

**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 Sophie Jackson. I am a political science Honors undergraduate student at UVU and currently part of the student-engaged learning model, known as SEL. My goal here is to raise my voice in support of the mountain girls and women and ensure that the final document of this session highlights the struggles and challenges women face in building a brighter future. I am a woman who has spent the majority of my life in the mountains, moving between the Wasatch Mountain range and the San Francisco Peaks of Flagstaff, Arizona. In my own community, I have seen women struggle against violence, discrimination, and the lack of a voice in our government and society. However, it is because of the SEL that I, a born-and-raised mountain woman, am able to make a statement before you all today.

On top of this, thanks to SEL, my peers and I participate in local service opportunities, such as raising funds by selling oranges for the local Rotary Club who support community projects, assembling hygiene kits for the less fortunate, and volunteering at a local food pantry. We do this to help improve livelihoods and to support our community. I have personally seen, felt, and researched the issues facing my own mountain communities and those of global mountain communities. However, the issues facing women and mountain communities are being overlooked. For these reasons, I am here to discuss Justice for women and to share my research on the challenges facing all women, with a particular focus on mountain women in Japan.

Recently, more and more young women are leaving their rural, mountainous hometowns in Japan for its big cities. These women are moving to big cities in search of better employment opportunities, to escape rigid social and religious gender norms, and to escape gender discrimination in both education and business. While their reasons for leaving are admirable, these women are becoming increasingly vulnerable to forced prostitution and forced participation in Japan's lucrative sex industry. Forced prostitution, manipulation, and violence against young women is on the rise in Japan due to an increase in demand known as sex tourism, new waves of crime organizations focused on trapping women into prostitution, and the lack of legal repercussions placed on buyers.

In conclusion, in order to empower mountain women globally, and especially in Japan, we must further examine how women's search for equality and greater opportunities is making them increasingly vulnerable within their societies, and examine how we can implement new legislation in order to protect vulnerable women. Lastly, we can promote the SEL learning model worldwide to continue community outreach and give more women opportunities to share research and experiences with world governments, as my peers and I are doing today. Mountain women need to be included in the final document for this session. Our voices will and must be heard worldwide to effect change. Thank you for your time.