United Nations A/57/PV.29

General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 15 October 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan . . . . . (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Miss Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 11 and 40 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/57/2 and A/57/2/Corr.1)

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

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It seems that I am not lucky. As the first speaker on the list this morning, I will be talking to myself and to the handful of colleagues in the General Assembly Hall.

My delegation would like to extend its thanks to Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, President of the Security Council for this month, for his presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We also wish to extend our warm thanks to the staff of the Secretariat for the considerable efforts that they have made in preparing this report.

Today, we are discussing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly under paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the United Nations Charter. I would like to mention the great importance attached to the General Assembly's discussion of the report in order to hear the views of Member States on the performance of the Security Council and its follow-up of its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In that context, we would like to state that one of the significant changes to the report was a brief analytical introduction. Resolution 51/193, adopted by the General Assembly in its fifty-first session, aimed, inter alia, at making the report of the Council more analytical. Thus, this report complies with that resolution, as it contains an analytical introduction.

More than 10 months have passed since Syria joined the Security Council, following its election in the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority of Member States. We should like to express once again our most sincere thanks to the States that supported us. Syria brought to the Council many issues and areas of concern that attracted the interest of many representatives of Member States, including the issue of improving the mechanisms by which the Council deals with the various matters of discussion before it.

Today, we see changes in substance and form in the report of the Security Council, thanks to the cooperation of all members of the Council. As far as substance is concerned, the report now contains an introduction that includes a brief analysis of political actions undertaken by the Council — a change that Member States had requested for many years. With regard to form, the report's volume and its number of pages have been reduced. As a result, it is both more useful and more economical.

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.

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Here, we should like to express our special thanks to Ambassador Mahbubani and to the Mission of Singapore for their strenuous follow-up efforts during the past period, which produced the desired result. However, we believe that much work remains to be done by the Council to make the report an actual reflection of the actions that the Council has taken, regardless of the extent of their success.

During the period under consideration, the Security Council achieved remarkable progress in making its work more transparent. There was participation by non-Council members, which were able to express their views on the political issues being discussed and on finding solutions to them. The Council held final meetings in which members and non-members frankly evaluated its work. Under the presidency of Syria in June, the Council held a great number of meetings in which it discussed issues related to various regions — whether to the Middle East, Africa, Asia or Europe — or specific issues such as combating international terrorism or promoting the role of the Security Council or of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, at various levels. In addition, a final meeting was held to evaluate the Council's work in terms of the principle of transparency.

One of the first issues presented by Syria — to which the Council responded last January — was the conducting of a monthly briefing on the Middle East. One of these briefings was presided over by Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, and in others, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and other high-level United Nations officials discussed developments in the Middle East. It has become clear that such briefings represent an advanced step in the way in which the Council deals with one of the most tense regions in the world. They also place on the shoulders of Member States the requisite responsibility to put an end to Israeli practices and Israeli occupation, with a view to finding a comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East problem, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and on the Madrid terms of reference, as well as on the Arab initiative adopted at the Beirut Summit, held in March.

During the period under consideration, the Council undertook intensive efforts to address the sensitive problems in Africa with a view to settling the disputes and wars on the continent. In that connection, we should like to refer to a number of open Council meetings that included the participation of concerned States — in particular African States — and of Member States in general to restore peace and security to the African continent, which urgently needs the concerted efforts of the international community and its unlimited support to achieve development and to eradicate the root causes of conflict. Syria has left no stone unturned in participating in Council deliberations and in adopting resolutions that reflect the views of concerned States, with a view to finding consensus on positions that would end conflicts and serve lasting peace.

We should like to state that the Council's dispatch of missions to areas of tension and conflict was very important, because it enabled us to gain firsthand knowledge of the situation on the ground. For example, one mission was sent to Eritrea and Ethiopia, another visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a workshop was held on the Mano River Union. A mission will soon visit Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Belgrade.

Also during the past period, the Security Council discussed many substantive matters, including in the areas of peacekeeping operations, the protection of women and children in armed conflict and terrorism. The Council was successful in addressing many of those issues. It made tangible progress, and we are trying our best to improve the Council's work in that direction. Yet we should like to state that, in the period under consideration and the preceding period, the Council could not follow up on the implementation of the resolutions it had adopted. That encouraged certain parties — especially in the conflict areas in Africa and in the Middle East — not to respond to Council resolutions. They have ignored those resolutions. As conflicts become more protracted, the matter becomes more sensitive, especially when they relate to resolutions adopted by the Security Council, under the provisions of the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. In such situations, the Council has been unable to maintain international peace and security.

We believe that lack of follow-up on the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions will have a negative effect on the Council's role and on the international community's view of the Council. All of us know, for instance, that Israel has rejected, ignored and refused to implement the Council's resolutions — resolutions that should have been

implemented with the Council's insistence. If the resolutions had been implemented during the past few decades, peace and security would have prevailed in the Middle East.

The Council has adopted 29 resolutions regarding Israel, none of which have been implemented. Some members insist on the implementation of certain resolutions, but not of others. We would like to state that all Security Council resolutions and positions should be implemented on an equal footing, with no double standards. We call for complete respect for the Charter's articles, underscoring the obligatory need for implementation of all Security Council resolutions by all States, without exception.

Here we would like to point out the important role played by the Council's 10 elected States and the need to foster its work and input. This is particularly relevant when we take into account the fact that the non-permanent member States represent many views relating to the updating of the Council's mechanisms, thus making its modus operandi more responsive and more transparent in dealing with the political and security challenges affecting today's world.

In the middle of this week, beginning tomorrow, the Security Council will discuss the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. This problem has taken on increasing international dimensions and interest. We have listened to a number of statements indicating that, in spite of the sensitive nature of this matter, the Council has thus far not discussed the question in open meetings, as the international community has expected.

Elected States have so far are not been given a chance to voice their views or express their positions on draft resolutions being circulated in the mass media some days ago. Such media-circulated draft resolutions were the main reference to those 10 elected States of the Council. I would like to emphasize the need to deal with this question within the framework of international law and to resolve the problem peacefully, in particular since Iraq has, on more than one occasion and in more than one official document, stated its readiness to implement the relevant resolutions to allow United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) inspectors and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to return to Iraq in order to carry out their mission without conditions or restrictions.

We believe that beating the drums of war and the issuance of threats does not in any way conform to the United Nations Charter. Nor does it serve the aspirations of the international community, which desires justice and peace.

Once again, we call upon Iraq to implement all Security Council resolutions relating to the Iraqi question.

We have already expressed in the Open-ended Working Group our observations on the issue of equitable representation in the Council and an increase in its membership. During the Group's meeting, we expressed our views in numerous statements, and our delegation participated actively in the Group. Our delegation believes that this Group still constitutes a viable rostrum for deliberations in order to reach consensus on those two sensitive issues.

Although the Working Group achieved somewhat commendable progress in improving the working methods of the Council, it has, regrettably, so far been unable to achieve any noticeable progress in other fields, given the difficulties within the Council. The Syrian delegation, which participated actively in all the previous meetings, will exert all efforts to achieve the desired progress along the line of the positions adopted by the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement countries. And we will continue our work to build on the positive steps taken, and on the views and drafts presented to the Working Group, which has discussed these ideas quite seriously with the aim of achieving more democratization in the Council whether in the area of expanding its membership or in achieving transparency in its working methods.

All proposals and views put forward by delegations on this important topic will be respected and appreciated by our delegation. As a non-permanent Council member, we will do our best to build on the achievements made in the past period. We will demonstrate full cooperation with the other Council members, so as to enable the Council to shoulder its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The international community has been working for 57 years

to strengthen the United Nations and to bring it into line with today's realities. In that context, reform of the Organization is a programme of vital importance, and Security Council reform represents one of the main aspects of its modernization.

Our world has changed a lot, particularly over the past 10 years. That is why is would be naive to believe that the Council — which was created in 1945 as a reflection of the economic, political and demographic interests of the victorious States of the Second World War — I repeat, it would be naive for us to believe that with its present structure and practices, the Council would be in keeping with present circumstances.

The new threats to international peace and security, such as terrorism and the threat to occupy States and change regimes, have ushered us into a new age that requires that decision-making be a collective responsibility rather than serve the interest of a single great Power. The Council has a real need for true leadership based on objectivity, team spirit and unity of purpose, to contribute to establishing a world where peace, understanding, equality and respect will prevail.

The report under consideration, much as it reflects objective realities, also points out real dangers. The Council did not respond to the voices of the Member States calling for its reform and for the modernization of its work so that it can be more representative, legitimate, democratic and effective and can accommodate greater participation in its work. It is clear that what is lacking does not concern submitting proposals, because that is not an impossible matter. What is important is the political will necessary to achieve the modernization I have referred to.

For the past 12 years, the Security Council has devoted much of its time to discussing the situation in my country, Iraq, which is not in keeping with the Charter or with anything relevant to international peace and security. Rather, it is in keeping with the wish and interests of two individual States that practise hegemony, I regret to say, without any consideration for the humanitarian and legal standards enshrined in the Charter or in established rules of international legitimacy.

Despite the fact that the resolutions adopted by the Security Council against my country have been unjust, denying the rights of Iraq and of the Iraqi people, as established in the Charter, Iraq has, nonetheless, implemented all those resolutions. Yet the Security Council remains firm in its position. It continues to discuss the Iraqi case behind closed doors, not only at closed meetings or informal discussions at the United Nations, but also in the capitals of the permanent members of the Council, completely sidelining Iraq and the non-permanent members of the Council from any discussion involving Iraq.

The Council has become a special tribunal on Iraq, acting secretly as judge and witness at the same time. And it has not stopped there. It has also disregarded everything that Iraq has been subjected to in terms of violations of its sovereignty, independence and security as a founding Member of this international Organization, even though the Council has affirmed its respect for all its relevant resolutions adopted since 1990.

Iraq has met all its commitments pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly those related to disarmament. Yet, the American Administration has carried out an aggressive campaign against Iraq, accusing Iraq, in a series of lies bandied about by highly placed authorities of the American Administration, of possessing and developing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and threatening international peace and security, and has issued statements by a number of authorities, including President Bush, threatening to occupy Iraq on the pretext that it is a threat to the United States and to international peace and security.

In the light of my Government's sincere wish to fully implement Security Council resolutions, and in response to the calls of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Arab nations and friends, including the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Government of Iraq has agreed to allow the unconditional return of the inspectors — a step which was widely welcomed by the Secretary-General, the members of the Security Council and the international community.

When the United States realized that that would deny it the opportunity to invade and occupy Iraq, it prevented the inspectors from returning to Iraq and began to discuss a draft resolution preparing the grounds for another war, a resolution which would be difficult to implement and thus pave the way for aggression against Iraq.

A few days ago, the American Senate and the House of Representatives adopted a resolution

authorizing President Bush to use armed force against Iraq, an independent State and a Member State of the United Nations, without referring to the United Nations. Immediately after that, a military build-up began inside and outside the region. The intentions of the American Administration became even more evident when it began to discuss, explicitly and blatantly, military aggression and appointing an American military governor in Iraq.

Is that not a blatant violation of the Charter and the system of international relations that has been forged over the past 50 years? Should we not consider such an American measure a threat to and a blatant violation of international peace and security by a permanent State member of the Security Council — the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security? Does that not undermine the very basis of international relations, in keeping with the Charter? Does it not constitute a monopoly of international legitimacy? I leave it to the Assembly to answer those questions.

The very serious nature of the measures that the American Administration is putting in place in order to invade Iraq makes it necessary for the Security Council to adopt counter-measures to guarantee respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq. If the Council disregards such threats, many other States will become the target of occupation aimed at overturning their regimes. The legality of the measures undertaken by the Security Council emanates from the mandate given to the Council by the Member States, which expect the Council to act on their behalf in maintaining international peace and security, as is made clear in paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the Charter.

The United States of America and the United Kingdom seem to be trying — through their relations with Iraq — to establish a precedent for terrorizing other States by adopting measures that violate the Charter. My country places great hope in the collective wisdom of the members of the Security Council and the international community in dealing with this very serious matter. We hope that they will do so with a sense of responsibility and courage and prevent the United States and the United Kingdom from undertaking further acts of aggression against Iraq, threatening its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The tragic development of relations between Iraq and the Security Council over the past 12 years has been determined by two permanent members of the Council — perhaps even by one. This has greatly weakened the credibility of the Council and its capacity to maintain international peace and security and to prevent conflict.

The Council is acting in accordance with the wishes of parties that exercise hegemonic control over its decision-making. The Council is not acting on behalf of the Member States. We blame the Council for its selectivity in dealing with issues. Such selectivity is evident not only in the Council's relationship with Iraq but also in the blatant example of the Council's approach to the Palestinian question. In that respect the Council has adopted a nonchalant position, given the massacres perpetrated daily by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people and the disregard shown for their inalienable rights, especially their right to self-determination.

The Security Council has paid no attention to the tragic situation of the Iraqi people resulting from the continued unjust economic embargo that has led to the death of more than 1.7 million Iraqi citizens — I call the attention of the international community to that figure — most of them from vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly. They have died for no other reason than lack of medicine and food.

The United States of America claimed that it wanted to improve the situation of the Iraqi people, and called for the adoption of a resolution in that respect. Resolution 1409 (2002), which was recently adopted, was aimed — so the United States and Britain claimed — at alleviating the suffering of the civilian population of Iraq. Yet the resolution provided for measures that place further obstacles in the way of implementing contracts for the purchase of medicines and food. The new mechanisms require the contracts for obtaining foodstuffs, including rice and flour, and pharmaceuticals, including chronic and heart-disease medicine, to be submitted to disarmament experts from the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. I do not know what expertise such individuals have in flour, rice and medicine such that they can determine whether we should be able to buy them or not. All the civilian needs of the Iraqi people, such as machinery and equipment for social and economic development, are also submitted to those experts.

The Security Council has neglected to address many of the matters submitted by my Government to the Council that fall within its mandate and its resolutions. The Council has not considered such issues, even though they go to the very heart of its responsibilities under the Charter. The no-fly zones are not legal; they have been imposed by the United States and the United Kingdom without having been provided for in any Security Council resolution. Indeed, they contravene the ceasefire conditions of the notorious resolution 687 (1991), as do the continuous raids by American and British aircraft in those and other zones and the daily violation of Iraqi airspace. Raids, destruction, bombings and killings are taking place on a daily basis before the very eyes of the Security Council, and no one lifts a finger.

Such neglect is not limited to the Security Council, but also extends to the bodies that the Council has established. Even the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, which is operating in the demilitarized zone between the two countries and whose mandate is to record and report any violations, has not informed the Security Council of the violations of that zone committed by American and British planes on a daily basis, although it has admitted that that such violations are taking place. It acknowledges that there are such planes, but says that it does not know and cannot determine their identity. Such planes fly in that zone and even in Iraqi airspace around the clock.

Those actions do, indeed, constitute a violation of Security Council resolutions and blatant aggression against a State Member of the United Nations. They represent a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq as well as of the integrity of a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

As for the sanctions, the topic of the age, even though we are fully convinced that they are neither legal nor legitimate, my country regrets the fact that the Security Council does not at least periodically assess the nefarious consequences of these inhuman measures on the civilian population.

No time frame has been established for the sanctions, and Article 50 of the Charter has not been made operative, and therefore some States are adopting unilateral measures to punish States that may not agree with their stance, such as the Sudan, Libya, Iran and others.

The notorious Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1991) continues to work very secretly, not allowing any participation by Iraq in its work, either directly or indirectly, even though the Committee deals only with the basic needs and livelihood of the Iraqi people — food and medicine. The Committee takes its decisions on the basis of the political interests of some States; everyone knows this.

Where is the justice, the transparency and the credibility in the Committee’s work? We are still waiting for approval of the lists prepared by the Office of the Iraq Programme, in consultation with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which are referred to as the “blue lists”. They used to be called the “green lists”. We are now waiting for the “red lists”. They have been greatly delayed because of the objections of the American and British representatives.

In addition to what those two representatives have done in dealing with the memorandum of understanding on oil for food, they have also delayed contracts and priced Iraqi oil retroactively, which has led to a reduction in export rates and consequently to a decline in programme revenues, with more than 1,240 contracts left unimplemented.

The Security Council has not devoted sufficient attention to peace and security, which form the very core of its mandate, in keeping with the Charter and with international law. That is why we say sincerely and explicitly that the Council has failed dismally.

One single member of the Council has made the Palestinian question impossible to resolve, even from the humanitarian point of view. The Palestinian people are struggling to free their land and to recover their rights. If the Council cannot offer them any humanitarian protection, how can the international community have faith that the Security Council will find a political solution to the Palestinian problem in accordance with the Charter and international law?

Iraq’s position concerning the reform of the Security Council can be summed up as follows. First, the veto right should be limited and then phased out, because it is not in keeping with the principle of equality among States as embodied in the Charter.

Second, the non-permanent members of the Council have been totally marginalized, and their

presence is often but a formality. They must be allowed to play an effective role, because they represent most of the peoples and the regions of the world, and they must participate in all the negotiations and deliberations of the Council as well as in decision-making.

Third, rules and measures should be adopted that would guarantee transparency and justice as well as respect for the rights of States.

Fourth, the Council's membership should be expanded so as to ensure a democratic representation of the international community.

Fifth, the Council, as an executive political organ, should not take decisions of a legislative nature. This is the mandate of the General Assembly.

Sixth, the International Court of Justice should be the one to interpret the Articles of the Charter, and its mandate should also include monitoring and interpreting the Council's resolutions.

Seventh, the collective international responsibility of the Council as one of the institutions of the United Nations should be affirmed; and the Council should not be used to implement special policies that serve the interests of a single State.

Eighth, States that are not members of the Council should be informed of Council debates on resolutions that pertain to peace and security, and the Council's deliberations be held in the open, without exception, in order to ensure transparency.

Ninth, members of the Council should not vote on any conflict to which they are a party.

Tenth, there should be resort to Chapter VI of the Charter in the process of conflict resolution as well as taking up preventive diplomacy as much as possible and employing all possible peaceful means to resolve conflicts between States.

Finally, I should like to congratulate the representatives of Pakistan, Germany, Spain, Chile and Angola on their countries' election as non-permanent members of the Council as of 1 January 2003. We wish them every success in carrying out their important responsibilities.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The General Assembly is addressing two very important items on its agenda: "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", and "Report of the Security Council".

The report on these two items clearly reflects the extensive and commendable work that has been done 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.

In this context, I should like to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Han Seung-soo, the outgoing President of the General Assembly during the fifty-sixth session and Chairman of the Working Group, and to the Vice-Chairmen, who guided the high-level discussions within the Group.

The Group's deliberations have shown that there is an urgent need to restructure the Council and to ensure greater transparency in its procedures and working methods. The studies and working documents submitted by various States, organizations and regional groups, as well as by the President's Office, all agree that there is a need to reform the Council to make it more interactive and more effective in maintaining international peace and security and to enable it better to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Nonetheless, despite the agreement in principle among Members on the required reform following that debate, the Working Group was unable to reach consensus on the increase in membership or on the Council's working methods. I regret to note that the debate has become repetitious over the past few years. We are constantly reiterating the same issues, as if we were caught up in a vicious cycle. We are therefore required to set a deadline for agreement on the necessary reform of that important organ.

Despite all this, the Group has achieved progress on the Security Council's working methods. There is now almost unanimous agreement on the measures and proposals to be adopted to amend the Council's rules of procedure. On its own initiative, the Council has implemented changes in its methods and procedures and we note that improvement in the form of the report can be used as a basis for further reform in the future.

In this context, I would draw attention to the section on page 5 of the report concerning developments in Iraq's implementation of the Council's resolutions. This section appears under the heading

"Iraq", whereas the agenda item is entitled "The situation between Iraq and Kuwait".

Kuwait has already had an opportunity to express its views on the Council expansion, both on its own behalf and as a member of the groups to which it belongs. Today's debate offers us yet another chance to reaffirm our position, as follows.

First, Kuwait supports an increase in the Council membership so long as the new number is not so unwieldy as to diminish the Council's effectiveness and proficiency in discussions on threats to international peace and security.

Secondly, the number of members should be in accordance with the two principles of equal sovereignty among Member States and equitable geographical representation.

Thirdly, if an increase in the number of permanent seats should be agreed, it should be limited and filled by Member States that, in their relations with the United Nations, have demonstrated a capacity to assume essential responsibilities and to ensure that the principles and purposes of the Charter are followed in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. These new members must be elected by the General Assembly in accordance with procedures to be agreed on.

Fourthly, with respect to the reform of the Security Council's working methods and its relations with other United Nations bodies, the General Assembly in particular, we support all proposals aimed at conferring greater transparency and clarity on the Council's work and at facilitating communications with United Nations Members. In this context, we stress the need to implement reform of the Security Council's decision-making practices and the proposals agreed by the Working Group, without awaiting consensus on other matters, such as the increase in membership and composition.

Fifthly, Kuwait agrees with the proposals on the election of non-permanent members, in accordance with Article 23 of the Charter, because they would allow small States, of which we are one, to become members and to contribute to the Council's work.

Sixthly, with respect to the veto and the complexity and sensitive nature of this matter, we note that the Group's discussion reflects a near consensus on the need to establish criteria vis-à-vis the use of the veto. We hope that the proposals made on this issue will allow us to achieve a consensus supported by all Members.

In conclusion, we should like to see the Group's discussions reach a consensus that will reinforce the Security Council's effectiveness and performance in the maintenance of international peace and security and in facing the challenges of the new millennium.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): Allow me to express my Government's deepest condolences to the Government of Indonesia and to the families of the demised over the tragic loss of innocent lives in last Saturday's barbaric act of violence on the island of Bali. We are still deeply shocked by this barbaric attack, which deserves our strongest condemnation.

I would like to begin by thanking the Security Council, the Secretariat and especially Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore and his delegation for their tireless efforts in the preparation of a comprehensive report on the work of the Security Council last year.

We have all noticed that this year's report is more concise and analytical than previous reports. It is greatly reduced and more focused, and makes it much easier to read about and understand the work of the Council in the period covered. We especially welcome the analytical approach taken in the introduction.

It has indeed been a significant and extraordinary year for the Security Council, as its workload has been much greater than ever before, not just in the number of meetings, but also from the substantive point of view. We welcome the fact that more and more meetings of the Security Council are open, thus giving all the States Members of the United Nations the possibility to follow closely and to take part in the discussion of important issues under consideration by the Council. We welcome the transparent approach of the report in presenting the resolutions, statements and other documents of the Council. However, we wish to stress our conviction that much more should be done in the field of implementation of the resolutions. The document itself is indeed of no great importance if they are not implemented. It is the Charter of the United Nations that provides for the clear obligation of States to carry out the Council's decisions.

Let me touch upon a couple of issues that my country believes have been of the most significant importance. First, the quick and decisive action of the

Security Council following the events of 11 September 2001 has shown us clearly that the Council is capable of a making a quick and appropriate response. The establishment of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and its work are the right, timely and broad response of not just the Council, but, I dare say, the international community as a whole to the threat of international terrorism. In this connection, we would also like to recognize the significance of the work of the Council regarding the question of Afghanistan, where our continued focus and involvement are needed, in particular in stabilizing the peace and in a post-conflict rehabilitation of the whole of Afghan society.

The area that is of particular interest to my country is South-East Europe. Much progress has been achieved in recent years and we are glad to note that less and less of the work of the Security Council is being devoted to the problems in that area. This is good for the region and good for the United Nations as a whole. It is beyond any doubt that tangible results have been achieved in South-East Europe, also due to United Nations involvement. The results achieved are strengthening the perspective and responsibility of the countries of the region, which makes overall stabilization efforts more sustainable.

This is a positive development in the region and is rightly reflected in a reduced United Nations presence. International presence, however, is still needed in South-Eastern Europe. This applies to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the European Union is taking over from 1 January 2003, and in Kosovo, where continued United Nations presence is still needed. However, we are glad to note that the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka is about to be concluded, which reflects a greater responsibility on the part of the parties concerned to reach an agreement on Prevlaka issues.

We welcome the fact that in our discussions on the report of the Security Council due attention has been given to the Council's working methods and the question of transparency. Among the most important achievements are the meetings of the Council with the troop-contributing countries, which enable them to participate in the Council's work. We are also glad to note that the Council has improved its transparency by holding more open sessions. We commend the briefings held by the President of the Council for non-member States, and the creation of a web site that is accessible to all Members. We therefore support a unified policy of transparency for the benefit of the entire membership of the United Nations. We also welcome the more frequent visits by members of the Council to areas under consideration and believe that such missions could or should be used as a tool of preventive diplomacy and thus assist us in turning from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

We also would like to stress the importance of the Council taking up matters that may, at first glance, not seem to be part of its domain, such as the issue of small arms, the protection of civilians and especially children in armed conflicts, the question of women. In these matters it has to cooperate closely with other bodies of the United Nations. However, this must not be done to the detriment of the responsibility and involvement of other organs of the United Nations.

Let me now briefly touch upon the question of the reform of the Security Council. I do not want to sound pessimistic, but I must be realistic. Since the establishment of the United Nations and its main bodies, the world has changed substantially and dramatically. All of the world's structures, especially in the political, social and economic areas, are very different from those that existed before. If the Council wants to achieve its primary goal, it must be representative, reflecting the membership of the Organization and the world community. At present, that is not the case. I believe that we all agree on the need to adjust our Organization, particularly the Security Council, so as to reflect the realities of a globalized international community. The Security Council does not reflect the reality of today's world. Consequently, it should come as no surprise when problems of the authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council are raised. We need to acknowledge and face the challenge of the new realities, and this should include our common reflection on the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

There were great expectations for the Open-ended Working Group when it was first established. However, after nine years of deliberations, it is time to reach a concrete conclusion and try to forge a basic consensus in order to pave the way forward. We have to admit that progress has been made in the area of improved working methods and the transparency of the Council, and much of this has been realized in practice. However, one of the basic questions remains. How will this progress and the proposed improvements be

reflected in the rules of procedure of the Security Council, which are still provisional? I do not intend to repeat Slovenia's position with regard to the question of the reforms, for it is well known and has been expressed during the sessions of the Working Group. We would, in this regard, like to encourage you, Madam, to take a very active approach in the Open-ended Working Group.

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate the delegations of Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain for their recent election as the new non-permanent members of the Security Council.

Ms. Fogh (Sweden): Let me start by joining other speakers in this debate in expressing our condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia. It was a hideous act of terrorism that was committed in Bali this past weekend. Among the many dead and injured were Swedish nationals and our thoughts are with the many injured and affected family members.

The focus is now on the Security Council. We are again being reminded of the enormous responsibility of the Council to uphold peace and security. To safeguard this important role, a reform is needed to further strengthen the Council.

A modern United Nations requires a Security Council that mirrors the realities of today's international relations. The world is changing and so is the United Nations with its growing membership. This must be reflected in the composition of the Council. All of the 191 Member States must perceive it as being truly representative. The credibility and legitimacy of the Council are at stake. Therefore, we need to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform.

As Members are aware, Sweden has taken an active role in the efforts to achieve a far-reaching reform of the Security Council. We remain committed to this aim and regard it as one of the most important tasks facing the United Nations membership as it works to implement the recommendations in the Millennium Declaration. Indeed, it is a complex issue, but a crucial one for the continued relevance of the Council if it is to achieve concrete results. In order to emphasize the legitimacy of the Security Council, the need for reform is urgent. This would further strengthen the Organization in its most vital role as the guarantor for protecting international peace and security. Therefore, all Member States must now act in a responsible manner and show flexibility.

All efforts should be made to strengthen the Council's ability to work effectively, negotiate in good faith and reach decisions. Necessary actions must not be hindered or blocked by a veto or threat thereof.

As stated on earlier occasions, Sweden favours an enlargement of the Council to make room for an increased representation of Member States, not least the developing countries. We also believe that it is of utmost importance that a reform is met by the broadest possible support — ideally by consensus. To achieve this, Sweden would support a reform process in stages. A first step would be an enlargement limited to non-permanent members. At a later stage, Sweden would not exclude an increase in permanent members.

The reform issue has been discussed for many years, with little success. However, Sweden would like yet again to state its commitment to moving the reform process forward. We will continue to work constructively in the Open-ended Working Group with the primary aim of facilitating an early decision on enlargement. Progress on this important issue is long overdue. We hope that all Member States will join the efforts to create a modern United Nations.

May I take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). Sweden welcomes the views presented in the section entitled "Stalled process of Security Council reform". Sweden fully agrees with the linkage between the Council's credibility and international peace and security. Consequently, it is in everyone's interest to make this important reform a priority.

At this point let me also welcome the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/57/2 and Corr.1). I, like others in this debate, would like to commend the members of the Security Council responsible for the initiative of the new and more user-friendly format of the report, with the analytical summary and the substantially decreased number of pages. It is a good example of modernizing United Nations documents.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): This meeting of the General Assembly has been convened in the sombre context of the heinous act of terrorism that took place

in Bali last weekend. The Government of Indonesia has strongly condemned the bombing, which claimed scores of victims, both Indonesians and foreign nationals. We wish to reiterate the condolences and deep sympathy of the Government of Indonesia to the families of the bereaved. The authorities are doing their utmost to investigate that brutal and inhuman act of violence and to bring its perpetrators to justice. We reaffirm Indonesia's commitment to work with the rest of the international community to overcome terrorism, which poses a threat to global security. My delegation therefore gratefully acknowledges the sentiments of sympathy that various delegations have expressed to our Government and our people during this debate.

It is with appreciation that my delegation has welcomed the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/57/2 and Corr.1). We also welcome last session's report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/56/47).

Following the decision of the Council in May 2002, my delegation has noted the changes in the format of the report of the Security Council, which were intended to provide the General Assembly with a more timely and informative document. We agree that the report before us, which covers the period from 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, is more concise and informative.

We are gratified that in its quest for increased transparency, the Security Council continued to review its working methods during that period. In that connection, we applaud the increased openness that the wrap-up sessions have engendered, particularly with the participation of non-Council members in February, May and June. We hope that this trend will continue.

Unfortunately, while the current report of the Council opens with an analytical segment, we had hoped for a more substantive, rather than a historical, recounting of the events as they happened in the Council during the year. We had expected the kind of political analysis that would not only tell us what we do not already know but also go below the surface to point out trends, rationales and justifications in the work of the Council. The eight pages that are dedicated to the analytical summary in the current report have not met that expectation, and we hope that this will be improved in the future.

Needless to say, the way in which the Council reports is no less important than its reform and reconstitution. On this issue, I wish to point out that in the segment of the analytical summary concerning the working methods of the Council, reference is made to the increase in the number of meetings that were held in public during the year, as well as to the briefings to non-members by Presidents of the Council. My delegation welcomes that trend and commends members of the Council for making it possible. We look forward to the momentum being sustained. Its continuance is a step forward and represents progress towards greater openness in the Council's deliberations, which has been one of the concerns of the majority of Member States. It is, however, important that efforts be made to ensure that the views expressed by non-members be considered in the drafting of resolutions and of presidential statements.

One question may be asked at this point: why do non-members join in open meetings of the Council? If one may venture an answer, it is not because they want to have their statements entered in the record books. When non-members go there to offer their views on issues of peace and security, it is often because they want those views taken into consideration by Council members, who are in a position to convert them into policy.

However, that may not be the practice of the meetings of the Security Council, particularly considering that in the structure of its work, an open meeting invariably comes after informal consultations — usually a series of informal consultations — at which a draft resolution or a presidential statement may have been prepared for adoption. Hence, the views of non-members of the Security Council are not properly reflected in Council decisions.

We deem it advisable that non-members of the Security Council be given the opportunity to speak prior to the informal consultations on a particular subject to allow them to express their views, followed by the members of the Council, who will speak in the concluding discussion, since they will have engaged in informal consultations on the issue. That kind of arrangement is realistic in another regard: the statements of Council members would then logically

and immediately be followed by the adoption of the resolution or presidential statement.

The further strengthening of the Council's dynamic interaction with the main organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly, has emerged as one of the important questions in the context of the overall reform of the Organization. The Council's reporting on its work to the Assembly, despite its importance, does not suffice; rather, more substantive relations have become imperative. In that context, we recall several items that were deliberated on and decided by the Security Council during the period of this report, including issues such as HIV/AIDS. The work of the Council in dealing with many of those problems should be structured in such a way as to maximize the work and the role of the Assembly on the issues, as mandated by the Charter.

I would now like to turn to the broader subject of Security Council reform. Seven years after the General Assembly first established the Open-ended Working Group on this issue, the Millennium Declaration, in 2000, called on us to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. That instruction was arrived at in recognition of the reality that, despite prolonged deliberations in the Working Group, we have moved no closer to an agreement on any of the substantive issues. Those unresolved questions will have to be addressed in order to enhance the Council's credibility and moral authority. As the Secretary-General has rightly remarked in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), the reform of the United Nations would be incomplete without reform of the Security Council.

Last June, the Working Group concluded its work for the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, having decided to recommend consideration of the agenda item at this session and that to recommend the Working Group should continue with its work.

As I have indicated, Indonesia acknowledges the provisional agreement reached on a number of issues concerning the working methods of the Council. We are, however, disappointed at the failure to narrow the substantial differences on other issues.

In the view of Indonesia, the time has come for us to make progress. We hope that the objective — which is to reform the Council comprehensively so as to make it into an organ that is transparent, democratic, representative and effective in the maintenance of international peace and security — will continue to guide our work. If we put that objective before narrower national or group interests, it will increase the possibility that we will reach speedier agreement on the substantive questions.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to express its sincere congratulations to Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council for 2003 and 2004. We are convinced that they will make concrete contributions to the work of the Council.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): First of all, I should like to express the deep sympathy and condolences of the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the Government and the people of Indonesia and to the Governments and the peoples of other countries that lost citizens in the recent bomb blast in Bali. We condemn that terrorist attack in the strongest terms, and we hope that the perpetrators will be brought to trial.

It has been nearly 10 years since the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform was created, and, as another year passes without a solution, we must say that many of us are getting a bit frustrated, impatient and weary. It could even be argued that we have reached an impasse — a point at which we are questioning whether a further exercise devoted to tackling this very difficult and convoluted issue is warranted. However, in the light of old and new threats to international peace and security, the significant role of the Security Council and the need to reform the Council so that it reflects today's global realities have never been more relevant. Hence, we must do everything we can to find an acceptable solution to the crucial question of reform.

The Working Group was created to examine key questions related to the reorganization of this important organ of the United Nations. The issues concerning the Security Council's working methods, its decision-making processes and the expansion of its membership are those to which most Member States have paid the greatest attention. Making the Council more effective by making it more representative, more transparent and more democratic is, and always has been, the primary aim of this entire exercise.

As is well known, the position of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the question of

expanding the membership of the Council is similar to that of the majority of Member States. We favour increasing both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership. Furthermore, in line with the positions and the repeated appeals of other Non-Aligned Movement countries, the Lao People's Democratic Republic stresses that, in order to be effective, any Council reform should also include measures to make the Council more transparent in its working methods, especially in its decision-making process. We believe that such transparency would not only boost the confidence of Member States but would also allow all of us to better understand the merits of the Council's decisions and to fully support them.

Finally, in this new age, most of us appear to be in agreement that the veto power of selected members of the Security Council is anachronistic, anti-democratic and discriminatory; yet we continue to witness the existence of that power today. Thus, in our effort to reform and to reorganize the Council, we must make the curtailment and eventual abolition of the right of veto a priority. Fully cognizant of the sensitivity and complexity of this issue, however, we should like to say that, in the spirit of compromise, a solution that is acceptable to all should be found.

Numerous changes have occurred since the inception of the United Nations in 1945. It is regrettable that the Security Council has not adapted to those changes fast enough. Many wars and conflicts are raging across our planet, and we cannot afford to hope that a Council characterized as unrepresentative and not transparent will be effective in maintaining international peace and security. Therefore, we should patiently pursue our efforts to reform the Council, the body charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, in order to make it more credible and more legitimate.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the GUUAM participating States, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and my country, Ukraine.

At the outset, I should like to join my colleagues in conveying our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the malicious and barbaric terrorist act carried out in Bali on 12 October 2002, and to the people and Government of the Republic of Indonesia for the tragic losses that it caused. This shocking event has, once again, underlined the need for consolidation in the efforts of the entire international community in its fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Let me express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, of Cameroon, for presenting the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. I trust the Assembly will agree that the annual report and its analytical innovations, together with the document prepared by the Secretariat on procedural developments in the Council in the year 2001 (S/2002/603), answered a number of important questions and raised new ones worth thinking about. Indeed, despite the routine practice of slinging arrows at the Council, we acknowledge the appearance of positive and encouraging tendencies in strengthening the Council's international role and improving its working methods.

The statistics show a significant increase in the intensity of the Council's activities last year. The body has been gradually expanding and diversifying its agenda, being deeply involved in a wide range of issues, from the fight against terrorism, to conflict prevention and peace-building, to the protection of civilians and United Nations personnel in conflicts, and so forth.

The Council tried to keep on the consensus track. Despite disappointments and setbacks, the unity approach prevailed, testifying to the willingness of the Council member States to respond adequately to global security demands.

The Council effectively continued applying creative innovations — so to say — in its work, building on the trend towards greater transparency and better working methods. Although there have been only six meetings of the Working Group on procedures and working methods, the final outcome deserves our support and encouragement.

Here we cannot but mention an increase in the total of open meetings, more active dialogue with other United Nations bodies and Member States, and a wider use of the latest information technologies that have helped to speed up the delivery of information to various audiences in the United Nations. This is especially important in view of the close link between accountability and transparency of the Council. United Nations Member States have had more opportunities to participate in the deliberations of the Council and have had a greater chance to influence some of its decisions.

Visible results have been achieved in improving the consultation mechanisms between the troop-contributing countries, the Council and the Secretariat. It is our deep conviction that this triangular cooperation, based on partnership and respect, is an indispensable element for conducting peacekeeping operations in the most effective manner.

It is worth mentioning that much of what has been achieved by the Council can be attributed to the perseverance and innovative thinking of non-permanent members, who, like fresh blood, enter the body with new ideas, new thoughts, new energy and the desire to contribute significantly to the Council's work.

Thus, our key message is clear: the GUUAM participating States (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova) support the ideology and practice of change, as demonstrated by the Council, and we believe that its improved performance in the international arena will further stimulate the overall reform of the world Organization, inspired and promoted by Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The period under review was marked by a wide range of dramatic events. To name just a few, the 11 September terrorist attacks against the United States, the challenge of bringing stability to Afghanistan, the security problems in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the lack of progress in the settlement of conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, the increasing and persistent violence in the Middle East, instability in Africa and the situation in Timor-Leste in its move to independence. And, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the Security Council appeared to be much more consolidated and effective in dealing with these important issues.

Among its major achievements, I would like first of all to mention the counter-terrorism efforts of the Council. The response to the 11 September attacks is, in our view, an example of how strong and efficient the Council's action can be if the body is united and resolute. The GUUAM participating States are confident that the Security Council should further play a central role in our common struggle against terrorism. In this context, the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee cannot be overestimated.

During the reporting period, real progress was made by the Security Council in bringing peace to Afghanistan, in ensuring a smooth transition of Timor-Leste to independence, in strengthening stability in the Balkans and in introducing new approaches to African conflicts.

With regard to Afghanistan, we consider it highly important that the Council continues to closely follow developments on the ground. The current situation in the country requires a new, comprehensive strategy of practical support, aimed at improving the security conditions and facilitating the reconstruction processes.

With regard to the Balkans, we wish to endorse the Council's approach in encouraging more active involvement of the European actors in the stabilization processes in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the fragile security situation in the region, and a wide range of unsettled problems, demand the active involvement and close attention of the United Nations and, specifically, the Security Council.

We note with satisfaction that the Council succeeded in making a major shift in its overall policy towards Africa. The establishment of the ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa is a landmark step, and we count on the productive work of the group, in close cooperation with other United Nations bodies and regional and subregional organizations.

We welcome positive developments in Africa, including elections in Sierra Leone, the delimitation decision by the Boundary Commission on Ethiopia and Eritrea, the signing of an agreement between UNITA and the Government of Angola and agreements between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and Uganda.

At the same time, against this optimistic background, we would like to express concern over some other issues. In particular, GUUAM is most disappointed with the lack of progress in the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia. In December of last year, some hope emerged after the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia, and later the Security Council, endorsed the document on the basic principles for the distribution of competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. However, for almost a year, the Abkhaz side has continued to brazenly refuse to accept the paper, despite the fact that the Council twice urged it to do so in its resolutions 1393 (2001) and 1427 (2002).

In general, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the problem of so-called frozen conflicts, which were left as unhealed wounds in the newly independent States that emerged in the territory of the former Soviet Union. The international community cannot turn a blind eye to the lack of progress in the settlement of conflicts in Abkhazia; Georgia; Nagorno Karabakh; Azerbaijan; or Trans-Dniester, Republic of Moldova, which have been destabilizing the situation in the whole region for a decade.

Regarding the Middle East, having adopted historic resolution 1397 (2001), which affirmed the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders, the Council established a clear political perspective for achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. In its subsequent resolutions on the issue, namely 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002), 1405 (2002) and, most recently, 1435 (2002), the Council clearly spelled out its demands for the immediate steps to be taken by the parties to move towards that goal. It is really unfortunate that those resolutions were followed on the ground with intensifying violence and terror, further complicating the work of the Security Council.

Regarding the Iraqi problem, the adoption of the new mechanism for processing civilian exports to Iraq in resolution 1409 (2002) was widely recognized as a positive step to improve the flow of goods, while maintaining necessary controls on dual-use and other military-related items. However, that achievement was also shadowed by a wide range of negative developments. In that context, we wish to reiterate our strong belief that all relevant Security Council resolutions should be implemented in full.

Our countries are also relying on the ability of the United Nations to peacefully resolve the Iraqi problem, which has already become one of the most crucial challenges before the Council.

Finally, regarding the issue of sanctions, though the Working Group on sanctions was originally scheduled to report its findings to the Council by November 2002, unfortunately, it still has not been able to reach final consensus.

We wish to encourage the Security Council to make additional efforts to achieve a compromise solution or to find other ways of ensuring that a comprehensive outcome of the deliberations within the Working Group on sanctions do not remain hostage to a few, albeit important, issues.

The GUUAM participating States have always attached special importance to the Charter powers of the Security Council and have consistently taken a firm stand on enhancing its authority as a nucleus of the global security system. Our countries are guided by the strong determination to contribute to preserving the key role of the Council in that area and to enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness.

When evaluating Council activities of recent years from a broad perspective, we may find many reasons to characterize them as being the beginning of a new chapter in the history of this body. We hope that that chapter will be marked by greater credibility, openness and responsiveness of the Council to the expectations of the Member States.

Our delegation believes that important innovations that have appeared in the Council's work during the last few years will finally become normal practice. Further expansion of dialogue between the Council and regional and subregional organizations is also a priority task.

Our delegation encourages the Council to continue the practice of sending special missions to conflict regions, which provides an opportunity to assess directly the developments on the ground. In our view, sending assessment expert groups of the Counter-Terrorism Committee should be also considered. In general, the ability of United Nations peacekeeping missions to identify and counter terrorist threats, as recommended by the United Nations Policy Working Group, should be enhanced in every way. We also fully support the view that the Council should meet periodically for a strategic review of its work.

Finally, let me reiterate that there is growing recognition, including within the Security Council, that overall reforms are indeed indispensable if the Council wants to respond to the demands of our times.

I would like to conclude by offering our congratulations to Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their recent election to the Security Council for 2003 and 2004. Our delegations are looking forward to close and productive cooperation with the newly elected members of the Council and wish them every success in discharging their very important responsibilities.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me first express my thanks to Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon for having introduced the annual report on the work of the Security Council and to the Secretariat for its preparation of the report.

Submission by the Security Council of an annual report on its work to the General Assembly is a good practice that serves to increase contact and collaboration between the General Assembly and the Security Council and to consider recommendations for improving its work on the basis of an analysis of the work of the Council.

The report of the Council presented at this session shows some improvement in its work, compared with previous years, but it still does not meet the expectations of the Member States.

As we review the Security Council's work of the past year, we find that the majority of issues were discussed within the informal format and that its open meetings were held only to adopt resolutions already agreed upon behind closed doors. That reality presents serious problems to Member States, given the distinctive characteristics of the Security Council and the fact that the most important issues regarding peace and security are dealt with by only a few countries.

In order for the Security Council to fulfil its mission properly, it should carry out its obligations to ensure international peace and security in good faith, as enshrined in the Charter. Above all, the Council should show transparency in all its deliberations and should make sure that no resolution is adopted for the political objectives of a specific country.

The Security Council should discuss all issues in open meetings on a just and fair basis, confine informal consultations to procedural matters only and, when it holds informal consultations, it should invite the parties concerned to those consultations so that they can fully present their views.

In particular, when the Security Council adopts resolutions on sanctions or the use of force, it should make it a rule to submit to the General Assembly special reports with the background and content of the resolutions at the earliest date possible, in conformity with the relevant Article of the Charter.

The Security Council should also take steps to prevent individual Member States from using or threatening to use force against other Member States without reference to an explicit United Nations resolution or by invoking coercive power. The Security Council should deal with the challenges to peace and security in a just and determined way, keeping abreast of the requirements of the reality.

There is no legal ground for the presence of the so-called United Nations Command on the Korean peninsula, given either the process of adoption of the relevant Security Council resolution or the relationship between the United Nations and the so-called United Nations Command. The United Nations does not exercise any power politically, militarily or financially over the so-called United Nations Command in Korea, which does not really exist for a United Nations ideal, but rather for the interests of a country. Such forces cannot be called a United Nations force.

My delegation underlines its expectation that the Security Council will, in conformity with the demands and aspirations of the new century for genuine peace and security, pay due attention to redressing the abnormal situation in which the name and flag of the United Nations have been abused for more than 50 years.

If the Security Council is to improve and strengthen its work in accordance with the requirements of the current reality, it should be decisively reformed. A prerequisite for the desired reform of the Security Council is that every Member State must have a clear position on the purposes and principles of the reform.

The core issue of Security Council reform is to make the work of the Security Council more just and democratic. The fair and democratic nature of the Council can be ensured only when representation of the developing countries is increased. In Council reform, priority should be given to properly addressing the implicit denial of the voices of developing countries.

Important consideration should also be given to issues at closed meetings, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly and regular review of the work of the Council.

All reform matters of the Council should be decided by consensus through the full participation of and negotiation by all Member States. Pressure and arbitrariness should not in any way be permitted. If it is difficult to agree on all issues at once, then issues

easily agreed could be discussed first. Security Council reform should be part of the general reform work of the United Nations and should be discussed accordingly in combination with revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

The Council will be able to discharge its mission of ensuring world peace and security, settling disputes — large or small — in a fair manner, and preventing the arbitrariness of the strong in oppressing the weak by force when it is made democratic, in accordance with the aspirations of the majority of the Member States and present realities.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): I wish first to extend our sincere condolences to the Government of Indonesia, as well as to all the bereaved families who suffer greatly because of the senseless and dastardly act of terrorism in Bali.

The joint debate on agenda item 11 and agenda item 40 gives us an opportunity to review the Council's track record and to clarify our thinking on that important organ of the United Nations.

Please allow me to begin by expressing our delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his introduction of the Council's annual report to the Assembly. I also wish to pay tribute to the work done by his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, and Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingolfsson of Iceland and Ambassador Patricia Durrant, Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform, for their tireless efforts on this very important issue.

Myanmar, as a strong advocate of multilateralism, takes special interest in the report of the Council. Submitted under Article 24 of the Charter, that report continues to serve as a vital link between the two main bodies — the General Assembly, where 191 sovereign States are represented, and the Security Council, five permanent and ten non-permanent members, entrusted by Member States with the crucial responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Last year, my delegation together with many others, pointed out that to be of greater value, the Council's report should provide a timely, detailed, complete and analytical account of its work. We are happy to see the improved format of this year's report, which provides us with an analytical account of the Council's work in its introductory part. For that, I wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mahbubani and his team for their valuable contribution. I would like to urge the Council to build upon that improved format, and I hope that in future, the analytical part of the report will be strengthened.

We note with satisfaction that the Council has continued the measures to lend greater transparency to its work, particularly the periodic wrap-up sessions. We also appreciate that many more meetings were held in public. The informal briefings on the work of the Council by several monthly Presidents to non-members not only increased transparency but also imparted a sense of inclusiveness. We particularly appreciate the decision by the Council to hold an open meeting to discuss the report before its submission to the General Assembly.

We would greatly welcome more open meetings of the Council. Here we should remind ourselves that open meetings of the Council used to be the rule rather than the exception it is today. We Members of the United Nations have conferred upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We have also agreed to abide by and to carry out the decisions of the Council. Therefore, it is only fitting that the views of the general membership be taken into considerations on important issues that affect us all. Such a course of action will also contribute to the successful implementation of Council decisions. The successful implementation of Council decisions clearly needs the full and wholehearted support of all Members of the United Nations.

Concerning the substantive side of the report, it can be easily seen that the work of the Security Council was greatly affected by the events of 11 September. The Council assumed new major responsibilities with the adoption of its resolution 1373 (2001) and the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in the wake of 11 September. By acting decisively and unanimously, the Council has demonstrated the value and the relevance of multilateralism.

Resolution 1373 (2001) imposed binding obligations on all Member States to prevent and suppress terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Committee, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Greenstock,

ably monitored the implementation of that resolution. Myanmar has taken the necessary legislative and executive measures to give effect to the resolution. The reports required of us have also been submitted. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the firm commitment of Myanmar against terrorism and our resolve to fully cooperate with the international community in the area of counter-terrorism.

I also wish to express appreciation for the valuable briefings that we were given by the Chairman of the Committee over the reporting period.

Allow me to make a few comments on the reform of the Security Council. The Council is at the centre of our system of collective security. We, therefore, would like to see a Council that is more representative, more transparent and more democratic.

More than 150 heads of State and Government unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration and resolved to intensify efforts for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. However, the report submitted by the Open-ended Working Group clearly showed that there had been little progress regarding critical issues, such as increased membership and the question of veto. My delegation is heartened, however, by the fact that the majority of the members of the Working Group favour the view that the use of veto be limited to matters taken up under Article VII of the Charter.

Myanmar has had the opportunity to outline its position on the reform of the Security Council on several past occasions. We would like once again to caution against the temptation to resort to partial solutions. If we were to agree to an expansion of the Security Council in one category and to make only artificial changes in its working methods, we would not be addressing the main issues. We would only be bypassing them and perpetuating an international system marked by inequity. The Non-Aligned Movement has consistently held the view that the expansion and the reform of the Security Council should be an integral part of the common package. We fully subscribe to that view. Cluster I and cluster II issues are equally important and need to be considered together. Any final decisions on the reform of the Security Council should be in the form of a package agreement consisting of expanded Council membership, in both permanent and non-permanent categories, and a comprehensive set of recommended measures to be institutionalized by the Council, so as to reform the procedures of the Council for greater transparency and the participation of Member States in its decision-making process.

The successful outcome of our efforts for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council is vital to all of us. The impasse at which we find ourselves could only be overcome by greater political will on the part of those concerned. It is our hope that realism will prevail and that our aspiration for a more representative, more transparent and more democratic Council will not be the vision of a distant future, but a cherished reality.

Finally, I wish to extend my delegation's sincere congratulations to Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election as non-permanent members of the Council for 2003 and 2004. We wish them every success as they work to bring about peace and security to the international community.

Mr. Valdes (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin Chile's statement by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, for his introduction of the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly, pursuant to Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter.

I also thank those delegations that have spoken before me for their congratulations extended to Chile on its upcoming membership in the Security Council. We also reiterate our wishes for success in that important role to Anglola, Germany, Pakistan and Spain.

We join in the condolences expressed to the Governments of Indonesia and Australia because of the tragic events that occurred recently on the island of Bali. That dastardly attack proves the global nature of terrorism and confirms the need to maintain the unity of this Organization.

We note with satisfaction that the report that we are addressing today is presented in a new format reflecting the opinions expressed by the General Assembly on this subject at its fifty-sixth session. It also records certain progress in the right direction by including in the introduction a brief analysis of the Council's work during the period under review. Nonetheless, there is still a way to go before attaining the desired goal, which is to have clear and accurate

indicators of the progress made by the Council and a section with proposals for improving the working methods. The current presentation still maintains a formal focus that does not reflect the realities faced by the Security Council and, therefore, does not facilitate an effective dialogue between those United Nations bodies.

It is fair to recognize that the General Assembly has some responsibility in this matter, as it has not been able to implement existing agreements that relate to the report of the Security Council. As we are aware, in undertaking efforts to improve the working methods of the General Assembly, that body adopted several resolutions, including resolution 51/241, entitled "Strengthening the United Nations system", in which various tasks are assigned to the Assembly, among them, the assessment that must be made by the President of the Assembly of the debate of the report of the Council. However, the necessary political decision has not been taken to do that.

During the period covered by the report, the world experienced in horror the terrorist attacks of 11 September. It is necessary to highlight today more than ever the Council's speed and effectiveness in responding to those terrible events.

In adopting its resolution 1373 (2001), by which it established the Counter-Terrorism Committee chaired by Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, and in creating the Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1267 (1999), chaired by Ambassador Alfonso Valdivieso, the Council took decisions of indisputable lasting value. Equally, Security Council resolution 1438 (2002), adopted last night, on the horrible attack that took place in Bali also demonstrates this. In these times, when ominous forecasts are being made from this very rostrum concerning the future of our Organization, it is important to remember these facts.

During the period under evaluation, we note once again that cooperation between the Security Council and other United Nations bodies responsible for vital areas such as poverty reduction, development assistance, human rights and the environment, is crucial to tackle the root causes of the threat of terrorism.

Globalization is a source of wealth and of surprising, and often marvellous, revolutions in the fields of technology and communications; but it is still not clear to anyone whether globalization will include more people than it marginalizes. On the contrary, it is evident that the ungovernable process of globalization originating in wealthy countries is unleashing a wave of globalized destitution, fuelling alienation and radicalization.

New threats and challenges to international peace and security are emerging on a near-daily basis and constantly changing at vertiginous speed. The credibility of the United Nations in the new millennium does not depend on its will to launch an order based on force, but rather on its development of an integrated vision that would make it possible to deal decisively with marginalization, oppression and extreme poverty, to develop international law and firmly to maintain peace and security wherever terrorism attempts to impose itself.

To achieve this, it is necessary to decisively explore the Secretary-General's proposals for our Organization's path to reform. Furthermore, we think that reality will sooner or later oblige us to reassess the need to intensify action leading to Security Council reform in all its aspects.

It is my country's opinion that the Security Council should not and cannot continue to reflect the realities of the Second World War; it should reflect the new regional trends that today characterize the international system. The path to be followed should be based on the selfless search of the common good, keeping as the main guideline an increase not only of the Security Council's efficiency but also of its representativity and legitimacy, so that it may become a more democratic body, in accordance with the aspirations and the reality of today's international community.

We appreciate the attention paid by the Security Council to the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, the gravity of which leaves no room for indifference. But it does not seem possible to ignore the fact that the threat of the use of the veto in this matter has frequently paralysed the Council, often stripping its decisions of effectiveness. Who is not aware that the tragedy of Palestine and Israel is one of the issues — if not the central issue — in present day international relations? Who can fail to recognize that the international community has decided to intervene, and has in fact intervened, in situations with lesser dimensions and whose threat to international

peace and security is much more remote? How much more deterioration in the appalling living conditions of the decimated Palestinian people — and how many more murders due to terrorism in Israel — can mankind tolerate? As the Secretary-General has suggested, the international community should intervene in this conflict, creating the conditions in which the parties involved can resume negotiations leading to lasting peace.

The situation in Iraq is a special challenge for the Security Council. The Council should adopt united decisions, reflecting the results of discussions that are transparent and open to all its members. Iraq, for its part, should fully meet, without any conditions or any procrastination, the obligations incumbent upon it under Security Council resolutions. Otherwise, the Council should adopt the measures necessary for the implementation of its resolutions. We welcome the decision to hold an open Security Council debate on this matter tomorrow.

We have followed with interest and satisfaction the results of the Security Council's missions to the African continent and the progress made in understanding the deep-rooted causes of conflict in the region. In this respect, my delegation expresses its gratitude to the Chairman of the sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Adolfo Aguilar Zinser of Mexico, for his report to the Council on his visit to the Mano River Union States in June and July 2002. We also express satisfaction at the results achieved by the Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA, chaired by Ambassador Juan Larrain.

We recognize and appreciate the assistance and ongoing guidance given by the Council to the people of Timor-Leste, who achieved their independence on 20 May 2002, following a complex process that was at times characterized by difficulties.

In relation to peacekeeping operations, we feel that the holding of joint meetings between the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and troop-contributing countries is an excellent mechanism to include the nations involved in each case in the decision-making process. We support the fine-tuning of that mechanism, to develop its potential to the full, so that troop-contributing countries may effectively participate in taking the decisions that affect them.

Finally, we cannot fail to recognize the dedication of the Council to issues such as the prevention of armed conflict, small arms, children in armed conflict, the protection of civilians in armed conflict and women and peace, among other important topics.

Chile welcomes the fact that countries continue to come to the United Nations to solve their conflicts. Collective international security resides in the commitment of Member States to multilateral cooperation. But the preservation of this commitment requires an urgent adaptation of the norms that guide the action of the Security Council. We know that, due to the nature of the objective and the diversity of both views and interests, this will not be an easy exercise. It will be difficult. But that does not mean that it will be impossible.

The Organization can rely on the enthusiastic support of my country in everything required for achieving this goal.

Mr. Vento (Italy): First of all, I would like to offer the condolences of the Government of Italy to the Indonesian authorities for the grave terrorist attack that took place in Bali; our condolences go also to all the other countries that suffered loss of life in that tragic event.

I congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his decision to combine the debates on the annual report of the Security Council and on reform of the Security Council. This is a significant innovation that moves in the direction of streamlining the work of the General Assembly, as Italy and its European Union partners have actively urged.

Italy feels that we must make it our common priority to carry forward the reform of the United Nations, so as to strengthen its ability to act and to guarantee international security in a framework of stability and peace.

The past 12 months have been a particularly intense and challenging period for the Security Council. The fight against terror, peace operations, nation-building and political support for mediation efforts in several regional crises: the members of the Security Council exercised their various responsibilities on various fronts simultaneously, as related in the new documents submitted to us pursuant to Article 15 of the Charter. I wish to acknowledge the changes introduced to the content and the format of the

annual report and to commend the active contribution of several non-permanent members to that result. Italy also extends its congratulations to the Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, on his determined and capable leadership of that crucial Committee.

In the past year, the members of the Security Council have dedicated more attention to improving the transparency and openness of its working methods. That is commendable. The Council's wrap-up sessions have further proved a useful opportunity to assess the monthly work and to consider how its substance and procedural aspects can be improved. For those who, from outside the Council, make a responsible contribution, under Council mandate, to the maintenance of peace in various troubled regions of the world, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, from Africa to the Middle East, it is important to be able to concur with Security Council decisions. Allowing us to participate more frequently in the Council's proceedings will, to some extent, enable us to express our views on issues of direct interest to the international community. Further progress along those lines is therefore recommended.

Transparency continues to be a means by which non-Council members can influence the Council's decisions. It is not, nor can it be, an end in itself. That is why there should be continued progress in the interaction between members and non-members whose interests are especially affected, as described in Article 31 of the Charter. At the same time, as the Secretary-General recommends in his report "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), we encourage the Security Council to consider codifying the recent changes in its practice.

We are aware that in some cases the political sensitivity of the issues addressed requires that the discussions enjoy a degree of confidentiality and flexibility. But when the Council's decision-making process becomes too opaque, its decisions lose authority and lend themselves to contradictory interpretations that weaken their implementation. We should all renew the call for full compliance with Security Council resolutions and other obligations under international law.

It is true that the search for consensus — gathering the broadest possible support for a specific line of action — may seem a laborious and time-consuming process. But when our collective security is at stake, it is necessary to develop an informed, common assessment that will allow responsibility-sharing at the international level. Ultimately, what we must all avoid is creating the impression of United Nations inaction, especially when a serious threat is imminent and certified. Equal care must be paid not to create the impression of selective or partial approaches, for example, when consensus is held hostage during closed consultations or when the Council is prevented from addressing a serious threat to the maintenance of peace. Making the Security Council vulnerable to accusations of double standards would erode its credibility and weaken its decisions. On that fundamental aspect, the Secretary-General's opening statement to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly mentioned some priority issues that will test the authority of the Security Council in the weeks and months to come.

When faced by the vicious threat of international terrorism, the Security Council proved that it was able to act promptly and decisively in a collegial manner. To promote global governance, the Council needs true leadership based on collective vision and shared interests and values.

That is why, in the context of the current debates on Security Council reform, Italy believes that the issues of representation and effectiveness should be dealt with in tandem. One cannot imagine changing the size or composition of the Security Council without, at the same time, carefully considering the consequences of any expansion formula. Those who call for an increase in permanent members should offer convincing reasons on at least two points: first, the political, geopolitical or global — and not merely financial — entitlement and authority for obtaining that privilege; and secondly, the impact of such expansion on the decision-making process in terms of efficiency and transparency. Indeed, new permanent members would only add to the Council's present shortcomings.

Italy is committed to efforts to strengthen the Security Council. Last year we formulated some proposals on areas where, in our opinion, the Council should step in. We are pleased to note that those issues were addressed and, at least in part, brought closer to a solution. This year we would like to focus on two particular questions.

The first is the relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations. Regional organizations make a decisive contribution to the implementation of Council resolutions. For example, Council activities in the fields of sanctions, the fight against terrorism and the conduct of complex peace operations, such as those in the Balkans — where a good example of an exit strategy will be set when the European Union takes over the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 1 January 2003 — are greatly enhanced by its cooperation with regional organizations. One need only think of the Counter-Terrorism Committee outreach, or the 1267 (1999) Sanctions Committee. We must recognize that some regional organizations have developed their crisis-management capabilities to such a level that they can contribute to the decision-shaping process of the Security Council. The Council should therefore avail itself more frequently of the views of those regional organizations, since they are often equipped with significant political and financial resources and are better able to mobilize the will of the main regional players.

To that end, Italy actively promotes the identity of the European Union in the Security Council's work. We feel encouraged by the progress achieved thus far and by the awareness of the large and obvious potential for a greater cohesive contribution of the European Union in the fields of security and peace.

A second issue is related to peace-building and transition to a lasting consolidation of peace. In the past year, the Security Council has not launched any new peace operations. Yet, at the same time, it has restructured and adjusted the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping or peace-building missions in Afghanistan, East Timor and Angola and has started to reshape the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. We encourage the members of the Security Council to draft coherent and integrated strategies to support the transition to durable peace and stability. Those strategies should be based on the establishment of democratic institutions, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, in close consultation with the largest donors and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

I conclude with a question. With the debates on Security Council reform entering the tenth year, how can we move forward? I would like to recall that annex VI to last year's report (A/56/47) contains a realistic proposal submitted by Italy and supported by many countries during the debates in the Open-ended Working Group. Italy believes that our proposal would make a very useful basis for building general agreement on comprehensive and meaningful Security Council reform called for by the Millennium Declaration.

Ms. Pulido Santana (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We join previous speakers in condemning the terrorist acts perpetrated recently in Indonesia, and we offer our condolences to the families of the victims.

It is a source of particular satisfaction for the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in today's debate on the report of the Security Council, as the positive changes that we have observed in the functioning of that important body, as reflected in the report, confirms our confidence in our membership of this Organization. At the same time, we feel encouraged by the willingness of the members of the Security Council to address some of the suggestions of Member States of the United Nations with regard to the report.

It would only be right on this occasion to acknowledge the work done by those involved in this complex exercise. We would like in particular to commend the work of the Ambassador of Singapore, Kishore Mahbubani, and his entire team, for their professionalism and sense of commitment to the United Nations in taking on the task of presenting the report of the Security Council in a new format.

Like previous speakers, we would like to refer to some specific aspects. First, the application of a new methodology in preparation of the report to include an introduction that effectively addresses our demands for an analytical approach and a multi-part format divided into a number of chapters, is very positive. Such a layout makes it easier to gain an overview, while avoiding the duplication of documents that have already been published and are known to delegations, thus preventing waste in terms of resources, time and energy.

The schematic framework around which most of the report is built could prove useful if it is developed further — not so as to return to past methodology, but rather to form the basis of for an analytical assessment.

The valuable exercise undertaken in the introductory part of the report is certainly a useful

guide to that end. This approach could be extended to the entire document, but it would be particularly relevant for the second part, in which the issues examined by the Council are presented in the context of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Applying geographical and thematic criteria, as seems to be the case in the second, third and fourth parts of the report, would enable those parts to be developed analytically. Part II could be drawn up following the model of the introduction, with each subject being considered on the basis of certain parameters — for example, what did the Council do with respect to each of those items? What progress did it make? What implications does that have for international peace and security, or for the immediate and future prospects for each of those themes?

Following on from that, sections I through IV of part I could be kept, since they constitute a useful quick reference document, while the rest of the first part — those paragraphs that refer to meetings of the Council — could be subsumed into the second part, which would be developed in the way that I suggested earlier, on the basis of thematic, geographic criteria, rather than under the heading of "Meetings".

We believe that such a formula would be much more beneficial in making evaluations, providing information and presenting results. My delegation is convinced that if such changes were made, it would result in the production of reports that were more substantive than the summary form of this year's document, but not as lengthy as those that were submitted up to this year.

Such a methodology would allow, for example, for the further development of matters of great importance for the Security Council and the entire United Nations and its membership, such as the fight against terrorism. In that way, the analysis of that theme in the introduction could be further expanded, including it as an important aspect of the corresponding analytical section. Thus we would avoid relegating the issue to a mere chronological listing under the meetings of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) — in section VIII of part I and Chapter 17 of part II, under the heading "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts".

It would be very useful to have an evaluation of the work of that Committee, given that there is an excellent basis for it in the valuable exchange of information process that the Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, has established with non-members of the Council. It would also be useful to have interactive public meetings of the Security Council in which the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee could be evaluated with a view to furthering and improving its work.

Secondly, we welcome the reference to the wrap-up meetings on the work of the Council. Our delegation greatly appreciates these meetings because the analysis already carried out by the members of the Security Council provides non-members with the information necessary to articulate a joint vision, to analyse the activities of the Council and to duly inform their Governments in an effective manner.

Although we value the reference to the wrap-up meetings and to the fact that the Council is continuing with that practice, we would also appreciate the inclusion in future reports of a summary of such evaluations, since by its very nature it would help to establish the analytical approach to which we all aspire.

We note with appreciation the fact that documents have been distributed in this respect by some members of the Security Council, in keeping with the responsibility of the presidency at the end of each month, when there has been a wrap-up meeting to analyse the work of that body. We regret that there are no verbatim records of such meetings.

We welcome the fact that during the work of the Security Council, as outlined in the report, certain thematic items were highlighted that are of particular importance to our delegation. These include themes such as women and peace and security; children and armed conflict; the protection of civilians in armed conflict; and small arms. We also note that matters relating to Africa take up a large part of the Council's agenda, indicating the interest of that body in such matters in the context of the new prospects that have opened up for that continent.

The delegation of Venezuela commends the Council for its attempt to coordinate its work with that of the Economic and Social Council, and hopes that it will continue to focus its efforts on these matters in

order to meet its objective of finding solutions to enable it to better fulfil its primary obligation for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Our delegation recognizes that the challenge presented to the Security Council by the Members of the Organization is a huge and very sensitive one, because it is not easy to satisfy so many countries with different views and interests and to offer an interpretation of the facts that is acceptable to all.

We feel optimistic because, given the fact that we have been able to make progress with this revised format, we see no reason why this exercise could not be continued.

In this respect, we consider that Ambassador Mahbubani's proposal that evaluation criteria be developed for the work of the Council, and that a methodology be used and research carried out that would yield figures and statistical data, would give the Council useful tools for the analytical evaluation that we would all like to see.

I should like to refer briefly here to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. It is interesting to be able to comment on both agenda items together.

Unfortunately, in this area we do not feel the same optimism that we did with respect to the report of the Security Council. We cannot fail to note that, regrettably, yet another year has elapsed without any substantial progress being made on the reform of this main body, even though we recognize the significant changes that have been achieved in various areas related to its working methods, the transparency of its functioning, an increase in the number of public meetings and periodic wrap-up sessions, and the institution of a more equitable way of drawing up the list of speakers in public debates.

These changes, even though they are good in and of themselves, do not address the main issue of the reform of the Council. A comprehensive overall perspective has not been achieved that would serve as a basis for the necessary changes, such as those relating to the composition of and an increase in the membership, the issue of the veto and working methods.

In particular, we reaffirm once again that it is not possible to dissociate the increase in the number of members from the question of the veto. The privilege of the veto, which we have consistently rejected since the very drafting of the Charter of the United Nations, must be eliminated, or, at the very least, its use should be regulated in accordance with the principle of the sovereign equality of the States Members of the Organization. That is why, in the reform of the Council, we cannot shy away from this question if we wish to transform this organ into a democratic, equitable and transparent one.

After almost a decade of study, examination and consideration within the high-level Working Group chaired by the President of the General Assembly, and despite the fact that many efforts have been made to achieve the objective for which it was established, Venezuela feels that this process has taken on some urgency. This is particularly true in the present situation, as all Member States face the pressing need to give fresh impetus to the United Nations, revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Organization, now that the Secretary-General has presented his report on this matter.

Even though the Security Council is very important, it is still one of the organs of the United Nations and so cannot excluded from the general reform process, nor can it remain on the sidelines of the major changes that must be made to adapt to the international system and to the realities of our times.

We hope that the spirit of reform that has begun to emerge in the Security Council will promote the implementation of the necessary changes, as referred to in the report, and will also have an influence on, and promote a general agreement among, the Member States with a view to achieving the elimination of the veto and increasing the number of Council members. The openness shown by the members of the Council in connection with the report demonstrates that change is possible, and that is why we continue to trust in the fact that the Security Council can be steered in the direction of the changes required to ensure good governance in the Organization.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me to begin by expressing our heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia and to the families of the victims from all over the world, including many from South Africa, for the devastating tragedy that took place in Bali, Indonesia.

This terrorist attack reminds us of the urgent challenges the international community must now

confront. The people whose car bomb killed nearly 200 innocent civilians in Bali are outlaws who do not respect the norms and laws of civilized society. They mistakenly believe that they can achieve their objectives through chaos and bloodshed. Our response as the international community must demonstrate that we are united in our resolve to fight terror and that we remain ready and willing to respond collectively and multilaterally.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his report on the strengthening of the United Nations,

> "the need for a strong multilateral institution — one dedicated to the service of humanity as a whole — has never been more acutely felt than it is today, in the era of globalization". *(A/57/387, chapter I, para. 2)*

We have before us two reports — one from the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and the other from the Security Council, reporting on its work for the year 2001-2002.

It is now nine years since Member States began the debate on the reform of the Security Council. South Africa has held a consistent and clear position, in line with that of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity/African Union, that the membership of the Security Council should be expanded to correct the imbalances in its composition. It is our view that expansion should occur in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

Furthermore, we believe that new permanent members of an expanded Security Council should have the same rights as do current permanent members. We call for the curtailment and eventual elimination of the veto. The fact that we have not made progress on these critical issues in the Open-ended Working Group over the course of nine years of deliberations has not deterred us in any way. We agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report on the strengthening of the United Nations that:

> "In the eyes of much of the world, the size and composition of the Security Council appear insufficiently representative. The perceived shortcomings in the Council's credibility contribute to a slow but steady erosion of its authority, which in turn has grave implications for international peace and security." *(ibid., para. 20)*

The words of the Secretary-General should encourage us to intensify our efforts to reform the Security Council. We cannot give up at this point.

We welcome the improvement in the format of the report on the work of the Security Council. Its contents reaffirm that the preceding year has been one of the busiest in the Council's history. Although the report has fewer pages than in previous years, it can benefit from further review by the Members. Member States would have appreciated an overall assessment of the work that is brought before the Council and of how Council members arrived at some of their most difficult decisions. For example, the Security Council narrative on "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question" does not explain the reasoning behind some decisions taken on this important issue.

My delegation, acting in our capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, submitted two letters to the Security Council addressing the situation in Palestine. In March 2002, we requested the Security Council to consider inviting Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel and President Yasser Arafat of Palestine to come to New York to discuss the situation in the Middle East with the Security Council. In April 2002, we reminded the Council of the recommendation already made by some of the NAM members that the Security Council visit Israel and Palestine at the earliest opportunity to familiarize itself with the situation on the ground. In both cases, we were unable to convince the Council to act on these suggestions and we have yet to understand why the Security Council dismissed these suggestions. Perhaps the report of the Council could have been used to throw more light on the thinking of the Council on such complicated issues.

We also welcome the increased number of open meetings, which provide greater opportunities for participation by non-members in the work of the Security Council. We particularly appreciate the creativity shown by some Council Presidents who deviated from the standard practice whereby the Council members usually speak first while the non-members listen. Some of the open meetings benefited from the Council's first listening to the rest of the membership before sharing its views. This allowed non-members to contribute directly to the decision-making of the Council. Sometimes there has been interactive dialogue in the Council, which has also been greatly appreciated.

We are particularly appreciative of the transparency in the work carried out by Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock in his capacity as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. His regular briefings to Member States have allowed for an exchange of views between the Security Council and the rest of the membership, which had never happened before. We hope that this will set the example for how the Security Council can engage the rest of the membership.

We note with satisfaction that the progress made in the working methods of the Council is directly linked to the Working Group's efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council. Indeed, the Working Group's success is reflected in the positive manner in which the Security Council itself has considered and adopted measures to improve its working methods. In the light of the positive changes that the Security Council has undertaken in its procedures, we support the call of the Secretary-General for the Council to codify the recent changes in its own practice and to adopt standard and predictable, rather than provisional, rules of procedure. Fifty years are sufficient time for the Council to decide whether to make its rules permanent or not. The world seeks not only a representative Council, but a predictable one as well.

Another interesting improvement by the Council has been the willingness to cooperate with other bodies, such as the Economic and Social Council. We appreciate that and we believe this has inspired the Council's efforts to diversify the requisite skills of peace missions to address gender, HIV/AIDS and the plight of children in conflict situations. It is a recognition that the Security Council cannot work alone in ensuring the success of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. We therefore urge the Security Council to continue to forge closer working relations with other United Nations bodies and international agencies to improve coordination and cooperation in dealing with post-conflict situations, as well as to avert the conditions that lead to insecurity and violent conflict.

The large number of conflict situations, many in Africa, that the Security Council remains seized of reminds us that we have to make even greater strides in resolving the root causes of conflict. In pursuing its mandate of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council must uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and ensure that multilateralism does not become a vehicle for the strong to prevail over the weak. In this regard, serious attention needs to be given to the Security Council's sanctions regimes and, in particular, the severe unintended consequences that sanctions have on third States and vulnerable communities.

The Security Council, and indeed the United Nations, cannot be party to increasing the humanitarian suffering of civilians who are caught up in situations of conflict, nor can it be convinced to agree to decisions which will subject and condemn large numbers of innocent civilians to conditions of war in efforts to enforce its resolutions. Through the United Nations Charter, we adopted a system of collective security and we now have to act with resolve to protect our rules-based system of international relations. The norms and fundamental principles of international law must be our basis for establishing the conditions for peace, justice and human dignity.

The Security Council should represent our collective security concerns and ultimately be accountable to the entire United Nations. The Secretary-General also notes in his report that

> "the perceived shortcomings in the Council's credibility contribute to a slow but steady erosion of its authority, which in turn has grave implications for international peace and security". (*A/57/387, para. 20*)

The Security Council's role in maintaining international peace and security is a core function of the United Nations. The credibility and the respect that the Security Council deserves will largely depend on whether we, the Member States, ensure that it remains the universal repository of our efforts in the maintenance of peace and security.

It has always been a source of comfort for those of us who are non-members of the Security Council that there are 10 elected members that we choose to represent our views. The elected members have their own special role to play in the Council's deliberations. Elected members may not always have the same resources or even global influence as permanent members do. However, they bring credibility and value to the Council by virtue of having been chosen by the members of General Assembly. They bring balance to the decisions of the Council. We are therefore dismayed to learn that these elected members are often excluded from participating in the consultations on the

most pressing issues before the Council. This is totally unacceptable and can only add to the erosion of the authority and legitimacy of Security Council decisions.

In combining the two reports — one on the reform of the Security Council and another on the work of the Council — we have been exposed to the positive and encouraging achievements of the Council and the areas which still need attention. Suggestions have been made that the two reports be separated and considered as different agenda items. The report on the work of the Security Council is mandated by the Charter. The reform of the Security Council is also inspired by the desire to live up to the spirit of the Charter. Although these are very different, we believe that, for this session, the membership has benefited by considering both reports at the same time.

As we have already stated, the deadlock we face on the reform of the Security Council needs an urgent and new impetus. We call on Mr. Kavan, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, to consider taking the debate to a higher political level. The Working Group cannot continue for a tenth year of business as usual. We concur with the Secretary-General's conclusion in his report that

> "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council". (*ibid.*)

We join in celebrating the successes that we have achieved as the United Nations, particularly through the efforts of the Security Council, the latest of which has been the admission of an independent and sovereign Timor-Leste to our family of nations. These successes should inspire the Security Council to act on its responsibility to those peoples who still suffer under occupation and oppression in Palestine, Western Sahara and beyond. The peoples of those territories will continue to look to the Security Council for assistance to alleviate their plight and fulfil our Charter's pledge. We have to ensure that the Security Council does not fail them.

Our combined efforts must therefore be to support multilateralism and collective security, and to work towards a credible and more representative Security Council. International peace and security are prerequisites for sustainable development and for the fostering of friendly relations among all nations.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.