

Mountain Targets Implementations Through Student Engaged Learning (Oral Statement to be heard at 2018 ECOSOC High-Level Segment)

We thank Russian Academy of Natural Sciences for allowing us to speak in support of mountain communities, who are among the poorest and most-neglected globally. Climate change and migration make their living conditions even worse. An estimated 39 percent of the mountain population in developing countries, are vulnerable to food insecurity, according to a recent study of the FAO-UN and the Mountain Partnership (MP) Secretariat. During 2000-2012, there was a 30-percent increase in the number of mountain people vulnerable to food insecurity, while their population increased by only 16 percent.

Two SDGs under the review of this forum contain three mountain targets and it has to address the challenges facing mountain communities: Target 6.6: by 2020, protect and restore water related ecosystems, including mountains,; Target 15.1: by 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particularmountains and drylands.....; Target 15.4: by 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

As one of the examples, since 2007, the Utah Valley University (UVU), with the support of the MP, involves students, including non-traditional ones, in the implementation of mountain targets. Members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a UVU student clubs coalition, through an engaged learning model, gain professional skills by addressing real-world problems of mountain communities with a faculty serving them as a mentor.

UIMF members advocated already for the mountain women during the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. They reported about jointly with the Kyrgyz peers hosting the International Women of the Mountains conferences as an implementation of the UN Resolution “International Year of Mountains, 2002.” The 2016 UN Secretary-General's Report on Sustainable Mountain Development featured recommendations provided by UIMF in the latest conference document about the role women play in implementation of two mountain targets. Through the model students raised and contributed \$250,000 to the mountain targets adoption and implementation.

The model demonstrates that students are able and must play an active role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It can be used by universities in rural and mountainous states worldwide to provide similar benefits to students, and to transform mountain communities towards sustainable and resilient societies.

Thank you very much for your attention