

**Statement of
Andrew Jensen, President, Model United Nations Club at Utah Valley
University during the International Mountain Day celebration
the United Nations, December 11, 2018**

My name is Andrew Jensen and I am attending the side-event today as the President of the Model of the United Nations (MUN) program at UVU. My interest in MUN began in high school. In MUN, we take on roles of different countries and members of United Nations and attempt to resolve conflict modeling the United Nations system. Last march I led a UVU team in the MUN of the Far West in San Francisco, which won a certificate for excellent performance on behalf of Japan. We selected Japan as a mountainous country because in 2017 our team also won a certificate by simulating policies of Kyrgyzstan and sustainable mountain development agenda at ECOSOC.

My experience at MUN was helpful when I had the opportunity through the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of clubs at UVU to attend the 2018 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development in July of 2018.

We were able to get through the assistance of three NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC a written statement accepted by the HLPF and also to give an oral statement during general debates at HLPF. This process was rigorous and involved an in-depth research about the assigned topic and meticulous editing and reviewing of the statement prior to submission to the UN.. Much of the work required self-motivation to achieve deadlines set by the United Nations. The core of our model at UVU is to take student interests and magnifying them through the model of engaged learning.

This was first time done by university students from Utah in the history of the UN. In both our statement we told about lack of attention to the mountain communities who are among the poorest and most neglected even by the UN. . Emerging challenges like climate change worsen their lives and this is relevant for the communities in Utah as well. The recent US report on climate change mentioned that climate change has the potential to vastly affect life in the United States, and in Utah in particular. Utah is also experiencing a chronic problem with air quality. Governor Herbert just announced a grant of millions of dollars that will be used to tackle climate change in Utah. We reported in our written statement how students at all levels advocated for that during 2018. For example, this May, as a result of two years of lobbying from members of a science club at Logan High School, the state of Utah passed a climate change resolution, titled the “Concurrent Resolution on Environmental and Economic Stewardship.” The resolution urges Utah to undertake the “the responsible stewardship of natural resources and reduction of emissions.” At UVU our peers from SMD club campaigned for improving air quality by advocating for a day where all UVU students would carpool to help clean air initiatives. Additionally, we campaigned for our work in clean air at conferences in Utah. Finally, we worked on legislation that would allow us to influence change in clean air protocols. UVU developed already a plan to become carbon neutral by 2050.

At the same time, our important priority was to ensure that in addition to the mentioning in statements, the mountain targets would be included in the final document of the HLPF. For that purpose, I studied contents of VNRs of 47 countries during HLPF and whether they discuss the implementation of mountain targets in their nations. I selected then among them 14 countries-Mountain Partnership members and decided to include questions about mountain targets implementations during their VNR sessions. It was a very challenging task as well, because each

countries Q&A sessions were handled by different NGOs. I contacted maximum possible NGO representatives responsible for Q&A sessions during VNRs. I was successful in two cases only: by establishing contacts with the Global University System and with an NGO-moderator of Q&A during VNR of Romania. The question whether Romania implements mountain targets was asked during Q&A about mountain targets, but it was avoided by the officials from Romania from responding.

UIMF will continue its efforts in advocating for mountain targets in 2019 sessions of ECOSOC. Our delegation will host a parallel event at the second floor of the Church Center on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 during the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We welcome your representatives to attend our event then. A written statement advocating for mountain women under sponsorship of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, an NGO on consultative status with ECOSOC was published already by ECOSOC on November 19, 2018. We included in the folder a copy of the written statement. And our team will try to get a language about mountain women to be included in the final document of CSW63. As we know from our this years' experience, that for all our those efforts to be successful, we need to have a support from each of your countries in jointly preparing such a language and preserving it in the final document of the CSW63. .

From our side, we will continue to expand our network with NGOs for joint work at ECOSOC in 2019. We just met with Gabriel Avgerinos and Takeshi Utsumi, representatives from the Global University System as preparations for the next year activities at ECOSOC and UN. The Global University System is a coalition of universities across the world that work together to promote the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. This venture was started because UVU submitted a cross-cutting statement for the Voluntary National Reviews and GUS contacted our delegation in order to create joint statement between the two organizations. We discussed today with GUS in particular, how their network will contribute to the United Nations Department of Public Information conference in Salt Lake City next year with UNSG Antonio Guterres in attendance as well. In addition, as part of our team at CSW63 and further we will have members of UVU Rotaract in order to get involved in our efforts of mountain advocacy Rotary International, a prominent NGO in general consultative status with ECOSOC from 1993.

We are looking forward to working under the MP in advocating the implementation of mountain targets. I will be glad to contribute my extensive experiences both with MUN and UIMF to advance that goal.