

Advocating for Mountain Women: My Contribution at the CSW 70 Parallel Event

By Louyoko Nianza

On March 10, 2026, I had the opportunity to participate as a speaker in a parallel event connected to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 70), hosted by students and faculty from Utah Valley University. This event focused on sustainable mountain development (SMD) and the challenges faced by mountain women and girls around the world. The session took place in the morning and included both live and pre-recorded presentations, followed by a question-and-answer discussion with participants.

As a speaker, I shared my personal experience working in community-based advocacy to support vulnerable women in mountain regions. My work focuses on helping women and girls gain access to education, hygiene resources, and basic community support. Through my involvement in local initiatives and nonprofit efforts like smart-africain NGO, where I have contributed to programs that have supported more than 250 women. These programs include hygiene awareness campaigns, distribution of essential supplies, and educational outreach aimed at improving daily living conditions.



My main contribution to the discussion was to emphasize the importance of grassroots action in addressing mountain women challenges. While global policies and frameworks are important, I highlighted that real change often begins at the local level. In many mountain communities, women face daily challenges such as poverty, isolation, and limited access to healthcare and education. By working directly with these communities, I have seen how small, targeted efforts can create meaningful and immediate impact.

Throughout the event, key topics included the connection between sustainable mountain development and women's rights, as well as the lack of representation of women in decision-making processes. I explained that these challenges are interconnected. When women are excluded from leadership and policy discussions, their needs are often overlooked, especially in rural and mountainous regions. My experience has shown that empowering women requires not only advocacy at the international level but also direct engagement with communities.

Another important theme of the event was the Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model at Utah Valley University. This model encourages students to connect academic learning with real-world service and research. I found that the principles of SEL—collaboration, community engagement, and applied learning—closely align with my own work. My advocacy efforts reflect these values by focusing on practical solutions and involving community members in the process of change.

The event also featured presentations from other participants such as Anna Cavallero, Amish Brock, and Abbie Fisher. Their research covered mountain regions in countries like Kyrgyzstan, Austria, and China, highlighting different perspectives on sustainable development and gender equality. These contributions helped create a broader understanding of the global challenges affecting mountain communities.

Through my participation in this event, I reinforced my understanding that sustainable development cannot be achieved without including women as active participants and leaders. I also recognized the importance of connecting global discussions with local action. Sharing my experience allowed me to contribute to this dialogue and highlight the real needs of mountain women.

Personally, being part of this event was both meaningful and motivating. It gave me the opportunity to share my work on an international platform and to learn from others who are also committed to advocacy and social change. It strengthened my belief that even small community-based initiatives can have a lasting impact.

In conclusion, the CSW 70 parallel event demonstrated the strong connection between education, advocacy, and sustainable development. My contribution focused on the importance of grassroots action and direct community support in empowering mountain women. This experience reaffirmed my commitment to continue working toward gender equality and to support sustainable solutions that address the real challenges faced by women in mountain regions.

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