My Participation at 12th International Mountain Day Celebration on "Sustainable Mountain Tourism"

Participants of the International Mountain Day observation at UVU

On December 1, 2021, I participated at the event at Utah Valley University (UVU), dedicated to the celebration of the United Nations International Mountain Day with focus on sustainable mountain tourism. The event was hosted by students - members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU.

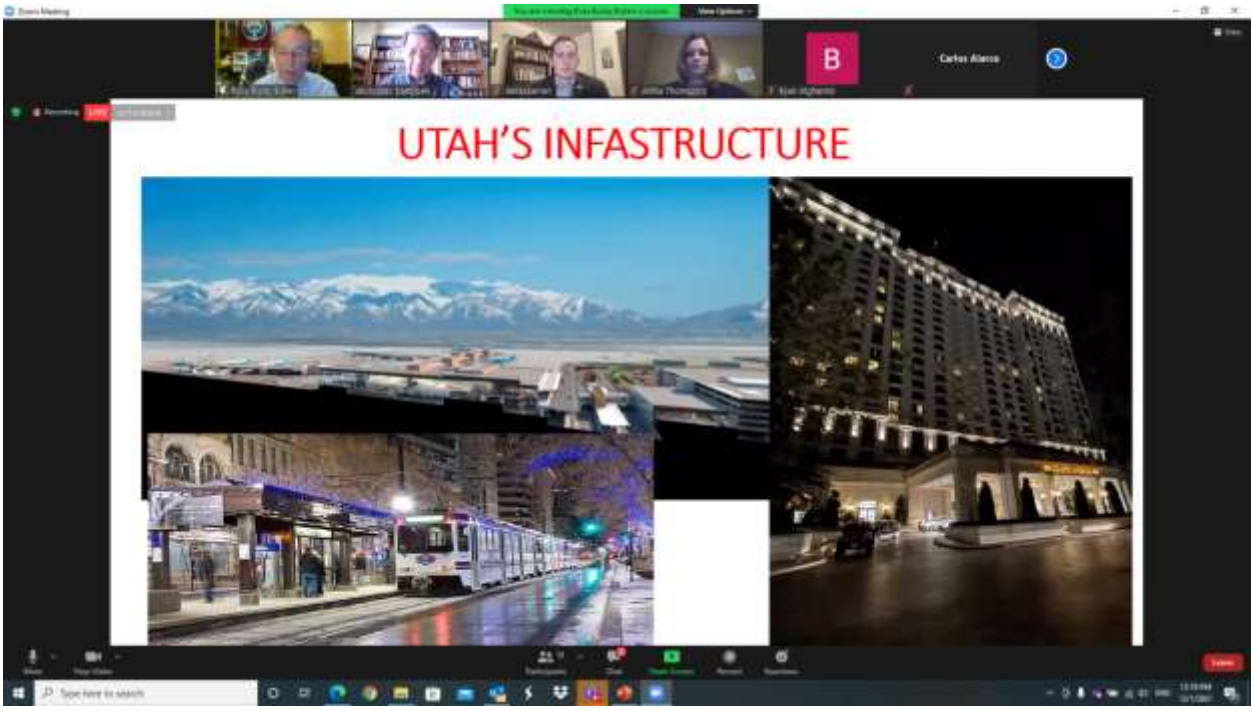
Dr. Rusty Butler, former vice President for International Affairs and Diplomacy at UVU and now the main representative at the UN for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, gave the talk. He discussed sustainable mountain development from Utah as an example. Utah's national parks serve to draw in millions of visitors each year. Additionally, they enjoy many activities conducive to both summer and winter recreation. These include mountain biking in the summer or skiing in the winter. He noted that the wife of the Ambassador of Austria to the UN commented that Utah's skiing was among the best relative to the European Alps. Moreover, winter in Utah's national parks remains pleasant under correct conditions.

Dr. Rusty Butler speaks during the event

Utah also enjoys a unique cultural heritage such as those of the handcart pioneers that made the westward trip to Utah. As a result, they created the LDS Church world center in Temple square, it is the most visited tourist destination in all of Utah. Similarly, Utah's native population adds another element of cultural heritage. Annually, Utah hosts the Sundance Film Festival that draws many global actors.

Utah has made considerable improvements to its infrastructure. The Salt Lake International Airport is in its final stage of development. Utah's TRAX and Frontrunner systems connect the most populous portions of the state. Utah's Grand America is among the most luxurious in the world, having hosted many ambassadors. In 2002, Salt Lake hosted the Olympic Winter Games. Salt Lake won the Olympics because of many factors, including excellent winter venues. As a result of the Olympics, the Moscow-Utah Youth Summer Games were born. Utah sponsors provided venues, hotels, meals and transportation. Moscow chartered aircraft to bring

the Moscow youth and coaches to Utah.



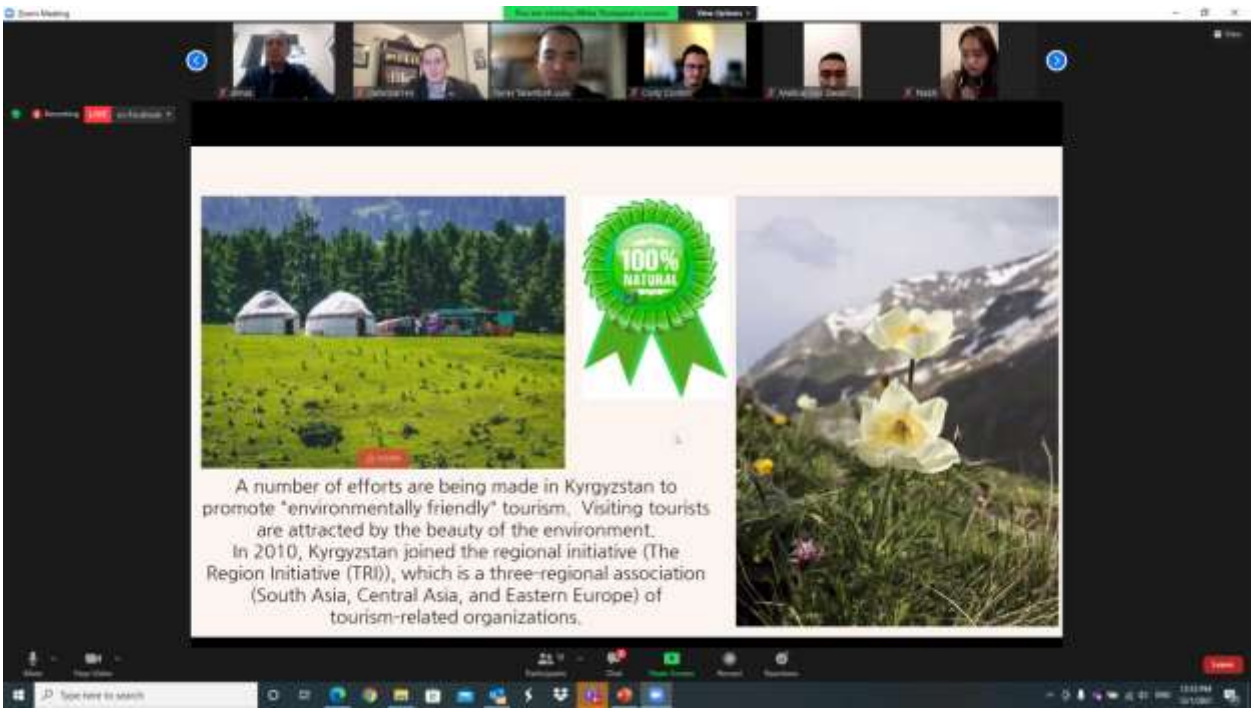
After him, Camilla Pendelton, the secretary of the Foreign Affairs club at UVU introduced next speaker Ms. Tatyana Panfilenko from Osh Technological University (OshTU).

Ms. Panfilenco presented their student-led project and remarked on the international connection between OshTU and UVU. Their joint program provides student engaged learning opportunities to tackle real world projects.

Baiel Abibillaev speaks during the event

Her student Baiel Abibillaev spoke of the mountains in Osh as a model of sustainable tourism. Baiel Abibillaev presented the mountain communities of the Kyrgyz Republic. Kyrgyzstan is made up of 95% mountains. A key issue in Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) is generating tourism revenue with sustaining natural resources. The British Backpacker Society in 2018 ranked Kyrgyzstan as the fifth best travel destination in the world. Ala Archa National park is one of the most famous natural areas in the country. Lenin peak at 23,406 ft is among the highest peaks in Central Asia. Arslanbob is one of the largest walnut forests in the world. It was first settled in the 3rd century. The Jeti-Oguz valley in Lake Issyk-Kul is also a popular tourist destination. A number of efforts are being made in Kyrgyzstan to promote environmentally friendly tourism. In 2010 Kyrgyzstan joined the regional initiative which functions as a link with South Asia and Central Europe. A state tourism development fund was

created on Oct 21, 2021 with a budget of 1 billion soms for the development of tourist clusters, such as Karakol with its ski holidays.



Mayor of Osh city Almax Mabetov is confident that Osh's tourism products will attract hundreds of thousands of tourists. The Department of Management at OshTU has made a training project on a travel guide with Osh Travel developing itineraries for tourist locations. The students of OshTU are looking to promote sustainable development for mountain communities with the student engaged learning method, in connection with Utah Valley University. Afterwards we were presented with a short video on the Krygyz Republic. Overall, the event highlighted the potential of the student engaged learning model.

Hector Manzanarez, Utah Valley University student