

International Mountain Day at Utah Valley University



Overall, I was impressed with the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations, Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva lecture at Utah Valley University on December 5, 2023, within the International Mountain Day observation and the contributions that she has made in Utah, and Kyrgyzstan. One thing I appreciated that she commented on, was that since the beginning of Kyrgyzstan's Independence, sustainable mountain practices have always been at the forefront of thought. I'd be willing to ask if it's been at the forefront of policy, but the forefront of thought is a step in the right direction.



Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva lectures at Utah Valley University

I appreciated the emphasis that she put on how many people in Kyrgyzstan are unsure of where their next meal will come from - she said 1 out of 3 individuals was in this boat. In 2002, Kyrgyz was the leader to hold by the United Nations the

International Year of the Mountain and since then, there has been a strong emphasis on food and agriculture - which employs much of Central Asia.

I was interested to hear that Kyrgyzstan is working to absorb huge quantities of rainwater so that mudslides wouldn't happen in mountain communities - I was curious to know if they were improving their waterways to not only prevent mudslides but to use that water sustainably and helpfully.

One thing I was a bit confused about, is that she said something along the lines that Utah was helping establish parliamentary measures in Kyrgyzstan. Or Kyrgyzstan parliament was heavily influenced by Utah's legislative measures? I didn't quite understand that part, but I'd love to learn more about that.



Allan Brock, UVU political science student, asks a question

I also thought it was interesting when nonproliferation was discussed by the distinguished guest - from her perspective, Kyrgyzstan was very forward-thinking in terms of nuclear disarmament, but other surrounding countries don't seem to be that way. Or if they say they are (such as Kazakhstan) very little is being done to make that statement a reality.

I also thought it was interesting when she discussed the impact that language accessibility can have in the discussion around censorship and access to

information. She said this in response to a question that Jake Carlson, a UVU student posed about how Kyrgyzstan receives media influence when Russia's propaganda-based media often dominates the circuit.

Overall, I thought this was a very interesting presentation and International Mountain Day observation. Going forward, I would have wished for more interaction and question-and-answer moments from Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva, but was appreciative of the time that we had with her.

Lexi Lamb, Utah Valley University student