



MAYOR'S OFFICE
JACKIE BISKUPSKI

PRESS RELEASE

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Salt Lake City selected to host 2019 United Nations NGO Conference

Today, Mayor Jackie Biskupski led a delegation from Utah to United Nations Headquarters in New York to announce that Salt Lake City has been selected as host of the 68th United Nations Department of Public Information NGO (UN DPI/NGO) Conference in 2019. The annual conference attracts 2,000-4,000 representatives from over 300 non-governmental organizations representing more than 80 countries. Each Conference focuses on a different UN topic of interest related to the work of civil society and NGOs.

The Conference is traditionally held at UN Headquarters, but has recently been hosted by global cities, including Melbourne, Australia; Paris; Mexico City; and Bonn, Germany. The 2019 Conference in Salt Lake City will be the first time the event is held in the United States outside of New York.

“As a city committed to being inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, it is an honor to be the first U.S. host city of the UN-DPI NGO Conference outside of New York,” said Mayor Jackie Biskupski. “I can think of no better time and no better place than Salt Lake City, for the UN and the world’s NGOs to expand awareness in this country of sustainable development goals and the value of global unity.”

In remarks to Conference attendees at the closing event, Mayor Biskupski highlighted Salt Lake City’s Climate Positive Plan, a path to transition to 100% clean energy by 2032 and reduce carbon output 80% by 2024.

“When Salt Lake City affirmed our clean energy goals in 2016, we were the 16th city in the United States to do so. Today, more than 85 cities and counties in America have resolved to achieve this goal, including three others in Utah—a testament to the power of partnerships, with NGO’s like the Sierra Club, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and Path to Positive.”

Mayor Biskupski encouraged the United Nations to make Sustainability Goal 11 the focus of the 2019 Conference. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 lays out a series of targets for cities to reach by 2030, including access to safe and affordable housing, transportation, and green and public spaces. Goal 11 also encourages cities to adopt and implement plans to reduce the environmental impact of cities, particularly air quality.

The effort to bring the UN DPI/NGO Conference to Utah began with the Office for Global Engagement at Utah Valley University. In November 2017, UVU was granted affiliate membership status with the UN Department of Public Information and works to educate the campus and larger community on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Earlier this year Baldomero S. Lago, Chief International Officer for UVU, approached Mayor Biskupski about the possibility of hosting the Conference.

“I knew the United Nations was interested in having the Conference somewhere in the U.S. and with UVU’s new status I thought Utah would be the perfect place,” said Lago. “Given Salt Lake City’s mission of building a sustainable and resilient city, it made perfect sense to approach the City to help make this dream a reality.”

The 2019 Conference is expected to take place in late August with events hosted at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Downtown Salt Lake City.

“By selecting Salt Lake City to host this prestigious conference, the United Nations is affirming our position as a global city,” said Scott Beck, President and CEO of Visit Salt Lake. “We know how to welcome the world in Salt Lake City and we are certainly ready, willing, and able to make this Conference a memorable event.”

Mayor Biskupski also participated in this year’s conference on a “Youth Hub” panel discussion with Alison Smale, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, and Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of Oxfam International. The panel was a dialogue with young girls and women attending the conference on their respective ideas on how the UN, civil society and local communities can best address the gaps and challenges they face in today’s world.

The delegation from Utah included Derek Miller, President of Salt Lake Chamber; Baldomero S. Lago, Chief International Officer for UVU; Anne Burkholder, CEO YWCA; Paula Green Johnson, United Way of Salt Lake and Ronald McDonald House Charities Board Member; Michael Morris, Executive Vice President of Real Estate Zion’s Bank; Karen Staples, Visit Salt Lake; Jonathan Ruga, CEO Sentry Financial; Steven Price, Founder Price Realty Group. The Utah delegation was joined in New York by Loren Blackford, President of Sierra Club and Ryan Koch, Director of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint Public and International Affairs Office in New York City.