

Off-Campus Visit to FAO



On Friday December the 2nd, the first year course of Global Governance went to visit FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. For most of us this was a very exciting visit, due to the fact that a lot of us have never been this close to the United Nations and have never gotten the chance to get so much information about it.

Therefore the fact that we got our own nametags was very impressive and pretty exciting. The actual visit started with the Preamble to the Constitution, the Nations accepting this Constitution are determined to follow and promote the articles included. At FAO these articles are shown in the entrance hall on stone platforms, written in the five different UN languages.

We went to the “Pillar Room” where normally the representative of different countries sit and vote. It was an overwhelming room, with the flags of all UN countries hanging above the desk where the speakers stand to speech.



194 countries are part of FAO. One country has one vote but there are two countries which can't vote, because they are not recognized as full states. Every two years the budget and program is voted and discussed by all countries and the director general, José Graziano da Silva from Brazil. For the year 2015 to 2016 FAO had a budget of 2.6 billion dollars.

This is made up by 40% obligatory state contributions, which is calculated by each countries GDP. The other 60% are made up by volunteer contribution of countries but also NGO's. From this form of funding problem can occur, due to

the big donations of some countries, they have the power to decide where money should flow. Therefore risk management needs to be done before they can decide which contribution to accept. But not just the 60% volunteer contributors might show problems, but also the state contributors. The United Nations do not have any power to break country policies, they therefore don't have binding power or punishing power. But there can also come up problems between countries due to political issues.



The mandates of the United Nations overlap, but FAO is mainly responsible for the Millennium Development Goal number 2, zero hunger. At the moment there are about 8.5 million people on the world who don't have enough food. By 2030 FAO has the goal to end hunger completely. Therefore FAO works in the long run and not like World Hunger Organization in the short run. This means they don't react for example if there is an earthquake.

After this presentation we were able to ask questions and new topics were raised as for example: if there will be funding from the United States of America, the biggest donor for the FAO.

To finish our trip we looked around FAO and ended up at an exhibition about food all over the world. Where many of us could find our own countries and see what was typical to eat in different countries. All in all it was a very instructive visit and it made some of us want to work for the United Nations someday, to make a difference the way they do.

Carlotta Frasca and Selene Grube