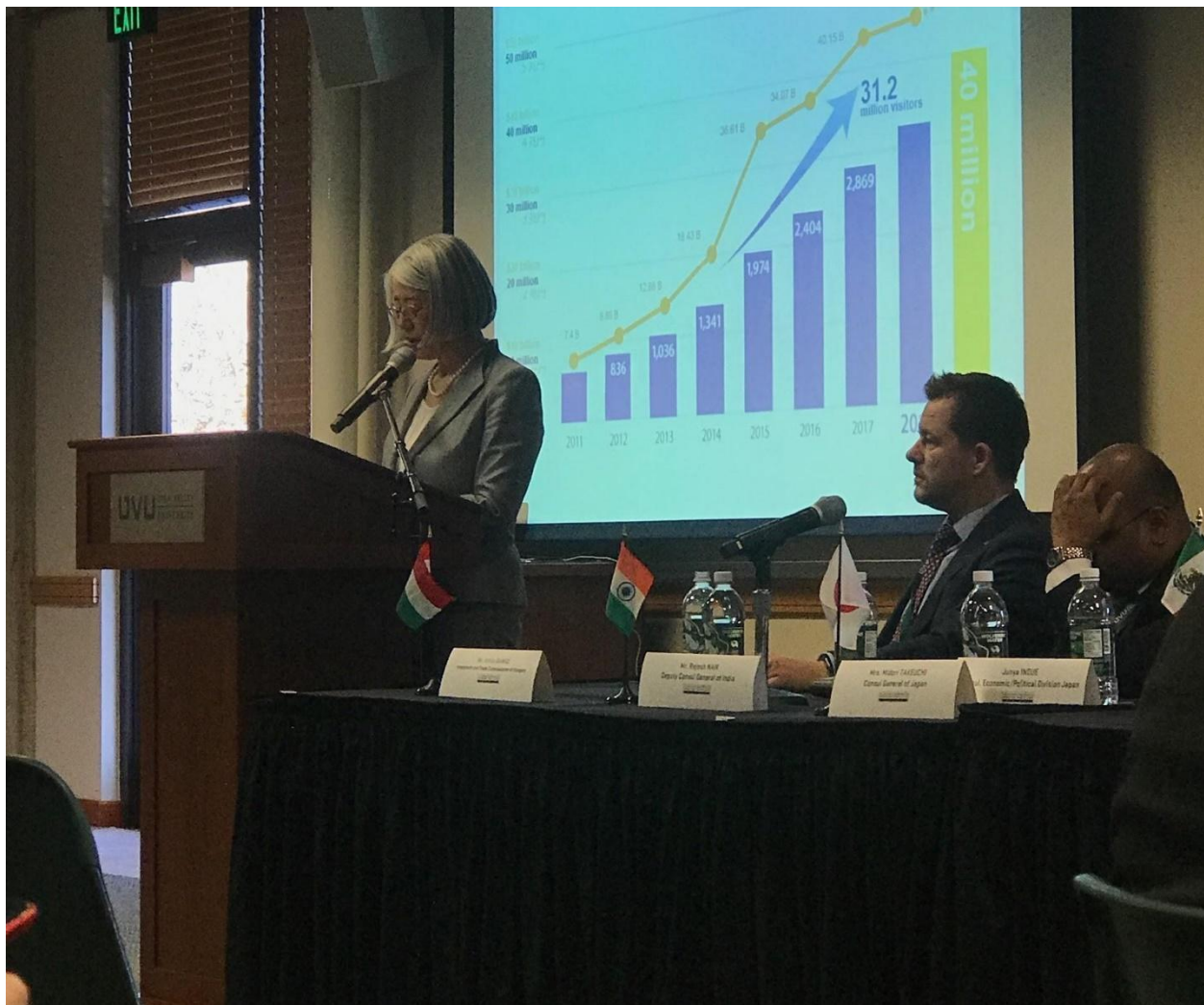


## My Participation at Utah Diplomatic Conference on International Trade Relations



On November 4, 2019, Utah Valley University office of Global Engagement hosted its Third Annual Utah Diplomatic Conference on International Trade Relations. Ambassadors, Consul Generals and Trade Commissioners representing countries from all over the globe came to in this prestigious conference. They each had time allotted for presentations on their respective economies, their successful policies, the future of these policies, and the relationship their economies have with both those of the United States as well as the State of Utah. The Office of Global Engagement invited UVU students including me to do different jobs with the conference, such as providing protocol, logistics among others.



*Mrs. Midori Takeuchi, the Consul General of Japan to Colorado during the conference*

While there were many highly informative activities during the conference, I will focus on the presence at the conference of Mrs. Midori Takeuchi, the Consul General from Japan stationed in Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Takeuchi in her presentation spoke about the success of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's economic reforms, known in both Japan and the U.S. as "Abenomics". Under these policies, Japan has managed to maintain low unemployment, one of the lowest in the world, sitting at 2.4%, while maintaining the third strongest economy in the world. Japan's GDP is growing, as is its Corporate Pre-Tax Profit which is at a record high at 41.3 trillion JPY. A key factor of this economic growth is Japan's focus on tourism, which by 2020 will bring in a record high \$40.97 billion USD. Positive economic growth will clearly lead to high sustainability and sustainable development, which Japan is already known for.

After her presentation, I was able to have a personal conversation with her not only in English but in Japanese as well, which I have learned fluently. It was an opportunity I asked her if Japan's now notoriously aging population will have an impact on how it deals with international trade and she answered that the impact would be negligible as Japan is a member of the WTO. Essentially, as long as Japan participates in global trade through these organizations, it's status as a global trader and manufacturer will be secure. In her view, however, what is much more significant for the Japanese economy is the current trade war going on between the United States under President Trump and China with President Xi. The trade war puts Japan in an economically vulnerable position being primarily allied with the United States. Essentially as long as China attempts to undermine global prices and markets by "breaking the rules" then Japan's economy will suffer. She stated that in order to ensure economic growth, safety, and mobility, the United States under a different president would need to attempt to cooperate with China with dialogue to convince China to be a "fair player" in international trade. Essentially, as China "cheats", the "rule-abiding" Japanese people suffer. As China cooperates, Japan and the world are strengthened, sustained, and continue to develop.

I additionally asked her about the status of Japan's natural disasters on Japan's role in the international market. She responded that while Japan has recently had record-breaking natural disasters over the last decade or so, that there has been no observed change in foreign investors and businesses from desiring to work with Japan. Japan has proven to be resilient to such disasters, continuing to prove their status as a desirable trade partner and technology manufacturer for the Western world.

UVU office of Global Engagement deserved special recognition successfully hosting the diplomatic conference. It provided me with such a great opportunity to establish contact and get to know closer the official from Japan and many other foreign dignitaries. I saw also how my other peers were happy by their interactions with visiting guests.

*Drew Tschirki, UVU Student*