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**68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Parallel event**  
**“Empowering Mountain Women Economically Through an Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning.”**  
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Good morning, everyone! My name is Jinwoo Song, and I am a political science student from Utah Valley University (UVU). I thank the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU for allowing me to advocate for women and girls from the mountain communities to be the focus of this session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Globally, they are challenged in achieving sustainable development not only by harsh natural conditions, including climate change but also by lack of services and economic opportunities.

I know about this from my own experiences in my native South Korea when I served in the military. My unit was stationed in a small mountain town. I have seen cases in which women in particular were subjected to unreasonable treatment or discrimination, compared to urban centers in Korea. I remember being quite concerned that the situation was more serious than I expected.

In 2021, as a UVU student, I was enrolled in the class called “United Nations” and in the class about sustainable development goals as well. During these classes, I have had the experience through student-engaged learning (SEL) to study one country and be able to discuss various issues with my peers and play a role in establishing and coordinating opinions including through research. SEL stimulated us students to work as a group on solving certain practical problems and our teacher advised us when we needed help. I was able to effectively approach the main theme of the UIMF, which calls for the sustainable development of women and families in mountainous regions globally.

In a current class on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by studying assignments and taking quizzes, I was able not only to understand the activities of UIMF but also involved in some of them as well. Those activities taught us how we can be successful by using SEL through UIMF to serve local communities. We also hosted dignitaries like UVU alumnus Tony Medina and John McClure, who told us how the model helped them to advance in different roles in the U.S. government and law enforcement institutions. I gained knowledge about SDGs' importance, including mountain targets that are designed to address a range of interconnected challenges facing the world, including mountain communities dealing with poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. This whole concept of SDGs is showing my peers and me direction and demonstrating students' success through SEL and UIMF.

My research in two classes during this semester focuses on the ongoing multi and bilateral diplomatic efforts in resolving violence and conflicts in Bolivia and Turkey. I study how women play a crucial role in environmental protection in mountain areas of both states and how strengthening countryside women is critical to decreasing hunger and poverty. However, due to discrimination in social norms, they still encounter more barriers regarding access to strategic resources and opportunities to make their voices heard. To solve these problems, society and men in particular need to change existing perspectives on women's advancement and strengthen their capabilities by adopting various measures for empowering them. One of the solutions could be to adopt similar educational initiatives in their local universities which will provide students opportunities to empower themselves with skills and knowledge about SDGs and mountain targets implementation and then help their communities as well.

Thank you for your time.