

Canada's Submission

This submission provides a summary of Canada's views on UN General Assembly Resolution 78/31, "Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation". This submission responds to a note verbale from the Office of Disarmament Affairs (*ODA-2025-00025/YOUTH*), pursuant to OP6 of the above-mentioned resolution, requesting the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States.

The importance of youth perspectives

Canada is deeply convinced of the need to engage diverse populations on disarmament and non-proliferation. In addition to empowering women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and the LGBTQ+ community, Canada also supports the full, meaningful, and effective integration of youth perspectives in disarmament.

There are an estimated 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 around the world. Of these 1.2 billion youth, millions are affected by war and conflict. Whether displaced, injured, or traumatized, youth all too frequently carry the burden of a world ravaged by weapons.

Youth are uniquely suited to meet the demands of an increasingly polarized and conflict-ridden world. Youth are resourceful, utilizing new technologies to work faster and more cooperatively. Youth are passionate about securing their future with a focus on combatting climate change, enhancing equality, and fostering economic opportunity. Youth are resilient, having already endured global shocks in their lifetimes, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In disarmament and non-proliferation, youth have always been an integral part of advocating for a weapons-free world. Youth are active in calling for reductions in military expenditures, a focus on international humanitarian law, and highlighting the adverse consequences they and their peers have suffered as a result of weapons use. Far too often, youth are discounted because of their age and relative inexperience, especially in technical fields like nuclear, chemical, and biological disarmament and non-proliferation.

Canada's youth engagement and empowerment activities

Canada strongly supports the inclusion of youth in government, multilateral, and civil society forums on disarmament and non-proliferation. In line with the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, this means not just allowing more youth in the room for important conversations, but also providing opportunities to have their voices heard and influence policy. To this end, Canada introduced the first ever Youth Day at the Conference on Disarmament on International Youth Day in 2021. Canada is pleased to see this tradition continue with successive CD presidents.

Canada also recognizes that youth must be equipped to help prevent, protect, and partner with others for the future. Canada prioritizes funding academic scholarships such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme at the IAEA, direct civil society engagement during our annual civil society consultations on disarmament and non-proliferation, and advocating for transparent and inclusive multilateral processes that allow for youth to share perspectives and witness diplomacy in action, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Review Conference.

Canada will continue to advocate for youth inclusion in disarmament and non-proliferation forums, specifically those that seek to secure a safer and more prosperous future for generations to come.