

Statement by Minister & Academician Yefim Malitikov -  
Chairman of the Commonwealth of Independent States  
Interstate Committee on Promotion of Knowledge Adult  
Education and NGO Znanie at the World Summit of the  
Mountains on Sustainable Development  
Bishkek, December, 2002

Your Excellency President of Kyrgyz Republic  
Askar Akaevich Akaev!  
Your Excellency President of Republic of Kazakhstan  
Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbaev!  
Your Highness Prince Aga Khan!  
Your Excellencies!  
Ladies and gentlemen!

It is a great honour for me to make a speech in front of the  
Council of Patrons of the Global Mountains Summit.

Mountains are like men. They feel, they see, they hear and they  
respond, adequately and powerfully. Thanks to your patronage,  
which crowned The International Year of the Mountains with  
the Global Summit, nations witnessed an unprecedented step  
forward to new life resources on the Earth...and the mountains  
will not forget this...

It is highly symbolic that it is Kyrgyzstan that undertook this  
initiative, responsibility and honour, even without all the  
resources of rich mountain countries like Switzerland. Sadly,  
humanity has not retained the knowledge and power of  
mountain empires of ancient civilizations such as the Aztecs and  
Mayas, with the secrets they could have unraveled to today's  
scientists.

However, differences in quality, the digital divide and gap in  
living standards of highlanders and inhabitants of plains just  
confirm the necessity to repay the human debt to nature. It  
reminds us that human activities have created a tragic list of  
disasters to the environment and to the mountains. For example,

half of the water on earth, the main living resource for man, which constitutes 80% of our body, is preserved by the silent giants of mountains.

The places all over the world that hold all the resources, like oil and gold and minerals, are now being dissipated. The only places left for discovery and exploration are in the mountains. One fifth of the mankind is courageously faithful to the mountains, paying for it with an unsettled life and poverty. However, they need new knowledge about the Earth, which is fastened with the embrace of mountains and their ecosystems. They need new visions, solutions and tools which are gathered here at this Summit, with representatives of more than 100 states in the world.

To distribute this knowledge among those living a life of heavy burden and suffering in the mountains is a task of global scope. When we solve these problems for highlanders, we will add to their courage and natural wit. We can create an army of highly competent and educated people of the mountains, who will preserve the water and other resources for peoples not only of the mountains, but also for the people of the plains, who critically need these resources. Thus highlanders or citizens of the mountains will again become great empires.

As long as the people who live in the mountains need to come down to the plains and capitals for their education, culture, universities centers (to a Louvre or Tretyakovskaya Gallery) making speeches about the economy, ecology, social problems of the mountains will just be empty words.

High quality education and knowledge needs to come directly to their yurt/house on the ever snow-white flank, to their pastures so the shepherd and his children will be able to decide the issues of peace, the economy, ecology, at their homes and villages within the mountains.

In the last decade, the internet was crowned a “panacea” for thousands of documents as a formula for happiness. Yes, the

internet is a marvel, but it is not a remedy or mechanism for all inhabitants of the world – the mountains don't accept this medicine. The internet is often too expensive, unprofitable and inefficient for use in the mountains. Modern education cannot be received via e-mail.

Life is changing like a shot. Only five years ago the business card of the President of German Telecom had no e-mail address. Today, the basic structure of the Interstate Committee CIS on Knowledge Promotion and Adult Education and of the International Association "Znanie" – Modern University for the Humanities, structures which I am honored to Chair, have a different strategy.

Through a Moscow planetary satellite teleport, we teach Kazakh students International Law from Cambridge in their homes without travel expenses and accommodation in Britain. Through this modern satellite technology, even those who don't speak English can learn. Kazakhstan has 17 such educational centers, one of which has 8,000 students. With your generous help, President Nazarbaev, a new building of our Educational Center is being constructed in Astana, your capital.

Today the Modern University of the Humanities has 150,000 distant learning students in 368 cities of Russia, CIS and 8 other countries. This is greater than 7.5 times the number of students at the largest university in Russia, the Moscow State Lomonosov University. Students are instructed in 68 professions. We created 400 regional educational centers and departments with 2,500 highly qualified professors.

Our satellite signal comes to the students as a picture, as a multi-image, a charming gesture of an extraordinary lecturer or prominent scientist from any country of the world can be seen by students 10,000 miles away. Such lectures could never be combined together within a conventional University. Our signal can reach the place where there is no transportation, just a donkey, where there is even no electricity.

And the cost difference is dramatic: satellite broadcast at \$5.00 per student is 100 times less expensive than internet costs at \$500 per student. In the mountains and in African jungles transmission by internet is 20 times more expensive.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, we now have a center and six more are being organized now, under the patronage of Academician Asulbek Akhmatbekavich Aidaraliev, your representative on the Interstate Committee CIS on Knowledge Promotion and Adult Education.

I would like to propose the establishment in Bishkek of the International Informational Educational Center based on the newest satellite telecommunication technology. Without satellite education, which penetrates to the otherwise unreachable places, we can't solve the greatest global problem of mankind: the eradication of illiteracy.

Today in the world over 880 million people are totally illiterate, they can't read or write. That is why more than the half of the Earth's population (more than 3 billion people) lives on less than \$2.00 a day. At the same time, the world needs over 15 million new teachers.

We invite the Patron's Council and you personally, President Akaev and you, President Nazarbaev, to visit our main facility and complex in Moscow. Visiting universities was always considered a good style for Presidents of important countries. If you visit the Modern University of the Humanities, you will be surprised and impressed and this new paradigm will be felt and understood by all your citizens, through your eyes.

Thank you for your kind attention.