

## Concept Note

### ***"Future-Proofing the NPT: A Youth-led Intergenerational Dialogue on Nuclear Weapons and Emerging Technologies"***

- **NPT Review Conference side-event:** “Future-Proofing the NPT: A Youth-led Intergenerational Dialogue on Nuclear Weapons and Emerging Technologies”
- **Date:** 30 April 2026
- **Format:** Youth-led Intergenerational Dialogue
- **Duration:** 75 minutes
- **Venue:** CR 8, UNHQ, and livestreaming on UN Web TV
- **Conveners & partners:** UNODA in partnership with Y4D Forum Alumni, and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

#### 1. Summary

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains a pillar of the global nuclear order. Its long-term effectiveness depends on its continued credibility and legitimacy, with States upholding the Treaty as an adequate, credible, and essential framework across its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. That legitimacy is increasingly under pressure. Review Conferences have struggled to reach strong consensus; progress on disarmament is widely perceived as insufficient; and multilateralism is weakening more broadly. These challenges intersect with long-standing participation gaps: young people still have limited influence in NPT discussions and processes, despite being deeply affected by nuclear risks.

At the same time, emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), alongside cyber and space capabilities, and other dual-use developments, are also reshaping the broader security environment. These technologies can compress decision time, increase the risks of miscalculation and escalation, create new pathways for proliferation, and expose gaps in verification and safeguards. While emerging technologies present certain challenges, they can also offer opportunities, such as in the areas of early warning, verification, and safeguards.

This side event will convene a youth-led intergenerational dialogue to explore how the NPT can remain relevant and credible by proactively addressing the broader implications of emerging technologies for international security and the NPT regime, while strengthening meaningful youth participation and building capacity to support modernization of governance. This side event builds on the [UN Youth4Disarmament Forum](#) held in 2025 at UN Headquarters and is linked to the [Forum’s outcome document](#). In doing so, it advances the recommendation to elevate emerging technologies on the multilateral nuclear agenda. As a concrete output, the event will develop a summary note with key takeaways and guiding considerations for strengthening the NPT, to be used in consultations and future NPT discussions.

## 2. Background and Rationale

The NPT's effectiveness rests on political legitimacy. States comply and cooperate because they continue to see the Treaty as a credible agreement across its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Today, concerns that could gradually undermine the Treaty's legitimacy are growing across three interconnected areas.

**First, stalled progress and eroding multilateral consensus.** Recent Review Conferences have struggled to deliver meaningful consensus outcomes. Limited progress on disarmament, perceptions of double standards, and heightened polarization contribute to a sense that the regime is not delivering sufficiently on its commitments. Nuclear threats are becoming more normalized in political discourse, arms-race dynamics are re-emerging, and security issues are increasingly addressed through bilateral or smaller-format arrangements. These trends risk weakening inclusive multilateral processes and accelerating fragmentation.

**Second, limited inclusion and generational continuity.** Many young people and Global South/Majority constituencies continue to have limited influence in formal NPT discussions and limited opportunities for meaningful participation. This can fuel a perception that younger generations are inheriting the regime without meaningful authorship or ownership of its future direction. Geographic imbalances, gaps in multi-stakeholder engagement, limited transfer of institutional knowledge, and disconnects between technical expertise and policy discussion may weaken continuity and shared commitment over time.

**Third, emerging technologies and the evolving security environment.** Rapid advancements in AI, cyber and space capabilities, and other dual-use technologies are increasingly shaping the international security landscape. These technologies can compress decision time, increase the risks of miscalculation and escalation, create new pathways for proliferation, and expose gaps in verification and safeguards. While they present certain challenges, they can also offer opportunities to enhance early warning, strengthen verification and safeguards, support informed decision-making, and improve transparency. It is therefore important to approach these developments in a balanced manner, ensuring that the NPT framework remains adaptable and responsive to technological change.

It is therefore essential that the NPT remains credible for current and future generations across all regions. Proactively addressing emerging challenges while institutionalizing meaningful youth participation can support continuous modernization, innovation, and revitalization of NPT governance.

## 3. Purpose and Objectives

### *Purpose*

The side event aims to help keep the NPT relevant and credible for current and future generations by convening a youth-led intergenerational dialogue on emerging technologies and evolving security environment. It will identify key generational, strategic, and political factors that could affect the Treaty's legitimacy and consider practical approaches that could be referred through NPT processes.

### *Objectives*

- Identify key factors affecting NPT legitimacy, including generational, strategic, technical (AI and other emerging technologies), and political factors linked to broader developments in the international security environment.
- Strengthen long-term support for the NPT by advancing youth and intergenerational inclusion and developing guiding considerations for strengthening the NPT, to be used in consultations and future NPT discussions.
- Identify practical options to track youth inputs and follow-up to support accountability.

## **4. Methodology and Structure of the Event**

The side event will be designed as a youth-led intergenerational dialogue that is dynamic, participatory, and grounded in real policy considerations. Rather than a traditional panel, the session will move from shared scenario framing to collective problem-solving and conclude with Member State reflections that connect the discussion to practical pathways and guiding considerations relevant to the NPT Review Conference process. The side- event will begin with opening remarks by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and a representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea, setting the scene for the discussion and while linking the event back to the Youth4Disarmament Forum held last year. This will be followed by a three part-methodology:

**Part I : Setting the scene (15 minutes).** A youth moderator will introduce a future-oriented scenario highlighting interconnected elements that could weaken the legitimacy of future NPT Review Conferences.

**Part II: Intergenerational dialogue (40 minutes).** A mixed group of young leaders and experienced experts will discuss this futuristic, including key drivers, potential implications, and possible areas for practical engagement within the NPT framework. A dedicated youth rapporteur will help ensure that the expert contributions are captured and reflected in both the analysis and the key takeaways.

**Part III: Member State reflections and closing (20 minutes).** Three Member State representatives will respond to the scenarios, highlighting practical steps to address emerging challenges and opportunities. The youth moderator will close by synthesizing key takeaways and linking them to broader discussions within the NPT process.

## **5. Outputs and Deliverables**

Main deliverable: A summary note highlighting key takeaways and guiding considerations for strengthening the NPT, to be shared with Member States and stakeholders for reference in consultations and future NPT discussions.