

## My Day 1 at CSW67 and Speaking at a Parallel event



**UN Headquarters, New York**

On March 6<sup>th</sup> 2023, I arrived at the United Nations Headquarters at New York for the UN Commission on the Status of Women Event 67<sup>th</sup> session. We had our parallel event at 2:30 pm at the Church Centre of United Nations 8<sup>th</sup> floor and I was one of the presenting speakers.

When I arrived at 8 am in the morning, I was delighted to meet all the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) delegation and my mentor Dr. Baktybek Abdrysaev and his wife. UIMF is a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University including: The American Israeli Alliance, College Democrats, College Republicans, Foreign Affairs, Model UN, Russian Club, and Sustainable Mountain Development. Initially, we took some to click pictures as a team and of the surroundings. Later, we went through the security.



**UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library**

The Utah Valley University office of global Engagement had the privilege to present the research papers in the form of book from the First International Academic Conference on Sustainable development goals "Why it Matters" to the UN Dag Hammarskjold Library at 10:30 am – 11:30 am. I was glad to be present in-person when Baldomero Lago, PhD handed over the efforts of all the hard work we researchers had put in these papers.



### UN General Assembly Hall – Morning session

We had already taken a ticket for the Opening of the session at the General Assembly on Saturday when we had to come to collect the UN ground pass. Thus, we proceeded to the 4th floor where the GA Hall is. This session was planned for 3 hours from 10 am to 1 pm. I attended the session at 11: 30 and onwards. The agenda of this sessions are:

#### **Opening of the session**

Election of officers (Item 1)

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (Item 2)

Introduction of documents  
(Item 3 as a whole)

#### **General discussion (Item3) (*opens*)**

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

Ms. Sima Bahous, UN Under- Secretary and Executive Director of UN Women started her speech delivery by saying “ A new kind of poverty now confronts the world, one that excludes women and girls in devastating ways—that of digital poverty” and why the work of this 67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) could not be more timely nor more critical. She continued to speak about how the rural women especially the migrants face a lot of income inequality and they are forced to flee along with their children from their country as there is war or conflict in their areas. She then continued to speak on how women are often sexually abused in digital and technological space and how 80% of the victims are children especially adolescent girls. She also mentioned how Afghan women also were targeted for participation in online campaigns under the Taliban government.

She stressed the importance of technology and innovation enable women lives. The research done by UN women shows that the progress of women is very slow in digital space and the reason are mainly there are unresolved challenges like conflicts, food crisis in countries like Ukraine, Afghanistan, Haiti and Syria. She also said that technology and innovations are game changers to catalyze reduced poverty, improved health, create and improve energy access benefiting women and girls via sustainable development.

Social Media acts as a crucial connector in critical countries like Niger and Haiti. Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality and Blockchain tech is used by UN to harness technology in every UN member state to build a better place with leaving no one behind. Every Member State must be having access to quality education especially for those girls who missed the first time around.

We should ensure job and innovation vacancy for women especially in Silicon Valley sector while forcing transparency so that bias is not embedded in the field of AI. Women should be included in design and deployment phases of AI as well. She concludes her remarks by saying . “**Digital Rights are Women Rights**” and that we can no longer turn a blind eye towards violence and discrediting women and girls.

Next, director of the committee on elimination of all discrimination of women spoke her report (Item 3 of the agenda as a whole) ‘Introduction of documents’ to the committee. Later, Rapporteur spoke on violence against women in which she says how mental health crisis affecting many of the girls in this era of technological change. She stresses on intersectional approach to all the technological interventions, which is not summarized in sound bites before election.

Next, General Discussion (Item 3) opens which is the follow up of the Fourth World Conference on women which is Women 2000 gender equality development and peace for 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Sweden representative of European Union spoke on how technology has the potential to push back negative social norms against harassment of girls. She believes that at the current rate it may take 300 years to achieve what we are heading towards. EU has high hopes that via significant investment from partners around the globe, faster progress towards Gender Equality can be achieved.

To accomplish digital transition in gender, it is not SDG 5 which should be concentrated on but also Sustainable Development goals 3,4,8, and 16. Innovation and digitization helps not only helps in maintaining privacy of girls in vulnerable places but also transposition of girls from gender stereotypes and bias. She also stated that technology facilitated gender violence in digital space is targeting young girls both offline and online. Women human rights defenders are often impaired off their activities. We should systematically include all ages of women in digital space and EU stresses a lot on comprehensive sexual education and approaches.

She concluded her remarks saying closing gender divide is very much needed to promote Gender Equality and turn words into deeds. The world provided by technology is the only world left.



**Meeting with Madam Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva, PR of Kyrgyz Republic**

After this session, we proceeded to meet the Permanent Representative from the Kyrgyz republic to the United Nations at 12: 30 pm. During this time, students of UVU discussed about hosting her at UVU in upcoming semesters. The ambassador seemed enthusiastic about the prospect of doing this. After the discussion, we presented gifts to the ambassador and prepared for the parallel event.



**UIMF – UN CSW 67 Parallel Event**

This event began at 2:30 pm at the Church Centre of United Nations, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor. Here, all the delegation team members spoke about “Empowering Mountain Women through Inclusive Student -Learning Educational Initiative” in their respective chosen mountain countries. My speech consisted of how there is a misleading stereotype in the west that India is very much backward in Information technology area and how the youth are at almost 50:50 gender parity rate in STEM graduates. I also spoke about my research wherein mountain women being secondary decision makers are less educated and empowered and investment must be made for not only women development but also women-led development. I concluded my speech by quoting “The Idea of perfect womanhood is perfect independence.”

After our lunch, we proceeded to the General Assembly for the afternoon session:

**3.00 - 6.00 p.m.**

**GA Hall**

**General discussion (Item3) (continued)**



**UN General Assembly Hall – Afternoon session**

After our parallel event, I and Ms. Wendy Jyang, from Utah China FISH DC joined the session at about 4pm. In this debate session, a representative Serbia spoke about how Gender Equality in digital space is important for future gender development and to achieve SDG 2030. Also a representative from Ukraine stresses the vitality of digital innovation and how in the war conflicted zone like Ukraine, digitization helped to narrow gap in gender equality. It is just in 2019, that the world became fully aware of Ukraine’s vulnerability. Women with children had to flee the country leaving men behind. To close the gender bias and promote digitization, 4k companies have registered in Ukraine to promote women entrepreneurship. Later, Netherlands spoke on how University of Aruba built the Master’s Program to educate women and girls about SDGs. In Luxembourg, the permanent representative conveyed that the students majoring in ICT is very low mainly because of inequalities in gender and it is said that it the key element that affects digitization. To promote Gender equality , it is highly essential to stop digital violence and to promote this they have a digital day celebration annually. Also in Ireland, STEM implementation plan was launched to promote gender balance evident in STEM. To break this stereotype, and provide full potential to women, it is very much essential to include girls in education

and the bridge the bias in gender inequality and lessen the digital divide and support the digital economy. Finally, I listened to the opinions put forth by United Kingdom representative and she began by saying “ Technology can be an educator and also a divider.” Women mostly do not have access to the digital world and moreover the marginalized ones can face increased barrier. Investment from the government is providing huge access to technology especially in countries like Kenya and Nigeria. The UK government have also passed a bill to protect the children from cybersecurity bullying as Digital age works for all of us and that’s the best way to achieve Sustainable development Goals.

At about 5:30 pm, my schedule for 6<sup>th</sup> March at UN Headquarters was accomplished and called it a day. Thank you.

**Priyanka Prem Kumar, UIMF member**