United Nations A/60/PV.47

General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

47th plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 November 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson . . . . . (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Expression of sympathy to the Government and the people of Jordan in connection with the terrorist attacks in Amman

The President: I would like to extend our sympathy to all those affected by the abhorrent terrorist attacks on three hotels in Amman, Jordan yesterday. On behalf of the Assembly, I offer our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Jordan and to the families and friends of all those killed and injured.

Those attacks are a further stark reminder of the importance and the urgency of the work we are doing to adopt a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

Agenda items 9 and 117

Report of the Security Council (A/60/2)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The President: With regard to agenda item 9, in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the General Assembly considers the annual report submitted by the Security Council pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter. The report of the Security Council was issued as General Assembly document A/60/2.

Concerning agenda item 117, members will recall that, upon recommendation 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, the General Assembly decided to continue its consideration of this item during the present session, with a view to facilitating the process of reaching general agreement.

Furthermore, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*), our heads of State and Government expressed support for early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of the overall effort to reform the United Nations. Our leaders aimed at making the Security Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent in order to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

Our leaders also called for adaptation of the working methods of the Security Council to increase participation in, and the transparency of, its work and enhance accountability to the membership. They further committed themselves to pursue efforts with a view to achieving a decision on Security Council reform and requested the General Assembly to review progress thereon by the end of 2005.

As stated in my letter of 3 November, this joint debate offers an opportunity to Member States to give input to the proposed review. I therefore encourage members to avail themselves of this occasion, and I am

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looking forward to hearing members' comments, proposals and ideas on this important matter.

I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council, Mr. Andrey Denisov, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation), President of the Security Council (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of all members of the Security Council, I would like to offer my congratulations to you, Mr. Eliasson, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. It is my sincere hope that during your tenure relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council will be further strengthened, as we work together to promote the purposes and principles of the United Nations, consistent with the Charter.

In my capacity as President of the Security Council for November 2005, I have the privilege to introduce the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (*A/60/2*), covering the period from 1 August 2004 to 31 July 2005.

The report shows that the Security Council's working agenda during the reporting period has been extremely full and intense. Two hundred and twenty-nine formal meetings have been held, 195 of which were public. The Council adopted 61 resolutions and 58 presidential statements.

The range of issues considered by the Council has remained very wide, covering all the major aspects of the maintenance of international peace and security. The report gives a comprehensive description of Council activities, and I would like to highlight some of the key issues on which the Council has focused.

Issues related to the settlement of regional conflicts and to ensuring stability in Africa have remained high on the agenda of the Security Council. The Council responded to worsening situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and has sought to encourage and consolidate continuing progress in strengthening peace and stability in Sierra-Leone, Liberia, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. The Security Council undertook a mission to Central Africa and focused on several issues affecting Africa, such as the cross-border issues in West Africa, Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security, post-conflict peacebuilding, the threat of small arms and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. In addition, the Council oversaw the gradual winding down of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), at one point the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation, which is to be replaced by an integrated United Nations Office in Sierra Leone. That is an innovation that should make the United Nations contribution to peacebuilding even more effective and establish a model for other countries emerging from conflict.

On 18 and 19 November 2004, the Council held an extraordinary session in Nairobi, its fourth outside the United Nations Headquarters since the Council began meeting in New York. This was done in order to re-energize the Sudanese peace negotiations and put an end to one of the most protracted conflicts in Africa. Also in Nairobi, the Security Council held a meeting aimed at strengthening the institutional relationship with the African Union. In a presidential statement (*S/PRST/2004/43*), Council members welcomed the progress made in the national reconciliation process of Somalia.

The Council has continued its support for the ongoing political transition in Iraq. In August 2004, the Council unanimously renewed the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for another 12-month period. UNAMI's support was vital to the success of the January 2005 parliamentary elections, through which the Iraqi people elected the Transitional Government of Iraq. The Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of reconciliation, national unity and an inclusive political process.

Events in Lebanon during the period under review also called for close Security Council attention. The Council adopted resolution 1559 (2004) of 2 September 2004, reaffirming its call for the strict respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon and calling upon all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon. On 19 October 2004, the Council adopted a presidential statement (*S/PRST/2004/36*), requesting the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) every six months.

The Council has also acted to support the Lebanese investigation into the terrorist act that resulted in the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on 14 February 2005. Following the attack, the Council adopted a presidential statement (*S/PRST/2005/4*) strongly condemning the murder and

requesting the Secretary-General to follow the situation in Lebanon closely. Following the report of the Secretary-General's mission of inquiry into the attack, the Council, on 7 April, unanimously adopted resolution 1595 (2005), setting up an International Independent Investigation Commission to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of all aspects of the assassination of the former Prime Minister.

The Council has paid close attention to other issues in the Middle East, Afghanistan and the Balkan region. It has closely monitored the situation in Haiti in order, inter alia, to ensure a secure and stable environment in which the electoral process can take place. The Council also undertook a mission to that country in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council.

In the reporting period, as a result of the sustainable progress in the peace processes in Timor-Leste and in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, the Council closed the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville. Following the completion of the UNMISET mandate on 20 May 2005, the Council established a one-year follow-on special political mission, the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste.

By its resolution 1590 (2005) of 24 March 2005, the Council established a new peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS).

In addition to addressing specific ongoing conflicts and crises, the Security Council continued to have thematic discussions related to the Council's work, which allowed for fruitful deliberations with the larger United Nations membership. The Council had open debates on children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, small arms, United Nations peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peacebuilding, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, justice and the rule of law, and civilian aspects of conflict management and peacebuilding.

The serious and continuing threat to international peace and security posed by terrorism remained a top priority of the Council, mainly through the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1540 (2004), as well as through the cooperation and coordination among those Committees. During the period under review, the Council began to receive joint briefings by the Committee Chairmen.

The Counter-Terrorism Committee continued to work intensively to fulfil its mandate as set out in resolution 1373 (2001), including through visits to States and strengthened methodology for the identification of States' needs for technical assistance. It also continued to develop cooperation with international, regional and subregional organizations. The Working Group established pursuant to resolution 1566 (2004) met to consider practical measures and procedures for tackling terrorists not on the Al-Qaida/Taliban list, as well additional means to support the victims of terrorist acts.

By resolution 1617 (2005), adopted on 29 July 2005, the Council improved the sanctions regime with respect to Al-Qaida and the Taliban and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with them.

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) continued its efforts to strengthen the international community's capacity to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of non-State actors.

Last year saw a further increase in transparency in the Security Council's work. Council members sought to hold as many public meetings as possible and regularly organized thematic debates and Arria-formula meetings in order to enhance our collective understanding of the key issues and to hear the views of non-Council members, independent experts and representatives of civil society. A proactive and responsible approach to transparency is very important for the Security Council, which is deeply interested in strengthening dialogue and interaction with all members of the United Nations. To that end, Security Council missions abroad made efforts to meet non-governmental organizations and civil society, as well as Governments and other parties in the countries visited.

The Security Council continued to develop cooperation among the Council, the troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat. Work on the basis of resolution 1353 (2001) and the note by the President of the Council in document S/2002/56, dated 14 January 2002, focused on important peacekeeping issues, including ways to improve the planning, conduct, support and management of peacekeeping operations,

and on the holding of in-depth and interactive discussions about both the immediate and underlying problems facing specific United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The Security Council, in line with the World Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*), is continuing to adapt its working methods to make it more effective, including by having a more open and productive relationship with Member States not on the Security Council and other countries.

The Council recognizes the crucial contribution of troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping missions under its authority. The Council undertook, inter alia, through its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, to involve, as appropriate, troop-contributing countries and other interested countries more effectively in the consideration of issues relating to United Nations peacekeeping operations and will continue to do so in future.

The Council will also continue to adapt its consultations with non-Council members with reference to other aspects of its activities. For example, the Council's subsidiary bodies dealing with sanctions will continue their dialogue with interested countries, in particular, with neighbouring countries, in order better to assess the effect of such measures and to ensure more effective enforcement of those measures, such as arms embargoes.

In conclusion, on behalf of all Council members, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the members of the Secretariat for their professionalism and invaluable support, without which the Council could not discharge its duties.

The President: I thank the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Andrey Denisov, for his introduction of the report of the Council. I particularly thank him for his words expressing the hope that relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council will be further strengthened as we work together to promote the purposes and principles of the United Nations, consistent with the Charter. I also welcome his words on having a more open and productive relationship with non-Council members and others, including troop-contributing countries and interested countries, in particular neighbouring countries, affected by sanctions regimes. That dialogue is extremely important for the General Assembly.

I earlier welcomed the President of the forty-sixth session, Mr. Samir Shihabi, but I see another president in the Hall, the President of the fifty-second session. I welcome Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, who is in the Hall today.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in the joint debate on agenda items 9 and 117, on the Report of the Security Council and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. I am making this statement on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), that are Member States of the United Nations.

Before I begin my statement, however, I would like, on behalf of the CARICOM member States, to offer our deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Jordan, and especially to the families of the victims, on the terrorist attacks that took place in Amman yesterday.

CARICOM would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Andrey Denisov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and current President of the Security Council, for his detailed presentation of the report of the Security Council. The report is clear and comprehensive and we have just a few comments to make on it at the present time.

I also wish to express our appreciation for the presentation of the report 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. In that regard, we are particularly pleased to offer special congratulations to Ambassadors Paulette Bethel of the Bahamas and Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein, the two Vice-Chairs of the Working Group, for their excellent work and untiring efforts in leading the consultations on working methods.

Again in this year's report, we see that Africa has figured at the forefront of the Council's agenda, although there were a number of other crises in other regions of the world that consumed much of the attention of the Council. We compliment the Council for its decision to hold an extraordinary session in Nairobi in order to meet closer to the centre of the conflict in the Sudan. We believe that such initiatives as well as strengthening the institutional relationship between the African Union and the Security Council,

bode well for closer and more effective collaboration between the United Nations and Africa in seeking to maintain peace and security in that region.

Member States have repeatedly called for more openness and transparency on the part of the Security Council. CARICOM was, therefore, especially appreciative of the opportunity that the Security Council provided for Member States to discuss the situation in Haiti by holding an open debate on Haiti on 12 January of this year. CARICOM member States participated in the debate and were, hopefully, able to provide a regional perspective that assisted the Council as it sought to reaffirm its long-term commitment to Haiti and underline the importance of national reconciliation, security and economic development to the country's stability.

CARICOM further welcomed the Security Council's mission to Haiti from 13 to 16 April 2005 in conjunction with the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. We are convinced that that visit and the Security Council's continued engagement in Haiti permitted the Council on 22 June of this year to adopt unanimously resolution 1608 (2005), which not only extended the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to February 2006, but also further increased the Mission's strength by 800 military personnel and 275 civilian police.

CARICOM wishes to take this opportunity to comment on another aspect of the Security Council's report that has affected many countries but has particularly impacted small, resource-deficient States, such as ours. I refer to the issue of counter-terrorism, which continues to be a matter of top priority for the Council.

The reporting obligations and responsibilities under the various counter-terrorism resolutions, while accepted as necessary, have nonetheless proven to be onerous to most of our States. We therefore welcome the initial efforts made by the various subcommittees of the Council to provide expertise and advice to Member States lacking the knowledge, experience or resources to implement the several resolutions, but would plead for even greater assistance, if we are expected to be able to fulfil all of our reporting obligations in a timely manner. Furthermore, we encourage the Security Council to consider ways of consolidating State reporting requirements, as stated by our Heads of State and Government in the outcome document of the September Summit.

Turning now to the reform of the Security Council, CARICOM is disappointed that the General Assembly has been unable, to date, to reach agreement on the issue of an increase in the membership of the Security Council. CARICOM has been consistent in its call for an increase in membership of the Council and particularly for greater representation from the developing countries and especially from States from the African continent. CARICOM believes that the matter of expansion remains critically important and that we all need to redouble our efforts to reach effective agreement on the issue in the near future.

CARICOM is, however, convinced that comprehensive reform of the Security Council is primarily and fundamentally grounded in reform of the working methods of the Council, and we had hoped for greater progress in the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

Critical to the reform of the Security Council is the need for greater transparency and openness in the working methods of the Council, and we therefore support the discussions that have been recently initiated here in New York, through the draft resolution on working methods put forward by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland.

CARICOM is also heartened that there is widespread acceptance of the view that the Security Council should be accountable to the General Assembly. Committed as we are to the primacy of multilateral diplomacy, we believe that such an approach would be the correct one. We further support the call for more frequent open debates of the Security Council to allow for greater inclusiveness and participation of all non-Member States and for more frequent and comprehensive Council briefings to non-members as a means of keeping all delegations fully informed of Security Council activities. CARICOM also supports increased formal interaction between the Council and troop-contributing countries as a necessary aid to the decision-making process on the establishment, conduct, review and termination of peacekeeping operations.

CARICOM is of the view that, whereas sanctions may at times constitute a legitimate and necessary tool for the enforcement by the Council of measures to

maintain international peace and security, we believe they should be imposed only as an absolute last resort and should be time-bound and accompanied by a clear exit strategy. Furthermore, CARICOM stresses that special care and attention should be given to the design and implementation of sanctions in order to avoid, or at least minimize, their negative impact on civilian populations.

Few questions on the issue of Security Council reform have proven to be as intractable as that question of the veto. CARICOM believes that the veto is an anachronism; and ideally it should be limited in its use with a view to its eventual elimination. In the meantime, we agree that the veto should be used with utmost restraint and should be limited to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that in the 2005 summit outcome document (resolution 60/1), heads of State and Government agreed that early reform of the Security Council is an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent.

CARICOM believes that Member States need to continue to be seized of the issue if we are to implement that aspect of the summit outcome document. CARICOM member States therefore stand ready to participate in the consultations, which we believe should be continued during the sixtieth session.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): May I begin by expressing Pakistan's condemnation of the dastardly terrorist attacks that took place in Amman yesterday. The people and the Government of Pakistan convey their profound grief and condolences to the Government and the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to the families of the victims.

We are considering once again the important issue of reform of the Security Council, together with the Council's report to the General Assembly (A/60/2). The discussion is taking place in the wake of the 2005 summit and in the midst of the process being led by you, Mr. President, to implement the summit's decisions.

The rationale and justification for reform of the Security Council is clear: the Council should be reformed to make it more representative, more transparent, more accountable and more effective. However, there are significant differences on how those objectives can be achieved. As we open this debate, the positions of all parties on the reform of the Security Council are well known and have been reaffirmed in recent days.

The position of the Uniting for Consensus group, which was circulated during the last session in document A/59/L.68, is also known to the entire membership. The members of the group continue to believe that our proposal offers the most promising basis to evolve a consensus, especially on the issue of equitable representation on the Security Council.

Let me briefly reiterate the virtues of the Uniting for Consensus proposal: First, our proposal is fair and equitable. It respects the principle of the sovereign equality of States and does not discriminate between Member States.

Secondly, our proposal will increase the opportunity for all Member States, including the small and medium-sized States to secure more representation on the Security Council.

Thirdly, it will enhance the accountability of Security Council members through the democratic mechanism of periodic elections and, if agreed, re-elections.

Fourthly, our proposal is simple. It proposes a direct Charter amendment for approval by the Assembly.

Fifthly, the Uniting for Consensus proposal is realistic. Since it can accommodate the interests and positions of all Member States, this proposal, if approved, is likely to secure the required ratifications, including the necessary ratification of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

And finally, the greatest virtue of the proposal is its flexibility. It can accommodate, through variable arrangements in each region, the aspirations and interests of the majority of the membership including regional groups such as the African Group.

We respect and understand Africa's desire for equitable representation on the Security Council. Africa is striving to redress a historic injustice. We believe that the Uniting for Consensus proposal is entirely compatible with the African approach. Both our position and that of the African Union is based on the principle that each region should be in a position to

determine its own specific arrangement for representation on the Council.

Africa's demand for two permanent seats, in our view, is different from other proposals which seek permanent membership for individual States. Africa, as we see it, seeks permanent seats for the entire region of Africa. We note also that against the two empowered seats sought by Africa, representation on the Council could be from two or, through rotation, a larger number of African States, under arrangements to be made by the Africans themselves. In our view, rotation is the best means to ensure the representation of regional interests, including those of Africa, as well as to provide greater opportunities to all States to secure more frequent membership of the Security Council.

Since our proposal is based on a regional approach, it could also accommodate the interests of subregional groups, such as the Arab League, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Central America. Other Groups, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, could also secure assured representation against the seats allocated to the regions of Africa or Asia. Moreover, through the provision made for possible re-election, the Uniting for Consensus proposal offers the possibility of long-term and even continued membership for some States if they are nominated for that purpose by their respective regions.

We are all aware that agreement within the general membership on the issue of representation on an enlarged Security Council will require difficult and patient negotiations. Member States must be allowed the necessary time and space to reconcile their positions and to evolve a solution acceptable to the entire membership. It is therefore essential to engage in dialogue and constructive negotiation to achieve an equitable and widely acceptable solution.

Meanwhile, we also need to give consideration to the other aspects of Security Council reform, namely, its working methods — the so-called cluster II issues. For a large majority of Member States, especially small and medium States, the reform of the Security Council implies, first and foremost, an improvement in its working methods. The General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group has reached provisional agreement on a large number of proposals to improve the Council's working methods. Some of those proposals are being implemented, but the majority still await translation into the practice of the Council.

I would like to thank Ambassador Andrey Denisov, President of the Security Council, for presenting the Council's report to the General Assembly. The quality and content of the report have improved. The present report provides a good statistical record and a ready reference regarding issues under the Council's consideration. However, it does not contribute to a better understanding by the general membership of how the Council has dealt with specific situations and the ways in which it has reached its decisions. In that context, I would like to reiterate Pakistan's concern about the Council's encroachment on issues such as those considered in so-called thematic debates, which lie more appropriately within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

Pakistan supports the full implementation of Assembly resolution 58/126, in particular its call for Security Council reports to the General Assembly on specific topics, briefings to the President of the General Assembly by the President of the Security Council and joint meetings between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and Economic and Social Council. Those mechanisms should be institutionalized as soon as possible.

However, the reform of the Council's working methods must go beyond such improvements in its operating processes. Openness, transparency and inclusiveness should be introduced in the working modalities of the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, especially the sanctions committees and those dealing with generic issues such as terrorism and non-proliferation, which are of direct concern to the general membership. The Council's work must cease to be conducted in virtual secrecy from the general membership. As envisaged in the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, most of the Council's work should be conducted in public meetings, as was the case until the end of the cold war. Informal consultations should be the exception, rather than the rule they have become. Member States that are most directly concerned in an issue should be able to participate in both the open and the informal meetings of the Council. Draft resolutions and proposals circulated informally in the Council should be available to all Member States, at least before they are provided to the media.

In the context of improving the Council's working methods, Pakistan is sympathetic to most of the proposals contained in the informal paper circulated by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. The areas covered in the annex to the paper — the Council's relationship with the General Assembly and other principal organs, implementation of Council decisions, the working of subsidiary bodies, the use of the veto, the conduct of peacekeeping operations and the integration of new Council members — are all vital to ensure transparency, inclusiveness and accountability in the Council's work. My delegation looks forward to an early opportunity to offer our suggestions and views to enrich the proposals circulated by those five delegations, and to evolve agreement on them.

Pakistan believes that any decision on the reform of the Security Council should be adopted by consensus, or at least through the widest possible agreement. Our reasons for taking that position are clear. Reform of the Council is an important issue. It impinges on the national security interests of every Member State. Any precipitate move to secure a decision by a vote would revive regional tensions and resurrect divisions within the Organization. It would once again eclipse, and possibly derail, the rest of the United Nations reform agenda. It could halt the heartening progress we are making, or expect to make, on the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, terrorism, the Human Rights Council and, most important, the implementation of the development agenda.

Moreover, any proposal for Security Council reform that is adopted by a divisive vote is unlikely to be translated into reality, as it will not obtain the ratification of two thirds of the membership, including the five permanent members. Indeed, a divisive vote is likely to freeze the status quo in the Security Council and thus squander the opportunity for its early reform and democratization.

The President of the General Assembly has been mandated by the 2005 summit to conduct consultations on the issue of the reform of the Security Council and to report progress before the end of this session. We trust that, at the appropriate time, he will convene a meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on this issue and enable delegations to exchange views in order to further advance the possibilities for consensus on the important issue of Security Council reform, including the improvement of its working methods.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the people and Government of the United Arab Emirates, to join the President and those who have spoken before me to express our sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of fraternal Jordan and to the families of the victims of the heinous terrorist attacks that took place last night in Amman, the capital of Jordan. We strongly condemn those acts.

On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I would also like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Chairman and two Vice-Chairpersons 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 for the valuable information contained in the Group's recent report (A/59/47). The report reflects the great efforts made towards reaching the consensus we all desire in the areas of strengthening international representation in the Security Council and enhancing transparency in executing its responsibilities with regard to maintaining international peace and security.

The last decade witnessed the launching of a comprehensive reform process, especially in the United Nations system, with a view to enabling it to keep up with the international changes and challenges that emerged after the end of the cold war, including the concept of a new world order based on the principles of partnership, democracy and the diverse interests of States and peoples.

Given the fact that the Security Council is a principal organ of the United Nations and has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, heads of States and Government were keen to reaffirm, during the Millennium Summit of the year 2000 and the High-level Plenary Meeting of the Assembly's sixtieth session, the importance of continuing and intensifying efforts to reform comprehensively the structure of the Council, improve its representative character, increase its efficiency and transparency, and strengthen its democratic character. That will help the Council to increase its effectiveness and legality as it implements its resolutions, which aim at establishing international peace and protecting

humankind from war, gross violations of human rights and other current threats facing the world.

When the Security Council was established in 1945, there were 51 Member States. Although the membership of the United Nations has now reached 191, the composition of the Council has not yet reflected that reality. Nor has it succeeded in representing the international community in a democratic and fair manner, a fact that has resulted in creating a political imbalance that undermines the transparency of the Council's resolutions regarding many important international issues. We therefore emphasize the need for the international community to carry out an essential and viable reform of the structure and working methods of the Security Council. That must include an increase in the Council's permanent and non-permanent members, in order to enable it to carry out its fundamental role of addressing the existing security threats and challenges facing our nations.

My delegation has carefully studied the recommendations of the Secretary-General and his High-level Panel on Threats Challenges and Change and has followed closely the special consultations of the General Assembly and the regional groups in the last few months, which dealt with initiatives, draft resolutions and proposals. We are concerned about the deep differences in the views of States in connection with the form and size of the Council. We therefore reaffirm our position calling for restructuring the membership of the Council in a manner more consistent with its current agenda, which has become more complex and which has exceeded the traditional security issues of the cold war era. In that context, we stress that the process of enlarging the membership of the Security Council should be based on the following three pillars.

First, the process of reforming and expanding the Security Council should be part of a common and integrated endeavour based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States and their equitable geographical representation on Council, in contrast to the biased and selective policy currently prevailing in that body.

Secondly, any increase in Council membership must address the issue of the underrepresentation of small and developing States in the Council.

Thirdly, Arab States, which include 22 countries and represent almost 12 per cent of the total membership of the United Nations, must be allocated a permanent seat in the Security Council. That seat should be filled on a rotating basis and in coordination among the Arab States, in accordance with the practices applied in the League of Arab States and in the context of the African and Asian Groups. Should that approach be adopted, it will strengthen the effectiveness of the participation of those countries in addressing the most complicated regional issues on the Council's agenda and in the joint efforts to maintain regional and international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates notes with satisfaction the number of measures, albeit limited, taken in the last few years to improve some of the working methods of the Council, in particular as regards increasing the number of open meetings and inviting non-Council members to its debates, especially those participating in peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, we are disappointed at the policy of double standards followed by the Council in addressing some of the issues on its agenda, specifically those pertaining to peace and security in the Middle East. That contradicts the Council's previous relevant resolutions. We therefore call for a serious, comprehensive and objective evaluation of the Council's working methods in order to enhance the institutional character and transparency of its procedures, working methods and decision-making standards. In that context, we call for the following measures.

First, the use of the right of the veto should be abolished or rationalized. That right has on many occasions inhibited the Council from finding fair and permanent solutions to many important issues in accordance with the principles of the Charter, resolutions of international legitimacy and the rule of relevant international laws.

Secondly, we call for the Council to take into consideration the interests of States whenever it adopts resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter, which permits the imposition of economic sanctions on countries violating Council resolutions.

Thirdly, we call for non-Council members, especially those with direct or indirect interests in issues under discussion by the Council, to be permitted to participate in the Council's consultations in that regard.

Fourthly, we call for coordination between the Security Council, the General Assembly and regional groups to mobilize all potential ways and means to contain existing disputes and conflicts and to protect humankind from their dangerous consequences.

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations on this item will lead to a convergence of views and to the strengthening of a constructive international understanding aimed at achieving the desired reform in the structure and working methods of the Security Council, in order to enable it to fully discharge its growing responsibilities in the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to join the President in expressing our sympathy and condolences to the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to the fraternal people of that country in connection with the heinous and dastardly terrorist bombings that took place yesterday in Amman, which took dozens of innocent lives. I pray to the Almighty to extend his mercy and succor to the victims and their families.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly contained in document A/60/2, which was presented to the Assembly by Ambassador Denisov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and this month's Council President. That report provides an overview of the Council's activities in the past year with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

With the vision it contains, that report provides Member States an opportunity to study and assess the Council's work, as well as its growing role in dealing with the various international issues falling within its purview. Member States must therefore scrutinize the report in order to be fully aware of actions taken within the Council, which, in accordance with the Charter, acts on behalf of all Member States. That is all the more important given that the important resolutions adopted by the Council place binding obligations on all Members.

There is no doubt that the Security Council has become the most active organ of the United Nations. Its role has in fact grown significantly in recent years, making the Council the most visible expression of United Nations activity in the world. Any failure by the Council to deal with the world's issues could therefore tarnish the image of the United Nations in world public opinion, which has reduced its perception of the Organization to the Security Council alone. For the sake of the Organization as a whole, we must correct that perception.

To set matters right, we assert that the roles of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should not be diminished. Their important and major roles as two of the principal organs of the United Nations must be emphasized and brought to the fore; they are equal in importance to the Security Council. The importance of the roles of those two organs must not be diminished when it comes to addressing all international issues, be they political, economic or social.

Our world today is experiencing an evolving political climate. This era poses both a challenge and a test for the Organization, which must deal with them ably and efficiently. In addition to the ongoing threats that we have all failed to resolve, new challenges confront the Organization. Terrorism, which has become widespread and out of control, has affected all of us. We must deal with it in a concerted manner in order to address its root causes. The spread of deadly diseases has taken thousands of lives. In fact, the victims of such diseases outnumber the victims of war. That makes it incumbent upon us all to cooperate to deal with and eradicate those diseases. There are also other important issues facing us. As individual Members and as an Organization, we must deal with them together to find appropriate solutions.

My delegation is pleased to welcome the report 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 (*A/59/47*). We express our sincere thanks to Mr. Jean Ping, former President of the General Assembly, for his chairmanship of the Working Group, and his two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representatives of the Bahamas and Liechtenstein, for their tireless efforts.

The question of the reform of the Security Council continues to be one of the main issues debated during the General Assembly's annual sessions. Many heads of State and Government expressed their Governments' opinions on this matter during the general debate that took place at the Assembly's High-level Plenary Meeting, from 14 to 16 September.

The Working Group is considering matters of extreme importance. The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the relationship between the Security Council and the other principal organs of the United Nations, consultations with troop-contributing countries, matters relating to the work of sanctions committees and other subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, and the issue of the use of the power of the veto are all matters of great importance that must be clearly defined in order to avoid conflict among the competencies of the principal organs of the United Nations. We believe that the relationships among the various organs of the United Nations must be complementary and cooperative, as they are clearly regulated by the provisions of the Charter, which divides responsibilities and work among the organs. As Charter rules, those provisions must be respected and maintained, for they guarantee that there will be no conflict with regard to competencies and responsibilities, thus preventing encroachment by one organ on the purview of another.

My delegation believes that establishing a strong relationship and ongoing cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly is a matter of critical importance to the effectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with the challenges and threats confronting it. That relationship must be interactive in serving the interests of all Member States. To achieve that goal, cooperation between those two organs, must be strengthened and further dialogue and exchanges of information must be pursued. Given the great importance of the matter and the fact that the General Assembly, as the main organ of the United Nations, is an integral part of the collective security system established by the Charter, the Security Council must respect the wishes of the Assembly in its decision-making process.

The reform of the Security Council must be comprehensive and reflect the new political realities of our times. The Council will not be able to maintain international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter, unless it reflects changes on the international scene and the new realities of the twenty-first century. It must also be democratic and transparent and must protect the interests of small States even before those of large ones. Its objectives must be in the interest of all if it is to be truly representative of all States, protect their rights and interests and ensure their stability.

Reform of the Security Council, the main organ of the United Nations entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, has now become an urgent priority due to awareness among all Member States of the need for the Council to equitably represent them all. Questions of increasing its membership and improving its working methods and procedures have become priority issues facing the United Nations. There is also a need to ensure that Council reform will serve the interests of all States. It must take into account the large increase in the membership of the Organization. Efforts must also be redoubled in order to ensure that the Council equitably represents all States and that it takes all their interests into account.

The new Security Council we aspire to must be one that represents all States, protects all their interests and ensures their security. It must ensure their stability. It must be a Council to which all turn for protection in times of crisis and need. It must be a Council that all Members trust, as well as one that guarantees peace and security, defends rights and establishes justice. It must be guided by equality. That is the Council we all desire for our Organization.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): At the outset, allow me to join you, Sir, and others who have spoken before me to express, in the strongest terms, our condemnation of the terrorist attacks that took place in Amman. On behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, we extend our deepest condolences to the Government and people of Jordan for the loss of life and the destruction caused by those attacks.

My delegation is pleased to participate in this joint debate on agenda items 9 and 117. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Andrey Denisov of the Russian Federation, current President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, as contained in document A/60/2. My delegation has taken note of the Council's report. I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Council for the period 2006 to 2007, namely, Congo, Ghana, Peru, Qatar and Slovenia. We are confident they will bring fresh impetus to the work of the Council.

The General Assembly's consideration of the Security Council's annual report provides a good opportunity for the larger membership of the

Organization to assess the work and performance of the Council during the period under review. That is in keeping with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, where it is stipulated that the Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Council and that those reports shall include an account of the measures that the Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security.

The report before us is a useful reference that summarizes the extensive work carried out by the Security Council over the period under review. We appreciate the vital contribution and pivotal role of the Council in the maintenance of world peace and security. The discussion on the Council's report provides an opportunity for Member States to reflect upon the importance of the Council's role and how its efficiency and effectiveness may be further enhanced. That should be seen in the context of promoting transparency in the work of the Council.

While my delegation commends the ongoing trend towards transparency in the Council's work, greater transparency and accountability could be promoted by convening an open meeting of the Council to discuss its report before it is submitted to the General Assembly.

My delegation notes that the Council addressed a wide range of issues during the period under review, reaffirming the trend in recent years towards a continuous increase in the volume and scope of the Council's activities. A total of 229 meetings were held, 61 resolutions were adopted and 58 presidential statements were made.

Conflicts and instability in Africa continue to be at the forefront of the Council's agenda. Despite the severity of the circumstances of the crisis in the Sudan, Malaysia is pleased that the situation has improved considerably following the successful conclusion of the Naivasha peace process. My delegation commends the Council for taking the initiative to adopt eight resolutions on the Sudan and to convene extraordinary meetings at Nairobi on 18 and 19 November 2004 — only the fourth time it has met outside United Nations Headquarters. The deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan clearly demonstrates the commitment of the Security Council to peace and security in the country, opening a new chapter in the country's history. Malaysia looks forward to the Council taking more effective decisions on conflict situations, particularly in Africa.

The increasing practice of holding open meetings of the Council provides an important contribution, as such meetings provide opportunities for the general membership to participate in the Council's work. We especially welcome the Council's growing practice of deploying missions to the field, such as the one to Central Africa, from 21 to 25 November 2004, to assess the prospects for peace and stability in the region. Furthermore, we commend the briefings on the humanitarian situation in Africa by Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, to bring to the Council's attention the challenges in trying to secure enough resources to help deal with acute humanitarian needs in Africa. We appeal to the international community to come forward and contribute generously to lessen the burden and suffering of people in need in Africa.

We also commend the public debate on the African dimension in the work of the Security Council at the wrap-up meeting held following the more than 20 formal and informal meetings on African issues that the Council held during the month of March this year. My delegation underscores the need to combine peace and security efforts with long-term development strategies, with a view to moving from the logic of resolution to one of prevention.

We welcome the joint efforts by the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in that regard. That is all the more pertinent with the recognition of the interconnectedness of threats and challenges faced by the international community and the need to face them in an integrated fashion, taking into account the linkages between development, peace, security and human rights. We should also emphasize the importance of strengthening coordination between the United Nations system and regional organizations. In that regard, the growing interaction with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States should be encouraged further.

Malaysia agrees that holding thematic debates is useful in improving the effectiveness of the Council. We consider thematic open debates as avenues to allow Council members and the wider membership of the United Nations to offer views and suggestions on issues directly related to the Council's work. However,

it is still unclear whether the Council has actually fully considered those views when arriving at decisions.

Given the Council's increasing workload, we believe that thematic discussions should be kept to a minimum, and held specifically with a view to achieving concrete results that have an impact on the performance not only of the Council but also the United Nations at large. We continue to believe that thematic debates and other important issues addressed by the Council from time to time merit the submission of special reports to the General Assembly, as provided for under Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter and in keeping with the intent of Assembly resolution 58/126.

Malaysia has actively participated in thematic debates and has been a long-standing proponent of the Council's addressing the protection of civilians affected by armed conflict.

Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations, we are particularly pleased with the Council's ongoing attention to the subject of women and peace and security. The same is true for the issue of children and armed conflict, as well as for the need for systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

In the open debate on the role of the Security Council in humanitarian crises, my delegation expressed its view that any action aimed at humanitarian intervention per se has no basis in the Charter or in international law. It should therefore be clear that, while the Security Council has a role to play, its response should be based on a distinction between crises arising out of conflict situations and those resulting from other causes, including natural disasters.

While action to deal with conflict is laudable, it also remains the Council's responsibility to ensure that conflict is avoided. Hence there is definitely a need to learn from past experience and to continue to find ways and means to avert conflict. The efforts made to hold a discussion on this matter are steps in the right direction.

We recognize that the Council has the responsibility to address humanitarian issues that specifically relate to situations of conflict and that it has taken appropriate action to deal with such situations. The Council's consideration of such issues has laid the groundwork for action in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding and in preventing a return to conflict. We agree that return to conflict often hinges on whether three key issues in post-conflict situations are adequately addressed, and to what extent — namely the promotion of the rule of law; security sector reform; and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. My delegation is supportive of the view that those pillars of post-conflict security should be further strengthened in order to achieve long-lasting peace.

Malaysia applauds the Council's continued interest in the Palestinian question as evidenced by the monthly briefings and open debates on that matter. However, we are disappointed that the Council failed to adopt a draft resolution on that issue on 5 October 2004 due to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council. Of the 77 vetoes used by that permanent member of the Security Council, 26 have been cast in an attempt to cripple any tangible international effort in the ongoing Middle East conflict. My delegation would recall that only one resolution was adopted in that respect by the Council, namely resolution 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004, which pertains to the demolition of Palestinian homes in the Rafah refugee camp by Israel, the occupying Power.

We call on the Security Council to enhance and maintain its credibility by asserting its authority concerning the Palestinian question, in particular in respect of commitment to the road map and to the two-State solution, the end of the occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories, the termination of Israel's settler colonialism activities, and the reversal of the construction of the separation wall.

The Council must not allow its resolutions to be manipulated or permit itself to be prevented from taking constructive action. The Council must resolutely take action concerning the construction of the Israeli expansionist separation wall, which has been declared illegal in the Advisory Opinion issued by the international Court of Justice.

The suffering of the Palestinian people under the occupation of Israel has been going on for far too long. Malaysia hopes that the Council will live up to its commitment to continue to support a comprehensive and just settlement in the Middle East based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the foundations of the Madrid Conference, and the principle of land for peace.

Turning to agenda item 117, my delegation wishes to state that we agree with the prevailing view that the United Nations, including the Security Council, must be reformed in a comprehensive manner in terms of both its working methods and the expansion of its membership, to make it more legitimate, representative, democratic and transparent. We note the extensive discussions we have had on this issue over the years; however, it is time for us to move on to action.

In that regard, we note with interest the non-paper that has been circulated by a group of countries on improving the working methods of the Security Council. Some of the proposals in the paper are not new, but the fact that over the years they have resurfaced regularly in various non-papers shows that they contain elements that Member States view as crucial to Security Council reform.

Malaysia has been supportive with respect to the question of enlargement of the Security Council. Malaysia supports the expansion of both categories of membership, based on equitable geographical distribution so as to make it more broadly representative, reflecting the geopolitics of today. Malaysia wishes once again to reiterate its view position that, if there is no agreement on the expansion in the permanent membership, we should proceed with expansion of the non-permanent membership, while keeping the issue of the expansion of the permanent membership on the active agenda of the United Nations.

The reform should also address the question of the veto with a view to eventually doing away with it, in conformity with the principle of sovereign equality as envisaged in the Charter. Malaysia continues to believe that the exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council should be regulated so as to prohibit that power from being used unjustly, at the sole discretion of the holder, to override the wish of the majority.

On 28 April 2005, during the thematic discussion on the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom", Malaysia proposed that, until the objective of abolishing the veto is achieved, there could be a modified veto, whereby two veto powers would need the backing of three other members of the Security Council in order to block the adoption of a Security Council resolution.

The Security Council, before taking any decision on issues that requires implementation by Member States, should seek the views of the general membership. That would allow Member States to voice their opinions and to make comments or suggestions on potential improvements before a decision is taken. As we have seen in the past, some Security Council decisions have imposed on Member States a heavy burden in terms of providing reports, leading to reporting fatigue.

Mr. President, Malaysia will continue to support and work closely with you, other Members of the United Nations and the Secretary-General to explore new ideas and arrive at a fresh outlook with respect to Security Council reform. We already possess the necessary tools to advance that process. What is required is the full support and political will of Member States.

Mr. Wali (Nigeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on the agenda item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

Mr. President, we wish to express to you our appreciation for your leadership in the conduct of the work of this session as well as for your commitment to steering our deliberations towards the actualization of the decisions of world leaders as reflected in the outcome document.

Permit me also to express the sympathy of the African States Members of the United Nations to the Government and the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in connection with the terrorist attack of Wednesday, 9 November 2005, which claimed many lives.

Africa considers the reform of the Security Council as fundamental not solely to the entire reform process of the United Nations, to which we are committed, but also to the realization of the primary objective of the maintenance of international peace and security, in consonance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. It is in that context that African leaders at the highest level of Government adopted, at their Summit in Sirte, Libya, on 5 July 2005, the Sirte Declaration on the Reform of the United Nations, which unambiguously states Africa's position on the matter.

I wish to recall that Africa's contributions to the various processes that led to the September 2005 world summit were informed by that position. Africa's call for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council aimed at making it more broadly representative and transparent is based on our assessment that such a reform would enhance the legitimacy of its decisions and the representativity of its membership.

For us, such reform should not be limited to expanding the Council in the permanent and non-permanent categories; it should also include improving the Council's working methods to make it more effective and efficient, strengthening the transparency of its procedures, improving its functioning and its decision-making process and ensuring greater involvement in its work. We therefore consider the present session of the General Assembly an historic opportunity to take decisions that will ensure that reform of the Security Council leads to its democratization, transparency and accountability. Reform should also enable us to comprehensively redress the injustice against developing countries, especially those in Africa.

Africa can therefore neither associate itself with nor support any initiative, however conceived, that seeks a partial approach to Security Council reform. Such an approach, in our assessment, would run counter to the decisions of our leaders and to the wishes of the broad majority of the United Nations membership.

I wish to reiterate once again Africa's call for Security Council reform through equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council. Lest there be any doubt, Africa's representation means no fewer than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges attached thereto, as well as five non-permanent seats. Indeed, Africa has a clear position and a clear understanding regarding what permanent seats would mean and entail for the continent. I therefore have the honour to inform the Assembly that that position was reaffirmed in the latest decision reached by African leaders at their Extraordinary Summit in Addis Ababa on 31 October 2005.

Africa is determined to engage with other United Nations Member States outside our region in pursuit of that clear position of the African Union. In that process, I wish to assure you, Mr. President, of our cooperation, mindful of the desire and commitment of other States to implement the decisions of world leaders.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We welcome the opportunity to discuss two reports — the report of the Security Council concerning its work during the period 1 August 2004 to 31 July 2005 (*A/60/2*) and the report 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 (*A/59/47*). In that regard, we align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. We particularly want to highlight the part of that statement expressing Africa's condolences to our colleagues from Jordan and to the Jordanian people with regard to the tragic incident that occurred yesterday in their country.

The Security Council has a solemn mandate to maintain international peace and security, which means that it has far-reaching impact on the lives of many people throughout the world. That gives urgency to the efforts to expand and transform the Council into a more credible, representative and effective organ.

We note the ongoing attempts to improve the working methods of the Security Council. However, we would be more appreciative if those reforms were made permanent so that the Council could have predictable working methods. We are pleased to note that the Council is gradually opening up to regional players in its maintenance of international peace and security, as demonstrated by the Council meeting in Kenya and the subsequent presidential statement reaffirming the institutional relationship with the African Union, as well as by resolution 1631 (2005), on cooperation with regional organizations. We hope that that relationship is further strengthened as we continue towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts on our African continent.

We are deeply concerned that the conflict in the Middle East continues unabated. In our view, the Security Council missed a significant opportunity to revive the Middle East peace process, which presented itself during the past year following the reduction in the levels of violence and terrorism and the disengagement of the Israeli army from Gaza. We believe that the Council could have seized that opportunity and acted decisively, rather than passively

receiving routine monthly updates from the Secretariat. At the same time, the Council failed to react as Israel accelerated the construction of illegal settlements on the West Bank and continued the construction of the separation wall that has altered the demographic character of the occupied areas.

We welcome Syria's compliance with the call to withdraw its forces from Lebanon and its commitment to cooperate with the investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. We wish to encourage the Security Council to make a similar call on Israel to withdraw its presence from the occupied Shaba'a Farms and the Syrian Golan and also to look into the assassinations of numerous Palestinian leaders in that area.

We welcome the decision to hold joint public briefings by the Chairs of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the Al-Qaida/Taliban Sanctions Committee, and the Working Group established pursuant to resolution 1566 (2004) as a first step towards rationalizing and consolidating the Council's counter-terrorism programme. However, it is important that the rest of the membership participate in such debates before the adoption of important resolutions that have an impact on everyone.

We trust that Member States already struggling to catch up with the Security Council's demands will be provided a genuine opportunity to express their views on issues such as the future of the 1540 Committee and the review of the performance of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. The Council should take stock of the effectiveness of its efforts to provide technical assistance to those who require it and should address questions related to the transparency and cost-effectiveness of its work.

Another area in which improvements could be made concerns cooperation between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. Recent meetings between the Council and troop-contributing countries have been rather unproductive, adding to the sense of frustration among those countries, which often feel that the Council does not take their operational difficulties into account when taking decisions that affect troop deployments.

In 1993, the General Assembly, through its resolution 48/26, established 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. The Working Group was established because Member States recognized the need to address representational equity in the Security Council and to examine formulas to increase its membership. It is now more than 12 years since Member States began the debate on Council reform, and there is still no agreement because the Working Group has remained deadlocked, particularly on the vital issue of Security Council expansion.

At their September summit, heads of State and Government took a decisive decision by calling for reform of the Security Council as an essential element of the overall efforts to reform the United Nations. We believe that that decision has overtaken the deadlocked negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group and that it has committed Member States to reaching an early decision on this matter. As members are aware, the General Assembly is required to review progress on Security Council reform by the end of this year.

It is for that reason that we are pleased by the decision of the African Union to reintroduce its resolution calling for expansion of the Security Council in both categories. Last week, the extraordinary summit of the African Union reaffirmed Africa's desire for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats on an expanded Security Council, with the new members exercising all the rights and privileges of current members.

The President has requested us to give him an indication as to how to move the process forward. South Africa believes that the broad objective of the reform should be to create a Security Council that is truly representative of the membership and able to respond effectively to international crises, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. The reformed Council should represent our collective security concerns in an even manner, and should be accountable to the entire membership of the United Nations. In our view, Council reform has to equally address both the enlargement of the Council and the improvement of its working methods. Anything less would be papering over cracks. It is for that reason that my delegation will have great difficulty in supporting any approach that addresses only one element of the reform of the Security Council.

We as Member States have the responsibility to ensure that the Security Council remains the universal repository of our efforts in the maintenance of peace and security by taking the bold step to reform it. The time has come to arrest the erosion of the Council's credibility and to seek agreement on the composition and working methods of a reformed Council. Let us create a Security Council that will serve us all in the context of the new geopolitical realities.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by expressing our sympathy and solidarity with the Government and people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan over the heinous terrorist attacks that occurred in Amman yesterday. They underscore the urgent need for a decisive role for the General Assembly in drafting and implementing a clear and concrete plan to combat international terrorism.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. It emphasized the importance all of us should attach to the issue of the reform and enlargement of the Security Council as a fundamental and vital part of efforts to reform the United Nations — a concern that was also expressed by heads of State and Government in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly last September (*resolution 60/1*). Given the particular importance that Egypt attaches to that issue, we look forward to continuing our collective work in the context of transparency and constructive understanding to take practical and tangible steps towards enlarging the Security Council and reforming its methods of work.

I should now like to refer to several points that reflect Egypt's views about this vital issue as we move ahead.

First, last year produced several important developments pertaining to the two aspects of the Security Council reform as a result of the momentum that accompanied the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, issued in the run-up to the High-level Plenary Meeting. Those developments have illustrated increasing African and international conviction that any effort to reform the Organization should include reform of the Security Council, including enlarging its membership and reforming its methods of work.

Secondly, 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 has made some progress in its efforts to develop clear proposals that command wide consensus with regard to reforming the Council's methods of work. We note with great concern, however, that due to a lack of political will to make the necessary breakthroughs in connection with either of the two aspects of reform, the Working Group could not translate that progress into practical conclusions to enable real reform with regard to enlarging the Security Council and improving its methods of work. We nevertheless believe that it is important that the Working Group continue its work on reforming the Security Council in both those areas and on negotiating an open and transparent mechanism through which the entire membership can express its views on the issue of reform. In requesting the General Assembly to review the progress made with regard to Council reform, the High-level Plenary Meeting emphasized the role of the Open-ended Working Group in reconciling varying points of view on the matter.

Thirdly, the intensive consultations carried out last year by the General Assembly have underscored the Assembly's determination that any model used to enlarge the membership of the Security Council should serve to bolster the participation of developing countries and reflect contemporary political realities, in particular the historical injustice Africa has suffered as a result of never having been a permanent member of the Council or enjoyed the right to the veto. Enlargement of the Council should also provide for reasonable representation of all civilizations and cultures. Despite the many proposals and models that have been put forth, none of which has enjoyed wide consensus, we should not give up our African and international aspirations, especially with regard to giving Africa permanent membership on the Council and equity and equality vis-à-vis the current permanent members. That must also include granting Africa non-permanent seats in accordance with the number of States on the continent as a proportion of the Organization's total membership.

In that connection, the most recent extraordinary session of the African Union created an African mechanism to continue to promote and muster support for Africa's position as emphasized in the Sirte Declaration and the Ezulwini Consensus, which

constitute an indivisible whole and cannot be addressed selectively. Africa will seek to mobilize support for its legitimate requests on this matter. In that regard, Africa seeks the support of the entire membership of the Organization, especially that of the permanent members of the Security Council.

Fourthly, with regard to reforming the Security Council's methods of work, last week we received the initiative by five friendly countries that included important ideas that merit our consideration and study. The delegation of Egypt will constructively and substantively consider that initiative as part of the overall effort to reform the Council's methods of work and its transparency and to ensure wider participation of non-members in its work and decision-making processes and in its subsidiary bodies. Reform should also ensure the Council's accountability to the General Assembly, balance the relationships among the Council and other principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, and rationalize the use of the right of veto prior to its ultimate abolition. In that regard, we look forward to continuing consultations on the issue of enlarging the Council in order to grant Africa no less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives of permanent membership, including the right to the veto, as well as five non-permanent seats. As clearly stated by the representative of Nigeria today, that objective would guarantee our aspirations as a continent in accordance with the resolutions adopted at the last African Union summit.

The consideration of the annual report of the Security Council is closely related to what has been said about the reform of the Council. There is no doubt that we need to urgently develop the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly so as to go beyond the routine of an annual report which is merely a narrative of the Council's activities and offers no analytical assessment of the obstacles that impede the effective and full implementation of its resolutions or of the methods of tackling the issues before it.

In this context, it has become more urgent to have an increased and developed thematic and institutional interaction between the Council and the Assembly so that Council activities will not encroach upon issues beyond its responsibilities for maintaining peace and security to include subjects that fall under the proper competence of the General Assembly, such as human rights, disarmament and international cooperation to combat terrorism. This should be done in order to re-establish a more balanced relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, on the one hand, and the Economic and Social Council on the other, and to carry out fundamental and genuine reform of those organs in a manner that makes their action more transparent, democratic and accountable. It would require that the General Assembly go beyond its rigid framework and not follow precedents that have caused it to lose more of its mandates and capabilities to the Security Council.

We look to you, Mr. President, to lead us in a new direction for the General Assembly. For example, condemnation, expressions of solidarity and observance of minutes of silence or prayer for victims are not sufficient means for dealing with terrorism. The Assembly should seek to realize clearer objectives that go beyond the adoption of the general protocol to the adoption of a comprehensive strategy and a clear working plan of action, so that it can achieve the security and stability to which we aspire.

In view of the amount of time occupied by issues of peace and security in Africa in the activities and plans of action of the Council, and in order to benefit from the genuine partnership with the African Union and other regional African organizations, there is a need to expand African representation in the Council's membership. Also, African participation in the Council's activities should be increased through new mechanisms that will lead to transparency in its working methods. In this respect, we call for the revival, activation and expansion of participation in the task force that exists within the Council to prevent and settle African disputes, taking advantage of the experience of the African Union in a manner that would achieve the hoped-for results.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): While the Bahamas aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Barbados on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), we wish to offer a few additional comments from a national perspective.

In 1945 the nations of the world, fresh from the horrors of war, embarked upon one of the greatest undertakings in international diplomacy — the United Nations. At that time, 51 States decided that the best chance for sustained peace was to bind together their

common hopes and aspirations in this world Organization based on the principles of international law, international security, economic development and social equity. Today, 60 years later, the nearly universal membership of the United Nations, with 191 Member States, is a testament to its appeal and indispensability.

As the sentinel for international peace and security within the United Nations system, the Security Council has often taken centre stage as we all grapple with the challenges brought on by an increasingly complex international order and the attendant opportunities, obstacles, and threats.

In compliance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, we are today considering the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly contained in document A/60/2, which has been ably presented by Ambassador Denisov of the Russian Federation. The annual report has been the object of much comment over the years, given its potential to be a major point of interaction between these two principal bodies of the Organization. This potential takes on great significance because, according to Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the Member States of the United Nations "confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

Inasmuch as the Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Member States in the maintenance of international peace and security, and while few would argue that the report before us is not comprehensive, many countries, the Bahamas included, agree that it could and should be more substantive and analytical, presenting a reflective view and assessment of the Council's activities. It is also in this vein that the Bahamas supports the idea of an interactive exchange between the Council and the General Assembly when this report is being considered by the latter.

The report certainly illustrates the width and breadth of the actions undertaken by the Council on our behalf and reveals a continuous increase in the volume and scope of its activities. The greater number of those activities were, in our view, rightfully geared towards bringing resolution to a number of conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly in Africa. We commend the Council for its focus in this area, especially in light of the acknowledged nexus between peace, security and development and the need to ensure that Africa makes significant strides towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Bahamas also welcomes the Council's sustained focus on our sister Caribbean nation, Haiti, through the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in an effort to resolve the complexity of challenges confronting that country. Thus we note with satisfaction the Council's acknowledgement of "the importance of promoting long-term economic development alongside security and political stability" within Haiti (*A/60/2, p. 11*). It is absolutely imperative that the international community continue to provide Haiti with the required assistance and support for its upcoming elections and beyond.

The Bahamas also takes a keen interest in the work of the Council's various counter-terrorism bodies, particularly their efforts to increase coordination in their respective fields of work, and the provision of technical assistance to States in need. The sometimes Herculean effort required to implement critical counter-terrorism measures adopted by the Security Council, as well as to meet reporting obligations under various resolutions, continues to pose a challenge to many States, particularly small States. The Bahamas would encourage the Council to continue its efforts to coordinate much-needed assistance to States in all aspects of their counter-terrorism obligations in our collective fight against this scourge.

Allow me at this juncture to convey the condolences of the people and Government of the Bahamas to the people and Government of Jordan on the loss of life and destruction caused by the terrorist bombings in Amman yesterday.

We acknowledge the service and efforts of the Member States that are members of the Security Council. We believe it is vital that all Member States with the capacity to serve on the Council be given an opportunity to do so, and therefore we feel that the expansion of the Council's membership is appropriate and should be given careful and due consideration. A Council that is truly representative of the present world must more equitably reflect the current membership of the Organization, allowing developing countries,

including small island developing States, to play a greater role in its activities.

Expanding the membership of the Security Council is, however, only one dimension of the reform that needs to take place in that body. The other equally important dimension is reform of the Council's working methods. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*) acknowledges and speaks to this aspect directly, recommending that the Council continue to adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work, as appropriate, enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work.

In tandem with the report of the Security Council, we are also, appropriately, considering the report 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, which is contained in document A/59/47. I had the distinct pleasure of co-chairing that Working Group, along with Ambassador Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein, during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. During that period, the Working Group's discussions concentrated on matters related to the working methods of the Security Council, or cluster-II issues, as they are commonly called.

As evidenced by this report of the Working Group, many Member States place great emphasis and importance on the working methods of the Security Council as a means of making the body more transparent, inclusive, accountable and effective. The Bahamas believes that positive contributions to the work of the Council could and would be made by many countries that would otherwise be kept on the periphery or totally excluded if the working methods of that body were modified. There is a plethora of recommendations and suggestions that have issued forth from the Open-ended Working Group in this regard, last year and in preceding years, and we invite the Security Council to consider them within a constructive and progressive frame of reference.

In this vein, the Bahamas is heartened by the discussions on working methods that have been generated in the wake of the draft resolution crafted by the "Small Five" delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. We commend those delegations for this initiative, and we hope it will lead to a groundswell of dialogue and action culminating in a positive outcome for all concerned. This could be a critical first step in acting on the agreement of the summit in September that early reform of the Security Council is an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations.

We are all familiar with the saying that with great power comes great responsibility. Nowhere is this old adage more appropriate than when it comes to the Security Council. We believe that primary among the Council's responsibilities is that of engaging regularly and constructively in dialogue with those on whose behalf it acts, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. It is the sincere hope of my delegation that this debate and the ensuing relevant discussions will all contribute to that end.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria)(*spoke in French*): Algeria strongly condemns the hateful terrorist attacks that hit Amman yesterday. I wish to convey sincere condolences on behalf of the Government and the people of Algeria to the Government and the fraternal people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I would also like to convey sincere condolences to the grief-stricken families of the victims.

I would like to thank Ambassador Andrey Denisov, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and President of the Security Council for the month of November, for his comprehensive introduction of the annual report of the Security Council (*A/60/2*). The period covered by the report, from August 2004 to July 2005, occurred during Algeria's term as an elected member of the Council. Hence, my delegation would like to draw some lessons from our tenure, particularly relating to the Council's working methods and to the question of equitable representation on that organ.

As a non-aligned, African and Arab country, Algeria has used its term on the Security Council to further the demands put forward by those three crucial elements of the Organization and echoed by the overwhelming majority of Member States: democratization of the Security Council; transparency in its work; and improvement in its effectiveness pursuant to the prerogatives assigned by the Charter to each principal organ.

The report before us attests to an extremely heavy, dense agenda for the reporting period. We note

that in the main these efforts were focused mainly on conflicts in Africa, as well as on the Middle East region. The large number of conflicts and pre-conflict situations has made it essential that the Council draw on all the resources offered by the Charter in the area of conflict prevention and settlement. Increasingly, the Council, given the multitude of its tasks, has had to look outside itself and solicit the support of regional organizations pursuant to Chapter VIII; that of the Secretary-General, in his mediating role through his network of special representatives and personal envoys; and that of Member States as influential regional actors or troop contributors. All of them have a contribution to make in working out a decision.

Within the Security Council, Algeria has actively sought to promote that just concept of shared responsibility of the members of the international community for the maintenance of international peace and security. While this is the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter, it is not its exclusive province. Algeria will continue to work to strengthen this trend and will join in the efforts of all Member States to that end.

We can already say that there has been — admittedly limited — an improvement in the transparency of the Council's work through the increased number of public meetings and the improved dialogue with parties to conflicts and with troop-contributing countries.

However, this should not blind us to some deficiencies, relating to the still excessive use of Chapter VII in situations where the resources of Chapter VI would suffice to achieve the same goal; to a persistent lack of political will to act on Council decisions taken under that very Chapter VII in a fixed and non-discriminatory way, as continues to be the case when it comes to the Middle East; and, finally, to the dearth of resources available to the Security Council to provide appropriate responses in post-conflict and peacebuilding situations. Algeria earnestly hopes that the proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission will objectively take account of the respective advantages of the principal organs before a rushed decision is taken to set up such a body.

In that light, I turn now to the question of equitable representation on the Security Council. My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

The world summit held in September demonstrated once again the great interest that Member States attach to Security Council reform as an essential element of the overall reform of the United Nations. Strong arguments were made for the expansion of the Security Council and for improving its working methods in order to make it more representative and more effective, and thus, to bolster its legitimacy and authority.

We hope that the question of the reform of the United Nations in general and that of the Security Council in particular will see positive developments as soon as possible so as not to lose the momentum that has been generated. We hope that such developments will put an end to the historical injustice done to the developing countries, particularly to the developing countries of Africa.

My delegation would like here to reaffirm its commitment to the specific proposals on substantive issues made by countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, reflecting a determination to strengthen the representativity and effectiveness of the Security Council. Clearly, such Security Council reform is by nature comprehensive, as it applies both to the Council's working methods and to its expansion. Here, we take note of the laudable efforts of a number of delegations to submit a draft resolution on improving the working methods of the Security Council. Africa's approach to Security Council reform, as set out in last session's draft resolution A/59/L.67, reflects African aspirations as set forth in the Ezulwini Consensus and as reaffirmed in the Sirte Declaration and at the fifth Extraordinary Session of the African Union Assembly, held in Addis Ababa on 31 October 2005: we aspire to a Security Council that is better adapted to contemporary realities.

Africa requests two permanent seats, with the same privileges and prerogatives enjoyed by current permanent members, including the veto, and five non-permanent seats. In due course, the African Union will, in a spirit of solidarity and unity, take a decision on the modalities for the apportionment of the seats to which it is entitled, pursuant to the Sirte Declaration. At the same time, we reaffirm our willingness and our desire to work with all delegations to make progress on Security Council reform. Here, we stress the integral

nature of the Sirte Declaration, which allows of no departure from any of its constituent elements.

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to express Kuwait's outrage at the terrorist bombings in three hotels in the Jordanian capital of Amman and to state our vigorous condemnation of those attacks. The bombings were intended to destabilize that country and took a heavy toll of innocent lives. Kuwait firmly rejects all such terrorist acts, which contravene all human values and norms. I convey our condolences and sympathy to the Government of Jordan and to the families of the victims. We wish the injured a speedy recovery.

I thank the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Ambassador Andrey Denisov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for his lucid introduction of the report of the Council to the General Assembly (*A/60/2*). He noted that the steady increase in the volume and breadth of the Council's work has continued over the past year. I also express our great appreciation to the former Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and to the two Vice-Chairpersons for their tireless efforts and for the excellent manner in which they guided the Group's deliberations.

It goes without saying that the item before us today is among the most important on the agenda of the General Assembly. That is clearly reflected in the intensity of this year's discussion of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, which has resulted in the submission of a number of draft resolutions by like-minded regional groups. The importance that Member States attach to the question of equitable representation on the Council and reform of the Council's working methods is reflected also in the support of heads of State or Government for speedy reform of the Council, as expressed in the outcome document of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1), with a view to making the Council more representative, efficient, transparent and effective, and to enhancing its legitimacy, as well as in their commitment to continue working towards an early decision on this matter.

In its deliberations of recent years, the Working Group has stressed the urgency of restructuring the Security Council and increasing the transparency of its working methods and procedures. Notwithstanding agreement among Member States on the principle of reform and change, the Working Group — 12 years after its establishment — has yet to agree on the nature of the changes to be effected. But we cannot disregard the progress made in the Group's deliberations, particularly with respect to the procedures and working methods of the Security Council. There is near-consensus on the proposals for changes that need to be made. Indeed, the Council itself has taken the initiative to introduce new procedures and working methods. We must hail these improvements in the Council's working methods. Our appreciation goes to the members of the Council, who regularly brief the broader membership on developments within the Security Council, thus helping to increase transparency.

Kuwait's position on this matter is based on the following principles. Kuwait strongly supports the reform and revitalization of the organs of the United Nations. This includes the Security Council, which will thus be enabled to discharge its Charter mandate of the maintenance of international peace and security. Secondly, no change in the composition of the Security Council must affect the efficiency and effectiveness with which the Council adopts resolutions in response to international threats and challenges. Change must help enhance the legitimacy and credibility of Council resolutions.

With respect to reforming and improving the working methods of the Council and the development of its relations with other United Nations organs, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, we will support any proposal that will increase the transparency and clarity of the work of the Council and facilitate the flow of information to and from the United Nations membership at large.

We emphasize the need to institutionalize the steps the Council has taken to improve its working methods without awaiting agreement on other issues, such as the Council's size, composition and decision-making process. Institutionalizing those steps need not require amendment of the Charter.

Kuwait supports retention of the mechanism by which non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected, under Article 23, paragraph 2, of the Charter. It gives small countries, such as mine, a

greater opportunity to join the Security Council and to contribute to its work.

It is important that the use of the veto be limited and regulated, including by limiting it to action and issues under Chapter VII of the Charter.

In conclusion, it is our hope that we shall soon reach a consensus satisfactory to all parties and ensuring the smooth, unimpeded conduct of the work of the Security Council.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): Let me begin by condemning the terrorist attacks that recently took place in Jordan. The people and the Government of San Marino present their deepest condolences to the Government and the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and to the families of the victims.

We, the States Members of the United Nations, have debated for many years the enlargement of the Security Council. This year the discussion has been equally disappointing for those who, like us, are proposing an increase in the membership without new permanent members and for those who are seeking new permanent members.

The Government and the people of San Marino believe that, in order to find an equitable solution, we must first address what lies at the root of the widespread discontent with the current system. It is important, for a start, to take notice of the ongoing dissatisfaction of the elected delegations to the Council, which feel like temporary witnesses with marginal influence on the decision-making process.

Furthermore, action by the Council in its present form has often resulted in the polarization of the international community along political lines. It might be wise, in order to reinforce the democratic nature of the Council, to reassess the use of the veto power. If we do so, a better and more representative system could begin to take shape within the Security Council.

Moreover, I wish to point out that, even if a system of 15 delegations is more easily manageable, what matters is not the number of members but the constituencies being represented. In fact, in the current system, small and medium-sized countries are not really represented in a consistent way. The common goal of achieving peace and security should be the guiding principle uniting countries seeking representation within the Council. Since demographic landscapes and political and economic interests are constantly changing, a larger non-permanent membership would make the Council truly representative of all the different realities of an evolving world.

It is also of paramount importance that we immediately initiate a serious debate on the working methods of the Council and on its transparency, which would encourage active participation by, and an exchange of ideas among, the elected members and those that voted for them.

On that subject, San Marino is sympathetic to the informal paper prepared by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland.

We believe that any decision on a final reform of the Council should be legitimized by consensus among Member States.

Finally, we encourage all Members to engage in an introspective analysis on this thorny issue and to take a definitive and bold decision, within a reasonable time-frame, so that a truly democratic evolution of the Security Council can take place that will benefit all of us. The whole world is waiting for a reform of the Council. We cannot fail.

Mr. Morote (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I begin my statement, I should like, on behalf of the Government and the people of Peru, to express our heartfelt sympathy to the Government and the people of Jordan in connection with the human losses suffered due to the horrendous and appalling terrorist attack that took place in Amman.

I should like to thank the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Andrey Denisov, for having introduced the report of the Security Council. Let me also express my delegation’s appreciation for the work of the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jean Ping, as well as to the ambassadors of Liechtenstein and of the Bahamas for having coordinated the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Following a 10-year period of paralysis, the first half of this year witnessed an unprecedented impetus in the process of Security Council reform. Indeed, the Secretary-General, in his report entitled “In larger freedom”, had proposed that a decision, by consensus or otherwise, be taken on the Council’s membership

before the September summit. However, nothing happened. The Council was not reformed, and efforts in that direction led to naught.

Why has the Council remained unchanged? The answer is simple: because what is at stake is the way in which world power is distributed. If we look back at history, it is clear that the distribution of world power has shifted only following major geopolitical disasters, wars, the overextension of empires, or economic and technological decline.

It is a historical fact that the existence of Powers with a global reach and the capacity to create a new world order is not due to any majority decision on the part of States. International power is seldom shared; it is almost always won or lost.

That lack of pragmatism in the approach to, and methodology for, reform of the Security Council has probably been the main obstacle to the success of reform efforts. The plain truth is that the United Nations can function only on the basis of a realistic valuation of power. In addition, failure to adopt the appropriate political methodology would cause great harm to the United Nations, making it appear unable to reform itself and thus inviting criticism by its enemies.

Any reform of the Security Council must begin with a minimum degree of consensus among the current permanent members and be followed by a broad-based, democratic dialogue among all States. We must begin, at the very least, with a minimum formula that will not be vetoed. It is not realistic to believe that any new permanent Security Council members could be elected by the General Assembly in the absence of a basic agreement among current permanent members, because, whatever the outcome, such an agreement is a requirement under the Charter, which was adopted by us all.

Having noted the lack of pragmatism in the process of Security Council reform, I should like to make it clear that Peru favours such a reform. Although my delegation is critical of the unrealistic methodology used, we support expansion of the Security Council by means of a broad consensus. In that connection, we support Brazil, inter alia, as a potential permanent member.

I cannot fail to note, in commenting on the unrealistic approach taken to Security Council reform, that it is one of the reasons we lost a lot of time — time that should have been devoted to elaborating, in the context of the final document of the summit, an effective plan of action for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly given the fact that the United Nations Development Programme's forthright 2005 *Human Development Report* stated that the Goals were not being met and requested that decisive action be taken. The outcome was disappointing. The final document of the summit, negotiated against the clock, did not include a plan of action to achieve the Millennium Goals.

Reform of the Security Council also implies enhancing its effectiveness and transparency and improving its working methods. What is important is that consultations be held with non-permanent members prior to the adoption of decisions by the Council and that such decisions not simply be presented, as is often the case, as a fait accompli. We must also give non-member States an opportunity to participate by enhancing consultation mechanisms when issues are discussed that are of direct interest to them.

Working documents of the Council must be more accessible, as many elements contained therein affect all States Members of the United Nations. All delegations must have the right to access working documents and draft resolutions as soon as the latter have been considered by the Council.

The best means of enhancing the transparency of the Council's work is to minimize the number of closed meetings while increasing the number of open meetings, like those held in the early days of the Security Council. The Council must be more public, not only to gain the confidence of non-member countries, but also to gain the confidence of world public opinion. The world must know that there is a body that protects peace and security.

Today, the Council, with its secrecy, is going in the opposite direction from the dizzying developments in telecommunications and from the rising global awareness that all nations belong to a single humanity. The Council must abandon secret diplomacy and become an organ that practises public diplomacy. Only thus will the Security Council and the United Nations make themselves understood and gain prestige in global public opinion.

Another way to improve the functioning of the Security Council is to make it effective in addressing crimes against humanity. Nothing discredits the

Security Council and the United Nations more than inertia in the face of ethnic cleansing, massive human rights violations and genocide. To improve the Council's functioning with regard to crimes against humanity, the five permanent Council members should reach a gentlemen's agreement not to use the veto when the United Nations Secretary-General or regional organizations request Council action to prevent or avoid crimes against humanity, massive human rights violations, genocide or ethnic cleansing. The idea is that permanent Council members should cooperate to save thousands of human lives.

Another valuable improvement in the working methods would be to step up field visits, particularly in order to understand civil conflicts. Such visits should be improved through effective and ongoing contacts with civil society, political and religious groups and staff of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and regional organizations familiar with the socio-political situation of the country visited. Moreover, field visits should be carried out not only when a conflict has already erupted, but when there is a threat of civil war or massive human rights violations jeopardizing international peace and security — that is, they should also be preventive.

The Council must not only continue to put out fires when it comes to civil conflicts; it must also analyse in depth the structural causes of such conflicts. Today, all strategic analyses agree that social exclusion exacerbates cultural, ethnic and religious rivalries, turning them into wars of national plundering in which the most heinous crimes against humanity are committed. Therefore field visits must be adequately prepared, particularly to obtain information about the degree of social exclusion in a country prone to or immersed in civil war. If the Council does not take into account the degree of social exclusion, it will not be able to prevent or resolve civil conflicts, because it would be disregarding the most important structural variable of current global violence.

Concerning the Council's working methods, my delegation welcomes the initiative of Switzerland and a group of countries to improve them.

Peru appreciates the efforts to improve the reports of the Security Council. However, the report continues to be descriptive; it is not sufficiently analytical and forward-looking. It does not evaluate current difficulties, progress, failures and trends encountered in the resolution of conflicts that threaten international peace and security.

If the report of the Security Council is not analytical and forward-looking, no one will be able to know whether the conflicts have diminished or increased; whether the stability of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia or Latin America has improved or is still precarious; how much stability there is in the Middle East and Iraq; what is happening in Kosovo; or why the situation in Darfur is not being resolved.

If the present report of the Security Council were read today by journalists, students of international relations or the general public, none of them would obtain clear and analytical information about the status of the conflicts threatening peace and security throughout the world. It is therefore necessary to prepare a report of the Security Council that has the merit of being understood by international public opinion so that it can be disseminated by the global media and can be discussed in international academic circles. The Human Development Report and the World Development Report of the World Bank are known *urbi et orbi*, but today I can say, without exaggerating, that no one is familiar with reports of the Security Council except us.

We need a report that connects the Security Council not only to the General Assembly but to all of humanity. Thus, not only the Council's efforts on behalf of peace, but also its limitations, would be widely known. That would provide realism and serve to eliminate the misperceptions that exist about the work of the United Nations.

All of these points — which the Peruvian delegation has made in order to improve the reform of the Council, the effectiveness of its work and the nature of its reports — reflect Peru's deep commitment to international peace and security. We hope that, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council during the period 2006-2007, we can make a contribution in that regard.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to inform members that, as its second item on Monday morning, 14 November, the Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 42, entitled "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", to consider draft resolution A/60/L.17.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.