

Lecture of the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations, Ambassador Kasymalieva at Utah Valley University



Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva speaking at UVU

Permanent Representative Aida Kasymalieva of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations delivered a lecture at Utah Valley University for International Mountain Day on December 5th, 2023. The event was hosted by the Office of Global Engagement. Co-hosts were members of Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University, through a student engaged learning (SEL) model. SEL lets students coordinate activities under the mentorship of faculty. Stephen Atkinson, UIMF president, coordinated the activities.

Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva discussed the challenges faced by mountainous regions. She addressed the complexities of education delivery, water conservation in agriculture, public health, gender equality, development funding, and the regional dynamics of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The ambassador highlighted the challenges of providing education in small, remote mountain villages. She proposed a strategic approach involving the utilization of online education platforms and the establishment of regional education centers. This dual strategy seeks to overcome the logistical barriers in mountainous regions lacking sufficient infrastructure, ensuring that education reaches even the most isolated communities.



Ambassador Kasymalieva (center), with faculty.

A significant portion of the address was dedicated to addressing threats to water in mountainous regions. The ambassador emphasized the importance of sustainable water practices including agricultural methods. She advocated for the adoption of water-saving technologies to promote environmentally responsible practices.

The challenges of providing public health services in remote mountainous areas, particularly disease screening, were underscored by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Access to medical care in mountainous regions can be difficult. Care for expectant mothers and other

women's health issues were addressed. Opportunities for cooperation between Utah Valley University's medical practitioners and EMTS for possible training in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Gender inequality and the momentous effort to tackle it in the Kyrgyz Republic was a focal point of her talk. The Kyrgyz Republic ranks 45th among member states. Ambassador Kasymalieva articulated the country's goal to be in the top 30 by the year 2030, stressing the role of education, healthcare, and economic opportunity for women.

Ambassador Kasymalieva stressed that the main priority of the Kyrgyz Republic was to secure international funding. Central Asian nations being landlocked primarily developing countries, require large amounts of capital from both states and international organizations. Central Asian nations primarily cooperate with each other but there is fierce competition among them for the limited amount of funds. The delicate balance between competition for external resources and collaborative efforts to address shared challenges. Outside actors including Russia which the Kyrgyz Republic is dependent on for natural gas can have a large impact on the political and economic future of Central Asia.

Ambassador Kasymalieva shared the challenges faced by the Kyrgyz Republic in its mountainous region and how cooperation between other mountain regions can be beneficial to all. By framing the issues of mountain peoples as an issue for everyone, the ambassador's address hopefully will encourage cooperation between mountainous peoples and encourage an exchange between Utah and the Kyrgyz Republic.



Ambassador Kasymalieva (right) receiving an award from Dr. Baldermo Lago (left).

This lecture was important for me because it allowed me to learn in depth about the challenges faced by mountain regions. The collaborative efforts between Utah Valley University and the Kyrgyz Republic showcased the beneficial impact such a partnership can create. The event gave me an opportunity to learn from a senior diplomat and gave me practical experience of diplomatic events and I was able to learn from real-world examples of successful collaboration.

Braden Birbara, Vice-President, Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU