



NPT RevCon Side-event

**Youth Leaders Acting for Disarmament: How the
YLF Programme Activated Youth in their Communities and Beyond**

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As delivered



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Excellencies,

Youth leaders,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you at this important side event on the margins of the Eleventh NPT Review Conference, and I am especially pleased to reflect on the vital role of youth education and empowerment in advancing our shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Government of Japan for partnering with us on this side event, and for its generous financial support towards the Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons.

As we convene during this Review Conference a process that demands persistence, compromise, and vision, we are reminded that solutions cannot and should not be shaped only with those present in negotiation rooms. We must also listen attentively to the voices and perspectives of young people, whose ideas, energy and leadership are indispensable to shaping sustainable and inclusive approaches to disarmament.

The Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons exemplifies this approach. Running from 2023 to 2030, the programme will take hundreds of young leaders from diverse backgrounds through a comprehensive learning experience.

Participants engage in an online curriculum, and many have the opportunity to travel to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Japan, they witness the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons firsthand, and directly engage with hibakusha.

It is our hope that the participants return to their communities equipped, both with the knowledge and with a renewed sense of purpose to drive change and raise awareness, locally and globally. I also hope it will form a strong foundation for their further substantive study.

With the completion of its first phase, we are already seeing clear evidence of the YLF's impact. The presentations you will hear shortly demonstrate how the programme has deepened the participants' understanding, fostered innovative

approaches to advocacy, and strengthened meaningful partnerships in different corners of the globe.

These young leaders are translating their experiences into action: through education initiatives, grassroots mobilization, academic research, and the creation of new platforms for engagement.

Their work also highlights the importance of diverse approaches in addressing global challenges. Participants in the first phase represented more than 60 countries across the globe, reflecting a wide range of perspectives, cultures, and experiences. This underscores how the imperative of nuclear disarmament resonates across regions, communities and generations.

As you engage in the discussions today, I encourage you to reflect on the transformative potential of youth, and the importance of sustaining, scaling, and replicating innovative approaches to nuclear disarmament. The determination, creativity, and commitment demonstrated here today by Valentyna, Simon, Victoria, and Martyna remind us that investing in young people is an investment in a more peaceful and secure future.

Let us continue to support and amplify their voices, as they work to turn aspiration into action and to build a world where peace and security are realities for all.

I thank you very much for your attention.
