

Statement

On behalf of the delegation of Utah Valley University before participants of the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Status of Women by Munkhbat Batmunkh, VP of UIMF

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

One UN Hotel, Manhattan Room, 2nd Floor, New York

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends and participants of the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, on behalf of the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs we thank you for your attention for our presentation.

We also would like to thank Wendy Jiang, her students from China and other colleagues, who helped us to organize this presentation. Our six member delegation of Utah Valley University (UVU), including five students will be able to join you all at CSW 61 during the next week only, when we have a spring break. Fortunately, thanks to the modern technology we can connect with you all from the internet Skype.

-Who are we?

We, students, members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) a coalition of student clubs at UVU, are actively promoting the Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) Agenda of the United Nations in State of Utah and in the North America since 2007.

-We are excited to share with you what we were able to achieve during 10 years, when we started to host the international Women of the Mountains Conferences in Utah. These Conferences today are known as grassroots forums to advocate gender and SMD in North America by collectively working together with other similar minded institutions. Also, our events are self-reliant and we raise funds on local level as our contribution to the UN agenda.

One of our most highlighted and proud achievements is that these efforts are done by the students and non-traditional students in particular who are in need to combine their job and family related responsibilities with their education. Still our members selflessly working to Empower Mountain Women and promote SMD as part of engaged learning approach at UVU.

What made us so successful?

-We are the student clubs' coalition that is all working together towards raising awareness about numerous challenges experienced by mountain women and families, who are often being ignored. For example, in Europe, there are developed mountain countries like Switzerland, which have successfully implemented themselves Gender and Sustainable Mountain Development while at the same time helping other developing mountain communities to do the same. And the goal of our coalition is to facilitate similar process here in the North America by mobilizing local communities to contribute to the promotion of gender and SMD in other parts of developing world.

We have hard working students working together to achieve today's result through engaged learning initiative which gives students the leading role in that process with teachers serving as advisors only.

Our coalition student clubs at UVU hosted the Fourth International Women of the Mountains Conference under the umbrella of the FAO-UN. It was hosted in Orem in October 7-9, 2015. Since 2007, we have hosted 4 WOMC's. However, our most recent conference is for the first time ever, a high level United Nations forum, was hosted through efforts of the **STUDENTS ONLY**. Our conference was gathered as a follow up to the historic UN sustainable development summit in New York which adopted SDGs.

Our coalition of clubs was featured in the 2016 United Nations Secretary General's Report on SMD. UN document mentioned that: "The Utah International Mountain Forum hosted the fourth International Women of the Mountains Conference at Utah Valley University in October 2015 to address the critical issues faced by women and children living in mountainous regions across the globe and provide a forum to discuss gender equality."

The report also emphasized that the final document of the conference

contributed to the implementation of the SDG#5, SDG#6, and SDG#15

As a new generation of leaders who are passionate about sustainability, gender equality for women within mountainous regions, and connecting with mountain communities globally, my peers and I were able to make a difference in those areas by action and by not giving up these important aspects that are almost forgotten.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to invite other student groups who contribute to implementation of UN post 2015 agenda with focus on gender issues to work together and be part of the International Women of the Mountains Conferences in particular.

We are confident that jointly we, students, can do so much and make a big difference not only in the world, but also among the mountain communities and women in particular.

Thank you again