

Day 4. CSW63 final document briefing and New York sightseeing

On the fourth day of our delegation's visit to New York (dedicated to attendance of the 63rd Session of the Commission of Status on Women (CSW63) of the United Nations), UIMF members participated in a daily briefing hosted by NGO CSW/NY. It was focused on the progress of the final document negotiations for CSW63, which focuses on implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #5 on gender equality.



Dr. Abdrisaev and delegation members listening to briefing remarks

After short briefing, Mrs. Hellen Swales, National President for New Zealand Federation for Business & Professional Women, answered the questions from audience, whose members were representatives of various NGO's and civil society in general. One of the audience members addressed the issue of NGOs' getting lower recognition within the United Nations lately and gradual decrease of their powers, wondering whether the situation can be interpreted as the "backlash against civil society". Ms. Swales answered that the trend seems to be the case, however it doesn't mean that NGOs need to tone down on their efforts to contribute towards change.

Next, UIMF mentor, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev talked about the importance of engaging non-traditional students in promotion of mountain women's issue, while Vice-President of UIMF Mr. Michael Hinatsu addressed the question of including mountain women in CSW63 final document.



Mr. Michael Hinatsu addressing issue of including language on mountain women

Mrs. Swales responded to Michael with two points: first, she reflected on the need of including not a singular group, but working on centralized language process, where "happy medium" would be reached and all struggling women groups would be included, regardless of their geography. Secondly, Mrs. Swales addressed Michael's concern regarding lack of input from UIMF towards finalized document, saying that promoting the issue should be the continuous effort and just because our voice was not heard once does not mean it will not be in the future if we keep trying. However, it would require not only repeated effort, but also networking with other NGOs' promoting similar agenda as coordinated agenda promoted by multiple groups has more chance for success. Our professor latter discussed with students how this point can be illustrated by the island states' efforts in promotion of their agenda on island women and the resulting success in including respective language in final document.

After the briefing, UIMF members chatted and took pictures with Mrs. Hellen Swales herself, as well as took more pictures on UN grounds and handed out UIMF stress balls to the members of the public.

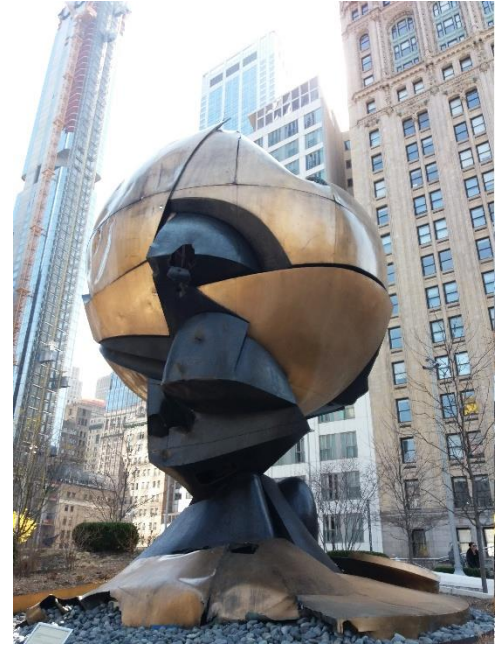


Group picture with Mrs. Hellen Swales

Despite many exciting and important events taking place in UN headquarters, because it was the last day of the visit for many of the delegation members, our group decided to split up and explore the city. Because of the need to check out of our accommodations, we dropped off our luggage at Dr. Abdrisaev's hotel, and went for a lunch next to it. During the meal, we shared our feelings and impressions from the trip, with many highlighting group-bounding component and engaged learning experience (where we got a change to gain practical skills and engage with high-level individuals) as the key highlights.

Latter, we headed for World Trade Center memorial - an important supplement for United Nations trip - where we visited the sites of both towers, and shared our childhood memories of 9/11 taking place, and which impact it had on our families and communities at a time.

We then headed to "The Sphere" in Liberty Park - large bronze sculpture created by German artist Fritz Koenig in 1971, which originally was installed in Austin J. Tobin Plaza beneath the



(1) 9/11 Memorial, and (2) The “Sphere” sculpture recovered from debris after 9/11

Twin towers, and was recovered from the debris after 9/11 with the signs of significant damage - in 2017 it was installed as a tourist attraction overlooking September 11 Memorial.

After another quick meal, we all headed to Dr. Abdrisaev's hotel to pick up our belongings, as some of the group members had a flight in a few hours. I, however, was staying in the city until the next morning, so after moving in to my new accommodations and resting for a couple of hours, I met with the remaining members of the group and a couple of new members for a dinner at Kebab Empire food establishment, which specializes in Uzbek & Central Asian cuisine. Our group included me, Dr. Abdrisaev, UIMF VP Michael Hinatsu, UIMF President Sam Ezinga and UVU faculty Paul Gallo. We shared our experiences from New York's visit and discussed the highlights of events we were able to attend. As all of us have interest and expertise in Central Asian region, we also talked about current geo-political situation there, especially in consideration of some of us had a chance to meet with Turkmenistan and Tajikistan Permanent Representatives to the United Nations same day earlier, who talked about their contributions towards CSW63.



Ms. Bahrii next to SDGLive installation on UN grounds

At the end, this trip left me with only the best memories, as not only did I get a chance to attend important high-level events involving Permanent Representatives from different nations, as well as to hear speeches of Chair of CSW63 and Malcolm X's daughter, but also experienced New York for the first time, especially in perspective of this trip focusing on promotion of Sustainable Development goals and women's rights - agendas of high importance to me.

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