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# 10th Anniversary of the International Mountains Day at UVU

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The Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) was fortunate enough to celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The International Mountain Forum has been working on handful projects throughout the year some of which are The Civil Society Conference, hosting Ambassadors from International Countries and preparing its students for the big trip at the end of the year to visit United Nations and present their proposal on the importance of the sustainable development within the mountain communities, especially in rural Utah. I had the opportunity to participate in the even by introducing the speakers that are crucial to the development of the UIMF and that have helped Utah Valley University and it's students to recognize the issues that happen not just within United States but challenged them to look outside the country, on the International and Global levels. I had the pleasure of introducing Dr. Baldomero Lago who is a CIO/Vice- Rector for Global Engagement at Utah Valley University.



**Dr. Butler engaging with students after his presentation.**

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Dr. Lago organizes and manages UVU's global and intercultural academic initiatives. He is the Honorary Consul of Spain in Utah and was awarded the title of Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Civil Merit by King Phillip IV of Spain in 2016. Dr. Lago is a humble man who gave the students perspective on how they could get involved with the advocacy campaign at the 64th session of the commission on the status of Women in March 2020 he advised students to take different opportunities that are available to help them succeed in their near future. I wanted to emphasize that Dr. Lago is responsible for making the UN Civil Society Conference happen for the very first time in Salt Lake City, Utah. Dr. Lago had big plans for the Civil Society conference and he was able to accomplish it. Dr. Butler during the



event stated that “He is responsible for single handedly bringing the Civil Society Conference to Utah. “ Dr. Lago spoke about the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development.

The agenda focuses on the bettering of the society and hoping to bring forth positive income within the nation by the year 2030. The Mountain Partnership under the food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN) is the United Nations voluntary alliance to work together for mountain people and environments. The “3 Targets” that were set focus on the ideas of protecting and restoring waters within ecosystems, insure the conservation of usage of the freshwater produced by

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the ecosystems, and ensures the conservation and biodiversity of mountain ecosystems. Dr. Lago finished his presentation by informing the students of the FAO-UN main theme of the year. The them is: “Mountains Matter for Youth” and that this is our opportunity to show support for the Sustainable Mountain Development and to make the 2030 Agenda the main focus of the year.

The next speaker is an extremely dedicated and well-educated former Vice President for International Affairs and Diplomacy and Director of the Utah Russia Institute. Dr. Butler retired from his position with a high honor and was celebrated on March 16, 2016 for his 20+ years at Utah Valley University. Currently Dr. Butler is a main representative at the UN for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, an NGO in general consultative status under ECOSOC since 2002. It was such an honor to have him come and educate students on the issues that UIMF strives to share about the mountainous communities as well as livelihood of the people that live in those communities.



**Professor: Baktybek Abdrisaev**

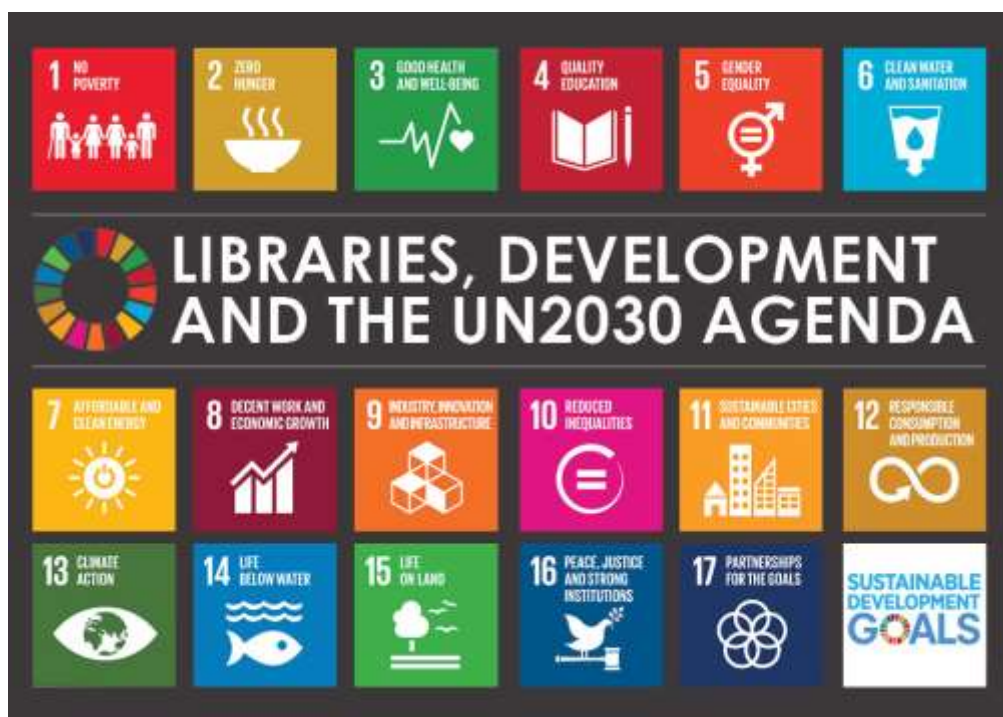
Dr. Butler started his presentation by telling a story of a women who was living in extreme poverty in a country where there is still discrimination against women. She was forced to stay in a country that was lacking basic economic issues that enable her to survive. Dr. Butler explained that this was the exact motivation that sparked the involvement of the United Nations initiative to advocate sustainable development among mountain communities

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both the Rocky Mountains region and Globally. He strongly advocates the sustainable mountain development (SMD) agenda in particular of the UN as well as the women and children agenda at UVU is a primary focus.

Dr Butler was extremely impressed with the UIMF members especially in how much work has been put into the event to celebrate International Mountains Day. He noted that the UVU has a great approach in the efforts that have been put in towards the advancement of the mountain development. Because of the unique teaching model that is used by the professors it allows students to get engaged in many different ways.

**“2030” Agenda Sustainability Goals:**



The model that is used set up in the way that helps the students to develop strong leadership skills and of course have amazing visit around the country and have the opportunity to work

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with distinguished Scholars, Ambassadors, and Professors. One of the initiatives from Dr. Butler is to arrange visits where Representatives of many nations in the UN visit UVU students and have a chance to see for themselves what kind of work is done through our University. At the end of his presentation Dr Butler mentioned that in March 2020 Russian Academy of Natural Sciences will have the opportunity to work closely with UIMF members and the UN on the commission of women. In this same event UIMF students will have the chance to make formal presentations in New York as well as hear from the Secretary General.

The overall event went exceptionally well, with great attendance from Utah Valley University students as well as the International Representatives. UIMF was able to once again raise awareness of sustainable Mountain Development by exposing the deep rooted issues that have existed for decades within the communities. UIMF not only raised awareness but also provided a solution by challenging students to focus on the 2030 agenda to achieve positive results for the environment.



**Victoria Bindrup, UIMF Member**

