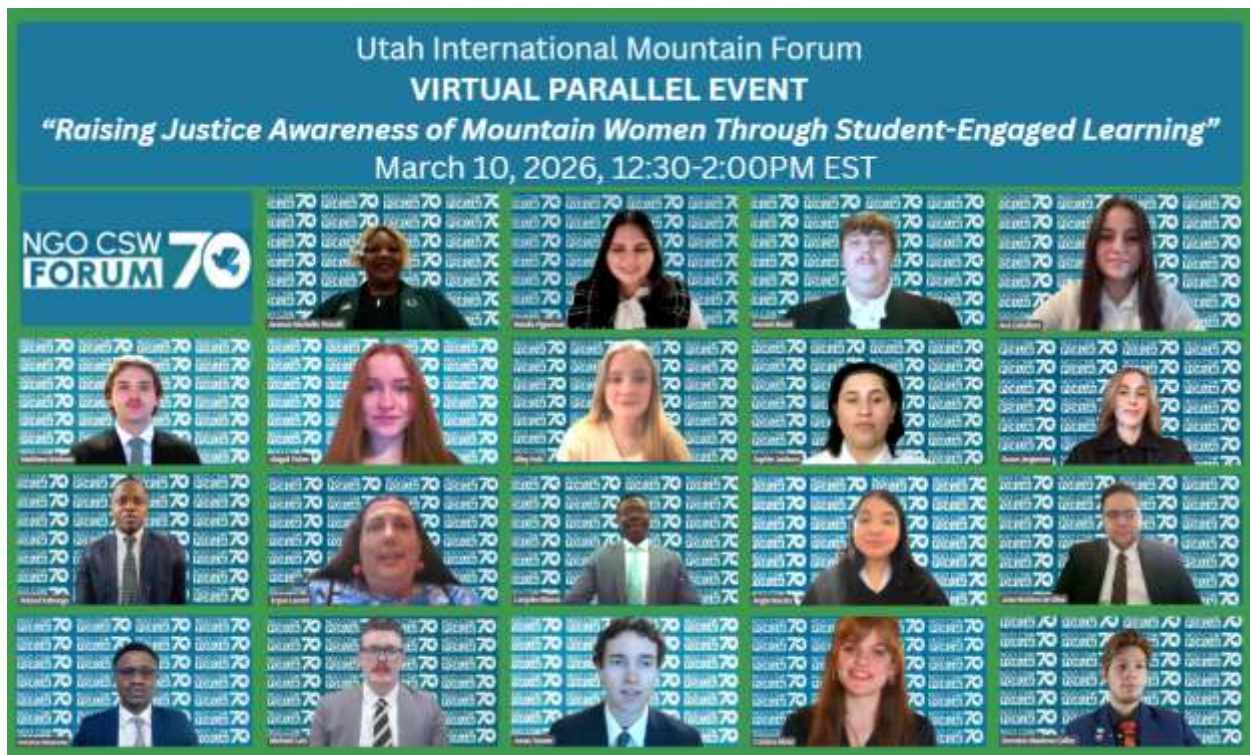


## My Experience Advocating for Mountain Women at the 70th Session of the Commission of the Status of Women

On March 10, 2026, I participated alongside 18 other students from the United Nations Sustainable Development course at Utah Valley University in the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). As part of our involvement, we organized and carried out a student-led parallel event titled “Raising Justice Awareness of Mountain Women through Student-Engaged Learning.” Our goal was to contribute to the broader work of the CSW by drawing attention to an often-overlooked group in global policy discussions—women living in mountain communities.



*“Family photo” of all the students who contributed to the parallel event*

Mountain communities are frequently left out of major policy conversations, and women in these regions face layered challenges tied to geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, and reduced access to economic and political opportunities. Going into this event, we wanted to highlight those realities and

advocate for stronger recognition of mountain women within international frameworks focused on justice, education, and sustainable development.

Each student delivered a short presentation based on their own research. My remarks focused on a comparative case study of the Alpine region and Kyrgyzstan, specifically looking at how mountain women are—or are not—accounted for in sustainable mountain development policies. Through this comparison, I argued that while some regions have made progress in recognizing the role of mountain women, there are still clear gaps in representation and implementation. My main objective was to advocate for more consistent inclusion of mountain women in policy design, especially given their critical role in environmental management and community resilience.



*Me giving my remarks at the CSW70 parallel event*

In addition to presenting, I also served as a co-moderator for the event. While Natalia Figueroa acted as the main moderator, I worked behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly. This included organizing speaker order, making sure participants were prepared, and managing transitions throughout the session. I was also in constant communication with other student leaders to troubleshoot issues and maintain the overall flow of the event. It was a hands-on role that required quick coordination and attention to detail.

As the Vice President of Utah Valley University Foreign Affairs, I was also involved in the broader planning and preparation process leading up to the event. Our work extended well beyond research and presentations. As a group, we engaged in several service-oriented projects that connected our academic focus to real community needs. We assembled hygiene kits for single mothers, volunteered at a local food bank to support families experiencing food insecurity, and organized a fundraiser through orange sales to support the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club and its charitable work. These efforts helped ground our advocacy in tangible action and reinforced the connection between local service and global policy engagement.



*Fellow student Antoine Mwamba and I coordinating during the event*

All of these experiences reflect Utah Valley University's Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model in a very real way. Instead of learning about international relations and policy only in a classroom setting, we were actively involved in organizing an event, conducting research with real-world implications, and

engaging in advocacy ourselves. Through the Utah International Mountain Forum especially, students take the lead in shaping projects, coordinating with peers, and contributing to broader global conversations. This model pushes us to move beyond theory and actually practice the kind of work we hope to do professionally.

This event also served as an important step in preparing us for future opportunities at the United Nations in Geneva and New York City. Being part of a structured, policy-focused environment gave us a better sense of what to expect in more formal diplomatic settings and helped build the confidence and skills needed to participate effectively.



*Group photo of all students who participated in the event*

Overall, this experience brought together research, service, and advocacy in a way that felt both practical and meaningful. It reinforced the importance of making space for underrepresented voices—especially those of mountain women—and showed how student-led efforts can contribute to larger international discussions.

**Written by: Aemish Brock – Vice President of UVU Foreign Affairs**

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