

My Contribution to the 68th UNCSC Conference Activities



As part of an effort to present academics, lay people, and politicians internationally a realistic perspective into how technologic developments will fundamentally transform our outlook on “business as usual” in our daily lives, I attend the 68th United Nations Civil Society Conference at the behest of Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev. I did not have a set agenda on what to accomplish during this gathering beyond raising my voice to question why social media seemed to be the only technologic platform receiving any real amount of attention at the event. Where I have given presentations at the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics (Haifa) World Conference on Bioethics, Medical Ethics and Health Law, the Portuguese National Congress on Bioethics, and several other academic venues, I have already raised global awareness as to the immediacy of new technologic developments and their impact on civil society—whether in metropolitan areas, in island nations, or in mountain communities. With that record, I wanted to further address these topics at this venue where permissible given that the attendees of the Conference came from a wider range of experiences than I was familiar presenting to.

Though I myself did not take an active role in assisting the current members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) to advocate for the inclusion of dialogue specifically including mountain communities in the Outcome Document for the conference, my relatively lax agenda for this event enabled to me to assist my peers currently enrolled at Utah Valley University to achieve this unprecedented goal. My aid came in the form of tabling the UIMF booth during all three days of the conference (including assisting with the assembly and disassembly of the station), which was visited by participants of the conference from all around the world. My assistance proved to be a great boon to all of the UIMF members in attendance of the conference. Contrary

to my initial expectations for the event, there were very few panels that piqued my curiosity enough to attend them—meaning that I ended up with a fair amount of free time. And although Dr. Abdrisaev had asked me to assist the UIMF members the week before the conference, my ultimate motivation for assisting my peers was to enable them the opportunity to immerse themselves in a very rare opportunity so close to home.



(R to L): Tyler L. Jaynes, B.Sc., UVU alumnus; Mr. Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev, official from Kyrgyzstan; Michael Hinatsu, Vice-President of UIMF; and Tokona Dyikanbaeva, wife of Mr. Kurmanbek Dyikanbaev; at the UIMF booth during the UN Civil Society Conference

Given that I have had the privilege to travel internationally on several occasions with the support of Utah Valley University, my desire to assist as an alumnus comes from the University's policy of engaged learning—which was another UIMF-led idea that was ultimately adopted in the Outcome Document of the conference. Being the son of a mother who attended the University back when it was still Utah Valley State College (and subsequently, being raised around the

campus), as well as attending the University’s affiliated public charter high school—the Utah County Academy of Sciences—I have embodied the principles of engaged learning for as long as I can remember. The beauty of the model, in my mind’s eye, is that being “engaged” is more than participating in class discussions or volunteering your time to a campus-led service project. “Engaging” oneself is a combination of real-world problem solving coupled with participating in events that students may otherwise believe to be too far above their status.



Tyler L. Jaynes assisting during the “Distributed Decision-Making for SDGs for Electronic ECOWAS and UN” workshop

That being said, I was still able to raise my voice in a few panels and network with various influential individuals—such as the UN Director of the Policy, Strategy & Governance Division, Salem Avan, and Utah District 19 Representative Raymond Ward (among others). The most rewarding aspect of the conference, however, was not in my networking gains. Rather, it was in welcoming people from around the world to my home state and discovering their impressions of

the conference. Many foreigners were shocked by the hospitality shown by the State, which extended to the provided refreshments. As I learned, other UNCSC conferences were unable to display such generosity. Another aspect that was frequently mentioned was the liveliness of the conference venue compared to that of New York or Paris—which extended to the relatively fluid accessibility of the various booths. And beyond praising the local scenery, many travelers were pleased with the fact that the trip was much more affordable—and in turn, they were able to plan in extra days to tour around the state.

In contrast to other conferences I have attended, presented at, and volunteered for in my time at Utah Valley University, I cannot say that I felt as though I accomplished a lot overall. While I was able to discuss my concerns for the direction in which technology is progressing with several individuals, and press Mr. Avan to address whether the UN has a plan to stem the number of jobs that will be lost to various technologic innovations, many at the conference seemed indifferent to the potentialities of furthering our development of computer intelligence systems or nanotechnology given how their uses are less practical than that of social media. While I am well aware of the impact of social media (given a conference presentation I gave at the New Media: Interactions & Transactions conference in El Jadida, Morocco in November of 2017), it is not the only aspect of technology that can aid us in developing more sustainable communities and cities.

My hope is that my coming conference presentation in Porto, Portugal for the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics (Haifa) 14th World Conference on Bioethics, Medical Ethics and Health Law will provide a more welcoming platform to develop upon. That, mixed with a more in-depth interaction with the UIMF (either as an alumnus or returning undergraduate student), may yield the results I have been so eager to achieve. Even if the 68th UNCSC was not everything that I had hoped it might have been compared to other UN-related events I have been a part of, I nevertheless am grateful to Dr. Abdrişaev and the members of the UIMF for accepting my support for this event.

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