

## The 14<sup>th</sup> International Mountain Day Observation at Utah Valley University



***Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva lectures at Utah Valley University***

The 14<sup>th</sup> International Mountain Day was held at Utah Valley University (UVU) and hosted the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva. In her speech, foreign dignitary highlighted the partnership between UVU and the Kyrgyz Republic, citing their accomplishments with research and events. She highlighted how the mountainous regions across the world are able to come together and support each other. The Kyrgyz Republic, nestled within the mountainous terrain, stands as a beacon in advocating for critical causes such as gender-based violence. Ambassador Kasymalieva's initiatives have significantly contributed to

raising awareness and combating this issue, demonstrating a commitment to fostering a safer society.

Moreover, the Kyrgyz Republic, part of the group of mountainous countries, embodies the legacy of the ancient Silk Road, fostering ties with regions like Utah, sharing similarities in geography, elevation, and population size. The significance of mountains transcends mere topography; they are essential pillars of sustenance for communities worldwide. With over 900 million people inhabiting mountainous regions globally, these terrains are fundamental for forest preservation, water provision, and serving as vital reservoirs of biodiversity, encompassing 95% of the Earth's diverse species.

Ambassador Kasymalieva made an apt observation that "Mountains are the water towers of the world," which underscores their indispensable role in maintaining global ecological equilibrium and supporting hydropower goals. The collaborative efforts between Italy and the Kyrgyz Republic have propelled initiatives focusing on mountain sustainability to the level of the United Nations, with the UVU History and Political Science Department assuming a pioneering role in North America.

UVU's historic distinction as the first North American organization in the US to join the United Nations Mountain Partnership underscores its commitment to global partnerships. Through trilateral collaborations with Asbury University, KY and Osh Technological University, the Kyrgyz Republic, and a focus on gender equality as a cornerstone of mountain sustainability, UVU has championed an inclusive and educational Student-Engaged Learning model. This approach encourages collective problem-solving for the challenges faced by women in mountainous regions, fostering an environment conducive to progress.

In essence, their collaborative efforts underscores the profound importance of mountains as not just geographical entities but as essential pillars of ecological, social, and economic sustainability on a global scale. Through these concerted efforts, the world can collectively strive towards securing the future of these invaluable natural landscapes while ensuring the well-being of the communities that call them home.

***Nina Cattani, UVU student***