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UIMF PRESIDENT
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS) STATEMENT
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Welcome everyone to the event today between the Utah International Mountain Forum and the Organization of American States. We are highly honored to host His Excellency, Ambassador Harold Forsyth, Chair of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States and Permanent Representative of Peru to the OAS. On behalf of Utah Valley University and as President of the Utah International Mountain Forum, I thank you for being with us today.

Before we get into our Agenda, I will provide some background of the respective organizations represented here today.

The Organization of American States or (OAS), constitutes the world's oldest regional organization, established during the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., from October 1889 to April 1890 as the International Union of American Republics, which served as the world's oldest international institutional system. The OAS was founded following the ratification of the Pan-American treaty referred to as the Charter of the OAS in Bogotá, Colombia on April 30th, 1948. The treaty, which entered into effect on December 13th, 1951, was developed in accordance with Resolution IX of the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace, held in Mexico City in 1945. Although the Charter has been amended on several occasions throughout the latter half of the twentieth century since its signing by the original 21 signatories at the Ninth International Conference of American States, the OAS remains true and committed to its founding principles today.

The Organization of American States comprises 34 independent States of the Americas; has granted 69 States with Permanent Observer Status, as well as the European Union; and “constitutes the main political, juridical, and social governmental forum in the Hemisphere” with a focus on democracy, human rights, security, and development. Dedicated to “International law,...order,” and “intensive continental cooperation,” the OAS regards “representative democracy” as “indispensable,” “solemnly affirms” the “principles and purposes” of the United Nations, and promotes the individual and collective “Political, juridical,...economic,” and social well-being of its member States.

Having spent two years in Colombia, I understand the needs and benefits in advancing the OAS objectives in the American continents, and in particular, Latin America.

The Utah International Mountain Forum or (UIMF), is a coalition of Utah Valley University student clubs that has been proudly advocating for sustainable mountain development since 2010 through our student-engaged learning model, also referred to as (SEL). Through SEL, students gain professional skills by addressing real-world problems of mountain communities as a group with faculty serving as mentors. The UIMF hosted through SEL the Fourth International Women of the Mountains Conference in 2015 in Utah. UIMF was highlighted by the UN Secretary General's report on SMD A/74/209 on July 22, 2019; the only student group worldwide. The Utah International Mountain Forum has advocated for the implementation of mountain targets at several

forums of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on sustainable development, including the fifty-second session of the Commission on Social Development; the sixty-second, sixty-third, sixty-fourth, sixty-fifth, and soon sixty-sixth sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, and; the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. During these forums, students, including nontraditional students, prepared written statements and hosted parallel and side events. Through SEL, students were also able to include language about mountain communities for the first time in the final document of the sixty-eighth United Nations Civil Society Conference, held in Salt Lake City, Utah on August 26-28, 2019. The resolute efforts of our members have also been commended twice in the U.S. Congressional Record by Congressman John Curtis on September 4th, 2018, and Congressman Ben McAdams on April 12th, 2019.

Today's event, with such a distinguished guest, will contribute to this model and allow you to see how our members through SEL will host this event. We are grateful for continued support from the UVU Office for Global Engagement and the UVU History and Political Science department, who are co-hosting us today.

Now, let me tell you briefly about the agenda for today's gathering.

Our First speaker will be Alitha Thompson, Vice-President of the UIMF and President of Foreign Affairs, who will further discuss the UIMF.

Our Second speaker will be Rusden Scott, UIMF Member, who will speak on the SEL method.

Our Third speaker, Stefan Atkinson, Vice-President of Foreign Affairs, speaking on mountain communities and their importance, will follow Mr. Scott.

Alexandria Lamb, Foreign Affairs Member, will then address us, on the subject of non-traditional students.

Our Fifth speaker will be William Clark, speaking on the effects of climate change on mountain areas.

We will then play a short video in which three UVU students, including my predecessor, Samuel Elzinga, presented at the 2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the UN Headquarters in New York City.

Next, two students from Central and South America will discuss sustainable mountain development within their respective countries.

A Sixth speaker, Tristin Smith, UVU Rotaract President, will present on Guatemala and current challenges with the Drug Cartels, as George Forsyth did Tuesday.

The Concluding student speaker, Carolina Yauyo, UVU Global Student Leadership Council Member and Native of Peru, will articulate Sustainable Mountain Development in Peru.

Following our final student speaker, we will be honored by Ambassador Forsyth addressing our coalition.

Now, I will turn over to my colleague Alitha Thompson, who will address us next.