

Mr. Maher Nasser, from UN-DPI speaks at UVU about peace and SDGs



Mr. Nasser, UN/DPI speaks at UVU.

On November 28, 2018, the office for Global Engagement at Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted United Nation (UN) Public Information Director, Mr. Maher Nasser. The presentation of the UN official was focused on the current situation globally, such as international humanitarian crisis, peace and security, and international terrorism. Dr. Baldomero Lago, Chief International Officer at UVU, introduced Mr. Maher Nasser. Mr. Nasser was part of the United Nations system for 31 years, and he's held various positions in Gaza, Jerusalem, Cairo, Vienna, and UN headquarters in New York City. Prior to coming to the UN/DPI, he was the director of the UN information systems in Vienna and then in Cairo. He was also a chief for the UNRWA before joining the Department of Public Information at the UN. He held the same

post in the drug control program in Vienna. He's held positions in two non-governmental associations before he joined the UN. He attended the Madrid conference in 1991 and several bilateral meetings in Washington DC., as part of the Palestinian negotiation team. He is married and has three children.



Mr. Maher Nasser with representatives of the UVU office of Global Engagement, who arranged his visit

At the beginning of his presentation, UN Director Mr. Nasser talked about the UN's duties to provide international assistance. For example, he mentions crucial role that the UN plays by having as its part the largest humanitarian organization which is the World Food Program, the non-governmental organization (NGO) with focus on international sustainable development projects in order to avoid a war. One example that they provide food assistance for 83 million people. Currently, there are 220 million displaced people and twenty million refugees, who had to be taken care off. 45% of the world's children are provided with vaccines with the

support of UNICEF, an organization of the UN. The international organization of migration (IOM) is also under the UN. IMO, international meteorological organization coordinates all of the data for weather that goes to all of the websites. They are an essential part of the system of organizations that are under the UN framework.

Furthermore, the UN plays a significant role in international peace and security. For example, the UN was created after the Second World War to protect nations from the scourge of war. It's also about building harmonious relations between countries. Mr. Nasser stated that "What you see because it makes the news, is gridlock. But what doesn't make the news is all of the times they do reach resolutions. 80% of the resolutions are adopted by consensus." The Cold War was ended in the early 90s, when the Soviet Union collapsed, and we entered the time of globalization. Cybersecurity is the main issue and challenge today. For example, terrorists and any criminals are able via Internet to strike, recruit, and promote attacks in other parts of the world. The UN have often stressed the importance that as nations fight terrorists and terrorism, they need not lose a sight from the importance of protecting human rights. Those rights should not be trampled in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Nasser stated that prevention of conflicts is a priority, but it's often hard to achieve. And still there are many conflicts are happening worldwide. Mr. Nasser lays out excellent examples, that many of us don't see the conflicts in certain places, and it is because of mediation and working behind the scenes to prevent the conflict from taking place. If someone takes a vaccine, and if he/she doesn't get influenza, then don't think "why did I bother to have that pain and needle in my back? Well, they could have gotten that influenza. Counterfactual outcomes are not absolute. We can't prove that intervention prevented a famine, but that's what happened through cooperation with different agencies and member states. When the UN works with

member states in different regions, it engages regional organizations. UN works a lot with the African Union, with the EU on global issues, with the Organization of the American States.

Climate change created confusion because people used to be talking about global warming. Global warming, what is an additional degree or two going to do to the planet? But the scientists have looked into this, and they agree that current climate change that is impacting the world is caused by human action. There are actually very few dissenting scientists and documentaries will show that many of those are being paid by lobby groups. Climate change isn't just global warming. Implications are that severe weather events are going to increase. So dry regions will get drier. Storms and super storms will get more frequent. Of course, everyone thinks of rising sea levels. When 1-2 degrees happens at the global level, then the ice cap in Greenland. The North Pole and the South Pole will melt, and that will lead to a rise in sea level. Those predictions will go from a few feet to 60 feet. Salt Lake City isn't on the coast, but the majority of humanity lives on the coast. Much of the land that we use to grow crops is near that. There are some nations and small islands that could disappear with unchecked climate change. Take that aside and then the ocean acidity will increase because carbon dioxide is the most we've ever had since measurements identified it. It makes the ocean more acidic.

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