

Celebrating International Mountain Day with UIMF

My experience at the Utah International Mountain Forum's (UIMF) International Mountain Day celebration was filled with knowledge and comradery as many speakers talked about the achievements made by the UIMF, as a student clubs coalition at Utah Valley University (UVU). The theme of the event hosted by UIMF on December 2, 2019 was sustainable mountain development, something which its members have spoken on and promoted throughout the last year.



Dr. Baldomero Lago speaks during the International Mountain Day observation at UVU

Dr. Lago, a Vice-Rector for UVU Global Engagement spoke of our university accomplishments. Among these accomplishments were: UVU getting a UN chapter, and the school's involvement in the UN civil society conference that took place in August. He assured UVU's commitment to continue to promote the UN sustainability agenda here in our Mountainous region. As well as to promote civility and coexistence.

The next speaker was Dr. Butler, main representative at the UN for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences. He told a story about a woman from Afghanistan and her struggles and achievements and then connected this story to the UVU student advocacy of mountain women at the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

The next speaker I'd like to touch on was Mr. Uday Teki, he spoke about Environmental sustainability and biodiversity. I was able to meet Uday Teki at the UN conference in August and he seems like a very dedicated person. I learned today that "youth" according to the UN are people ages 18 to 32 glad to hear I'm still in my youth, according to the UN.



Lacey Meyer, UIMF Vice-President speaks about challenges in rural Utah

The final speaker I was able to hear from was Lacey Meyer and she did an amazing job. She spoke about rural Utah communities. She found in her research that rural Utah is in an economic downturn. Her hometown of Price, Utah was once much more rural than it is but because of some growth in technological businesses, it is now more developed and economically stable. Lacey listed several ways that we can help rural Utah: the first is to help the economy through

encouraging diversification, the second is through partnering instead of overseeing companies, the third is through bolstering the education system and quality in rural and urban communities, the last one is through empowerment. Speaking about empowerment Lacey said, “Rural communities are strong and capable, allow them to flourish.” She was passionate in her statement that we need to create a better system to help rural communities grow. Even though we may not see opportunities immediately to directly help, Lacey encouraged attendees to stay updated on events happening in rural communities through reading articles, as well as attending events about rural communities, and acting when those opportunities to help arise.

Overall, I was glad that I was able to attend the Utah International Mountain Forum celebration of Mountain Day. It was a great opportunity to learn about the great and important work that the UIMF coalition is doing, and all of the current issues facing our own community of Utah and the struggles other mountainous communities are facing all around the world. Hopefully many of the people that attended, including myself, can work to make a better world for all people.

Rachel Godfrey, UVU student