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November 13, 2012

Uzbek Ambassador to the United Nations Murad Askarov to Visit Ramapo College

(MAHWAH, NJ)- Uzbek Ambassador to the United Nations Murad Askarov will visit Ramapo College on Thursday, November 15. He will give a lecture on the "Future Water Use, Sustainable Development and the Aral Sea Crisis: an Uzbek Perspective" from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Friends Hall (SC-219). Discussion will be offered by Professor and Director of the Institute for Environmental Studies Michael Edelstein and Adjunct Professor of Environmental Studies Astrid Cerny. Following the lecture, a reception will be held from 1 to 2 p.m. in Friends Hall.

Ambassador Askarov earned his Doctorate in political science and a Masters degree in international relations from the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. After holding various posts for 12 years, Askarov became the Uzbekistan Ambassador to the UN in 2009.

Uzbekistan, which was formerly part of the Soviet Union, is the most populated nation in Central Asia. While it looks to create a future based upon sustainable development, the nation and region face significant obstacles relating to water and climate change and the legacy of decision making from the Soviet era. Most significant of these legacy issues is the Aral Sea disaster, involving the virtual disappearance of the Earth's fourth largest inland body of water, often described as the Earth's worst ecological disaster to date. Significant continuing desertification and salinization in the nation and region threaten health, water quality, agricultural productivity, as well as the cultural and architectural legacy.

Moreover, as a double land-locked country where water is derived entirely from two rivers controlled by upland nations, Uzbekistan faces a geo-political challenge that can result either in peace and prosperity or scarcity and conflict.

The visit stems from the College's ongoing relationship with Uzbekistan. Under Professor Edelstein, the college hosted Dr. Abror Gavaev, a Fulbright Visiting Scholar from Uzbekistan, and completed a research exchange program on the Aral Sea funded by the Trust for Mutual Understanding. With Drs. Cerny and Gadaev, Edelstein has edited a book on the Aral disaster, which is due out this month, "Disaster by Design: the Aral Sea and Its Lessons for Sustainability."

Among campus groups co-sponsoring the Ambassador's visit are the Masters in Sustainability Studies, the Roukema Center for International Education, the Culture Club, the Model UN and One-Step (the Sustainability Club).

Visitor's from off campus are welcome and should plan to get a parking pass at the

security booth at the campus' north entrance. For more information please contact Professor Mike Edelstein at medelste@ramapo.edu.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers five graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.