



September 13, 2013

4th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership

Erzurum, Turkey

Dear organizers and participants of the Meeting,

On behalf of the Utah Valley University (UVU) delegation I would like to express appreciation for the invitation for us to take part in the 4th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership. We are glad also to work here as a part of the team from North America led by VERTEX, CO and the Mountain Institute, VA. We support efforts of our partners from Aspen, CO to sustain their institution as a North American hub for MP and continue to work with them jointly to promote common goals and activities under SMD-agenda.

As a member of the Mountain Partnership since 2006, UVU contributed to the promotion of Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) agenda of the United Nations with particular focus on gender issues. We were able to co-host three international Women of the Mountain Conferences in Orem Utah and Puno, Peru. The first international Women of the Mountains conference in 2007 became the first event in North America ever which gathered almost all representatives of the Rocky Mountain States with focus on gender and SMD-agendas of the United Nations (see: www.womenonthemountains.org).

We were able to achieve successes with those gathering thanks to our cooperation with partners from Aspen International Mountain Foundation from CO, Vista 360 from WY and the Mountain Institute from VA among others. All those years we also successfully partnered with the International University of Kyrgyzstan, and advocated jointly SMD-agenda in the Rocky Mountains and between North America and Central Asia.

Reflecting some suggestions made by my colleagues at UVU, our delegation would like to propose for the MP to use Women of the Mountains conferences further as platform to gather on an annual basis forums with focus on gender as a part of the SMD agenda promotion with alternating sites between Utah and other mountain nations worldwide.

In addition to gender agenda, UVU contributes to such areas of SMD-promotion, as conflict prevention, climate change, as well as exchanges between Utah and Central Asia, Utah and Latin America (some proposals are enclosed in our package prepared for distribution at the 4th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership).

As a sign of UVU determination to involve youth as future leaders in the SMD-advocacy we have included two students of UVU as members of our delegation. By creating Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU (see: www.utahimf.org), they played a key role in particular in hosting three Utah High-Schools essay contests on the topics of SMD and International Mountain Days celebrations on annual basis since 2010.

UIMF will do that again this coming December. We plan together with Vertex and the Mountain Institute to dedicate this year IMD celebration to the memory of our dear friend Dr. Jane Pratt, who tirelessly promoted mountain cause all over the globe at all levels, including the need for regional cooperation in North America and who passed away one month ago.

As a part of our joint North American fair, we prepared a special exhibition of posters which reflects numerous activities in SMD-promotion undertaken by UVU together with partners from the Rocky Mountains and Central Asia since 2006 and we also printed specially for this Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership, a volume of papers written by UVU students and students at Utah high schools, winners of the contest on best essays. We included also for the presentation here a copy of Sustainable Mountain Development in North America report for RIO+20 in Brazil 2012 due to a couple of reasons: it is a document, which was prepared under the VORTEX leadership and is a true regional effort done for the first time. Our students contributed to it by doing research on mountain ranges in North America and these particular copies have been printed through efforts of UIMF students who were able to raise \$2500 to do that. During all those years UVU was able to raise for the advocacy of SMD-agenda more than \$150,000 from local funds.

We are determined to contribute to the success of the 4th Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership and to work closely further with other MP members on implementing decisions of the Mountain Partnership Governance and Strategy 2014-2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Baldomero Lago', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Baldomero Lago, Ph.,D,

Utah Valley University Delegation, Chair

International Center and Multicultural Studies

Senior Director