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Chief International Officer of UVU's Officer for Global Engagement
67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Side event

“Advocating for mountain women and girls’ education through student-engaged learning.”

March 8, 2023

I would like to express thanks to the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations and the Mountain Partnership for providing an opportunity for our delegation to speak today during this side event advocating for mountain women through education. I also appreciate both institutions for allowing us to present the student engaged learning (SEL) model developed at Utah Valley University (UVU) in collaboration with academic institutions from the Kyrgyz Republic. My office together with the UVU History and Political Science Department contributes to this model since its establishment in 2011.

SEL encourages students to work on real-world problems as a group with faculty mentoring them. The model is implemented through the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU with their teacher, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, serving as mentor. This is the sixth session of the Commission in which the UVU students through SEL advocate for mountain women by hosting a parallel event and submitting a written statement.

In 2018 my office assisted students to host a side event by engaging them with Permanent Missions of Uzbekistan and Bosnia Herzegovina to the United Nations. As a tradition, my Office assists UIMF members to observe annually since 2010 December 11th as the International Mountain Days. We appreciate that the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic invited President of the UIMF Samuel Elzinga to speak during IMD observations at the UN in 2018 and 2019.

In summer 2019, my office co-hosted the 68th UN Civil Society Conference, the first time it was held in the US outside NY headquarters. UVU students then included language urging sustainable development for mountain communities in the preamble of the Outcome Document of the conference. UIMF members also advocated for sustainable mountain development during the first international academic Conference “Why it Matters” on sustainable development goals which UVU hosted during October 5-7, 2022 in partnership with the Civil Society Unit and the Academic Impact Initiative of the UN Department of Global Communications.

This delegation has 28 students and 22 of them are UVU Rotaractors. We hope that for the next time we could have during a similar side event at least one Rotaractor from each of the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries. This will allow us to contribute in practical way to the efforts of the Kyrgyz Republic in making an education a central part of the 2023–2027 "Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions", approved by the UNGA in the resolution A/RES/77/172 at the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic.