

My Student Engagement and Advocacy for Mountain Women at the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

On March 10, 2026, I had the opportunity to participate virtually in a parallel event of the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70). The event, titled “Raising Justice Awareness of Mountain Women Through Student-Engaged Learning,” brought together students, advocates to discuss challenges faced by women living in mountain regions around the world. As an international student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo studying at Utah Valley University (UVU), it was a meaningful opportunity for me to contribute my perspective and advocate for women whose voices are often unheard due to geography, conflict, and limited access to institutions of justice.



A group photo of Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) members and Utah Valley University students at the conclusion of the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women parallel event held at Utah Valley University.

During the event, which took place from 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., I delivered a short statement emphasizing the urgent need to include mountain women in policy discussions and in the final outcomes of CSW70. Mountain communities provide essential resources such as water, food, and cultural heritage to millions of people worldwide, yet women in these regions frequently face isolation, poverty, and insecurity. In the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, difficult terrain combined with ongoing conflict often prevents women from accessing police stations, courts, or medical services. These barriers highlight the importance of ensuring that justice, protection, and development initiatives reach women regardless of their geographic location.



A photo of Antoine Mwamba, a member of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), delivering his statement at a parallel event of the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women at Utah Valley University.

My participation in this event was made possible through collaboration with the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) at UVU and through the university's Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model. This approach allows students to work as a group with their teacher mentorship to apply their academic knowledge to real community needs while gaining practical experience in civic engagement and international advocacy. Through SEL activities, I have been

involved in service projects that support local communities and raise awareness about mountain development issues, demonstrating how students can actively contribute to global conversations on sustainable development and human rights.



Antoine Mwamba, a member of the UIMF, delivering his statement at a parallel event of the CSW70 at UVU.

Participating in CSW70 was a valuable introduction to diplomatic engagement and international advocacy. It also served as an important step in preparing for my upcoming study-abroad program in New York later this year, where I hope to continue learning about global governance and the work of the United Nations. Experiences like this reinforce the important role students can play in amplifying marginalized voices and promoting inclusive solutions to

global challenges. By engaging students in meaningful advocacy, universities and international institutions can help shape future leaders committed to justice, equality, and sustainable development.



Antoine Mwamba, a member of the UIMF, delivering his statement at a parallel event of the CSW70 at UVU.

Antoine Mwamba is an international student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a sophomore at Utah Valley University. He is majoring in International Business with a minor in Political Science. He is actively involved with the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), where he advocates for sustainable mountain development and the rights of vulnerable communities. He aspires to pursue a career in international diplomacy and hopes to work with the United Nations to promote justice, development, and global cooperation.

By Antoine Mwamba, Utah Valley University student