

Learning about multiculturalism and SDGs from Mr. Maher Nasser

Utah Valley University and the Global Office of Engagement had the honor of hosting Mr. Maher Nasser, Director of Outreach in the UN Department of Public Information on November 28, 2018. Mr. Nasser spoke primarily on the topic of Multilateralism and the importance of our responsibility as a collective in achieving these goals.



Mr. Nasser first stressed the value of the UN, and how it affects our lives. The UN has grown from a gathering of nations, into a group that helps to organized hundreds of smaller groups, NGO's, governments, and agencies, in order to help accomplish its goals, and make the world a better place. He also spoke about the Sustainable Development Goals, not being the UN's goals, but the goals of the worldwide community. The

community had worked together to develop these goals, and now it is in their hands to implement these goals.

He next spoke specifically on three missions of the United Nations. He mentioned the history of the United Nations, and that when it was first formed, it was to prevent conflict in the world, especially on the scale of what was experienced during the two World Wars. This mission has expanded to also try and mediate regional conflicts, and terrorism. He stressed that it was important to fight terrorism, without compromising our values, or using tactics that are inhumane or morally ambiguous.

Mr. Nasser spoke next on the mission of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and the role that they will play in the upcoming conference next year, in Salt Lake City. With that conference focusing on SDG 1, making cities and settlement safe, resilient, and sustainable, he spoke about how all the SDG's are interconnected and that they must be worked on together.

He warned of some of the dangers of not implementing these goals. He commented that the vast majority of climate scientists agree that climate change is happening more and more rapidly, and unless we do something to fight this, many of our coastal cities and many of the food production centers could end up underwater. Our population estimates are also climbing. We now expect more than 11 billion people by the year 2100. It is important, now more than ever that these SDG's be implemented so that human development can continue.

He lastly spoke on the mission of the UN to improve the condition of human beings through the adoption and implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document has helped the UN in its mission in to help protect the rights of people all over the world and helped other countries to also develop ways to protect their citizen's human rights. In this, many of the nations that helped found the UN and this document, have not always had the best human right's records, but that it is a model that we are all striving for.

Mr. Nasser helped paint a picture for cooperation and mutual benefit, not just for nations, but for individuals and communities in making the world a more sustainable and livable place for everyone. It remains however, to be seen if those groups can come together in meaningful cooperation to achieve the goals that they themselves set. Mr. Nasser

mentioned that the vast majority of resolutions pass. It is one thing to pass resolutions, but implementing them is another story and issue entirely.

Brandon Pedler, member, Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University