

**STATEMENT**  
**Mr. Michael Hinatsu**  
**68th UN Civil Society Conference**

Thank you for your attention. Women and girls in mountain communities worldwide are often neglected at national and international levels. A 2015 study by the FAO-UN and MP Secretariat revealed that 39% of mountain communities, including women in developing countries, are vulnerable to food insecurity, and that during 2000–2012, 30% more mountain communities suffered from food insecurity, despite a 16% population growth. The UN has designated three mountain targets under the SDGs as important tools for implementing the 2030 development agenda in mountain areas: targets 6.6, 15.1 and 15.4.

Since 2011, UIMF advocates SMD through an SEL model, whereby its members gain professional skills by addressing real-world problems of mountain communities as a group with faculty serving as mentors. In accordance with target 4.7 about the importance for all learners to contribute to implementation of SDGs, UIMF encourages its members, especially non-traditional students, to be an active part of the implementation of the UN 2030 Development agenda. They achieved a number of accomplishments at the UN level:

- Since 2007, hosted under the umbrella of the UN MP, four WOMCs as implementation of mountain targets with SDG#5 on gender in Utah and North America;
- Advocated for mountain targets' adoption at the UN Open Working Groups on the SDGs during 2013-2015;
- Made statements advocating for mountain women and targets during the 53rd session of the Commission on Social Development, 62nd CSW, and at the 2018 HLPF on SD.

Beginning in September 2018, I worked with my fellow students and UIMF members under the SEL model to mobilize other nontraditional students to gain professional advancement via the SEL models as I have experienced, as well as to prepare for our advocacy work at the CSW63:

- We wrote, submitted, and gained approval for a written statement co-sponsored by RANS and Utah China F.I.S.H D&C and published by ECOSOC as an official document on November 19, 2018.
- Added language advocating for mountain women to the CSW63 Zero Draft Document during online conferences with NGO CSW/NY.
- Lobbied for adoption of that language from the UN Secretary-General, ECOSOC President, 46 UN Member States who presented Voluntary National Reviews at the 2018 HLPF, and 54 ECOSOC Member States.
- At the conference, we held a parallel event in which students advocated for mountain women and demonstrated how they used SEL model to address different issues of sustainable development in Utah; we also advocated for mountain women at civil society briefings and other forums at the CSW63

Our experiences show that youth play a critical role in implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It is crucial that all learners be given the tools they need to address issues of sustainable development within their own cities and communities, and SEL can be used to provide them the tools they need to be successful in such endeavors.