain development. As a state with many universities located nearby mountain ranges, I believe this is a worthy first step towards continuing the mountain cause. After that, we would need to expand to other institutions as well, but for now, we will focus on Utah. I believe we have a real chance at making a meaningful impact in the sustainable mountain development world and will continue to strive and promote SMD at every level, from local to global.

Damon Ashcraft on behalf of our delegation presented to the VIP official a folder with UN documents highlighting UIMF role in advocating the mountain targets as well as UVU and brochures. We informed our counterpart that plan to present an oral statement during the general debates of the High-Level Segment on July 19, 2018. We also presented to Mr. Mastrojeni and Mr. Grussu a puzzle set that highlighted some of Utah's natural wonders and a stress ball from the UVU History and Political Science Department. They were very pleased with both gifts.

Sam Elzinga, President, Foreign Affairs club