

## Statement

### Mary Cisneros

Utah Valley University graduate student  
67<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women

#### Parallel Event

*Empowering Mountain Women through Inclusive Student-engaged Learning Educational Initiative*

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

As an undergraduate at Utah Valley University, I had the honor to contribute to the 2015 Women of the Mountains International Conference held under the auspices of the United Nations Mountain Partnership. It was a stellar effort by the community, the faculty and the engaged students which included nontraditional learners such as me. The conference was a success, with women coming from 20 mountain states worldwide to Orem, Utah, to participate.

Women who came and were involved in the conference communicated a concern about world hunger. It became quite obvious through this engaged learning experience that women, in particular, can solve the world's problems also through STEM education.

This event was an eye opener for me, in the way that I recognized the importance of engaged learning in our schools and Universities, and as a non-traditional student it meant all the difference to my career to be a part of such an ambitious project. I was responsible for organizing a business fair and moderating a session on women's role in business. During the organizing process, Dr. Abdrisaev, as our mentor and I included, went all over the State of Utah to bring awareness to this event, with many people expressing much enthusiasm for having the opportunity to also share their important and valuable work. This work is extremely beneficial for the education of non-traditional women learners, and for it to continue, it needs our support.

The conference was highlighted by the United Nations Secretary General's report on sustainable mountain development in 2016 as hosted by students through clubs' coalition. This laid for us a foundation for UVU students every year to participate at the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.