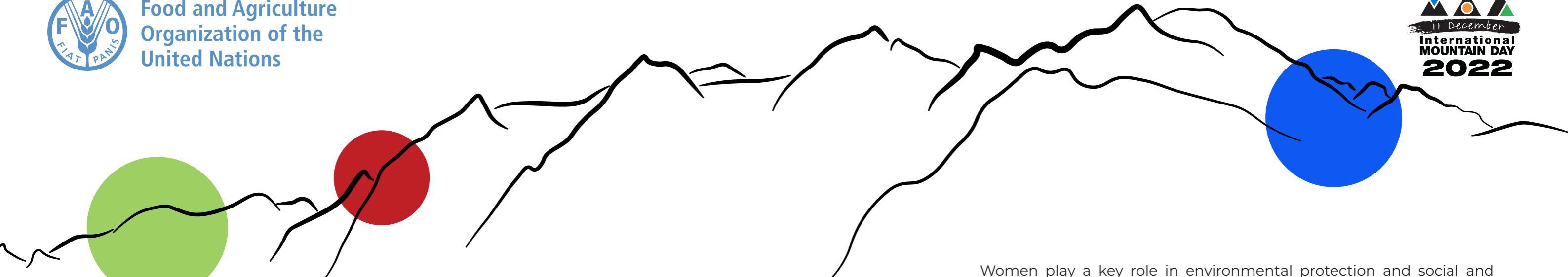




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Women move mountains

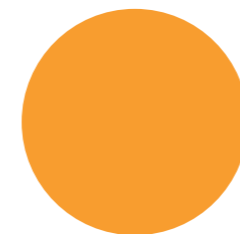
Women play a key role in environmental protection and social and economic development in mountain areas. They are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guardians of biodiversity, keepers of traditional knowledge, custodians of local culture and experts in traditional medicine.

Limited economic opportunities and increasing land degradation, coupled with the impacts of climate change and the lack of investment in mountain agriculture and rural development, have often pushed men to migrate in search of alternative livelihoods. Women have therefore taken on many tasks formerly done by men, but often without having the same legal status, decision-making power and access to training, services and resources.

As farmers, market sellers, businesswomen, artisans, entrepreneurs and community leaders, mountain women and girls have the potential to be major agents of change. When rural women have equal opportunities, they become a driving force against hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty and are active in the development of mountain economies.

To trigger real change towards sustainable development, it is important to engage in gender transformative change that promotes gender equality and empowers mountain women to participate effectively in decision-making processes and have equal opportunities and control over productive resources. Access to technology, credit, capacity development, markets and equal land ownership can increase gender equality and provide opportunities for women and youth.¹

1. Further resources:
FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030
Mountain Partnership website



Voices of mountain women



Karen Martinez, 22, Argentina

Karen lives with her grandmother at 4 200 metres in the Andes. She takes care of their 250 llamas, 100 sheep and 17 goats, from which they produce dairy products and fibre. She dreams of having an internet connection to be able to study online while living in the mountains. She wishes there were more opportunities for youth in the mountains so there would be more peers to collaborate with instead of them moving away to study and work elsewhere.



Asha Maliki, 22, United Republic of Tanzania

Asha lives in Soweto in Moshi District of the Kilimanjaro Region in the United Republic of Tanzania. She has worked as a mountain guide for three years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of tourists and work, Asha could no longer afford her education. Sometimes she could only provide herself and her family one meal per day. To support herself in the short-term, she is working in restaurants and at weddings. Asha believes that capacity development opportunities as well as creating a cooperative where women could work together to save their money could build the resilience of women that live and work on Kilimanjaro.



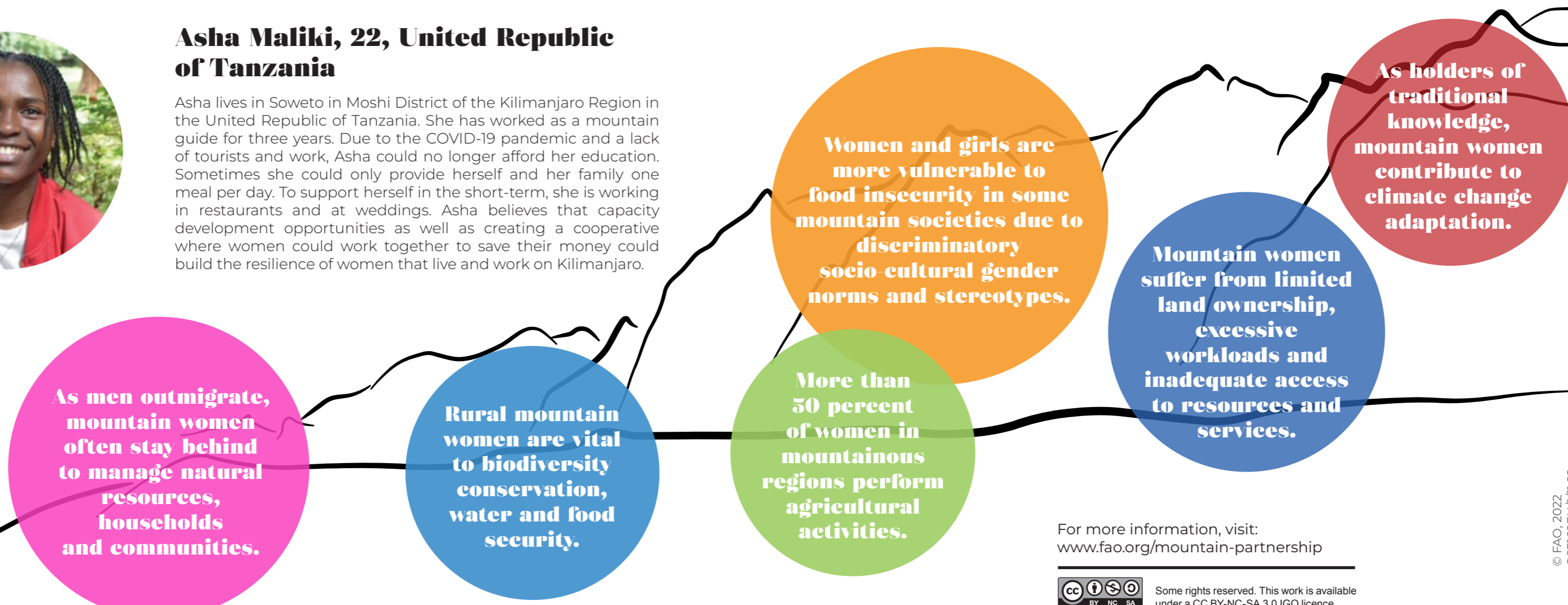
Zhibek Abdyldaevna Turatbekovna, 40, Kyrgyzstan

Zhibek was born and raised in Kyrgyzstan's Chon-Alai Region, where she runs a guesthouse. When her husband is away for work, she also takes care of their family's cattle. The women in her village face several challenges, including heavy workloads, inadequate healthcare and a lack of financial and educational opportunities. She also noticed an increase in domestic abuse cases in her village during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her biggest dream is to support other women by creating suitable working conditions.



Muna Gurung, 36, Nepal

Muna was raised in the rural mountains of northern Nepal by her mother. After the death of Muna's father, her family faced discrimination. It was difficult for her mother to earn a livelihood to afford to send Muna to school. Muna was married and had a child by 15 but later divorced. A friend introduced her to the idea of becoming a mountain guide – a job done almost entirely by men. Empowering Women of Nepal and 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking provided Muna with a 6-month training programme as well as a job. She has now been working as a guide for 17 years, travels internationally to climb, and has received international recognition for her feats. She is a role model for other women in her community.



For more information, visit:
www.fao.org/mountain-partnership



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