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General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

25th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo . . . . . (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/56/366)

The Acting President: As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In this connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/56/366.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 11

Report of the Security Council (A/56/2)

The Acting President: I now invite the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Richard Ryan, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I am honoured to introduce to the General Assembly the annual report of the Security Council, covering the period from 16 June 2000 to 15 June 2001. The report shows clearly the range of issues considered by the Council, and the intensity of the work programme undertaken in the year under review. Altogether, in the reporting period, the Council held 173 formal meetings, adopted 52 resolutions and issued 35 statements by the President.

Consistent with its primary responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council gave particular attention during the year to issues relating to the settlement of regional conflicts and conflict situations generally.

With regard to Africa, the Security Council gave extensive consideration to the situations in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Burundi, Liberia, Angola, Somalia, Western Sahara and Rwanda, and the situation in Guinea following attacks along its borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Council also examined the general situation of the countries of West Africa in the light of the report of the United Nations Inter-Agency

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Mission visit to the region. In addition, the Security Council met at the level of heads of State and Government on 7 September 2000 to discuss the need to ensure an effective role for the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in Africa.

The situations in the Middle East, East Timor, Afghanistan and the Balkans were also the subject of consideration by the Council.

Extensive consideration has been given to the situation in Iraq.

Attention was also given by the Council to broader peace and security issues, including children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, peace-building, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, HIV/AIDS, and international peacekeeping operations. The Council also addressed the issue of the prevention of armed conflict in the light of the report of the Secretary-General.

The Security Council has also contributed more generally to the enhancement of peacekeeping through the adoption of resolution 1327 (2000) of 13 November 2000, and resolution 1353 (2001) of 13 June 2001.

During the year in question, the Security Council continued to strengthen further its working methods and procedures. This includes obtaining better information through field missions; the use of special missions by the Council; direct contacts with parties involved in situations before the Council, including through meetings with the Council; as well as closer liaison with United Nations troop-contributor countries, following up its resolution 1353 (2001) of 13 June 2001. The Council also took steps to improve its procedures and those of its committees for sanctions.

The Security Council made particular efforts in the year under review to conduct its business in as transparent a manner as possible. In particular, many public meetings and briefings were held with the participation of the wider membership of the United Nations.

The members of the Security Council hope that this report will provide useful information on the activities of the Council during the year under review. They attach great importance to the consideration of this report by the General Assembly as a significant part of the dialogue between the two principal bodies of the United Nations. The members of the Security Council look forward to the comments and suggestions of Member States in the course of today's discussion.

The members of the Security Council will be reviewing the format and the structure of the annual report in the upcoming months, and they will consider any suggestions made in the course of this debate. Conclusions reached in that review will be reflected in next year's report.

Let me conclude by expressing the appreciation of the Security Council members to the staff of the Security Council secretariat for their commitment, professionalism and tireless efforts on behalf of the Security Council. Their work, as always, remains indispensable to the efficiency of the work of the Security Council.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first to thank Ambassador Richard Ryan, Permanent Representative of Ireland and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his introduction of the report of the Council for the year to 15 June 2001.

The consideration of this report is taking place at an extraordinary moment. Only three days ago the Nobel Peace Prize Committee decided to award that high distinction to the Secretary-General and the United Nations as a whole for their efforts to achieve international peace and security, as well as for their leadership in confronting the economic, social and environmental challenges that face humankind. There is no doubt that the Security Council has contributed substantially to making the Organization worthy of such recognition.

The Security Council is currently the international community's only legitimate mechanism to respond to armed conflicts and humanitarian crises of such gravity that they constitute threats to peace. Consequently, the Council's work in maintaining international peace and security is vital to the future of mankind. As wisely proclaimed by the Nobel Prize Committee, the United Nations is the only path to global peace and cooperation.

Nevertheless, the path to peace is full of obstacles. At this moment, all of our peoples and nations are living under the shadow of international terrorism. The despicable criminal acts of 11 September have raised international terrorism to the top of the international agenda. It is therefore

impossible to assess the Security Council's work during the last year without considering its reaction to the attacks of 11 September and, in particular, its resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September.

Undoubtedly, resolution 1373 (2001) heralds a new era in international relations. For the first time in history, the Security Council has declared that a particular phenomenon — international terrorism — constitutes, in any circumstances, a threat to international peace and security. Also for the first time, the Security Council recognized the inherent right of self-defence against the activities of non-State actors, even when those actors are on the territory of third States. Furthermore, for the first time, and pursuant to its powers under the Charter, the Council imposed upon all States a series of obligations and general norms of conduct, of the kind usually reserved for international treaties, in order to fight against international terrorism. Unlike previous precedents, these mandatory measures were adopted without being linked to a particular situation or controversy and without provision for their termination. Moreover, the Council established a permanent committee, with broad powers, to monitor implementation of those measures. In short, for the first time in history, the Security Council enacted legislation for the rest of the international community.

My delegation welcomes the contents of that resolution. It constitutes a strong, proportionate and necessary response to the despicable criminal acts of 11 September 2001. Furthermore, my delegation warmly welcomes the renewed confidence in multilateral mechanisms and the extension of the Council's powers and areas of responsibility manifest in the resolution.

My delegation has for several years advocated such that very strengthening of the Security Council. We have pointed out that the Council is the only mechanism available to mankind in order to face the dangers that threaten it. Costa Rica questioned the Council when it renounced its mandate and had become irrelevant. We criticized it when it confined itself to weak and inadequate responses to the gravest political and humanitarian emergencies. We denounced it was unable to act due to the irresponsible use of the veto or the defence of selfish national interests by some of its members. We can therefore only congratulate the Council today on having unanimously adopted strong and clear-cut measures to face a crisis situation. Moreover, we expect the Security Council to act with the same firmness, promptness and efficacy when confronted by other crises or emergency situations in the future.

Resolution 1373 (2001) demonstrates the broad powers of the Security Council. In exercising its powers, however, the Council must act responsibly. In accordance with the provisions of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Members of the United Nations. Its members, whether permanent or elected, represent equally all States Members of the Organization and they are, therefore, responsible to them. That is why it is essential for the Council to hold transparent and effective consultations with the other members of the international community when it adopts measures of far-reaching importance.

The Council's main goal in promoting international peace and security should be to guarantee full enjoyment of human rights and full respect for human dignity. Therefore, the Security Council should scrupulously strive to promote respect for fundamental rights. In this regard, when adopting measures such as those embodied in resolution 1371 (2001) in particular, the Security Council must keep in mind the obligations of States to act in accordance with the imperatives of international law.

In exercising its powers, the Security Council must bear in mind that the prohibition on the use of force is the cornerstone of the society of nations, and that it must continue to be so. We fear that if that prohibition were undermined, it would open the door to violence in international relations. We believe that, with the very limited exception of the right to self-defence, advance authorization from the Security Council is essential for any initiative that may require the use of force. Furthermore, we must be cautious in resorting to the inherent right to self-defence. That right is never absolute because it is limited by the principle of proportionality.

As we consider the report for the period 2000-2001, we must acknowledge that the work of the Council has yielded some very positive results, particularly in Timor and Kosovo. Not all of its efforts have been as successful, however. Did the Council take adequate steps to respond to the situation in Afghanistan? Today, the answer seems clear: it did not. Did the Security Council prohibit the transfer of arms to rebel or extremist groups? Regrettably, it did not. Did the Council take effective action to revitalize the

peace process in the Middle East? Unfortunately, it did not. Did it take appropriate steps to respond to the crisis in the Great Lakes region? Very little was done. Did it devote sufficient resources to the conflicts in West Africa? It does not appear to have done so. Was it able to find a solution to the situation regarding Iraq? Unfortunately, it was not. Did it adopt clear-cut measures to prevent future conflicts? It adopted just a few.

I would like to deal with that last issue, which was the subject of a public debate on 21 June this year and of resolution 1366 (2001), which was adopted on 30 August. The United Nations and the international community have an unshirkable moral obligation to prevent armed conflict and other threats to international peace and security. That obligation flows directly from the basic principles of solidarity and fraternity among all human beings. We cannot, therefore, continue to stand by as passive witnesses to countless cases of genocide, massacre and war.

History teaches us that genuine, lasting peace can be achieved only when decent living conditions have been ensured for all; when there is a sufficient level of economic development to meet the basic needs of everyone; when fundamental human rights are respected; and when social and political differences are resolved by democratic means. That is why the early prevention of armed conflict requires us to address the profound structural causes of crises.

We are aware that that is a task for Governments and local authorities. That principle is correct, provided that such Governments and authorities are effective, responsible and democratic. Unfortunately, in many cases we have seen Governments and political leaders fuelling social tensions and inciting armed conflict.

Poverty, underdevelopment, ethnic differences, health problems, gender discrimination and lack of educational opportunities do not in themselves engender armed conflict. Those structural factors can generate violence only if there are political or military leaders prepared to incite to violence the groups that champion those causes. In this regard, the presence of leaders who are prepared to respond to such social claims or grievances by violent means, in order to satisfy their selfish, political and economic ambitions, is the true cause of, and indispensable condition for, social violence and armed conflict.

It is precisely in that context that the Security Council should play a key role in the prevention of conflict. The Council should use all its diplomatic, legal and political resources to support and demand good governance, the rule of law, democracy, representative government and respect for human rights. The promotion of peace requires a constant and sustained effort to create a climate of mutual respect and rejection of violence and extremism.

As we consider the work of the Security Council over the past year, we should reflect upon the contribution made by each of our States to global peace during the same period. Have we supported the United Nations in deed, as well as in word? Have we provided it with the necessary material and human resources to enable it to carry out its tasks? Have we given it the essential political backing? Ultimately, the achievements of the Security Council are the achievements of the whole international community, just as its failures are the failures of all of us.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to underscore the importance that Colombia attaches to our consideration of this agenda item, among other reasons because of our current responsibility as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. However, our regular status as a permanent member of this Assembly imposes on us an additional obligation to offer the Assembly, in plenary meeting, certain thoughts relating to the content and structure of the report now before us. We do this in the most constructive spirit possible, because we believe that this report should be accorded the proper political significance. We also do so because we take the view that, to a large extent, the contents of document A/56/2, as well as of similar texts from earlier years, reflect a distant relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

I should like first to refer to the formal aspects of the report. The first draft of the text being considered today was submitted to the members of the Council early in September this year. At the informal consultations devoted to the consideration of the document, we questioned its usefulness and content and insisted on the need to begin a debate within the Council that would make it possible to draft a report that would be useful in the General Assembly.

Unfortunately, we must state that our proposals and those of other colleagues made in this regard were

not heeded. Clearly, among some of the permanent members and, paradoxically, among several Secretariat officials, there does not seem to exist the spirit nor the willingness to modify a document submitted to us as a fait accompli. Therefore, consideration of the report in open debate was a formality that did not have the political importance that should have been accorded to this document to be submitted to the General Assembly, which, in our view, is the supreme organ of the United Nations. We noted our dissatisfaction also at that meeting.

The lack of serious and appropriate action by the Council is confirmed in Part II of the report, chapter 41, page 241 of the document before us today, where the absence of analysis and the tendency to adopt the draft report mechanically are noted. Colombia believes that the report does not reflect the fact that the Council is politically accountable to the General Assembly for its actions or failures to act. What we have before us is a simple compilation of documents, which is no different from a formal list of Council activities. In fact, most of the texts included in the report have already been issued and are familiar to all members.

The General Assembly needs an analytical, energetic, informative, innovative, simple and brief document that truly reports on the Council's activities and that naturally strengthens the relationship between both organs. The realization of this aspiration is something that all the members of the Council must work towards, with the full awareness that propitious conditions for the appropriate and visionary reform of the content and format of this report will not always exist.

We understand that attempts have been made in the past to achieve this. We understand that it is a document that has been submitted by consensus among all members of the Council. We know that there will be political difficulties in agreeing on an analytical text of the activities of this organ, responsible for monitoring international peace and security.

Nevertheless, we must state categorically that these reports do not have an aggregate worth, nor do they contribute substantive elements to permit the Members of the United Nations to carry out a proper evaluation of how the Council's responsibilities were fulfilled in the corresponding period.

I wish to raise briefly a substantive item relative to the report we are considering today.

To highlight the relationship between this report and the Council's efficiency, we wish to refer briefly to the transcendental decisions that have been made during recent weeks, which have affected all the members of the United Nations. We refer particularly to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) on international terrorism, and to its possible implications for the relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Unlike other Council resolutions that have been adopted under Chapter VII, this resolution, which seeks to fight international terrorism, the greatest threat to international peace and security, can only be successful if it enjoys the agreement and the cooperation of all or of a large majority of the Members of the United Nations.

The particular characteristics of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), together with the need to forge a global commitment against terrorism, should lead us to reflect, among other things, on the usefulness of a Security Council report like the one before us. We cannot act in this new structure of the international system without collective and nimble information systems that enhance the confidence of the Member States of the Organization in the Security Council. Even though the report of the Security Council is not, nor will be, the main source of information, it is one of the main elements whereby the Security Council seeks political support for its decisions in the General Assembly.

The direct relationship between these two principal organs of the United Nations — the Council and the Assembly — will always lead to exploring alternatives to introduce changes or, at least, to reflect on the questions they can ask themselves about the role that each plays. In that spirit, on behalf of the Council, we attended a meeting of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, held on 13 June 2001, which will be remembered as having been highly contributory and productive. In the report we submitted, we reported the claims that were made so that the Security Council could appear to be closer to, more integrated with and more in tune with the expectations and the aspirations of the entire membership of the United Nations, beginning with the 15 members of the Council.

We trust that the opinions expressed by the participants during this debate will be an important

basis for a productive discussion in the Council's working group on documentation and procedure. We hope we will have a better report that is relevant to the new demands of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Article 24 of the Charter stipulates that in discharging its main responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the Organization.

The Council is, therefore, supposed to submit annual reports and, if necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for consideration.

In an effort to streamline its work, the General Assembly, in resolution 51/241 of 1997, which is still entirely relevant, decided that the President would assess the debate on this item and would decide whether it was necessary to consider the report of the Security Council further. The General Assembly might even, following informal consultations, make a decision on any action based on the debate.

This means that the exercise that we are embarking upon today should not be regarded as a mere formality, but rather as a valuable opportunity for us all to examine in depth the work carried out by the Security Council in the past year, share our feelings about how it has been pursued and suggest possible improvements regarding the Council's working methods and its relations with the General Assembly.

It is not my intention to examine each issue the Council has reported on in depth in its voluminous report to the General Assembly, nor to make value judgements on the way it has dealt with those questions. My intention is simply to make some general comments on the way the Security Council is carrying out the important mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, on its working relationships with the other principal organs and on how its report to the Assembly is conceived and presented.

However, I would like to start by expressing my appreciation for the increasingly active and influential role the Council has assumed on the international scene in the prevention and settlement of conflicts. Judging by the number of plenary consultations and official meetings held during the periods under review, hardly a day goes by without the Security Council taking up a situation that represents or could come to represent a threat to international peace and security.

Fifty-two resolutions and 35 presidential statements have resulted from often long and arduous consultations. Their real effect on the ground is difficult to evaluate at this stage, but they show that the number of conflicts and disputes is growing year by year and that the United Nations is more than ever the framework and recourse for any action aiming to maintain international peace and security. My delegation certainly welcomes this, being so committed to the role the United Nations must play in conflict prevention and resolution.

Nevertheless, we regret that the Council, which has emphasized at every opportunity the need to protect civilian populations in areas of conflict, has been unable to rise above its differences on the question of international observers being deployed in the Palestinian territories to protect the Palestinian civilian population, which has been abandoned to the arbitrary and brutal actions of Israeli security forces.

We also regret that a number of important Council resolutions, the outcome of painstaking efforts, have remained a dead letter and have not even started to be implemented. This state of affairs encourages recalcitrant States to continue defying the will of the international community and can only damage the prestige and credibility of the Council, while also causing disappointment and frustration among States that have appealed to the Council for arbitration.

Finally, we regret that despite greater interest in Africa, the Council continues to experience difficulties in fully getting involved in the suppression of African conflicts and in acting with the required determination.

Regarding the way the Council conducts its work, I think we should welcome the progress achieved, particularly in the course of the last three years, with respect to the transparency and the information provided on matters under discussion. A number of meetings of an informative nature are now open to non-member States, which nevertheless still do not have access to substantive consultations held in closed meetings. It is during those closed meetings, in fact, that all the decisions affecting the fate of Member States are taken. It should be pointed out in this regard that although the Council's still provisional rules of procedure stipulate that it may hold closed meetings, it would seem that what should be the exception has

become the rule, since the bulk of the Council's work is carried out in the consultation room, and the Council holds plenary meetings only to ratify agreements reached behind closed doors. That said, the rather timid yet praiseworthy efforts towards the Council's greater openness will remain fragile and reversible as long as openness depends on the goodwill of the President and Council members and until it has formally been made a rule.

Similarly, it seems to me that one can envisage improvements that can only help the Council better discharge its mandate. The Council could, for example, open its informal consultations to the parties to a dispute or conflict and to other concerned and interested parties, even if their deliberations are to continue later with those parties absent, but obviously better informed of the facts.

Likewise, with respect to plenary meetings, I think it is worth remarking that the Council should not, as has become customary, limit participation in debates to Council members alone on items of possible interest to other delegations. Furthermore, it should allow not only the parties to a conflict but also other countries concerned to take the floor prior to Council members so that Council members will have all the information they need in order to speak knowledgeably.

Another comment of mine relates to requests by States or groups of States for a meeting of the Council that the Security Council has hesitated or refused to act on. My understanding of the Charter and the practice of this Organization is that the Security Council cannot sidestep requests for meetings under the pretext, for example, that one of its members deems it inopportune. Whenever such a request is made, I think it is obvious that the Council should take it up, even if it has to resort to a procedural vote. Whatever the real motivations of the countries desiring a plenary debate, it is always preferable to give the protagonists a chance to exchange views in the Council Chamber than risk seeing them resort to force on the ground.

With respect to how the Security Council's report has been designed and presented, I think that what would be of most interest to the General Assembly is not so much a complete listing of Council activities — which is extremely complete and certainly very useful — as an evaluation by the Council of the work it has accomplished, the difficulties encountered and the lacuna and limitations observed in its working methods and in its relations with the other organs of the United Nations, as well as its vision of its role and responsibilities in a world in transformation.

If in the future the Security Council could examine itself and what it has done, critically, lucidly and uncomplaisantly, and share the results of such a self-examination with the Member States of the Organization in their entirety, and if the Council finally decided to start taking into account the observations and suggestions of the General Assembly, the Council would no doubt find its role strengthened and its performance greatly improved.

I would now like to address a delicate question: the relationship of the Security Council to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly.

With regard to the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, my delegation has strongly encouraged the two bodies to strengthen their dialogue and ties, since their activities are often complementary and can — if they are not careful — interfere with each other, especially in matters of preventive diplomacy and peace-building.

The fact that the joint meeting envisaged could not be held must not discourage the two organs from continuing to seek together ways to strengthen their cooperation.

With respect to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, it should first be pointed out that despite the more or less regular meetings between the Presidents of the two bodies, dialogue between them is far from adequate. Even worse, the Council has an increasing tendency to take up questions falling within the purview of the General Assembly, which the Assembly, in turn, tends to relinquish without resistance or reaction.

Indeed, more and more so-called thematic debates on subjects that actually fall within the purview of the General Assembly are organized within the Council and are highly publicized. However, these debates are essentially only media shows of no consequence; they generally are not followed by action, since the Security Council has neither the expertise nor the means necessary to implement the results these debates occasionally lead to.

The General Assembly is increasingly being transformed into a simple forum for deliberation. That

fact was once again demonstrated a week ago when, after the most substantial debate held on a specific question in a number of years, the Assembly could not reach a unanimous rejection of terrorism in a consensus resolution. Encouraged by this progressive self-effacement on the part of the General Assembly, the Security Council is increasing its incursions into the Assembly's sphere of action — even in the matter of diplomatic conferences — and now takes it upon itself to legislate and make decisions on matters that, by all logic, should be discussed and resolved in larger and more competent bodies. There are even situations in which, emboldened by the lack of any reaction or challenging debate, the Council has gone so far as to decide to enjoin States to implement the provisions of international conventions that have not yet come into force, thus substituting itself for the sovereign will of States.

This tendency on the part of the Council infinitely to extend its competence, while raising very serious legal and political questions and contradicting the spirit and the letter of the Charter, from which the Council draws its legitimacy, must be contained because it will ultimately prejudice multilateralism, the principle of the democratic participation of States in negotiation and decision-making on questions of general interest and, in the final analysis, the very role and effectiveness of the Council itself, which to a certain extent would be distracted from its main responsibility: the maintenance of international peace and security.

More balanced relations between the two organs are therefore necessary and desirable. This will require the Security Council to strive to respect as scrupulously as possible the mandate it has received from the Charter. It is equally important that a general agreement be reached as soon as possible on reforming the Security Council, which cannot continue indefinitely to function with its current composition and working methods. Its expansion and the strengthening of its effectiveness, particularly through the abolition of the privilege of the right of veto, are more necessary than ever and can only enhance its representativeness, legitimacy and credibility.

Above all, this will require the General Assembly, rather than undertaking a yearly summary facelift of its outward appearance on the pretext of improving its working methods, to work to recover its lost authority and its full prerogatives. This is the challenge that we have to meet together if we do not wish the General Assembly to renounce forever its Charter status as the principal organ of our Organization and if we are not to abdicate once and for all our rights as sovereign States. From this point of view, it is essential that our debate today not succumb to the fate of previous debates and that it lead to action. Resolution 51/241 provides the President of the General Assembly with the opportunity to initiate such action. It would be appropriate for him to do so.

This is the contribution that my delegation wished to make to our discussion today, inspired as always by its desire to help to improve the working methods of one of the most important organs of the United Nations and, ultimately, of the Organization as a whole.

Mr. Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to express my appreciation to Mr. Richard Ryan, Permanent Representative of Ireland and President of the Security Council, for introducing the report of the Council to the General Assembly. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republics of Bulgaria, Mexico, Guinea and Cameroon on their election to the Security Council. I trust that the new non-permanent members will help enhance the openness, transparency and representativeness of the Council to the fullest extent permissible under the current structure of that main body of the United Nations.

We attach great importance to the agenda item under consideration. What we are to consider is the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly on the way it conducts its work, which constitutes the maintenance of international peace and security, on behalf of the full membership of the United Nations. The submission of an annual report, stipulated by the Charter, is the constitutional link that establishes accountability between the two main bodies of the United Nations. In other words, the annual report represents the efforts of the Council to live up to the expectations of and to be accountable for its work to the membership from which it receives its powers.

As to the content and structure of the report, the General Assembly at its fifty-first session adopted resolution 51/193 in an effort to reform the reporting procedure of the Security Council. In that resolution, the Council is encouraged to provide a substantive and analytical account of its work and, inter alia, to include information on the consultations of the whole

undertaken prior to action by the Council on issues within its mandate.

Having carefully considered the current report submitted by the Security Council to the General Assembly, we note that it continues to be mainly a compilation of the documents, a recalling of activities, a restatement of facts with regard to those activities, and so on. Like previous reports which the General Assembly has received, the current 571-page report, contained in document A/56/2 covering the period from 16 June 2000 to 15 June 2001, describes only what the Security Council has done and remains largely silent about the reasons and circumstances leading to the decisions adopted.

In this report, too, the lack of sufficient information for non-members of the Security Council on informal meetings persists. The 185 consultations of the whole, totalling some 325 hours, compared with 173 formal meetings during the reporting period, demonstrate the significance of informal meetings and their role in the decision-making of the Council. Despite the importance of consultations of the whole, non-members of the Council continue to be kept in the dark on how the decisions were arrived at and on how and why the Council failed to reach a decision, except for what each delegation can figure out on its own. This is a clear example of how non-member delegations of the Council may remain uninformed or misinformed about some important aspects of the Council's work.

Likewise, the goal of making the report of the Council more analytical, which figures among those set out in resolution 51/193, is yet to be achieved. We think that, if we judge the current report by that criterion, clearly there is room for improvement.

Nonetheless, we recognize some improvements made in the content and methodology used in the elaboration of this report. It is also worth recalling that this is a process that has continued over recent years and we hope that it can continue to the end. In this respect, we may refer to some efforts made in recent years to make the Council more transparent, including the increase in the number and frequency of open debates, which we consider to be an important step forward. However, we think that there is still much room for enhancing the transparency of the work of the Council.

All in all, we are convinced that there is room for enhancing the content of the report so that it will better describe the work of the Council and so as to ensure that the report can be better utilized.

More broadly speaking, the way the Security Council has dealt over the past several decades with the situations in some volatile areas, especially in the Middle East, is a manifestation of the inadequacy and inappropriateness of its working methods. Many times in the past, the Security Council has been called upon to shoulder its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by putting an end to the inhuman and aggressive acts of the Israeli regime. But regrettably the exercise or the threat of the exercise of the veto has frequently paralyzed the Council and has prevented it from discharging its constitutional responsibility on that crucial issue.

During the reporting period, despite the attention paid by the Security Council to the ongoing crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories, and despite several public meetings organized under the presidencies of some Council members, it is regrettable that the continued aggressive policy of the Israelis and the lack of any action by the Council did not allow any easing of the suffering of the Palestinians. Regrettably, the Council failed to fulfil its responsibility with regard to the threat posed by Israel to peace and security in the volatile Middle East region. We should recall that the exercise of the veto was the main reason for that failure. The resort to the veto last March proved to be a disservice to the volatile situation in the area. Undoubtedly, the presence of a United Nations observer force on the ground could have forestalled more violence and more bloodshed and could have saved so many precious lives.

On the other hand, I need to acknowledge the relatively great attention paid by the Security Council to the situation in Afghanistan during the reporting period. The dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the threats against neighbours and beyond emanating from the disorder and lawlessness in that country figured among the Council's priorities last year. By its resolution 1333 (2000), adopted in December, the Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, focused mainly on the provision of sanctuary by the Taliban to international terrorists and demanded an immediate end to such practices. The recent terrorist acts on United States territory brought to the forefront

the implications of the chaos and lawlessness in Afghanistan for the international community as a whole, and we hope that the Council will remain actively seized of the situation in that country. We acknowledge and appreciate the attention paid by the whole United Nations system to various aspects of the Afghan crisis, and we pledge to lend our active support to the efforts undertaken by various United Nations bodies and by the international community as a whole aimed at restoring peace and helping Afghans to form a broad-based and representative Government in their country.

However, the new turn of events in Afghanistan is very worrisome. Undoubtedly, many acts perpetrated by the Taliban, such as harbouring terrorists, trafficking in drugs, massacring members of the Afghan Shiite minority, murdering Iranian diplomats, et cetera, run counter to very basic international and humanitarian law. But it is also evident that the Afghan people should not be victimized because of the acts of the Taliban. The Islamic Republic of Iran is concerned over media reports from Afghanistan pointing to the increasing number of civilian causalities as a result of ongoing air strikes, and it expects countries involved in military action in that country to show restraint and not engage in activities that will jeopardize the lives of innocent people.

Last but not least, my delegation acknowledges the valuable work done by the Secretariat in compiling information and organizing it in keeping with the instructions and guidelines that the Security Council has laid down.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): The debate we had two weeks ago on the terrorism issue was clearly the single most important debate of this year's session of the General Assembly. One hundred sixty-seven countries participated. Today's debate on the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly should be the second most important debate. Unfortunately, today's participation is much more modest; at the last count, probably only 52 delegations will be participating.

Perhaps some members of the General Assembly have not fully realized how political power has shifted within the United Nations family. During the cold war, due to cross-vetoes, the Security Council was moribund. Key debates took place mainly in the General Assembly. In the post-cold-war era, power shifted dramatically to the Security Council, even though the Council also had its share of ups and downs in the 1990s. Today, we are entering a new era, where the Security Council will be playing an even more important role. The recent Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) were landmark decisions. Resolution 1373 (2001) in particular makes it obligatory for all States to impose far-reaching measures to combat terrorism, which will be monitored by the Council's counter-terrorism Committee. Thus, both constitutional and practical political requirements to ensure the successful implementation of such important resolutions underscore the need for a relationship of trust and confidence between the General Assembly and the Security Council. That should be the key goal of this debate.

The United Nations Charter confers sweeping powers upon the Security Council, making it conceivably the single most powerful body in the whole world. No other international body, not even the International Monetary Fund or the Group of 7, can make decisions that are mandatory for every Member State. What has passed unnoticed over the past decade is that the Security Council has quietly and gradually built upon and expanded powers conferred on it by the Charter. Today, within the United Nations environment, the Council occupies more political space than any other United Nations organ. The Council has also broken new ground by establishing panels of experts, monitoring mechanisms and, more important, the International Tribunals on the former Yugoslavia and on Rwanda, which cost $206 million in 2001, compared to the $10-million budget for the International Court of Justice, which is theoretically a far more important institution.

In the year 2001, the Security Council controlled peacekeeping operations that cost the United Nations community just over $3 billion, compared to the $1.27 billion spent on the regular budget. This huge disparity in annual expenditures speaks eloquently about the relative power and influence of the Security Council within the United Nations community. And, if I may be permitted an aside, it may be useful to reflect on the Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations Organization. The Secretary-General fully deserved this award; he has raised the prestige of the Organization to new heights. But for the half awarded to the United Nations, which member of the family earned the Prize? Was it the

Secretariat, which has often been unfairly criticized for its bureaucratic record? Was it the General Assembly? Was it the Economic and Social Council? Or was it the Security Council? We do not know the answers to these questions, but I think they are worth posing, even as we receive the award.

Given the enormous powers of the Security Council, both in theory and in practice, it is startling that the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is not seen by United Nations Member States as an important occasion for serious reflection. Indeed, as a current member of the Council, we were truly puzzled that this report was also adopted without any serious discussion or reflection within the Council. Despite a note by the Council President in 1997 (S/1997/451), which stated the Council's intention to make the report more analytical, we have a publication that basically reprints United Nations documents already available elsewhere. We believe the time has come for a change, and we think that the Council should consider producing a report modelled on the annual Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1). This report is both brief and analytical. It is 45 pages long and costs $46,000 to produce, compared to the report of the Security Council, which is 571 pages long and costs about $581,000 to produce. A simple listing of the document symbols, or even a web site, could have taken care of the routine contents of the Security Council's report and, indeed, made much of it redundant. Just by doing this, the United Nations could save half a million dollars each year. Why hasn't such a simple suggestion been made or implemented? Our discomfort with both the form and content of this heavy annual report left us with no choice but to state our public reservation when the Council adopted it at its 4375th meeting on 18 September 2001. For the record, let me also add that we agree fully with the comments made earlier today by the Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso. We urge the Council members to heed his comments.

During last year's debate on this item, several delegations made some sharp and useful suggestions on how the Security Council report could be improved. For example, Italy noted that it was a mere catalogue of meetings, resolutions and Presidential Statements. Italy also suggested that it should be more substantial and analytical, thus allowing us to better assess the work of the Security Council in all its aspects and effects in the areas of both peace and resources. We agree with Italy and other members who made suggestions last year, and we are pleased that this year the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has also reminded us of resolution 51/193, which also calls for a substantive analytical report. Unfortunately, none of these proposals were taken into account in drafting this year's report. We hope that this year's debate will make a difference. In our capacity as a Council member, we have therefore suggested that the Council should meet soon after today's debate, assess the comments made here today and take them into consideration when preparing future reports. We hope that this reasonable suggestion will be taken on board by the Council and that it will seriously discuss some of the questions raised this morning — for example, the excellent questions posed by the representative of Costa Rica on some of the substantive issues of the Council's work.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, let me stress one point: we would like to be constructive in this debate. We believe in the Security Council. Most institutions, like human beings, languish when they have only uncritical lovers or unloving critics. The Council needs loving critics. We have a national interest, as do most members of this General Assembly, in being such a loving critic. As a small State, we have a vested interest in a stronger, not weaker, Council. Hence, for example, in our very first month on the Council, during our January presidency, we organized a debate to strengthen cooperation between the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat. As a result, the Security Council established a working group on peacekeeping operations. Eventually, resolution 1353 (2001) was adopted on 13 June, and the Council made a commitment to consider specific proposals of troop-contributing countries for a new mechanism. We suggest this as an example of how innovations can be made and how the Council can be improved.

We would therefore like to encourage General Assembly Member States to give their views to the Council, both on how the annual report should be restructured and on how this annual debate should be conducted. Frankly, all of the General Assembly debates so far have been perfunctory. But Assembly members have no one but themselves to blame for this sorry state of affairs. Behaviour like this explains the

growing weakness and irrelevance of the Assembly. We were truly puzzled to hear a German parliamentarian, Mr. Eberhard Brecht, declare in August of this year that he saw an erosion of reputation and loss of importance of the Security Council. Such a description — and we say this with some sadness — would be a truer picture of the General Assembly. Incidentally, in the same paper, Mr. Brecht made a more valid observation when he said,

> "Instead we must look for procedures that will make it more difficult for a member of the Security Council to place national interests above the preservation of world peace and international security".

To make our discussions more meaningful, we would like to suggest that this annual report be sharply condensed. It should contain three main parts: descriptive, analytical and prescriptive. Our suggested format has been outlined in the annex to our statement. As copies of my speech have been circulated, I hope Members will refer to the annex.

In part I, the descriptive part should quantify the Council's output. Some of the concrete indicators of the Council's output are provided in the annex. They should be provided in a user-friendly fashion so that major changes can be easily spotted. Let me cite one example. In 1999, there were 9,000 military troops and 2,000 civilian police serving in United Nations operations; today there are 35,000 military troops and 8,000 civilian police. This massive increase took place in the period covered by this report; but nowhere in the report do we see this increase documented or discussed. Perhaps it is time for a major international organization — intergovernmental or non-governmental — to consider establishing an external monitoring mechanism to measure and monitor the impact of Council decisions and results.

Part II should contain an analytical review. We have no illusions that this analytical part will be easy to produce. Indeed, again — referring to this morning's statement by my friend Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso — he, too, acknowledged that analytical descriptions can be difficult. Even simple descriptions can be politically controversial. We are not naïve. However, we do believe that after the usual initial difficulties of charting a new course, the Council could provide an analytical review of its annual contributions, which, for the most part — and this is a point worth stressing — are positive and constructive. The Security Council does not have many skeletons in its closet. On the contrary, the Council has some laudable success stories to its credit, such as Namibia, Mozambique and, to some degree, Cambodia. East Timor remains a work in progress, but with continued United Nations engagement — and we hope the United Nations will remain fully engaged in East Timor even after independence — it could also turn out to be a model success story for the United Nations.

To obtain such an analytical report, it would help if the member States of the General Assembly could suggest the key questions or dimensions that such an analytical section could cover. To get this discussion going, we would like to suggest a few questions.

First, which key issues of peace and security — for example, Iraq, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, East Timor and so on — were addressed in the year of review? What progress was made, or regress occurred, in each of these areas? Were the trends positive or negative? Secondly, which longstanding issues — for example, Cyprus, Somalia, Angola — continued to remain on the Council's agenda for a decade or more with no progress? And, if so, why? Thirdly, which Security Council instruments — peacekeeping operations, sanctions, Security Council missions, panels of experts, monitoring mechanisms — proved to be effective, and why? Fourthly, how much money was allocated to each issue and region, and what were the results? Fifthly, what key lessons were learnt in the course of the year?

The question of lessons learnt is particularly important. Since joining the Security Council, we have discovered that the Council, like any other human institution, is not perfect. It does make mistakes, as a few examples may help to illustrate. The Council spends about $200 million a year on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), but balks at authorizing $5 million to pay for the Boundary Commission, the completion of whose work would help the early conclusion of UNMEE's mission and save hundreds of millions of dollars. The Council spends $800 million a year on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), but balks at spending $27 million for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes which would greatly assist in meeting the Mission's key objectives. These are small examples, but they clearly suggest that the Council can, and indeed should, be improved.

Incidentally, for the record, we should mention that, as a member of the Council, we have pointed out these mistakes. Unfortunately, no one has responded to our concerns.

The biggest lesson that all organizations, both in government and in business, have learnt in recent times is that it can be fatal to stagnate and stand still in rapidly changing times. The Council is clearly one of the most conservative institutions in the world. Despite appeals from several elected members, in the first 10 months of this year, only one meeting has been held of the informal Working Group of the Security Council concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions.

The obvious question to ask is: did this lack of meetings happen by accident or by design, and, if by design, whose design? These are the sorts of questions we should be asking. With some luck, another meeting of this difficult-to-organize group will be held next week, during the Irish presidency, to discuss, among other things, how to improve this annual report.

Reluctance to reform its working methods and procedures is a deep-seated trait within the Council, and one debate is not going to change this. Indeed, many hours have also been spent discussing cluster 2 issues in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Unfortunately, their conclusions rarely cross over into the Security Council's own Working Group on procedures and working methods.

In conclusion, let me state that we recognize that change will not come easily. Change will be especially difficult for a body such as the Security Council, which uniquely enjoys both sweeping powers and immunity from any formal review or accountability. It is easy for it to feel invincible and invulnerable. But it may be wise for the Council to learn a lesson or two from equally mighty and powerful global organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Both have been humbled in recent years. Both have learnt the value of public accountability.

Paradoxically, the only reason why the Council has not faced calls for public accountability is because its activities are hidden within the fabric of the larger United Nations community. Article 24 of the United Nations Charter clearly states that the Security Council, in carrying out its duties, acts on behalf of the United Nations Members. In other words, the Security Council derives its power from the wider membership. Therefore, the General Assembly should not be surprised if it is one day held accountable for failing to make the Council an institution that is also accountable to the international community, in the political, if not the legal, sense.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): The debate on this agenda item comes at a moment of challenge for the United Nations. In the face of the tragedy of 11 September, the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, are called on to fully discharge their responsibilities. The international community is counting on effective action by the United Nations, and we trust that this call has been heard.

I thank Ambassador Richard Ryan for his presentation of the report and the Secretariat for its work in producing this document.

We recognize Ambassador Ryan's effort to make this presentation more than a mere formality. This is a hard task, though, since the raw material we have before us — the report contained in document A/56/2 — is, unfortunately, once again very disappointing.

It is frustrating to see that the report continues to be little more than a compilation of decisions and a list of documents. As a consequence, most of the comments to be made here today will be based on information delegations have collected not from the report but from other sources.

It is hard to imagine that the Security Council would agree to debate any issue on its agenda on the basis of a report similar to this one. It is not fair to expect the General Assembly to do so.

Members of the Security Council are, in fact, aware that this report does not meet the expectations of the United Nations membership. We agree with the comments made by Ambassadors Mahbubani, Valdivieso and Levitte during the discussions that preceded the adoption of the report by the Council to the effect that greater efforts should be made to prepare a more meaningful report. Let me reiterate my full agreement with the statements made by Ambassador Valdivieso and Ambassador Mahbubani, especially the excellent, precise and concrete proposals put forth by both of them. What the General Assembly is receiving is not consistent with the efforts the Council itself has been making towards making its work more transparent.

We encourage the Council to continue its efforts to overcome outdated practices and to produce a document that fulfils, in a substantive manner, the obligation contained in Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

We believe that a useful report from the Council would be one that is not only analytical but also informative. It should contain data on what the Council did during the preceding year and an analysis of how each issue was treated, what was achieved, how well the Council performed its task, how treatment of the issues can be improved, and what obstacles are impeding the implementation of the Council's decisions.

It is not the size of the report that counts. It is, rather, the quality and depth of the information provided that matters. Again, I believe that Ambassador Mahbubani's idea of a report consisting of three different chapters is perfect.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this vein, we suggest that the Council consider to the provision of special reports, as foreseen in the Charter, to inform the General Assembly, at various times during the year, of its work regarding thematic issues, including specific situations. These special reports could lead to more focused debates on the work accomplished and the difficulties faced by the Security Council. The special reports would not be quarterly editions of the present type of annual report, but should rather follow a completely different approach. Consequently, the General Assembly could be convened to discuss the agenda item now under consideration more than once a year. Relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council should not be confined to a one-day debate in the middle of October. There should be more fluid and permanent interaction.

There is ample material for focused, analytical special reports by the Council dealing, for example, with its discussions and achievements with respect to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, peace-building, children in armed conflicts, cooperation with troop-contributing countries, difficulties encountered in the implementation of sanctions regimes and, now, international terrorism.

In order to improve the content of the annual report, the Council should consider the possibility of establishing a specific working group for this task. The President of the Council should be more than a presenter of the report to the General Assembly. He or she could make, as part of his or her responsibility, an assessment of the year covered in the report.

The membership's knowledge about the work of the Council goes much beyond what the report says. The Council's good work disappears in the midst of a report that is not friendly for those willing to be educated about the essence of the Council's activity. The Security Council is so important and its decisions touch the international community so deeply and extensively that failing to report them adequately goes against the Council's interest.

The message coming from the general membership is clear. The credibility and legitimacy of the decisions taken by the Council would only be enhanced with the presentation of a meaningful and substantive report. Otherwise, in the absence of a proper account of its work, the Council runs the risk of a partial and even unfair assessment of its work on the part of the General Assembly.

The period covered by this report was a very busy one for the Council. This, unfortunately, is a sign that the international community has not been able to establish the peaceful, stable, just and prosperous society envisaged by the drafters of the Charter.

Angola remains of particular interest to Brazil, and we are pleased by the way the Council has strengthened the implementation of the sanctions against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The Security Council Committee on the situation in Angola, presided over by Ambassador Ryan, and the Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA, headed by Ambassador Larrain, deserve a word of recognition for their tireless work which, by depriving UNITA from their tools of war, has been saving lives in Angola.

We are also following with great interest the East Timorese road to independence. The leadership of the Secretary-General from the start and the admirable work of the head of United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), Sergio Vieira de Mello, and his team are paving the way for a successful transition to statehood. We should also praise the political maturity of the people of East

Timor, as shown during the transition and in the peaceful holding of elections. To achieve stability and sustainable development, the situation in East Timor will need more efforts from the international community. We expect the Council to play an important role in catalyzing the collective will to foster East Timorese prosperity, regional inclusion and democracy.

We applaud the increasing tendency of the Security Council to be more transparent and inclusive in its procedures. Private meetings, open briefings, public debates and the practice of daily briefings by the presidency help bring the work of the Council closer to the general membership. Brazil is encouraged by the fact that the Security Council is today more sensitive to the need for intensive dialogue with troop-contributing countries. It is also a positive fact that the Council has been able to discuss the issues of sanctions and peace-keeping operations, bearing in mind the views of the Member States. Once again, my delegation welcomes the practice of public wrap-up sessions at the end of each month, and encourages Council members — and particularly the outgoing president — to use those sessions to evaluate how well the Security Council has fulfilled its role.

In order for such changes to go beyond the methods of work and affect the very heart of the Council's competence, it is necessary that Security Council members accept that transparency is a two-way street. This means being prepared to entertain an even higher degree of interaction with the general membership. By assuring a greater emphasis on transparency, and through a permanent sharing of information with the general membership, the Council will be able to assert more effectively its influence on the matters on its agenda. This is a natural product of transparency, which we sincerely hope that Council members can accept for the benefit of the Organization.

It is equally important that the general membership perceive a true sense of commitment by Council members to the mandates they establish. This sense — ultimately a sense of ownership and responsibility — materialize, for instance, in the active and actual engagement of Council members in the solution of all questions before it, as well as in the provision of material means and personnel for peacekeeping operations.

We also believe that Council missions to countries or regions are a very useful instrument, as they provide a first-hand knowledge of the realities, and help develop a better understanding of the situation, on the ground.

The Security Council and the General Assembly are both forms of expression of the will of the international community. A disconnect between what the Security Council decides and what the wider membership feels is the greatest risk this Organization runs. It is imperative that the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly converge. Through mutual reinforcement, the realization of the United Nations highest ideals is easier. To bridge the gap that sometimes appears, we should not fail to grasp every opportunity to increase interaction between the Council and Member States.

The recently established Security Council Committee on counter-terrorism is certainly one of these opportunities, as resolution 1373 (2001) clearly requires vigorous cooperation and continuous dialogue with the wider membership in order to achieve the goals we have set for the United Nations. We are therefore encouraged by the way the Committee has set out its activities under the able guidance of Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock. His briefings on the work of the Committee amply reflect the broad and new dynamics of cooperation that we must promote in the relations between the Council and Member States.

This also reinforces the case for a comprehensive reform to make the Security Council more representative, effective and legitimate. The need for Security Council reform is all the more evident in times like these, when the realities of new security threats highlight the fact that our world is different from what it was 50 years ago.

The work of the Council is also challenged by claims of selectivity, due to the lack of even-handedness in dealing with agenda items, and by episodes in which the Council was sidelined.

Despite all the hurdles, the capabilities of the Council are still intact and Brazil firmly believes in them. The Council's rapid reaction to the threats to international peace and security posed by international terrorism, which culminated with the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), proved that it is able to act decisively when it is determined, resolved and united.

We trust that this model of deliberation will be reproduced in other items on the agenda.

Accountability is essential. Only by increased accountability will members be sure that the responsibility they entrust to the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, is being fulfilled in a satisfactory manner. Thanks in part to the introduction of more transparent practices in its methods of work, the Council is today more accountable than before. Were we to take this report and its discussion in the General Assembly as a measure of transparency and accountability, however, the grades would be disappointing.

Brazil would like to invite the Security Council to dedicate time and attention to this debate not only today, but for the whole year, and to offer the General Assembly next year, through a renewed effort, an unequivocal demonstration of commitment to enhancing its accountability.

In times of challenge, the crucial role of the Security Council is even more evident for all Member States. It is at times like these that we hope the Council will emerge more united, accountable, open and responsive. In the fight against terrorism, we need a strong and wise Council able not only to represent the United Nations, but even more importantly to unite nations in a common cause. In doing so, it would be meeting the international community's expectations and strengthening the United Nations as a whole.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to thank the President of the Security Council, Mr. Richard Ryan of Ireland, for introducing the fifty-sixth annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We are of the view that the consideration of the Council's annual report by the Assembly is not a mere formality, but an occasion when the larger membership should be free to comment on and assess the performance of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

There has been a clearly expressed wish on the part of the larger membership of the Organization for a more informative and analytical report on the work of the Security Council. This has been expressed both here in the Assembly and in the Open-ended Working Group on Council reform and in the informal meeting on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. While we welcome the improved format of the present report, we hope that future reports will be more comprehensive and analytical.

We also welcome the improved format of the monthly reports of the President of the Council. However, while they are now more substantive and informative than in the past, they are largely descriptive in nature and lack an analysis of the issues dealt with by the Council. We would suggest that the President of the Council be given greater latitude in making an analysis of the issues dealt with during his or her presidency.

We hope that the Council's informal Working Group on Documentation and Procedures will pay special attention to the concerns raised by the general membership during this debate. Indeed, it would be an extremely useful exercise if, following this debate, the President of the Council or his successor would schedule a discussion in the Council on the comments, observations and suggestions of the general membership on the report. I would therefore encourage Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore, who made the same suggestion, to push his colleagues in the Council to consider the views of Member States articulated here with the seriousness that they deserve.

During the period under review, the Council has held many thematic debates on, inter alia, peacekeeping, security and post-conflict peace-building, and the promotion of peace and security. These debates have become a useful forum, providing an opportunity for both Council and non-Council members to address cross-cutting and complex issues relating to the overall question of peace and security. The maintenance of international peace and security requires an integrated approach; hence the need to develop comprehensive and coherent strategies involving the entire United Nations system. However, the Council must be circumspect in its approach so as not to encroach more and more onto areas that are strictly not within its purview. Also, while these thematic debates have been generally useful, it is prudent not to overdo them, so that a thematic debate is not convened purely for its own sake or to fill in the Council's programme of work for the month.

In addition to the thematic and open debates, my delegation also supports more frequent convening of the so-called private meetings of the Council in which the Council meets in closed formal sessions for an exchange of views with representatives of concerned

States and parties to a conflict. We believe that these private meetings contribute substantially to improving the decision-making process of the Council by making the Council more accessible to the concerned States and parties and by listening to their views before making a decision. However, useful as these debates are, they must not become a substitute for prompt and effective Council action.

We note that during the reporting period Council missions visited Kosovo and the Great Lakes region in Africa. My delegation welcomes the more frequent dispatch of Council missions to conflict areas. Having taken part in three such missions in the past when Malaysia was a member of the Council, we feel that the cost of sending these missions is worth it, since they enable Council members to be better informed of the situation on the ground, thereby enabling the Council to make more sound decisions on these issues. We also welcome the practice of having open meetings of the Council immediately after the completion of Council missions to consider their reports. This practice should become a permanent feature of the work of the Council as it increases further its transparency vis-à-vis the larger membership of the Organization.

My delegation also sees merit in the holding of a wrap-up session at the end of each presidency of the Council to assess the work of the Council for the month. This session, which is open to the general membership of the Organization, is a new and useful mechanism for the Council to review its performance and determine the necessary follow-up actions, as well as to provide useful insights on the work of the Council to the larger membership.

We have many times in the past stated that without the necessary reform the Council will remain an anachronistic institution that reflects the outdated realities and power equations of the immediate post-Second World War period. The continued existence of the veto has rendered the Council's decision-making process less than democratic and has contributed to much of the impasse in, and paralysis of, the Council. The problem of the veto was at the core of the Council's inaction with respect to the massacres in Bosnia, the genocide in Rwanda and the "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo. It was, and continues to be, the main reason for the inability of the Council to contribute constructively to solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was the threat and use of the veto that prevented the Council from taking action to address the current grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

On the issue of sanctions imposed by the Council, the Secretary-General himself has highlighted what he called the serious moral dilemma facing the United Nations as it struggles with this issue, juggling, on the one hand, to promote and preserve peace while, on the other, contributing to the sufferings of innocent populations through the effects of punitive sanctions imposed on their countries. As a general principle, Malaysia is opposed to the imposition of sanctions on a people, because of the debilitating effects they can have on innocent populations. We believe that sanctions are a blunt weapon that very often punish not the intended target, but the innocent populace.

However, if, as provided for in the Charter, sanctions are to be utilized as a measure of last resort when all other measures short of force have failed, they should be imposed after a careful analysis of the likely impact. This is to ensure that they have the desired effect only on the intended target or targets, not on the general population. Also, their use must be governed by a set of clear parameters, including, specific and clearly identified targets, a prescribed time frame and regular impact assessment. In this regard, the so-called smart or targeted sanctions should be the only permissible form of sanctions to be used, being more humane than comprehensive sanctions.

It is to be hoped that the Council will give careful thought to designing more effective and humane sanctions regimes. My delegation would strongly encourage the ongoing discussions in the Council aimed at finding ways and means of more effectively implementing and managing current sanctions regimes, ways and means which will serve as useful guidelines for future sanctions regimes that the Council may decide to impose on Member States in exceptional circumstances. It is regrettable that in some cases the management of sanctions by the Council has tended to be influenced by political considerations or expediency rather than principles.

In our view, the sooner the Council resolves the moral dilemma that the Secretary-General spoke of, the better it will be for its prestige and credibility. There will invariably be an inherent tension between two imperatives: morality and the need to punish errant States. We believe that it would be judicious for the Council to resolve this tension between the two

imperatives by coming down on the side of morality, as it cannot afford to be accused of condoning the deaths, destruction and sufferings of innocent populations living under sanctions.

In such situations, the humanitarian tragedy arising from sanctions could be viewed as overriding the need for a harsh sanctions regime. Such ethical and moral arguments provide a compelling justification for reviewing and drastically revamping existing sanctions regimes that have either failed to fully realize their objectives or become irrelevant in the context of the time. In this regard, my delegation commends the Council for finally lifting the sanctions on Sudan, following the failure of several attempts in the past to do so because of the threat of a veto. We look forward to the Council's moving in the same direction in respect of the sanctions on Libya and Iraq.

With regard to meetings with troop-contributing countries, my delegation welcomes the positive elements embodied in Security Council resolution 1353 (2001). Nevertheless, we regret that the resolution was not able to incorporate the views of a large number of troop-contributing countries, including the proposal relating to the participation of troop-contributing countries in all phases of peacekeeping operations, especially in connection with the concept of operations and rules of engagement. That would help to resolve differences that may exist between military doctrines and command-and-control structures among the various troop-contributing countries.

We also hope that the new, expanded format of meetings with the troop-contributing countries will be fully utilized by all concerned — Council members, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat — and that such meetings will become more interactive in character. The meetings between the Council and troop-contributing countries should not be mere formalities.

My delegation is also pleased to note that representatives of the Security Council were able to participate at a meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council to share experiences and exchange views on the working methods of the Council over the years. We commend the Bureau of the Working Group and the President of the Council at the time for making that interaction possible. The candid and stimulating exchange of views between Council members and the Working Group proved to be extremely useful and provided both Council members and members of the Working Group with important insights into their respective work. We hope that such exchanges will lead to more informal and focused discussion in the Open-ended Working Group.

Two weeks ago, in addressing the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, my delegation commended the efforts of the Secretary-General to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We are of the view that the Council can also play a role in the area of preventive diplomacy by working closely with the Secretary-General and encouraging him to bring to the attention of the Council issues and developments that have the potential of leading to outbreaks of open conflict, so that appropriate steps can be taken to nip them in the bud. For this purpose, we would strongly encourage more frequent informal contact and interaction between the Secretary-General and Council members.

We feel that an excellent avenue for this purpose would be the holding of more frequent informal contacts and discussions between them, such as the weekend retreats involving Council members that were initiated by the Secretary-General himself about three years ago. These informal brain-storming sessions, if held more frequently, rather than just once a year, as is the current practice, would be of tremendous value to the Council and the Secretary-General in dealing with thorny issues being dealt with in the Council, including those that are potentially explosive.

The historic Council Summit, held in September last year, made a clear commitment to making the Council's work more effective and efficient. By that commitment, spelled out in resolution 1318 (2000), the Council undertook to improve its capacity to act effectively; to act preventively; and to act promptly and decisively. We look forward to the Council following up on that resolution, as spelled out in the presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/2001/10, which expressed the Council's commitment to further review progress in implementing resolution 1318 (2000), with the active participation of non-members of the Council.

In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Council, who will begin

serving next year, namely, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. We wish them every success, confident in the knowledge that they will enrich the deliberations of the Council.

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): The central issue under consideration today is the connection between the Security Council and the general membership. Security issues cannot any longer be dealt with effectively by just the powerful few. Rather, broad coalitions — broad in terms of geography and capabilities — are required to overcome conflict and other threats to international security. The tragic events of 11 September and their aftermath have underscored this fact. The Security Council has clearly understood the importance of engaging the entire United Nations membership effectively on an issue that, as in this case, obviously has consequences for us all. Let us therefore seize on the present momentum to look into possibilities of forging a sustained and multifaceted connection between the Council and the general membership — a connection that can be mobilized any time for any purpose within the mandate of the Council.

At the level of intergovernmental policy-making, we have to look at ways and means to improve the cooperation between the principal organs of this Organization. In doing so, we can build on what we have achieved so far in terms of promoting interaction between the Council and the general membership.

In the past year, we have seen an increasing awareness among Council members that informing and involving non-members in any way benefits the work of the Council. Thanks also to the untiring efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, a lot has been achieved in the way of transparency and openness with regard to the daily work of the Council. Equally, we can pride ourselves on having achieved the closer involvement of troop-contributing countries with the work of the Council. There is a clear recognition on the part of the Council that such a level of involvement is long overdue and, ultimately, that it is in the Council's own interests.

As for the issue of the troop-contributing countries, we feel that we have arrived at a critical juncture. If there is one area where there is a pressing need for the Council to connect more closely to the membership — and vice versa — it is the relationship with the troop-contributing countries; these are the countries providing the men and women who will face the consequences of the decisions of the Council. These men and women, putting their lives on the line for the cause of peace, are entitled to maximum transparency and inclusiveness in the process of preparing for and managing peace operations.

Fortunately, the Security Council has been increasingly sensitive to these concerns and is engaging itself gradually in an interactive process with troop contributors. Non-members were able to press their points of view in the open debate of the Council on 16 January this year on strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries, resulting in the establishment of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. This Group conducted its deliberations with a fair degree of openness and consultation with non-members. Security Council resolution 1353 (2001) certainly reflects this progress and is a step forward in that respect. It keeps open the option of a more far-reaching mechanism for the involvement of troop-contributing countries in the work of the Council. We expect that the present deliberations of the Security Council Working Group will lead to proposals for such a mechanism.

When it comes to connecting the general membership with the work of the Security Council, we should not limit that to ad hoc involvement with specific issues. We should also look at options for making a better connection at the institutional level. Obviously, the Charter provides for cooperation and coordination between the principal United Nations organs, but so far little effective use has been made of those provisions.

While the United Nations has made considerable progress in improving coordination of United Nations agencies, the same cannot be said about the decision-making process at the intergovernmental level: the main United Nations intergovernmental bodies do not cooperate or coordinate. There is no interaction and no integration, or at least convergence, of policies to speak of. It is clear, however, that those bodies, each from its own legitimate angle, very much cover the same issues or important aspects of those issues. Because there is no connection, the value that those bodies combined could add is far from optimal. In that sense, the entire membership is failing in its responsibility to provide the world with effective intergovernmental tools to address successfully urgent global issues.

An area where a better intergovernmental connection could be of enormous benefit is the grey zone between economic conditions and conflict and, in particular, the range of policies and activities in the context of post-conflict peace-building. It is obvious that the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council share a job here. Let us therefore heed the call to the international community made by the Secretary-General last year at the Millennium to learn how to govern better together. And let us remind ourselves of our own pledge in the Millennium Declaration to promote regular consultations and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations. Good governance not only should be a commitment at the national level, it should be a standing practice at the intergovernmental level as well.

So far I have explained that we see a great need for a more dynamic interconnection between the Council and the general membership; we have also signalled progress made so far, and we have indicated where the challenges are. Where does the report of the Security Council fit in all this?

The report before us is quite a mixed bag of information in varying degrees of relevancy to the larger United Nations membership. It is, no doubt, a reliable record of the Council's proceedings, which were public anyway. For example, what is presented in the report as background information on specific country situations does not amount to anymore than an elaborate paraphrasing of resolutions and presidential statements that can be found in their entirety also under the appendices of the report. Otherwise, the report is no doubt an encyclopaedic masterpiece that as such, however, is not very likely to fuel a spirited debate on the Council's activities during the past year.

An obvious omission in the report is the absence of any reference to meetings of working groups established by the Council, like the one on peacekeeping — a missed opportunity since these working groups deal with issues, like peacekeeping, that are of great interest to the wider United Nations membership and certainly to United Nations troop contributors.

However, the part of the report that is truly narrative and somewhat substantive and informative is concealed in its annex. It is the part that contains the reports that Presidents of the Council publish after completion of their monthly tenures and is the closest thing to analysis that we can find in the report. It is the kind of analysis we need to have to have a useful debate on this agenda item.

In that respect, I recommend that the Security Council take inspiration from the Secretary-General's annual report. In the view of my delegation, this is a model that the Council might want to adopt in the future. In that way, Member States will feel better prepared to have an in-depth debate on the activities of the Council in the past year. This would greatly enhance the relevancy of our debate under this agenda item in the future.

Mr. de Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express our gratitude to Ambassador Richard Ryan, Permanent Representative of Ireland and current President of the Security Council, for the introduction of the annual report of that body.

Peru receives this report in accordance with Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, which clearly acknowledges of the Security Council's responsibility to act on behalf of the members of the Organization in discharging its essential duty of maintenance of international peace and security.

Peru is convinced that a fluid, effective and regular interaction between the Security Council and all the Member States represented in the General Assembly is essential. That facilitates the consensus required for the institutional, normative, doctrinal and operational adaptation of the Organization, so that we can face together and resolutely the multiple challenges within the spheres of international peace and security and development.

The recent experience of our collective response in combating international terrorism validates this conviction. The Security Council reacted as it should have in the performance of its duties, adopting resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Unfortunately, the same did not occur in the General Assembly. More than 140 Member States participated in a fruitful and thorough debate. However, the General Assembly was not able to define clear guidelines to strengthen international cooperation on an issue of profound concern to the entire international community.

The Security Council has created a Committee against terrorism with the mandate of verifying the implementation of its resolution 1373 (2001). It will be

assisted for this purpose by a group of experts in the various areas required for the struggle against this scourge. I would like to announce that Peru is fully resolved to cooperate with that Committee. Since my country is one of the few that have been successful in eliminating terrorism, we believe that Peru is very capable of assisting the Security Council in carrying out such important tasks, and we are therefore evaluating the possibility of suggesting the appointment of a Peruvian expert as a member of that advisory group.

Seeking to strengthen the synergy between the Security Council and the General Assembly, we believe it necessary that the President of the General Assembly implement resolution 51/241 of 22 August 1997, on strengthening the United Nations system. That resolution states that, based on the deliberations on the report of the Security Council,

> "informal consultations shall be held, under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss action that may be required by the Assembly on the basis of the debate of the report." (*resolution 51/241, annex, para. 7*)

A clear example with respect to this suggestion regards the solution of internal conflicts involving national disintegration, which abound in various regions of the world. The handling of these internal civil conflicts must be considered from a comprehensive perspective. This perspective includes action to prevent the outbreak of civil conflict; the restoration of peace if preventive action fails; punitive action against the massive violation of human rights, once peace is restored; and finally, humanitarian aid. With these elements, the conflict can be suppressed. But after conflict, the most important thing is building a viable nation State, in other words, a politically and economically sustainable country.

It is obvious that the solution to conflicts and later nation-building of a viable nation State require the participation of the entire United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions. However, for nation-building to be effective, we must go further and obtain the participation of the private sector and the commitment of private foreign investment in order to create companies with globally competitive advantages that will support the long-term economic viability of the reconstructed nation State.

With regard to the Security Council's work to combat terrorism, the creation of an ad hoc committee was a wise decision. But this committee should not only be advised by governmental experts but should also have consultations with banks, private financial companies involved in international monetary transactions, as well as non-governmental organizations that have experience in the fight to make human rights and democracy prevail.

With respect to peacekeeping operations in accordance with resolution 1353, troop-contributing countries must have early and direct participation in the definition of the terms of reference and the scope of peacekeeping and peace-building missions. This permits a significant increase in the chances of success of these missions and constitutes a coherent, practical measure. Although important progress has been made in this area, we believe there is still outstanding a need for a formal interrelational and complementary mechanism allowing for participation prior to the revision and renewal of the mandates of United Nations operations.

Peru hopes that these brief reflections and, in particular, the possible expert contribution to the Security Council committee on terrorism and the needed participation of the entire United Nations system and the private sector in the nation-building of collapsed countries and in the fight against terrorism can contribute to creating a more organic effort by the Security Council and, through that, a better management of conflicts by this Organization.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We thank Ambassador Ryan of Ireland, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Once again, it is clear that the task of the Security Council continues to grow in both volume and complexity. Increasingly, the challenges that continue to frustrate our quest for international peace and security point to the need for concerted international cooperation among all Member States.

As before, the report of the Council presents us with a compendium of the extensive range of issues placed before Council. In our efforts to better allocate our resources, we would like to recommend that the Council revisit its decisions regarding the format of the report and try to minimize the number of previously issued documents which are unnecessarily repeated in

the report. This report before us could have been user-friendly.

In this debate, Member States are expected to reflect on the work of the Council and provide assessments of ways in which the Council may improve its effectiveness. Therefore, the report should be designed to offer comparative information with which to analyze the performance of the Council on a particular issue. While we can understand the Council's reluctance to indulge in subjective self-evaluation, the format of the report should assist Member States to more easily extract and review the actions and the results of Council activities. Member States would then be in a position to better assist the Council through their analysis of the assimilated data provided in the report.

The events of the past month have demonstrated clearly that we need the Security Council and the General Assembly to work closely together. If we are to counter the surge of terrorism, the United Nations will have to be unified in its aims and its intentions. My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that the United Nations is best suited to respond to this latest challenge.

In the past couple years, we have seen international peace and security being redefined to go beyond the scope of the traditional military conceptualizations. Indeed, some members of the Security Council have argued that threats to human society, such as HIV/AIDS and water scarcity, not only threaten individual or personal security but are also likely to trigger future international conflicts. This is yet another demonstration of the need for the United Nations organs to work together. For this reason, my delegation regrets that the Security Council and Economic and Social Council have yet to meet. The meeting of these two organs is long overdue. We are therefore convinced that an important challenge that the Council must undertake is to redefine its role in terms of the evolving global order, while remaining cognizant of its mandated role relative to the other competent organs and institutions of the United Nations.

My delegation is keenly aware that the Security Council has again devoted considerable time over the past year to addressing conflicts in Africa. While we warmly welcome the Council's attention to our continent's situation, we would like to see the same commitment to deploying resources to resolving African conflicts. The Council has made some progress in its efforts to curb the financing and arming of rebel groups in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. However, the situation in Burundi remains a serious challenge to the United Nations. We would urge the Security Council to remain seized of this matter and to consider timely involvement in support of the peace process.

On another matter, the Kimberley Process, which is the product of the General Assembly's determination to contribute to compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, is now making significant progress in stemming the trade in conflict diamonds. In this regard, we welcome the efforts made by the respective sanctions committees and panels and offer our continued support and cooperation. We would like to call on the sanctions committees to standardize the format of their lists on entities restricted by sanctions and to ensure that the information on the Web site is easily accessible and user-friendly. Perhaps more important is the recommendation that sanctions committees harmonize their work so that capitals are not faced with the inconvenience of receiving one sanctions committee after another seeking the same information and asking the same questions.

The African countries have launched the New African Initiative, which forms a pillar upon which our continent is resolving conflicts and contributing to global stability and security. We believe that, through development and the establishment of institutions for good governance and human rights, we will create the conditions that lead to peace and cooperation amongst member States, as well as among the diverse components within member States. Our experience is that at the centre of conflicts are the issues of underdevelopment and poverty. In other words, in addressing global peace and security, we must also focus our attention on the living conditions which many people in the developing world are forced to endure.

The Middle East remains an important issue for the Security Council and the ongoing conflict in that area impacts directly on international peace and security. We urge the Security Council to respond urgently to the need to resolve that conflict. The Council must be persuaded to reconsider the efforts made by the elected members and by some permanent members to mandate the deployment of a credible

international observer mechanism to oversee the implementation of the Mitchell report by Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

My delegation has keenly monitored the efforts of the Security Council to improve its working and decision-making methods, in particular those pertaining to cooperation with troop-contributing countries. As last year's events in Sierra Leone demonstrated, the solid relationship between the Council, the Secretariat and the troop contributors is vital to the effective management and conduct of peacekeeping operations and their ultimate success. We therefore welcomed the adoption of resolution 1353 (2001) as a step in the right direction towards improving that relationship. However, we believe that the matter should not be left at that. In our view, the relationship between the Council and troop contributors is an evolutionary one and should be subject to constant review and improvement.

We welcome the continued attempts made by the Security Council to promote transparency and interaction between the Council and relevant stakeholders. In this regard, we support the Council's efforts to gain first-hand experience of conditions on the ground by sending missions to such areas.

We are also pleased to note that the Council continues to conduct open debates and that some Council members have sought to improve the quality of the interaction between the Council and other Member States through more interactive sessions. It is through focused interactive dialogue that the Council would be better able to benefit from the views of Member States regarding its activities.

One way in which the Council might derive greater value from its debates is to have the Secretariat distribute its briefing papers before the meeting. Another useful suggestion which was made by a Council member in April this year was that, wherever possible, briefings by the Secretariat and the Secretary-General's representatives should be held in public, rather than in private meetings. Furthermore, Security Council members could pose questions to guest speakers, such as the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, on behalf of non-Council members.

The Council should seriously review the effectiveness of its actions with regard to resolving conflicts and bringing about sustainable peace. We believe that security cannot be achieved by a few in the midst of the sprawling insecurity of the masses. We have therefore argued that security must be addressed by resolving the root causes of conflict and instability. We have spoken much of the potential positive benefits of globalization, but have yet to undertake the important tasks of minimizing its potentially negative aspects.

The Council requires a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of sanctions, such as those against Iraq, which have caused untold suffering to innocent civilians. Sanctions, like other instruments at the disposal of the Security Council, cannot succeed if they do not enjoy universal support, particularly the full support of regional and other influential players. Collective action must therefore, by necessity, be taken in accordance with the stipulations of international law and be supported by the legitimate authorization of the Security Council and/or the General Assembly in order to ensure universal implementation.

The wider United Nations membership, including the elected membership of the Security Council, must assert the primary responsibility of the Security Council in determining legitimate threats to international peace and security. The Council should determine the measures to be taken under Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter to restore peace and security. Actions against threats to international peace and security cannot be undertaken unilaterally or by regional partnerships unless they have the authorization of the Security Council and are conducted in terms of international law. It is therefore critical that Council decisions receive adequate consideration and wide consultation, because their implications are so wide-ranging, especially when Chapter VII is invoked. Member States are, after all, more than mere partners whom the Security Council must co-opt; in fact, the Council represents Member States and acts on their behalf.

In conclusion, it is abundantly clear that the Security Council and, indeed, any other organ of the United Nations must join in a cooperative venture to face the challenges of this new millennium. In this regard, it is now as important as ever that high-level political consideration be given to reforming the Security Council and expanding both its permanent and non-permanent membership towards greater regional representativeness. A more representative Council will better reflect the current state of international relations.

It will be able to act with greater credibility and accountability.

We welcome the five newly elected members of the Security Council, as we also say farewell to those elected members that have represented us so admirably over the past two years. As our new colleagues on the Security Council prepare to meet the challenge of serving on the Security Council, we are once again reminded that the privilege of serving on the Council also places even greater responsibilities on members of the Council. We look forward to working closely with the Security Council as it strives to improve its response to the global need for peace and security.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador Ryan of Ireland for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/56/2). Our thanks go also to the other members of the Security Council, as well as to the Council secretariat for its work in preparing the report.

Despite numerous criticisms each year, the report before us today has basically the same characteristics as those of previous years. We reaffirm that such a report, in spite of its great size and high cost, falls far short of responding to our hopes and our needs. Instead of a mere compendium of documents, we want a substantive, analytical report. The report of the Security Council should reflect not only what was done, but also what could not be done and why. The report should set out the divergent opinions of Council members on particular questions.

The submission of an annual report of the Security Council is not a privilege granted to the members of the General Assembly. To the contrary, it is an obligation that is clearly stated in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. Member States have not only the legitimate right, but also the duty, thoroughly to evaluate the work of the Council and to determine whether the Council is truly acting on behalf of all and fulfilling, as it should, the high responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter.

In 1996, on the initiative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/193, by which it encouraged the Council, in its reports to the General Assembly, to provide a substantive and analytical account of its work. Regrettably, more than five years after the adoption of that resolution, it has still not been duly taken into account, and the Assembly has not even been told why. Nor do we know why the General Assembly still does not receive the special reports that the Council should be submitting pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

Transparent working methods and the establishment of a genuine interrelationship with the General Assembly and with Member States would not weaken the Council, but would strengthen it. In the Millennium Declaration, our heads of State or Government stressed the need to bolster the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Greater transparency in the work of the Security Council is urgently needed. In an increasingly interdependent world, the decisions taken by the Council have ever greater implications, either direct or indirect, for all Member States. Moreover, Council decisions are implemented with funding from all of us, not just from the members of the Council.

Closed informal consultations, which are not even provided for in the Council's provisional rules of procedure, continue to be the rule and not the exception — in spite of the fact that according to its own provisional rules of procedure the Council should, in the absence of a specific decision to the contrary, meet in public.

We are grateful for the sincere efforts of some elected members of the Security Council to promote greater transparency in the Council's work. We acknowledge in particular the endeavours of Colombia and of Jamaica, which currently represent the Latin American and Caribbean States on the Council, to keep our region as well informed as possible about the work of the Council. But such efforts, by themselves, are not enough.

We cannot expect positive results from the work of the Council if it continues, inter alia, to neglect the opinions of Member States — often, even those of States directly involved in the question under discussion.

Except when exceptional circumstances prevent it, briefings by members of the Secretariat or by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General should take place in public meetings, not behind closed doors.

The quality of the daily information meetings for non-members of the Council varies a great deal depending on which country holds the presidency. Some make it possible at least to get some idea of the discussions held behind closed doors, but others are, frankly, not very useful, perhaps because of the fear of some presidencies that other Council members might view them as "too transparent".

It is important that the monthly wrap-up meetings on the work of the Council should become a regular practice. We particularly hail the Colombian initiative to organize a public wrap-up meeting this year, the first of its kind. It is important not only to permit non-members of the Council to be present at such meetings, but also to make it possible for them to participate actively by posing questions and offering proposals. That would encourage a true interactive exchange, which would be useful for all.

We are concerned at the Council's increasing tendency to discuss items and to adopt texts on matters that go far beyond its assigned mandate. The Council should not assume functions that belong to the General Assembly or other United Nations organs. Rather, there should be a greater effort to secure better coordination between the Security Council and the General Assembly and other bodies. In April steps were taken towards convening a joint meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Unfortunately, this could not take place, owing, in our view, to the unnecessarily hasty way in which the idea was promoted by the Security Council and to attempts to establish modalities for participation that were clearly unfavourable to members of the Economic and Social Council. Looking to the future, possible joint meetings of the Security Council and other organs should be convened on the basis of balanced, mutually acceptable formulas for participation and procedure. It is striking that, notwithstanding the difficulties that exist, the Council's informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions met hardly at all during the reporting period. In fact, its meeting last June was the first in a year.

Moreover, apart from mentioning that it met 26 times during the reporting period, the annual report of the Security Council says nothing about the work of the Military Staff Committee. It is thus impossible for us to make even the most general comments on the way in which that Committee is fulfilling — or failing to fulfil — the important functions entrusted to it by the Charter, or to express any view about its possible use as a way to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security.

We are convinced that many of the problems now affecting the work of the Security Council can be resolved only by thorough reform of that organ. The Council must be reformed because, in its present form, it does not and cannot represent the interests and aspirations of the States Members of the United Nations.

The anachronistic and anti-democratic privilege of the veto must disappear. While it remains, the Security Council will be effective only in preserving the interests of its permanent members.

Council reform is unquestionably the most sensitive and pressing element of the reform of the United Nations as a whole. We shall discuss this in greater detail when the Assembly debates agenda 49. We do not mean to say that there can be no progress until such reform takes place; experience shows that, even in the current circumstances, we can and should move forward.

Although public meetings continue to have little real influence on Council decisions and although they continue to be the exception rather than the rule, their number has increased. We have also noted some recent advances with respect to interaction between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, such as the holding of private meetings with those countries.

The practice of successive presidencies maintaining web sites on the Council's work during the month has become more widespread. Some of the sites have been particularly well organized.

Although their quality and level of detail vary, the optional monthly assessments by former Presidents of the Council are useful.

This year, in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, there was an opportunity to convene a meeting in which some Council members participated. It would be very useful for that kind of exchange to be repeated in the future, because it promotes better understanding of the positions prevailing in the two bodies. We believe that an important practical step would be for the Council to consider in depth the opinions and proposals presented

in this debate and to take them duly into account when organizing its future work.

I wish to conclude by congratulating the delegations of Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria on their recent election to serve as members of the Council. We wish them every success in their term.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): May I take this opportunity to thank member States for the confidence they have placed in Bulgaria by electing it as a non-permanent Security Council member for the term 2002-2003. Bulgaria will discharge its task with a sense of responsibility and in the spirit of the United Nations Charter and its fundamental principles.

First and foremost, I would like to address my delegation's congratulations to my friend Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, who, as Council President for the month of October, gave a very clear and concise introduction to the annual report of the Security Council. Bulgaria follows closely the work of the Council and attaches great importance to this debate based on Articles 15 and 24 of the United Nations Charter, which stipulate that the Council must present to the General Assembly both annual and special reports.

Our consideration of the current report is an opportunity to carry out an exhaustive evaluation of the Council's activities during the period of 16 June 2000 to 15 June 2001. My country is convinced that this debate is an ideal opportunity not only to review the Council's activities but also to consider the ways and means of maintaining and strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of a principal organ of the Organization.

The document before us contains very complete and detailed information. It gives us a wealth of specific data. The report convincingly demonstrates the significant workload that the Council has taken up and fully demonstrates the importance of the part it plays in dealing with a number of situations threatening peace and security in the world. The report reflects the considerable efforts made by the Council in order to prevent armed conflict and to settle disputes by peaceful means as part of its main responsibility — the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation would like to emphasize that, during the period under review, the Council has played a positive role in preventing and resolving conflict, as well as in peace-building. The report provides many examples demonstrating the beneficial effect of what it has done. This year, as in previous years, the Security Council report gives pride of place to crises ravaging Africa, where we find, most of the conflicts on the Council's agenda. In view of the great stakes and the frequently unstable political situation of the continent, a source of concern for the entire international community, the Council has made laudable efforts to contain these conflicts. Genuine progress has been achieved on the road to peace in a number of countries, including Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Thus, the Security Council is contributing to peace and security on the African continent, which, is a prerequisite for its sustainable economic development.

It is our hope that peace and stability will become rooted in the western Balkans, a region neighbouring Bulgaria. Despite certain recent positive developments in the region, the attention paid by the Security Council to it is of no less crucial importance now than in the past. Bulgaria reaffirms its support for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and would like to recall the importance that we attach to active participation of all electors in the elections to be held this November. Developing a culture of tolerance and multiculturalism in Kosovo is an essential condition for ensuring the well-being of all ethnic communities.

We note, however, that the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) reveals certain differences in approach within the Council. It is obvious that the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and that in East Timor are very complex and involve a form of international administration of the territories. These Missions require the participation of civil administrators, magistrates, prison wardens and border guards coming from countries of different parts of the world.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the Council has sent missions to conflict areas, such as those sent to the Great Lakes region and to Kosovo. Even if those missions have not always resulted in major breakthroughs in the settlement of conflicts, they have made it possible for Council members to get a better grasp of the situation on the ground and to better assess the nature, complexity and dynamics of the conflicts. The light that these missions shed on Council

discussions dealing with specific conflicts can only enhance its decision-making process. In our view, the Council missions have become an indispensable tool for the effective discharge of its duties.

It should be emphasized that the Security Council has begun to re-evaluate its policies on sanctions in order to improve their effectiveness while at the same time avoiding negative side effects. My delegation is preparing to consider the results of the work of the Working Group on sanctions, created in April 2000, in order to come up with relevant recommendations on these matters.

Bulgaria believes that it is essential to ensure that we reset our sights in regard to sanctions, and that this results in a clear-cut and coherent methodology with respect to imposing and lifting sanctions. Such a methodology should take into account the concerns of the civilian populations and the interests of third countries, while at the same time improving the effectiveness of sanctions.

Peacekeeping operations are becoming increasingly complex and numerous. Financial resources, mandates and political will should all converge to make each peacekeeping initiative practicable. Bulgaria welcomes the strengthening of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Secretariat, the Council and troop-contributing countries for peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, I would like to pay a tribute to all those who, during this debate, have expressed frankly what they really think, even their feelings of frustration, without mincing words. This approach can only enrich our discussion.

As a recently elected non-permanent Security Council member, the Republic of Bulgaria is ready to work resolutely and constructively with other delegations in order to improve the Council's working methods, particularly as regards transparency, and its effectiveness, so that it can better discharge its responsibilities.

I would like to conclude by expressing my warm congratulations to the delegations of Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria on their recent election to Council membership.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): At the outset, on behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I would like to express our heartfelt congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and all the staff of the United Nations on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. We are all uplifted and, indeed, greatly encouraged by this timely and well-deserved recognition of their dedication to world peace.

The United Nations and its respected and able Secretary-General will, however, need ever-greater support from the international community as they tackle the difficult tasks and challenges before them, now and in future. I therefore would like to reaffirm Japan's commitment to continuing to provide as much support and cooperation as possible to the United Nations and to Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

I should like to express my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council on its work from June 2000 to June 2001.

However, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to a number of suggestions offered by my colleagues with a view to improving the content and the format of the annual report of the Council. Since I find many of these suggestions pertinent, I would like to request the Council to take them seriously so as to see major improvements in the next report.

In recent years, it has become increasingly evident that the activities and decisions of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security are encompassing an ever-wider range of areas. For example, the mandates of peacekeeping operations established by Security Council resolutions cover activities related to civil administration, development and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR).

The Council has also taken decisions in the field of the safety of civilians in armed conflict, humanitarian assistance, and HIV/AIDS. Most recently, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) obliged Member Governments to take comprehensive anti-terrorism measures, including in the financial field.

All of this points to the fact that the Council cannot by itself cope with the challenges it faces. It needs the full cooperation of the entire international community to implement its decisions.

I thus welcome the willingness of the Council in recent years to hold frequent meetings, both public and private, at which the views of non-members can be

expressed. However, more can be done to strengthen the Council's working relations with non-members. The first aspect of this issue concerns the criteria for the participation of non-members in the discussions of the Council. Given that the criteria for holding such meetings remain unclear, we would like to request that criteria be established based on Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

In this context, we find it essential that countries whose interests are especially affected by a decision of the Council be given an opportunity to take part in discussions before a decision is made.

Another aspect is the question of the Council's relations with non-member countries in the context of peacekeeping operations.

In June, the Security Council adopted resolution 1353 (2001), an important decision which stipulates the Council's relations with troop-contributing countries in a comprehensive manner. While we fully support the idea of strengthening the Council's partnership with troop-contributing countries, my delegation wishes to reiterate its view that, in the implementation of resolution 1353 (2001), it is essential that not only those countries which provide military and civilian police personnel, but also those which supply civilian personnel or which make major financial contributions, be involved in order to ensure the effective functioning of a peacekeeping operation. The prospects for broadened mandates of, and increased costs for, peacekeeping operations underscore the importance of the involvement of such countries.

Before concluding, I would like to touch upon the importance of Security Council reform, although I intend to take up this matter in greater detail on another occasion.

We all know that improvements in the working methods of the Council alone will not be sufficient to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council. This will require that the Council be reformed so that its composition reflects the realities of today's international community.

The increasing responsibilities of the Security Council I touched upon earlier make it more urgent than ever that we address the long-pending issue of Security Council reform.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.