

## **Mr. Maher Nasser from UN-DPI about Sustainable Development and a Collective Responsibility Among Young People**

Mr. Maher Nasser, Director of Outreach Division, Department of Public Information at the United Nations visited Utah Valley University on November 28, 2018. Guest from UN spoke before UVU faculty and students on the topic of Multilateralism and Collective Responsibility to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



*Mr. Maher Nasser speaks at Utah Valley University*

Mr. Nasser explained, that, the United Nations was created post World War II as an effort to provide peace, security and protection to the citizens of the world. The United Nation is responsible for the impartial, unbiased coordination of humanitarian aid efforts across the globe. The United Nations in 2015 created Sustainable Development Goals that would help focus the United Nations efforts on 17 key initiatives with the goal of completion by 2030. 80% of things implemented by the UN are adopted by consensus.

Mr. Maher Nasser said, that the United Nations is a system of various organizations and happens to house the largest humanitarian group in the world: The World Food Program. The UN recognizes that global

problems and crises are never respecters of borders. Terrorists are not stopping at borders, with the growth and reach of the internet terrorist groups are able to recruit members in near or distant lands. Viruses and Diseases also are not restricted to borders. With the break out of Ebola in Africa, the United Nations created their first emergency mission for Ebola in order to aid in the prevention of the disease spreading to other lands and people. UNICEF, a UN group provided 45% of the world's children with necessary vaccines.

UN official emphasized further, that human activity has been a great contributor to global warming, but climate change reference to an increase or change of weather patterns or other natural occurrences. Storms and super storms will go more common and common as time moves along. Climate change is having an effect on the worlds coasts; the majority of big metropolitan cities are found on or near coasts as well as the majority of food sources. Climate change can lead to these major cities being submerged by water. This would not only impact infrastructure, but also food sources. Coral reef bleaching destroys fish nurseries, if these fish die of then there will be a great impact on the food chain of coral reefs all the way to humans and the fish they eat. There are so many things that need to be taken care of to ensure that future generations are able to benefit from the earth in which we live.

At this current point in time, as Mr. Nasser said, there are more people living on the earth currently than that of the history of the world combined leading up to this point in time. There are more young people than ever before and an even greater number of children on the earth. The world population will keep growing and there are still millions of people that go to bed hungry each night.

These issues cannot be left to the government alone to fix, emphasized distinguished guest. As a global community we need to all make greater efforts to protect the world in which we live. The Sustainable Development Goals strive to eliminate poverty and need, while taking care of the earth and creating more self-reliant people. Dr. Nasser's role with all this information is to make sure that it is passed along to young people so that they can become further engaged in the decision making that is happening for our future. He shared that there is never a place or meeting about young people and their future that they should not be able to attend. Young people need to make sure that they have a place at the table.

Dr. Nasser's ability to express the importance of the issues that face the United Nations and the world's future was impactful and inspiring. It is easy to get caught up in the issues that directly impact our own lives and communities, but we must be aware of the issues that are outside

our scope of vision. In Utah, we are not located close to any coastal regions; we are completely landlocked. Even though I am not living near the seashore, I still have a responsibility in protecting marine life and lessening my carbon footprint. I was most impressed by his passion to have the young people of the world get involved in the efforts that are happening today; youth should shape their future. It is common for older adults and professionals to believe their opinion and thoughts are the most valid in the room, to these people often have furthered their education or worked in a professional setting for an impressive period of time. Mr. Nasser made it clear that we the young people of the world need to make sure our voices are heard now and not wait until we are older. This helped me to understand I don't need to be a part of decisions only for myself, but also the generations to come.

*Taylor Bell, UVU student*