

## Tajikistan and the Sustainable Development Goals

On October 05, 2018, Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations (UN), Mr. Mahmamin Mahmadaminov. During the visit, Ambassador Mahmadaminov made his major presentation titled: “Tajikistan’s efforts to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”



*Ambassador Mahmadaminov with UIMF members*

At the beginning of his visit to UVU, Ambassador Mahmadaminov had a special meeting with students – members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU, ([www.utahimf.org](http://www.utahimf.org)), who are involved in the initiatives under the sustainable mountain development agenda (SMD) of the UN. UIMF members prepared a special presentation to Ambassador Mahmadaminov about their contribution to the promotion of SMD in Utah and North America. It was interesting for me to see for the first time, how UIMF members implemented UVU student engaged learning model by working as one joint team in hosting an official from Tajikistan: they provided protocol, worked out logistical issues, prepared brochures,

all necessary information, raised funds and purchased gifts for Ambassador. And I liked how Sam Elzinga, Hagen Isaacson, Megan Davis, Mark Driggs and Viktoriia Bahrii, five UIMF leaders reported to Ambassador Mahmaminov about different aspects and activities of UIMF in their efforts to promote SMD locally and internationally since 2011, when UIMF was established.

It was really nice when Ambassador Mahmaminov started his presentation by stating that Utah looks just like his home country - Tajikistan: both do share similarity of the mountain communities as 93% of Tajikistan is mountainous, with nearly 1450 lakes, which some are really high in elevation (more than 400 meters). Ambassador Mahmaminov continued to explain that the main goal of his country, as well as its neighboring countries in Central Asia, is to continue working towards their constructive economic prosperity. He also stated, that it is important for his country to build cooperation with the State of Utah, Salt Lake City, and UVU, which would benefit all.

In his presentation, Mr. Mahmaminov emphasized the important role of family. He called the family a “Foundation of Society, because it is the smallest cell of any society but with the most crucial duty of preparing the youth and help in encouraging the future generations to be more well-educated in order to be successful. He emphasized that a strong family is also able to help in implementing the ethics of SDGS and fighting all kind of radicalism, which unfortunately has increased in recent years.

As a student enrolled in a class on post-soviet politics and part of a special assignment, I study this semester Tajikistan as my focused country. Due to that, I prepared several questions for guest from Tajikistan about his country but due to the limited time, I asked just one: about building Rogun Dam – Tajikistan’s’ \$4 billion worth mega dam and the future economic development that Tajikistan would accomplish from this monumental project. The Rogun Dam is planned to be built on the Vakhsh River in southern Tajikistan and it will be situated at the distance of 110 Km from the capital Dushanbe. Once this monument landmark is completed, it will be the highest dam in the world (335 meters= 1,099 ft). Ambassador Mahmaminov advised that once completed, the plant will have a total installed capacity of 3,600 MW and the most significant impact of the new dam will be to make Tajikistan a point of reference for the energy sector in the region, doubling energy production in the country and contributing to the reduction of power shortages suffered during the winter months.



*Abeir Isawi with Ambassador Mahmaminov after the lecture*

In fact, according to my research, [regional media outlets, like Azernews](#), informed, that Uzbekistan received 382 million kWh of Tajik electricity. The same source also informed that: “a month earlier, the volume of supplies to this country amounted to 417 million kWh. In August, electricity was also exported to Kyrgyzstan in the amount of 12.4 million kWh, which was not recorded in July. Afghanistan, as in the previous months, received slightly more than 200 million kWh of Tajik electricity in August. Tajikistan this year plans to increase the export of electricity to Afghanistan by 200 million kWh. At the beginning of this year, first Deputy Chairman of Barki Tojik Madumar Asozoda said that last year Tajikistan exported 1.3 billion kWh of electricity to Afghanistan. According to the agreements, the figure is planned to increase to 1.5 billion kWh this year.” This means that planned Rogun dam will provide Tajikistan more energy resources to accomplish those plans and initiatives.

By attending the meeting and a presentation of Ambassador Mahmaminov, I did learn a lot about the country of Tajikistan and its economic future within its region as well as on its international level. All my appreciation is for my university and UIMF for all their efforts and

engaged learning in particular to provide us as students and faculty the great honor to meet such important international officials and learn from their valuable personal experiences how we together could benefit both the state of Utah and Tajikistan mountain communities at the same time.

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