

CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM Fall 2019 Session Report

The Fall 2019 group of Fellows from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Mongolia completed a six-week program of high-level meetings and research in Washington, D.C. from October 1 to November 7, 2019. The group included *Ms. Ellaha Shaheen (Afghanistan)*, Market Access Negotiator at the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the World Trade Organization; *Mr. Aram Pinajyan (Armenia)*, Deputy CEO and Chief Risk Officer at HSBC Bank Armenia CJSC; *Ms. Rasmina Gurbatova (Azerbaijan)*, Owner and Designer of Resm, the first Azerbaijani jewelry brand inspired by traditional and oriental patterns and ornaments; *Ms. Nona Mamulashvili (Georgia)*, Founder and Chairwoman of the Caucasus Economic Policy Institute; *Ms. Rusudan Mamatsashvili (Georgia)*, First Deputy Head at the National Tourism Administration of Georgia; *Ms. Dinara Chaizhunussova (Kazakhstan)*, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Bolashak International Scholarship Program; *Mr. Ruslan Assaubayev (Kazakhstan)*, Managing Partner and Regional Development Director at Korkem Telecom, a leading Kazakhstan IT company; *Mr. Mirbek Asangariyev (Kyrgyzstan)*, Founder and CEO of the 4-star eco-friendly business Hotel “Bridges” and Founder of the social enterprise, “Bishkek Furniture”; *Mr. Batzaya Batsaikhan (Mongolia)*, co-founder and CEO of Unread Media, a hybrid media company focused on empowering the next generation; *Ms. Enkhzul Dambajantsan (Mongolia)*, the Chief Operating Officer of the Mongolian Stock Exchange; *Mr. Shuhrat Mirzoev (Tajikistan)*, Managing Partner and Founder of IRSHAD Consulting LLC, a Tajikistan-based professional consulting firm; and *Mr. Sardor Mukhamedaliev (Uzbekistan)*, Chief Business Development Officer of the Swiss-based leading online shopping marketplace, Zoodmall.



Fellows visit to the U.S. Department of Defense

The Fellows had an intensive schedule of group meetings with representatives of the U.S. government, business community, media, think tanks, academia and NGOs, as well as attended conferences and seminars at different institutions to better understand how opinion-making and policy-making work in Washington, D.C.

The Fall 2019 group met with members of the U.S. Congress, Chair of the House Republican Conference *Representative Liz Cheney (R-WY)* and Ranking Member of the newly formed Task Force on Financial Technology *Representative French Hill (R-AR)*; Director for Central Asia of the National Security Council Staff *Eric Rudenshiold*; former U.S. Ambassadors to the region *Robert Cekuta*, *John Herbst* and *Richard Hoagland*; former Ambassadors to the U.S. *Temuri Yakobashvili* (Georgia) and *Husain Haqqani* (Pakistan); as well as with members of the current Administration including representatives of the Department of State, Department of Defense, USAID, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Open World Leadership Center and National War College. Fellows also attended receptions hosted in their honor at the Embassy of Afghanistan and the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Washington, D.C.



Fellows with Thomas Firestone, Partner at Baker & McKenzie LLP

In addition, the group had the opportunity to meet with business leaders and representatives of the media, think tanks, non-profits and other organizations including with Director of the Caspian Policy Center *Efgan Nifti*; President and CEO of CSIS *Dr. John Hamre*; Founder and President of digital agency and public relations firm, Javelin *Keith Urbahn*; President of ConantLeadership *Douglas Conant*; Partner at Baker & McKenzie LLP *Thomas Firestone*; Chair of the National Women's Business Council and Founder & President of Best Marketing LLC *Liz Sara*; President of Philanthropy Roundtable *Adam Meyerson*; Greater Washington, D.C. Market President of Bank of America *Lawrence Di Rita*; Senior Vice President at CRC Public Relations *Mike Thompson*; as well as leadership and staff at the Albright Stonebridge Group, American Foreign Policy Council, Atlantic Council, Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Council on Foreign Relations, The Heritage Foundation, Hudson Institute, Middle East Institute, U.S. Institute of Peace and many others.

Since the fall of 2011, the Fellowship Program has partnered with the Open World Leadership Center to organize local programs with host communities outside of Washington, D.C. to help demonstrate American democracy on the grassroots level, how business and government work on the local level, and how people are empowered to take responsibility for themselves and others in their community. The Fall 2019 group traveled to *Norfolk, Virginia* and *Manchester, New Hampshire* and then to *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania* where the program included meetings with the leadership and staff at the Philadelphia Alliance for Capital and Technologies (PACT), Eisenhower Fellowships, the Pennovation Center, Comcast NBCUniversal's LIFT Labs and The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.



Fellows with Rep. French Hill, U.S. Congress (R-AR)

In the final weeks of their program the Fellows made a presentation at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Forum on the topic of *“Intra-Regional Trade in the CAMCA Region: Current Trends and Growing Opportunities.”*

The next group of Fellows will visit Washington, D.C. from March 23 to April 30, 2020. The participants of the Fellowship Program for the Spring 2020 session will be announced in February of 2020.



Fellows with Dr. John Hamre, President and CEO of CSIS



Fellows visit to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)

Rusudan Mamatsashvili: “If a single experience could be considered life-changing, then the Fellowship is definitely one of those. It is a time for venturing into uncharted waters, broadening horizons and becoming inspired. The program not only provides a glimpse into the political and economic life of the United States, but also helps forge valuable connections and friendships. These six weeks have undoubtedly had an indelible influence on my personal and professional life.”

Dinara Chaizhunussova: “The Fellowship is a program which brings more confidence, knowledge and conscience into international relations and geopolitics. It also helps you envision the potential routes of your country’s future development and your role in its progress.”



Fellows with Lawrence Di Rita, Greater Washington, D.C. Market President, Bank of America, and Rumsfeld Foundation Board Member



Fellows with Rep. Liz Cheney, U.S. Congress (R-WY)

Rasmina Gurbatova: “The Fellowship presented us with unprecedented opportunities and eye-opening events and meetings, giving us a better understanding of the operations of various political and business systems in America.”

Mirbek Asangariyev: “The Fellowship helped me crystallize my further professional strategy and my role in the destiny of my country. I was able to see the place of our region in the big picture of geopolitics and how it is shaped by opinion and decision-makers in this most powerful city. The main reward of the program was the regional networking – a truly exceptional and enabling benefit.”

Sardor Mukhamedaliev: “This outstanding Fellowship is a unique leadership program which brings together visionary leaders from across the CAMCA region. The meetings with both public and private high-level key decision makers were very productive and insightful and gave us a better understanding of how U.S. business and politics works in today’s fast-changing world. I am proud to be part of the CAMCA Network.”



Fellows with Doug Conant, President, ConantLeadership



Fellows Final Presentation at the Middle East Institute

Nona Mamulashvili: “These six weeks were a whirlpool of real-world experiences as the Fellowship allowed me to dive head first into the many mysteries of the world’s political capital.”

Batzaya Batsaikhan: “A truly perspective-widening experience. Besides having insightful high-level meetings with U.S. policymakers, business leaders, think tanks, Congress members, entrepreneurs and many others in Washington D.C., Philadelphia and New Hampshire, the Fellowship gave us an opportunity to form invaluable and everlasting bonds with like-minded individuals from the CAMCA region.”

Shuhrat Mirzoev: “Being part of the program has given me a distinct sense of pride and belonging to a diverse group of leaders from the CAMCA region. These six intensive weeks of interacting with leading activists, experts and policy makers in the United States was a unique experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life. The network is a powerful resource and capability multiplier, which enables each Fellow to set the narrative in our respective countries instead of catching up with it. Ultimately, the network is built on trust, competence and leadership, which are forged through the Fellowship Program.”

Enkhzul Dambajantsan: “The Fellowship has been transformational in that I learned to think like a policymaker and execute like a businessperson. This is not a six-week fellowship but a lifetime-long fellowship where the networks and friendships built during our program will help generate cooperation and opportunities within the region and with the United States for years to come.”



Fellows with Keith Urbahn, Founder and President of Javelin