



## REACHING FOR THE STARS: SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT

Leave No One Behind –  
Social Development Track

### EVENT DETAILS

<b>TITLE</b>	Reaching for the Stars: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Mountain Development
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, 7 October 2021
<b>TIME:</b>	11:00 – 18:00
<b>VENUE:</b>	The Nexus for People and Planet
<b>IN ASSOCIATION WITH</b>	UAE Ministry of Climate Change & Environment, DP World
<b>CO-CURATE PARTNERS</b>	Italy, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, Aga Khan Development Network



## EVENT SUMMARY

Now more than ever, as the climate crisis progresses, there is a dire need to empower vulnerable mountain communities who are often left behind in policymaking and agenda-setting. This day-long event will be one of its kind, bringing together mountain practitioners, policymakers, scientists, the private sector, and grassroots actors to share local knowledge and best practices in enhancing the resilience of mountain communities, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Hear speakers engage on how mountains make life possible; the unique fragility of mountains; mountain people and their livelihoods; and the policies we need action on. Be transported to the Andes, Hindu Kush, Alps and Pamirs through voices that shed light on the innovative work being undertaken to tackle the impact of climate change. Take away ideas on how leaders, experts and communities can work in unison for sustainable and climate resilient mountain development. Learn and be a part of the change —because #MountainsMatter.

## AGENDA

Reaching for the Stars: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Mountain Development

7 October 2021, 11:00 – 18:00

The Nexus for People and Planet

### TIME

### ACTIVITY

**10:30 – 11:00**

#### **Registration**

Start the day with an informal opportunity to meet and connect with other attendees.

**11:00 – 11:10**

#### **Introduction**

**Bahar Dutt**, Environmental Journalist will open the event and welcome attendees to the day's focus - sustainable and climate resilient mountain development. It will highlight various activities, panel discussions, demonstrations of best practices, and stories featuring mountain communities' perspectives, which will feature during the day.

**11:10 – 11:15**

#### **#MountainsMatter - Setting the stage**

Did you know that mountains are one of the most fragile ecosystems on our planet? Climate change is threatening mountain ecosystems, livelihoods, and cultures around the world. Why is this a cause for concern? Because mountains make life possible — they are an indispensable source of water, renewable energy, timber, and biological diversity.

**Minister Mariastella Gelmini's** (Minister of Regional Affairs and Autonomies, Italy) video message will set the context on why mountains matter, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of leaving no one behind including mountain communities.

**11:15 – 12:15**

## **Reaching last mile communities: Promoting livelihoods and economies in the face of climate change**

Already facing increased poverty and malnutrition, mountain people are one of the most marginalised and poorest populations in the world. To make matters worse, climate change is reshaping agricultural practices that mountain people have relied on, for years, affecting the economies of communities and the livelihood options available. Through this session, let's focus on solutions centered around sustainable food systems in mountains, promotion of mountain agriculture, tech-based solutions and high-value mountain products, and diversification of livelihoods.

On this panel, hear from our esteemed experts and ask them question at the end of the session. Join the thought-provoking conversation with:

- **Maurizio Martina**, Assistant Director General – Special Advisor, FAO
- **Paolo di Croce**, General Secretary, Slow Food International
- **Mario Cerutti**, Chief Institutional Relations and Sustainability Officer, Lavazza.
- **Anita Paul**, Director, Pan Himalayan Grassroots Foundation
- **Apoorva Oza**, Global Programme Team, Aga Khan Foundation
- **Giorgio Grussu**, Coordinator, Mountain Partnership Products Initiative (moderator)

**12:15 – 12:40**

## **Young leaders: Sustainable-mountain development for future generations**

The audience will have the opportunity to select from two exciting sessions featuring inspiring champions.

Listen in to young agents of change who are mobilising to act on climate change mitigation and adaptation — to secure their future. Across the world, their voices are garnering attention and inspiring movements such as 'Friday's for Future'. Three young speakers, belonging to different parts of the world and diverse walks of life will dive into the significance of youth participation and set the stage for the Youth Forum, which is being organised in the Italian Pavilion, on the following day. The session will be moderated by Environmental Journalist, Bahar Dutt and:

- **Tsechu Dolma**, Founder, Mountain Resiliency Project, Nepal
- **Tea Hoxha**, Youth representative, Italy
- **Stefano Sala**, Youth representative, Italy

## Partnerships for livelihoods

To realise sustainability, we need to open all doors of opportunities and be innovative in our approaches.

**Stella Jean**, a renowned fashion designer from Italy, will walk audiences through her journey of building a business model that focuses on promoting the economic autonomy of mountain women producers in Kyrgyzstan.

Be inspired as Ms. Jean speaks about her projects, which unite multiculturalism and sustainable development and watch a video screening that gives you a deeper understanding on how fashion can be a tool for cooperative international development. **Giorgio Grusso** (Coordinator, Mountain Partnership Products Initiative) will moderate the session.

**12:40 – 13:40**

The audience will have the opportunity to select from two exciting sessions featuring inspiring champions.

## Creating resilient mountain habitats

The power of mountain rural planning is often overlooked. Its absence leads to uncontrolled, climatically, and seismically unfit construction, transforming mountain villages into peri-urban concrete extensions, devoid of identity and sustainable resources. These challenges are intensified by climate change and hazards: from earthquakes to rock falls, through to uncontrolled glacial, river and lake outbursts. Seismically resilient, climatically suited buildings coupled with sustainable, risk-sensitive land-use planning is not only critical to long-term sustainability of the environment but is also the crux of safety and sustainability.

This session will showcase how resilient planning can be scaled through rural mountain planning methods, integrating community engagement, data-driven decision-making, and spatial design. The discussion will touch upon the intersection of climate-change, hazard mitigation, the implications of long-term development interventions and mechanisms to leverage innovations at scale.

Dive into this important topic with the following experts:

- **Yodgor Doyorovich Fayzov**, Governor of Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
- **Karim Khoja**, Chief Executive Officer, Industrial Promotion Services, Asia Region (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan)
- **Roy Sidle**, University of Central Asia and Mountain Society Research Institute (MSRI), Director and Mountain Society Research Institute (MSRI)
- **Kira Intrator**, Lead, Habitat Planning and Innovation, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat
- **Bahar Dutt**, Environmental Journalist (moderator)

## **Plenary #2: Sustainable mountain tourism**

Every year, the world observes International Mountain Day (December 11) to promote awareness around mountain ecosystems and communities. This year, this milestone celebrates sustainable mountain tourism, a theme that comes against the backdrop of a pandemic that has suspended tourism activities around the world.

**Mira Rai** (Mountain Partnership Ambassador) will provide a glimpse of the majestic Himalayas, through a video message from Nepal, to call for the need to preserve them through sustainable mountain tourism. **Jake Norton**, Mountain Partnership Ambassador, climber, and filmmaker, will narrate his adventures and describe how mountains have evolved with the progression of climate change, as well as moderate the session.

The discussion between experts from distant communities will cover the following topics:

- concept of sustainable mountain development
- way forward for sustainable mountain tourism, citing examples from the ground
- importance of partnerships and collaboration for the same

Join the dialogue with:

- **Constantino Aucá**, President of Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN)
- **Sandra Carvao**, Chief of Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- **Atty. Maria Anthonette Velasco Allones** Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Promotions Board, Philippines

**13:40 – 14:40**

**Lunch**

**14:40 – 15:40**

**Transforming disruptions to resilience: unlocking climate partnerships and scaling up innovations**

With climate change increasing disruptions to mountain livelihoods and ecosystems, communities and grassroots organisations are relying on the reservoir of indigenous solutions and innovations to build resilience and accelerate adaptation efforts. However, scaling and sustaining such initiatives requires resources. **Ambassador Massimo Baggi**, (Ambassador of Switzerland to the UAE and Bahrain), will highlight the significance of long-term partnerships between key actors and sectors for creating innovative strategies and mechanisms.

The panel will convene diverse voices — private sector players, donors, and development agencies — who will share their recommendations on strategic partnerships and arrive at shared goals that can be adopted by stakeholder groups that are key for climate collaborations. The audience will have the opportunity to ask their questions via the live platform.

The speakers who will participate in this thought-provoking discussion include:

- **Adriana Apollonio**, Counsellor, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- **David Davies**, CEO, AgUnity
- **Onno Ruhl**, General Manager, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat
- **Fausto Jori**, CEO, EcorNaturaSi
- **Rosalaura Romeo**, Mountain Partnership Secretariat

## 15:40 – 16:15

The audience will have the opportunity to select from two exciting sessions featuring inspiring speakers.

Communities have been building adaptive capacities and responses to reduce the burden of climate change on their lives. Hear from those who are on-the-ground, making a difference and impact through solutions anchored in partnerships and innovation.

### **Resilience across regions: Case studies on Himalayas and Alps and Apennines**

These talks, moderated by **Rosalaura Romeo**, will feature stories, from the Himalayan, Alps and Apennines regions, on how local initiatives are driving positive change.

Hear **Umesh Lama** (Organic World and Fair Future (OWF), Nepal; Producer in the Mountain Partnership Products Initiative, spotlight the success of local efforts and innovations to improve marketing of agricultural produce and handicrafts) in Nepal. **Anna Giorgi** (Delegate of the Rector of the University of Milan to the promotion of teaching, research and third mission activities for the valorisation of mountain areas – UNIMONT, University of Milan) will further highlight the positive influence of the educational alliances for sustainable mountain development.

### **Resilience across regions: Case studies on Andes and Pamirs**

These talks will feature stories, from the Himalayan, Andes and Pamirs regions, on how local initiatives are driving positive change.

Hear **Sonia Salas Dominguez** (President, REDAR Peru) through a video message, spotlight an initiative in Peru, REDAR, and its impact on rural and mountain communities. **Hadi Husani** (CEO AKAH, Tajikistan) and **Dilsodbegim Khisravova** (Volunteer, CERT, Tajikistan) will highlight the role of culturally aware and community-based volunteers in disaster responses through their case study.



**16:15-16:45**

## **Coffee Break**

An opportunity for speakers and participants to take the discussion beyond the room.

**16:45 – 17:45**

## **The way forward: Fostering resilient mountain landscapes and communities**

Even though mountain people contribute faintly to climate change, they bear the brunt of its impact. Yet, mountain communities lie on the fringes of policy- and decision-making.

This discussion will bring together high-level policy- and decision-makers from regions that are experiencing the impact of climate change. Key speakers include:

- **Khalid Khurshid**, Chief Minister, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan
- **Yodgor Doyorovich Fayzov**, Governor of Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, Tajikistan
- **Alessandro Panza**, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), Member of the Regional Development Commission of the European Parliament - Delegate of RUMRA (The European Parliament Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas & Smart Villages)
- **Elena Manaenkova**, Deputy Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization
- **Bahar Dutt**, Environmental Journalist (moderator)

Key thematic areas of discussion will include:

- Policy dialogues on priority issues that mountain regions face in view of the looming COP26
- Innovative policy approaches being applied at local, national, and international levels, which can be strengthened and replicated across nations
- Actions required to address barriers to resilience such as connectivity, infrastructure, and job opportunities

**17:45 – 17:50**

**A brighter tomorrow: Message by FAO Director General**

Hear Dr. Qu Dongyu's (FAO Director General) message on the urgent need to prioritise mountain ecosystems and people so that their economies, livelihoods, resources, health and happiness, can be protected from the risks of climate change.

**17:50 – 18:00**

**Vote of thanks and closing remarks**

A summary of the day's activities led by Rosalaura Romeo, followed by the chance to learn about the Youth Forum, which will take place in the Italian Pavilion the next day. Leave the day with greater knowledge, stronger networks, and invigorated passion for sustainable and climate-resilient mountain development.



## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



**BAHAR DUTT**  
Environmental Journalist  
@bahardutt

Ms. Bahar Dutt is an award-winning environment journalist who has reported some of the biggest stories of our times over the last two decades. She currently teaches as an Associate Professor at Shiv Nadar University and manages multimedia projects for the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) – India, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Ms. Dutt has also worked as an Environment Editor with India's leading English news channel, CNN-IBN, and her reportage has helped move environment reportage from an obtuse segment on television to the prime-time news space.

For her reportage on green issues, she has won over twelve national and international awards. She is the author of two books, 'Green Wars – Dispatches from a Vanishing World' by Harper Collins and 'Rewilding in India' by Oxford University Press.



**MS. MARIATELLA GELMINI**  
Minister for Regional Affairs and Autonomies,  
Government of Italy

Ms. Mariastella Gelmini is the Minister for Regional Affairs and Autonomies, Government of Italy. Prior to holding this office, Minister Gelmini was the President of the Forza Italia parliamentary group in the chamber of deputies. A law graduate specialised in administrative law, she began her political career in 1998, when she was elected to the Municipality of Desenzano del Garda as a member of the Forza Italia.

She was elected as the councillor of the Province of Brescia for Territory in 2002 and for Agriculture in 2004. In 2006, she was elected at the Chamber of Deputies during the XV legislature, where she was member of the council for the authorizations to proceed, of the parliamentary committee for the procedures of indictment and of II Justice Committee.

In 2008 she was reconfirmed at the Chamber of Deputies in Lombardy II area in the lists of "Popolo della Libertà" for the XVI legislature and was elected minister of education, university and scientific research in the IV Berlusconi's Government. In 2015, she was elected as the President of the Garda Community and was elected as the City Councillor of Milan in June 2016.



**MR. MAURIZIO MARTINA,**  
Assistant Director General – Special Advisor  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Mr. Maurizio Martina, a national of Italy, is Special Adviser to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at the level of Assistant Director-General. From 2018 until joining FAO in January 2021, he served as Member of the Italian Parliament in the House of Representatives. Prior to this, he was Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the Italian Government (2014 – 2018), held responsibilities in the Committee of Coordination for the Universal Exposition of Milan (2015), was Undersecretary of State for Agriculture of the Italian Government (2013-2014) and was elected Councilor of the Lombardy Region (2010-2013).

He also served as Secretary of the Democratic Party (2018). During his term in office as Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Martina was, inter alia, President of the meeting of Agriculture Ministers of the G7 in Bergamo, Italy, and President of the European Council of Ministers of Agriculture (Brussels). Moreover, he participated in several high-level meetings, including the Meeting of the Agriculture Ministers of the G7 Countries in Niigata (Japan) and the Meeting of the Agriculture Ministers of the G20 in Istanbul (Turkey).



**MR. PAOLO DI CROCE**  
Secretary General of Slow Food International  
@SlowFoodHQ

After receiving his degree as an environmental engineer from Turin's Polytechnic in Italy, Mr. Paolo Di Croce started his career in Slow Food in 1999, serving as the General Secretary of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity from 2003 to 2007, which defends the biodiversity of our foods and gastronomic traditions from the world over, promotes sustainable agriculture, respect for the environment, for cultural identities, and for the wellbeing of animals.

He also served as the General Secretary of Slow Food International since the Puebla Congress, and was reappointed for a second and third term in 2012 and 2017. Mr. Di Croce played a pivotal role in the organization of the first edition of Terra Madre in 2004, serving as the General Secretary of the Terra Madre Foundation from 2005 until 2014. He currently serves as the Secretary General of Slow Food since 2007 and leads the Slow Food Executive Committee.



**MR. MARIO CERUTTI**

Chief Institutional Relations and Sustainability  
Officer and Secretary of the Lavazza Foundation  
@MarioCoffeeMan

Born in Torino, Italy, Mr. Mario Cerutti has been working in Lavazza since 1986, where he is currently the Chief Institutional Relations and Sustainability Officer and Secretary of the Lavazza Foundation.

He also serves as President of the Institute for Scientific Information on Coffee (ISIC), as President of Italian Coffee Committee (CIdC – Comitato Italiano del Caffè) – the association of large Italian coffee companies and as Chairman of the Coffee & Climate Steering Committee. Additionally, he is a board member of the International Coffee Partners (ICP) and World Coffee Research (WCR). From 2004 to 2007 and again from 2017 to 2020, he was President of the European Coffee Federation (ECF).

Mr. Cerutti studied Business Administration at the University of Torino in Italy and has an MBA in International Finance from the University of Dallas in the United States.



**MS. ANITA PAUL**

Director, Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation  
@houseofumang, @grassroots.ngo, @mountainhighshop

Ms. Anita Paul is a social entrepreneur engaged with promotion of gender inclusive sustainable development strategies in the Indian Himalayan Region. In 1992, she co-founded the Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation, a voluntary organization which spearheads holistic mountain development through active engagement of communities. For the past three decades, she has been passionately advocating inclusion of Mountain Agenda in the global discourse on sustainable development. Ms. Paul also participates on forums promoting Fair Trade and climate resilient responsible Food Systems.

Alongside, she has been developing global voluntary labelling systems for high value niche mountain products from the world of the mountains in collaboration with Mountain Partnership Secretariat, hosted by Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at Roma. She represents Asia, as a member of the Board for International Association for Community Development (IACD) which is a global network of community development practitioners.



**MR. APOORVA OZA**

Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, India (AKRSPI)

Mr. Apoorva Oza is the Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, India (AKRSPI) and was appointed to this role in 2001. Besides his work with AKRSPI, Mr. Oza is actively involved in founding and supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and NGO networks as well as influencing government policies. He is interested in supporting initiatives which address the human resource needs of rural India.

He is a mechanical engineer by training with a diploma in rural management from the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA). He also holds degrees on strategic change from Cranford University, United Kingdom, and Cornell University, USA.



**MS. TSECHU DOLMA**

Founder of Mountain Resiliency Project  
@tsechudolma

Ms. Tsechu Dolma is the founder of Mountain Resiliency Project, a social enterprise dedicated to strengthening mountain communities in South Asia. Leveraging her education and experience, Ms. Dolma returned to the refugee camps she grew up in to fight for a sustainable future in the high mountains of Asia.

Her track record has been recognized by the Asia Society Young Leaders, Forbes 30 under 30 in social entrepreneurship, and Brower Youth Award. Ms. Dolma has led several projects with the US State Department, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Trained at Oxford University and Columbia University, she is a Skoll Scholar, Fulbright Hillary Clinton Public Policy Fellow, Udall Scholar, and Echoing Green Fellow.



**MS. TEA HOXHA**  
@CETEAROLO

Ms. Tea Hoxha is a twenty-one-year-old student of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Padua. In addition to cultivating her passion for art and humanities, Ms. Hoxha has been actively participating in a variety of events and initiatives such as cultural exchanges and collaborations with the FA as well as UN simulations and hackathons.

These experiences have helped her enhance her creativity, public-speaking, and organization skills. Over time, her interests in politics and the world-dynamics have increasingly consolidated and today she is part of various associations to create and promote social and cultural activities both on local and international levels.



**MR. STEFANO SALA**  
Project Officer at Ge.S.Di.Mont. Research Centre  
@stefano\_grund

Mr. Stefano Sala is currently working as a Project Officer at Ge.S.Di.Mont. Research Centre, an interdisciplinary research centre for sustainable development of mountain areas at the Università Della Montagna/University of the Mountain (UNIMONT) within the University of Milan in Italy. He is experienced in working on interdisciplinary research projects for the development of mountain areas, with a specific focus on governance issues and policies for sustainable mountain development and tourism.

Mr. Sala has also been supporting the coordination of the EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) Action Group 1 to develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem with the objective of promoting coherent R&I policies at the regional, national and transnational level. He is part of the board of directors of the Italian chapter of the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) and is an active member of civil society, collaborating with several non-governmental organizations for the sustainable development of mountain areas.





**MS. STELLA JEAN**  
Fashion Designer  
@STELLAJEAN\_SJ

Ms. Stella Jean is a renowned fashion designer and is recognized as the first black Italian designer. She created and built a business model and sustainable development platform entitled Laboratorio delle Nazioni (LDN), which focuses on a standard of sustainability and multiculturalism applied to the fashion industry and uses fashion as a tool for cooperative international development. In 2021, Ms. Jean along with Michelle Ngonmo and Edward Buchanan, founded a work group comprised of Afro-Italian professionals: WAMI - We Are Made in Italy, in conjunction with the National Chamber of Italian Fashion (CNMI). In 2014, Ms. Jean attended as a speaker on the 'Power of Empowered Women' at the Palace of United Nations and, on the same day, presented her garments created in collaboration with the United Nations ethical fashion program at the World Trade Organization (WTO). That year, she also presented her creations within the 'Fashion 4 Development' project, organised in collaboration with the UN Millennium Development Goals. As a measure of her work and success, she was highlighted by the New York Times as the most convincing of all the New Gen designers in Milan in 2019 and was nominated by the Business of Fashion as one of the 'People Shaping the Global Fashion Industry in 2014' in the annually published ranking list 'BOF 500'.



**MS. KIRA INTRATOR**  
Lead, Habitat Planning and Innovation, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat  
@kiraintrator

Ms. Kira Intrator leads urban and rural planning and innovation for the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), supporting teams in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Syria, and Tajikistan. Her work focuses on creating and refining innovative digital tools, methods and practices that exponentially scale impact on urban planning and development. Her projects include designing an award-winning, post-disaster Interactive Voice Response prototype for emergency relief with Google's Civic Response team, creating an AI data capture design to enhance real-time urban demographic data collection, and piloting a satellite and open data 'Habitat Assessment' tool for urban planning in Central Asia.

She has also raised \$18million in VC-style growth capital to train and place underserved young adults in jobs in IT and investment operations for a US based social enterprise, which allowed her to lead the organization's expansion to new offices in Chicago and Seattle. In her 15 years of experience, Ms. Intrator has managed urban planning programs, created digital products for development, and executed strategic management consulting projects for UN Agencies, government ministries, foreign aid agencies, academia, foundations, and multilaterals.



**MR. KARIM KHOJA**

CEO

Industrial Promotion Services, Asia Region (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan)

Mr. Karim Khoja is currently working as the Chief Executive Officer of Industrial Promotion Services (IPS) – Asia Region. Prior to this role, he was the Chief Executive Officer of Roshan and under his leadership, Roshan grew to be Afghanistan's leading telecommunications provider, with more than six and a half million customers. He has over twenty-five years of experience in the telecommunications industry, which has included starting and managing extremely successful GSM companies in Pakistan, Poland, Croatia, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Over the course of nineteen years, he has dedicated his time to the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) to bring competition and best practices to the telecommunication industry in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Mr. Khoja serves on the board of IPS West Africa, IPS Pakistan and Tcell in Tajikistan, and the executive committee of Accelerator Prosperity. He has a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from Chelsea College at the University of London, a Master's degree in Management Science from Imperial College London and an Advanced Management Program (AMP) from Harvard Business School.



**PROF. ROY C. SIDLE**

Director of the Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI)

Prof. Roy C. Sidle is currently working as the Director of the Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) and Professor of Earth & Environmental Sciences at the University of Central Asia (UCA) in Khorog, Tajikistan. He has forty-nine years of research, teaching, outreach and leadership experience in hydrology, environmental science, sustainability, and natural resources management; and much of his research has focused on mountain ecosystems across the world. Prior to joining UCA in 2018, he served as Director of the Sustainability Research Centre at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia and has held the post of Distinguished Professor at Tokyo University of Agriculture & Technology since 2017.

As measures of his scientific contributions and success, Professor Sidle was elected as a Fellow in American Geophysical Union in 2010 and received the International Award from the Japan Society of Hydrology and Water Resources in 2014. He holds a PhD in Soil Science/Hydrology from the Pennsylvania State University and MSc and BSc degrees from the University of Arizona.





**MR. YODGOR FAYZOV**  
Governor of Gorno-Badakhshan  
Autonomous Oblast in the Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Yodgor Fayzov is currently the Governor of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast in the Republic of Tajikistan and has held this post since 2018. In this position, he leads one of the four Oblasts (administrative entities) of Tajikistan, as the highest state executive representative in the region. He was Chief Executive Officer of the Aga Khan Foundation in Tajikistan, an affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and managed the development and funding of wide variety of programs in agriculture and food security, economic inclusion, education, early childhood, health and nutrition, and civil society. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Fayzov was General Manager of the Mountain Societies Development Support Program (MSDSP), a program of the Aga Khan Foundation, focusing on food security and agriculture, enterprise development support and other related areas in mountainous areas of Central Asia. He has also worked in top positions with state agencies of former USSR and veterinarian agencies of the region. He specializes in a wide array of areas including veterinary sciences, agriculture, business development, country strategy development, post conflict reconstruction, portfolio management education, early childhood, civil society and municipal management. Mr. Fayzov has a Master's degree in Veterinary Sciences from Tajik Agrarian University and has also completed high courses in Municipality and Public Administration in Moscow, Russia.

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**MS. MIRA RAI**  
Mountain Partnership Ambassador  
@miraraiofficial

Ms. Mira Rai is a Nepalese ultra trail runner and sky runner and specializes in ultra distance mountain races. She is part of the Salomon Trail Running Team and has participated in many international competitions and has won numerous awards for the same. She recently became the Goodwill Ambassador of United Nations Mountain Partnership and is committed to work to achieve sustainable environment in the world's mountain regions. Ms. Rai was the winner of the National Geographic Adventurer of the Year in 2017 and the Asia Game Changer Award in 2018.

She mentors young female runners, organizing trail races, and promotes the sport in Nepal through the Mira Rai Initiative, a non-profit organization committed to supporting trail-running and the trail-running community in Nepal.



**MR. JAKE NORTON**

Mountain Partnership Ambassador, Climber and Filmmaker  
@JAKENORTON

Climber, filmmaker, photographer, and activist, Mr. Jake Norton has spent most of his life in the high mountains and remote regions of the world. From helping discover George Mallory's remains on Mount Everest to following the footsteps of Sir Ernest Shackleton across South Georgia Island, unearthing 3500 years old human remains in cliffside caves high in the Himalayas to following the Ganges River 1600 miles from source to sea, and reaching the summit of Everest three times, Mr. Norton has been blessed in his 47 years to traverse the globe and share his stories far and wide.

He has filmed, directed, and produced three award-winning documentaries, and works as a Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations Mountain Partnership, advocating globally on behalf of mountain communities and ecosystems. Through his fundraising climbs and initiatives, he raised nearly \$500,000 for mountain and water-related non-profit partners. He relishes the opportunity to share his experiences with wider audiences through his photography, film, words, and stories. Jake makes his home in Evergreen, Colorado, with his wife and two children.



**MR. CONSTANTINO AUCCA CHUTAS**

President of Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN)

Born in Cusco, Peru, Mr. Constantino Auca Chutas is a biologist who graduated from the University of San Antonio Abad del Cusco (UNSAAC). Since 2000, he has been the president of Association Ecosistemas Andinos (ECOAN) and of Accion Andina. He has also been the Conservation Advisor of the Global Forest Generation since 2018. In 1989, Mr. Chutas worked as an assistant to Dr. Jon Fieldsa of Copenhagen Zoological Museum and Natural History at the University of Copenhagen and has implemented national and global conservation projects. He is a member of field expeditions with the Smithsonian Institute, amongst other institutions.

He is also an honorary researcher at the University of Plymouth, United Kingdom and associate researcher at the Museo De Historia Natural (UNMSM) in Lima, Peru. He is a grantee of many international donors.



**MARIA ANTHONETTE VELASCO ALLONES**

Chief Executive Officer, the Tourism Promotions Board, Philippines

Maria Anthonette Velasco Allones is an educator, OD practitioner, leadership coach and lawyer with extensive professional experience in public sector strategic and reform management. She has been serving as the Chief Operating Officer of the Tourism Promotions Board since February 2020. She has also served as Assistant Secretary for Personnel at the Department of National Defense, and also as Assistant Secretary at the Department of Labor and Employment. She is a member of the core faculty of the Ateneo School of Government and serves as a subject matter expert for the Career Executive Service Board's (CESB) leadership development program. Atty. Allones earned the distinction to be the first and only recipient of the prestigious Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award for HRD in government service in the Philippines. From 2007 to January 2020, she served as Executive Director of the CESB, transforming the key programs on leadership selection, training and development for the higher civil service. She holds a Masters in Public Management from the joint program of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy-National University of Singapore and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She also completed her Masters in National Security Administration at the National Defense College of the Philippines, and earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Bachelor of Laws at the University of the Philippines.



**MS. SANDRA CARVÃO**

Chief of Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness at the  
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)  
@scarvao1

Ms. Sandra Carvão is Chief of Tourism Market Intelligence and Competitiveness at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) since June 2018. Before that, she was Chief of Communications and Publications for 8 years until May 2018 where she was responsible for UNWTO's strategic positioning. Prior to this post, Sandra was Deputy Chief at UNWTO's Market Trends, Competitiveness and Trade in Tourism Services Department between 2007 and 2010. During this period, Ms. Carvao coordinated the Tourism Resilience Committee created by UNWTO to address the impacts of the global economic crisis 2008-2009 on tourism. Prior to joining UNWTO in 2003, Sandra held a position as market manager in the Portuguese National Tourist Office in Lisbon. She has a degree in International Relations, Economics Branch, by the Instituto de Ciências Sociais e Políticas/Universidade Técnica de Lisboa and a postgraduate degree in Marketing by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.



**MR. DAVID DAVIES**  
CEO  
AgUnity  
@AGRI\_UT

Mr. David Davies is currently working as the Chief Executive Officer of Aguity, where he has helped lift low-income farmers out of poverty. For his work, he was named by Future Agro Challenge (FAC) as Global Agripreneur of the Year 2018. The work by Mr. Davies and AgUnity has also been globally recognized by the likes of IFC World Bank, Mastercard Foundation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Oxford University and more. Previously, David has been the Founder and CEO of several successful FinTech, SaaS, and mobile start-ups and spent over a decade in senior roles at global investment banks such as Goldman Sachs, Lehman, Nomura & Standard Chartered Bank.

He is now applying his extensive experience and AgUnity's technology to a new project with AgriUT – a not-for-profit Foundation that is powered by a digital utility token ecosystem that directly connects consumers to farmers through the Agriwards platform and enables funding of social impact initiatives lifting last mile farmer communities out of poverty.



**MR. ONNO RÜHL**  
General Manager  
Aga Khan Agency for Habitat  
@onnoruhl

Mr. Onno Rühl is currently working as the first General Manager of the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH). A Dutch national, he held positions in the World Bank, as Country Director for Nigeria, and more recently as Country Director for India. Rühl joined the Bank in 1993 as country officer for Moldova and Armenia. He has since held various positions within the World Bank in East and Central Asia as well as Africa.

Mr. Rühl has also held the position of lead private and financial sector development specialist in the Africa and Europe and Central Asia regions. During that period, he provided leadership in creating and financing the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI). Prior to working in the bank, he was with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

He has a longstanding reputation for driving organisational change, building partnerships, as well as experience in emergency response and natural disaster reconstruction. He frequently speaks at public events and in universities on a range of development topics and holds a Masters in Economics from the University of Amsterdam.





**DR. FAUSTO JORI**  
CEO  
EcorNaturaSì

Dr. Fausto Jori is currently working as the Chief Executive Officer of EcorNaturaSì, the largest specialized Italian distributor of biodynamic and organic products, which services over 500 shops and has over 300 farms engaged in production.

He set up Vitulia Biocontadini Mediterranei, a biodynamic agricultural-social cooperative in Calabria, Italy and was Director and Head of Global Innovation at Reply S.p.A, which specialises in the design and implementation of solutions based on new communication channels and digital media. Prior to this, Dr. Jori was an entrepreneur, and founded a consulting, innovation and strategy company for large organizations. He also serves as the president of two social promotion associations. He holds a PhD at the University of California at Berkeley and together with his wife Carla and daughter Cornelia, he is passionate about nature and sustainable innovation.



**MS. ROSALaura ROMEO**  
Programme Officer at the Mountain Partnership Secretariat of  
the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
@rlaurom

Ms. Rosalaura Romeo is currently working as a Programme Officer at the Mountain Partnership Secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and has worked with them since 2003. Prior to this role, she worked within the Coordination Unit of the International Year of Mountains 2002, at FAO. Her key areas of expertise include sustainable mountain development, agricultural research, forestry research, as well as international processes and advocacy.

Ms. Romeo has published studies on the vulnerability of mountain people to food insecurity for the Mountain Partnership, and is also author of publications titled 'Mountain Farming Systems – Seeds for the Future' and 'Mountain Farming is Family Farming'.

She has an MSc in Agriculture from the University of Tuscia in Italy and has studied Integrated Watershed Management from the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia in Canada.



**MR. UMESH LAMA**

Chairman

Organic World and Fair Future (OWF)

Mr. Umesh Lama is currently working as the Chairman of Organic World and Fair Future (OWF). Established in February 2008 under the company registration act, OWF is a for-profit company with an eco-social mission. Engaged in pro-poor value chain development, OWF serves local, national and international markets with organic Nepali agricultural products. The company, under Mr. Lama's leadership, has teamed up with passionate individuals who are highly committed to providing customers with high-quality, organic products and contribute to social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

OWF acts as a crucial link creating a business ecosystem between small-scale organic farmers and their groups from mountain regions, and consumer markets. The organisation is a member of the Mountain Partnership of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Nepal Permaculture Group and Fair Trade Group.



**PROF. ANNA GIORGI**

Delegate of the Rector of the University of Milan to the promotion of teaching, research and third mission activities for the volarisation of mountain areas.

UNIMONT, University of Milan

@unimontagna

Prof. Anna Giorgi is a professor of applied environmental botany at the University of Milan, where she also directs the interdisciplinary Research Centre for the Management and Sustainable Development of Mountain Areas (Ge.S.Di.Mont). Additionally, she is the coordinator of the Bachelor's Degree in 'Conservation and Sustainable Development of Mountain Areas' at the Università Della Montagna/University of the Mountain (UNIMONT) of the University of Milan, located in Edolo, a small mountain municipality in the hearth of the Italian alps.

Since 2016, she is the Leader of Action Group 1 of the EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). Since 2020, she is board member of EUROMONTANA, Brussels-based organisation promoting cooperation for European mountain regions. She participates in the main research networks for mountains, such as International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps (ISCAR), European Network for Mountain Research (NEMOR), of which she is a founding member, and Mountain Research Initiative (MRI).

She is also a member of the National working group for mountains set up by the Italian Ministry for Regional Affairs and Autonomies with the aim to develop a national strategy for the sustainable development of mountain areas since 2021.



**MS. SONIA SALAS DOMINGUEZ**

President of Oberle Peru,  
President of the Rural Agroindustry Network of  
Peru - REDAR PERU  
President of the Andean Network of Know-how  
Knowledge.

Ms. Sonia Salas Dominguez is an Agroindustrial Engineer, Magister and Dr. Scientiae in Food Industries, specialist in rural development, food and technology; rural agro industry; participatory processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation of projects related to strategic planning and managerial leadership.

She has 22 years of experience in the field of research and promotion of rural development through rural agribusiness, and recovery of ancestral knowledge and Andean-Amazonian biodiversity with extensive experience in the Sierra and Selva coast of Peru, the countries of the Inter-Amazon treaty and the Andean and Latin American countries. A former Research Associate at the International Potato Center (CIP) and a board member of the Kathmandu-based World Mountain Forum, she is currently also a member of the FAO Mountain Alliance and Latin American coordinator of the German Foundation Wilhelm Oberle, President of Oberle Peru, President of the Rural Agroindustry Network of Peru - REDAR PERU and president of the Andean Network of Know-how Knowledge.



**MR. HADI HUSANI**

CEO, Aga Khan Agency for Habitat  
Tajikistan  
@akdn

Mr. Hadi Husani has been leading humanitarian and development agencies in Central and South Asia, largely with the Social Development Institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) for close to twenty years. With degrees in Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology as well as a professional background in management consulting and the private sector, he has consistently sought effective and contextually appropriate solutions to any challenges. Mr. Husani served as the Chief of Mission and Executive Officer for Focus Humanitarian Assistance in Tajikistan and in the United States.

He led Aga Khan Planning and Building Services in Pakistan as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He also supported educational initiatives for the Aga Khan Education Services in Tajikistan and Afghanistan and is currently the CEO for the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat in Central Asia. Outside of the AKDN, he has worked as the Resident Representative for International Medical Corps in Central Asia and as their Country Director for Pakistan. Additionally, he is a trustee for a UK based charity, United Purpose, formerly known as Concern Universal.





**MS. DILSHODBEGIM KHISRAVOVA**  
Volunteer, Community Emergency Response Teams  
Tajikistan

Based in the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan, Ms. Dilshodbegim Khisravova has been volunteering since she was in high school. She has been volunteering with a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) for four years now and is currently the team leader of a CERT in Khorog, a town in the Pamirs. CERTs are volunteer groups which capitalise on the local volunteers' knowledge of the terrain, language and culture and train them to be the first responders in the event of a disaster.

As a volunteer, she has provided first aid to local communities during different emergencies, and she is experienced in Camp Management and in developing systems for Camp Coordination. She believes that serving as a volunteer is important to view and understand Jamat (society) in different perspectives.



**MR. ALESSANDRO PANZA**  
Member of The European Parliament Intergroup on Rural,  
Mountainous and Remote Areas and Smart Villages.  
@alepanzaoff

Born in Domodossola and 'vigezzino ma milanese' by adoption, Mr. Alessandro Panza was elected as a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for the first time in 2019 with the Lega party. A graduate in Political Science, he began his career in the Lega in 2009, working as Accredited Assistant to MEP Matteo Salvini at the European Parliament VII legislature. In 2017, he was appointed as the Federal Head of Organization for the Lega per Salvini Premier, a role which allowed him to have constant contact with the electoral base. The priorities of his parliamentary mandate are linked to his passion for the mountain regions.

Mr. Panza believes that mountains need to be more focused in European politics, and people living in those regions must have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Currently, he is a Member of The European Parliament Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas and Smart Villages.



**DR. ELENA MANAENKOVA**

Deputy Secretary-General at the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Dr. Elena Manaenkova is the Deputy Secretary-General at the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). A geographer with a specialization in hydrology and meteorology, Dr Manaenkova devoted her career to the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring in the Hydrometeorological Centre of Russia, prior to joining WMO. She then worked in the Scientific Research Centre on Space Hydrometeorology "Planeta" in positions with increasing responsibility, ultimately attaining the title Scientific Secretary and Director of Department of Science and International Cooperation.

In recognition of her leadership on gender equality, the Geneva Environment Network selected her as one of 20 inspirational women working for the environment. Dr Manaenkova graduated from the Moscow State University in 1986, and holds a Doctorate degree (PhD) in physics and mathematics from the Doctorate of Hydrometeorological Centre of Russia (1993) with specialization in meteorology, climatology, satellite meteorology and remote sensing from satellites.



**H.E. KHALID KHURSHID**

Chief Minister, Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan  
@AbdulKhalidPTI

Born in Gilgit Baltistan, Mr. Muhammad Khalid Khurshid Khan hails from a political family and began his political career in 2009, contesting in his first election as an independent candidate. He joined the political party "Pakistan Tehreek Insaf" in 2018 and was appointed as the party president in 2019.

He was successful in the Gilgit Baltistan elections in 2020 and was subsequently elected as Chief Minister of Gilgit Baltistan. Since his rise to power as the Chief Minister, Mr. Khalid Khurshid has been actively engaged in socio-economic development of the region. He is particularly invested in the sustainable development of the area for which he has introduced concepts such as eco-tourism through village development plans and is currently leading an integrated development plan for the people of Gilgit Baltistan.

The integrated development plan revolves around the concept of development of mountain communities through better communication infrastructure, uninterrupted power supply, and improved health and education facilities. He studied at Punjab University in Pakistan and has a Bachelor of Arts in Law from the University of London.



**DR. QU DONGYU**

Director-General of Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
@FAODG

Originally from China's Hunan province, Dr. Qu Dongyu is currently serving as the Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and has held the role since 2019. In his role as Director-General, he strives to build a dynamic, open, transparent and deliverable FAO to achieve the 2030 Agenda, by transforming to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. Prior to this role, Dr. Dongyu served as China's Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, where he promoted inclusive and innovative development and ensured information and communication technologies (ICT) were available in rural areas.

As Vice Governor of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, he formulated action plans aimed at poverty reduction, women empowerment, youth startups, agritourism and solidarity between ethnic groups. He studied horticultural science at the Hunan Agricultural University and then plant breeding and genetics at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). He also has a PhD in agriculture and environmental science from Wageningen University, in the Netherlands.



**MR. GIORGIO GRUSSU**

Project Coordinator for the Mountain Partnership Secretariat at  
the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
@unmountains

Mr. Giorgio Grussu is a national of Italy and works in Rome as a Project Coordinator for the Mountain Partnership Secretariat at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since 2012, dealing with sustainable development, climate change adaptation/mitigation and biodiversity conservation in fragile ecosystems such as mountains and islands. He is the coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Products initiative, selected by the Expo 2020 Dubai's Global Best Practice Programme as one of 25 Best Practices out of 1175 from around the world. Before joining the FAO, Mr. Grussu worked as an advisor on environmental issues with the Italian Development Cooperation, and for several years as a project manager with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with the UN Environment Programme, and with non-governmental organizations in Morocco, Angola, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He holds a PhD in Environmental Biology, Masters in Environmental Engineering, Masters in International Environmental Policy and a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS).