

Statement

Parallel event “Mountain Women Empowerment Through the Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model”

65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Dr. Baldomero Lago

Chief International Officer

Office for Global Engagement

Utah Valley University

I am honored to speak today during the parallel event as part of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. As a tradition, the UVU Office for Global Engagement collaborates with the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences led by my personal friend and predecessor, Dr. Rusty Butler. We are joined also by Clark Merkley, who represents the Orem Rotary club. And it is another effort from our joint delegation to raise our voices in support of the women and girls from mountain regions around the world. While they are still affected by such challenges as food insecurity and outmigration, they are also threatened now by climate change.

This is the third session of the Commission on the Status of Women in which the UVU delegation advocates for mountain families and women by hosting either a side or a parallel event in addition to submitting a statement together with two non-governmental organizations: RANS and The Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Cooperation, in support of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

And it is important to state that our team is led by students, members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University. Our office is proud to contribute to the student engaged learning (SEL) model, which distinguishes Utah Valley University together with its dual mission. As you can see from this event, students, including non-traditional learners, are able to host this event as a group effort, allowing them both to advocate for the mountain women cause and at the same time to learn many new skills necessary for professional development. Their teacher, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, serves as mentor. The developed model encourages students to handle everything for this visit starting from raising funds, to logistics, protocol, and putting together an agenda, to name a few. They have invited us to contribute to their presentations. This is the essence of the extracurricular SEL model developed at UVU.

On August 26-28, 2019, UVU co-hosted with Salt Lake City the 68th UN Civil Society Conference. This conference became a historic event as it was the first time an UN conference was held in the USA outside its NY headquarters where more than two hundred NGO's represented by 134 countries attended the event. During this event, UIMF work closely with UVU's Office for Global Engagement. It was remarkable to see that UVU students were able to include language urging mountain communities to be in the focus of the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in the preamble of the Outcome Document of the 68UNCSC.

We wish similar successes to our students at CSW65 with their noble goal of advocating for mountain families, women and girls.