

Mr. Maher Nasser from UN DPI at UVU



Maher Nasser, who is the director of the Outreach Division in the UN Department of Public Information, spoke at the Utah Valley University in Orem Utah on November 28, 2018. He promoted the roles and achievements of the United Nations. He started the presentation in a light tone with thought-provoking questions to highlight the importance of multilateralism. Throughout his presentation, he maintained the central theme of multilateralism, showing how inter-state cooperation under the UN umbrella has helped in making the world a better place for all. According to Nasser, every aspect of the audience's life is touched by one branch of the United Nations or another. Nasser described the roles and achievements of some of the major organizations within the United Nations system of organizations that consists of 53 organizations. He provided captivating statistics of the impact that these UN organizations have had in the world. As described by Nasser, the efforts of these organizations are felt in areas such as health services, alleviating hunger, spearheading development, preventing wars, ensuring peace and security,

advocating for a sustainable global environment, protecting human rights, and promoting democratic governance. These roles are categorized into three pillars of the UN.

Nasser illustrated all the three pillars, starting with the pillar of prevention. He emphasized that prevention is the pillar that is given priority but often the most difficult to prove. Conflicts that have occurred can be seen, but those that have been prevented cannot be observed. To stress on this point, Nasser gave an example of the vaccines used to prevent influenza; it is difficult to link the preventative intervention to the end result of not getting influenza. The second pillar stated by Nasser is that of development. Lastly, Nasser told about the pillar of human rights. He considered human rights to be the key pillar for him. He described it with passion and comprehensively explained the efforts taken by the United Nations to promote and protect human rights across the globe. As described by Nasser, the office of the higher commissioner of human rights in the UN is the one obliged to calling out human rights violations. Nasser applauded the productivity of this office in living up to its role whistleblowing human rights violations.

It is interesting how Mr. Nasser emphasized the role of multilateralism in handling the issue of climate change and global warming. From Nasser's description of this issue, it is evident that he values global environmental sustainability and is displeased with the ongoing human-caused degradation of the environment through emissions and destruction of the natural environment. In this context, Nasser dedicated a significant portion of his presentation to describe the importance of multinational cooperation in controlling climate change and global warming. I agree with most of Nasser's assertions about the role of the United Nations in delivering important services, advocacy, and supporting the most vulnerable population such as refugees and children in different settings. Like Nasser, I am also touched with the issue of climate change and global warming since I believe that the rise in the overall temperature of the earth's atmosphere is already causing significant effects on our climate, our health, and our communities. Therefore, I support the United Nations' commitment to containing climate change and global warming.

Listening and reflecting on his presentation has affected my experience by opening my eyes to the numerous humanitarian initiatives taken by the United Nations. Initially, I had undervalued the importance of the organization because of the scope and scale of the challenges it faces. However, from Mr. Nasser's presentation, I came to appreciate UN's capabilities and the organization's commitment to overcoming challenges and delivering services to people globally.

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