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Friday, 8 November 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe . . . . . (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Miculescu (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 29 and 123 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council

Report of the Security Council (A/68/2)

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

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): Let me, at the outset, thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this very important debate. I also wish to thank the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Tanin, for continuing to consult us and engage with as we search for a solution to this long-pending question.

It has now been over five years since the General Assembly adopted decision 62/557, on 15 September 2008, which was aimed at launching the intergovernmental process. We are concerned about the slow pace of negotiations.

My delegation wishes to stress the great importance we attach to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We believe that this is an imperative whose time has come. We therefore welcome the resumption of the negotiations and urge the Chair of the process, Ambassador Tanin, to garner all the necessary strength and resilience to drive the process to its logical conclusion. My delegation pledges its utmost support and commits to engaging in constructive and open dialogue.

The Security Council remains the most important organ of the United Nations, whose primary mandate is the maintenance of international peace and security. However, it is regrettable that ever since its establishment, in 1945, the Council has lacked, and still lacks, adequate geographic and democratic representation of the United Nations membership.

It defies human logic that Africa still remains the only unrepresented constituency in such a body, the legitimacy and strength of which must derive from the totality of its membership. While all regions of the world are represented and have a footprint in the Council, Africa is still relegated to the back bench, with no voice, no power and no presence to influence the key decisions of that powerful institution.

My delegation believes that it is now time to reform the character, shape and working methods of the Council in order to bring them in line with the realities of contemporary international relations. It is for that reason that we remain committed to the intergovernmental negotiations aimed at addressing the historical imbalances of the Council and bringing about improvements in its decision-making and working methods.

In line with both Africa's position and that of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), my delegation holds the view that the reform of the Council should

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be comprehensive, transparent and inclusive. While stressing the importance and primacy of the Charter of the United Nations, we reiterate our long-held position that the envisaged reform of the Council should result in a more effective and efficient body. In that context, it is our hope and expectation that the reform process will embrace the following elements: the categories of membership, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council, the working methods, and, of course, the veto question.

While welcoming the resumption of the intergovernmental negotiations, we wish to caution Member States that it is very important to remain open-minded and flexible in our debate. There is no wisdom in sticking to known positions. Negotiations are by nature a give-and-take process. We need to compromise.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of NAM (see A/68/PV.46) and would like to reiterate Africa's position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus.

The African position is loud and clear. It is inspired by the desire to see the continent take its rightful place among the community of nations in making key global decisions. That position proposes the expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Furthermore, the African position views the question of the veto as divisive, exclusive and subject to abuse by the veto-wielding Powers. Africa therefore wishes to see a review of the veto power with a view to abolishing it. If it is not abolished, then a reformed Council, which must include Africa, must extend the veto power to the new permanent members without exception.

We therefore have every confidence that, as we resume these negotiations, we shall take into consideration all the proposals brought forward by various groups, find areas of convergence and build on the consensus on them. After all, we are all here not to dismember or render ineffective our most cherished body. We are here to enrich it, find common ground and address the limitations that are already apparent in the Council, with a view to strengthening it. We trust that a solution will be found to propel the Council to greater heights as we continue to serve humankind for future generations.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): At the outset, let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting and most especially for the items on the agenda: the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. I thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to present the position of my country on the subject matter.

With regard to the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/68/2), I thank my colleague and current President of the Security Council, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, for his introduction of the report (see A/68/PV.46), and the United States delegation for its hard work in preparing it. The report of the Security Council to the Assembly is a good mechanism for the transparency and accountability of the Council. Rwanda will continue to support any and all initiatives aimed at opening up the Council to the participation of the general United Nations membership, especially the participation of those directly concerned by Security Council decisions.

On the general discussion on Security Council reform, allow me to first commend the President of the Assembly for his leadership and demonstrated effort to move forward on this debate aimed at reforming the Security Council, as demonstrated by his decision to set up an advisory group to provide input to help kick-start the process of text-based negotiations. That initiative is a clear demonstration of his strong commitment to make substantive progress in the process. The Security Council reform process is aimed at better reflecting contemporary realities and achieving a more accountable, representative and transparent Council, mindful of all regional groups and emerging Powers, as well as small island, landlocked and developing countries.

We also welcome his decision to reappoint His Excellency Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. That move not only answers the plea of several Member States that advocated for his reappointment during the informal meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform held in June, but will also ensure consistency with previous deliberations while allowing this debate to make headway.

Rwanda aligns itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, on behalf of the African Group (see A/68/PV.46). I

commend his efforts as coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State to promote the Ezulwini Consensus and for tirelessly engaging all Member States and interest groups to achieve the African common position.

Rwanda, as a member of the L.69 group, further aligns itself with the statement, also delivered at the 46th meeting, by His Excellency Mr. Delano Frank Bart, Permanent Representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations, on behalf of the L.69 group, a diverse group of developing countries united to achieve a lasting and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

We are encouraged by the rapprochement of the African Group and the L.69 group on Security Council reform, which I believe will help us achieve a comprehensive reform, which shall include the expansion of the Security Council membership in both categories — permanent and non-permanent — with the same rights and obligations as the current members, particularly with regard to the veto right, as long as it exists.

It has been demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of the United Nations wishes for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The reform shall uphold the principles of fairness and equitable geographical representation, particularly in favour of Africa, a continent that has yet to be represented in the permanent category of the Security Council although it provides more than a quarter of the United Nations membership and occupies more than 70 per cent of its agenda.

Rwanda also strongly supports the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, and we commend the work done by Ambassador María Cristina Perceval of Argentina as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We also support the dedication of the accountability, coherence and transparency group for the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council, which was defended with courage and resolve by the group of five small nations.

In that regard, we reiterate our firm belief that the responsibility to protect the citizens of the world shall not be held hostage by the political interests of the permanent members of the Security Council — that has cost us millions of lives, particularly in the 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi in Rwanda. We once again call upon permanent members to refrain from using the veto, especially in the case of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Improving the Council's working methods also entails in particular improving the Council's resolve to fight against impunity, especially for those who have committed genocide and other crimes against humanity. It is therefore unfortunate to note that the perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda, which have been renamed the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, are still roaming free in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That fact is even more deplorable since we know that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a United Nations force of nearly 20,000 troops with a budget of more than $1 billion a year, has done nothing for the past 13 years to combat them — not to mention the fact that the Security Council has never held the United Nations Mission that it established accountable.

The intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have been going on for too long. Some even wonder if reform will be achieved in our lifetime. However, I would appeal to all of us to show a sense of responsibility and ensure that we have a concrete outcome by the year 2015, which will be a double anniversary: the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and the tenth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit, at which our Heads of State and Government mandated us to achieve early reforms of the Security Council.

To conclude, Rwanda is confident that, under the leadership of the President of the Assembly, the Security Council reform process will soon move from debating procedural questions to engaging in text-based negotiations. We will continue to render our support to his effort in search of a common position that brings about a fair and equitable resolution of the pressing issues surrounding this debate. It is our firm hope that during his tenure as President of the General Assembly, given his dedication to reforming the process, that noble landmark will be credited to him — and all members — as their legacy to posterity.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I would first like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important debate ahead of the new cycle of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. I also commend his decision to reappoint Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan as the Chair of the

intergovernmental negotiations. I would like to thank the President and Ambassador Tanin for their leadership in the process.

In Croatia's view, the present structure and functioning of the Council does not properly reflect either the geopolitical realities of today's world or the structure of United Nations membership in the twenty-first century. Therefore, in order to maintain the Council's authority, relevance and indispensability in maintaining global peace and security, its reform must not be postponed any further, and it must be comprehensive.

Croatia served on the Security Council in 2008 and 2009, and that valuable opportunity has given us deeper insight into both the Council's strengths and its shortcomings. Therefore, we are of the view that the enlargement of the Council is deeply connected with the reform of its working methods. It is Croatia's position that any expansion of that crucial organ should happen in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with one additional seat to be reserved for the Group of Eastern European States in the non-permanent category. Such a reform would then properly reflect the reality of contemporary international relations and ensure appropriate and balanced representation for various parts of the world in the Council.

Furthermore, although we welcome the greater transparency in the Council's work achieved thus far, we find that there is still room for improvement in that regard. We believe that the Group of Eastern European States deserves equal treatment with the four other regional groups. I will not use the composition of the President's advisory group as an example of that, but I must emphasize that the Eastern European Group is entitled to equal treatment, recognition and respect. An additional seat for the Eastern European Group in an enlarged Security Council is very important, but not the only step along that road.

In Croatia's view, one of the key issues in the reform of the Security Council includes questions being raised on the use of the veto power. Its should be used responsibly and, above all, in a limited manner. By that we mean limiting its use in cases of genocide and gross human rights violations.

Furthermore, Croatia strongly supports intensifying efforts to translate the decisions set out in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and its aftermath into concrete results.

After so many years of debate and after so many meetings and speeches, it is challenging to come up with something entirely new. Although we have accumulated a lot of different proposals, political will and unity are now of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, we must strive to be innovative. What we need is to identify common denominators, stronger involvement and interaction between and among major groups in the process.

A number of achievements in the wider United Nations reform have already been made since the World Summit. That reform has already given birth, inter alia, to the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, UN-Women and, most recently, to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The obvious shortfall in that regard, however, remains Security Council reform.

In 2015, the United Nations will celebrate its seventieth anniversary. It took only 18 years after the foundation of the United Nations to adopt the General Assembly resolution on the enlargement of the Security Council (resolution 1991 A (XVIII)). In 2015 we shall mark the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the work of the 15-member Council. To say that reform is overdue would be more than stating the obvious. Having said all that, let me reiterate Croatia's full support to the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations process and to express our confidence that it will bring us closer to our common goal of a reformed and improved Security Council.

Mr. Alcántara Mejía (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express my appreciation to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China and President of the Security Council during the month of November for his comprehensive introduction of the annual report of the Security Council (A/68/2). Pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council has a mandate to submit reports to the General Assembly for the consideration of States Members of the United Nations. The document that we have before us covers a rather difficult period that undoubtedly tested the capacity of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security.

Despite the efforts made by Council members, the report continues to suffer from a lack of an analytic

perspective of the work undertaken by that organ, its public open meetings and its informal consultations. We recognize, however, the progress made by Council members to optimize transparency in their work. We also acknowledge the improvement in working methods, which help Member States to participate more actively on questions and concerns of common interest on the Council's agenda.

Addressing the matter of its working methods leads us to refer to a point of particular importance for the Dominican Republic, that is, the reform of the Security Council. We commend the interest of the President of the General Assembly in keeping the topic among those of highest priority in his programme of action.

The Dominican Republic hopes that the process will continue to move forward in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, with the goal of Member States being able to decisively impact the democratization of the Security Council. We support the idea of 2015 serving as a horizon for setting the necessary guidelines for the long-awaited reform of the Council. We therefore hope that the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform will continue and that a document can be consolidated to support negotiations aimed at bringing greater legitimacy and credibility to the Council's work.

We welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, at the helm of the intergovernmental negotiations, as well as the selection of the group of ambassador advisers on Security Council reform. We trust in the leadership and skill of the members of that group to reach important decisions at this crucial stage.

The Dominican Republic has always advocated for an enlargement of the Council to take place with particular emphasis on opening up greater opportunities for developing countries, thereby ensuring a more level playing field. Hence we support the communiqué issued in February at the conclusion of the twenty-fourth Inter-sessional Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of State and of Government of the Caribbean Community, in which there was a call for greater urgency to achieve lasting reform of the Security Council. We also support the initiative it contains to give new momentum to the intergovernmental negotiations process.

The current structure of Council membership is clearly unbalanced and does not accurately reflect the current geopolitical situation. We appeal to the political will and commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to correct that unjust situation with firm determination. It is time to put an end to the imbalance that has relegated some regions to the sidelines when it comes to Council representation. Only then, we believe, will the Council be better able to respond, and with greater efficacy, to the growing problems and challenges that arise in international relations.

I take this opportunity to commend the new non-permanent members of the Council on their recent elections. We hope that they will contribute positively to the work of the Council in maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Hamilton (Malta): My delegation expresses its appreciation for the President's resolve to make the reform of the Security Council a priority for his mandate. I also join other delegations in thanking the Permanent Representative of China for introducing the Security Council's annual report (A/68/2) on behalf of the Council.

Malta fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group (see A/68/PV.46).

With deference to the recent decision to create an advisory group to the President of the General Assembly on the Security Council reform process, UFC members have already conveyed their assessments in the letter dated 31 October. We thank the President for his meeting on Wednesday meeting with UFC members. His clarifications were encouraging, especially when he informed us that the advisory group would have only a consultative purpose and would not have a negotiating role or a mandate to draft or to streamline any negotiating document or draft resolution and that the advisory group would not bypass the intergovernmental negotiations. We appreciate the fact that, in his opening remarks yesterday, the President restated those points very clearly. We hope that augurs well for an end to any misinterpretations of the advisory group's mandate.

Considering the slow rate of progress during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, it is appropriate that we look forward to identifying common ground, as the President stated in his letter dated 6 November. In our collective thoughts and actions we need to define the areas of convergence according to the principles agreed to by consensus in decision 62/557, of 15 September 2008. Malta remains of the firm view that the five key agreed issues are interlinked. If we

maintain those five key issues as one component, we will ensure that the reform of the Security Council is conducted in a coherent and cohesive manner. In turn, that would safeguard the interests of all Member States and endow a reformed Security Council with the much-needed sense of ownership of the broader membership.

As the President rightly stated in his letter, that common ground can be reached only through a process of negotiations, of give and take. Malta understands that only the Uniting for Consensus group has shown flexibility to date, having come forward in 2009 with a constructive, updated proposal that is, comparatively speaking, the most beneficial for the wider United Nations membership. We call on other groups to reciprocate in this exercise of give and take.

The intergovernmental negotiations over the past few years have clearly shown that there is at least agreement on two issues among all States Members of the United Nations, and those could provide a common ground for advancing our consideration of the question of Security Council reform. The two issues are, first, that there should be an increase in the non-permanent member category and, secondly, that the historical injustice regarding Africa's representation should be remedied.

All States Members agree on the need to reform the Security Council in order for it to better reflect the world in the twenty-first century. Member States, especially small and medium-sized States, continue to search for ways to reform the Security Council so as to make it more representative, more democratic, more efficient and effective, more accountable and more transparent in order to better address the challenges of our time as we approach the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The membership of the Security Council has to be more reflective of present-day realities. Therefore, like many other States, Malta strongly believes that the Council membership should be increased. I would like to recall that, since the last Security Council enlargement, in 1965, 76 countries have joined the Organization as new States Members. It is therefore logical that one of the key issues that needs to be resolved is the question of the enlargement of a reformed Security Council to take into account the larger General Assembly membership of 193 States.

The position of small and medium-sized States in an expanded Security Council should figure prominently in our discussions. Malta notes that only the Uniting for Consensus proposal includes specific non-permanent seats for both small and medium-sized States. It is also statistically the most advantageous proposal for over 180 Member States, including all small and all medium-sized States. That fact has not only been stated by the Uniting for Consensus group, but has also been published by the independent civil society organization Platform for Change, which aims to educate and inform the diplomatic community and civil society about the important issues and events surrounding Security Council reform.

My delegation appreciates the role that the President and his predecessors have played in trying to bring the views of different delegations closer together and, in so doing, to define and agree on an approach that would do justice to all the States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank the President for convening this important and most timely meeting. We also congratulate His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, on his reappointment as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform and for his leadership in guiding its complex deliberations.

Kazakhstan recognizes that the geographical imbalance in the Security Council and the limitations in its operations continue to exist. Kazakhstan therefore reiterates its commitment to reform of the United Nations — primarily the Council — on both of those fronts. With a view to the enhancement of regional representation, my delegation reconfirms its position on increasing the Council's membership from the existing number of 15 to 25 by establishing six permanent and four non-permanent Security Council member seats. Moving the negotiations forward demands a new understanding that would bridge the divergence among the vast majority of Member States. The positions of all the groups concerned need to be bridged. Kazakhstan therefore calls for a spirit of compromise and inclusiveness in order to gain the broadest possible consensus. We would like to submit the following recommendations for the General Assembly's consideration.

The proposals of the latest intergovernmental negotiations should be carefully reviewed with respect, in particular, to the veto right with all its implications, so that a viable solution can be found. We believe that a change in the working methods does not require an

amendment to the Charter of the United Nations or adoption by a two-thirds majority. Kazakhstan believes that any improvement in the working methods will not limit the power of the Council or subordinate it to the General Assembly, but rather will strengthen the Security Council to make it more efficient. It is critical to have all the proposals of Member States on the table for the purpose of greater transparency, accountability and fairer participation, increased access to information through open briefings, thematic debates and consultations with States that are not members of the Security Council, the involvement of troop-contributing countries in its decision-making processes on peacekeeping operations and the easy availability of provisional agendas, draft resolutions and presidential statements.

It is equally imperative to strengthen the cooperation mechanism between the Security Council and the General Assembly, since the latter represents the interests of all Member States. In particular, the most crucial and unresolved disputes in the Council could be discussed in the General Assembly to ascertain the positions of the majority of Member States on vital issues, so as to make the adoption of Security Council resolutions as informed as possible. We welcome the measures designed to increase the number of open meetings of the Security Council and the decrease in the number of closed meetings to ensure greater transparency. That is particularly important for countries when the Council deliberates on the cases of their immediate neighbouring countries or those in the region, because of the relevant inputs that can be made and to assess the interrelated impact and consequences.

The States that are not members of the Security Council need to know first-hand and objectively the decisions and positions of the members of the Security Council — not through the lens of the mass media, with its distortions. We also welcome the establishment of the advisory group to the President of the General Assembly and believe that it will serve the negotiating process as a whole and provide a balanced approach, including in its scope all positions and concerns expressed by groups and Member States.

To conclude, I would again reiterate Kazakhstan's commitment to engaging in the intergovernmental negotiations and work in a spirit of compromise and cooperation to finalize a speedy reform of the Security Council. The reform process cannot wait much longer, in the light of the new emerging global geopolitical realities and socioeconomic developments.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I have the honour to speak before the plenary of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly and on a matter of such vital importance to us all as the current agenda item, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related issues, allow me to express to the President my sincere congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

My delegation also appreciates the apposite and clear way in which the President is guiding the debates during this session and fully supports his efforts in that regard. I am also very pleased at his initiative to convene this meeting and at the new impetus he has given to this theme by reappointing Ambassador Zahir Tanin. Mr. Tanin has my delegation's full confidence as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We also express our full support for the President's innovative initiative to appoint an advisory group. As he has explained, the role of the group is not to take decisions or to to supplant or usurp the work that Ambassador Tanin will undertake. Simply, as its name implies, the group is to serve the President as an advisory body with no binding character.

My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Liu Jieyi of the People's Republic of China for introducing the report (A/68/2) of the Security Council yesterday, on the occasion of the start of our debate on this issue (see A/68/PV.46).

It has been 68 years since the United Nations was established, on 24 October 1945, following the disastrous impact of the Second World War. Thirty-four years later, in 1979, during the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, on the initiative of Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Guyana, India, Maldives, Nepal, Nigeria and Sri Lanka, the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and the increase in its membership was raised. A debate was launched in that regard at the forty-seventh session, in 1992, when resolution 47/62 was adopted. Pursuant to that, the Secretary-General published a report with comments made by the aforementioned Member States. Thus, the United Nations is 68 years old, and for 34 of those years we have been debating the need for Security Council reform.

While 68 is a very significant age for both people and States, it is even more important in the history of an international Organization that serves as a forum for debating rights of every sort — human rights, the right to food, women's rights, children's rights, the right to the self-determination of free peoples and so on. Is it not fair that the time has come for the rights of countries and all regions to rightful representation in the Security Council to be recognized?

Is it not already time for the African continent, with 54 Member States in the United Nations — more than any other region — and more than 70 per cent of the issues discussed in the Security Council concerning it, to be given the right of representation in the Security Council, with the right to vote and to the veto, in order to actively participate in discussions on relevant issues? In his statement at the general debate in September, South African President Jacob Zuma said:

> "We would like to challenge the Assembly today by saying 'Let us set ourselves the target to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations in 2015 with a reformed, more inclusive, democratic and representative Security Council!'" (*A/68/PV.5, p. 50*)

That is two years from now.

That goal should guide the new process of intergovernmental negotiations, so that the United Nations is adapted to the challenges of an international order that is completely different from that which prevailed 68 years ago. This is a new world, quite different from the one that saw the establishment of the United Nations. Today's world is not the product of war, but of technological change. In the world today, at the United Nations, we recognize rights, dialogue, democracy, transparency and good governance. Those realities should shape United Nations bodies as a whole, in particular the Security Council.

As we are approach the end of 2013, the international Organization that is the United Nations, and through its General Assembly, has some promising prospects in the next two years, including 2015, the year set for the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. The Assembly should ensure that 2015, when the United Nations will mark its seventieth anniversary, is also the year when we achieve effective Security Council reform.

As President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea said during his statement at the general debate,

> "Let us be honest with ourselves, because democracy, as a just and equitable system, should prevail in all the organs of the United Nations system, the epicentre of the international community, aspiring to peace, order and development." (*A/68/PV.13, p. 8*)

I am participating in this debate as the Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea, which is a member of the Committee of Ten of the African Union. In that connection, I fully associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Mr. Vandi Chidi Minah, as coordinator of the Committee of Ten, and also with the statement made by His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/68/PV.46).

In that regard, we reaffirm the claim made by the African continent to be fully and broadly represented in all decision-making bodies of the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council, which is the main decision-making organ on issues relating to international peace and security. The broad and full representation required by the African continent means obtaining at leats two permanent seats in the Security Council, with all the inherent privileges and prerogatives, as well as five non-permanent seats.

Members will agree with me that it is totally inconceivable and unjustifiable that a continent such as Africa, which has more than 1 billion people, the largest number of States Members of the United Nations and the largest number of issues dealt with by the Security Council, does not to date have a single permanent seat on the Security Council. In that regard, it should be noted that the demand for seats for Africa on the Security Council is a demand and an inalienable right in the modern world, especially in a global Organization such as the United Nations — a guarantor of the principles of justice, good governance and rights.

I would like to conclude my brief statement by saying that my country reiterates its position — the African common position — that we reject any provisional or transitional proposals in the negotiations, as the main requirements of such an approach would go against the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. That is what was decided at the Kampala Summit in July 2010, reaffirmed at the African Union Summit held in

Addis Ababa in January 2011, unanimously reasserted again during the Malabo Summit in July 2011 and ratified and supported in subsequent summits. To that end, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its full confidence in Ambassador Zahir Tanin in driving the Security Council reform process. We also reiterate our confidence that all of Africa's partners, friends and allies from all regions and continents will support us so that this African claim can become a tangible reality.

My country and Government in general believe that all States, regions and interest groups should bring their positions closer together in the context of this reform process, so as to achieve equitable, fair and objective representation on the Security Council and within the United Nations system. We hope that the Security Council in particular and the United Nations system as a whole will be restructured in a manner that more broadly takes into account the interests of all the States and geographical regions of the international community. That will require all States to continue to move forward and to overcome the obstacles that prevent them from achieving a genuine and more representative membership of the Security Council. We therefore hope for resounding success in the new negotiating process.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would like to thank you, Madam, for convening today's important meeting.

Slovenia believes that it would be more efficient if the General Assembly were to hold two separate debates — one on the Security Council report (A/68/2) and the other on the question of the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters — since both topics need to be thoroughly discussed. We believe that the content of the report is of high importance for all Members, and would therefore like to examine it in depth before discussing it further. Nevertheless, I would like to thank the representative of China, Mr. Liu Jieyi, for introducing the Security Council report covering the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

Slovenia welcomes the initiative taken by Ambassador John Ashe, President of the General Assembly, to reconvene the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform early in this session of the Assembly. We would like to congratulate Ambassador Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, on his reappointment as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We sincerely hope that this round of negotiations will lead to tangible results and a successful outcome. We also respect the President's decision to establish an advisory group of eminent ambassadors, which is charged with the important task of producing the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations while taking on board all the suggestions made so far. We see this decision in the context of the current momentum to move forward in the process of negotiations on the question of equitable representation and an increase in the size of the Security Council, which is long overdue.

In our opinion, it is important to maintain a clear distinction between the debate on enlarging the Council and the discussion on improving the working methods applied under its current composition. After last week's open debate on working methods (see S/PV.7052), we expect that the Council will be able to build on several proposals made by a large number of the Member States. As a member of the accountability, coherence and transparency group, Slovenia will contribute further ideas on how to enhance the accountability, coherence and transparency of the Security Council.

We regret that discussion has lagged on the question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We believe that the enlargement of the Council would contribute to its effectiveness, improve its representation and bring fresh perspectives to the table. It is apparent that the expansion of the Security Council in permanent and non-permanent membership has gained broad support among the States Members of the United Nations. Slovenia remains convinced that the Council should be expanded in both categories of membership. In the general debate at the sixty-third session, Slovenia suggested a specific model for Security Council expansion. We believe that our suggestion and other specific past proposals should be approached head-on and that they should be taken into account by the advisory group.

Slovenia views the determination and commitment of the President of the General Assembly as an opportunity to come to meaningful conclusions that should be implemented in the light of the upcoming United Nations anniversary in 2015. Prolonged debates have revealed the discontent of many Member States, and it is high time to address that issue in a proper and concrete way that will adapt the Security Council to new challenges and reflect the realities of the twenty-first century. I can assure the Assembly that Slovenia will play a constructive role in the process of intergovernmental negotiations.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I am pleased to see you presiding over this meeting, Madam. If it were up to Algeria, we would have liked to see Security Council reform achieved under your presidency today. I would like to thank you for convening this joint debate on agenda item 29, "Report of the Security Council", linked with agenda item 123, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". It is important that we look at the way the Security Council is working in order to correct what needs to be corrected. So we work on that link. In that regard, I would like to thank Ambassador Liu Jieyi, representative of China and President of the Security Council for the month, for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/68/2), covering the activities of the Council from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

With respect to item 123, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Zahir Tanin on his reappointment as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiation process and to reiterate Algeria's commitment to working with him in order to ensure the speedy and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Algeria aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group (see A/68/PV.46).

At a time of profound changes on the international landscape, Security Council reform has become more urgent. Why? For instance, in document A/68/2, covering the reporting period of the Security Council, one observes that there are very few elements that allow members of the General Assembly to have a sense of the kind of debate taking place on the various agenda items. I have in mind one particular agenda item that I happen to follow closely — the question of the Western Sahara. With respect to the debate that took place in April 2013 (see S/PV.6951), during the reporting period, the report does not reflect what actually happened.

There was a very tense debate in the midst of a looming diplomatic crisis between important members of the Security Council and one party to the conflict in the Western Sahara, but it took place in the informal discussions before the item was actually considered in the formal meeting. There is therefore no mention in the report of the attempt by responsible members of the Security Council to propose extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and to monitor the human rights situation in the Territory of Western Sahara, because it took place outside the work of the Council.

Members of the Council are right to report only what happened in the Council Chamber. Since everything is happening in the corridors, within the small group of friends and in consultation outside the formal meetings, they have the right not to report to us, but then we miss the point. We do not know what happens. I know one question, but I do not know another one. In the future, the records we transmit to future generations will not allow them to know what happened on various issues. That is why more transparency is of the essence, and that is why we are insisting that we achieve a speedy and timely reform of the Security Council.

Another issue that the Member States might have noticed is that, since the reopening of the Secretariat and conference buildings, since the renovations within the framework of the capital master plan, some changes have been introduced to the way the Security Council interacts with the Member States. We, the 178 delegations that are not members of the Security Council, are no longer allowed to approach the Security Council consultations room. Actually, there is a prohibition in the form of a red sign stating that it is a private zone. One cannot reach the German lounge that Germany generously equipped a long time ago to allow delegations to sit and interact with the elected members of the Security Council, representing the membership, and to be informed about the proceedings and work of the Security Council.

I would like to mention that the consultations room is an informal setting, according to the Charter. The Charter has established that the Council meets in the Council Chamber, and that we are entitled to attend the deliberations of the Council on any question related to international peace and security. In order to prepare for the debate, the members of the Council happen to meet outside the Chamber in a corridor, to have a coffee or not and to exchange views before the meeting. That corridor became the consultations room, but it has no status whatsoever, and we are entitled to cut the funding of the informal consultations of the Security Council on the basis that they are not in conformity with the Charter. Moreover, we are not even allowed to approach the antechamber of the consultations room. I rely on the wisdom of the permanent members to help the general membership to improve their relations with the Council's work.

As for other innovations that have been introduced, I congratulate the Secretary-General on having occupied the former office of the President of the Security Council, and I understand that the President of the Council has now been assigned a smaller office in the back. I express my sympathy for the elected members, which are losing an opportunity to provide some visibility to their short term of membership in the Council, but it is for the current and future elected members to address this issue.

Another aspect of the work of the Security Council is the principle that those who have a stake in any agenda item should be able to participate in the debate or interact with the Council. In the case of the Western Sahara, on the occasion of the most recent consultations, which took place on 30 November 2012, the representative of the Frente Polisario was denied access to the vicinity of the Security Council. As we all know, there are new rules, but in addition to that, he was further excluded from the area. It has been a tradition that those identified by the Council as the parties to a conflict — in this case, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Polisario — can make their case to the members of the Council and to the membership through the stakeout. He was denied a chance to speak at the stakeout. The necessary claim has been filed with those responsible, and here also I am confident that the wisdom of the permanent members of the Security Council, which are no doubt concerned about maintaining good relations with the users of the Council, will allow for a speedy resolution of this issue.

As for the report of the Security Council, it is up to us to decide whether we are to continue with the situation and are satisfied, or we are to increase our efforts. Algeria supports the intention of the President of the Assembly to increase efforts in order to speed up the process. We support him — and we supported him within the framework of the African Group — in the establishment of the advisory group.

We caution against encroaching upon the prerogatives of the membership. The President has the right to establish a group of friends to receive advice and to make proposals to the membership. Let us avoid making the advisory group a body that is tasked with drafting texts without being sufficiently representative of all the positions in the debate. However, the President has the right to listen to the group and to make proposals to us, and we encourage him to do so. We encourage all those who have complained that Security Council reform has taken too long to consider the real causes.

Actually, I did not want to get to this point. I do not see the Permanent Representatives of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan in the Hall. I will make my proposal to them on 15 November within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations because I do not want to repeat myself.

I would like to convey our call on Ambassador Tanin to address the status of the third revision of the compilation. We all complained about the incursion of Ambassador Tanin into our prerogatives, trying to interpret our positions. Let us go back to the second revision and take it from there. We are ready to help Ambassador Tanin, who is an asset. He has the institutional memory and he knows where we can meet. We are ready to work with him by no later than mid-November.

Mr. Dos Santos (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his timely initiative to undertake work in this area. I also express the appreciation of the delegation of Paraguay to Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his important role as Chair of the previous rounds of intergovernmental negotiations. We wish him success in the new round beginning at this session. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of China for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/68/2).

The Government of Paraguay maintains that expanding the Security Council is necessary in order to strengthen and update the Organization with a view to making it more effective and equitable, as mandated by the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). That process, which is proceeding in the form of intergovernmental negotiations, must be accompanied by a reform of the Council's working methods, since if the Security Council is more democratic, representative, transparent and efficient, its decisions will have greater legitimacy.

As stated in the Charter of the United Nations, the Council's primary function is to preserve international peace and security. The increasing expansion of the powers of the Council to other issues that already have dedicated forums for discussion undermines the authority of the General Assembly and other organs of the Organization, which is a cause for concern.

Over the past few years, my country has followed with growing interest the rounds of intergovernmental

negotiations undertaken on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. In this respect, we believe that the Security Council should consider a balanced geographical distribution for its membership, in accordance with the principle enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter concerning the sovereign equality of States.

Regarding the veto, Paraguay supports its elimination. We also believe that there must be effective communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly, which is the most representative and democratic organ of the United Nations system. We therefore need to systematically hold meetings between the President of the Assembly and the President of the Security Council, which will help to improve the transparency of the Council's work.

Finally, we are fully confident that the Council will ultimately adapt to the changing times of this century by becoming more representative and improving the effectiveness, legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.

Mr. Velásquez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting to continue discussing one of the core issues related to the reform of the Organization — the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

I would like to highlight the work done by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, in heading up the informal plenary meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and membership of the Security Council and related matters, and we therefore welcome their ongoing help in this process during the current session.

The significant and substantive discussions that we have carried out during the nine rounds of the process of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have highlighted the significant agreement among Members regarding the urgent need to adapt the structure of our Organization to adequately reflect the changes that have arisen in the international context since the most recent reform of that body. In that respect, Peru believes that new impetus must be given to the negotiations to advance the goal of achieving a renewed, renovated, expanded, more democratic, representative, effective and efficient Security Council whose working methods that are more transparent. Therefore, Peru believes that it is time to proceed to a dynamic, informal drafting process that leads us to a negotiating text with clear alternatives that enjoys the support and, above all, commitment of Member States.

We are grateful for the valuable compilation work carried out by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We now need to hold text-based negotiations in order to overcome entrenched positions and identify and process the options available to us so that we can move forward towards negotiating work with tangible, balanced and representative results, always on the basis of the principle that it must be a transparent and inclusive process with a view to the timely reform of the Security Council.

Peru welcomed the recent creation of an advisory group responsible for collecting the positions of the various negotiating groups and countries that are involved in this debate, on the understanding that this is part of the efforts to revive the process of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, in accordance with General Assembly decision 62/557.

Peru reiterates once again its conviction that, if the Security Council is to adapt to new realities, it must incorporate new members, permanent and non-permanent alike, in order to promote fair and equitable regional representation that represents a change from the current status quo.

With regard to the question of the veto, Peru has consistently maintained a principled position aimed ultimately at its elimination. Now, in a constructive spirit, my delegation believes that the permanent members should commit to assessing, as a first step, a possible limitation on the use of the veto, relying on the existing rule established in paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the Charter.

Additionally, Peru believes it is important to reach consensus on the possibility of establishing precise limits for the use of the veto, eliminating the possibility of applying it in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and successive acts of flagrant violation of human rights or international humanitarian law. I welcome the French position on this issue, while calling on the other permanent members to explore that option.

It is also important for the Security Council to make progress on a serious and comprehensive self-assessment of its work in order to enhance its legitimacy and the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. In that

regard, my delegation believes that it is of the utmost importance to make progress towards a concrete reform of the working methods of the Council, so that they are more transparent and efficient. To that end, we believe that there is a need to hold more open meetings, increase the number of meetings to update members on the topics of discussion, and ensure that such meetings are substantive in nature and held in a timely manner.

We also believe it important to strengthen the practice of Security Council consultations with troop-contributing members in advance of the Council's deliberations on the subject, and to ensure inclusion and regularity in the practice of self-assessment and the review of the implementation of Council decisions. Similarly, we welcome the recent initiative to hold meetings to review the work of the Council at the end of each month, and we call for this beneficial practice to be continued in order to increase the transparency of the Council. We also appreciate the practice of holding open debates on issues being considered by the Council. However, this should not be a mere formality, and the debates should reflect the views of all Members of the Organization.

Every process should lead to the adoption of a decision. Continuing to reiterate our well-known national positions merely postpones an important decision that is supported by a majority of the membership. If, as unanimously expressed here, we want to reform the Security Council, we must translate this desire into concrete commitments. I reaffirm my country's willingness to continue to participate constructively in the informal plenary meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation in and membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago aligns itself with the statement made by the representatives of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Japan on behalf of the Group of Four, and Saint Kitts and Nevis on behalf of the L.69 group in encouraging inclusive Security Council reform, and takes this opportunity to deliver our remarks on agenda item 123, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

Trinidad and Tobago unequivocally supports expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent member categories of the Security Council, and as such it advocates for the expansion of the roles of developing countries in both categories. In that context, it is resolutely in favour of the African common position, as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus. In addition, we support calls for the provision of a special rotating seat for small island developing States in a reformed Security Council, and in that context we call for an increase in the size of the Security Council from the current 15 to approximately 27.

With a view to promoting the equality of States, Trinidad and Tobago supports the elimination of the veto. However, in the event of its retention, we consider that all permanent members of an expanded and reformed Security Council must have the same rights and privileges as existing permanent States.

In the vein of efficiency, we call for improved working methods of the Council so as to increase the involvement of non-members in its work, as appropriate, and to enhance the Council's accountability and transparency. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago supports the position advanced by CARICOM as it relates to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, and encourages the adoption of appropriate measures to enable the General Assembly to function effectively as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

Trinidad and Tobago believes that the need for Security Council reform is evident, as the international community is faced with new and evolving global security challenges, as well as issues of human rights and conscience. With the continuing evolution of the global political climate, the need for a Security Council that represents, more broadly, the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century is becoming increasingly obvious.

In the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1), international leaders supported an early reform of the Security Council. The pace of that reform, however, must be increased if we are not to be overtaken by new circumstances that could repeatedly test the fabric of relationships among Member States of the General Assembly.

Trinidad and Tobago further reiterates CARICOM's call for greater urgency in achieving lasting Security Council reform, and we extend our continued support for decision 64/568 on that matter. We congratulate Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, on his reappointment as Chair of the

intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, and encourage the progressive spirit that those negotiations espouse.

In closing, Trinidad and Tobago would like to express its gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, for his efforts in promoting Security Council reform, and to current President John Ashe for his efforts to continue discussions towards a more representative and effective Security Council. It is our hope that tangible outcomes, including a meaningful action plan, will be the outcome of those deliberations, in the interest of global peace and security.

Mr. Emiliou (Cyprus): Cyprus welcomes this timely debate on the important matter of the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. As the President of the General Assembly has noted, United Nations reform represents an important element in our overall effort to strengthen the Organization, without which the Organization runs the risk of becoming inconsequential.

We welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Tanin as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, and we look forward to the session's first meeting in that framework. We also take note of the President's decision to form an advisory group that, as we understand it, will provide him with input aimed at reflecting a comprehensive approach to the positions and ideas put forward in the negotiations so far, and pointing to the options available for charting the road ahead.

Cyprus supports a comprehensive report of the Security Council based on decision 62/557, which, among other things, includes the improvement of the Council's working methods in order to enchance its capacities and legitimacy and the effectiveness of its decisions and actions, as well as to increase the transparency of its work. In addition, we support expanding the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We believe that all five key issues identified in the aforementioned decisions — namely, categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council, working methods, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly — should be addressed and resolved in a package deal through the member-driven process of the intergovernmental negotiations. Only that process, in its inclusive and holistic nature and its unity of purpose and intention, can bring about reform that is meaningful, representative and democratic.

The year 2015 will mark the 10-year anniversary of the 2005 World Summit, in which global leaders recognized, among other things, the need for an early reform of the Security Council. Furthermore, it has been nearly five years since the intergovernmental negotiations began. In decision 62/557, Member States resolved, among other things, to negotiate in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, seeking a solution that could garner the widest possible political acceptance of Member States.

We believe that the time has come to show the necessary political resolve, realism and commitment to moving the process forward and to agreeing consensually on a reform model that would address the concerns and aspirations of all involved. We need to create a more fair and representative Council that can reflect the twenty-first century's reality and tackle its complex challenges. In order to make progress, we need to begin serious and committed text-based negotiations. We do not have the luxury of delaying this process any longer, since we will soon be entering the tenth round of intergovernmental negotiations. Let us remind ourselves that the world needs to see our determination to keep the United Nations relevant, involved and resolute, with the ability to address its problems and to fulfil its hopes.

Mrs. Morgan (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. We join others in thanking the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China for introducing the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/68/2) and the United States of America for preparing its introduction.

Security Council reform is a process that can be guided only by all States members of the General Assembly, not just by a few. It is also urgently needed. The Council's inaction for over two years concerning the crisis in Syria was the latest example of the paralysis that often prevents it from responding in a timely and effective manner, and that needs to be corrected.

In that regard, Mexico acknowledges France's recent proposal to limit the use of the veto, particularly in situations involving war crimes, crimes against

humanity and genocide. We believe that would be a step in the right direction and would reaffirm the commitment of the five permanent members of the Council to its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Mexico is eager to work with all those interested in the proposal in order to find a formula that can enable it to be applied.

Mexico reiterates its commitment to continuing to work on a comprehensive, transparent and equitable reform process without artificial deadlines. We should not be under the illusion that an agreement will be reached because the Organization's seventieth anniversary is on the horizon. It may be a good target if every State has the political will to reach a compromise, but we must not forget what happened during the sixtieth anniversary. Cyclical celebrations do not bring magical solutions that are not backed up by broad, solid agreements. As long as the lack of flexibility and political will on the part of some is aimed at privileging a few, no reform is possible. We should concentrate our efforts on the substance and not the calendar.

The ultimate result of our negotiation process should be an effective, transparent Security Council that is representative of all Member States and provides greater opportunities for countries that wish to serve on the Council on a more frequent and prolonged basis, as well as those that have never been members. Mexico hopes that the recent reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin as facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiation process will lead to substantial progress in facilitating a process that is not based on bias or a tendency to interpret the positions of Member States in return for support. It should be a comprehensive process that takes into account the five key issues in decision 62/557 and includes realistic, viable and comprehensive proposals. The formula for reform enlarging the permanent membership, which some countries in the Council are pushing, exacerbates the inequality that is intrinsic to the Council's current composition, to the detriment of the goals of greater representativeness, transparency and accountability to the General Assembly.

Mexico and Uniting for Consensus seek not to impose their views on the rest of the membership, but to find a compromise solution with which as many Member States as possible can agree. As Latin Americans, we understand perfectly the desire of the African Group for fair representation that will enable it to play its rightful role in the Council. In particular, we recognize and support their claim for equal rights and for a solution to the entire continent's historic lack of representation. We see their rightful claim as an expression of the strength that gives them unity and consensus, and not as an individual desire for power and privilege. We reiterate our willingness to continue to work with Africa in promoting formulas for equitable representation for all regional groups.

Like the rest of Uniting for Consensus, we took note of the letter of 22 October, by which Member States were informed of the decision to create an advisory group on Security Council reform, with the proposal that it produce a basis for the intergovernmental negotiations. However, we do not believe this to be a body that represents the vast majority of the membership of the Organization. Mexico reiterates its appreciation and full respect for the members of the advisory group. We reiterate, however, that the only forum with the authority to make decisions on Security Council reform is that of the intergovernmental negotiations within the General Assembly, where we need no one to interpret our wishes. We appreciate Ambassador Ashe's assurances to our group this week regarding the mandate and objectives of his advisory group. We are encouraged by the fact that it will not draft any official documents or have the capacity to negotiate, summarize any of the reform proposals that have been circulating for many years or prepare any draft resolutions. However, as we have seen throughout this debate, there are still conflicting interpretations, promoted by some members of the group, regarding its mandate. We trust the President's word and believe that his commitment will prevail over the national positions expressed by some members of his advisory group. Mexico will not support any working document issued by the group unless it has the full approval of all Member States, which ensures impartiality, including on the different positions of various Member States.

Both nationally and as a member of the Uniting for Consensus group, Mexico will continue to participate constructively in the forthcoming session of the intergovernmental negotiations, with openness and complete transparency.

Mr. Moura (Portugal): I would like to commend the President for convening today's meeting and launching the intergovernmental process on an important subject at an early stage of this session. I would also like to welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The question we are discussing today is about equitable representation, but it is ultimately also about the efficacy of an organ, the Security Council, that acts on behalf of us all, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and security. In order to exercise such responsibility and address the challenges the world faces today, we need a strong and effective Security Council. And a strong and effective Security Council is one whose composition reflects the geopolitical realities and emerging regional Powers of the twenty-first century.

The original structure of the Security Council, with permanent and non-permanent members, has not changed. Could it be different? Hardly, since the structure results directly from the Charter of the United Nations that we have all ratified, entrusting the permanent members with a specific guardian role concerning any modification of its provisions. No reform of the Council can avoid it. The need for ratification of any Charter modification by the permanent members leads us to the pragmatic conclusion that both categories of permanent and non-permanent members are here to stay.

Under that assumption, in our view the only way to make the Council more representative is to increase both categories of its membership. Moreover, to find the right balance in the representation of the Council as a whole, we must examine the composition of each category, give all regional groups due participation in the permanent category, which is still not the case, and ensure broader participation and representation in the non-permanent category. In the 1960s, the General Assembly opted to increase membership in the non-permanent category only. We were then 115 members, but five decades later, with 193 members, we can no longer accept increasing its seats again in only one membership category, thereby reinforcing even further the existing correlation. We should aim at an increased membership in both categories if we want to achieve equitable representation on the Council as a whole.

Secondly, when addressing such enlargement, one should be cautious in order to maintain an appropriate balance and equitable representation in the non-permanent category. For medium-size and small States — which, I note, constitute the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations — that is of crucial importance. Any proposal that would reserve a number of those seats for certain States for long-term mandates would substantially hinder the access of many of the other States to serving on the Council. That is something we are not inclined to accept. Creating a new category of seats would aggravate the already existing division among permanent and non-permanent members by including an intermediate category of semi-permanent members. In our view, that would neither serve the wider membership nor help the Security Council in its work, and would in fact result in a less representative and effective body.

Thirdly, the notion of permanent membership is tightly linked with the very notion of civility. It is as inherent to the category of permanent membership as rotation is to non-permanent seats, which should allow as many States as possible the opportunity, if they so wish, to serve on the Council.

Fourthly, proposals to increase the membership in both categories have been gathering increased support among delegations. While differences still exist, increasing convergencies related to the issue have been identified in the course of the recent round of intergovernmental negotiations in the form of several proposals on the table, including the African position. Let us move forward and build on those convergencies. That should not prevent us from focusing when the time comes. However, if divergencies persist, we will continue our efforts to build an even larger common ground in the future.

In conclusion, the reform of the Security Council cannot be delayed time and time again. As recently stated by my Minister for Foreign Affairs in the general debate,

> “It is increasingly difficult to justify why countries such as Brazil and India are not permanent members of the Security Council.” (*A/68/PV.18, p. 39*)

Moreover, we are of the strong view that Africa absolutely deserves permanent representation on the Security Council. Africa must be treated with justice and in a way that reflects its size, its economic growth and its weight in today’s world.

We should avoid engaging in repetitive exercises that end up feeding our divergencies. Rather, we should narrow our focus on that which can unite and lead to a larger common ground and make possible further efforts towards consensus. In that respect, we see merit in centring future intergovernmental negotiations on a suitable basis that may help to focus on the main elements of reform and narrow to the extent possible the different positions on the table.

My delegation again commends the President of the General Assembly for opening that path of negotiations to members and for committing his leadership to the intergovernmental process on the reform of the Security Council. On our part, we are ready to engage actively and constructively in that process.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand commends the President of the General Assembly for taking up the challenge of Security Council reform, the need for which was again strongly emphasized in many statements from our leaders in the general debate earlier in the session.

There is little doubt that structures designed in the 1945 post-war world for an intergovernmental Organization of just 51 Members are no longer best-suited to today's 193-Member body. That is particularly so with the Security Council, whose membership has been expanded only once in the past 68 years, nearly 50 years ago, when, as the representative of Portugal has just pointed out, the membership of the Assembly numbered just over 100 — little more than half its present membership.

For whatever reasons, back in 1945 some very influential States were left out of the original power-sharing arrangements. They and those whose power has emerged in the ensuing years understandably now chafe at being excluded from the inner circle of the Organization's most powerful body. We also share the view of many smaller States that the current number of non-permanent seats and the associated geographic groups no longer ensures either fairness in representation or opportunity for election. There are too many faces pressed against the window. Change is needed.

However, the past two decades of debate have shown that there is no obvious or easy solution to rectifying the democratic deficit that is inherent in the Council's current composition, and the lack of progress inevitably raises serious questions as to whether the Organization is likely in the foreseeable future to agree any fundamental structural reform of the Security Council.

In New Zealand's view, that democratic deficit will not be fixed simply by adding another group of permanent members, even if that might be considered desirable, or, by extending veto rights. Nor will the deficit be fixed by insisting on the status quo, despite the deep misgivings of some Members regarding any expansion in the category of permanent membership. New Zealand believes we will make progress only if we are willing to explore and even to test solutions that advance the interests of the wider membership and not of just a few.

That is why New Zealand has expressed support for an intermediate solution that would offer the Assembly's more powerful members the prospect of Security Council membership for longer periods — including the possibility of immediate re-election — and that would also expand the number of seats that are held for two-year terms, thus ensuring that smaller States would not be shut out of the Council.

While we are certainly willing to consider other ideas, we believe that an intermediate solution of that nature is more likely to secure the support of two thirds of the membership in a vote of the General Assembly, and also to achieve ratification by the same majority — a key Charter requirement that is sometimes overlooked by those who seek to tally votes in support of their respective positions.

This debate is focused principally on the size, categories of membership, regional representation, working methods and the use of the veto in an enlarged and reformed Security Council. We must remember, however, that those issues are only a part of the bigger question of overall Security Council reform. Equally important is the question of improving the current Council's working methods — and that is change which should be achievable even in the shorter term.

We see that as an issue separate from structural reform. As my Prime Minister said when addressing the Assembly in September,

> "[t]he problems are more systemic and relate both to the composition and the formal and informal processes of the Council" (*A/68/PV.14, p. 9*).

Considerations of efficiency and realpolitik do not justify denying elected members an effective voice in Council decision-making. For that reason, we urge permanent members to take a hard look at the way in which they conduct their business. They could do much to assuage concerns about the legitimacy of Council decisions if they were more open and responsive to the views of the wider membership and if they treated elected members of the Council, whose votes are needed for all formal Council decisions, more as partners. In that regard, we particularly welcome the suggestion from the delegation of France that there be a voluntary

restriction or code of conduct on the use of the veto (see A/68/PV.46).

We look forward to exploring those and other issues in the negotiations we are to conduct, and we wish the President every success in that endeavour.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China and president of the Security Council for the month of November, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/68/2).

Ireland warmly welcomes the initiative that the President of the General Assembly has taken to reinvigorate the search for a fair and effective solution to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We have confidence in the advisory group that has been appointed, and we look forward to the fruits of the work that it is undertaking to identify options and a basis on which the intergovernmental negotiations can be resumed.

Everyone recognizes, and has recognized for years, that the Security Council needs a thorough overhauling. Its composition is seriously out of step with the geopolitical realities of today's world. We need a Security Council that is more representative, more inclusive, more effective, more transparent and more accountable in its actions. We also need to find ways through the logjams that its own procedures can create. The veto rights conferred on its five permanent members can on occasion lead to paralysis, compromising the Council's ability to respond effectively to the great global challenges that fall within its remit.

There are many deficiencies in the Security Council's structure and procedures that need to be addressed. For as long as we fail to agree a programme of significant reform, we are perpetuating a deeply unsatisfactory state of affairs. At a time when global and regional challenges are proliferating and its agenda is rapidly expanding, the Council's weaknesses are apparent and its authority and credibility are suffering.

We must make a concerted effort to move the negotiations on reform of the Council into a more concrete and operational phase. It is time to concentrate minds around a concise basis on which we can move towards the decisions that are now urgently needed. It is also important that we set ourselves a clear time frame for that work. A high-level political meeting that would take key decisions is something for which we should aim during this General Assembly session. For all those reasons, Ireland strongly supports the timely initiative taken by the President of the General Assembly.

In our view, the five reform elements outlined in decision 62/577 are interrelated parts of a single package. Success is contingent on agreement in all five areas. That, we believe, should create the scope for compromise and make it easier rather than more difficult to reach overall agreement.

How might the future Council be composed? We see substantial merit in the various models for reform that have been put forward to date. All grapple with the challenge of adjusting the composition so as to correct the anomalies and problems of underrepresentation, which are widely acknowledged. African underrepresentation is perhaps the most blatant injustice. There is, however, disagreement as to the best way forward. No single model as currently put forward commands overwhelming support. It could be argued that the stalemate to which that has led is in fact undermining the very institution we are seeking to improve.

My delegation believes that whichever reform model is chosen should be capable of attracting very extensive support across the membership. We need to get Security Council reform right. We must be certain that whatever new arrangements we make are overwhelmingly accepted if the aim of enhancing the Council's democratic legitimacy, restoring its authority and improving its effectiveness is to be achieved. That points towards compromise and exploration of the middle ground. We should be willing to look at alternative ways forward that would retain key elements of the main models on offer but seek to build bridges between them.

There is division over the question of additional permanent seats, with strongly argued positions on both sides. If we are to reach an agreement that will command the broadest possible support and therefore be solid and durable, imaginative approaches will be needed in addressing the claims to permanent membership that are made by a number of countries and regions. Ireland would also wish to see arrangements that do not diminish the opportunities for smaller States to serve on the Council at regular intervals.

Turning to another aspect of the debate, Ireland believes that the veto rights conferred on the permanent five members (P-5) are an anachronism in today's world.

We would ideally wish to see them ended. If that cannot be achieved, we see great merit in the proposal by the representative of France that the P-5 would voluntarily forgo their veto rights when the Council is discussing mass atrocity crimes (see A/68/PV.46). We would hope, indeed, that the P-5 could also agree to waive those rights when dealing with other issues, such as flagrant human rights violations or breaches of international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, a rebalanced Security Council, together with a modified approach to veto rights, would in our view enhance significantly the effectiveness of the Security Council and make it fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President for having convened this debate and support the efforts to launch negotioations on Security Council reform. We also thank the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China for having introduced the report on the work of the Security Council between 1 August 2012 and 31 July 2013 (A/68/2).

Cuba fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/68/PV.46).

The General Assembly has invested 20 years in discussing this issue. Those years have been crucial in terms of putting forward country positions and to fostering a better understanding of the urgency of Security Council reform. It is difficult to sustain the status quo nearly seven decades after the founding of the United Nations with the tremendous political, social and economic development that we have seen in the history of humankind during this period, in particular in the past 20 years.

Ms. Picco (Monaco), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Cuba reiterates the need to launch true negotiations on Security Council reform that would make that main organ of the United Nations a democratic, transparent and representative body. The 193 States Members of the United Nations would in that way feel fully represented and recognize the full legitimacy of the provision of Article 24 of the Charter, which confers on the Council the responsibility of acting on behalf of all Member States.

As Member States, we must also comply with the mandate established by the General Assembly through various resolutions, which calls for the start of immediate intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Previous rounds of discussions and the bodies of proposals put forward by delegations affirm that a clear majority of Member States support the following positions, to mention but a few.

First, the majority of Member States support an expansion in Security Council membership in both categories, that is, increasing the number of both permanent and non-permanent members. Secondly, they recognize the need to eliminate the veto and immediately implement mechanisms that limit its use as much as possible. Thirdly, they recognize the need to seriously reform the working methods of the Council in order to ensure that it works as a transparent, democratic and representative organ. Fourthly, they recognize the need for a balanced and efficient relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Cuba is ready to begin the negotiations required for that process without further delay, and agrees with the majority of delegations that all the proposals made during intergovernmental deliberations should be taken into account. While Cuba's positions are very well known, allow me to reiterate them for the benefit of the new cycle of discussions and in line with the elements of the letter of the President of the General Assembly dated 22 October.

Cuba does not support the creation of new categories of membership. Instead of encouraging better functioning of the Council, that could exacerbate the existing differences and foment division within the Council. New members of an enlarged Council, whether permanent or non-permanent, must have exactly the same duties and powers as the current members of that organ, including the right to the veto. Cuba would not object to the possibility of the immediate re-election of non-permanent members.

With regard to the veto, Cuba's view of that undemocratic and anachronistic privilege, which must, we are firmly convinced, be eliminated, is well known. However, given that it would be unrealistic to expect that to happen right now, we believe that, as a first step, the use of the veto should be limited to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Cuba favours a large increase in Security Council membership. An enlarged Council should increase to

25 or 26 members. The expansion should take place in both categories of membership and most of the new seats should go to developing countries, on the basis of the proposals made by the Non-Aligned Movement. The objective is not to expand for the sake of expansion, but rather to respond to the unjustifiable lack of representation of developing countries in the Security Council.

Council reform must also include the reform of its working methods. We support a transparent Security Council in which closed-door consultations are the exception and not the rule. We aspire to a Council that addresses the issues that it is responsible for, which means that the Council must not encroach on the mandates of other organs. We want a Council that really considers Member States' views before adopting decisions, and that ensures a level of real access to States that are not members of that body.

In conclusion, I reiterate Cuba's opinion that Security Council reform is a central element of the reform of the United Nations. One cannot speak of genuine reform of the Organization until there is real reform of the Council so that it functions on behalf of the interests of all Member States, which, in accordance with the Charter, is what it is supposed to do. It should be held accountable for that.

Mr. Sarkowicz (Poland): This year's general debate proved that the issue of an effective and responsive Security Council is one of the major concerns of the whole membership. The President of Poland, Mr. Bronisław Komorowski, voiced in his statement (see A/68/PV.9) Poland's strong support for bolstering the Council's authority, legitimacy and effectiveness. We believe that the appropriate moment has come for breaking the deadlock in the reform process.

Poland views the enhancement of the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as its enlargement, as the key issues in the complex process of reforming the Security Council. The reform should be built on the assumption that membership not only grants privileges but also, most important, increases responsibilities. All Security Council members are entrusted with an extremely important duty to defend and secure the fundamental values inscribed in the Charter of the United Nations.

Security Council reform is essential, as the current composition of the Council and its working methods do not meet the challenges of the world today. The contribution of Member States to the Organization should be taken into account in considering modifications of the Security Council's composition. In that regard, fulfilment of financial obligations and participation in peacekeeping operations are of the utmost importance. Reform is essential, but it should be done without weakening the efficiency of the Council.

Furthermore, the enlargement of the Council should seek to ensure a balanced representation of all regional groups. In that context, Poland supports a reform that would grant an additional non-permanent seat to the East European States, given the Group's substantial enlargement in recent decades — from 9 to 23 countries.

We have always supported efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council with a view to making its actions more transparent. The Security Council should further enhance its cooperation with regional organizations, troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and the entire United Nations system. We support more active engagement by non-Member States and countries directly affected by conflict situations in the work of the Security Council, in particular during the process of preparing resolutions, presidential statements and press statements. Genuine improvement in the functioning of the Security Council should also include closer consultation with civil society. We hope that the newly established accountability, coherence and transparency group will contribute significantly to the discussion on the working methods of the Council.

We take note of the recent decision of the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador John Ashe, to establish his advisory group on Security Council reform and to organize this year's debate on this issue earlier than usual. We believe that such steps may help to build momentum for an acceleration of the negotiations. However, while new attempts to revitalize the debate are of the utmost importance, it is equally important to avoid harmful polarization of positions.

Mrs. Miculescu (Romania): As we are jointly debating two agenda items, I would like first to use this opportunity to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, for introducing the Security Council's annual report (A/68/2), as well as the United States for preparing its introduction. I also thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely and very useful debate.

Allow me to put on record, at the very outset, my delegation's support for the efforts of the President of the General Assembly aimed at relaunching the consultation process on the reform of the Security Council. We are very pleased with his decision to reappoint the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, His Excellency Ambassador Zahir Tanin, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, and we warmly congratulate Ambassador Tanin. His reappointment ensures the continuity and the necessary institutional memory of the work in progress and reflects a recognition of and trust in the skills, dedication, patience and impartiality that Ambassador Tanin has demonstrated during the last couple of years.

We also value the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to establish an advisory group for facilitating the start of the intergovernmental negotiations during the current session. We hope that the group will cooperate fully with Ambassador Tanin so that the process can advance effectively. I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate all the colleagues involved in this new stage of the process and assure them of my delegation's full interest and readiness to contribute to the progress of the work during the current session. We fully appreciate and value the extensive details on the rationale and the exact mandate of the group that the President of the General Assembly provided us with at the opening of our debate.

As we also seek to adopt feasible concrete measures for Security Council reform before the 2015 summit, we are in favour of accelerating the deliberations, including with the input received from the advisory group. The time has come to start negotiations on a concise draft text.

We got a glimpse of what lies ahead of us in the next stage during the latest Security Council open debate on the Council's working methods (see S/PV.7052), where there was broad recognition of the improvements — although some speakers considered them to be slow and tortured. Nevertheless, in terms of transparency and accountability, some progress has been achieved through, inter alia, open debates, briefings by the President for non-member States, wrap-up and horizon-scanning meetings and through improved public access to information. Now that all of those improvements have been launched, we need to maintain them so that they become the rule, not the exception.

We should be realistically ambitious. That is why, in our view, the five key issues under consideration should be approached independently, at their own pace. Among them, the further improvement of the Security Council's working methods is definitely the least contentious one and continues to offer some chance for further progress. In that respect, Romania finds particularly interesting the various concrete proposals that have been made, particularly the recent ones introduced by the accountability, coherence and transparency group.

In most of the national statements on Security Council reform in particular, and on reform of the United Nations system more broadly, 2015 is the deadline for bringing in deliverables. Romania is naturally of the view that we are lagging far behind the commitments undertaken by our Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit to make the Council, which is a unique body, more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and to facilitate the implementation of its decisions. We therefore believe that we are at a juncture where time is critical for consensual and collective decisions.

The President of the General Assembly has rightly anticipated that our current debates represent yet another opportunity for Member States to reiterate national positions on Security Council reform. Please allow me therefore to briefly state Romania's main objectives in that process.

We stand firmly for increased representation of the East European Group and for providing for at least one additional non-permanent seat for the Group in the future architecture of the Security Council. We support an expansion of the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, within reasonable limits — that is, up to 25 members. We consider that an adjustment of the veto right should be based on the consensus of the current permanent members, while taking into consideration the needs of the Council for faster action, greater involvement in conflict prevention and increased efficiency. We fully agree with the African, Asian, and Latin American Groups' proposals for better representation in the Security Council.

At the same time, the President of the General Assembly invited us to take this opportunity to identify the directions in which the search for common ground might be undertaken. That is why I would like to state

once more the strong preference of my country to engage in a truly intergovernmental negotiating process that is based on a concise document. We look forward to the input of the advisory group and to the 15 November meeting under the leadership of Ambassador Tanin. Romania sincerely hopes that we are entering a new stage of the process that will be characterized by inclusiveness, transparency, predictability and stronger political will, a stage that will integrate all the valuable ideas put forward so far as well as those that will definitely continue to emerge.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): At the outset, we would like to align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the African Group and the L.69 Group (see A/68/PV.46).

When the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma, addressed the General Assembly on 24 September 2013, he said the following about the reform of the Security Council:

> "Allow me, therefore, to register once again our serious concern that the Security Council, almost 70 years since its establishment, remains undemocratic, unrepresentative and unfair to developing nations and small States, and disenfranchises the majority of the States Members of the United Nations, which form the majority in the General Assembly. We cannot remain beholden indefinitely to the will of an unrepresentative minority on the most important issues of international peace and security.
>
> "There has been too much talk about the need for reform, with too little action. We would like to challenge the Assembly today by saying 'Let us set ourselves the target to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations in 2015 with a reformed, more inclusive, democratic and representative Security Council!'" (*A/68/PV.5, p. 50*).

We are pleased that a number of Member States are taking up that challenge and that more and more voices are joining in the call to achieve the reform of the Security Council in time for the seventieth anniversary of the Organization in 2015. The need for the reform of the Security Council has been made even more urgent by the Council's inability to effectively address current and continuing crisis situations, and calls into question whether the Council, as it is currently constituted, is able to carry out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Indeed, there has been too much talk about the need for reform with too little action. We therefore welcome Mr. John Ashe's commitment to prioritizing the matter during his term as President of the General Assembly. We extend our full support to the President and his leadership in order to infuse the intergovernmental negotiating process with a sense of urgency and much-needed momentum. In his acceptance speech upon his election, on 14 June, as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see A/67/PV.87), he made a pledge to advance the process of reforming all of the principal organs of the United Nations. We now recognize that pledge to have been inspired by the commitments made at the 2005 World Summit.

While the reform agenda covers the full spectrum of global governance, it has become necessary, for the reasons mentioned, for the reform of the Security Council to be addressed as a matter of priority. We applaud the leadership that the President of the General Assembly is showing on that important matter. South Africa views the reform of the Security Council as a key link in the restructuring of the United Nations aimed at ensuring that it is adequately empowered to address current and future challenges that require our collective action through the multilateral system of governance, as mandated by our leaders at the 2005 World Summit. It is therefore imperative that we move with the same sense of resolve and urgency to reform the Security Council.

We are all aware that for many years the open-ended dialogue on Security Council reform has not produced much in terms of tangible outcomes. It is therefore incumbent upon us, under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, to infuse the intergovernmental negotiations process with renewed vigour. It is high time that we progress to text-based negotiations, an approach that has been a tried-and-tested tool in the United Nations as the means to get us to where we need to go. In our view, a call for anything less is to advocate for the United Nations to remain stuck in a bygone era, while the challenges to maintaining international peace and security outpace the ability of the United Nations to respond effectively. We therefore support any initiative to move the stalled process to a concrete result, and we trust that the advisory group appointed by the President of the General Assembly will rise to the task.

Our preference is for text-based negotiations to start on 15 November. We see that as a realistic approach that can add momentum to the process of reform in an inclusive and transparent manner. The draft text must reflect the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the membership of the United Nations, which has been calling for early reform, and should include an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

We are fast approaching the year 2015, which will be the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and which will also be the culmination of the decade following the 2005 World Summit, when our Heads of State and Government mandated us to achieve early reform of the Security Council. My delegation believes that it is within our reach to deliver a reformed Security Council in time to celebrate that milestone occasion. The world has changed since 1945, and the membership of the United Nations has quadrupled since then. The only organ that has remained the same for the past seven decades is the Security Council, and that is untenable. It is an irony that those who consider themselves the leaders of the free world and the bastions of democracy are themselves comfortable sitting in an undemocratic, archaic and unrepresentative structure.

The more we continue with rhetoric and do not get down to the business of negotiating actual reform, the status quo continues to favour those who are privileged by the post-Second World War settlement. Africans are not going to accept the view that we should maintain the status quo while 70 per cent of the workload of the Security Council deals with African issues. Therefore, we would like to call on all progressive forces and like-minded countries to begin to consider producing a framework text covering all five agreed areas. Such a framework text would draw inspiration from the third revised draft that the facilitator produced some months ago. Based on the statements that have been made since the beginning of the intergovernmental negotiations by Member States and the observations of the facilitator a year and a half ago, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations would like to see a comprehensive reform of the Security Council with an expansion in both categories of membership.

We would like to make one point clear. The Charter is very unambiguous on the numbers required to amend it, and we therefore would not want to be drawn into a view that reform can be achieved only by consensus. The reality is that those who are opposed to the call for a comprehensive review and reform know very well that they are in the minority and that they are on the wrong side of history. They continue to use all the tricks in the book to delay and frustrate the process with a view to paralysing it.

In conclusion, South Africa believes that the time to engage in text-based negotiation is now. That can happen only if all those who would like to see an early reform unite and support the facilitator, Ambassador Tanin. The meeting of 15 November cannot be yet another debate filled with rhetoric, but should be about the text that is intended to serve as a base for the negotiations. By now we know one another's positions on reform. What we need now is for those positions to be packaged, just as the facilitator did when he produced his third draft text. A failure of the General Assembly to adopt a framework resolution in 2015 risks rendering the Security Council irrelevant, illegitimate and unaccountable.

Finally, we have noted that most Member States support the legitimate claim of Africans for representation in the permanent category. However, we are concerned that such claims of support have not been translated into concrete actions of support for early reform. It is far-fetched to think that reform is only for the benefit of Africa. Therefore, expressions of support should be located within the broad context of comprehensive reform; otherwise, such support is meaningless.

Ms. Lalić Smajević (Serbia): My delegation would like to thank the President for convening this meeting to discuss one of the most important issues on the agenda of the United Nations, and we wish therefore to express our appreciation for his commitment to drive the process forward. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the representative of Afghanistan on his reappointment as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. We would also like to join previous speakers in thanking China for introducing the Security Council's annual report (A/68/2) to the General Assembly, and the United States of America for preparing its introduction.

At the outset, I would like to point out that the Republic of Serbia is firmly committed to multilateralism in international relations and is a strong believer in the crucial and irreplaceable role of the United Nations in safeguarding international peace and

security and in promoting universal democratic values, human rights and development.

My country is a strong advocate for a reform and revitalization of the United Nations system that aims to adjust it to contemporary circumstances and streamline it to make it more realistically reflect the political and economic relations of the twenty-first century. The driving force and political framework for that process was provided by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit, whose Outcome described early reform of the Council as

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

Bearing that in mind, let me recall that, more than five years ago, in 2008, the current negotiating process was established by decision 62/557, which the General Assembly adopted by consensus. It has since provided Member States with a platform for discussing the future of the Security Council. Meanwhile, the rapidity of the changes taking place outside these walls is increasingly outpacing the tempo of reforms that we are able to agree upon. It is therefore important to speed up the current process of the intergovernmental negotiations during this session in accordance with decision 67/561, of 29 August.

In order to accelerate that process, we must invest our best efforts in an effort to find a compromise solution and establish a joint platform that is acceptable to the majority of the Organization. In future negotiations, we should proceed from the fact that the membership is united in the conviction that Security Council reform is necessary, in line with the conclusions of the 2005 World Summit. Additional efforts should be made to overcome the existing differences and ensure even greater convergence on all the aspects of the reform, as well as on all available models and proposals by Member States. We believe that the sensitive and complex nature of the issue should not deter us from working hard, with mutual respect, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. In that context, the Republic of Serbia will support every country working towards a reform that realistically reflects the situation at the global level.

We believe that an enlargement of the Security Council should be based on the broadest possible consensus on the part of Member States. At the same time, it should ensure the proper representation in that body of Member States from the various regional groups. In that context, we would appreciate it if the possibility of creating yet another seat for the East European Group could be seriously discussed during the next stage of Security Council reform negotiations, in view of the fact that the number of countries in that region has increased.

It is essential to maintain the trust and confidence of the entire membership in the process so that it can continue in a constructive manner. Success in achieving a comprehensive reform of the Organization that takes into account the interests of all Member States while encompassing the five key issues set out in decision 62/557 will require greater flexibility, mutual understanding and the political daring to reach a compromise.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate our hope that we shall find the courage and wisdom to take the negotiations to the next stage in the period ahead. That would further enhance the General Assembly's status as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations and, in that way, advance the efforts of generations to entrench peace, security and prosperity across the globe.

The Republic of Serbia will continue to engage constructively and to cooperate closely with other Member States in advancing the main objectives of Security Council reform.

Mrs. Namgyel (Bhutan): My delegation is pleased to participate in the discussions under the important agenda item 123, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". In doing so, my delegation fully associates itself with the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/68/PV.46).

My delegation is pleased to note that a matter of great urgency is receiving the requisite attention under the able leadership of the President of the General Assembly. In that connection, we welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Tanin as the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. My delegation would like to wish him every success in taking the process forward and to assure him of our full cooperation.

The intergovernmental negotiations under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Tanin has made

commendable progress, and it is now imperative that the process move forward on the basis of a text-based negotiations. Towards that end, we welcome the timely initiative of the President to convene an advisory group to assist him and to provide input to facilitate the work of the intergovernmental negotiations without further delay. If the advisory group is to begin its work on an auspicious track, it must include in its draft the desire of an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations for an early reform, which, inter alia, includes an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

The reform of the Security Council is compelling and has been called for by world leaders and representatives of almost every nation, both outside and within this Hall — testimony of the unanimous conviction of the overwhelming majority of Member States that it is high time for change. By now, the positions of each group, perhaps even each Member State, have been well articulated during the last eight rounds of the intergovernmental negotiations. Reform efforts must be expedited, taking into account the most accommodative, inclusive and judicious of those views if the United Nations is to adapt to the transformed realities and to continue to retain its relevance and credibility.

The United Nations will be 70 years old in 2015. We will also be marking the end of a decade since Heads of State and Governments mandated us to achieve early reform of the Security Council at the 2005 World Summit. Surely, we cannot and must not fail to deliver concrete outcomes for such a historic timeline.

Before concluding, may I also join other delegations in placing on record our appreciation to His Excellency the Permanent Representative of China for the comprehensive annual report on the work of the Security Council (A/68/2), as well as to the delegation of the United States for preparing the report's introduction.

Mrs. Beck (Solomon Islands): Let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting on agenda item 123, concerning Security Council reform.

The Solomon Islands would like to align its statement with that made by the representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/68/PV.46), as well as with the statement to be made this afternoon by the representative of Papua New Guinea on behalf of the small island developing States of the Pacific.

A reform of the Council remains an essential and integral element of our overall effort to reform the multilateral system. It has, however, eluded us for the past 15 years in 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, before entering intergovernmental negotiations for the past five years. A wealth of ideas have been collated over the years.

In that connection, Solomon Islands registers its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for taking a fresh look at where we are in the negotiations. My delegation shares the appreciation of those who have spoken before me in welcoming the reappointment of His Excellency Ambassador Tanin to manage our intergovernmental negotiations process. He has been with us from the beginning. Once again, as always, my delegation takes this opportunity to assure Ambassador Tanin of Solomon Islands' support and cooperation going forward.

The work of the intergovernmental negotiations process is guided by the Charter of the United Nations, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), the relevant rules of procedure and past practice. Decision 62/557 identifies the five key negotiable elements. We certainly have a document that compiles all of our positions; it now needs to be streamlined for it to be a negotiable text.

My delegation would like to acknowledge the President's hands-on approach in initiating the establishment of an advisory group of ambassadors to assist his Office. That initiative will breathe life into our stale intergovernmental negotiations process. We congratulate the ambassadors on their appointment and look forward to working with them. We would like them to produce a streamlined negotiating text based on submissions made by the membership. Once that is done, it will bring all our thoughts together in a single text that allows us to take collective action on negotiable elements that already enjoy general consensus. The output of their work should remain State-driven and should feed into the resumed intergovernmental negotiations. We are clear about the fact that we are not creating another negotiating track.

We live and operate in a fast-changing world. Already, we have seen deep integration within some

regions of the Organization that have already developed a common foreign policy. That needs to be taken into consideration in any reform outcome. We must also avoid going into the negotiations with conditions that put the process in a straitjacket. We call on everyone to come to the table with a vision to strengthen the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security and to ensure that structural change in the Council happens.

I will now go through the Solomon Islands' position on the five Security Council reform elements as they have been stated or restated over the years — the questions of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council, the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, and the Council's working methods.

Of the five negotiable elements, we see improving the working methods of the Security Council as the low-hanging fruit that does not warrant change to the Charter of the United Nations and that already has the widest possible support of everyone.

I will be bold and suggest that the President may wish to consider drafting a resolution on improving the working methods of the Security Council that addresses the legitimacy, inclusiveness, representation and transparency of the Council. We can build on work already done by the group of five small nations. We acknowledge the work done by the Council itself on improving its working methods. The Council's efforts complement the work to be done by the General Assembly.

On the question of the veto, we would like to see it abolished. But in the event that it is retained, the rights and privileges of the veto must be accorded to all new members to ensure that everyone with a permanent seat is on equal footing. The use of the veto is also linked to improved working methods that provide for limitations on the use of the veto.

On enlargement in the number of permanent and non-permanent seats, Solomon Islands supports enlargement in both categories. We would also like to see a seat for small island developing States in the non-permanent category.

With respect to equitable regional and geographical representation in terms of the permanent seats, special attention must be focused on unrepresented or under-represented regions.

On the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, we would like to see it improve. My delegation acknowledges that the Council's annual report to the General Assembly strengthens the relationship between the two organs. We thank the Chinese delegation for its introduction of the report (A/68/2) yesterday (see A/68/PV.46).

Finally, I conclude by stating that we need a reformed Security Council to match the realities of the twenty-first century. Solomon Islands, like all of the Pacific States, stands ready to engage in reforming the Council. We hope to see progress in the negotiations carried out in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner.

Ms. Philippa Jane King (Australia): First, let me thank you, Madam President, for presiding over this joint debate on the Security Council annual report (A/68/2) and Security Council reform — a subject on which Australia is a long-standing advocate. Australia welcomes the introduction of the Security Council annual report, made by the Permanent Representative of China, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, in his capacity as President of the Council for this month. We also thank the United States delegation, along with other Council members, for their work on the report. We look forward to a more substantive discussion in the General Assembly on the annual report later this month.

Substantive reform of the Security Council is long overdue. It is therefore imperative that we achieve progress in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Indeed, the priority that the President of the General Assembly has attached to the issue during his presidency is welcome and significant. We commend his reappointment of Afghanistan's Ambassador Tanin as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. Having led the General Assembly's work on the issue consistently since 2008, Ambassador Tanin's reappointment will be an important element in maintaining continuity, focus and an appreciation of the complexities of the issues under discussion.

We also welcome the appointment by the President of the General Assembly of a new advisory group on Security Council reform, composed of the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Liechtenstein, Papua New Guinea, San Marino and Sierra Leone. We have full confidence in the substantial intellectual contribution and integrity of those individuals and the group. Given the need for a strong Council with

the capacity to tackle today's international peace and security challenges, we support that initiative. We have a rare opportunity to achieve lasting successful reform, and we should seize it. We need to shift the mindset from posturing to practical, real negotiations.

Australia has long supported an expansion of the Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. That is important both to ensure a more equitable geographic balance and to enhance the Council's legitimacy. Both of those factors are important drivers of reform. As we have said before, all Member States have a stake in the Council's decisions. The Council has universal responsibilities and engages in situations across regions, particularly in Africa, for which the case for permanent membership is clear and compelling.

Since joining the United Nations as a founding Member, Australia has also argued strenuously for limits on the use of the veto, and promoted transparency as integral to the Security Council's legitimacy. We remain strongly committed to those principles, particularly as an elected Security Council member for this year and next.

The growing complexity and breadth of the Council's agenda makes it all the more necessary for the Council to adapt to modern times. The key to effectiveness lies in a more representative, transparent and legitimate Security Council.

A major criticism of the Council is that in recent times, in the face of major humanitarian crises, it has failed to discharge its responsibility to maintain peace and security — a responsibility it exercises on behalf of all Member States. Much criticism is directed towards the impact of the use or the threat of use of the veto. Given the recent Syrian experience, we believe France's proposal for permanent members to voluntarily renounce their veto powers in cases of mass atrocity crimes has merit and deserves further consideration. We should seriously discuss how to take that proposal forward.

Without prejudice to other aspects of Council reform, Australia supports early efforts to realize immediate and tangible benefits in the Council's working methods. As an elected member of the Council, we have seen first-hand the importance of and the need for greater transparency and accountability in the Council's work, including to enhance engagement with the broader United Nations membership, in particular troop- and police-contributing countries — those countries that are actually working to implement Council mandates on the ground, as well as key organs of the United Nations, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and regional and subregional organizations.

As we said during the Security Council open debate on working methods held on 29 October (see S/PV.7053), the accountability, coherence and transparency group, established in May, has greatly informed our work as a Council member, and we value our collaboration with the members of the group.

The notes by the President of the Council of 28 August (S/2013/515) and 28 October (S/2013/630) represent important steps towards enhancing the Council's engagement with the wider membership, including troop- and police-contributing countries.

As the President of the General Assembly has said, Member States must now consider how to reinvigorate their efforts in order to find common ground on the issue. Today and yesterday have seen useful discussions. But now let us try to make substantive progress. My delegation looks forward to hearing the ideas of the membership as well as the ideas of the advisory group on how to take the issue forward. It will require flexibility, cooperation, creative solutions and, above all else, some political will. But we must make progress to strengthen and modernize the Council. The challenges that face it and that face all of us are great and growing, and we need to remake a body that will meet them.

Mr. Reetoo (Mauritius): Mauritius aligns itself with the statement on Security Council reform delivered by the Permanent Representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/68/PV.46).

The debate over Security Council reform has endured for far too long. World leaders at the Millennium Summit resolved to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. At the 2005 World Summit, our leaders supported the early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of the overall reform of the United Nations in order to make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus further enhance its effectiveness, legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

Mauritius is convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations that upholds the principles, objectives and ideals of the

Charter of the United Nations. We believe that the reform should promote greater equity and take into consideration the major political and economic changes that the world has witnessed since the inception of the Organization. Mauritius also considers that the time has come for text-based negotiations to take place within the intergovernmental process.

We welcome the reappointment of His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations and wish him success in steering the process forward. We also support the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to appoint an advisory group to assist him in that important process during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Mauritius supports the L.69 proposal because we believe that it is consistent with the African common position, as embodied in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. We believe in Africa's rightful aspiration to enhanced representation in the Security Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. We also subscribe to the view that, as long as permanent members of the Security Council have the right of veto, the new permanent members of a reformed Security Council, too, should have the right of veto. We also fully support the proposal that the expansion of the Security Council should include one non-permanent seat for small island developing States.

After debates spanning more than two decades, the international community should start real and meaningful negotiations on Security Council reform. Mauritius believes that the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, in the year 2015, will be an important turning point, at which we should be able to deliver concrete outcomes on this most pressing subject. We hope that this session of the General Assembly, under the able leadership of the President, will generate the necessary political will and collective effort to take the process forward.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland): Allow me to commend His Excellency Mr. John Ashe, President of the General Assembly, for convening this meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We thank the President for his commitment to achieving progress on that important topic. We firmly believe that, under his able leadership, it is possible to move forward and achieve concrete results in that protracted process.

The Security Council is the principal organ of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Many factors determine the effectiveness of the Security Council and the authority that it carries in the international community. Most important is the quality of the decisions and the political and practical ability to carry them out. We are concerned that the ability of the Security Council to take the necessary decisions is too often compromised due to the right of the veto of permanent members. The Security Council must show that atrocity crimes are not tolerated by the international community. We join other Members in asking that the permanent members of the Council refrain from the use of veto in such cases.

I think that we all agree that the reform of the Security Council is crucial. The composition and the working methods play a key role in the reform. Transparency, openness and inclusiveness are relevant concepts in improving the functioning of the Security Council. We are proud to be members of the accountability, coherence and transparency group, whose purpose is to develop and improve the working methods of the Council. The composition of the future Security Council is, of course, the main issue. Efforts to improve the working methods are not a substitute for increasing the representativeness of the Council. In view of the realities of today's world, an enlargement of the Security Council is necessary in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, but without extending the right of the veto.

The Security Council needs large and small countries. Even the smallest countries can make a valuable contribution to the work of the Council in the benefit of international peace and security, However, size is not everything. We need better geographic represention. The underrepresentation of Africa is a key issue to address and to resolve in the reform process.

Finally, let me underline that Finland wholeheatedly supports Security Council reform. We hope that all Members of the United Nations will have an open mind and be ready to discuss new ideas. That process can succeed only if we focus on possible solutions, not on disagreements. Finland remains committed to engaging actively and constructively in order to advance the reform. We look forward to making tangible progress under the guidance of the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): Jamaica associates itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis representing the L.69 group and by the Permanent Representative of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters (see A/68/PV.46). I also join other delegations in thanking the representative of China for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/68/2).

The reform of the Security Council, one of the most powerful organs of the United Nations, is an issue that has long been on the agenda of this institution. The Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security has made it necessary to ensure that there is greater access, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and effectiveness for an improvement in the Council's overall performance.

Since Jamaica became a Member of the United Nations, on 18 September 1962, we have witnessed a steady growth in the membership of the Organization following the independence of many former colonies. With the rapid influx of new Members came loud calls in 1963 for a rearrangement of the composition of the Security Council. Jamaica was at the vanguard of that initiative, which heralded an expansion in the number of non-permanent seats from 6 to 10. Since then, we have had the privilege of serving twice on the Security Council. Having done so, we have experienced first-hand the complexities of the Council and its inner workings, as well as the need for its restructuring in order to safeguard its legitimacy and enhance its credibility.

Jamaica therefore raises its voice in support of the continuation of negotiations on Security Council reform and underscores the urgent need to move the intergovernmental negotiations process forward. In that vein, we welcome this debate and applaud the President of the General Assembly for his reappointment of Ambassador Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations process on Security Council reform. We likewise welcome the establishment of the advisory group to facilitate the continuation of the negotiations process and note its composition of Member States from a wide cross-section representing the different positions. Such developments have provided us with a new opportunity to move the process forward on the basis of text-based negotiations.

We therefore reiterate our continued support for an expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council. We believe that the new permanent members should include countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and that the new non-permanent members should be from Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. That takes into account the need to ensure the representation of developing countries, including small island developing States, whose participation should be on the basis of the concept of rotating seats.

With regard to the working methods of the Council, we are supportive of the view that there should be an improvement in those methods and in the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Jamaica believes that appropriate measures must be adopted to enable the General Assembly to function effectively as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. In conclusion, Jamaica remains convinced that Security Council reform is an important element in ensuring effective global governance. The United Nations must not only be a forum for discussion of global issues but must demonstrate leadership and be an example of that. A failure to achieve concrete outcomes on such a pressing subject would be tantamount to a failure to build and sustain peace for a safer world for this and future generations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.