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STATEMENT

H.E. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC “MAPPING THE VULNERABILITY OF MOUNTAIN PEOPLES TO FOOD INSECURITY”

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

This is the first side-event I have participated in as Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN. It is a great honor and at the same time highly symbolic for me that this first event is about mountainous people. It is no secret that Kyrgyzstan initiated the International Mountains Day and is an active member of the Mountain Partnership and has always pursued a policy aimed at promoting the issues and challenges of mountain countries in the global agenda.

Dear colleagues,

MDG implementation has shown the importance of data. In this regard I would like to express our gratitude and to stress the timeliness of the FAO and Mountain Partnership Study. The new methodology provides the most accurate possible estimate of the vulnerability to food insecurity in mountain areas, based on the best technologies and data available. I am positive that this analysis will help send a clear message to policy makers and resource partners on the need to focus on the plight of mountain peoples in the context of the 2030 Development Agenda.

This is particularly important for Kyrgyzstan. For us, mountains are not only something beautiful. They provide us with food, water,

resources, and many other services. At the same time, people living in mountain areas are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Soil quality, difficulties with cultivation, distance from roads, poor infrastructure, and marginalization and lack of access to markets are among the most widespread difficulties we are faced with.

Kyrgyzstan has made significant advances towards reducing hunger and poverty and we are committed to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite our progress, challenges remain. Since late 2011 we have seen a slower growth in remittances and increased prices for essential items

I would also like to note that the poverty rate remains higher in rural and mountainous areas, reflecting dependence on natural resources.

As recognized by the Second National Report on Adaptation to Climate Change, food security in the Kyrgyz Republic is highly sensitive to climate change. Increases in temperatures have resulted in the melting and disappearance of more than 1000 small and medium-sized glaciers in the mountains of Central Asia. The country is susceptible to natural disasters such as droughts, earthquakes, floods and landslides. According to the Ministry of Emergencies, losses and damages from natural disasters in the country are substantial and estimated at around USD\$ 35 million each year, which has negative impact on food security. Mountain populations are especially vulnerable.

Kyrgyzstan is taking steps to address this situation. We are investing in institutional capacity, food security and resilience building. Since 2005, national programs have linked food security and environmental issues and recognized them as a key development priority. The Kyrgyz Republic's national sustainable development strategy for 2013-2017 aims to ensure food security and protect the environment.

It is therefore vital that the State works to expand its support to rural communities, with the support of the UN and development partners. We have made efforts to develop and offer extension services to Kyrgyz farmers, particularly in mountainous regions.

We welcome global alliances such as the Mountain Partnership which allow us to create an effective global platform for poverty alleviation and food security in support of our national efforts.

Today we have SDGs and Paris climate agreement as a strong commitment to address the challenges facing us, the mountain states. And I would like to encourage that the spirit of unity be transferred from declarations to concrete actions at all levels so that we can break the cycle of poverty and hunger of mountain communities.

Thank you for your attention.