UN STUDIES TO BECOME A SIPA SPECIALIZATION

By Sarah Goldman

Starting in the Fall 2014 semester, UNSP will merge with the International Organizations (IO) specialization to create a new “International Organizations and UN Studies” specialization.

With its addition to SIPA’s menu of specializations, UNSP will be able to provide students with a structured curriculum based around examining the different functions of the UN, and students will receive an academic degree in UN Studies. With this institutionalization, SIPA becomes the only school in Manhattan to offer a specialization in UN Studies.

Just four years after its creation, UNSP has outgrown its co-curricular status. Over 500 students are currently in the Program, many of whom chose to attend SIPA because of their interest in the UN. The movement to transform UNSP into a specialization was student-led, as students routinely expressed a desire for the Program to be achieved at SIPA.

A lot of students come to SIPA because of its proximity and close working relation to the UN,” said Michael Lenihan (MIA ’15), one of the students who led the student movement. “It is a unique aspect of the school, and I thought elevating UNSP to a specialization would match the importance a lot of students give the topic.”

“For a long time, there has been an interest from students to specialize in UNSP,” said Rina Lila (MIA ’15), co-President of the UNSP Working Group. “Students who have heard about UNSP becoming a specialization are excited.”

In pushing the process forward, a team of students met with officials in the SIPA Administration, released a survey to UNSP and its Working Group to gauge student interest, and sought advice from members of the Gender and Public Policy specialization, which recently went through the same specialization approval process.

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“A Day at the UN” Marks Fourth and Largest Year

By Alana Ngoh

What does it really mean to work at the United Nations? 35 lucky SIPA students found out when they spent one, two, three, four, and even five days getting an inside view of the UN.

In what has become an annual tradition, UNSP once again organized its popular “A Day at the UN” program, a chance for students to immerse themselves for a day or more in a variety of UN departments and agencies. Building on last year’s success, the majority of students participating in the 4th edition of the initiative spent more than one day at the UN while one student, Priyanka Johnson (MIA’15), set a record by spending five days with her host, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

At a panel event on Monday, April 28, attended by student and staff participants of “A Day at the UN” and moderated by UNSP Director Elisabeth Lindenmayer, a handful of students shared stories about what they learned from their time at the UN. Despite their varied experiences, one common theme was how the opportunity brought them closer to a long-held dream. For Ed Brockoff (MPA ’14), who was placed at the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Secretariat was a far cry from the small farm he grew up on in Australia. “The UN was always this magical place far, far away,” he said.

Although her hometown is much closer to UN headquarters, Diana Caba (MIA ’14) felt the same way. “Growing up in the Bronx, I never imagined that the UN was a place where I could go and spend the day.” She was even more excited to learn that her mentor would be Gülden Türköz-Cosslett, Director of Program Support at UN Women. “She was one of the people who helped establish the agency in 2010 and is someone I have admired ever since. It meant a lot to me to be placed with her.”

For Rina Lila (MIA ’15), the experience reaffirmed her aspirations to work at the international organization. She visited the Assistant Secretary-General’s Office at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and felt a connection the moment she walked in. “I was welcomed so warmly by the team. Within a couple of hours, it felt as though I had been working there for months!” she said. “It made my dream of working at DPKO a reality and made me realize that I belong at the UN.”

Palavi Sekhri (MPA ’15), who shadowed the Policy and Mediation Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), also walked away with some valuable professional insights. “The experience was a great opportunity for me to see how I can use my legal skills can intersect with the world of international development and affairs. It also helped shape the direction of my studies at Columbia. I recognize the soft skills I need to develop to become a successful Mediator, and now plan to take courses such as psychology to support that.”

Other students walked away with valuable leadership lessons. Johnson expressed admiration for Agnès Marcaillou, the Head of UNMAS, who defied preconceptions of diplomacy with her straight talk and ability to get things done. Her biggest takeaway: “That you can be the head of a UN department and speak your mind.” Meanwhile Lila, who watched her mentor Assistant Secretary-General Edmond Mulet in action at the Security Council, said: “Listening to him confidently answer questions from members of the Council made me understand what it takes to be a good leader.”

For all the praise that students had for their UN mentors, the tables turned when hosts explained the motivations for taking them on. Assistant Secretary-General Mulet spoke of how rewarding it was for them to be able to invest in young people. “These students are the future. We need to show the world and especially the next generation, the importance of the UN,” he said.

Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins, an alumna of SIPA’s Class of 1978, imagined herself in the students’ shoes. “I thought of myself when I was at SIPA and this type of opportunity was never an option—in fact, it was unheard of. When I had my first interview at the UN shortly after I graduated, it was the first time I had even stepped into a UN building!”

Meanwhile, Marc Bichler of the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) explained how this initiative feeds into the UN’s multi-stakeholder approach. “Because of the complexity of the problems we face, it is important to reach out and form partnerships with academic institutions like SIPA.”

The dedication and commitment of UN staff left a lasting impression on the students. “Although they all come from different backgrounds, they are inspired by the same passion,” said Lucas Xu (MIA ’15), who was at the UNCDF. Professor Lindenmayer agreed: “After 30 years, it is still a miracle to me that so many people from so many different backgrounds are able to work together towards a common goal.”

Revealing this humanity is why Professor Lindenmayer remains so dedicated to organizing the “A Day at the UN” initiative. As she summed up nicely, “This initiative is really about putting a human face to the UN. It is only by meeting the staff, seeing who they are, where they come from and why they work for this organization, that students can gain a true understanding of the UN.”
Thank You To Our Gracious Hosts of “A Day at the UN!”

You have given our students such memorable experiences and we are looking forward to seeing you again next year!

Congratulations to UNMAS who, for the first time, hosted a SIPA student at the UN for an unprecedented five days!
First-Hand Testimonials of

“I had the priceless opportunity to attend high-level briefings on the Central African Republic crisis and witness the strategy behind formulating peacekeeping proposals.”
Shuo Yan Tan (MPA ’14), Department of Field Support, with Under Secretary-General Ameera Haq

“I learned about the issues of impunity and military discipline, and the importance of training of law enforcement and local capacity-building in bringing an end to sexual violence in conflict.”
Caroline Miller (MPA ’15), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, with actress and activist Robin Wright

“The staff was so warm and welcoming that at times it felt that I was actually working there among them. I also participated in an inter-departmental briefing with the Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Somalia regarding the future of the UNSOM mission mandate that will soon expire.”
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“Attending the Disarmament Commission reaffirmed that, while disparity may exist, all UN member-states have a right and opportunity to speak their mind.”
Michael Lenihan (MIA ’15), UNODA, with Political Affairs Officer Tom Kono

“One of my tasks was to research the Philippine diaspora’s response to Typhoon Haiyan, which would be used to help inform the policy division’s research. I could see where my work, even in just two days, contributed to OCHA.”
Isabelle Lacson (MPA ’15), OCHA Asia-Pacific Section, with Humanitarian Affairs Officer Ozgul Ozcan
"I am honored to have had the chance to accompany ASG Mule and realizing my dream to visit the DPKO and seeing how the organization works due to my childhood background of growing up in the country of Kosovo."
Rina Lila (MIA '15), DPKO Office of the Assistant Secretary-General, with Assistant Secretary-General Edmond Mulet

"Everyone was lovely and brilliant. I was privy to real-time negotiations and discussions on Ukraine and Syria and the direct feedback and lessons learned from all the major peace negotiations of the last year."
Pallavi Sekhri (MPA '15), DPA Policy and Mediation Division, with Senior Political Affairs Officer Stephen Jackson

"I had the privilege of attending a forum on partnerships to witness how the UN tackles global challenges in concert with diverse stakeholders."
Ryan Berger (MIA '15), UNDESA ECOSOC Support and Coordination Office, with ECOSOC President Ambassador Martin Sadjik

"I had the chance to observe a town hall that included the UN WOMEN Executive Director and Deputy Directors, which was a fascinating insight into the internal conversation ahead of next year’s Beijing+20 activities."
Miki Noguchi (MPA '14), UN WOMEN Fund for Gender Equality, with SIPA alumna Gender Specialist Yata Mboup-Kande
Annual UNSP International Women’s Day Event Welcomes UN Chef de Cabinet Susana Malcorra

By Maggie Li and Ruba Shweihat

In celebration of International Women’s Day, on Tuesday, March 4, UNSP hosted Under Secretary-General (USG) Susana Malcorra at SIPA. The event was sponsored by SIPA’s Gender and Public Policy Specialization and Economic and Political Development Concentration.

The discussion, moderated by UNSP Director Elisabeth Lindenmayer, took place in IAB 1501 with a sunset across the Manhattan skyline serving as a backdrop. Several dozen students, faculty and guests attended the event, entitled, “Lessons Learned from a Woman in Leadership and an Outstanding Career in Emergency and Humanitarian Operations.”

USG Malcorra is Chief of Staff to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, having been appointed to the position in March 2012 following a role as the Under Secretary-General for Field Support at the World Food Programme. A native of Argentina, she trained as an electrical engineer and began her career at IBM before going on to become the CEO of Telecom Argentina. USG Malcorra credits her drive for excellence to her parents who taught her to have ambition and just “go for it.” When faced with resistance in all-male environments during her career in the private sector, she brushed it off. It was “[the men’s] problem if they had an issue […] not mine.”

In response to Professor Lindenmayer’s question on how transferable were skills she learned as a private-sector CEO her present role in a supranational institution, USG Malcorra mentioned that leadership is one such skill that is replicable across sectors. The main challenge in her career transition, she said, was remembering to have patience.

“You have to be extremely patient to get to the end objective,” the Under Secretary-General said. “It’s not so much things measured in time, but in achieving the objective. More ‘what I want to do’—not ‘what I want to do now.’”

Reflecting on her current job as Chef de Cabinet, USG Malcorra said she is “just an engineer” applying her knowledge in a different environment. “I never tried to compete,” she continued, “I just tried to bring a different perspective, and that has helped me through life. I deeply believe women bring a different perspective to matters.”

Throughout the conversation, USG Malcorra and Professor Lindenmayer touched upon the positive influence women can have in leadership positions. Among her duties in the Secretary-General’s Senior Management Group, Malcorra told the audience, is dealing with large personalities. While stressing the importance of not obsessing with planning a career or life because “there is no such thing,” USG Malcorra advised students to “just do it.” What is more important, she went on, is “grabbing the opportunity and trusting yourself.”

And for the women in the crowd, she warned against women’s tendency to shy away from power. “Power is the capacity to make a difference,” the Under Secretary-General said.

Professor Lindenmayer agreed and added, “There is a huge difference between the way women and men perceive power at the UN. Women see it as a contribution; men see it as raw power.” She also recommended women not to fear power but, instead: “Take it, grab it. You need power to make your contribution.”

USG Malcorra’s presence at SIPA commemorated International Women’s Day and was the latest installation in a UNSP-led tradition to celebrate this day. Past participants have included: Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile and former Executive Director of UN Women; Judy Cheng-Hopkins (MIA ’78), Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support; and Lakshmi Puri, Assistant Secretary-General for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships at UN Women.
UNSP Wire

UNSP Attends SC Meeting on the Search for a Permanent Peace

By Danny Emory and Camilo Lizarralde

Braving below-freezing temperatures, 50 UNSP students and UNSP Director Elisabeth Lindenmayer made the trek down to Turtle Bay on January 29 to have the opportunity to observe the UN Security Council’s open debate on “War, its Lessons, and the Search for a Permanent Peace.” Almost 100 years following the start of World War I, the meeting sought to reflect on the Security Council’s efforts to achieve long-lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict. UNSP students were eager to hear member-states discuss one of the Council’s core missions: maintaining international peace and security.

UN Under Secretary-General (USG) for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman opened the debate by outlining the United Nations’ role in forging reconciliation worldwide. He commented that unresolved internal conflicts, suffering from competing visions of history and identity that threaten long-term peace, continue to pose a danger to the wider international community. While the UN has experience in enacting political roadmaps and quick projects rebuilding infrastructure, USG Feltman said, “We have reflected less on our ability to repair trust in societies and foster genuine reconciliation.”

Pointing to three current conflicts on the Security Council’s agenda—Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Syria—USG Feltman remarked on the difficulty in erasing grievances “by only clearing the rubble.”

While admitting that the UN does not hold a monopoly on reconciliation efforts, the Under Secretary-General outlined four areas that deserve special attention from the international community: including reconciliation mechanisms in peace agreements; focusing on timing of elections and constitutional reform processes; ensuring that reconciliation is not imposed from the outside; and creating common knowledge and expertise on reconciliation.

Following USG Feltman’s opening speech, over 50 speakers participated in the debate until the end of the working day. The Permanent Mission of Jordan, which organized the meeting as the president of the Security Council for the month of January, called upon the UN to realize the importance of fostering reconciliation among ex-combatants and populations in consolidating international peace and security. In a concept note distributed ahead of the debate, Jordan recommended that the Council form a historical advisory team to help bridge differing historical narratives that have promoted conflicts in the past.

The statements by other member-states reflected on common themes of justice and reconciliation, and the necessity to objectively approach past histories of conflict. Thomas Mayr Harting, EU Ambassador to the United Nations, referred to the EU as a prime example of regional integration that resulted in peace and lasting reconciliation. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Powers memorably stated that “the opposite of war isn’t peace; the opposite of war is not war,” while commenting that communities must know what happened in order to move from “not war” to peace.

However, some speeches referenced current disputes that created tensions within the chamber. Both the Chinese and Korean delegations criticized Japan’s refusal to confront its wartime past, actions that they insist have contributed to distrust among the states in Northeast Asia. In response, Japan’s Deputy UN Ambassador insisted that his country has admitted to its historical actions, and called the Chinese and Korean statements unhelpful in lowering tensions and enhancing regional stability.

For many students attending the session, the meeting reflected the continued elusiveness of a shared understanding on what permanent peace entails. While the meeting focused on the role of forgiveness and reconciliation in achieving peace, Ashley Robinson (MIA’14) argued that, “A peace that is reliant on someone else’s actions is not a sustainable definition of peace.” Many students pointed to the strained relationship between Japan, China and South Korea as proof of the difficulty of achieving true historical reconciliation.

Evidently, differing historical interpretations still remain a challenge to the Council’s efforts in fostering sustainable peace and security.
The Administration was very supportive of the students’ efforts and decided to take the process into its own hands. While the approval process at SIPA generally takes about two years, for UNSP it took just one semester thanks to the efforts of the Dean and her team.

The new IO and UN Studies specialization will comprise two tracks: an “IO track” for students wishing to study regional international organizations such as the EU, AU or Arab League; and a “UN track” for students wishing to focus specifically on the UN. Both tracks will require a core course in international organizations. The UN track will require two UN-related electives in the areas of human rights, security or development.

The new UN Studies specialization will continue to offer popular programs to connect students to the UN. Over 100 students applied to UNSP’s ‘Day at the UN’ initiative this year. UNSP has conducted nine Capstone and Independent Research projects over its four years, hosted 26 Working Lunches with Ambassadors from over 20 different countries, and brought multiple UN dignitaries to SIPA for high-level panels, including former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, current Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, and UN Chief of Staff Susana Malcorra.

SIPA already has many professors who are former UN practitioners or have many years of experience working with multilateral institutions. Lila is eager to soak up their insights and apply their teachings to public leadership.

“I was extremely thrilled to hear that UNSP was becoming a specialization,” she said. “The specialization will enable us to relate our first-hand UN experience, gained from attending UNSP events, with critical thinking and analytical classes. This practical experience and inspiration from Professor Lindenmayer and the other UN Studies professors will grant every student the opportunity to learn how to become a well-rounded leader.”
By Ryan Berger and Isabela Cunha

On January 23, UNSP hosted three ambassadors to the UN as well as a leading human-rights expert for a panel discussion on the recent fallout between numerous African Union (AU) member-states and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The well-attended event was organized and moderated by UNSP Director Elisabeth Lindenmayer.

Panelists at the forum, titled “The Relationship Between the International Criminal Court and the African Union: What Went Wrong?”, included: Ambassador Charles Ntwaagae, permanent representative of Botswana; Ambassador Macharia Kamau, permanent representative of Kenya; Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, permanent representative of Liechtenstein; and Richard Dicker, director of the International Justice Program at Human Rights Watch.

The event was particularly opportune; its timing coincided with a weeklong AU summit at its Addis Ababa. It appears that some AU countries are contemplating the possibility of withdrawing from the Court. One such country is Kenya, whose president and deputy president—Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, respectively—have been charged by the ICC for various crimes against humanity related to post-election violence in 2007. President Kenyatta and Deputy President Ruto were elected to their current positions in March 2013.

On the day of UNSP’s event, Deputy President Ruto was at The Hague for his trial, which officially commenced in September 2010. Also, on that same day the ICC asked for a three-month postponement for the start date of its trial against President Kenyatta, which was supposed to commence on February 5.

When asked what has changed in the relationship between the AU and the ICC since 2009, Ambassador Ntwaagae pointed to a change in “tactics and approach.” Ambassador Kamau expanded by saying that the ICC “was supposed to be about prosecuting individuals, but went wrong when prosecutors began to conflate individuals with nations.”

The ICC was established in 2002 and investigates crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. All eight of the ICC’s active cases relate to countries in Africa, but Professor Lindenmayer pointed out that four of them—Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and Uganda—were referred to the Court by those governments. Another two—Sudan and Libya—were referred by the UN Security Council, and the remaining two—Kenya and the Ivory Coast—were initiated by the ICC prosecutor. The largest bloc of countries that are signatories to the Rome Statute that established the ICC comes from Africa and 5 of the 18 ICC judges, as well as the chief prosecutor, are African nationals.

Ambassador Kamau referred to the 2007–2008 violence as “28 bad days in our 50-year democracy” and pushed back against the notion that Africa is the “theater of the worst atrocities,” charging that other parts of the world witnessed high body counts and severe human-rights abuses throughout history. He continued by stating that the ICC’s success is contingent on honesty, transparency and equality—principles that he believes are not being observed.

Mr. Dicker concurred by noting that the Rome Statute is a “voluntary contract” and many great powers—most of which are not party to the treaty—hold themselves outside of it thinking they cannot be touched. That these same nations, which hold prominent positions in the Security Council, do not accept the same jurisdiction in their own countries that they authorize for Sudan and Libya is hypocritical, Mr. Dicker said.

In response, Ambassador Wenaweser, who formerly served as president of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute, said that “the institution has applied the law that we have given to it.” He noted that the mission of the Court was to ensure no impunity for large-scale crimes in systematic ways and no immunity for anyone—including heads of state. The Ambassador concluded by saying that because the ICC did its job it was not fair to be attacking the institution.

Ambassador Ntwaagae contributed by pointing to the complementarity system and that the ICC acts only when local remedies seem innocuous. He further stated that these difficulties are faced in Africa due to lack of capacity and political will. Therefore, the ICC is filling a gap in Africa. According to him, a pan-African system of justice exists, but it is not as robust as to be compared to the ICC.

Professor Lindenmayer stressed the importance of the international system having an institution devoted to the principle of justice.

“The voice of victims is important, and there is no peace without justice,” she said.

In light of the variety of opinions presented regarding the next step in the AU–ICC relationship, all panelists wished for the ICC to succeed and thrive in the future in spite of their differing takes on the present situation.
By Marcello Bonatto and Rachel Olanoff

“Why do we need nuclear weapons?”

This was how Ambassador Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea (ROK), opened the first UNSP Working Lunch of the spring semester. The discussion took place on Friday, February 21 at the ROK’s Permanent Mission to the UN in New York’s Turtle Bay neighborhood. The embassy is a stunning 11-story, marble-clad building located steps from the UN Secretariat and designed by world-renowned architect I. M. Pei—perhaps most famous for the pyramidal Louvre in Paris.

The subject of the lunch was “Is Nuclear Disarmament Possible?” and 21 fortunate students participated in the discussion, which revolved in part around the Korean Peninsula and the ROK’s national security. Ambassador Oh engaged students with a unique discussion format, soliciting responses and making them think through various scenarios. After a brief historical overview of modern warfare, the Ambassador invited students to challenge their own beliefs on nuclear proliferation.

“I would like to ask everyone a hypothetical question,” he said. “What do you think would provide the least chance of war among nations?”

As students ate the large selection of freshly-made sandwiches, salads and fruit, Ambassador Oh offered four options for consideration: a nuclear-free world; a nuclear monopoly by one country; the current nuclear regime, whereby the P5 countries have Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)-sanctioned legitimacy to possess nuclear weapons; and a free-market situation in which all capable countries can have nuclear weapons.

“Issues related to nuclear weapons can sometimes be very technical but, the way I see it, these issues are fundamentally philosophical questions,” the Ambassador added. The majority of students voted to keep the current regime—a sign that many remain skeptical about a world entirely devoid of nuclear weapons.

Jin Hashimoto, a Japanese student at Teachers College, was impressed by Ambassador Oh’s theoretical approaches to nuclear disarmament. “The Ambassador said that if the international community fails to sustain the NPT, we will have to bear with a free-market situation allowing all countries to have nuclear weapons,” Hashimoto noted. “It was a thought-provoking scenario, but it reconfirmed the importance of the current NPT regime to prevent such situations.”

For the ROK, the topic of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has remained a crucial issue over the years due to its neighbor to the north. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), has developed nuclear weapons, and recently threatened “dramatic action” in response to military maneuvers between the United States and the ROK, that were scheduled to begin in late February.

As Ambassador Oh took questions from students during the second half of the lunch, the discussion turned to the future of the NPT, possibilities for greater regional cooperation and the ROK’s role in Korean reconciliation efforts. While Amb-

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Saudi hospitality was on full display on April 10 as a UNSP delegation of SIPA students led by UNSP Director Elisabeth Lindenmayer had the honor of participating in a working lunch with H.E. Abdallah Yahya Al-Mouallimi, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Ambassador to the UN, at the Saudi Permanent Mission in New York.

After first being guided to a comfortable sitting room featuring a wall-sized bird’s-eye photograph of the Grand Mosque in Mecca and throngs of pilgrims gathered around the Black Stone, the delegation was seated in a spacious conference room adorned with vintage photographs of the Saudi royal family. Upon receiving the group, Ambassador Al-Mouallimi expressed his highest regard for SIPA’s UNSP curriculum and its impact on the UN’s work.

The subject of the discussion, “The Shifting Geopolitical Context and Global Security: The Role of Saudi Arabia,” was particularly relevant given recent consequential developments in the Middle East, underscored by U.S. President Barack Obama’s visit to Riyadh in March.

The working lunch started when Ambassador Al-Mouallimi delivered the Kingdom’s policy statement on topics of regional concern. First, he expressed Riyadh’s disappointment with the impasse and possible collapse of Israeli–Palestinian peace talks but reiterated the firm commitment of His Royal Highness King Abdullah, who drafted the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, to a two-state solution.

The Ambassador then shared Saudi Arabia’s distress at the ongoing violence and growing humanitarian crisis in Syria. He added that by declining a seat on the Security Council last October, Saudi Arabia made an unequivocal statement against the UN’s decision not to intervene.

Expanding on the Syrian civil war, Ambassador Al-Mouallimi described what Saudi Arabia viewed as Iran’s undeniable role in the destabilization of Syria. The Kingdom has been openly critical of Iran’s involvement in the affairs of Arab states; however, Riyadh opposes nuclear proliferation and favors a nuclear-free Middle East.

After this overview, Ambassador Al-Mouallimi took questions from students, several of whom asked about Saudi Arabia’s energy policy and position on climate change. The Ambassador stated that the Kingdom was investing heavily in renewable energy and green technology. He also noted that coordinated international action was necessary to rein in rising temperatures, but that this action had to be fair for all countries, echoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s emphasis on “energy for all.”

When asked for his reaction toward the United States’ possible drawback from Saudi oil amid its boom in shale development, the Ambassador replied that he wasn’t worried, reminding students that the U.S. is a security guarantor for the region and helps stabilize world oil prices. Also, the growth in aggregate demand for energy sources brought about from rising consumption in developing countries is what dictates market prices, which will benefit Riyadh economically.

The Ambassador also commented on the wave of uprisings in the Arab world. The Saudi government was of the view that the political unrest in Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Tunisia was the product of longstanding political and socioeconomic disparity in those societies. Ambassador Al-Mouallimi argued that these conditions are not prevalent in Saudi Arabia and that Riyadh’s answer to the uprisings, in keeping with the social contract between the House of Saud and the Saudi people, was to re-eval-
bassador Oh acknowledged the significance of responding to the DPRK’s violation of the NPT and its implications for the strength of future international-security agreements, he also addressed student questions about how to build trust between the two Koreas.

The Ambassador noted that building trust should not be “that difficult” as many North Koreans are “our own family members,” recounting how his own father-in-law who tried until his death unsuccessfully to reunite with the family members he left behind in the North. He repeatedly referred to North Korea as a “brother” nation, and noted that they have “been the same nation for thousands of years, but we have only been separated for 60 years.”

When asked about how soon reunification could be possible, he answered that, if asked the same question 10 years ago, he would say “not in the near future”—but that now “it might be possible in the not-so-remote future.”

In addition to discussing issues of nuclear disarmament and reunification, Ambassador Oh called for renewed cooperation between the ROK and other East Asian countries such as China and Japan. Despite difficult battles over postwar legacies and territories, the Ambassador believes the region should unite in their shared history and culture for greater security and economic development akin to the European Union member-countries.

Professor Lindenmayer thanked Ambassador Oh on behalf of SIPA for his gracious hospitality in spite of his busy schedule.

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 Ambassador Al-Mouallimi thanked SIPA students for their informed questions and welcomed them to a delightful luncheon in the Permanent Mission’s lounge that overlooked the East River.

As students and staff mingled, they further discussed the challenges ahead for the Middle East. Regional power shifts, competing interests of Saudi Arabia’s neighbors and the evolving political situation in Egypt and Syria remain the indicators of a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, not to mention a test for a new era of Saudi leadership. Students were grateful to Ambassador Al-Mouallimi for expanding their perspective on these critical issues and for his warm and generous hospitality.

Students left the lunch with a renewed sense of purpose and a better knowledge of the myriad perspectives to nuclear weapons in the world.