

# My Experience at the Women of the Mountains Conference

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I recently had the opportunity to participate in the Women of the Mountains conference hosted by Utah Valley University students in Orem Utah on October 7-9, 2015. My assignment was to provide a protocol for Mia Rowan, representative of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat and F.A.O. of the United Nations, during the conference and around the campus of UVU



***Mia Rowan, representative of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat makes presentation during the conference***

Mia had flown in directly from Rome on October 6, 2015. Her flight was delayed and as person responsible for her protocol, I waited for her at Salt Lake City airport that day until the 11:00 pm. I immediately recognized her when she appeared at the baggage zone thanks for photos provided to me before. She was a very short lady, friendly and very energetic, despite the long flight... I was able to drive her to the hotel in Orem which is just 50 minutes apart to the south from Salt Lake City.

The Mountain Partnership is a “United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the

world.”[1] It was founded in 2002 and has been meeting the challenges and issues that mountainous regions have been fronting. Drawing from a variety of resources, the Mountain Partnership is currently working with “more than 250 governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups (e.g. civil society, NGOs and the private sector) and subnational authorities.”[2] On top of that, Mia also works with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations which focuses on the “eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Needless to say, her experience was very much needed and appreciated during the conference.

We started out by going to meetings immediately after Mia’s accommodation at the hotel. She was very interested in meeting many participants of the conference during the social event in the evening of October 6, 2015: women entrepreneurs from Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Peru greeted her and socialized with her as well.

Mia was supposed to meet with a panel of the Mountain Partnership members from North America that she was going to head. Members shared ideas about what would be good key points to hit and how everyone could contribute something special from their uniquely different positions that were all dedicated to the same cause. After that she was going to and from meetings, panels and presentations and I followed her when it was necessary. By seeing everyone participate it was easy to note that all had put much thought and effort into their valuable contributions. It was a great opportunity for all those present at the conference to network and meet new people from all around the world committed to the same purpose of helping people living in the mountains and their families and children.

In between the items on the agenda I was trying to be as helpful as possible by fulfilling trivial tasks while Mia was attending the meetings. One of them was printing off and setting up a station where people could sign a petition to make certain mountain ecosystems and peoples affected by climate change are addressed in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties in Paris (UNFCCC COP21).[3] Anyone can sign it that goes on to the web-site hosted at [change.org](http://change.org) or goes to the Mountain Partnership’s Facebook page and follows the link. I also was able to help with one of Mia’s presentations in running her power point while she spoke.



***Mia Rowan speaks at the conference and I help her with power point presentation***

Overall, it was a great experience. I never had imagined that this year, as a college student, I would be able to work with dignitaries and high ranking officials around the world in a cause such as this. It was a great to become more familiar the process of how these international conventions and conferences work and what it actually takes to run them while they are happening.

***Trevor Williams, UVU student***

[1] <http://www.mountainpartnership.org/about/en/>

[2] <http://www.fao.org/about/en/>

[3] [https://www.change.org/p/unfccc-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change-ensure-that-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-mountain-peoples-and-ecosystems-is-fully-addressed-in-the-unfccc-cop21-new-climate-deal?recruiter=47847342&utm\\_source=share\\_pe](https://www.change.org/p/unfccc-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change-ensure-that-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-mountain-peoples-and-ecosystems-is-fully-addressed-in-the-unfccc-cop21-new-climate-deal?recruiter=47847342&utm_source=share_pe)  
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