

# **STATEMENT**

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**Osh Technological University**

**69<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**Side Event**

***The Kyrgyz Republic – State of Utah advocacy to empower mountain women and girls through ethically good student-centric education***

**March 11, 2025**

It is my pleasure to speak today during this side event organized by the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations and advocating for mountain women and girls to be included in the final document of the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I would like to thank Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva for including us, faculty and students from Osh Technological University in this panel to tell how it could be done through education. And I have to thank her also for giving us this podium every year since 2023 together with our colleagues from Utah Valley University.

Kyrgyzstan is one of the most vulnerable countries in Central Asia to climate change impacts, in particular women and households headed by women. More than 20 types of environment and climate-related hazards and processes can be observed in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Kyrgyz Republic ratified the Paris Agreement in 2019. In April 2020, Kyrgyzstan launched the National Climate Change Learning Strategy with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. With the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, they implemented policies including the Energy Efficiency in Buildings Project. Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations, Aida Kasymalieva together with the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries at the United Nations, are strong advocates for active involvement of rural and mountain women, including in Kyrgyzstan, in mitigating the impact of climate change on communities and their livelihoods.

Since 2007, faculty and students at Osh Technological University with our colleagues at Utah Valley University, and International University of Kyrgyzstan have been jointly advocating for the sustainable development of mountain communities around the world. Our main focus was and continues to be on promoting educational initiatives to combat climate change and empower women as

part of joint efforts to promote the sustainable development of mountain communities.

We are glad to use a student-engaged learning (SEL) model which encourages students to contribute their experience, knowledge, and financial resources to jointly solve issues important for their local communities with their teachers mentoring them. The SEL model was developed by our partners from Utah Valley University with the Utah International Mountain Forum as a coalition of student clubs making the advocacy of the mountain communities and women and the improvement of their livelihoods a student-led and student-driven educational initiative.

We were happy to contribute to this model in December 2012, when faculty and students of Osh Technological University hosted a delegation from UVU in Osh and jointly organized an international conference on climate change and mountains. The conference representatives adopted a joint resolution highlighting the problems that worsen the situation of women in mountainous areas, such as traditional perceptions of their low status in communities; weak infrastructure with deteriorating conditions for economic development; low level and quality of education as one of the main challenges for the active participation of women and girls in addressing issues related to the conservation of the mountain ecosystems in which they live.

During the conference we also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the United Nations proclamation of December 11 as International Mountain Day. As a result, UVU and OshTU have created several new initiatives and projects in the field of educational exchanges and scientific research aimed at jointly promoting sustainable mountain development.

As another example of the SEL in action, in December 2015, students from Utah Valley University, Osh Technological University and two other universities in Kyrgyzstan collected more than 1,600 signatures from the required 5,000 for the petition of the United Nations Mountain Partnership requesting the issues of the impact of climate change on mountain communities to be included in the agenda of the 2015 Paris United Nations Climate Change Conference.

In June 2019 I greeted the UVU delegation in Bishkek, when Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev and Dr. Lynn England with six students from Utah visited the Kyrgyz Republic as a study abroad program. This was a new opportunity for both sides to discuss joint initiatives with focus on sustainable mountain development.

From September to December 2021, a group of OshTU faculty and students holds weekly online meetings to master this type of group activity under the guidance of leaders of the Utah International Mountain Forum. Using this technology, our

student Abibullaev Bayil prepared a report on the state of tourism in Kyrgyzstan, which he delivered on December 2 at an event dedicated to the International Mountain Day. Tatiana Panfilenko helped these students as a mentor when they needed her advice. As a result, our team was also able to speak at the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in an online format.

As a result, a delegation of students from Utah Valley University and Osh Technological University participated from the sixty-sixth to the sixty-eight sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. Under the umbrella of the Utah International Mountain Forum, they jointly advocated through SEL for mountain women. They demonstrated their skills in protocol, logistics, and presented the case of the current situation and challenges affecting communities in both Utah and Kyrgyzstan by working as a group with university faculty serving as advisory mentors.

The model implements Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality in interaction with target 4.7, ensuring that all learners acquire knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Today we have one more opportunity to raise our voices in support of the mountain women to be included in the final document of this session. This will also be an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the Kyrgyz Republic and the State of Utah with focus on educational programs.

Thank you very much.