

## **Day 4 at the CSW63: Working with Civil Society for Mountain Women**

Utah Valley University (UVU) students continued participation in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) activities and attended a daily briefing hosted by UN Women and NGO CSW/NY early morning on Wednesday, March 20, 2019 to get information on the progress of member state negotiations on the final document of CSW63. They found out that the negotiations were still ongoing on certain topics, such as gender aspects of climate change, investments, and marginalized groups, but also that mountain women and other groups were not being discussed.

Indigenous women are likely to be included; however, women living in mountain regions may have delved into specific language that was difficult for such a large drafting body to consider since every delegate seeks to accomplish their own agenda, leaving mountain women isolated when it comes to international cooperation and protecting women at CSW63. Professor Baktybek Abdrisaev and Michael Hinatsu, vice president of the UIMF were given the opportunity to voice their concerns that another year has gone by and still some of the women in the world are specifically being targeted because there are less protections for them.



*Professor Abdrisaev speaks during the civil society meeting.*

I found out that there are less protections for mountain women in areas where there is conflict. Mountain women have been subject to conditions that other women are not subject to, and this is simply because of their location, culture, and socio-economic status. Education barriers, climate change, land degradation, access to water, and violence are all challenges that can be addressed through international cooperation, specifically the efforts made at the CSW. It is important to keep in mind that international cooperation does not happen overnight; it can take years before important issues take root during negotiations that provide relief to the needy. This is why it is important for UVU to continue to train students to effectively engage in learning, research, and professional communication. I was very grateful to take part in this and learn this important information.



*Myself in front of Nelson Mandela's statue in UN headquarters.*

Without student engagement, it is likely that nothing will be done. This issue won't be noticed without students who are willing to work hard to achieve a satisfactory outcome. The chairwomen CSW63, the Regional Caucus of Europe and North America, and every activist that showed up in New York all have the same goal – to help provide equality, a better living standard, and create safe environments for women globally. It is through engaged learning that students can make a

difference. With teachers as mentors, UVU's engaged model can be used for a broader public, teaching students to strive to accomplish achievements that prepare them for professional work while, at the same time, providing services that help those in need.



*My wife, Brianna in Chinatown.*

Next year is a 10-year anniversary for UN Women, and the recent rollbacks of progression are already being discussed. It is even more likely that women in mountain areas will be included in the final document of CSW64. UVU students have brought more awareness of this important demographic of women to the attention of the Chair of CSW63, as well as ensured that the Regional Caucus of Europe and North America understand that language pertaining to mountain women is important. Next year, UVU students will need to specifically single out countries with mountain populations, call on the permanent representatives of these areas to support the adoption of the language “mountain women,” and ask leadership to take note of the growing support for this vulnerable population. With organization, systematic cooperation, and hard work, students will be able to accomplish the implementation of mountain women in the final document of CSW64.

*William Gum-Causey, UIMF member*



*Myself and fellow colleagues in UN headquarters.*