



Kiribati's Perspectives on Youth, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Affairs

30 May 2025

Executive Summary

Kiribati appreciates the opportunity to share its activities on advancing youth engagement on disarmament and non-proliferation affairs as requested by the Secretary-General. Kiribati believes that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education serve as a means for young people from affected communities to learn about the critical importance of key treaties, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and share their testimonies.

Section I. Overview of the Legacy of Nuclear Weapons

Kiribati is a Pacific Small Island Developing State situated near the equator on the International Date Line in the central Pacific Ocean. Kiribati is composed of 33 atolls and reef islands dispersed over a vast area of approximately 3.5 million square kilometers.

Kiribati is divided into three main island groups: the Gilbert Islands, the Phoenix Islands, and the Line Islands. The Gilbert Islands, where most of the population resides, include Tarawa, the capital. The Phoenix Islands are an isolated group of atolls and reef islands in the central Pacific Ocean, known for their significant biodiversity and conservation efforts. The Line Islands, including Kiritimati and Malden Islands, are historically significant as the site of 33 nuclear tests during the height of the Cold War by several Nuclear Weapon States.

The citizens of Kiritimati experienced severe medical illness and psychological disorders. These disorders have persisted through the generations. As a consequence, many descendants of the survivors of these tests continue to suffer from both physical and post traumatic harms linked to these nuclear tests.

Section II. Youth Empowerment and the TPNW

To raise awareness about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, the Permanent Mission of Kiribati to the United Nations invited young people from Kiritimati to serve on its delegation for the Second and Third Meetings of the States Parties to the TPNW. A rigorous selection process was conducted in Kiritimati to select several young women to represent affected communities at the meetings of States Parties to the TPNW.

Prior to these meetings, the selected Kiribati youth learned about Kiribati and Kazakhstan's joint work on advancing the International Trust Fund as Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Articles 6 and 7.

a. Drafting and Writing Statements at the TPNW Meetings

At the meetings of States Parties to the TPNW, Kiribati youth were given the opportunity to share their personal testimonies on the relationship between nuclear weapons and gender and the significance of the International Trust Fund for the victims of nuclear testing.

b. Participation in the High-Level Segment and Press Conference at the 3MSP

At the Third Meeting of States Parties, a young Kiribati woman delivered a statement on behalf of affected communities. She also participated in a press conference with the President of the Third Meeting of States Parties, a representative of the ICRC, and the Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

c. Cross-Cultural Event at New York University

On the margins of the Third Meeting of States Parties, youth representatives of Kiribati engaged in a cross-cultural event at New York University with American youth, High School Peace Messengers of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Chair of the 2017 Negotiating Conference on the TPNW, Nihon Hidankyo, Gensuikyo, winner of the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize, as well as representatives of Austria and Kazakhstan. This exchange helped Kiribati youth to foster relations with other survivors and understand how young people are collaborating together towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Section III. Educational Event at the 2025 NPT PrepCom

At the 2025 NPT PrepCom, Kiribati, Japan, Mexico, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and its youth initiative Reverse The Trend (RTT), the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, and Peace Boat US sponsored a side event on advancing nuclear disarmament and non-

proliferation education. Speakers included: Josephine Moote, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Kiribati; Ambassador Tomiko Ichikawa, Permanent Representative of Japan to the CD; Eduardo Alcibiades Sanchez Kiesslich, Secondary Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Mexico; Radha Day, Chief of Regional Disarmament Information and Outreach Branch of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs; Masako Toki, Senior Project Manager and Research Associate of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS); and Emilie McGlone, Director of Peace Boat US. The event also featured Lena Pothier, a NAPF/RTT youth delegate. Christian Ciobanu, Director of Policy and Advocacy of NAPF, RTT Coordinator, and Adviser for Kiribati, moderated the event.

Kiribati also endorsed the joint statement on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education that was delivered by Japan.

These initiatives demonstrated Kiribati's unwavering support to advance youth empowerment and educational initiatives at the United Nations.

Section IV. **The Power of Art as a Form of Youth Empowerment**

Recognizing the importance of art as a vector for young people to express themselves on the legacy of nuclear weapons, representatives from Kiribati hosted an art contest for young people. The contest was geared towards middle school students who prepared art pieces about the legacy of nuclear testing. The best pieces were shown at a special art reception and exhibit at the Third Meeting of States Parties.

Section V. **Participation at the Nuclear Justice Forum in Astana, Kazakhstan**

In 2024, a youth from Kiribati attended and delivered statements at the international youth forum on nuclear justice held in Astana, Kazakhstan. This forum was held on the margins of the TPNW Coordination Committee's meeting. At this international youth forum, they underscored their aspirations for a trust fund to the committee's members and international press.

Section VI. **Engaging with Young People**

As we continue to advance youth engagement on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation affairs, Kiribati is committed to accrediting young people from Kiribati to its delegation in New York to attend international conferences. Additionally, Kiribati will be inviting i-Kiribati youth to the international meeting on victim assistance and environmental remediation to be held in 2026 at an appropriate time by the Secretary-General. We are considering the possibility of inviting them to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference and TPNW Review Conference.

Moreover, Kiribati is planning to engage in virtual consultations with young people in Kiritimati to help them to learn about international initiatives to advance nuclear justice, including the establishment of the International Trust Fund.

Section VII. **Recommendations**

Currently, Kiribati relies on bilateral funding arrangements through its key partners and private foundations to facilitate the participation of young people from Kiritimati to international conferences. This may not be sustainable in the long term. As such, Kiribati strongly recommends States to consider the establishment of a funding mechanism within the UN Secretariat to support the participation of young people, especially from affected States to major UN conferences and other international conferences relating to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation affairs. Kiribati also encourages the Secretariat to collaborate with impacted States to raise awareness about different educational opportunities for young people from affected communities.