

## Lecture of Mr. Richard Jordan at Utah Valley University



Richard Jordan has over 22 years of service in the United Nations representing many NGO's. He has been one of the five co-founding editors of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) and the Chairman of the CONGO NGO Committee on the UN and sports. He has participated in the Earth Summit in Rio (1992), the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen (1995) and much more.

He talked about the intricate working of the United Nations using specific examples and people to illustrate his points. He gave as an example the earth covenant: a 1 page manifesto that people and organizations could sign that recognizes a variety of harmful sources to the environment like military pollution, corporations that do not respect the environment, etc.

He went on to talk about a 15-year campaign to promote the need for United Nations to get involved in human security. After 15 years the UN formed the 'Human Security Task Force' in

1994 and it also has a trust fund which Richard commented, “if money is attached you know something will get done.”

When asked ‘what really happens at the UN?’ he explained it is very much like a club of member states. While negotiations on a variety of topics that serve as the basis of adopting resolutions in the General Assembly, only member states are involved formally. He also talked about the role of intergovernmental organizations and how over 100 or most of these organizations are from the security sector.

When Mr. Richard Jordan was asked for specific examples or experiences, he mentioned Kiran Bedi’s police unit where she taught yoga to her police unit and found that violence dropped dramatically. This caused the adoption of the International Yoga Day on the calendar of international observances. It shows, as Mr. Jordan said, alternative thinking and how individuals can make a difference. He also gave the example of Airline Ambassadors who train airlines, airport personnel, etc. how to identify human trafficking.

I found Richard Jordan to be informative and insightful in his examples and experiences. When he talked about how NGOs are becoming more powerful within the UN, it caused me to wonder how these NGOs get chosen to be included in the UN meetings and what is the process for them to have influence in the UN. When I voiced my question, Mr. Richard Jordan was able to explain the process of applying to be included and even gave an example of ‘bike-gangs’ who had been applying for years to be UN nonprofit ambassadors and what logic was used by India’s representative and currently there are several bike-gangs associated with the UN.

As member of the student hosting team through student engaged learning model, I helped coordinate Mr. Richard Jordan’s visit to East High School in Salt Lake City on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 1:30pm. He spoke there to a group of 50 or so students. I coordinated his visit with Stephanie Shelton who was the point person at East High School as an AVID, Debate, and History teacher. She helped student to prepare questions about what it is like to work in the UN, how the UN functions and what the relationship between NGOs and Ambassadors of different countries are in the UN.

This was very interesting visit of such a knowledgeable and experienced person, who shared with us, students so many important stories and lessons of being engaged with the United Nations. Moreover, it happened thanks to the UVU engaged learning model.

*Sariah Gomez, UVU student*