

## Richard Jordan spoke at UVU about NGOs role at the United Nations



Mr. Richard Jordan, Dean of NGOs at the United Nations spoke with UVU students on April 8, 2019. He focused on the history and changes at the United Nations from 1989 to the present. The issues facing the world have changed over the last thirty years, and likewise the initiatives undertaken by the UN have changed to reflect modern times. There is now a greater emphasis on harmonization and cooperation between nations, and more programs designed to promote sustainable development and women's rights.

One recurring element of Mr. Jordan's speech that I found most interesting was his description of the complexly layered bureaucracy at the United Nations. In an effort to improve harmonization and coordination between different groups there are joint briefings for Member States with the President of ECOSOC and the President of the General Assembly. NGOs and CSOs are also much more directly involved with member states than they were in the past. NGOs are

now able to speak directly with member states and have greater involvement with them via informal mechanisms such as daily brainstorming sessions.

Along with internal operational changes happening at the UN, new initiatives that reflect modern problems are also taking center stage. One example is the joint UN resolution on Women and Girls in Science first introduced by Princess Nasreen of Iraq, adopted in 2015. This resolution took approximately eight months to prepare before it was read and adopted by member states, and has a transformative agenda pushing for pay parity between men and women in science fields. This resolution will also help support efforts of involving girls in science fields from an earlier age which will further help reduce disparities between genders in the future.

Another recent initiative that is reflective of changing conferences by members states are the Ocean Conferences. These conferences are held in multiple locations around the world to address specific ocean issues in different regions of the world. These conferences discuss issues of global warming, pollution, endangered marine life, and other challenges facing the worlds oceans today.

The sustainable mountain agenda was first introduced in 1989 as part of preparations for the Earth Summit. The Earth Summit was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and gave member states a platform to discuss and collaborate on sustainability initiatives. Since the time of the Earth Summit many nations have adopted resolutions that began development during that first summit. This has gradually evolved into the UN Sustainability Initiative, with new sustainability goals for the 2030 summit in development now.

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