

**STATEMENT**  
**Louyoko Nianza**  
**69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Parallel Event**  
***Empowering Mountain Women and Girls Through Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning***

**March 10, 2025**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Louyoko Nianza. I am originally from Africa, the Republic of Congo. I came to the USA in 2023 and currently study political science at Utah Valley University (UVU). I was a Rotaractor in Congo and since December 2024, I have been the president of UVU Rotaract. I am honored to be part of the UVU delegation at CSW69. Therefore I am proud today, to speak here about the importance of including mountain women and girls in the CSW69's final document. These women worldwide and in particular in the mountain areas of Africa face many challenges.

For decades, women in DRC have suffered the brutal consequences of war, losing loved ones and being forced to flee their homes. In Sudan, violence and instability have further deepened women's suffering. Because of the war in Congo, I lost both of my parents when I was a child. In such conflict zones, women face sexual violence as a weapon of war, leaving many without justice. But still, African women remain the backbone of their communities, striving to protect the environment, ensure food security, and keep families together.

Yet, they are excluded from decision-making processes. Limited access to education, economic opportunities, and leadership roles hinders their progress. Providing education and leadership opportunities for women in conflict zones is crucial for peace and sustainable development. Women are not just victims; they are powerful actors of change, capable of rebuilding communities, advocating for peace, and driving economic growth. The world cannot exist without them.

At UVU, I was involved in the Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model—a hands-on approach that helps students learn by solving real-world problems as a group when the teacher mentors them. Our work in environmental advocacy, including volunteering at the Conservative Climate Change Summit hosted by Congressman John Curtis last October at UVU, has provided us with new skills and knowledge in protecting the environment and promoting gender equality.

UVU Rotaractors and I are fortunate to partner with the Orem Lindon Rotary Club when we provide services to underserved communities in Utah County: we have served jointly at Tabitha's Way, a local food pantry in Utah County, and raised funds to purchase coats for kids at local schools among others. Our team and I have taken action in Africa as well: as a result, last December, we helped fund scholarships for over twenty students in Chad. Our visit to CSW69

happened thanks to support from Rotarians together with Utah Valley University's History and Political Science department and College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

To create lasting change, I call on the United Nations and global leaders to support an inclusive, student-driven SEL model—one that combines education, leadership, and community service to uplift mountain women and girls. Let us work together to ensure their voices are heard in CSW69's final document and beyond.

**Thank you.**