

## **STATEMENT**

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**70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**Parallel Event**

**Raising Justice Awareness of Mountain Women Through Student-Engaged Learning**

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Good afternoon, my name is João Petter. I am from Brazil, and I am a Global Politics student at Utah Valley University and a member of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF). A mountain perspective matters to the UN Mountain Partnership, because mountains are essential to global sustainability and human security. Yet mountain communities and women are frequently under-resourced and underrepresented. This is the case of the CSW, which has never included mountain women in their final documents.

Mountain regions provide water and livelihoods while facing disproportionate climate impacts. In many mountain communities, women and girls carry heavy burdens such as unpaid care work, little access to education and health services, and safe transportation. These pressures create real limits on civic participation and legal empowerment. When violence occurs, survivors face long travel to report, language barriers, and institutional practices that discourage follow-through.

The UVU Student Engaged Learning (SEL) Model offers a practical way to respond. SEL is inclusive because it brings together traditional and non-traditional students. In UIMF, SEL allows students to work on challenges affecting mountain communities and elevate women's leadership through policy analysis, public outreach, and UN engagement. Through the SEL I was able to help serve mountain communities throughout the state of Utah in partnership with non-profit groups such as the Orem-Lindon Rotaract and host events with both local and foreign dignitaries bringing awareness to the issues facing mountain women.

In my research on Bolivia, I learned how mountain geography can widen the gap between rights on paper and justice in practice. Bolivia has formal legal protections for women, but Indigenous women in highland areas face distance to services, limited legal support, language barriers, and institutional delays that make justice difficult to access. The lesson is clear: discrimination is not only a problem in laws; it can also appear in everyday practices that prevent women from receiving equal protection.

In conclusion, we urge member states and partners to support practical access to justice through language access, survivor-centered procedures, and community-based pathways that reduce distance and delay. Additionally, universities should expand inclusive SEL models that are student-centric and student-driven. They build the skills and partnerships needed to advance women's rights and sustainable mountain development.

Thank you.