

STATEMENT
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69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Parallel Event
An Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women and Girls
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Good Morning, Honorable delegates, distinguished guests, and fellow advocates. My name is Ana Caballero, and I am from the southeast of Mexico. I am a Global Politics Major, and today, I want to highlight the crucial role of women in indigenous mountain communities in Mexico and their contributions to sustainable development. Across these remote regions, Indigenous women have long been stewards of the environment, preserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and maintaining traditional ecological knowledge that has been passed down for generations. Yet, their work often goes unrecognized and unsupported.

Through the Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model at Utah Valley University (UVU), students, both traditional and non-traditional, actively engage in projects and research that address real-world challenges, particularly in sustainable mountain development. This inclusive model allows students from diverse backgrounds, including working professionals, first-generation college students, and international scholars, to collaborate on initiatives that have a tangible impact..

Indigenous Mountain women play a key role in food security through traditional farming techniques that prioritize sustainability, such as milpa cultivation, which combines corn, beans, and squash in a way that naturally enriches the soil. They also lead conservation efforts, protecting forests, water sources, and biodiversity through practices deeply rooted in their cultural heritage.

Despite their essential contributions, Indigenous women face systemic barriers, including limited access to education, land rights, and financial resources. Gender inequality, combined with the impacts of climate change, further aggravates the challenges they face. Addressing these issues requires policies and programs that empower women as leaders in sustainability, ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels.

As we gather at the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, it is vital to recognize that sustainability and gender equality are deeply interconnected. When Indigenous women have access to resources, education, and decision-making power, they drive meaningful change not just for their own communities but for the world as a whole. Empowering Mexican indigenous women is not just a moral imperative; it is a necessary step toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.