

**Aidana Nurlanova**

**Vice-President, Bishkek Nomad Rotaract Club**

**68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**Side event**

***“Advocating for Mountain Women and Girls’ Education through Student-Engaged Learning.”***

**March 14, 2024**

Dear Ambassador Kasymalieva and Ambassador Lok Bahadur Thapa. I thank you for allowing me to speak during this side event in support of mountain women. Empowering women economically and ensuring access to healthcare are vital steps towards gender equality and poverty alleviation. Dismantling discriminatory laws and practices is equally crucial. Investing in women's empowerment is not just morally right but strategically imperative for societal prosperity.

I will be glad to tell you about the contributions of Bishkek Nomad Rotaract Club members in the implementation of sustainable development of mountain communities in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Rotaract Club in Bishkek was founded in 2017 by the Rotary Club of Bishkek. Dedicated to fostering positive change, particularly in empowering women, our club champions initiatives to break barriers hindering women's education and economic opportunities.

Our recent project at home, the Central Asian Inclusive Model of the United Nations, focused on promoting human rights, with a special emphasis on women's rights. By bringing together individuals from across Central Asia, we sought to address challenges and explore solutions to empower women. In addition to advocacy, we actively support women in need through practical initiatives like charity events and educational programs. Collaborating with organizations such as the UN Women's Mission in Kyrgyzstan, we raise awareness and advocate for policy changes to combat gender inequality.

The nexus between poverty and gender inequality is stark. Women, disproportionately affected by poverty, face limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Addressing this requires increasing educational accessibility, combating stereotypes, and ensuring infrastructure and institution safety.

We were glad to work with Rotaractors from Utah Valley University (UVU) last year by jointly hosting World Polio Day on October 24, 2023, and International Mountain Day at UVU on December 2, 2023. Rotaract as a club helped us to jointly implement a Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) educational model, which involves students in resolving practical problems through joint efforts with the teacher usually mentoring the student team. Those actions helped us to be better

prepared for today's side-event, when each of our teams was working on repairing the agenda, solving logistics, protocol, and other issues, including raising funds.

We are also excited to extend this collaboration with UVU Rotaractors to our country, in particular through the involvement of students from Osh Technological University by creating their Rotaract Club. This will make our sustainable mountain development advocacy initiatives driven by students through SEL and contribute to the implementation of Five-Year Actions for the Development of Mountain Regions.

Thank you for your attention.