Side Event

World Trade Organization
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Empowering Mountain and Landlocked Communities Through Trade Facilitation, Market Access, and Student-Centric Learning: Lessons from the Kyrgyz Republic and the State of Utah, United States

STATEMENT

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Good afternoon, Dr. Maksutov, distinguished delegates, colleagues, and friends. I would like to express my appreciation to you, the WTO Secretariat, and the United Nations Mountain Partnership for hosting today's side event, including education as one of the important factors for mountain communities in facilitating global trade.

My name is Aemish Brock, and I am a Utah Valley University (UVU) Political Science major with an emphasis in Global Politics, with a minor in Russian Studies. I also serve as President of the UVU Foreign Affairs Club, and a Vice President of the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU, which, over its 15 years, has advocated for sustainable mountain development in the State of Utah and at the UN. I am honored to contribute to this Side Event today by discussing how trade facilitation and student-led research can support sustainable mountain development, particularly in the energy sector.

In my research, I examined how the Alpine region, including Austria, Switzerland, and Bavaria, through broader German initiatives, has cooperated with the Kyrgyz Republic on sustainable energy through Swiss public-building efficiency projects, water-energy platforms, Austrian hydropower investment and technology partnerships, and German renewable-energy knowledge sharing. These efforts strengthened energy efficiency, hydropower modernization, renewable planning, and regional cooperation. Although led by states, with support from international financial institutions, they were shaped by WTO trade rules, standards, customs procedures, and market-access conditions, showing how the WTO can support

sustainable mountain energy by reducing barriers, improving standards cooperation, supporting green customs corridors, and coordinating Aid-for-Trade efforts.

This research was possible thanks to UVU's Student Engaged Learning (SEL) model. Through SEL, students not only learn theories and processes of SDGs in the classroom, but also take that knowledge to the political stage itself. Students, as one team, conduct the research, organize the advocacy, present the findings, and raise funds while faculty mentor them. This model gave me the opportunity to prepare and speak at this side event.

SEL at UVU encourages us to first serve our local mountain communities, and we do this through the UVU Sustainability Committee projects and the partnership with Utah District Rotarians and the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club. I am also grateful to the UIMF for giving me the opportunity to advocate, through SEL, for mountain causes at the United Nations, and in particular at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Members of our delegation also use SEL to study the Voluntary National Reviews of the mountainous countries, which will be presented during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York next week. SDG 6 under the revision has Target 6.6 affiliated to the mountain water-related ecosystems, and we will study their implementation during next week's visit to New York.

In conclusion, I would like to praise the WTO's role as a practical platform to facilitate fair trade between landlocked and mountainous countries, with an emphasis on increased exchanges of energy and resilience technologies. I also encourage the United Nations to promote more student-centric learning programs, so a new generation of leaders can contribute directly to the implementation of global development goals. Thank you.