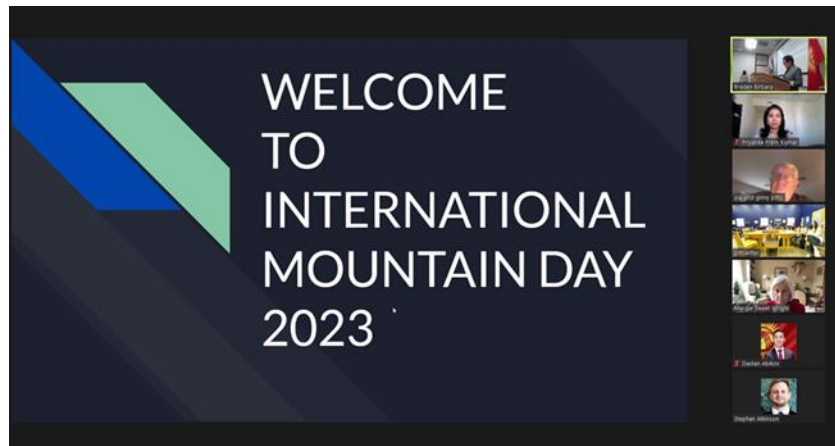


## My Participation at the 14th International Mountain Day at Utah Valley University



On December 5, 2023, I participated in the 14th International Mountain Day observation at Utah Valley University (UVU). The event commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Baldomero Lago, Chief International Officer at UVU. Dr. Lago expressed gratitude to all attendees and extended a special welcome to Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva, the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations.



**Dr. Baldomero Lago, Chief International Officer at UVU, introduces Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva**

Dr. Lago emphasized the longstanding relationship between UVU and the Kyrgyz Republic, forged with the assistance of the former Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic to the USA, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev. Dr. Lago announced UVU's ongoing efforts to deepen affiliations with international organizations such as UNESCO, with plans to establish a UNESCO Hub at UVU and named UNESCO Chair.

Stephan Atkinson, the UIMF's current president, gave a brief introduction to the event, underlining the commitment to saving mountains and ecosystems. His sentiments resonated with me, and I recognized the critical importance of addressing the challenges faced by mountain communities.



**Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva lectures at UVU**

Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva shared insights into Kyrgyzstan's advocacy for mountain regions and its people since gaining its independence in 1991. She highlighted the nation's sponsorship of the UN resolution in 1998, leading to the observance of the International Year of Mountains (IYM) in 2002. Kasymalieva's comprehensive presentation outlined the significance of mountains, emphasizing their role as vital resource providers, biodiversity hotspots, and protectors of water sources.

Kyrgyzstan's dedication to addressing climate change and promoting sustainable mountain development was evident in Kasymalieva's remarks. She detailed Kyrgyzstan's efforts to foster international cooperation, leading to the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution "Five years of action for the development of mountain regions" from 2023 to 2027.



**Faculty and students during the lecture of Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva at UVU**

I was, impressed by the collaboration between UVU students and their counterparts in Kyrgyzstan, and acknowledged the role of UVU in fostering a platform for students to engage in meaningful discussions on SMD through the observance of IMD.

The event also featured Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, who emphasized the importance of celebrating International Mountain Day annually at UVU. His insights into UVU's commitment to the Service Learning (SEL) model, experiential learning at the UN, and internships at the UN showcased the university's dedication to producing global leaders in sustainable development.

Also, Honorable Joseph Pitts, speaking virtually from Asbury University, commended UVU's efforts in organizing the IMD event for the 14th time. He recognized the university's commitment to raising awareness about sustainable mountain development in mountain communities.

The speeches by Dastan Abikov and Aidana Nurlanova underscored the global collaboration on SMD, with a focus on empowering women and positive change. Their commitment and anticipation for the UN CSW 68 in March resonated with my beliefs in prioritizing the role of women in shaping the future.

Dr. Atabekov Almaz and Tatiana Panfilenko, from OshTU, highlighted the successful implementation of the SEL model in Kyrgyzstan. Their testimonies reflected the positive outcomes of collaboration with UVU, contributing to the 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals.



**Christ Hermes Louyoko Nianza with Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva  
at the 14th International Mountain Day**

In conclusion, my participation in the 14th IMD at UVU helped me understand the urgency of global collaboration to address the challenges faced by mountain communities. I

realized that the event not only celebrated International Mountain Day but also served as a platform for knowledge sharing, strengthening international partnerships, and promoting sustainable mountain development. My presence allowed me to emphasize the importance of continuous efforts to preserve the world's mountains for current and future generations.

***Christ Hermes Louyoko Nianza, Rotaractor from Africa***