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New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki . . . . . (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 9 and 119 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/64/2)

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

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation for the manner in which you, Mr. President, have conducted the work of the General Assembly thus far during this session and for the importance you have assigned to the reform of the Security Council during your presidency.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the Permanent Representative of Egypt (see A/64/PV.43).

I would also like to express our thanks to the delegation of Uganda for the preparation of the report of the Security Council to the Assembly (A/64/2) for the period from August 2008 to July 2009 and to the ambassador of Austria for presenting it.

Colombia would like to highlight the need for this document to go beyond compiling and enumerating in the future, and for it to include more qualitative information, such as the criteria used by the Council in its decision-making.

With regard to the reform of the Security Council, Colombia would like to highlight the work of the ambassador of Afghanistan in his capacity as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations held in the Assembly's informal plenary. I wish to express, on behalf of my delegation, our support for Ambassador Tanin in the continuation of his work during this session.

During the previous session of the General Assembly we began a negotiation process that can be considered historic, as it is a starting point for achieving concrete results in Council reform. The three rounds of intergovernmental negotiations, in which a large number of Member States participated, allowed us to have a valuable exchange of views and furthered our understanding of the vision of various Member States with regard to the process. We must take advantage of the clarity that we have gained and continue moving forward on the basis of the progress achieved. One of the primary objectives must be correcting the inequities and inefficiencies that affect the functioning of the Council.

The process that we are continuing today has generated a momentum that must result in a comprehensive reform of the Council, achieving to a more democratic, representative and transparent body in which there is greater effectiveness and better accountability. While the negotiations have demonstrated that there are issues on which the positions remain some distance apart, there are areas of reform that have the support of a large majority of Member States.

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For example, I doubt that any delegation disagrees with the fact that the ongoing improvement of the Security Council's working methods is a priority. All Member States of our Organization, especially those on the Council, must make efforts to ensure that it becomes a more transparent and participatory body. To achieve that, the Council must more often operate in an open manner. We need better access to information by way of a larger number of open meetings and special sessions and better interaction between the Council and the rest of the membership. The number of closed meetings and informal negotiations must be reduced. The Council should also allow greater access for States not members of the Council, in particular those directly affected by the issues being discussed. Likewise, decision-making by the Council should be based on clear procedures, in order to guarantee transparency.

With regard to the veto, Colombia has opposed that privilege since the creation of the United Nations and has advocated its abolition. We realize that it is a sensitive matter and that discussion of it could delay our deliberations on reform. An in-depth review of the possible alternatives for limiting the arbitrary use of that power, so as to make the decision-making process more democratic, has wide support among Members and could be a starting point. As my delegation has previously expressed, limiting the use of the veto to situations falling under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, creating mechanisms that could reverse or neutralize its application, or tightening the conditions under which it can be used are additional options that deserve serious consideration.

Colombia, like the majority of the membership, firmly believe that all States, large, medium or small, should have an equal opportunity to participate in the Council. The situation of historically underrepresented groups and regions, especially Africa, must be remedied.

The reality of the current process is that in the majority of areas there is wide agreement on how to achieve comprehensive reform. Most differences of opinion correspond to the discussion of categories of membership, and that is precisely where we must direct our best efforts.

Expanding the permanent-member category of the Security Council would conflict with our ideals. Extending permanent membership and the privileges that come with it to a few countries would be detrimental to the participation of small and medium States, which should have equal rights when it comes to influencing the decisions and actions of the Council.

The implications for our Organization of increasing the number of permanent members are clear. It is impossible to talk about democratization or sovereign equality and at the same time to extend arbitrary privileges to a few States. We cannot demand greater transparency and at the same time exempt a few from accountability to the rest of the membership. Likewise, we need to recognize the risks in appointing new members in perpetuity without knowing what the future holds. We must look for democratic alternatives that guarantee transparency and strengthen the accountability and representativeness of all States.

Colombia recognizes the aspirations of some States that seek to become permanent members of the Council and have expressed the desire to contribute to the work of the Council and to the maintenance of international peace and security beyond the non-renewable two-year term. The intermediate option, which my delegation has discussed on previous occasions, could be a viable option to enable some States to participate without compromising our guiding principles. An increase in the number of non-permanent seats with the possibility of re-election, or the creation of new, extended-term seats, is a formula for convergence that could bring together positions that to date have opposed each other.

Although great challenges still lie ahead in the search for an agreement, today we find ourselves closer to a solution than before. The process requires the full commitment, flexibility and goodwill of all Member States to negotiate in an open and sincere manner. The success of our work will depend on genuine efforts to find a common ground that allows for the broadest political agreement — of more than two thirds of the membership — and thus give reform the necessary legitimacy.

You may rest assured, Mr. President, that Colombia will continue to support your efforts, as well as those of Ambassador Tanin, in order to further the goal of making the Security Council a more democratic, transparent and participatory body that meets contemporary realities.

Mr. Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the report of the Security Council (A/64/2),

we wish to note once again that late access to the definitive version of the report makes detailed analysis of the document very difficult, particularly in view of its length. As for the insight into the activities of the Council that the report offers to the rest of the Members of the United Nations, we can say only that it retains the same features as previous reports, avoiding any substantive discussion, which makes for rather dull reading for us, the peoples of the United Nations who are not part of the Security Council except for perhaps once every 30 or 40 years.

With regard to reform of the Security Council, Uruguay has always maintained a flexible position, accepting that increasing the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members can be considered. Uruguay has lent its support to the proposals submitted by Japan, Brazil, Germany and India.

Uruguay is firmly opposed to granting the veto to new permanent members created by the eventual reform. Therefore we oppose the direct or indirect granting of the veto, whether through moratoriums on the exercise of a hypothetical right or through any other kind of mechanism that would seek to prolong such an extension.

Uruguay's principled position goes back to the original moment of creation of the United Nations. At the San Francisco Conference, the Uruguayan delegation underscored the need to ensure that members of the Security Council joined that body with no differences in prerogatives or rights, accepting that those countries that had borne the heaviest burden during the war should be assured seats on the Council, but not indefinitely, proposing a timeline that could be deemed prudent. "With no differences in prerogatives or rights" — that is the essential feature of the legal equality States, which is a central element of the Charter itself. The creation of new privileges would undermine the original basis of the Charter.

We cannot ignore the fact that many of the issues addressed during the rounds of intergovernmental negotiations have been discussed for over 12 years now and that there has been no agreement on them. Therefore we do not believe that it would be advisable for now to insist on issues that we know will not enjoy consensus or a broad majority. Those topics include the question of the veto.

In this regard, we wish to announce that, at the right time and while awaiting the development of discussions and the nature of the proposals to be made, the delegation of Uruguay will present texts of amendments or will propose a vote on all those paragraphs that would allow for proposing alternatives that establish the veto or applying the majorities required under Article 27 of the Charter to any of the new elected members in order to take up their functions in a reformed Council.

Finally, Uruguay supports the reform of the working methods of the Security Council in keeping with the proposals submitted within the various negotiating forums, in particular those presented by the so-called Group of Five.

Mr. Korček (Slovakia): It is a great privilege and honour for me to participate in today's joint annual debate on two crucially important and interrelated agenda items dealing with the report of the Security Council and with the issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We believe that our fruitful discussions yesterday and today will provide further impetus for the upcoming continuation of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council.

My delegation welcomes the annual report of the Security Council contained in the document A/64/2. The complexity, volume and continually increasing number of meetings are a worrying sign of the growing challenges in the area of international peace and security. We note with appreciation, however, that yet again this year the Council opened more meetings to the wider membership of the Organization.

From the statistical point of view, the annual report offers truly interesting and informative reading. However, we do regret that in spite of repeated calls for more in-depth reporting, this year's report again fails to provide a more analytical portrayal of the proceedings over the past 12 months. More substantial and analytical reporting that highlights the areas where the Council was able to respond effectively and where, on the contrary, it failed to act, would be much more conducive to meaningful and effective consideration of the work of the Security Council and to the success of our ongoing intergovernmental discussions on its reform as we strive to make the Council a truly effective and credible organ.

This joint debate today provides us with an excellent opportunity to consider effectively not just the report of the Council but also the ways to improve its work and its relationship with the General Assembly, also in the context of the overall Council reform process. In that regard, we welcome your commitment, Mr. President, to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform and appreciate your entrusting to Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan his continuing role in presiding on your behalf over our debate. We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Tanin for the able manner in which he has been guiding us through our complex deliberations and to assure him of our full support in this difficult task.

At the 2005 World Summit, heads of State and Government declared:

> "We recommend that the Security Council continue to adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work, as appropriate, enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work". (*resolution 60/1, para. 154*)

We cannot reaffirm strongly enough the importance of implementing that recommendation. Even though we particularly welcome the Council's enhanced transparency and improved working methods over recent years, it is undisputable that adapting the Council to the realities of the twenty-first century calls for further measures.

The questions of size and categories of membership have proven to pose the greatest challenge to our reform efforts. Therefore, as we continue with our deliberations, my delegation believes the time is ripe to start narrowing their scope and engage in a serious attempt to define concrete and precise parameters of the next steps. That approach means eliminating those proposals that do not enjoy sufficient support and elaborating further on those ideas to which a majority of Member States have expressed readiness to consider favourably.

As we move forward with the next round of intergovernmental negotiations, it is essential that we build upon the positive momentum created so far and avoid having a new round of restating well-known positions. To facilitate our move towards more substantial and concrete deliberations, we would very much be in favour of having a negotiating document from the Chairperson to serve as basis for our next debates.

My delegation believes that States capable of assuming global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security should become eligible for filling the posts of potential new permanent members of the Security Council — provided that the right of the veto is not further extended. To the contrary, the veto must also be subjected to serious reform as to its scope and the manner in which it is applied. Although we have heard a majority of Member States stating their support for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories, the inability to agree on this point has resulted in a stalemate that we have not been able to overcome for years.

Any prolonged hesitation to act and reach tangible results in Security Council reform will have further negative consequences on the overall reputation of the United Nations. To make this Organization truly trustworthy and relevant, we have a duty to reform the Security Council without further unnecessary delay.

Therefore, in the spirit of compromise in our quest for an effective outcome, we believe the intermediate solution merits our serious consideration. The notion of holding a review conference makes any new formats temporary. Furthermore, in order to allow for new members to truly settle into their new roles and prove their capabilities without having to deal with the stress of a fast-approaching re-election or review, it is essential that they remain in their seats at least for 10 to 15 years. That approach will inevitably prove to be a challenge for prospective new permanent members, as they would be subject to review. If they meet that challenge successfully and earn the trust of the overall United Nations membership, they would have to go through another democratic election process to obtain a permanent seat.

As for regional representation, it is essential to ensure that distribution of posts within the Council's non-permanent category be done on an equitable geographic basis. We believe that the regional group of Eastern European States needs to be allocated at least one additional non-permanent seat.

It is indisputable that the Council must become more representative. However, the enlargement must not compromise its ability to function as the executive organ that the Charter designed it to be. It is difficult to

imagine a more serious threat to the United Nations than an inoperable Security Council. We believe that the number of members of the enlarged Council should not exceed 25.

In Article 24 of the Charter, we Member States conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that the Council acts on our behalf. It is essential that we all remember that fact when deciding on the size of the Council. Rather than making it ineffectively large for the sake of representation, we need to choose its representatives in such a way that we can fully trust them to act on behalf of us all.

As we have stated on numerous previous occasions, my country's primary goal in this process is to ensure a more effective and efficient Security Council truly able to deal with and act upon the mounting challenges that we all face. Slovakia therefore is open to all constructive proposals and will consider them with the utmost open-mindedness and flexibility.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to pay tribute to you, Mr. President, for convening this joint debate and for giving due attention to Security Council reform in the agenda of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Let me express my gratitude to the delegations of Uganda and Austria for preparing and introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/64/2). My thanks go also to His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for all his invaluable efforts in presiding over the Assembly's informal intergovernmental negotiations on Council reform and for his humble acceptance of that responsibility for the second consecutive year.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I wish to communicate a few additional points.

Each year, the Security Council, pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, submits its high-profile annual report to the General Assembly for consideration by the Assembly; and each year in turn, the Assembly, pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 1, of the same Charter, receives and considers the report. However, expectations have still not been met, and the report is still not convincing. What is the point of making minor changes to the report, and what is the added value of this debate, if we do not want a mere repetition of the usual list of activities? The answer may lie in an understanding of the nature of today's meeting as a joint debate.

The point of making such changes and the added value of this debate are to be found in the combination of the two agenda items before us. We are here to consider the report of the Security Council together with the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Joint consideration of the report with the reform process essentially serves the basic objective of dealing with comprehensive Council reform in all its aspects. That merger should bear fruit in the form of a more democratic, inclusive, equitably representative, transparent, effective and accountable Council.

Since last year, five key issues related to the Security Council reform process — including new membership categories, 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 — have been discussed in detail in the Assembly. The hope was that those deliberations would somehow be reflected in practical terms in the work of the Council and its report.

Undoubtedly, much work went into the preparation of the 263-page report before us. We have taken note of the hard work done by the delegation of Uganda and the Secretariat in this compilation of the Council's undertakings. However, we need to think critically in order to make substantive changes to the report, so that it can depart from the customary repetitive pattern of annual reports. For that reason, I should like to take a look at the report and make a few points concerning the objectives and key issues of the reform process.

First, it goes without saying that the current composition of the Security Council is anachronistic and is neither regionally balanced nor geographically or geopolitically reflective of today's realities. In addition, many insightful and innovative independent studies, carried out within and outside this body, need to be taken into account. Thus, it is necessary to conduct an independent and comprehensive study of possible new elements that would better reflect today's

realities, responding to all the key issues of Security Council reform.

Needless to say, the under-representation of developing countries — including those in the Muslim world — on the Council must be seriously and satisfactorily addressed.

Secondly, the veto — and the fear of the veto as a tacit weapon in the hands of a few Member States — is a non-constructive instrument that reduces the possibility of Council action in many ways and in various cases in which action is needed, which has resulted in Council inactivity. The question of Palestine — including, in particular, last year's invasion and brutal bombardment of Gaza by the Israeli regime — is one of the clearest examples of Council inactivity and intentional delay.

Thus, the gradual elimination of the veto power is supported by almost all delegations. Reflections and further deliberations on this important subject could be explored, formulated and agreed upon. The report, together with other elements, could serve as a factual account of events in which the use or threat of use of the veto prevented or delayed Security Council decisions.

Thirdly, the long-time and continued practice by the Security Council of encroaching on the mandates of other principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the mandates of technical bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, under the pretext of security should be abandoned forever. If we are to tackle this dilemma, it is high time that we work out a pattern of cooperation by clearly defining each body's prerogatives in detail, as well as the areas along their shared boundaries, which could be addressed in collaboration between the bodies concerned. As a preliminary step, the report could provide a detailed account of the Security Council's exercise of its Charter prerogatives.

Fourthly, in accordance with the Charter, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, is entrusted primarily with the task of the progressive development and codification of international law. Therefore, norm-setting and lawmaking by the Security Council runs counter to the letter and spirit of the Charter. This could be analytically assessed in the report in order to facilitate the division of labour and tasks between the General Assembly and the Council.

Fifthly, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Council's decisions should reflect the wishes and views of the general membership. For that reason, the general membership — including, in particular, the countries concerned — should be informed about negotiations on resolutions or statements directly affecting them. However, this has often not been the case. The report could discuss the realization of that right.

Sixthly, to help ensure that the Council's working methods enable it to carry out its responsibility with regard to the rights of non-Council members, the following activities could also be listed and described in the report: implementing Article 31 of the Charter in order to allow non-Council members to participate in discussions on matters affecting them and their interests; allowing the countries concerned to exercise their right to inform the Council of their positions on issues having a direct impact on their national interests; providing non-selective notifications of Council meetings and convening regular daily briefings; and considering a right of reply for countries against which allegations are raised during Council meetings in certain formats.

Finally, no Council reform will be successful and no report will be complete unless and until all major issues are appropriately, comprehensively and inclusively addressed. Every effort should be made to make the Security Council more democratic, representative and accountable. Let me assure the Assembly of the full cooperation of my delegation to achieve those objectives.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The principal responsibility of the Security Council is the maintenance of international peace and security. In that sphere there are highly important matters, such as the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine, in which the Council has shown great failings.

The issues we are touching upon today are of particular significance in the necessary process of change that must take place within the United Nations. Security Council reform is the key element in the process of strengthening the United Nations and bringing it into alignment with the changes in the international system in recent years. The Organization of the United Nations does not meet the expectations of democratization cherished by the peoples of the world. We must transform it. The democratization of the United Nations should address both the specific structures of its various principal organs and the exercise of a real democratic culture. All Member States must respect its rules and decisions on the basis of the principle of sovereign equality among its Members. No country can claim dominance over it. No country should be belittled.

The Bolivarian Government believes that the reform — and thus the strengthening — of the Organization inevitably must include the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Therefore, the reform should lead to strengthening the role of the General Assembly in carrying out the powers assigned to it by the Charter in the field of peace and security, in accordance with Articles 10, 11, 12 and 13 of that international instrument. Those issues should not be the exclusive competence of the Security Council. Venezuela considers that the General Assembly must remain the Organization's primary forum for discussion and maintain its independence from other organs. It is necessary to reverse the tendency of the Security Council to become involved in matters outside its jurisdiction, undermining the central role of the General Assembly. The United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, cannot continue navigating with a map based on an obsolete political reality formed by agreements made at the end of the Second World War. What is required is an Organization renewed on the basis of understanding among all Member States and that therefore authentically represents the interests of the peoples and Governments committed to peace, justice, security and development.

My delegation welcomes the decision of this Assembly to continue the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the sixty-fourth session in the terms specified by General Assembly decision 62/557. We share the call of various delegations for the facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiating rounds to be given the mandate to produce a basic text for future negotiations.

Venezuela sees Security Council reform in terms of comprehensive results. Those should include expanding the categories of permanent and non-permanent members, the revision of the decision-making mechanism by way of eliminating the veto and the improvement of working methods to ensure broad participation of Member States, especially in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We agree with the statement by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation in the Security Council in 1999 (A/53/47) that reform of the Council is linked inextricably to the question of the veto. The veto is an anachronism that violates the sovereign equality of States and calls into question, within the Security Council itself, the very principle of democracy that this body labours to promote internationally.

Venezuela reiterates its support for increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members in the Security Council, and strongly supports the inclusion of countries from the developing regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, as permanent members. This is an unavoidable historic demand. The Bolivarian Government also favours an increase in the number of non-permanent members and an agreement to increase the membership of the Security Council to 25 or 26 members.

Venezuela recognizes that in recent years there have been some improvements. It welcomes the public debate, which encourage the participation of Member States in the discussion of issues of interest related to international peace and security. Those efforts, however, have been very limited. It is necessary to reverse the pernicious tendency of making closed meetings the rule and public gatherings the exception. In this matter it is necessary to respect rule 48 of the Provisional Rules and Procedures of the Security Council.

It has been suggested that genuine democratization of the Security Council and greater transparency of its operation could be achieved through improved working methods. That is a reductionist approach. Venezuela observes with concern that the old practices of the Security Council, about which there is

nothing democratic, continue on unchanged, adversely affecting the democratization, transparency and legitimacy of that body. The Security Council should hold consultations with countries affected by its decisions more often, guided by criteria of transparency, participation and democratization. It should invite countries that are not members of the Council to participate in informal consultations, using procedures similar to those stipulated in Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter.

Peace is a goal that concerns all Member States without exception. Peace based on privileges is discriminatory and is fragile and contrary to the aspirations of the democracy that we promote within multilateral institutions. Reform of the United Nations must necessarily lead to the strengthening of the General Assembly, because that is the main deliberative and policymaking organ of the Organization, as well as its most representative.

To ensure the necessary level of responsibility of the Security Council to Member States, the Council must submit regular substantive and analytical reports to the General Assembly. The Council's current practice of reporting annually, in a merely factual format, has not produced the desired results. The Council must be accountable to the General Assembly for its activities in a systematic manner, in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 (3) of the Charter.

To conclude, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that the reform process — and therefore the strengthening of the Organization — will be possible only to the extent that the purposes and principles of the Charter and the resolutions of its principal organs, including the General Assembly, are fully accepted and respected by all Member States.

Mr. Jawan (Malaysia): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement under this agenda item.

Malaysia takes note of the report of the Security Council, as contained in document A/64/2. We recognize the important work being carried out by the Security Council, as evidenced by the 228 formal meetings and 141 consultations of the whole held by the Council during the period under review. This adds up to more than one meeting per day, as the Security Council remains seized with more than 43 different issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security in four different continents.

However, what does not add up is how these many meetings were so efficiently summarized in a report to the general membership of the United Nations in a mere 51 pages, with an additional 20 pages thrown in to describe the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council. The other 202 pages were facts and figures relating to the reference numbers of resolutions and their dates of adoption. In terms of balance, this does not seem, to my delegation, to be balanced reporting of the actual discussions that we know the Security Council to have carried out with all its due diligence and meticulousness.

The general membership of this esteemed Organization should be kept informed of the deliberations of the Council, in particular those held in closed sessions. The Charter of the United Nations stipulates that the Council act on behalf of the general membership, thus making it obligatory that the membership be notified not only of decisions of the Council, but also of the deliberations of the Council. This is what we were hoping the report of the Security Council would contain — a more comprehensive reporting of the goings-on within the Council, as well as an analytical look at the many issues on the agenda of the Council.

Malaysia would also like to have the countries concerned be included in the deliberations of the Council rather than informed after the fact. This is provided for under Article 32 of the Charter, and should be strictly adhered to, rather than selectively applied. We hope to see a more streamlined and standardized procedure in that respect.

Malaysia was one of the countries that rejoiced when, at the end of the sixty-second session of this Assembly, Member States were able to push through, by consensus, an agreement to establish the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform at the informal plenary of the General Assembly. We believed that that breakthrough, though small in the eyes of the rest of the world, would finally put us on our way towards the reform of the Security Council after 14 long years of discussing the matter.

Having gone through three rounds of intergovernmental negotiations at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, we are now not so convinced that we actually achieved as much as we

thought we had. After a brilliant start under the able Chairmanship of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan, the intergovernmental negotiations seem to have sort of fizzled out in the second and third rounds. The first round was successful in that it outlined the five key issues to be discussed: categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and the working methods of the Council, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. All were as outlined and agreed to in decision 62/557.

Let me take this opportunity to briefly outline Malaysia's position regarding these five key issues. We would like to see an expansion of the Security Council in both categories, both permanent and non-permanent, without expansion of the veto and with a view to the eventual abolition of the right to veto. The Security Council should be more representative. Hence its enlargement should take into account the fact that the membership of the United Nations itself has grown over the past decades. Malaysia believes that seats on the Council should be held by countries but that due regard should be paid to equitable geographical representation. We also believe that the Council should be more inclusive and transparent than under its current working methods. There should be greatest interaction between the Council and the General Assembly and due regard should be given to Article 24.1 of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that it is the Member States of the United Nations that confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that the Council acts on their behalf.

My delegation is convinced that the second and subsequent rounds of the intergovernmental negotiations lacked the momentum afforded by decision 62/557 and the sterling qualities of the first round because States did not have a negotiating text before them. It is still not too late for us to have such a composite text to form the basis of our negotiations during the sixty-fourth session. If delegations are serious about moving forward, then they should prove it by giving the Chairman of the intergovernmental negotiations the necessary mandate to produce this composite text that we need.

The text should include all the options proposed for each key issue. Then it will be the task of the intergovernmental negotiations to taper down the list by eliminating those proposals that do not garner the minimum amount of support. Key among the proposals to be put forth should also be the intermediate approach, which seems to have gained much interest in the last weeks of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. We need to move forward. We need to truly negotiate a tangible document rather than restate our long-held views.

In the coming months, progress will be measured not by the sheer determination of those who want to move forward, but by the flexibility of the delegations that see obstacles rather than opportunities on this path upon which we have embarked. Malaysia affirms its strong support for the process of reform of the Security Council, and in particular the question of the equitable representation in the membership of the Security Council itself. It is time that we discard notions of elitism and embrace the promise of inclusiveness. And that promise is well within our collective grasp.

Mr. Sin Son Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At the outset, I should like to express my delegation's gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having convened this important meeting on the reform of the Security Council.

The reform of the Security Council has been on the agenda for 15 years as part of the reform of the United Nations. In spite of strenuous efforts on the part of Member States to reform the Security Council so as better to reflect our changed environment, discussions have continued to spiral around with no apparent results. We note, in particular, that no progress has been achieved at all with regard to adequate representation of developing countries on the Council.

Recently, certain countries have abused the Security Council for their own political ends by having it deal unlawfully with issues beyond its mandate. This has inevitably led to the discrediting of the Council in the eyes of the international community. The typical example of the abuse is the calling into question in the Security Council of the satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's last April. To date, no such satellite launch has ever been debated at the Security Council. The Council has singled out and debated this peaceful satellite launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was lawfully conducted pursuant to all international legal procedures. This matter clearly demonstrates the

selectivity, arbitrariness and application of double standards in the Council's activities.

This also constitutes a wanton violation of international treaties on outer space, which stipulate that outer space should be free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination of any kind, on the basis of equality and in accordance with international law.

The current situation shows that the Security Council is now reduced to a tool of arbitrariness and high-handedness overriding international law. This clearly demonstrates why the international community urgently demands reform of the Security Council, which lacks democracy and does not reflect the general will of United Nations Member States.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to recall the Final Document of the fifteenth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which reaffirmed that reform of the Security Council should ensure that the agenda of the Council reflects the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries, in an objective, rational, non-selective and non-arbitrary manner.

The wrongdoings in the Security Council, such as the abuse of the Council by specific countries for their own political purposes, the unlawful victimization of developing countries and the arbitrary imposition of coercive measures such as sanctions, must be terminated once and for all.

In order to ensure non-selectivity and impartiality in the activities of the Security Council, we deem it necessary to establish a regime whereby major Council resolutions would come into force only upon endorsement by the General Assembly.

Practices in the Security Council favouring informal consultations and meetings should be discouraged, and open-ended and full participation on the part of stakeholders, including the parties directly concerned, in all consultative processes should be allowed, so that all relevant issues can be fairly considered.

It is also important to ensure that non-aligned and other developing countries — including, in particular, African countries — which constitute the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership, are adequately represented within the Security Council. In that regard, it would be more realistic and feasible to first expand the category of non-permanent Council members.

Those are the conclusions drawn from the rounds of intergovernmental consultations on reform held this year.

With regard to increasing the number of permanent seats on the Security Council, Japan should never be allowed to have such a seat, since it has revived its militaristic ambitions by persistently denying the history of its aggression, instead of recognizing and atoning for its crime-ridden past. Any discussion of whether Japan should be granted permanent Council membership on the basis of its contributions to United Nations activities would itself constitute a dangerous and shameful move on the part of the international community. It would only stoke Japan's unfulfilled ambition to create a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Mr. President, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is confident that, under your able leadership, the current session of the General Assembly will identify realistic and innovative approaches to Security Council reform.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): First of all, the delegation of Kazakhstan would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing these joint debates to discuss important issues such as the report of the Security Council (A/64/2) and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

I would like to express gratitude to the Security Council for providing us with the comprehensive report on its work over the past year. My delegation welcomes all the Council's efforts to find peaceful solutions to various situations and conflicts in many regions of our world during the period covered by the report. In that regard, 228 official meetings were held, 53 resolutions were adopted and 43 presidential statements were issued. We acknowledge that, despite intensive debates in certain cases, the members of the Council were able to reach agreements and took action related to important decisions. During the reporting period, the Security Council thoroughly addressed various issues related to Africa, the Middle East, counter-terrorism and non-proliferation, and it held thematic discussions on peacekeeping, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, women and peace and security, and children in armed conflict.

At the same time, the overall approach of the report remains similar to that taken in previous years. While we appreciate the report's informative content, we share the view of many delegations that it should contain more substantive and analytical elements, not just a listing of meetings and decisions.

We also reiterate the appeals of Member States for greater transparency and accountability and broader participation by the general membership of the United Nations in the work of the Council in order to enhance the implementation of our responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Not much time has passed since the General Assembly adopted decision 62/557, which provided for the launching of intergovernmental negotiations on a whole set of questions related to an increase in the membership of and improving the geographical representation in the Security Council. It was a historic step on the path towards reform of one of the principal United Nations organs. We highlight the commendable and useful work done by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. We also commend the detailed nature of the relevant report of the Working Group, prepared under the chairmanship of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan.

We believe that, on the whole, the outcome of the third round of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform shows the unanimity of United Nations Member States in understanding the need for Council reform to strengthen its efficiency, ensure equitable representation and improve the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. Nevertheless, we should analyze the results of the September negotiations, which did not lead to a common approach with regard to an expansion of the Council and an increase in both its membership categories.

Kazakhstan once again reaffirms its commitment to reform of the United Nations, including, first and foremost, the Security Council, and clearly expresses its position on increasing the Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories in order to improve regional representation. For us, it would be preferable to increase the number of Council members from 15 to 25 by adding six permanent and four non-permanent seats.

We believe that six new permanent Council members should be elected in accordance with the following scheme: two from among the African States, two from Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one from among the Western European and other States. In addition, four new non-permanent members should be elected as follows: one from Africa, one from Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean and one from among the Eastern European States.

The current stage of the negotiation process requires that we seek a new formula that would close the gap between the view of the majority of the Member States, which favours an expansion in both categories of Council membership, and the view of the group Uniting for Consensus, which insists on an expansion in only the non-permanent membership category. It would probably be useful to know the preferences of Member States with regard to expanding the permanent and non-permanent Council membership categories. It makes sense to consider an intermediate approach thoroughly. But such an option should not be accepted as a starting point for a new round of negotiations. We think that proper attention should be given to the compromise proposals put forward at the last round of intergovernmental negotiations, which called for an intermediate model that would establish terms for mandatory review at a conference, with the aim of examining new members in the intermediate category for promotion to the permanent category. Moreover, new permanent members should not be permitted to exercise a veto until a decision on extending the right of veto to them is made by the review conference, which would review the contribution of potential permanent members to strengthening peace and security.

It is clear that the decision process has proved tough and controversial, and that the potential threat of deadlock still remains. In order to advance the negotiation process, we think it would be useful to begin discussing a paper that incorporates all the Member States' proposals, without exception, to be prepared and introduced by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters, headed by its Chair. In the framework of ongoing negotiations not one

presented position should be excluded a priori. We hope that the reform process will generate innovative ideas that can lead to a compromise decision supported by the largest possible majority of Member States.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the readiness of Kazakhstan to take part in the intergovernmental negotiations with the rest of the Member States in a spirit of compromise and cooperation, aimed at reaching agreement on an entire package of United Nations reform, with Security Council reform at its core. We also believe that the improvement of the working methods of the Security Council should be considered another important aspect of reform, based on enhancing transparency and accountability.

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): We appreciate today's opportunity to discuss the report of the Security Council (A/64/2) and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. I would like to thank the current President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Austria, Ambassador Mayr-Harting, for presenting to the General Assembly the report of the Council for the period from 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009. It is evident that the reporting period featured an increasing workload and a wide range of complex regional, thematic and general issues before the Council.

I also wish to commend the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for his tremendous efforts and impartial leadership over the past year, which have given the Security Council reform negotiations the boost they so urgently needed. The reform of the Security Council is long overdue and is an essential part of overall reform of the United Nations. It must address both enlargement of the membership and improvement of its working methods. We have already seen some progress; however, there is still much room for improvement so that the Council can fulfil its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security in the most efficient and effective manner.

Enlarging the Security Council is not only a matter of fairness but a necessary condition for its effectiveness. The time is ripe for changes in the Council's structure. A reformed Security Council must better reflect geopolitical realities and be more representative, with its authority and legitimacy strengthened. And, regardless of the size of the Council, we need to improve its working methods and its interaction with the membership of the United Nations as a whole. We welcomed the open debate of the Council held in August 2008 and the informal interactive discussion with Member States on the report on the work of the Security Council that took place in July this year.

For many years now, Members of the United Nations have been confronted with an ever-increasing number of Security Council decisions, with notable security, legal and financial implications for every Member State. If the Council expects Member States to be real partners in sharing this burden, it should be ready to be more transparent and inclusive and to engage with non-members of the Council on a more frequent regular basis. We appreciate and support the initiatives of the group of five small countries (S5) in this regard.

We welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, to further facilitate the process of Security Council reform. As many speakers before me have stressed, we have had an interesting and productive debate and exchange of views on all five key issues of reform during the last round of intergovernmental negotiations under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Tanin.

It is apparent that expanding the Security Council, with various types of both permanent and non-permanent members, has gained broad support among Member States. Slovenia remains convinced that the Council should be expanded in both categories of members. Particular attention should be paid to the representation of countries from Africa and Latin America, which have so far not been represented in the permanent membership category. The enlargement of the Council should also increase the possibility for small and medium-size states to serve on it. Slovenia's President, Mr. Danilo Türk, suggested a specific model for Security Council expansion during the general debate at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. This and other specific proposals made in the past need to be seriously examined.

We must maintain the momentum generated and move forward. We look forward to the presentation of the work plan for the negotiations. It is clear that, while support for Security Council reform remains strong, Member States' positions on the issue still

diverge. We therefore need to narrow our options and search for solutions that will garner the widest possible support among Member States. A paper prepared by the facilitator would be helpful in this respect, and could serve as a useful basis for negotiations during the General Assembly's sixty-fourth session.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In conclusion, we must not fail to take forward the process of negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We are convinced, Mr. President, that your leadership, guidance and wisdom, coupled with the necessary political will, good faith and flexibility among Member States, will bring us to a successful conclusion of the prolonged debates on the issue of Security Council reform.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): By joining the report of the Security Council (A/64/2) with the issue of Security Council reform, today's debate can be seen as an assessment of the Council's work, as well as of the areas that require improvement. Singapore commends the Council for the preparation of a report that gives a factual account of its activities from August 2008 to July 2009. We appreciate the efforts and challenges that have gone into the preparation of these annual reports, and we welcome a number of qualitative improvements to the report's expanded introductory section.

However, we believe that more can be done to improve the report's substance and clarity. Rather than simply putting a positive spin on the work of the Security Council, the report would have been more useful if it had given more specifics in the record of the year's achievements, as well as the lack thereof. We would also suggest that care be taken not to confuse quality with quantity. Drafters of future reports should exercise vigilance to ensure that all information added to the document is substantive, and that the report is not expanded for its own sake.

While Singapore, along with numerous other delegations, would have preferred a more analytical report, we note the reasons shared by Security Council members, in formal and informal settings, for the problems inherent in producing an analytical work. Still, we urge Council members to continue trying, since it does not matter if progress is slow as long as you do not stop. We would also suggest that, if the Council is unable to produce a collective analysis of its work, its 15 members can perhaps reflect on the work of the past year and share their assessments with the General Assembly. For example, why are some legacy resolutions adopted year after year without any apparent progress? In addition, I am sure that the Assembly would be interested in what the Council members see as their priorities and strategies for the maintenance of international peace and security. Such individual national assessments could be included in the annual report of the Security Council.

That brings me to my next point — the need for much more to be done to improve the level and quality of dialogue between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Security Council was created as a body of action, but it is not an autonomous organ, beholden to no one. The Council and the Assembly exist in dynamic symbiosis, with the Assembly conferring on the Council its legitimacy and authority. This relationship thrives when the two bodies have regular, frank and candid dialogue; it shrivels when interaction is choked off or kept at arm's length. Worse, either side's refusal to engage with the other breeds suspicion and distrust, which complicates the task of keeping the peace.

In this connection, we welcome the initiative undertaken by Viet Nam last year to engage in an informal dialogue with United Nations Member States before it prepared the report of the Security Council. We note that Uganda, which drafted this year's report, also took the wise step of holding an informal dialogue with United Nations Member States, and we urge all presidents of the Security Council in the month in which the report is being prepared to continue this practice.

My preceding comments and suggestions are linked to the broader issue of Security Council reform. It is a sorry truth that real progress on reform, in all areas, remains difficult given the divergence in views and aspirations of United Nations Member States. The expansion of the Council, the question of representation, the veto and working methods were all hotly debated in three rounds of intergovernmental negotiations in the previous session, but deep divisions remain. Member States will be aware that Singapore has consistently supported an expansion of the Security Council in both its permanent and non-permanent categories. Nevertheless, much was said by other delegations about the option of creating a new category

of intermediate seats, but few concrete details were offered. We need to continue with the intergovernmental negotiations.

In addition, Singapore has, together with the rest of the group of five small nations (S-5), promoted a number of proposals since 2005 on improving the Council's working methods. The S-5 submitted draft resolution A/60/L.49 in March 2006 and, more recently, in April 2009 circulated a non-paper entitled "Elements for reflection", both of which contained suggestions to improve the Council's working methods. The S-5 members share the common belief that the working methods of the Council should be an integral focus of its overall reform. Better working methods could improve the Council's efficiency, make it more transparent to the wider membership, enhance its legitimacy and strengthen its role as the body entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Singapore is firm in its belief that the reform of the Security Council is necessary and overdue and that the change must come if the Council hopes to stay relevant in our evolving global environment. We call upon the permanent members of the Security Council in particular to exercise leadership and work closely with the General Assembly on this endeavour. Membership in the Security Council comes with special responsibilities and this is a price that its members, especially the permanent five, must be willing to pay. If the Council wants to truthfully say, as it does in the first sentence of its report, that it has discharged its duties, then reform is needed, and needed urgently.

It is in all our interests to keep the Security Council — and by extension the United Nations — relevant, because it is not written in stone that this house will remain the sole organization of recourse for the poor and the persecuted. Alternative groupings, supposedly reflecting today's geopolitical realities, appear to be taking root and moving to address some of the same issues that the Security Council deals with. As responsible stakeholders in this body, let us prevent the devolution of authority from the United Nations by working to strengthen the effectiveness, transparency and legitimacy of this principal organ.

Mr. Cuello Camilo (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to convey our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting of Austria, for his comprehensive introduction of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/64/2). We also congratulate the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Zahir Tanin, who led the intergovernmental negotiations for the reform of the Security Council, for his leadership and spirit of compromise in the conduct of the entire process. We also take this opportunity to congratulate him on having been appointed by the new President of the General Assembly to continue leading the intergovernmental negotiations during the sixty-fourth session.

In the period under review, the Security Council certainly continued its careful consideration of situations in certain specific countries and regions. It also took up the subject of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation with new vigour, a course of action that we will support until the world is rid once and for all of nuclear weapons, the altogether unnecessary legacy of the cold war.

Nevertheless, we are of the opinion that it is fundamental for the United Nations that the Security Council adapt to present realities. Our focus in this matter is based on a very specific event: the coup d'état in Honduras. It is indeed sad that, in the face of the inadmissible overthrow of the democratic political system of a prominent State Member of the United Nations, the Security Council has not taken rapid and determined steps to restore the democratic and constitutional order of our brother country, Honduras. In that regard, the President of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, has raised the question of the inability of both the Organization of American States and the United Nations, after five months time, to restore constitutional order in Honduras. The reason is clear. The Security Council has not spoken on the issue.

The Security Council is very familiar with the experience of Africa, which is quite illustrative in this context. Many of the root causes of conflicts generated in that brother region are linked to political frustration, humiliation and disregard for constitutional norms and for the Africans themselves. That has been a fertile breeding ground for the violence, crises and conflicts that continue to plague the African continent.

The Security Council is the only organ of the United Nations whose decisions and resolutions are

binding on all Member States. It is also the organ entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The Dominican Republic therefore believes that the members of the Security Council have the obligation to fulfil their compelling and absolute responsibility to restore democratic order, respect for constitutional principles and political stability in Honduras. That is the only way to avoid the recurrence of anti-democratic efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean, which once again pose an imminent threat to the lives and security of our citizens.

Regarding the reform of the Security Council, the Dominican Republic regrets the slow progress of the intergovernmental negotiations and the lack of substantial results. However, we still hold the hope that one day we will see the reform of that organ so crucial to the United Nations system. In our view, any reform of the Security Council must aim to increase both its legitimacy and its effectiveness. Consequently, the Dominican Republic supports the increase in the number of members of the Council in both categories — permanent and non-permanent members.

However, if the reform process is not to be overshadowed by the issue of the veto, the Dominican Republic believes that this matter should be discussed at a review conference of the Charter to be held within 10 years. We believe that Security Council reform should also cover its methods of work, increase its transparency and promote its accountability.

We also believe that a satisfactory relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is fundamental, because relations between these two important organs of the United Nations system should not be confined to the periodic issuance of update reports. The General Assembly must participate and engage in more meaningful and active dialogue with the Security Council in order to ensure greater transparency, representativity, efficiency and legitimacy.

We see no justification whatsoever for the perpetuation of the current outdated representation on the Security Council whereby the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean have been marginalized. We advocate the position that Latin America and the Caribbean should enjoy equal footing with other regions when the number of seats of the Security Council is increased. We support the position that the Security Council can truly become more representative only by ensuring the inclusion of representatives of developing countries.

The aim of this debate is to ensure that the Security Council is better able to respond to the realities of the world in which we live. It is essential that we adapt the representation on and the functions of the Security Council to the new realities of the twenty-first century. It is necessary to give the Security Council enhanced capacity to address prevailing challenges effectively and to better carry out its role in resolving crisis situations. The Dominican Republic is convinced that we still have time to develop the necessary political will to achieve genuine commitment to making tangible progress on these important issues.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): At the outset, Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, and, of course, by the representative of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community. Permit me also to express my appreciation to Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, Permanent Representative of Austria and President of the Security Council for the month of November, for having introduced the report of the Security Council (A/64/2).

Additionally, I take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude to Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, for his invaluable contribution to advancing the work on what we agree to be a most protracted issue — reform of the Security Council.

In that regard, I also commend Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, who served as chair, for his astute guidance of the intergovernmental process during the sixty-third session, and we express every confidence that his reappointment as chair during this sixty-fourth session will contribute to taking us much closer to a satisfactory outcome.

Charged with the responsibility of maintaining and countering threats to international peace and security, the Security Council remains an essential pillar of the entire United Nations system. Its work is of tremendous importance to all of us. Its decisions impact on our daily lives across all corners of the globe. Member States therefore expect that, consistent with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council, in

the solemn discharge of its responsibilities, will endeavour to ensure that actions taken on behalf of the membership of the United Nations conform strictly with the purposes and principles of the Charter. Of course, we are all aware that Article 24 also stipulates the need for an annual report.

The report we have before us is, as in previous years, essentially an extensive compilation of the work of the Security Council over the reporting period, in this case from 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009. Jamaica maintains that the annual report of the Security Council should contain a high level of qualitative and analytical content in assessing the work of the Council, including such cases in which the Council fails to act, as well as containing the views expressed by its members during the consideration of agenda items. The continued absence of a methodical and systematic diagnosis of the work of the Council in its annual report to this Assembly remains symptomatic of its much outdated and discredited working methods, which the majority of Member States continue to deplore.

My delegation also welcomes the debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. We recall that, around this time last year, we were compelled to use the opportunity of this debate to call for a consolidation of the gains made with the adoption of the landmark decision 62/557 on 15 September 2008. This was based on our strong view that the crucial task for the General Assembly was to move forward in earnest to facilitate the commencement of intergovernmental negotiations.

Unquestionably, decision 62/557 guided us in the right direction, towards the commencement of the negotiating process, which is currently under way and, we hope, has steered us away from the cycle of endless consultations and the repetition of established positions which had characterized the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group for the past 15 years.

We have been very encouraged by the efforts of the chair of the intergovernmental process, in particular in focusing attention on the level of progress achieved in the three rounds of negotiations that have been held to date. Jamaica also welcomes the oral decision adopted by the General Assembly at its meeting on 14 September 2009, by which it agreed

> "to immediately continue intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in informal plenary of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session as mandated by General Assembly decision 62/557, building on the progress achieved during its sixty-third session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States" (*A/63/PV.105, p. 8*).

We therefore anticipate that the intergovernmental negotiations will resume at the earliest possible opportunity.

As noted in the letter of the chair of the intergovernmental process dated 16 July 2009,

> "it was argued on the one hand that the third round should revolve around what has commanded the most support from delegations speaking up during the meetings so far, namely the model with an expansion in both current categories including its different varieties, and on the other hand around what needs to be further explored, namely the intermediate model including its different varieties".

It was clear then and it is even more so now that a vast majority of delegations supports expansion in both categories and that, therefore, it is not necessary to delay the process by seeking further clarification on the intermediate model.

Jamaica continues to strongly support the position that expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories would be a far more democratic and inclusive means of addressing the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, in keeping with contemporary realities.

It is also important to note, as we pointed out then and note again now, that, in statements made by permanent members of the Security Council, which would normally be considered most resistant to the idea of change, there has been a general acceptance of the need for expansion in the permanent category as a means of making the Council more inclusive and representative. The permanent members should therefore be held to these commitments.

Finally, Jamaica continues to reiterate its call for a compilation document containing the proposals and positions of all Member States as the basis for conducting open, inclusive and transparent

negotiations in a very focused, constructive and orderly manner. We believe that this is the best way to advance the intergovernmental process if we are to avoid the perpetual cycle of repeated positions and proposals of Member States, which are already well known among us and will only serve to dampen enthusiasm and put the brakes on the momentum generated over the past few sessions.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): Sixty-four years ago, the General Assembly elected my country, the Netherlands, one of the first non-permanent members of the newly established Security Council. In its first year, the young Council adopted 15 resolutions. Over the past year, as we can read in the report before us today (A/64/2), it produced 53 resolutions, along with 43 presidential and 35 press statements.

These figures are an expression of how the role of the Security Council in the exercise of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security has expanded over the years, particularly since the end of the cold war two decades ago. All the while, the Security Council has acted on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations. It is therefore a matter of legitimate concern to the entire membership that the composition of the Council appropriately reflect present-day international realities.

In the discussion of the enlargement of the Council, we should, in the view of the Netherlands, be guided by the criteria laid down in Article 23 of the Charter, particularly those concerning the contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, and equitable geographical distribution. Speaking of the composition of the Council, in our view the contribution to international peace and security is a criterion that could already be taken more into account when electing non-permanent members under the present system.

For more than 15 years now, the General Assembly has been discussing Security Council reform. Against that background, the progress made during the sixty-third session was no mean feat. We moved from endless deliberation to intensive negotiation, leaving behind the Open-ended Working Group — which was already nicknamed the never-ending working group — and taking the matter to the General Assembly itself. Hopefully we can maintain this momentum in the coming year; the Netherlands will actively contribute to this objective.

At the 2005 Summit, world leaders expressed their support for early reform of the Council. Staying on course for this early reform requires first of all the immediate resumption of the negotiation process, as Assembly decision 63/565 stipulates. We look forward to receiving the chair's letter on the fourth round following the conclusion of this debate.

A month ago, we were happy to learn that Ambassador Tanin will once again be chairing our meetings. Not only was he instrumental in the successful launch of the intergovernmental negotiations, but also one simply does not change horses in midstream. Always impartial to any of the positions, yet partial to progress, Ambassador Tanin has established a legitimate and smooth process — a process we can build on.

After we have looked at all the five key issues from all possible angles, the next logical step in the process would now seem to be a text that can provide a basis for negotiation. We have no fixed position on how such a text can best come about. Nevertheless, it is our view that at the current stage we cannot in all fairness ask Ambassador Tanin to take on this extremely sensitive task. It is now up to us, Member States, to pick up this gauntlet.

As far as substance is concerned, I would like to quote one of the main conclusions from the 2007 facilitators' report, to which the Netherlands contributed: "The positions of the major interest groups, well known to the membership for some time, are not likely to be fully realized at this stage" (*A/61/47, annex I, part II*). In our mind, this conclusion still holds true. The main contender to break the present logjam, we believe, is currently what is known as the intermediate approach.

Although it goes by different names, we all know what is basically being discussed here. This inventive solution continues to raise questions in certain quarters; however, those will not be answered within the context of more plenary meetings with general statements. Only by putting pen to paper, while jointly drafting the negotiating text that I mentioned earlier, will we really be able to untie all the knots and to map out in a clear manner the different variants.

I know that some delegations accept the intermediate model exclusively as a potential outcome and not as a point of departure. I say it does not need to be a point of departure. Nevertheless, for it to be a

potential outcome of the negotiations, it needs at least to be on the map as a point of interest. In our negotiating text, we do not have to award it some special status, but it does deserve some status. The only alternative to really exploring new and inventive solutions, such as for example the intermediate approach, is the status quo — and we all solemnly declare that we want to move beyond that. Such declarations create obligations, for subsequently doing nothing leads only to the conclusion that the United Nations is broken but incapable of repairing itself — the worst possible outcome for us all.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Ambassador Mayr-Harting, for his introduction yesterday of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/64/2), as required under United Nations Charter Articles 15 and 24; and Ambassador Rugunda and the Ugandan delegation for their preparation of the annual report during their presidency of the Security Council in July.

The annual report provides non-Council members with a transparent and comprehensive review of the intensive work of the Security Council. We hope the report does indeed facilitate the exchange of information and enhance cooperation between these two principal organs of the United Nations. The United States takes seriously the importance of making sure that all Member States are informed of and appropriately involved in the Council's work.

There has been an ongoing effort to hold more formal meetings of the Council, open to the full membership, as the report highlights. There were 219 such meetings between August 2007 and July 2008 and 228 meetings between August 2008 and July 2009. Regrettably, however, these meetings are not always attended by more than a small percentage of Member States, including this very morning. We hope that more members will avail themselves of the opportunity to follow the Council's work first-hand on such occasions rather than relying primarily on an annual report. To those non-Council members that cannot follow the Council's work on a regular basis, I commend the Council's website, with its wealth of information and meeting summaries, for further in-depth reference.

Turning to our other topic today, we welcomed the President's letter of 13 October announcing his appointment of Ambassador Tanin to chair the intergovernmental negotiations on his behalf. We pledge our full support of Ambassador Tanin's efforts to lead forward the informal plenary of the General Assembly in productive intergovernmental negotiations. As we stated during the first three rounds of these negotiations and will continue to elaborate in more detail in those negotiations, the United States supports expansion of the Security Council. Such expansion, however, should diminish neither the Council's effectiveness nor its efficiency. Let me briefly summarize key elements of my Government's position.

The United States is open in principle to a limited expansion of both permanent and non-permanent members. In terms of categories of membership, the United States strongly believes that any consideration of an expansion of permanent members must be country-specific in nature. In determining which countries merit permanent membership, we will take into account the ability of countries to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the United Nations.

As we have previously stated, the United States is not open to an enlargement of the Security Council by a Charter amendment that changes the current veto structure. To enhance the prospects for success, whatever formula emerges for an expansion of Council membership should have in mind Charter requirements for ratification.

We remain committed to a serious, deliberate effort, working with other Member States, to find a way forward that both adapts the Security Council to current global realities and enhances its ability to carry out its mandate and effectively meet the challenges of the new century.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We should like to express our views on the annual report of the Security Council (A/64/2) and then address the status of the reform process of that body. We thank the delegation of Uganda for the consultations it convened on this subject and the briefings it organized for the report's submission during its chairmanship. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Austria for presenting the report yesterday.

Once again, we underscore our concern over the continuation and intensification of intra-State conflicts, intertribal violence and conflicts over natural resources

that occur in areas where there is a lack of socioeconomic development, resulting in institutional and political fragility. The truly tragic situations in the Sudan and Somalia are examples of this. In turn, the number of terrorist attacks is once again on the increase in a number of countries, and every day we witness more bloody acts resulting in an ever-increasing number of civilian casualties.

As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated, these terrorist acts are by their very nature an assault on the fundamental principles of law, order, human rights and the peaceful settlement of disputes — the principles upon which this Organization rests. In addition to the statements of condemnation issued by the Security Council, which are already perceived as banal, given their quasi-bureaucratic repetitiveness, the Security Council will need to decide which political course of action it should take, working jointly with the General Assembly, to effectively combat, in a multilateral and coordinated manner, the scourge of terrorism that affects all States equally.

We support the efforts of the Council to prevent the recurrence of genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The international community is responsible for protecting civilian populations when the State that is obliged to do so is unwilling or unable to meet its obligations. Furthermore, conflicts between States call for new efforts to attain peace in the context of international and humanitarian law. In this regard, we call on the parties to the Middle East conflict to make substantial progress towards finding a just and legitimate solution within the legal framework established by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

I wish to express my Government's satisfaction at the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1892 (2009), extending the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). I also underscore the many sponsors of that resolution and the active participation of the Group of Friends of Haiti. We trust that implementing the mandate of MINUSTAH to ensure a stable environment will help to create the conditions necessary for the full realization of that country's economic and social development goals.

Before proceeding to comment on the subject of reform, I would like to express my country's gratitude for the historic resolution 1887 (2009) on disarmament and non-proliferation, which will promote further progress towards achieving a safer world free from nuclear weapons. This is how the Council can and should show leadership and prevent the loss of its relevance and legitimacy, a growing trend in recent years that we hope will be reversed in this new era of international relations through the adoption of that resolution.

In this regard, the reform of the Security Council is of particular relevance and high priority, as the challenges to international peace and security are increasingly grave. The crisis of relevance within the Organization is due first and foremost to the extent to which the Security Council has lost its representative nature and been circumvented in its active management of threats and violations of international peace and security.

Argentina is firmly committed to achieving a comprehensive reform aimed at making the Security Council a more representative, transparent, inclusive, democratic and effective body that not only reflects the dynamics of today's world but, through its structure and functioning, is also prepared to adapt to future changes or transformations in the international scene. This goal will be reached only through a reform that is guided by the principles of inclusiveness and responsible accountability, which cannot be reconciled with the expansion of the number of permanent members.

The priority is to achieve a more representative Council, rectifying the lack of representation of a number of regions, such as Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, and of developing countries. This will also require ensuring that all Member States, including small and medium-sized States, have an opportunity to serve on the Security Council and thus make a more direct contribution to international peace and security.

As we have said, there is a need for comprehensive reform that is not limited to an increase the number of Council members. While expansion is important, it is not the only component of democratic and lasting reform. The issue of the Council's working methods is also crucial to enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of its decision-making processes. Another issue that the reform must address is the Council's relationship with the General Assembly, the

only universal body in which all Member States are represented.

The broadest support is essential to achieving progress in working towards a successful reform. Only through an inclusive process that addresses the interests of all and enjoys the support of all Member States will we achieve a reform with the legitimacy necessary to strengthen the Security Council and make it more credible and effective.

To enhance its legitimacy, the Security Council must become more democratic. We believe that the democratization process will be viable only through an increase in the number of non-permanent Council members. Pursuing the democratization of the Security Council by increasing the number of permanent seats, thereby swelling the ranks of the privileged, is contradictory. Democracy is based on the idea of and capacity for representation, and the category of permanent membership is not based on the concept of democratic representation but is the outcome of a particular moment in history. Only a process of regular elections in the regional context, with adequate accountability and a system of rotation, will guarantee true representation for members.

In the spirit of seeking a broad, negotiated solution, Argentina welcomed the detailed exchange of views during the third round of intergovernmental negotiations in order to explore an intermediate solution, which has the potential to offer a compromise between the positions held by the various groups. We are ready and keen to continue in a constructive process, exploring the various options that may constitute a genuine compromise solution that is lasting and not subject to any revision process.

Mr. McNee (Canada): I thank the President for convening this important meeting. Canada welcomes this opportunity to share our views on the annual report of the Security Council and also to return to the important issue of Security Council reform.

The report of the Security Council (A/64/2) makes it clear that the complexity, variety and volume of Security Council business continue to expand at a dramatic pace. During the past year, the Council has taken important decisions on peace support operations in situations as varied as Haiti, Afghanistan and Sudan. In addition to taking decisions on specific peace operations, the Council has also started a more general review of peacekeeping issues — an undertaking which Canada strongly supports. Canada is particularly encouraged by the commitment to improve consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries, and hopes that concrete proposals to follow up on that commitment will be forthcoming shortly.

One particular area where consultations need to be improved is mandate generation. Although the Security Council is responsible for designing the mandates, they are of importance to all Member States. For that reason Canada is hosting a series of policy discussions with all Member States on improving United Nations peacekeeping. The focus of the third event of our series, which will be held on 4 December, is on the issue of mandates and modalities. We are very fortunate that Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and Lieutenant General Obiakor have both agreed to join us for that event, and we look forward to an informative and productive exchange.

Canada is also encouraged that the Council has begun to work more closely with the Peacebuilding Commission in post-conflict settings. I have the honour to chair the Sierra Leone configuration and have seen first-hand the valuable and innovative work of the Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone. That model offers great promise for better managing the transition from crisis to peacebuilding in an integrated and efficient manner. I would therefore encourage the Council to engage even further with the Peacebuilding Commission in the year to come.

While the report of the Security Council details the scope of the actions taken by the Council, it still fails to provide an analysis of how and why those decisions were made. Although producing such a report may be difficult, it would be a tangible step towards improving both the Council’s transparency and its accountability to the broader membership.

Transforming the report in that manner could be part of the follow-up to the open debate on the working methods of the Security Council held in August 2008 (see S/PV.5968 and S/PV.5968 (Resumption 1)). That was an important and long-overdue event. It is disappointing that the Council has yet to follow up on those deliberations. Canada would therefore like to reiterate the request made during that debate that the Working Group on Council Documentation be mandated to undertake a comprehensive review of the note by the president contained in S/2006/507 and to present its findings to the Council as soon as possible.

Last year the membership took an important decision to launch intergovernmental negotiations on a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. After three rounds of negotiation, today is an opportune moment to reflect on what has been accomplished thus far, and how we should focus the negotiations to ensure progress during this session of the General Assembly.

The negotiations to date have shown the many areas of convergence among Member States. There is broad agreement on the need for an increase in the size of the Council, while keeping in mind the need to ensure that the Council remains effective. There is also overwhelming support for improved working methods in the Council and some restraint on the use of the veto.

(spoke in French)

However, there remains serious disagreement on the issue of categories of membership. The position of Canada on that issue is well known. Security Council reform cannot be effective if it consists only of extending the privileges enjoyed by some and adding permanent seats for others. Canada therefore supports a modest increase in the number of elected non-permanent members, which would allow for better representation of regions of the world, in particular under-represented regions such as Africa. Such a strategy would preserve the important oversight role of the broader membership, better reflect the reality of the twenty-first century and increase the proportion of elected members in the Council and the opportunities for small- and medium-sized States to serve on the Council.

However, the debate over the past year has shown that the membership remains deeply divided on that important issue and that that proposal has nothing like the support necessary for its adoption. That is why Canada supported the decision to hold a separate debate on intermediate options. Reforming the Security Council by adding seats and extending mandates would satisfy the need to recognize the special contributions made by certain Member States while also maintaining the Council's necessary accountability to the broader membership and ensuring that small- and medium-sized States may serve on the Council.

There are still many details to be considered. However, for now, further exploration of the intermediate option offers the best chance to overcome the current stalemate. In order to achieve real progress on Security Council reform, all delegations must be willing to put aside their own preferred options and engage in serious negotiations aimed at a compromise solution.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): At the outset let me express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, the Permanent Representative of Austria, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council (A/64/2) to the General Assembly.

The Ukraine welcomes the measures taken by the Security Council in recent years to increase its openness to non-members. Efforts to take further steps in that positive direction should be encouraged. We also support a greater role for the troop-contributing countries in shaping and modifying of mandates of peacekeeping operations.

We encourage the permanent and non-permanent Council members to find compromises on the difficult issues facing the United Nations today, such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the stabilization of the situations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur and other areas. However, on a few critical occasions the Council failed to react adequately to serious challenges that directly threatened international peace and security. Unfortunately, it has been unable to come up with a common position on topics like Georgia and Gaza.

Meanwhile, it is clear that demand is growing for United Nations participation in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. To adequately address those and other challenges the world needs a modernized Council.

We are confident that the reform of the Security Council is an issue of exceptional international significance. Making that body more representative and balanced and its work more effective and transparent, especially with regard to decision-making, is vital to adapting the United Nations to the realities of the twenty-first century. Ukraine therefore considers it a priority to carry out reform on both fronts, namely, enlarging the Security Council and improving its working methods. Achieving progress in at least in one of those areas will serve our long-term interests.

In that context, taking into account the lack of noticeable progress in the negotiating process, Ukraine agrees that there is a need to further explore the

intermediate model as a compromise and a first step forward. That arrangement should entail a mandatory review of the reform process, which should be carried out in stages and should identify elements that can potentially be agreed on in the short term and those that, given their controversial nature, should be deferred and revisited by Member States during the review.

Ukraine is open to discussing all possible options and new, creative approaches to the reform of the Security Council. Nevertheless, our position remains the same. Any increase in the category of non-permanent members of the Council should ensure that there is enhanced representation for the Group of Eastern European States through the allocation of at least one additional non-permanent seat.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Ukraine's full commitment to participating constructively in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council, with the aim of securing a model that can gain the widest possible support.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): The consideration of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/64/2) provides us an opportunity to evaluate the work done in the past year by that important organ in connection with the main issues on its agenda. We are very grateful to Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting for the clear and objective presentation he has given us.

With the intensification of the Council's work, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is a need to continually improve its working methods in order to promote better interaction with the other organs and with States that are not members of the Council. In that regard, some of the proposals made during the debate on Council reform deserve the Council's attention. However, although improvements in the Council's working methods are necessary, they are but a complement to, not a substitute for, overall reform of the Council to make it more representative and to adapt it to the profound changes that have taken place at the international level.

The situations and issues taken up by the Council, the number of meetings and consultations held and the resolutions it has adopted reflect the fact that the Council continues to be attentive to situations in every region of the world that pose a threat to international peace and security.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, has been the subject of the Council's attention. That was especially the case in December 2008 and January 2009, following the tragic events in Gaza and their devastating humanitarian consequences for the Palestinian civilian population. Despite the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 1860 (2009), Palestinians continue to await the full implementation of its provisions and the fulfilment of international reconstruction commitments so that they can once again lead normal and dignified lives.

As in previous years, the African continent continues to be at the centre of the Council's concerns with regard to both peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Council's high-level debate last March on peace and security in Africa (see S/PV.6092 and S/PV.6092 (Resumption 1)) enabled the Council to evaluate progress on peace and reconciliation in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau — an undertaking to which the Peacebuilding Commission has made an invaluable contribution.

That debate also illustrated once again the need for the international community to redouble efforts to strengthen peace processes in other parts of Africa and to mark the way for the emergence of political solutions adapted to individual situations. In addition, the debate showed the importance of the participation of regional actors in promoting such solutions and the responsibilities they must assume in doing so.

The truth of that is self-evident in every situation, including the issue of Western Sahara, concerning which the Council has continually called on all the parties, including Algeria, to cooperate with United Nations efforts and with each other in order to achieve, through the process of negotiation, a realistic political solution that is acceptable to all. In response to appeals by the Security Council and to the desires of the international community, Morocco has put forward a negotiable autonomy initiative that, once agreed and finalized, will be put before the people concerned for their approval. That initiative illustrates my country's desire to pull the settlement process out of the current deadlock, where, unfortunately, the other parties want to stay, clinging to outdated and non-viable approaches and turning to diversionary tactics and erroneous pretexts aimed at eroding the negotiating dynamics.

Since 1976, when the decolonization of the Sahara was completed, Morocco has pledged its will to resolve that artificial conflict. We shall continue to do so peaceably and with commitment, in the hope that the other parties will in the end become part of the negotiating dynamics, with the political will to make it succeed, in the interests of all the peoples of the Maghreb.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): Let me begin by thanking, you, Madam, and the President of the General Assembly for holding today's debate, which gives us an opportunity to review the work of the Security Council in the past year. It also invites us to examine the current state of the process aimed at making the Council more transparent, efficient, effective and representative of all Member States. That is all the more appropriate in that 2009 has been the year in during which the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform began. Those negotiations will therefore be main chief focus of my statement.

First, however, let me thank Ambassador Rugunda, Permanent Representatives of Uganda, and Ambassador Mayr-Harting, Permanent Representative of Austria, for the annual report of the Security Council (A/64/2). Concrete efforts were made by the presidencies involved to foster greater transparency in the Security Council, in particular the holding of meetings with all Member States over the past weeks to discuss the draft report. That process of consultations, which we fully endorse, was inaugurated last year by our colleague Ambassador Minh, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam.

Another concrete contribution to more transparency and openness was the renewed momentum on reforming working methods that was generated thanks to the Security Council's open debate on 27 August 2008 (see S/PV.5968 and S/PV.5968 (Resumption 1)). Such a debate had not been held since the 1990s. We believe it is crucial to continue to address that fundamental aspect of reform. There have been improvements recently. The more transparent approach in recent years to the process of drafting the annual report has been a significant step, but much remains to be done.

There were also tangible signs in the past year of renewed efforts towards comprehensive reform of the Security Council, efforts punctuated by the start of intergovernmental negotiations last February. The General Assembly decided unanimously to launch those intergovernmental negotiations by its decision 62/557, of September 2008. The mechanism thus created proved to be effective in the end, as it was implemented in its entirety. I must recall, for example, the reservations that some delegations had with regard to the role of the Open-ended Working Group at the very beginning of the last session of the General Assembly.

The Working Group met from November 2008 through January 2009 to help clarify procedural aspects — a process that was essential to the launching of the negotiations. One particularly controversial point in the discussions was the informal nature of the exercise. Without the Working Group, the negotiations would have started within a completely unknown framework, and their failure would have been a foregone conclusion.

Substantive negotiations began in February under the valued guidance of Ambassador Tanin. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his confirmation as Chairperson and to reaffirm our readiness to fully cooperate with him in this complex exercise. Since February, over the course of three rounds, we have examined all the issues related to reform, as well as their interlinkages. This is not the place for a detailed re-examination of the outcome. I would, however, like to offer some thumbnail reflections on what has taken place so that we might chart the direction in which we can realistically expect to move over the next few months.

There is no doubt that sharp differences still exist between the parties. It is no secret that Member States continue to be deeply divided over the question of categories of membership, and none of the various proposals has the required support. All attempts to create the impression of a majority in favour of this or that model have inevitably ended in failure. No model has the necessary support: not the African model, not the Group of Four model, not the Uniting for Consensus model and not the models presented by other groups and delegations. That is another clear outcome of the negotiations.

In this debate we have heard some delegations requesting from the chair a negotiating paper to be narrowed down through the exclusion of options that have less support. I would like to recall that that

proposal has already been rejected, at the Assembly's sixty-third session.

Let me be clear on that point. First, our negotiations are intergovernmental — that is, they are based on the positions and proposals of Member States. Secondly, that proposal seeks to endorse a process based on a logic of majority-minority, hard to identify, that literally goes against the nature of a negotiation. Counting votes in the Assembly is one thing; negotiating and looking for compromise is something completely different.

To the contrary, we all decided to start real negotiations. Our goal has therefore become to identify a path towards compromise solutions that have the necessary support of the General Assembly. We believe that there are at least three paths that could be helpful as we move ahead.

First, as we have said in recent months, despite the confirmation of differences, the intergovernmental negotiations have so far outlined some areas of convergence among the various groups: the issue of size, which is gravitating towards 20-plus; reform of the Council's working methods, an area where there is consensus on the need to push for improvements; and updating the decision-making mechanisms. While the latter broaches the sensitive issue of the veto, it is nevertheless an issue on which almost the entire membership continues to express a will for debate. The same holds true for the question of the relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as the other main bodies of the United Nations. For the purposes of moving the negotiation forward, it would be helpful to build on those areas of convergence.

Secondly, another prerequisite for progress in the discussions is the abandonment of extreme positions. Last April, Colombia and Italy presented a new platform that includes innovations on the positions that Uniting for Consensus proposed in 2005. We could have refused to budge from our original position, but we sincerely believe that these negotiations can reach a positive conclusion only through an agreement based on compromise. That is why we presented our proposal, clarifying that it remains an open basis for discussion. Today, we strongly believe that the time has come for others to take a similar step towards common ground.

Thirdly, as in any other complex negotiating processes, it is essential to make efforts to find innovative solutions that would bring the parties closer together. We see at least two areas on which it would be worthwhile to focus.

The first would be the so-called intermediate solutions. I wish to underline from the outset that Italy does not have a definitive position in favour of or opposed to intermediate approaches. At the same time, we remain open to any prospect aimed at facilitating a compromise solution. That is why we support proposals for the further exploration of intermediate options. Our goal is to gain a clearer understanding of the substance of these ideas.

The second innovative solution that deserves in-depth exploration is regional representation. I am well aware that there are countries that are still wary of that notion. Nevertheless, it represents a new approach that is the subject of growing interest on the part of various groups, including groups outside Uniting for Consensus; of course, I am thinking of the European Union. Just a few days ago, the process for ratifying the Lisbon Treaty was completed with an additional leap in the common external projection of the European Union. But I am also thinking of Africa, whose underrepresentation in the Council is one of the most urgent reasons for reform.

The twenty-first century is a world in which regional organizations have an absolute role in the maintenance of peace and security, on an equal footing with States. An increased regional dimension in the Council — which should also be pursued through reform of the Council's provisional rules — as opposed to an increase in the number of seats for a tiny group of countries, would automatically ensure greater representation of all United Nations Member States.

All one has to do is leaf through the table of contents of the annual report of the Security Council, which lists the issues addressed by the Council, to gage the weight that regional organizations have acquired. Any reform that does not take due account of that aspect and instead hinges on the archaic logic of a concert of Powers would be outdated on arrival. Rather, it is our duty to create a Security Council that is more effective and more truly representative of the world in which we live today.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the

presidency for convening this meeting of the General Assembly on an issue central to reforming the Organization to make it more democratic. I also wish to thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, and all members of his team for their outstanding work. We are aware of how difficult it was to launch this process, much sought by the international community, and to lead it with the required objectivity, balance and neutrality. The delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia believes that the intergovernmental negotiations should resume immediately, building on all the progress made during the three previous rounds of discussions.

Reform of the Security Council goes beyond merely increasing the number of its members and is directly linked to the abolition of the veto, as many Members stated during the three rounds of intergovernmental negotiations. Bolivia reaffirms the relevance and centrality of the issue of the veto in genuine Council reform, which is intrinsically linked both to an expansion of the Council and to its working methods, in particular its decision-making mechanism and its actions. Bolivia does not believe that an artificial distinction should be made between those issues, which would detract from the comprehensiveness of the current process.

The veto is not democratic. It paralyzes the decisions of the Security Council and undermines a fundamental principle on which the United Nations is based: the sovereign equality of all its Members. Therefore, any attempt to supersede that concept through the adoption of norms that are not democratic and that are offensive to the membership and the international community as a whole, threatening the climate of peace among nations, is unacceptable.

As for increasing the number of permanent members, Bolivia believes that expansion is necessary, as we have stated in the three previous rounds of negotiations. However, that expansion should apply to one category alone. There should be 25 members without privileges, without permanent membership and with the same rights and responsibilities. That would thus meet the need to restore the balance of power between the General Assembly and the Security Council, in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

We believe that reform of the Security Council should not be restricted to the question of the expansion of its membership alone, but rather should also incorporate a profound transformation of its working methods. Democracy, transparency and accountability are all linked to the taking of decisions that are sometimes binding on all members. Those components should, therefore, be present in the working methods of the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, such as the sanctions committee and others. The Council should convene more open sessions, which would guarantee the transparency within that United Nations body. It should be open to global, public opinion and to States that are not members.

It would be very useful to be able to draw on a document that compiles the various proposals that have been presented to date. It would also be useful if the presidency would issue an agenda of work, so we could make progress on that important discussion during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): We thank the presidency for convening this meeting on Security Council reform. Let me begin by congratulating our dear colleague, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, on his reappointment as Chair of our intergovernmental negotiations. Under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, Ambassador Tanin ably steered us in three rounds of negotiations on the five identified negotiable elements. My delegation commends him for taking us to a new level of discussion.

My delegation is reassured by our President, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, and his substantive statement yesterday, stating that there is broad agreement to build on progress attained since the last session. In this connection, my delegation welcomes his engagement in facilitating the process and looks forward to working with him to enhance the legitimacy and accountability of our Council, making it more representative, efficient and transparent.

My delegation continues to echo its support for increased membership in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. We would like to see equitable geographical representation, including in the permanent category, among regions currently not represented or under-represented, that is, Africa, Asia and Latin American and the Caribbean.

We would like to see the veto abolished, as it has too often been used for political reasons and to block action. However, should the veto be retained, all its prerogatives and privileges must be extended to new permanent members. Having said this, we remain firm that the veto power should not be applied in instances of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

There is already overwhelming support among the membership to reform the Council's working methods. The group of five small countries (S-5) has made specific proposals that, in our view, provide a good basis to begin real negotiations. I hope that, during this session, substantive progress on that element can be achieved.

On the question of the relationship between the Council and the Assembly the General Assembly, as chief deliberator of the international community, is, as has been stated in previous debates, the most representative and democratic organ of the United Nations. By right, the Assembly should have an enhanced role in its relationships with the Council, making the Council accountable to the Assembly for its action or lack of it. As stated by my colleagues from the small island developing States who spoke before me, we would also like to see greater access for and effective participation of our States in a reformed Council.

Let me close by commenting on the process we have adopted. My delegation hopes we can uphold the integrity of our process. We need to achieve a few milestones during this session by entrusting our Chair to come up with a text based on inputs registered so far and within a specified timeframe, so that we can have more focused and results-oriented negotiations. We must have trust and faith in ourselves and in our process if we are truly to make any real and meaningful progress.

Mr. Borg (Malta): My delegation would like to commend the work and activities of the Security Council during the past 12 months, as reflected in its report A/64/2 introduced by the Permanent Representative of Austria.

In this regard, we note, in particular, the fact that there was an increase in the number of open debates and open briefings. We welcome this trend, since in our view, it reflects an increase in transparency and openness in the work of the Security Council, which, in turn, enhances access and participation by all United Nations Members States in the consideration of important issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Situations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East continue to create concern for the whole membership of the United Nations. Once again, we note, in particular, the conflicts in Africa, which continue to occupy a considerable part of the work and activities of the Security Council. Considering that half of the current United Nations peacekeeping operations and a number of United Nations missions and offices are situated in Africa, and that about 70 per cent of United Nations peacekeepers work in Africa and 43 per cent of the United Nations peacekeeping budget is devoted to activities in Africa, related partnerships and cooperation have to be strengthened and enhanced.

Therefore, the role of the Security Council is essential and primordial. The holding, therefore, by the Security Council of a high-level debate on peace and security in Africa last March provided an important contribution in defining strategies for cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) — a key and critical player in the area of peace and security — and for the deployment of AU peace support operations and the African Peace and Security Architecture.

My delegation also welcomes the missions undertaken by Security Council members to Africa, the Asian region and Haiti, which continue to bring the work of the Council closer to Governments and peoples in conflict areas. We feel that such missions assist Council members in getting a first-hand assessment of the negative impact of the tensions and turmoil resulting from conflicts, which continue to obstruct the economic and social development of many countries and which displace large populations and increase poverty, the number of refugees and political instability.

The situation in the Middle East continues to present a formidable challenge in the search for a way to relaunch the Middle East peace process, with the Palestinian question at its core. The grave events that occurred at the beginning of this year in and around the Gaza Strip, resulting in considerable loss of life, have aggravated the deteriorating humanitarian situation there and require a more decisive contribution and involvement on the part of the Security Council in order to fully implement Security Council resolution

1860 (2009) of 8 January. The entire membership of the United Nations looks to and expects the Security Council to embark on reinvigorated efforts and measures in implementing the Quartet's Road Map.

Malta joins the other delegations that continue to call for a durable and political solution to the question of Palestine and the Middle East conflict, and for restarting negotiations that can lead to an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel. My delegation urges Council members to continue to engage all concerned parties to contribute in a more substantive manner in order to put the Middle East peace process back on track again.

Malta welcomes the Security Council's efforts to address, at times at a high level, thematic, general and other issues relevant to the maintenance of international peace and security. The fact that the Security Council is fully engaged with other United Nations Member States in discussing such important and contemporary issues goes a long way to ensuring a better working relationship between the Council and the Assembly, thus making the Council more transparent, efficient and effective. At the same time, Malta feels that the annual report of the Security Council should include appropriate analysis of its work, including of its internal discussions and its drafting of resolutions and decisions, which eventually, when adopted, have to be implemented by the whole membership of the United Nations.

Malta feels that a considerable degree of progress has been achieved in the past 12 months on the reform of the Security Council, as a result of the healthy and proactive exchanges that have taken place in the intergovernmental negotiations on the five key issues. My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his contribution to making the process possible. Still, more ground must be covered to ensure that our deliberations result in an effective and productive outcome. From the start of the intergovernmental negotiations Malta has striven in a sustained effort to make an objective and transparent contribution so as to advance the legitimate aspirations of a small State, desiring not to be marginalized or overlooked in these important negotiations. Malta has also been consistent and persistent in expressing its resolute position that small States, which make up nearly one fourth of the Organization's membership, must be given due and important recognition during our discussion of a reformed Security Council.

In each and every statement by Malta, we have continued to observe that the five key issues are inextricably linked and that consideration of any one of these issues must, therefore, ensure a coherent and cohesive progression on the others. Attempts have been made recently to de-link these issues; it is therefore of critical importance that under the President's wise leadership the intergovernmental negotiations continue to recognize that all key issues must be considered as a whole and not in isolation, which would go totally against the consensus reached in the Assembly's decision 62/557 of 15 September 2008. The statement of the President of this Assembly yesterday morning assured us that the five key issues will continue to be considered as one package.

As a small Member State, my delegation attaches particular importance to the issue of the size of an enlarged Security Council. I would like to emphasize that the significant increase in the number of small States that are United Nations Members must be taken fully into account when discussing the proposed expansion of the Council. This, in the view of my delegation, would yield justice to the more than 40 small Member States that clamour for a better response and full recognition of the legitimacy of their claims in the intergovernmental negotiations. It will be recalled that Colombia and Italy introduced a realistic and feasible proposal for a model of reform that included reserving a seat for small States. My delegation feels that small States involved in the negotiations must rally around this proposal to show their determination to see their aspirations become reality.

Improving the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the Security Council's working methods is one of the pillars among the key elements of reform. As a small State, Malta is strongly in favour of more open briefings, fewer closed meetings, and increased transparency and openness in the work of the Council through enhanced access and participation for all United Nations Member States. In particular, the views of the general membership should receive more positive attention from Security Council members.

As I have already stated, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly has to be enhanced in such a manner as to ensure the

transparency and accountability of a reformed Security Council. The important link between the Council and the General Assembly — and the role that the Assembly should play in those instances where action needed to maintain international peace and security is blocked because of the exercise of a veto by a permanent member — must form part of a more open debate during the intergovernmental negotiations. Member States should therefore acknowledge the clear demand to constructively engage on the issue of the veto, including the limitation of its use by all permanent members of the Security Council.

The issue of regional representation is closely linked to that concerning underrepresentation, as well as to the other four key issues. During the intergovernmental negotiations we have heard many delegations explain how their respective geographical or political groupings are underrepresented in the current composition and structure of the Council. In this context, regional representation could make a positive and constructive contribution to a reformed Security Council. Malta feels that our deliberations should take a more constructive approach to this important issue and that therefore we should embark on a detailed discussion of how to debate it effectively.

Malta would like to acknowledge the smooth transition process for continuing negotiations in the current session of the General Assembly. My delegation would also like to stress the necessity of carrying over the negotiations in a well-balanced way that is representative of the discussions held to date, with an all-inclusive and comprehensive presentation of all the options on the table, including those from the previous rounds. That would ensure that any agreement reached in the intergovernmental negotiations will form part of the whole package, and that no piecemeal decisions are taken, since these would be detrimental to the purpose of our talks and to the wider United Nations membership, especially medium-size and small States.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): May I begin by expressing my appreciation to Ambassador Thomas Mayr-Harting, the Permanent Representative of Austria and current President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/64/2) under agenda item 9.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We look forward to a very comprehensive and productive discussion on the issues at hand during the sixty-fourth session.

Over the past 15 years, the Maldives and other Member States of the General Assembly have expressed their desire to see wide-ranging reform of the United Nations in order to improve the effectiveness of the Organization. Such reform has now become an integral part of our institution as we address the challenges and difficult tasks we face today.

In that regard, comprehensive reform of the Security Council lies at the heart of our larger efforts at revamping an international structure that came into being more than 60 years ago. For the United Nations to continue on its path of progress towards becoming a more effective institution, the Security Council must be expanded and restructured to reflect today's geopolitical realities. The Maldives is of the view that the inclusion of both India and Japan in any future composition of the Security Council remains an important and fundamental aspect of future reform, providing a key mechanism for the effective functioning of the Security Council in the twenty-first century.

We welcome the statement made by the President of the General Assembly yesterday on the question of Security Council reform and his commitment to finding a just and agreeable solution to the five key issues. The recent positive efforts made during the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council must be maintained during the current session as well. However, there is a still work that needs to be done to address the concerns of all Member States to make the membership truly representative.

While the composition of the Council remains a key area of priority, we believe that the working methods of the Council must also be improved, with a view to restoring its credibility, authority and legitimacy within the United Nations system.

We also believe that the expanded membership of the new Council should come from both developing countries and developed countries and should include the participation of small islands, landlocked and other vulnerable States, reflective of the United Nations and its diverse membership.

Lastly, we wish to emphasize the need to rethink the veto power in order to strengthen the present architecture for the adoption of responsive and preventive measures aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

The Maldives firmly believes that this Assembly must be committed to the implementation of decision 62/557 in letter and spirit. We fully support the stand taken by the President of the General Assembly and welcome his commitment to advance the reform effort through a constructive and consultative process in the informal plenary. Furthermore, we call for the widest possible political acceptance by Member States in proceeding with these negotiations. It is our view that failure to reach consensus should not prevent action on these important reforms.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my hope that consensus can be achieved in reaching a solution to the general reform and composition of the Security Council. We must be united in our resolve and pragmatic in our approach so as to break the impasse that has caused United Nations reform to stagnate for the past 15 years. Only by working together will we be able to bring forth a Security Council that would be representative, efficient and able to deal effectively with the shared challenges we face today.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.