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New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa . . . . . (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Butagira (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 9 and 111 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/61/2)

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

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): At the Millennium Summit in September 2005, world leaders rightly pledged to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and credibility of the United Nations system. Today's United Nations is doing much more than the United Nations of some 20 years ago. The challenge, both for the United Nations and for us, the Member States, is to ensure that the demands of the United Nations are met rapidly and efficiently. That requires reform of the United Nations — mostly reform of its management structure. However, United Nations reform cannot take place without reform of the Security Council.

It is a well-known fact that expansion of the main United Nations peace and security body has proved to be a highly sensitive and difficult issue. It will not be an easy endeavour in the future, either. However, we all agree that it is more than necessary. That is why, instead of doubting, we should begin to act now, without further delay.

We have stated many times, while knowing that there is no perfect solution in view, why we support the concept of the Group of Four (G4): expanding the Council to 25 members in both categories, permanent and non-permanent, with the inclusion of developing countries in both. Any expansion and restructuring of the Council must include permanent seats for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean so that the concerns of the developing countries can be addressed.

While we continue to support last year's draft resolution submitted by the G4, we are aware that new ideas have emerged and that the call for an interim solution might gain ground. Although we believe that the G4 concept still provides us with the most realistic way to reform the Council, we are open to discussing the new ideas with an open mind.

As we consider expanding the Security Council, we should not overlook reform of its working methods. Among the many options for achieving that is the proposal submitted by the group of five small nations. While that proposal is well intentioned, we continue to doubt its practicality and comprehensiveness, because we believe that reform of the Council's working methods should go hand in hand with structural reform of the Council itself.

I wish to reiterate that my country has no vested interest in reform, other than our desire for better functioning and greater authority of the Council. That is why we call for action to overcome the current deadlock.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

06-65194 (E)

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative the State of Qatar, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for the work that he has been doing in the Council and also for presenting the report on the Council's activities to the General Assembly (A/61/2).

My delegation has awaited this report of the Security Council with particular interest, because it is the first that was to reflect the will expressed by the heads of State and Government of our countries during the 2005 World Summit. In particular, Costa Rica hoped to see how the mandate to improve the accountability of the Security Council to the General Assembly would be fulfilled. We hoped to see substantial progress in this area.

But when we study this report, we are forced to observe that the improvement that we expected has not taken place. The report we are discussing today serves the interests of the Security Council, but does not contain the answers that the General Assembly has been asking for.

With respect to our debate last year on this same item, we hoped as well that we would resume the practice of convening a meeting of the Security Council for an in-depth discussion of its annual work and to approve the report. Regrettably, that has not taken place either. It is crucial that the 2002 experience — convening a meeting of the Council to discuss its work — be taken up as a practice that can only enrich all of us and effectively benefit our peoples. I would like to recall that that gratifying experience took place thanks to the insistence of the delegation of Singapore, which was then a member of the Security Council. With the same purpose of increasing the effectiveness, transparency, responsibility and accountability of the Council, Costa Rica today joins with Singapore, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Switzerland in the group of five small nations — the "Small Five".

Our position with respect to United Nations reform in general and that of the Security Council in particular is well known. However, we take this opportunity to highlight a few points.

I begin by saying that for Costa Rica, the theme of raising the number of members of the Security Council is important only as a mechanism to restore the geographic representation that we lost in the light of the historical evolution of the last 60 years. The fundamental guide in expanding the number of Council members should not be simply the economic contribution of those who contribute the most, or the responsibilities that some States have in peacekeeping. In addition, and above all, increasing the number of members on the Security Council should respond to the necessary representation of the interests of the poorest sectors of mankind, of those who have less access to the benefits to scientific and technological progress, those who suffer the most from hunger and from war, and those who pay most dearly for the deterioration of our planet.

Increasing the number of permanent members is a complex topic and could have consequences that we do not want. In June 2005, the delegation of Costa Rica circulated a study that proves without any doubt that those who are permanent members of the Security Council not only hold the most powerful positions within the Organization but also convert themselves into permanent members of the most important bodies and subsidiary organs of the system. We are deeply concerned that, in expanding the category of permanent members of the Council, we could restrict in that way the number of seats available for other States in the organs and subsidiary bodies of the system.

Thus we believe that before we discuss the possible increase in the number of permanent members, we should discuss seriously the measures and guarantees that would prevent that dangerous snowball effect, which has been evident so far. Further restricting access to the principal organs of the system and its subsidiary bodies could only result in weakening the sense of belonging on the part of many of those excluded, to the detriment of the international legitimacy of the United Nations.

We would like to reiterate that for us it is crucial to make major efforts to substantially improve the working methods of the Security Council. It is in improving these methods that we find the answers to the most important questions that weigh on the Council and that bear on the effectiveness of the work of the Organization itself. In order to have a Security Council that has greater legitimacy and that better meets the concerns of Member States and of international public opinion, our efforts should focus primarily on improving the Council's working methods.

In this respect, we believe that the work done by the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation is a very valuable step in the right direction. We would like to acknowledge the work of Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan, whose leadership was decisive in this task. We would also like to see the effective implementation of the recommendations of this Working Group, recommendations that for us represent a starting point, not a destination.

We believe that there is still much left to be done to restore the prestige of the Organization and to improve the legitimacy of its decisions. Although many say that they do not understand what we are referring to when we talk about transparency and accountability, we will not relent in insisting on the need to have more and more information on the Council's activities, nor we will not relent in our determination to make sure that all, without exception, explain their conduct to the Assembly.

We are living in a time of transparency and accountability. This phenomenon is taking place everywhere, and the best-kept secrets come to light. Governments, sooner or later, will answer for their actions, first of all to their own peoples, and also to the international community.

Today, more than ever before, we have to restore the balance of power between the General Assembly and the Security Council. We have to revive the intention of the founders of the Organization that is so clearly expressed in the Charter of the United Nations. In accordance with the Charter, the Council acts in representing all of the Member States and its primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. Logically, from this, the Council should inform the Assembly in a timely manner on its actions or its lack of action so that the Assembly can exercise the proper control and, if necessary, take the corrective measures that the situation requires.

However, the Security Council's reports cannot simply be an accounting of the facts, which is what we have before us today. The General Assembly has the right to see documents that are more analytical, including assessments of the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the Council and the positions of its members in adopting them. In that regard, we have often called upon the Council to provide the Assembly with special reports — in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter — whenever the Council decides to establish a new peacekeeping operation or substantially alter the mandate of such operations or sets up new sanctions regimes.

We also believe that the Security Council must provide the General Assembly with a report whenever a draft resolution is vetoed. That is especially important in the world in which we live in today. Our action or lack of action can be perceived immediately in all corners of the Earth. In this age of information, we cannot fail to have the necessary political will to achieve fluid, effective and thorough communication among all protagonists in the United Nations system.

We have many concerns. Before I conclude, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the power of the veto, which we believe has lost much of the original purpose for which it was conceived. This instrument, which was justifiable at its inception, requires that it be used responsibly in the global village in which we live today. The veto cannot be the last resort of special interests to the detriment of overall interests. Nor can it be a mechanism that leads to inaction. Above and beyond a thorough debate on this issue, we would like to emphasize today the need for urgent reform that eliminates, or at least effectively limits, the use of the veto in cases of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights.

We are pleased to note the growing awareness of the reform of the Organization which is taking place today. We believe that reform will not be complete unless we once and for all take on the overall reform of the Security Council. We have made some progress, but much remains to be done.

Costa Rica would like to reiterate its commitment to the Organization and to the vision we have for it in the twenty-first century, in order that we can together clearly respond to the peoples of the United Nations so that they will never again be subject to our inaction in the light of the horrors that many people of the planet experience today.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to thank Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar, the current President of the Security Council, for presenting the report of the Security Council (A/61/2). Qatar's role in the Council is another example of the invaluable contribution that an elected member, and a small country, can make to its work.

Pakistan fully endorses the comprehensive statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The concerns expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement include double standards in the work of the Council, prolonged inaction and silence in some cases, quick resort to the threat or authorization of sanctions and enforcement action on others, lack of coordination with other principal organs and encroachment on their mandates, and non-transparent and non-inclusive decision-making, which is aggravated by the abuse of the veto. We earnestly hope that the proposals advanced by the Non-Aligned Movement will be considered seriously.

In recent years the Council has had relative success in dealing with internal crises and complex emergencies, in particular in Africa. United Nations peacekeeping has significantly enlarged and evolved over the past decades into a vital tool in halting and ameliorating several conflicts — in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burundi. We hope such successes will be extended elsewhere. Pakistan takes pride in its role and contribution to those efforts as the largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Notwithstanding those successes, the Council has failed to deal effectively with peacebuilding and development. Without that several success stories could regress to failure, as happened with Haiti. There are also several ongoing conflicts, especially in Asia and Africa, that continue to fester, and where the Council is not always regarded as an honest broker due to one-sided decisions. In vast sections of public opinion, especially in the Islamic world, the Security Council is viewed as ineffective and partisan. It is widely believed that the Council is controlled by, and acts on behalf of, some permanent members and other major Powers. It does not reflect the concerns and aspirations of the majority of the small and developing countries of the United Nations.

The Council is not dealing directly with some of the major conflicts and threats to international peace and security. The implementation of some resolutions is actively pursued while others are ignored. There is inaction even in the face of the most obvious acts of aggression, as we witnessed in Lebanon. On the other hand, there is proaction, even interference, in the internal affairs of sovereign States, even where clearly there is no threat to international peace and security.

The provisions for the pacific settlement of disputes remain grossly under-utilized by the Council. In contrast, there is a dangerous tendency to have recourse, too often and too soon, to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, including sanctions and enforcement action. We hope the United Nations will not to be placed in a position to participate in the errors of intervention by the invocation of the responsibility to protect. The limits of the use of force have now been fully revealed.

Meanwhile the Council's encroachment on the mandates and jurisdiction of other principal organs, especially the General Assembly, continues unabated. That upsets the delicate balance envisaged under the Charter and jeopardizes the overall effectiveness of the United Nations system.

Despite recent efforts to improve transparency, much of the Council's real work and decision-making takes place behind closed doors, often in exclusive conclaves that exclude even the elected members of the Security Council. Often, the media are more informed than those members. Most inequitably, the Member States directly concerned with a dispute or conflict are not allowed to participate in the Council's deliberations; nor are they even properly consulted. The Council's annual report does not shed any light on the rationale for and process of decision-making. Hence, non-members hunt for and gather information.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the United Nations Secretariat seems to be responsive only to the major Powers. Indeed, the leadership of the principal departments of the Secretariat is considered as the heritage and right of some permanent members.

It is therefore quite evident that comprehensive reform of the Security Council is essential to provide it greater legitimacy and credibility. The reform of the working methods of the Council is part and parcel of such a comprehensive reform. Pakistan supports the so-called S-5 initiative. However, in our view, it does not go far enough to address some of the real issues I have mentioned.

Pakistan agrees that a comprehensive reform of the Council must cover the vital issue of the veto. It is now clear that the veto will not be surrendered or shared by the five permanent members. However, there may be ways to address this issue. The power of the veto is the power to block decisions. To equalize power, we could consider raising the proportional

majority required for the adoption of resolutions in an enlarged Council — for example, by increasing it to two thirds from the present ratio of three fifths.

In an enlarged Council, a higher ratio for approval of resolutions could provide its elected members, including developing countries, a greater possibility to influence the decision-making. It is not through a permanent or long-term presence that the balance of power in the Council can be changed or challenged. It can happen by increasing the number and role of the elected members in the enlarged Council.

We agree that the composition of an enlarged Council should better reflect current realities, but current realities are complex. The changes of the past decades have not only created some large and emerging Powers; there are also a number of middle-sized States that play an equally important role in international and regional peace and security. Furthermore, there is also a large number of small States, mostly developing countries, that can contribute significantly to the Council's work. The examples of Singapore and Qatar come readily to mind.

The most tangible contribution to peace and security is not wealth, military power or population. It is determined by the degree of the commitment of a Member State to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, its adherence to United Nations resolutions, its participation in United Nations peacekeeping and its willingness to have recourse to the pacific settlement of disputes. The best way to determine a State's qualifications for membership on the Security Council, whether more or less frequent, is through the democratic method of periodic elections by its peers, that is, by the General Assembly, on whose behalf the Security Council is supposed to act.

Pakistan's position is well known. It was reflected in the 2005 Uniting for Consensus draft resolution (A/59/L.68). That was a most feasible and equitable proposal. Pakistan continues to believe that permanent membership for a few individual States will deny the opportunity for equitable representation to all other States. The smaller the expansion of the Council, therefore, the greater the need to find ways to ensure equitable representation for all States.

An acceptable formula for rotation could provide the means for such equitable representation. Such rotation, combined with regional representation, may also offer possibilities for the fuller representation of countries members of various groups of States. We are not restricted to options A and B of the High-level Panel on threats, challenges and change. The acceptability of enlargement, and its nature, will depend considerably upon, first, the size of expansion and, secondly, the methodology adopted to ensure the equitable representation of all groups of countries, including large, medium and small States.

The concept of long-term membership should not become a guise for a permanent presence. However, Pakistan remains open to the idea of immediate re-election, whose modalities would need to be determined according to the size and structure of any model while ensuring overall balanced representation of geographical groups and other subregional and political constituencies.

The Security Council, as is evident from its wide-ranging agenda, is increasingly assuming a larger role in the management of international relations. It is evident that all Member States have a direct and vital interest in the work of the Council and its decision-making. All Member States therefore have an equally crucial stake in the reform of the Council. That is why it is essential that reform should be decided by consensus or the widest possible agreement. The key lesson of last year is that no proposal designed to serve the interest of a few individual States can expect to win the support of the required majority of Member States. Without consensus or the widest possible agreement, the prospects for ratification of any Charter amendment for the reform of the Council will remain dismal.

If we are to achieve consensus or widest possible agreement, all proponents will need to review their positions and explore fresh ideas with flexibility and creativity. The dinner meeting hosted by President Musharraf of Pakistan and Prime Minister Prodi of Italy, along with other like-minded countries on 20 September in New York, was designed to initiate the process of such fresh thinking and dialogue on Security Council reform. We were most encouraged by the positive and constructive response of all the participants at that meeting.

We can conduct further informal contacts and consultations in any appropriate forum where ideas and options can be freely explored and discussed. Seminars or retreats can be organized for such brainstorming and exploratory sessions. In such informal processes, we

should seek to elaborate possible approaches to an equitable compromise solution. Various alternative models could be developed for consideration. That should be an open and inclusive process. We should avoid labels and groups. Restricted initiatives with partisan agendas will only divide us. Our efforts should be aimed at bridging, not creating, divides within the membership of the United Nations. We would be grateful to the President of the General Assembly if she could lead such a process. Pakistan is committed to participate constructively and to work together with all Member States in a collective endeavour to achieve consensus.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): We are once again convened in this Hall to share our views on the reform of the Security Council. Since our last meeting on the same subject, many major political and military crises have erupted around the world and democratic elections have taken place, changing the political landscape of small and large powerful countries alike. Unfortunately, however, during that time we have been unable to inch away from the more than 60-year-old crystallized format of the Security Council. Despite the promising meeting organized by the leaders of Italy and Pakistan, very little has followed. We therefore once again find ourselves at the starting point.

It is obvious that most Member States want comprehensive and equitable reform of the Council. I believe that nobody challenges the contention that certain countries and continents deserve more representation on the Security Council for the good of all. It is understandable that the demographic, economic and political developments they have experienced in the last 60 years give them new relevant status. We want the Council to play a central and legitimate role. Its membership should therefore be truly representative.

At this very point, nobody questions enlarging the Council or the need for more transparent working methods. The time is right to create a new format for the Council itself, as well as to refocus on its responsibility vis-à-vis the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies.

I ask the President of the General Assembly to take the lead in convening all Members at the beginning of the new year — nobody should be left behind — under a format that allows each Member State to negotiate, in an open and truly democratic way, the new rules for our new Security Council. I hope that the leadership of the General Assembly will help us to move forward in this delicate but vital reform.

Mrs. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, at the outset, to thank the Ambassador of Qatar, current President of the Security Council, for his detailed presentation on the report of the Council (A/61/2) to the General Assembly. My delegation would also like to thank the Ambassadors of the Bahamas and the Netherlands for their work as Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council.

The report on the activities and issues addressed by the Council during the period of August 2005 to July 2006 makes possible a broad review of the situations in regions that have a high potential to affect international peace and security. In accordance with the functions and powers conferred by the Charter of the United Nations, the Council's current actions should be focused on resolving issues on its agenda.

In that regard, we share the concern expressed in various Council meetings about the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East.

We would also like to point to the efforts of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We trust that the current stabilization phase will be completed so that the support of the international community to that country can be focused primarily on promoting sustained and long-term economic development programmes. We are certain that the current Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Haiti and head of MINUSTAH will contribute positively to achieving that goal.

With regard to the Security Council reform process, Colombia attaches particular priority to the review and updating of the Council's working methods. We believe that that aspect and an increase in the membership of the Security Council in the non-permanent member category are logical outcomes of the changes that have taken place in recent decades at the global and regional levels. The Council's working methods must be adapted to the need to increase participation by States that are not members of the Council, improve accountability on the part of countries that are members and achieve greater transparency and openness in the work of that body.

Greater participation by non-member States in the work of the Council would make it possible for us to have better information about national and regional realities. It would also make it easier for the Council to adopt decisions that take into account the conditions in each country and the specificities of a given situation. And it would contribute to avoiding unique or general formulas that could prove inappropriate in certain situations.

Moreover, the diverse nature of the situations on the Council's agenda makes it necessary to carry out more consultations, as necessary, with non-member States, regional groups, regional organizations and other relevant actors. That would contribute to better-informed decisions and to viable and lasting solutions.

The Security Council must be accountable to the General Assembly. That is the only way to ensure that its efforts are adequately revealed in the universal space that is the United Nations, as well as the only way to guarantee its essentially multilateral character. In that regard, the Council's informative briefings to all States should be frequent and exhaustive, so that delegations can be fully informed of the Council's activities.

We would also like to underscore the importance of the Council's focusing its efforts on threats to international peace and security. Diluting the Council's agenda with issues that are not directly related to its mandate has an effect on the Council's efficiency and calls into question the legitimacy of its functions.

The issue of the veto continues to be a sensitive and complicated matter. Colombia has expressed its opposition to that privilege ever since the first proposals were put forth for the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, in 1945. Sixty years later, the anachronism of the veto is even more pronounced, as is the desirability of eliminating the veto in the future. Until it is finally eliminated, the use of the veto should be limited so as to bring about greater democratization and efficiency in the work of the Council.

We believe that broad consultation on the Council's methods of work would contribute to the development of additional proposals to improve the work. Any initiative to that end should be approached with an open mind and in accordance with its own merits. Moreover, it should be implemented without waiting for progress in other areas of reform. The United Nations Charter provides the necessary flexibility for that purpose.

Colombia shares the opinion expressed recently by the Secretary-General with regard to the importance of finding common ground for action in the process of Council reform. We agree that there is an opportunity to build bridges, reduce the gap between positions and generate the expected momentum. Only an outcome forged on the basis of consensus can provide a strong foundation for the reform of the Council. That premise is crucial in order to reach a just and equitable agreement, by which the sovereign equality of States can be fully applied. Likewise, we must make progress on proposals that would avoid differentiating between Member States, which would be consistent with the objective of achieving improved representation on the Council.

The proposal submitted by the Uniting for Consensus movement for the expansion of the number of non-permanent Security Council members meets the aforementioned criteria. It is both realistic and flexible. It avoids the extension of privileges and differentiation between countries. And it pays greater heed to the principles of equitable geographic distribution and the sovereign equality of States.

In this sense, the candidate selection processes at the regional level would have greater validity and political support, as equal opportunity of access to Security Council seats would be guaranteed. Furthermore, a greater number of non-permanent members would make the Council truly representative of the diverse realities and continuous changes that are taking place across the world.

The scope of the challenges facing the United Nations makes it increasingly necessary to have convergence between States and to bring together approaches on reform of the Organization. Cooperation, consensus and joint efforts are essential if we want to effectively advance the issue of working methods and equitable representation on the Council. Only in this way will an agreement be reached that would be robust enough to adapt that principal body of the United Nations to new conditions and challenges.

Colombia expresses its willingness to go beyond informal consultations and a mere exchange of views towards a genuine negotiating process with clear goals and defined procedures. If the debate during the current session of the General Assembly creates a space for

movement in that direction, we will have taken a positive, more promising and credible step.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting and to express our appreciation for her efforts in conducting the work of the General Assembly.

We welcome the work that the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has carried out under the leadership of the delegation of Japan. We look forward to the implementation of all the recommendations set out in the note by the President of the Council (S/2006/507), including the recommendation that the Security Council should conduct effective consultations with States Members of the United Nations on draft resolutions before the Council on situations and conflicts on its agenda and that it should seek the views of Member States that are parties to a conflict and/or other interested and affected parties. Such an approach is a natural imperative if the Council is to strengthen the results it seeks to achieve in the maintenance of international peace and security pursuant to the Charter.

The President took the Chair.

We also welcome the report's emphasis on the importance of Security Council coordination with troop-contributing countries through meetings to exchange ideas in the preliminary phases of planning for any United Nations peacekeeping mission. It is crucial that these consultations be candid and transparent if they are to achieve the greatest measure of effectiveness.

Although many such positive elements are included in the report, the Security Council has yet to take any steps to implement them. We urge that such recommendations be implemented in all their aspects and in a balanced manner, with a view to making their implementation a normal practice as the Security Council fulfils its responsibilities.

We believe that reform of the working methods of the Security Council is an ongoing, gradual and developing process. Thus, we see in the views set forth in the draft resolution submitted during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — the elements that are required to deal with the issue of the Security Council's mechanisms and working methods in a radical way. The ideas included in that draft resolution can lay a sound foundation for comprehensive and integrated Security Council reform. Therefore, we look forward to working with the members of the S-5 to develop these ideas, so that they can be included in a new draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly next year.

We maintain our position that United Nations reform will not be complete unless the Security Council is reformed through developing its working methods and expanding its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Our adherence to that principle reflects our earlier commitments, pledges and positions on this question. In particular, we support ideas that lay the democratic foundation for expanding the membership of the Security Council; here, we believe that the Arab States deserve to be continuously represented on the Council.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): With respect to United Nations reform issues, the Outcome Document of the World Summit of September 2005 (resolution 60/1) remains our road map. As the months progress, we are steadily implementing the agenda that was set out by our leaders. We have embarked with renewed vigour on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We have established a Peacebuilding Commission and a Human Rights Council. We have adopted a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and resolutions on revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and we are now discussing system-wide coherence. The list of accomplishments is indeed growing, but it does not yet include the Security Council.

Some say that we should not reform the Security Council just for the sake of reform. And they are right: the Security Council is one of the more effective bodies of the United Nations. In recent years, the Council has adopted an average of 60 to 80 resolutions annually, a sharp increase compared with the 10 to 15 during the cold war. The Council stepped in when new threats arose, such as terrorism and proliferation, and it is increasingly addressing the nexus between security, development and human rights.

However, the Outcome Document hits the nail on the head when it describes the ultimate goal of Council

reform as being "to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions" (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*).

Of course, we cannot qualify the work of the Council by just looking at the number of resolutions. Decisions of the Council have to be implemented and often require long-term efforts and dedication. In that regard, it is essential that Member States — Governments, civil society and citizens — perceive the Council's decisions as legitimate, credible and equitable. Only if those conditions are met will decisions get the extensive and sustainable military, financial and political support and involvement of the wider membership that are required.

When we take a look at some of the important decisions the Security Council has recently taken, I should mention the strengthening of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon by resolution 1701 (2006), the establishment of a follow-on United Nations mission in Timor-Leste by resolution 1704 (2006), resolution 1718 (2006) on measures related to the nuclear aspirations of North Korea, and the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by resolution 1711 (2006). In each of those situations, the Security Council, including its permanent members, relies heavily on United Nations Member States for their implementation. That concerns all of us who contribute in one way or another in that regard, but most notably those countries that have grown over time to become major players.

We cannot expect those countries to continue making large contributions to international peace and security without having a formal say in the decision-making process. During the American revolution, it was called "no taxation without representation". In his recent book on the United Nations, the historian Paul Kennedy concludes that "if the United Nations remains encrusted in its 1945 constitution, it will appear, and really be, increasingly anachronistic".

Now, few disagree that increased legitimacy leads to better implementation and increased effectiveness, but some argue that this comes at the price of less efficiency and more cumbersome decision-making. That is not necessarily so, I would say. Fortunately, much of the work of the Security Council is relatively non-controversial. On those issues, an expanded Council with new global powers on board will encourage more burden-sharing to take on leading and initiating roles. Of course, on contentious issues, decisions might be more difficult to reach, but if we take a close look at recent Security Council work, different sides or viewpoints of a debate are often already represented amongst the members. In short, expansion would not facilitate decision-making about issues such as the situations in North Korea, Iran or Darfur, but neither would it automatically and necessarily complicate matters.

Thus, reform is to a large extent about reflecting new political realities and giving a greater say to certain underrepresented regions, such as Africa. However, we firmly believe that there is another aspect of improved legitimacy and effectiveness that deserves our attention. Even on an expanded Council, a majority of United Nations Member States would only serve sporadically. Therefore, improved working methods, and most notably assured access of countries to the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, are of the utmost importance.

That means greater consultation with those on which the resolution might have a direct bearing. It has been proposed in the past to use Article 31 of the Charter more frequently. That article stipulates that any Member State may and should be invited to participate whenever its interests are affected. Another idea that can be explored is to give regional organizations a place at the Council table on certain occasions, including at relevant closed consultations.

Additionally, a special look at the new tasks of the Security Council is warranted. It is clear that the Council has embarked on a broad interpretation of what constitutes international peace and security. Under Chapter VII, resolutions such as 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004) have been adopted, calling into being a wide array of legal obligations for United Nations Member States. To increase the legitimacy and credibility and thereby the implementation of those resolutions, a broader, deeper and more formal consultation process with Member States is required.

What kind of reform does this analysis lead to? Obviously, one of the key challenges is to determine which countries should get a bigger say in Council affairs. Can we draw a line, and where should we draw it? Is there a group emerging that is similar to the Permanent Five at the time of the birth of the Organization? It seems that many Member States do

feel that the current power structure should be adapted to better reflect geopolitical realities, but at the same time they feel that the world is dynamic and that we should not replace one fixed, unchangeable structure with another.

Consequently, there is a growing interest in the idea of a transitional arrangement. Such a solution would enable some countries and underrepresented regions that might have aspirations to a permanent seat to assume and show increased responsibility for world affairs. It could thus provide them with the opportunity to exemplify their aspirations to eventually becoming permanent members and provide us with the possibility to build up trust in the functioning of a bigger Council. To paraphrase Secretary-General Kofi Annan during his farewell press conference at the United Nations in Geneva three weeks ago, we must get into the room and take it from there.

An important advantage of that approach is that it would considerably lower the stakes because we would neither reject nor endorse any proposal or idea for a permanent solution. Arguably, that would lead to more flexibility to compromise on the modalities. There are different ways and means to flesh out the arrangement, and they should be further explored. Options range from a model with long-term, re-electable and possibly rotating seats to a strong and binding review mechanism of expansion with semi-permanent seats. The interim period could also be used for trying to find the ideal size of an expanded Council. In combination with effective measures to improve the access of non-Council members when it matters to them, it could be argued that we can start at the lower end in terms of number, while keeping the option of adding a few more seats when the temporary solution is reviewed.

In conclusion, the Netherlands looks forward to engaging on a path towards comprehensive Security Council reform. In our view, once again, the key notion to keep in mind is to increase the legitimacy of the Council. We can achieve that by increased membership to cater for the medium- to large-sized countries and by increased access to cater for the small- to medium-sized countries. We suggest that the surest way to get there is through a transitional arrangement.

Procedurally, the Netherlands would welcome proposals on how to take the process further, possibly by facilitating focused consultations between interested Governments with the aim of entering into negotiations on a limited number of possible models or arrangements.

We hope that today's debate will highlight the beginning of such a process — one in which the widely shared sense of the need for Security Council reform evolves into an equally shared sense of urgency, leading to concrete discussions and a successful reform effort. We should not forget that Security Council reform remains at the heart of our endeavour to increase the very credibility and relevance of the whole of the United Nations.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I would like to thank you, Madam, for having convened this plenary meeting to discuss matters to which many delegations attach great importance: the annual report on the work of the Security Council, and Council reform.

Earlier, following the general debate in September, the President identified Security Council reform as one of the tasks that needed to be translated into action during the sixty-first session. Indeed, in the general debate, leaders of a good two thirds of the entire United Nations membership recognized Security Council reform as the key unfinished task of the institutional reform agreed to in the Outcome Document one year earlier. Many leaders referred to the Secretary-General's oft-repeated statement that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without Security Council reform. We therefore welcome today's debate and hope that it will add new impetus to our discussion and prepare the ground for concrete action in the coming months.

I wish, first, to touch briefly upon the report of the Security Council (A/61/2), while thanking Ambassador Al-Nasser of Qatar, President of the Council for the month of December, for having presented it to the General Assembly. The report gives a summary of the Council's activities over the past year, during which it addressed a number of increasingly diverse and ever-more complex problems and challenges confronting the international community. Japan has had the privilege of serving on the Council during the past two years and has participated in its work actively and — we hope — constructively.

As a member of the Council, Japan has sought to play an active role in two areas in particular, serving in the chairmanship of two of its subsidiary bodies: the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and the

Informal Working Group dealing with working methods. Uppermost in our mind was the need to contribute to improving the transparency and broader participation of non-members, as well as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Council.

First, the recent expansion of United Nations peacekeeping operations has been remarkable, in terms of both the number of personnel and the variety of tasks entrusted to those operations. As of September 2006, 77,000 military and police personnel from 110 countries were deployed in 18 missions. The cost of those missions exceeded $5 billion in 2005. Operations of that magnitude cannot be sustained without the strong commitment of Member States in the form of personnel and financial contributions, as well as political support. Some serious issues have also come to light, such as sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers and misconduct in procurement. All of that poses major new challenges in the overall management of United Nations peacekeeping operations, which will require closer attention and a timely response by Member States.

In the Security Council, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations can serve as an effective tool for the promotion of understanding among Member States by engaging in close interactive dialogue with troop-contributing countries and other stakeholders.

It is with that in mind that we felt the need to rejuvenate the Working Group, and I believe that that has been achieved to some extent during the past two years. In the process, efforts were made to ensure the broader participation of non-members, encompassing troop-contributing countries, major financial contributing countries and other important stakeholders. An attempt was also made to bring about improved interaction between the Working Group and the Bureau of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — the Committee of 34.

A report on the work of the peacekeeping operations Working Group, which will give an account of these activities, will soon be issued separately. It is our hope that further efforts will be made to make good use of that Working Group with a view to enhancing cooperation and coordination, particularly with the major stakeholders to which I referred. This would also contribute to greater transparency in the work of the Council in the important area of peacekeeping operations.

Secondly, regarding the issue of improving working methods, Japan has, since February, led the effort as Chair of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. As I reported in the debate held in plenary meeting in July, the Security Council adopted a certain number of specific measures formulated by the Working Group aimed at enhancing the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as its interaction and dialogue with non-Council members. They are annexed to the Note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2006/507.

Members of the Council are committed to implementing the measures set out in the Note. Admittedly, the measures agreed to so far represent a rather modest accomplishment when set against our expectations — I am the first to admit that — but we believe that it is a meaningful first step, which should be built on with further measures. It is our strong hope that the Security Council will continue to actively pursue its endeavours to improve its working methods through the Working Group in the interests of greater efficiency and transparency and broader non-member participation in its work.

At the same time, I would like to acknowledge the important contributions made by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — in submitting a draft resolution during the sixtieth session. My delegation looks forward to their continued active engagement on this important issue.

On Security Council reform, the need for a change in the Council's composition and structure is now widely accepted by almost all Member States. Many delegations, including my own, have repeatedly stressed this point, citing many reasons. The most important is the plain fact that the challenges which the United Nations and the Security Council face today differ significantly from those confronted at the time of the Organization's foundation.

In the view of many, the Security Council in its present form is no longer legitimate, nor is it as effective as it could be. The leader of one of the permanent members, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, was candid enough to admit as much in a speech delivered in the United States earlier this year. Everybody knows this to be true. In a joint

communiqué issued this summer, two of the permanent five members — France and the United Kingdom — expressed their continued support for Brazil, Germany, India and Japan to be permanent members in the future, as well as for permanent seats for Africa.

The Security Council must represent the political realities of the twenty-first century. A reformed Council must let major stakeholders — on which the implementation its decisions depends — participate in its decision-making. It must ensure that developing countries have an adequate say in Security Council matters, and it must commit to meaningful reform of its working methods. All of that can be achieved only through an expansion of the Council to better reflect the realities of today's world.

In Japan, a new Government, led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has made it clear that our country intends to continue to pursue permanent membership in the Security Council as a matter of the highest priority in seeking overall United Nations reform. Prime Minister Abe recently discussed that matter with the leaders of a number of countries, including the United States, China and Russia. My Government intends to take further initiatives to that end. Japan is grateful to all the Governments that have kindly expressed their support for its aspired position.

However, the discussion on expansion of the Council has been stalemated since the end of the Assembly's fifty-ninth session. At the debate in July, many Member States stressed the need to start thinking outside the box and to get real dialogue and negotiation started, instead of simply repeating the original positions taken by the various regional and other groups. In the same vein, there were also calls for all parties to be more open-minded in their approach. For its part, Japan has been conducting informal but intensive discussions with all interested Member States, including those that publicly opposed the Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution, while maintaining the cooperation framework of the G-4.

Here, I would like to reiterate what we said in September at the general debate. We need a new proposal, one that is both creative and persuasive, with a view to reaching a decision at the sixty-first session. Japan continues to believe that the Security Council must be reformed through an expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories to make it more representative, more efficient and more transparent, with enhanced effectiveness and legitimacy. That, we believe, is the view shared by an overwhelming majority of Member States, including many African countries.

Building on the past joint efforts of the G-4, its co-sponsors and other Member States, we are now actively considering concrete ideas that might provide a basis for discussion. We hope to be able to present them for wider consultation with all interested groups and individual countries in due course. We also encourage other groups and interested countries to come up with new ideas and proposals that could generate broader support among the membership. We hope that the next stage in the process of consultations will be one that is open, flexible and creative on all sides.

The time is ripe for us to bring the 15-year-long discussion on the Security Council to a conclusion. This year, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's membership in the United Nations, the Japanese delegation intends to spare no effort to ensure that the Security Council reform efforts will achieve concrete results during the current session. We look forward to working closely with all interested Member States and groups to that end.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, for enabling us to start re-evaluating and re-discussing all the issues related to reform of the Security Council.

There is no doubt that the reform process should cover the Security Council. The Council should be more representative, and its working methods must be reviewed and adjusted to the needs of our time. It is also clear that the present models envisaged for an enlargement do not respond to the expectations and requirements of all Member countries. Let us not forget that the enlargement issue directly involves the national interests of almost every Member country.

Under those circumstances, in our view, there are only two options available to us: either we will insist on one of the existing models — which, I am afraid, will lead to an impasse — or we will review our national positions and look into new and different models, one of which may respond to our needs to a certain extent. So we are faced with a situation in which the best is the enemy of the good. We now have to decide whether we want to maintain our national positions in a maximalist manner or whether we are

ready to negotiate and conclude a model that constitutes a common denominator for all, even if it is the lowest one. Turkey, for its part, is ready to actively take part in an exercise that, we hope, will lead to a reform to be adopted, if not by consensus, then by the consent of the overwhelming majority of Member States. I call upon all my colleagues to work to that end.

As for the working methods of the Security Council, we already have available to us a number of proposals — such as that of the group of five small nations — on which I think we can all work. Indeed, it would be far more desirable if we could achieve progress on both tracks of the reform process related to the Security Council. But if that turns out not to be possible, I feel that the lack of progress on one of the tracks should not hold hostage the progress on the other track.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): It is my great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation in the joint debate on two important agenda items relating to the report of the Security Council (A/61/2) and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar, President of the Security Council, for his comprehensive introduction of the annual report of the Council.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made earlier on these agenda items by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The overall world picture of peace and security in the past year continued to be a mixture not only of bright patterns, but also of quite a few dark spots, where prolonged armed conflicts, civil wars and terrorism still threatened the lives of millions of people and pushed many others into miserable conditions. As the principal United Nations organ having primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has made a significant contribution to removing those dark spots from the picture.

Thanks to those efforts, the past year saw remarkable achievements such as the successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and the fair and mostly calm elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Burundi and Haiti. Nevertheless, the Security Council still has to work much harder to discharge its heavy responsibilities, as peace and stability are still regarded as something of a luxury to people in many areas of the world.

The Middle East is one case in point. Although the Council has been continuing to monitor the situation there closely, it is truly disheartening to see the escalation of violence in the region while the Council cannot live up to its high responsibilities. In this context, it should be noted, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in a July 2006 meeting of the Council on this subject, that a stable, long-term peace in the Middle East "requires the international community, through the Council, to speak with one voice".

Turning to the matter of Security Council reform, my delegation has always maintained that such reform is one of the most important issues in the process of reform of the United Nations as a whole, and no reform of the Council can be comprehensive in the absence of either of its two equally important elements — reform of its composition and reform of its working methods.

While all Member States agree that without the reform of the Security Council — the main United Nations body charged with one of its most important tasks, that of maintaining international peace and security — the reform of the Organization can in no way be completed. It is truly frustrating that we have not managed to make any headway towards this end.

Regarding the working methods of the Council, more positive changes have taken place with a view to enhancing efficiency and transparency. These include greater interaction with non-members of the Council, increased use of public meetings and strengthened coordination among the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

We commend the efforts that have been undertaken by Council members, as well as their commitment to implement the admittedly modest measures contained in the July 2006 report of the Council's Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (S/2006/507, annex). We hope the Council will strengthen this momentum in order to meet the desire of all Member States to ensure genuine democracy, transparency and accountability in its work.

We also highly appreciate the contributions of Member States to improve the Council's working methods. In this regard, we wish to reiterate our commitment and readiness to continue consultations on the issues under consideration by 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.

As for structural reform of the Council, we are pleased to acknowledge that Member States have expressed their strong determination to keep the momentum going and their willingness for further discussions. For our part, we look forward to working with other delegations in order to arrive at a solution that enjoys the support of a broad majority of Member States. My delegation believes that Member States must redouble their efforts to overcome their differences in order to reach this target.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): On a number of occasions, many of us have quoted Secretary-General Kofi Annan's remark that without Security Council reform, United Nations reform will be incomplete. This still holds true. But if we want to summarize the progress that has been made since he made this remark, this Hall would be pretty silent. While silence is golden in many cases, in this case it is not.

Security Council reform has proven to be a very sensitive and difficult issue. There are many legitimate concerns that have to be addressed in the modalities of reform. On the other hand, there are concerns that are being raised, not for the sake of reform, but as a means to delay or dilute it. Two years ago, the G-4 was accused by some of undue and artificial haste. It was asserted that such a serious reform required an appropriate amount of time. Well, we are now over 20 months down the road without having achieved anything, and the lack of progress has even created a sense of frustration within the membership. This, in turn, translates into a general atmosphere of mistrust and creates controversy well beyond the Security Council in many forums of the system.

The growing polarization in matters concerning human rights and on issues relating to the Secretariat are but two examples taken from very different areas. Our position, therefore, is that we have to act without further delay. We would certainly be interested in hearing from those who called for more time 20 months ago as to whether they would agree that the moment for action has now arrived.

Let me now address the issue of effectiveness. We have often heard the argument, in particular by some permanent members, that enlargement of the Security Council would harm its effectiveness. Let us not confuse efficiency with effectiveness. The most efficient body, obviously, would be a very small body, unfettered by considerations of transparency and accountability. It would be a body consisting of only, let us say, five countries. That body, unburdened by rules of procedure, would be extremely efficient, but it would not be what we want. It would be efficient but not legitimate, and, therefore, not effective. It would take decisions that could not be implemented for want of legitimacy.

Right now, we are already witnessing erosion in the effectiveness of the Council, because more and more often, the Council and its decisions are perceived as not being sufficiently legitimate. This is also part of the reason why it is growing increasingly difficult to generate the resources needed for implementing ever-more demanding Council decisions.

An enlarged Security Council would have to be both effective and efficient. We believe this can be achieved in a Council with 25 members. Obviously, a lot depends on working methods, support of the Secretariat and the approach of the 25 members. NATO and the European Union show that it can work. Both organizations have recently gone through enlargement processes successfully. This was done for good political reasons and was supported by the respective members, who include a number of P-5 countries.

We continue to believe that the G-4 proposal is the most comprehensive, aiming both at structural reform of the Council and a thorough reform of its working methods. We are aware, however, that new ideas have recently emerged and that the call for an interim solution is gaining ground. We are prepared to discuss this and any other ideas with an open mind.

However, the aim of the exercise must remain at the centre of our reflection. The aim is to bring the Security Council into line with today's political realities, to give appropriate influence to the developing world as well as to the main contributors and enablers, to secure the participation of newly emerged countries or those that have regained their full

political independence and to allow input from the membership at large.

We believe that ultimately, those aims can be achieved only by adding members which, thanks to their political weight and their status within the Security Council, can act as peers of the P5. Also, we understand the legitimate call in particular by the developing world not to be treated as second-class members in the Council. Outright, permanent and systematic refusal of permanent seats for developing countries — amounting, by the way, to well over half of the world's population — constitutes a discrimination we need to overcome. In discussing interim or transitional models, we should therefore bear in mind that the option for permanent seats must be kept open.

On working methods, we are in principle very supportive of the ideas developed by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five". However, we are doubtful whether those can and should be treated in isolation from structural reform.

We hope to see progress on that matter before the end of this session of the General Assembly. If we fail, the risk of a loss in reform momentum and of an eventual standstill is real. That would very likely have serious consequences for the United Nations as a whole at a time when it is needed more than ever. We would therefore call on all concerned to re-engage on Security Council reform with the aim of overcoming the present deadlock.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): At the outset, I, like others, would like to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of December for presenting the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. I will, however, limit my brief statement to the other agenda issue — the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

On 22 November in Geneva, Secretary-General Kofi Annan made a strong statement for the reform of the Security Council, saying, for example, that unless the Security Council is expanded, solutions to various issues will be more difficult or even not possible to reach. We have, as the President of the General Assembly stated this morning, to "be prepared to look at this matter with a fresh and open mind so that we can make substantial progress" (*A/61/PV.72*).

Through the discussions year after year in the Open-ended Working Group and elsewhere, everyone knows the fundamental arguments of most other Member States on the composition of the Security Council. Unfortunately, nothing new in that field has taken place for more than a year now and there is, as a result, in fact a certain loss of momentum to be felt. As my Japanese colleague stated here a few minutes ago, discussion on the expansion of the Council has stalemated. We do indeed need to move forward with open minds, as my Egyptian colleague described before our lunch break, along with my Czech colleague this afternoon and my German colleague just now.

The General Assembly has discussed reform of the Security Council for more than a decade without comprehensive agreement on reforms in sight. The 2005 High-Level Meeting expressly acknowledged that early reform of the Security Council was

> "an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations — in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions" (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*).

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also repeatedly stated that no reform of the United Nations will be complete without the reform of the Security Council. Iceland concurs with his view, of course, as so many others have done today.

The position of Iceland on that matter has been placed on record several times. We have for many years advocated reform of the Security Council. The reform should, in our view, entail a comprehensive reform of the Security Council both in expansion and working methods. There should be an expansion in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council. We have hitherto supported the proposal of the Group of Four (G-4) that the membership of the Security Council be increased from 15 to 25 by adding six permanent and four non-permanent members, and we co-sponsored draft resolution A/59/L.64. I very much liked the exposé given by my German colleague just now on the relationship between effectiveness and legitimacy, and would like to align myself with those words.

Iceland has for many years advocated increased transparency in the work of the Security Council and

welcomed the proposal of the so-called group of five small nations — the "Small Five". We are of the view that the proposal is in harmony with the working methods part of the G-4 proposal. We all want the Security Council to observe in its activities, approaches and procedures the key elements of transparency, openness and consistency, to paraphrase my Cuban colleague this morning when he spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and I would agree with my colleagues from Switzerland and Liechtenstein, who spoke earlier in this debate, that there is still a lot of room for improvement in the working methods of the Security Council.

Iceland attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council and has announced its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Council for the term 2009-2010. Iceland, a United Nations Member since 1946, has never before been a candidate for a seat on the Security Council. We believe that a comprehensive reform of the Security Council is essential if it is to represent today's global realities. We will continue to be actively engaged in seeking progress on that matter. Discussing the matter for another 10 years is not an option, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan also said in Geneva. He continued by saying:

> "We need to bring the Council's structure and membership in line with the realities of the twenty-first century, and not maintain agreements that cover geopolitical realities of 1945".

It is clear that compromises are needed to break the seemingly no-end-in-sight discussions. The goal must be to come as close to a consensus as possible through new consultations in which respect for each others' views is the guiding light. I am sure that Ambassador Kenzo Oshima said what many of us are thinking when he expressed the hope that the next stage in our consultations will be one that is not only open, but also flexible and creative on all sides.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Maintaining international peace and security is a solemn responsibility entrusted to the Security Council by States Members of the United Nations under the Charter. Over the past year, the Security Council has remained committed to addressing various regional and international hot spots and made vigorous efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, de-escalate tension in hot spot situations, maintain regional stability and assist the peacebuilding efforts of countries in post-conflict situations. A highly efficient and accountable Security Council is in the interests of all of us.

To better fulfil its responsibilities, the Security Council has consistently sought to improve its working methods and to increase transparency. During the process of recommending the new Secretary-General, the Security Council listened to the views of Member States with considerable attention and respect and undertook constructive arrangements to enhance communications with the General Assembly, which yielded good results. Needless to say, there is still much room for further improvement in the work of the Security Council. Together with all other delegations, China is ready and willing to continue to work hard to that end.

Since the holding of the World Summit last year, United Nations reform has made much headway in various areas. The Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Central Emergency Response Fund have been established. Resolutions on development, management reform, the revitalization of the General Assembly, the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy have been adopted. Consultations are now under way on mandate review and United Nations system-wide coherence.

One of the important lessons we can draw from those reforms is that, as United Nations reform involves the interests of all 192 Member States, it can make real progress only on the basis of full consultations and broad agreement. It therefore follows that for any reform result to have vitality and sustainability, it must be achieved through extensive consultations and consensus-building.

On Security Council reform, President Hu Jintao spelled out China's principled position at last year's Summit. I would like to take this opportunity to underline the following observations in connection with the current state of affairs.

First, China has consistently supported the Security Council in carrying out all necessary and reasonable reforms, so as to enhance its capacity to respond to new global threats and challenges. Security Council reform must be multifaceted, covering both the enlargement of its membership and the improvement of its working methods. Its reform should also aim at ensuring its authority and enhancing its efficiency.

Secondly, Security Council reform must take into consideration the interests and concerns of all parties, while giving priority to enhancing the representation of developing countries, especially African countries. Any reform formula that only addresses the concerns of a few big Powers, while disregarding the wishes of small and medium-sized countries, can hardly be accepted by the general membership of United Nations, and it will surely receive no support from China.

Thirdly, Security Council reform should be carried out on the basis of extensive consultations and avoid a hasty political showdown, which would be certain to divide, rather than unite, all Member States. China encourages all sides to draw from past experience and explore new ideas in an effort to narrow differences and reach the broadest possible consensus. That is the only correct approach that can assure the eventual success of the reform of the Security Council. In that regard, China supports the continuation of the work of the General Assembly's 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 intense and emotional discussions on the reform of the Security Council that took place at the United Nations over a year ago still remain fresh in our memories. The experience and lessons drawn from those discussions deserve our thorough consideration. At a time when progress has been made in other areas of United Nations reform, it is understandable that there are high expectations for the Security Council to speed up its reform. In order to achieve that objective, we need more than confidence and enthusiasm to promote progress. A flexible and pragmatic approach that takes into consideration the views of all sides is crucial. Without that it will be difficult to come up with a concrete formula that can bridge all the differences among Member States.

Security Council reform has now entered a new phase. All sides should go beyond their respective positions and consider, from a global perspective and in an open-minded and constructive manner, a way to achieve Security Council reform. A starting point could perhaps be to explore potential main benchmarks for a formula that is generally acceptable to all. Specifics could be worked out subsequently. There is an old Chinese proverb that says a melon is bound to fall from its stem once it is ripe. I am confident that as long as all sides demonstrate genuine political will, display a cooperative spirit for compromise and take a pragmatic approach, Security Council reform will eventually achieve a happy landing and end up with a solution satisfactory to all. China is ready and willing to continue to work with all other delegations to that end.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): First of all, my delegation would like to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of the State of Qatar, President of the Security Council for December, for introducing the report of the Council covering the period from 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 (A/61/2). The State of Qatar is well known for being firm on principle in the deliberations of the Security Council.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made at the 72nd meeting by the Permanent Representative of Cuba in his capacity as Chairperson of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In July of this year, the General Assembly convened a two-day debate on the subject of Security Council reform. The active participation of a large number of delegations in the debate clearly reflected the degree of importance that Member States attach to that issue. Although delegations differed widely on the modalities for reforming the Security Council, a general consensus emerged to the effect that there will be no meaningful reform of the United Nations without the reform of the Security Council itself.

Myanmar is in favour of the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. An expanded Security Council must also reflect today's political and economic realities. However, the fact that we have not made substantial progress on the expansion of the Council demonstrates the sensitive and complex nature of the issue. It is extremely important that this issue does not become a divisive factor among the membership of the United Nations. Dialogue and consultations must continue in order to arrive at a solution acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the membership.

Expansion alone is not enough. We see the need for the Security Council to further improve its working methods and decision-making process, to make it more

transparent and democratic. Some of the initiatives taken by the Security Council in recent years are welcome steps. On the other hand, my delegation is greatly concerned by the increased encroachment of the Security Council on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. States Members of the United Nations, and in particular the 118-member Non-Aligned Movement, have expressed their growing concern about that encroachment.

Their concern is clearly reflected in the Final Document of the Fourteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held in September 2006 in Havana. Allow me to quote the relevant portion of that document.

> "The Heads of State or Government underscored the need for [United Nations] Member States to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal organ of the [United Nations], in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among these organs with their respective Charter-based functions and powers. They stressed that the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions, as well as all General Assembly resolutions, which clarify its relationship with the latter organ and other principal organs. In this context, they affirmed that Article 24 of the Charter does not necessarily provide the Security Council with the competence to address issues which fall within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the [Economic and Social Council], including in the areas of norm-setting, legislation and establishing definitions, bearing in mind that the Assembly is primarily tasked with the progressive development of international law and its codification. They cautioned about the danger of encroachment by the Council on issues which clearly fall within the functions and powers of other principal organs of the [United Nations] and their subsidiary bodies." (*A/61/472, annex I, para. 40*)

One vivid example of encroachment by the Security Council concerns my own country. Urged on by a most powerful permanent member, and despite strong opposition from a number of Council members, the Security Council unjustly placed the situation of Myanmar on its agenda by alleging that it poses a threat to international peace and security. Nothing could be further from the truth. Myanmar has done nothing that can undermine the peace and security of any country, let alone regional or international peace and security. Myanmar has close and cordial relations with all of her five neighbours and other countries in the region and beyond. Myanmar's neighbours, as well as the NAM, have taken a position that they do not consider the situation in Myanmar as a threat to international peace and security and oppose attempts by a permanent member of the Security Council to categorize Myanmar as such.

The founders of the United Nations did not intend the world body to become a forum where some members with political and economic clout could gang up against a Member State and label it for what is not. We therefore urge Member States to resist attempts by those powerful States to influence the Security Council to take action against a Member State which in no way poses any threat to international peace and security.

In this context, allow me to call the Assembly's attention to the fact that, at the Fourteenth Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, the heads of State or Government of the Movement called upon the Security Council to uphold the primacy of and respect for the Charter in connection with its functions and powers and stressed once again that the decision by the Security Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on a situation in any Member State of the United Nations or any issue that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

My delegation fully shares the NAM view that transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. My delegation also supports the NAM position that the Security Council must comply with the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter, which allow any non-Council member to participate in discussions on matters directly affecting it.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reaffirm our position that any expansion or enlargement of the Security Council should reflect the reality of the world today. We envisage the developing countries taking a greater role in an expanded Security Council. Myanmar is committed to supporting reform of the United Nations as a whole, which includes reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Tarrago (Brazil): On behalf of the Brazilian delegation, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely plenary meeting on the long-standing issue of increase in the membership of the Security Council. Progress on this fundamental question is key to the successful completion of the institutional reform of this Organization.

A world still marked by war and violence requires a Security Council that can effectively respond to the contemporary challenges regarding international peace and security and the observance of international law. Since the Council is called upon today to play a role in a wider array of issues, its reform becomes more urgent than ever.

The need for effective collective measures to re-establish confidence and settle international disputes is all the more evident as regional tensions continue to escalate, conflicts continue to be a daily reality and civilian populations continue to suffer mounting casualties. Recent events in various regions of the world highlight the narrow power and representation base of the Security Council. This risks further eroding the authority, legitimacy and ability of the United Nations to respond adequately to such situations.

We welcome the progress made with respect to United Nations reform that resulted in the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, in a follow-up to the outcome of the summits on development issues and in the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, among other things.

The latest debate on Security Council reform, held on 20 and 21 July 2006, underlined that the pressing need for change is now a notion held nearly unanimously by United Nations members. It showed a clear majority of views on what a reformed Council should look like. Many delegations underscored the need for the participation of developing countries in both categories, as well as for changes in the Council's working methods. None expressed support for maintaining the status quo. The time has thus come to advance towards a process of dialogue and consultations, with a view to arriving at an early decision on this question.

The most important issues regarding Security Council reform are, undoubtedly, membership and representation. This does not mean denying the importance of a comprehensive reform that includes adaptation of working methods and the problem of encroachment by the Council on powers and functions of the other main United Nations organs. But unless the question of membership is addressed, imbalances in representation and the consequent impact on the issue of legitimacy will continue to gradually erode the Council's effectiveness and credibility.

Meaningful reform must result in a Security Council that is more democratic and representative, with new members in its permanent and non-permanent categories. Reform that corrects the historical imbalance in the composition of the Council — which today excludes entire regions of the developing world from the permanent member category — is not only a just aspiration; it is a political necessity.

We wish to continue to work closely with all those who have expressed a genuine interest in Security Council reform, so as to complete the process and bring to fruition the mandate that our heads of State presented to us in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1). Movement in the right direction would imply agreement on expansion, with developed and developing countries from various regions in both categories. Brazil has been working on all fronts of the United Nations reform process, consistently assisting in the formulation of the positions and views of developing countries.

In 1965, under pressure from a growing membership, the United Nations agreed to an amendment to its Charter that allowed for the addition of four new members to the Security Council. That progress was possible only as a result of strenuous efforts by several newly independent States that insisted on upholding their right to be heard. After more than 40 years and a substantial enlargement of the United Nations membership, the Security Council needs an overhaul to reflect current realities. We still have the opportunity to effectively reform the Organization in a manner that establishes a more just, fairer and more equitable structure for cooperation and helps to counter the disturbing trend towards the weakening of collective security and of multilateralism as a whole.

At the first Africa-South America Summit, which took place in Abuja on 30 November 2006, the heads of State or Government of Africa and South America sent a clear message. In the Abuja Declaration, they

stressed the importance of promoting the democratization of the international decision-making bodies to improve the participation of developing countries in the multilateral system. The leaders of these two regions of the developing world also called for urgent reform of the Security Council — an essential element of the overall effort to reform the United Nations — and supported its enlargement in order to make it more broadly representative of the developing countries, efficient and transparent, and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

Brazil is encouraged by the fact that the Group of Four proposal remains the one that has garnered the largest support base. We will continue to work with our partners, fellow sponsors and other like-minded delegations to build on the core elements of that platform, while keeping an open mind to views recently expressed, including during this debate. Our aim is to incorporate constructive and creative ideas in preparing a text for adoption at the current session of the General Assembly.

The membership of the Organization must face up to the challenge of comprehensive United Nations reform, in the knowledge that no reform would be complete without Security Council expansion.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): There can be no complete United Nations reform without reform of the Security Council. However, since the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform was created, progress has been slow. Many of us are getting a little frustrated, impatient and weary. Hence, we should do everything we can to find an acceptable solution to this crucial reform question.

The primary aim of this whole exercise is to make the Security Council more effective by making it more representative, transparent and democratic. In this endeavour, most Member States have focused on the issues of expanding the Council's membership and improving its working methods and decision-making processes.

Like the majority of United Nations Member States, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is in favour of an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members from developed and developing countries, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and taking into account the relative importance of various countries. Furthermore, we would like to stress that reform should also include measures that would make the Security Council more transparent in its working methods, especially in its decision-making processes. We believe that such transparency would not only boost the confidence of Member States, but also enable all of us to better understand the merits of the Council's decisions and to fully support them.

Africa is a great continent that deserves the support of us all. However, Africa has no representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council in its current form. In this exercise, all efforts should therefore be made to correct and put an end to that glaring injustice. The Lao delegation will support every endeavour to that end.

The world of today is experiencing complex and rapidly changing developments. Since 1945, great changes have occurred. The Security Council, the main body in charge of the maintenance of international peace and security, should adapt to those new changes and realities. The Lao People's Democratic Republic believes that, with tireless efforts and in a spirit of compromise, we should work together to reform the Security Council in order to make that body more effective and legitimate.

Mr. Wallace (United States of America): The United States is committed to a strong and vibrant United Nations. We have been consistent and strong advocates of United Nations reform as a means to enable the Organization to confront successfully the many challenges of the twenty-first century.

At the beginning of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, our heads of State called for an ambitious effort to modernize the United Nations through significant management and governance reforms, expansion of the Security Council and the establishment of a Human Rights Council and a Peacebuilding Commission. Our collective reform effort to date has so far yielded only modest results. Our limited success to date should serve as a reminder that reform does not inherently engender improvement unless it is done right and is fully completed.

That maxim holds true for Security Council expansion. We believe that it is necessary to modernize the Security Council, and we support a modest expansion. Membership in the United Nations has grown from 51 in 1945 to 192 today. The balance of

power has shifted since 1945. Non-State actors and transnational threats, such as terrorism and failed States, increasingly threaten international peace and security. We believe that it is appropriate for the Council to change to meet these new realities.

Council expansion should be designed to increase its effectiveness to respond to these challenges. Any expansion must first ensure that the Council's ability to respond with agility, credibility and efficacy to threats to international peace and security is preserved. One reason why the Council is able to function efficiently is that its size permits useful and manageable discussion and debate. Expansion to a larger membership must not undermine efficiency in reaching consensus in the Council.

Proposals to expand the Council presented during the previous two sessions of the General Assembly envisioned a large expansion that could endanger the Council's efficiency. Those proposals did not achieve the broad-based consensus necessary for eventual adoption as a Charter amendment. We must search for new and more measured ways of looking at the issues that are capable of achieving wide support. That is why we favour a more modest expansion of the Council.

With regard to permanent membership in the Council, we believe that new permanent members must be supremely qualified to undertake the tremendous duties and responsibilities that they will assume. In our view, qualified nations should meet criteria in the following areas: size of economy and population; military capacity; financial and/or peacekeeping contributions to the United Nations; commitment to democracy and human rights; strong records on non-proliferation; and equitable geographic balance. We continue to support Japan — which by all accounts has proved its qualifications — for permanent membership on the Council.

As we continue this debate on the expansion of the Security Council, let us remember the bold vision of the signers of the Charter and achieve an expansion that will truly help the Council to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations in discharging its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

In conclusion, let me express our thanks to the President of the Security Council for the month of December, Ambassador Al-Nasser of Qatar, for his remarks introducing the Council's annual report to this body (A/61/2). The report is a comprehensive review of the very intensive work of the Council in the year ending 31 July.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Our debates on the Security Council are often tinged with tension and frustration. Non-Council members lament their exclusion from decision-making and the opacity of the Council. Council members feel hectored and under-appreciated for the significant responsibilities that they take on. We are not communicating as we should. We need to break out of this cycle and to try to understand and address each others' concerns in a realistic way.

I would like the proposals of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — on working methods to be seen in this light. The S-5 proposals are not meant to badger or shame. They are based on a genuine desire to improve the Council's working methods. We feel that our suggestions will help Member States to interact with the Council and properly implement Council decisions. This will only strengthen the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness.

An Australian Minister of the Navy, N. J. O. Makin, was the President of the Council during its first meeting, held in London's Church House on 17 January 1946. He said,

> "I would stress ... that the calling together of the Security Council will not by itself establish peace. The maintenance of peace requires the cooperation of all Members of the United Nations."

The key words are "cooperation of all Members of the United Nations". The Council and the Assembly can work together, and must do so if we are to achieve our goals.

Although the S-5 draft resolution has been in existence for nine months now, we have not had an opportunity to discuss the issues with the Council as a whole. That said, it is unfair to accuse the Council of non-responsiveness. For example, the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has responded to calls for more inclusiveness, accountability and transparency by coming up with a list of recommendations. Some are similar to the S-5 proposals. We are grateful to the Council and, in particular, to Japan, for taking this initiative. We also thank Japan for chairing the Working Group. We hope that the Working Group will continue its work and that it will enjoy the benefits of

having a long-term Chairman as committed as Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan.

The Working Group's recommendations were made in July. We hope that the intervening six months have given the Council enough time to digest and implement its own suggestions. As the saying goes, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating". Implementation is crucial.

In addition, there are a number of S-5 ideas that remain unaddressed. For example, we would still like to have more analytical reports submitted to the Assembly. I am sorry to say that the most recent Council report hardly meets that definition. We note that informal briefings by the presidency of the Security Council were started again last week. Credit goes to Qatar for reinvigorating that practice. But the implementation of this has always been a bit capricious. That is, perhaps, a function of having provisional rules of procedure for 60 years. All of this relates to the broader points of accountability and transparency. We also continue to have concerns about procedures relating to sanctions lists. We do not disagree with the concept of lists. However, due process and review procedures should also feature.

I will not go into detail about the issue of expansion. Singapore's views are well known. We support expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories so as to better reflect current geopolitical realities. In this regard, we have expressed support on previous occasions for the Group of Four (G-4) proposal, which includes developed and developing countries. We do not support the extension of veto powers to new permanent members. Increasing the number of vetoes in the Security Council will complicate decision-making and undermine the Council's credibility and effectiveness. We remain wary of intermediate steps that might ensconce a few countries semi-permanently in the Council and possibly result in the exclusion of small States.

I am aware that some prefer to conflate working methods with expansion. In an ideal world, that makes sense. But the reality is that expansion remains contentious. None of the current ideas have come close to generating the support required to pass a Charter amendment. By comparison, working methods reform can be effected more quickly. It may be more feasible to pursue parallel tracks.

Albert Einstein once said that common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age 18. Who am I to disagree with Einstein? But I hope that, rather than a collection of prejudices, common sense is simply the recognition of what it is realistic and right to do. In the view of the S-5, reforming the Security Council's working methods is a worthwhile endeavour that will only help all sides, including the Assembly and the Council, in the long run. The S-5 looks forward to continuing to work with the Security Council and Member States on the reform of the Security Council's working methods.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): Let me start by thanking the President of the Security Council for December, Ambassador Al-Nasser of the State of Qatar, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/61/2). I would also like to commend the Secretariat for its efforts in producing the report.

I would like to make a statement in my national capacity on agenda item 111, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Finland strongly supports the reform and enlargement of the Security Council. We must take every opportunity to make the United Nations more effective and more legitimate. The Security Council should reflect the aspirations of the entire membership. The reform of the Security Council is an important part of that process. We must make sure that the Council is truly efficient in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For most countries, membership of the Security Council is a rare and limited opportunity. However, all Member States of the United Nations are required to implement the decisions of the Security Council, and are directly affected by the actions of the Council. Therefore, closer cooperation between the Security Council and the membership at large is essential.

Finland supports the enlargement of the Council in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members. However, for the Security Council to be effective, the right of the veto should not be extended to new permanent members under any circumstances. Finland also strongly supports the reform of the Council's working methods and procedures, so as to make it more transparent, inclusive and legitimate.

In conclusion, I would like to express our support for the aspirations of countries such as Japan,

Germany, India and Brazil to be elected permanent members of an enlarged Security Council. We also support making the Council more representative by also including representatives of developing countries from the southern hemisphere and Africa.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin, like representatives who have taken the floor before me, by expressing my deep gratitude for the personal interest and commitment demonstrated by the President since she assumed her post to ensure that the process of Security Council reform makes significant progress during her mandate. I should also like to reiterate my gratitude to Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, for the seriousness, skill and dexterity with which he is guiding the work of the Security Council this month, and especially for the very detailed, original and relevant nature of his opening statement to the Assembly. I also wish to take this opportunity to convey my sincere congratulations and encouragement to all the new non-permanent members of the Security Council, who we are certain will, like their predecessors, continue sustained efforts to improve transparency in the Council, thereby increasing support for its decisions.

As in previous years, the General Assembly is meeting today to take up the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/61/2) along with the agenda item pertaining to 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. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered this morning by the Permanent Representative of Cuba in his capacity as Chairperson of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Having read the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, my delegation is fully convinced that there is no doubt that the problems raised in previous years continue to be relevant. It is quite unfortunate that the report was published so late, making it impossible for us to study it as we would have wished.

Having said that, my delegation believes that, in accordance with the provisions of Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council must account for its actions before the General Assembly, which is the organ of the United Nations that best reflects the universal and democratic nature of the Organization. The General Assembly has a very important role in the running and general direction of the United Nations. In accordance with Article 10, it has a mandate to discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter. We therefore believe that the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly must be more factual, thorough and analytical. It should, in particular, contain an assessment of the efforts and effectiveness of the Council.

My delegation would strongly urge the Security Council to adopt new measures. They could include, for example, the preparation of reports containing critical assessments of its work and performance and the issuance of a compendium setting out significant improvements made or under way.

We urge both permanent and non-permanent members of the Council to avail themselves of this forum to put forth constructive ideas regarding the Council's internal dysfunction and on the best way to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter. While it is true that substantial progress has been made in the Security Council, especially in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, we must now build upon those achievements while also expanding consultations with all Member States.

As set out in the Ezulwini Consensus, whose general contents were reaffirmed in the Sirte Declaration of the African Union and, more recently, during the Union's Summit, held in July 2006 at Banjul, the Gambia, Senegal will continue to resolutely assert that, in the context of the enlargement of the Council, the election of new members of the Security Council should be considered from the following perspective.

First, we must immediately correct the injustice done to Africa by giving it a permanent seat on the Council, before any further consideration of the reform of the Council. Africa, a continent that is home to 53 United Nations Member States, is currently deprived of permanent representation on the Council. That is a paradoxical situation, given that nearly 70 per cent of the issues dealt with by the Council clearly concern African problems.

It is today inconceivable to discuss African problems in the Council and adopt and implement

measures and decisions without Africa being represented by at least one permanent member. It can in fact be said that this situation is a historical error that must be rectified as soon as possible as part of a fair and equitable enlargement of the Council that results in granting Africa two permanent seats, with the same privileges and prerogatives as current permanent members, as well as five non-permanent seats.

That is the only just and realistic approach, for it acknowledges that the status of permanent membership cannot be denied to African States. African countries ask only to be allowed to contribute to the strengthening of the foundations of the United Nations and to the promotion of the Organization's ideals of peace, justice and progress for all peoples.

Although we respect the legitimate positions of other members and interest groups, and on the basis of the principle to which I have referred, we cannot at all countenance the proposal to expand the membership of the Council only in the non-permanent category. We are prepared to dispassionately consider other ideas and suggestions, as well as to demonstrate realism and flexibility, but without abandoning our duty to the principle of African solidarity and the need for justice for all.

The reform of the Security Council is within our grasp, despite the current deep-seated differences. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan has often said, the reform of the Security Council is still feasible so long as Member States have the political will to see it through.

My delegation believes that last April's submission of the final observations by the Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group with regard to the main points of the debate concerning Security Council reform in general (see A/61/47, annex II), which reflected comments and opinions from a wide range of regional and subregional groups as well as other interest groups at the United Nations, was an important step that clearly illustrated the collective commitment of most Member States to foster the conditions necessary to continue and to expand the consideration of the issues at stake and to reach satisfactory results for all.

However, we must recognize that, despite those praiseworthy and courageous specific initiatives, the prospects for a comprehensive and thorough reform of the Security Council to make it a modern, democratic, transparent and effective body are still to be realized.

Thus, a large number of questions remain unanswered, dealing in particular with the enlargement of the Security Council in the two membership categories, the composition of the Council, the use of the right of veto, the conditions to be met by candidates for permanent membership, relations among the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the improvement of the Council's working methods, as advocated by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — and the overwhelming majority of other members, as well as the question of periodic review.

In the course of our debates, delegations and some regional or interest groups have put forward relevant suggestions to improve the Council's working methods, which are designed to ensure, if adopted, greater transparency, effectiveness and legitimacy for this central organ of the United Nations system.

As I emphasized earlier, efforts have been made in this direction and should be continued. However, for my delegation, the fundamental issue of enlargement cannot obscure the equally important issue of improving the Council's working methods. Regarding this question of the relationship between the enlargement of the Council and the improvement of its working methods, we would like to see an integrated and comprehensive method.

We welcome the efforts made by the African Group in relation to other regional or interest groups, including the Group of Four, with a view to creating synergy within the discussion on Security Council reform, and we encourage all actors to continue in this direction.

Security Council reform is a delicate process requiring Member States to make considerable efforts, to show imagination and make bold and innovative initiatives. It is along those lines that I would like to appeal to Member States to overcome without delay the impasse in which this difficult exercise of reforming the Security Council finds itself. Through a spirit of openness and flexibility which we must all demonstrate, we would then give the President of the General Assembly the means to complete the work of reform that we have undertaken together over the past two years.

I can assure her now of the complete readiness of my delegation to provide her with all the support necessary for this purpose, with a view to seeing a renewed Security Council which is more democratic, more transparent and more capable of responding to the numerous challenges of our time.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the convening of this meeting on Security Council reform. Above all, we welcome the invitation made by the President of the General Assembly to take a fresh look and to try to inject a bit of oxygen into a debate that has been going on for more than 10 years.

One of the reasons why, over those 10 years, we have not made progress is that we have been discussing the reform policy and not the reform itself. I believe that that is an important distinction that must be acknowledged. We have been discussing regional balances, the aspirations of a few Powers, a revision of the balance of power, equitability, accountability — phrases which have been dealt with extensively this morning and afternoon. Thus, we have discussed the policy of reform but not the reform itself.

In that sense, we have not had a genuine dialogue. Rather, we have had monologues, we have had speeches — my speech, by a conservative estimate, will be approximately the eight-hundredth on this topic. These monologues have shown something very important: that we cannot move forward on reform. We do not have genuine exchanges of views. I believe that the time has come to begin direct negotiations among all the interested parties on the various aspects of reform to see what problems the Security Council has and, on the basis of that, to try to seek a reform that would address those problems.

The guide, inevitably, has to be what constitutes the ideal system, the best system possible for collective security on which we should work. Here, we have no margin of error. The fundamental essence of the United Nations is that we do a good job in the area of peace and security. If we fail in this task, undoubtedly we are going to put our Organization in a serious predicament. That is something that we cannot accept. I do not think that any of the 192 States Members of the United Nations can accept that.

The question would therefore be how to move forward in this reform process. I believe that we have to put forward two basic questions. First of all, if the models that have been presented to us — A or B, or any other model that we have seen up to now during the past 12 years — have not made progress or have not created a broad consensus among Members, what then should be the perspective to guide this reform process?

It seems to us that the fundamental questions that need to be addressed in order to make progress are, first of all, what are the weaknesses of the Security Council that we observe and that we have to remedy? That is a question that we have to deal with urgently.

The second question, of course, is how to establish this collective security system in which we obtain, as provided for under Article 24 of the Charter, a more flexible and effective organ which would respond effectively to old and new challenges and threats. As we have said many times in this Hall, we have to update the Security Council after 61 years. What has changed are the challenges; what has not changed is the way we address those challenges on behalf of all Members.

In order to change the architecture of the Security Council, we first have to have a collective diagnosis of the type of threats that confront us and the concepts we are going to use to fight these threats. It would be very sad if we were to create a new building for the Security Council and afterwards, after having built it, realize that it is not relevant for the challenges and threats that we are facing today.

It is necessary to come up with the concept and then the architecture that we would like to build. My delegation believes that we have six challenges in order to move forward in Security Council reform. The first is how to balance a better representation in the Council without sacrificing its effectiveness. I believe that that issue is behind a great number of statements made this morning and afternoon. It is hard to achieve greater representation and more legitimacy in the decisions taken by the Council without losing effectiveness. I believe that that is the first, and perhaps the most important, challenge that we have had to deal with. Historically, as we have seen from the reform of 1963, there has been a ratio of four States Members of the United Nations to each member of the Security Council. I would simply mention that as a reference.

The second challenge we have before us to promote reform is to make sure that the function of the

Council would be the element that determines its size and working methods.

Our third challenge is to make sure that the Security Council's structure is flexible enough and capable of evolving over time. It is not impossible that if we manage to come up with a reform under any model today, in 20 years we may very well find ourselves confronted again with the same type of inquiry. We have to inject some sort of evolutionary gene into the collective security system so that this very important organ can automatically adapt to the world's changing challenges and needs.

The fourth important challenge where there seems to be growing consensus relates to the need for the Security Council to strengthen its system of accountability. That is a fundamental issue, and I believe that, especially as regards membership on the Council, there is a serious lack of accountability. But election through a periodic democratic process is a further incentive for States, whether they espouse a parliamentary system or any other form of democracy, to renew their mandate through the ballot box. There has to be such communication, through accountability, between the electorate and those who hold power.

The fifth challenge to which my delegation would like to refer relates to an issue that has already been mentioned briefly this morning: how important it is that the Council not dismiss out of hand the work that has to be done under Chapter VI. In other words, I do not believe that the reflexive manner in which the Council is increasingly invoking Chapter VII serves it well in its work. We must further explore the question of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Finally, given the exponential growth of peacekeeping missions, the Security Council must establish a clear link between the means at our disposal and the objectives that we are pursuing. The current situation is bordering on critical, since we do not have the means to enable us to deal with the various crises that the Council has taken on.

In conclusion, Mexico would like to reaffirm its commitment to working in this area. We cannot delay this any longer. Twelve years is more than enough time to become familiar with the position of every State Member of the United Nations. Now is the time to begin negotiations that can make it possible for us to make effective progress — and it must be effective — in reforming the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.