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New York

President: Mr. Kerim . . . . . (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

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

Agenda items 9 and 122 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/62/2)

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

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this joint debate, which provides us a timely and useful opportunity to reflect on the reform of the Security Council. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, President of the Security Council for the month of November, for his introduction of the Council's annual report (A/62/2) to the General Assembly.

The report confirms once again the increasing work load of the Council, in which African issues have continued to be at the forefront of its agenda. It gives an accurate account of the work of the Council, although it could be more analytical. As has been underlined by many other speakers, there is still much room for further improvement in the working methods of the Council in order to enhance its transparency, accountability and inclusiveness. We therefore encourage the Council to continue its efforts to this end. At the same time, we should also continue to look into the working methods of the Security Council.

We are fully committed to the early reform of the Security Council in order to make it more representative, efficient, transparent and democratic, thereby further enhancing its legitimacy and credibility. Those widely shared general principles should continue to guide our efforts in the next phase of our work.

While focusing on the reform of the Security Council we should not overlook the revitalization of the General Assembly. The reform of the Council and the revitalization of the Assembly are inevitably two interrelated issues that should proceed separately but simultaneously.

Despite the divergence of views among the membership on the nature and modalities of achieving the reform of the Security Council, we managed to generate momentum and make positive progress during the sixty-first session, thanks to President Al-Khalifa and her facilitators. We must now build on that progress and show greater understanding, flexibility and cooperation — and thereby try to seek the widest possible agreement among the membership. Having said that, let me make a few observations on the way ahead.

First, we strongly believe that you, Mr. President, should continue your informal consultations with all interested parties. Your leadership, guidance and wisdom at this critical stage of our work are needed more than ever.

Secondly, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council should

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continue to be the main forum within which we should prepare the ground for an eventual intergovernmental negotiation. The crux of the matter is not how we label our meetings but to what extent we can be flexible and forthcoming with regard to the enlargement of the Security Council.

Thirdly, our future work should be guided by the report of Open-ended Working Group (A/61/47), and in particular the reports of the facilitators annexed to it. Those reports should be the basis of our future discussions.

Fourthly, in every stage of our work, we should take into account the views and concerns of small States and island States on the reform process, in order to garner the general agreement of the membership. Without their consent, there can be no reform.

Let me underline once again our readiness for an open-minded discussion under your able leadership, Sir, with flexibility, inclusiveness, transparency and constructiveness as the key words to be kept in mind.

Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia): First, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for presenting to the General Assembly the report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 (A/62/2), which contains revealing facts regarding the ever-increasing workload and complexity of the issues before the Council.

The second agenda item under consideration today — "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters" — has attracted an even longer list of speakers to address the Assembly in the past two days. That is a clear sign of the great importance we all attach to the issue of Security Council reform.

The valuable work of the facilitators appointed by your predecessor, Sir, and the subsequent discussions in the previous session, have moved us further along on this item and have generated momentum which we cannot afford to squander. We find the proposed intermediate solution to be a possible way forward towards a compromise. We have to engage in negotiating a solution that will lead us to the goal we all share, namely, an efficient, effective and representative Security Council.

Let me take this opportunity to state once again the Slovenian position in a nutshell: we support the enlargement of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We would also like to see a representative geographical distribution of seats, including an additional non-permanent seat for the Group of Eastern European States. We also believe there is a need for improvement in the working methods of the Security Council.

We hope that your leadership, Mr. President, and the necessary flexibility among the membership will bring us to a successful conclusion of the prolonged debates on the issue of Security Council reform.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): On behalf of the delegation of Nepal, I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the report of the Security Council (A/62/2) and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

The Security Council is one of the most important organs of the United Nations. Its responsibility and relevance in the maintenance of international peace and security need no elaboration. Unless we make the Council effective, we cannot achieve the objectives stipulated in the Charter. In view of the changing reality of our times and the complexities of the issues that confront the Council, its composition and working methods need improvement.

The reform of the Security Council is among the unfinished business on the reform agenda of the United Nations. Such reform should include the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council and the improvement of its working methods. Reform measures should be aimed at further strengthening the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy in dealing with emerging threats to international peace and security, and at increasing more meaningful participation by the entire membership of the United Nations in that process.

Nepal supports the expansion of the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We feel that India, Brazil, Germany and Japan deserve permanent seats, while Africa should also be fairly represented in the expanded Council. The expansion in the non-permanent category should take into account the aspirations of smaller countries, especially those which regularly contribute to the work of the Council by sending troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions. We can also develop a membership rotation

mechanism for non-permanent seats, so that all Member States can be represented in the Security Council in rotation and can thus focus the energy, time and resources they are currently devoting to campaigning for membership on dedicating themselves to more productive activities in the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations.

Nepal attaches great significance to the work of the Council and has been responding to its call by sending troops to various peacekeeping missions around the world. Next year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of Nepal's continued participation in peacekeeping missions. It is currently the fourth largest troop contributor, participating in 13 United Nations missions with more than 3,000 troops and police personnel.

As a troop-contributing country, Nepal would like to see a more coordinated approach and a more clarified role towards troop-contributing countries in the working methods and decision-making of the Security Council. The Council can involve troop-contributing non-members in its work more proactively and more regularly.

We also favour substantive and tangible improvement in the working methods of the Council to increase its transparency and accountability to Member States, which it is supposed to serve. For example, the current method of excluding concerned Member States from the Council's consultations and briefings cannot be said to be highly transparent and inclusive.

There also needs to be a concrete improvement in the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, so that the two complement one another and do not compete for decision-making space. In particular, the General Assembly should be allowed to play its legislative role against the current practice in the Security Council of adopting resolutions of a legislative nature that apply to all Member States.

In the past session we agreed to move ahead on this agenda item, including through intergovernmental negotiation. We should not delay any further in making progress on this important issue. Nepal welcomes the idea of an interim arrangement to break the deadlock on this important matter.

As you stated in your opening remarks, Mr. President, the need of the hour is to agree on a process. The Open-ended Working Group can start negotiations on the content of a package for an interim arrangement, for which there seems to be a certain degree of desirability. Perhaps the Open-ended Working Group can develop a negotiating proposal. As it develops, that process needs to be further augmented with few rounds of informal consultations at the plenary, as we did with regard to most other agenda during the reforms last year. In conclusion, Nepal pledges to constructively engage in the reform of the Security Council with the members of the General Assembly and we are thankful for this initiative.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): I do not have a prepared text. I will try to be as interactive as possible in my contribution.

First of all, I want to align myself with the statement made by Angola on behalf of the African Group.

My own remarks will be confined to the issue of reform of the Security Council. Various positions, as we all know, have been put forward. This process culminated in the two facilitators' reports, which have been discussed at length. These discussions led to a decision to the effect that we should build on the work of the facilitators and continue the process, including intergovernmental negotiations. My reading of that decision does not entitle us, does not obligate us to start intergovernmental negotiations straight away. Intergovernmental negotiations are one of the elements that we will be considering.

Therefore, we have not reached the stage where we are set to start intergovernmental negotiations. We have to consider the roadmap; we have to consider the elements that will form the basis of intergovernmental negotiations. I believe that this process can best be conducted within the framework of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the Security Council. Therefore, this process has to continue and we must build on it.

When we were considering the facilitators' report, I did point out that, as far as Africa is concerned, our position seems not to have been taken into account in either of the facilitators' reports, especially in the last one, with regards to the intermediary approach. I thus insisted that any negotiations, in order to be all-encompassing, must take into account all of the positions of the group. I am very glad that that also was the position taken by this

Assembly — that all positions advanced so far by the groups must also form the basis of negotiations.

It is therefore not correct, or arguably right, to single out one position and insist that this position should form the basis of negotiations to the exclusion of all other positions. In our effort to form an extremely comprehensive basis for negotiations, we have to ensure that all of the positions, plus the views of the two facilitators, are all considered as a whole.

In this regard, the African position has been well-articulated and is well-known: in brief, at least two permanent seats with a veto. The rationale behind this has also been well-articulated and is well-known. Africa is a continent that has no permanent seat, and we insist that this historic wrong be corrected. Some people have misunderstood us, thinking that we are adopting a maximalist approach, that we are saying to do this or nothing. But this is not our position. We are very articulate, our position is very well-reasoned and we hope and think that it can, along with other positions, form a basis for negotiations.

If we look carefully at the African position, one can see that it states that the two permanent seats that we are demanding should be given to the region, to Africa as a whole. But within the African context, we shall determine who will occupy those seats. We shall also have the right to recall our member, because, very often, a State campaigns to be on the Security Council, but, immediately after gaining this seat, sometimes the State in question simply pushes for its own interest and disregards the interests of the group. In this context, we want the African position not to be disregarded by whoever is elected to the Council. We insist on our proposal that there should be a built-in mechanism for recall.

Our position also emphasizes that the best criterion for joining the Security Council should not be how powerful the country is, in terms of political or economic power. We are not comfortable with arguments that say that "country A, because it is very powerful economically should qualify to be on the Security Council". This criterion is a bit false. Country B, which is not, at the moment, economically powerful, tomorrow can become so. Does this then mean that country B, once it attains that power, should now also qualify to be on the Security Council as a permanent member? In other words, we do not want to entrench the privileges that have led to the current fight. If the criteria to join are based on power, we are back to the situation of 1945.

To avoid all these configurations, we think that any country is entitled to be on the Security Council. This is why I want to examine the criteria in a very careful manner, so that whatever we conclude at the end of the day takes into account all positions and all interests of the countries concerned.

In a nutshell, what the delegation of Uganda is insisting upon is that this process of Security Council reform has not reached a stage where we can fully launch intergovernmental negotiations. There are many areas to consider, many loose ends to tie up and we can only do that if for now, under the President's wise guidance, this process is continued within the framework of the Working Group.

Lastly, let me also touch the issue of peacekeeping. We are very proud of the peacekeeping role played by the United Nations through the appropriate organs. I believe that whenever blue-helmeted personnel are seen, they represent the theme of peace. That does the United Nations proud. For the most part, peacekeeping operations are in Africa. But if we keep to the traditional role of peacekeeping — that is, carrying out peacekeeping where there is peace to keep — then, I am afraid, certain conflict situations may not be addressed.

Take the example of Somalia, where the situation has been bad. If we apply the traditional peacekeeping approach, the United Nations will not deploy in Somalia, since there is no peace to keep there. Does that mean that the United Nations will watch helplessly as slaughter takes place? Surely, the United Nations should be concerned. It should move beyond the traditional approach and even engage in robust peacekeeping: peacemaking as well as peacekeeping.

My country is proud to have played exactly that role. We have deployed in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and the countries participating in the Mission are the only ones that are there. We knew the consequences of going into Somalia; we knew all these things. But if we had folded our hands and done nothing, it would have been a real abnegation of responsibility at the international level. So we deployed; we are there. And we know that our presence has reassured the people of Somalia that the international community cares.

Therefore, we call on the United Nations to examine its position on peacekeeping, to engage in peacemaking in Somalia, to encourage those countries that have pledged to deploy troops there and to give them all the logistics necessary to do so. However, I want to reassure the Assembly that Uganda is in Somalia for a noble cause and that we are not leaving the country, despite all these setbacks — despite the fact that we are there alone. We hope that, one day, others will join us for the sake of peace.

Mr. Piperkov (Bulgaria): Allow me to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for this timely initiative. I would also like to join those who have expressed their gratitude to Ambassador Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia and President of the Security Council, who presented the annual report of the Council (A/62/2). We understand the difficulties associated with the preparation of a report that goes beyond enumerating the Council's activities and meetings, and we encourage the Council to continue to strive to submit reports that fulfil the expectations and needs of Member States.

I would like to share with members some aspects of the Bulgarian position on the other agenda item before us, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Reform of the Security Council is part of the international community's overall efforts to promote positive change and transformation of the United Nations in conformity with the new economic and political realities. Any reform will remain inconclusive unless it addresses the issue of improving the body that is at the core of the United Nations mission of maintaining international peace and security.

Security Council reform should enhance the representative character, as well as the effectiveness, legitimacy and transparency of the Council's activities. Expansion should be carried out in such a way as to ensure the Council's effectiveness and strengthen its capacities.

Regrettably, the debate on Security Council reform has consumed much energy and time over the years, with no apparent substantive result. We share the disappointment prevailing among Member States in that regard, although we do not think that our efforts have been in vain. Some progress has been made on the issue of working methods. Here, I would like to stress the contribution of the five countries sponsoring the relevant initiative. Their efforts have injected some impetus into the Council's efforts to achieve greater transparency and openness in its proceedings.

As to the issue of composition, Bulgaria believes that the Security Council should be expanded in both categories. We are convinced that some countries will be able to successfully perform the duties and responsibilities stemming from permanent membership, owing to their increased economic and political potential and their widely acknowledged international roles. Similarly, the increased overall number of Member States in recent decades — including those belonging to the Group of Eastern European States — points strongly to the need for expansion in the non-permanent category as well.

With regard to the non-permanent category, Bulgaria supports an expansion that would ensure maintenance of the balance between permanent and non-permanent members and of the equitable distribution of seats among the regional groups. We want to support a formula that takes into account the legitimate and justified aspiration of the Eastern European Group — whose membership has doubled over the past decade — to an additional seat in the non-permanent category.

My delegation welcomes the decision of the General Assembly, taken during the previous session, to consider the question of Security Council reform during the current session of the Assembly so that further concrete results can be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, on the basis of the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, and the positions and proposals of Member States.

Bulgaria welcomed the idea of seeking innovative formulas. We are encouraged by the sense of flexibility shown by various delegations during this debate. We understand the arguments in favour of a so-called interim decision until the time is ripe for permanent solutions. Given the uncertainty regarding the final outcome of such an intermediate process, we are of the view that, should it be accepted, we must envisage necessary provisions that would make it subject to appropriate review. As the process advances, we stand ready to examine this and other initiatives that might help to give rise to widely supported ideas on the reform process.

Mr. President, I would like to assure you that, in seeking the right formula for reform of the Security Council, we will continue to rely on your wise advice and your able guidance in the process of defining the best way to move forward.

Ms. Enkhtsetseg (Mongolia): I am taking the floor today to express my Government's position on the issue of structural reform of the Security Council.

Mongolia supports early reform of the Security Council aimed at making it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus further enhancing its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. My country believes that there should be a just and equitable expansion of the Security Council in both its permanent and non-permanent membership categories, ensuring due representation for both developing and developed countries.

Expansion in the permanent-member category should address the dichotomy in the Council's composition as well as today's geopolitical realities. Factors such as a country's global outreach and its economic and political weight must therefore be taken into consideration. After all, permanent membership is not only a privilege; it is also a heavy responsibility. Mongolia thus supports the aspirations of Japan, Germany and India, which are willing and, we believe, well positioned to serve as new permanent members of the Security Council. Moreover, Africa and Latin America should be adequately represented on the Council.

My delegation supports the creation of additional non-permanent seats, which would reflect the changes in the Organization's membership in recent decades and would give small States greater opportunities to serve on the Council. In the same vein, my delegation does not support proposals to amend Article 23 of the Charter. The provision that retiring members of the Security Council shall not be eligible for immediate re-election has been instrumental in ensuring the rotation of Council members and the election of more countries to the Council than otherwise would have been the case. Needless to say, smaller States have been the main beneficiary of this rule.

I would like to add that we find objectionable any proposals that entertain ideas of establishing a third tier of membership in the Security Council. We believe that it would result in the devaluation and sidelining of the existing category of non-permanent members, and is not, as such, in the best interest of small States.

The improvement of working methods of the Security Council is an essential element of the reform process and one that is of particular significance for the majority of Member States. My delegation notes in this respect the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to improve the working methods of the Security Council. Increased transparency, openness in the Council's work and better access for States that are not members of the Council, as well as enhanced accountability to the membership as a whole, can only enhance the authority of the Council and increase the legitimacy of its decisions.

Our deliberations over the years have revealed that all Member States share the view that no reform effort of the United Nations is complete without Security Council reform. Another point of universal convergence is the necessity to make progress on the Security Council reform track, as everyone agrees that the status quo is unacceptable.

I take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, for her remarkable leadership in steering the work of the General Assembly and in moving this vital reform dimension forward. Indeed, her efforts and those of the facilitators were instrumental in generating a unique momentum that has carried over to this session, as exemplified by the number of delegations that are taking the floor in this debate.

The last session of the General Assembly was marked by an extensive process of consultations that allowed delegations to engage in a focused exchange of views on every aspect of Security Council reform. But even more importantly, this process resulted in adoption by the General Assembly of a decision in which it decided that the question of Security Council reform should be considered during the current session of the General Assembly, so that further concrete results might be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, based on the positions of and proposals made by Member States.

My delegation takes the current debate as the beginning of the process that should yield concrete

results over the course of this session. We look forward, Mr. President, to hearing your suggestions and proposals on the way to proceed. Rest assured, Sir, that my delegation shall spare no effort to assist you in your efforts.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to express thanks to and congratulate the representative of Indonesia for his presentation of the report of the Security Council in his capacity as President of the Council.

We do not intend to reiterate the exhaustive analysis set forth in most of the statements during this debate. However, we do believe that it is appropriate to stress the need to elaborate with greater emphasis on some factors that should be taken into account in order to contribute to the reform process in the United Nations, a reform that has been under way and addressed for more than a decade.

The majority of delegations recognizes that this is the right moment in which to make great changes in the current structure of the bodies of the United Nations, but we continue to observe the same non-convergent positions on one side and another. Many delegations have mentioned the fact that little progress has been made concerning reform of the Security Council and that the issue might not be worth the effort that has been made during all these years of debate.

The Bolivian delegation takes the view that most countries are fully in agreement as to the need to strengthen the authority of the General Assembly, which, given its broad democratic representation, should serve as a central axis of the Organization, thus averting interference from the Security Council in issues that are not strictly within its jurisdiction.

We all agree fully to the need to reform the Security Council. As far as Bolivia is concerned, it is extremely important that this body should have a more democratic membership. I would like to indicate what our vision is of the concept of a more democratic Security Council.

We take the view that the fundamental principle of democracy is the equality of all the components of the Organization. But when we have a Security Council in which there are countries with certain privileges in comparison to others, that is not democracy. Nor do we believe that the democratic composition of the Council can be notably improved by increasing the number of privileged members. When we talk about a democratic Security Council, we should think in terms of all its members having exactly the same rights, the same powers, the same obligations. That is democracy.

When we propose a more democratic membership, we are also speaking of a composition that would reflect broader regional vision, so that, through its legitimate representativity, it would become a genuine watchdog capable of safeguarding international peace and security. It is not possible to build a lasting peace when, at the same time, there are countries that threaten others with pre-emptive wars or wars of reprisal for any reason.

The current composition of the Security Council reflects the political situation of the last century, times in which the hegemonistic nature of the victors was clearly predominant. Today, we are living in a different era, in which we aspire to achieve complementarity for all countries, respect for human rights, respect for the self-determination of peoples, peaceful coexistence, without modern masters or modern slaves. It is natural that this new reality should be reflected in the structures of the United Nations.

We must not deceive ourselves by thinking that merely enlarging the Security Council would change the imbalance that is patent in the current structure. Even less effective would be an increase in the number of privileged countries with permanent membership status. We feel that, as long as there are countries on the Security Council with the right to veto, those countries will always be the ones to take the important decisions. In some cases those countries might consult with others that might come in as permanent or non-permanent members, but that is almost always done in isolation, without taking into account the general views of the Security Council, let alone those of the General Assembly. At present in this process of reform, it is necessary to expand the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council to make it more regionally representative.

Bolivia supports the initiatives aimed at analyzing and reaching consensus on limiting the scope of the veto — if the veto has to be maintained in order to preserve the unity and integrity of the United Nations. We have no doubt whatsoever that the United Nations was born with a body, with a head and with limbs; we do not seek to decapitate this Organization. For this reason, when conditions improve, we may be

able to talk about the elimination of the veto; but for the time being, we support the proposal to limit the scope of the veto.

The credibility of the United Nations in the international context is ever-shrinking, and we know that there is a single and very simple reason for this: no decision of the General Assembly, even if appropriate, is of a binding nature. The Charter of the United Nations does not grant this power to the General Assembly. I believe that if we really want to make progress in serious reform of the United Nations, we must face the need to introduce amendments to its Charter — amendments that would endow the General Assembly with powers to take decisions binding in nature, and therefore duly heeded and complied with by all countries without exception. For example, we know that the imbalance that prevails in the Security Council will always be maintained, regardless of whether its number of permanent members increases or not. If we wish the United Nations to become more democratic and more representative, we should endow the General Assembly with the power to review decisions vetoed in the Security Council, when appropriate. We would suggest that this proposal, together with others, should be analyzed in the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the United Nations.

We are not persuaded that this is the right time to embark on a dialogue of an intergovernmental nature. We believe that there is an inherent danger in this: the most powerful economic countries might exert pressure on countries that are the most economically needy in order to get them to comply and take certain positions on these matters. We believe that this matter should continue to be discussed and analyzed in a completely democratic and transparent fashion in the Open-ended Working Group analyzing United Nations reform.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I thank the President for organizing these consultations, which, following these two days of debate, have been very timely and useful. We have found a lot of common ground, even though it may not appear so at first sight. I also thank the President for his introductory remarks that are of fundamental importance for all of us in their political weight.

I was supposed to take the floor yesterday afternoon, and I wanted to be very brief and simply express a few remarks, because I thought that there was nothing really that I could add after those speakers. The position of the Uniting for Consensus group was fully presented. The Permanent Representatives of Mexico, Pakistan, Canada, Colombia, Spain and Costa Rica and this morning the representative of Turkey among others presented their views, which I fully share and support. I will quickly add that I fully support their guidance and leadership, and we are ready to move the process forward and keep the momentum going.

After having listened to the 45 minute speech by Ambassador Sen, the Permanent Representative of India, I feel that if we heed his call to give substantive inputs and to be more interactive and count on everyone's indulgence, we could elaborate a bit more and act more in the spirit of a constructive interactive approach.

First of all, allow me to begin by joining other Permanent Representatives in thanking Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2). As we have heard, the issue is very sensitive for the Council's membership, because it involves differing views on the wider picture, the need to preserve the Security Council's role, its interaction with other organs of the United Nations and, in short, its "behaviour".

There have been conflicting assessments of the matter, as we all have heard. Owing to time constraints, I will not elaborate this point today, but I would just like to draw attention to the linkage that Ambassador Sen established, with great eloquence and passion, between the alleged weaknesses and shortcomings of the Security Council as it stands now — in more general terms, its alleged inadequacies — and the need for Security Council reform, which might bring in more permanent members, even without veto power. This would bring about a shift in the balance and in the structure of power. The idea is to balance, so to speak, the excess of power of the P5, or looking at the substance, to "contain" the P5.

Security Council reform, with an expansion in its permanent membership, is to be seen, from the point of view of substance, as part of a strategy of containment of the P5. Of course, this is nothing new. We have heard this argument by Ambassador Sen and other distinguished representatives, advocating shaking the tree and restructuring power within the Security Council. The former Permanent Representative of

Germany, Mr. Pleuger, was very vocal on this topic. We veterans recall this plea for restructuring. I mention Mr. Pleuger because the current Ambassador, Mr. Matussek, is much more subdued on this point.

If it is true that we need new permanent members in order to balance or restructure the power within the Security Council, what puzzles me is that the United States — for example, Ambassador Khalilzad, and, as we have heard, President Bush, speaking in this General Assembly — and other permanent members seem to favour expansion of the number of permanent members. However, the rationale behind the increase is presumably to curtail their power. Either the P5 members that support expansion have not understood the rationale, as has been explained by Ambassador Sen, or they are masochists. Or, perhaps, something is wrong in what Ambassador Sen and other representatives have been saying.

In fact, the situation is exactly the contrary. It may seem a paradox — and we do not have time now to elaborate further on this point — but, if one wants to strengthen the P5 influence within the Security Council, what you have to do is just enlarge it with new permanent members without veto power. To understand my line of thought, let us recall how the Roman Empire expanded and strengthened itself. In facing the challenges from the provinces, the Empire strengthened itself by co-opting them, by integrating them. And you, Mr. President, you come from the region and you understand very well and know the history of the region very well; you understand how the Roman Empire strengthened itself. We can also read Marguerite Yourcenar's *Memoirs of Hadrian* to see it. From the generals, who were co-opted at the top, to the prisoners, who were given Roman citizenship, all the while staying prisoners, all were co-opted.

In fact, today, for the P5 and the Security Council to have new members without the veto is a very clever that strengthens influence. There is a great advantage in having to deal always with the same members. There can be a lot of trade-offs with a member that cannot block you because it has no veto power, but will, at the same time, inevitably tend to behave as a fellow member of the same privileged "boardroom".

Let us not mix permanent membership, which implies veto power and can, indeed, make a difference in the balance of power in the Security Council, with the permanent presence of a member that has a seat without veto power. Ambassador Sen's scenario is as follows: if you want to contain or curtail the powers of the P5 in order to have a "different" Security Council, then you should not settle for anything less than permanent members with veto power. Here, we can also understand the rationale behind the African position as it was presented so passionately this morning by the Permanent Representative of Uganda, Mr. Butagira.

What we will have, if we have an expansion without veto power, is simply a strengthening of the P5 club. Let us be blunt. We will have more members that will benefit from the cascade effect, a point that has been so forcefully highlighted by the Permanent Representative yesterday of Costa Rica, Ambassador Urbina, and before him, Ambassador Ugarte, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica.

As an alternative to new permanent members with veto power, if you really want to shift the balance of power within the Security Council, maybe something else is needed, something different from what Ambassador Sen and other distinguished representatives have advocated. I do not like very much the idea of containment, because it goes a bit against my thinking. I prefer not to go against somebody but to build together with somebody. I prefer to say that we really want to make the Security Council more representative of today's geopolitical realities.

Let me now recall, as I have done in the past, in 1945, in Dumberton Oaks in Washington D.C., the idea of "regional seats" was suggested. Among those advocating regional seats — in 1945, more than 60 years ago — were Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Philippines and Uruguay. The Egyptian delegate, Badawi Pasha, was among the most vocal in favour of regional seats. At that time, the big Five flatly rejected the notion of regional seats, because they were potentially very dangerous as a counterbalance to their power.

Today, in the last twenty years, what is the reality that we have in front of us? It is regional organizations, regional ownership and regional empowerment. This is what we have to address and we have to see how to address this within the context of the reform that we have been discussing for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years.

A few days ago, we had a very interesting thematic debate in the Security Council, organized by the Indonesian presidency, on the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (see S/PV.5776). It became very clear that the central pillars of our system are now regional. What struck me was the lack of coherence in the debate. On the one hand, we talk about the fundamental importance of regional organizations, such as the African Union and the European Union. As Ambassador Butagira recalled this morning, Africa takes up 78 per cent of our time in the Council. On the other hand, when we talk about Security Council reform, we forget about the importance of regional organizations. Somewhere along the line, we are missing something.

Have we sufficiently explored the notion of permanent regional representation as a basis for negotiations on Security Council reform? I recall a very lively discussion on that subject in a consultation with the five Facilitators; there was a very vigorous intervention by Ambassador Abdelaziz of Egypt. But we cannot say that we have addressed this issue just because we discussed it on a couple of afternoons.

Here, I should like to recall that the representative of Indonesia said yesterday that the regional approach brought with it some interesting ideas that were worthy and needed to be further explored. Moreover, yesterday or the day before, the representative of El Salvador flagged the importance of addressing the issue of the regional approach.

That brings me back to the African vision, but because, as Ambassador Butagira said, we have to listen. I recall that, at a meeting at African Union headquarters at least two years ago, it was made very clear that the African vision — which dates back to 1945, 60 years ago — looks forward. At that time, the African vision was defeated. This time, because we will be responsible for the reform that we carry out, let us not allow that vision to be defeated.

This morning, Mr. Butagira clearly reaffirmed that the African Union is not asking for permanent membership for one nation. So there is a substantial — I repeat, substantial — difference between the aspirations of African countries and those of other member countries. The language being used — permanent membership — is the same, but the concept is substantially different. What Africans are requesting is a permanent seat for the region in order to correct a historical imbalance.

What we must do now is, rather than trying to split the African Union, to see whether it is possible to apply the African concept of regional ownership and empowerment to other areas so that they can benefit from it. If that is possible, we must find ways to do this, as I believe Ambassador Akram of Pakistan hinted. We must address how to “export” the African vision to other areas, taking into account the cultural and political differences and the historical development of States. As the Permanent Representative of Egypt forcefully emphasized during those consultations three or four months ago, there cannot be different models for reform; we cannot carry out reform with different models for Africa and Asia. So we must work for a new San Francisco in that regard.

As I said at the outset, the positions of some of the countries that agree with the principles of the Uniting for Consensus idea have been very clearly stated during the consultations. Once again, we have placed on record our ideas on how to proceed, on the need to carefully prepare for the next phase of negotiations, on the critical importance of including all stakeholders at every stage of the process — as you, Mr. President, so wisely stated at the outset of the consultations — and, finally, on the importance of continuing our work in the Open-ended Working Group, which is the most flexible and inclusive body of the General Assembly.

I should like to comment on the last two of those issues. We cannot carry out reform without including the entire membership, as you said in your introductory statement, Mr. President. In reform of the Security Council, there are no major players or second-class players; we are all primary players. Allow me to be very frank: I would not like to see a repeat of what we saw during the final stages of preparing the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1), when doors were shut in the faces of United Nations Members. That cannot happen a second time.

It has been said by some, including Ambassador Matussek, that the Open-ended Working Group is not the right forum for bringing forward the work that you will lead, Mr. President. To say that the Open-ended Working Group is not effective is to say that the United Nations is not effective, which perhaps is true. But if the Working Group is not effective, it is because we

have not made it effective over the past 15 years. The United Nations will not work, if we do not want it to work or want to have its decisions implemented. So if we have the necessary political will, the Open-ended Working Group will work marvellously well. It is the best tool that we have at our disposal — provided, of course, we have the necessary political will.

At the sixty-first session, the Open-ended Working Group was very successful, thanks to the truly outstanding performance of the Facilitators and the two other colleagues who succeeded them. They submitted two reports, and substantial progress has been made in following up on those reports. So how can we say that the Open-ended Working Group is not effective? There has been substantial progress, and, as we have decided by consensus, we must build on that progress.

Before proceeding further, I should like to point out that we must not be held hostage by the Babel of languages, as Ambassador Sen is always saying. We need to engage in discussion, consultation and negotiation, because perhaps we are talking about exactly the same thing. If we begin with what should be the first point to be addressed in deciding on reform — whether to expand the Council to 19 or 26 members — we should realize that those are two completely different things. So if we decide that there should be 19 members, that decision would have certain consequences, and if we decide that there should be 26 members, that decision would have other consequences. But let us suppose that we conclude that the best solution is, say, 22 members. What has occurred is that we have had discussions, consultations, negotiations — it does not matter what we call them — the point is that every day we are in negotiations — negotiations in the broadest sense of the word. That said, having addressed the question of language, I do not think it has very much importance.

Let us go back to the reports of the facilitators, although I do not want to dwell on their substance, in the interests of time. What is the central point of the intermediary approach? While, again, not going into the substance, I want to draw attention to a point that was forcefully made by Ambassador Wenaweser of Liechtenstein. As far as I can recall, he has been the only one to say — or at least the one who made the point most forcefully when he spoke the day before yesterday — that the intermediary approach — and I would add "or any negotiated solution", although he was talking only about the intermediary approach — has to be sustainable. Otherwise, as soon as an interim solution is adopted, we will start working for a change in that solution through a long electoral campaign.

If we are indeed going to embark on the path of the intermediary approach, it should not be presented, as Ambassador Wenaweser put it, as a "less-than-ideal solution" — and that is a bit of an understatement —

> "that we would set about to change or further refine as soon as it was adopted. Rather, such an intermediary approach should only be considered if it finds the largest possible political support, which has been elusive for all the other proposed solutions presented in the past". (*A/62/PV.47*)

Thus, unless we have it set in our minds that the intermediary approach is the right one, as was forcefully stated by the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, if I remember correctly, it would be better not to embark on that path, since it would be useless to do so if there is some hidden agenda behind it or if we are simply postponing something that we want and that we could have today. I think that, as Ambassador Wenaweser said, if we really believe in the potential of this approach, that is the path the facilitators have indicated, without excluding any other solution.

Many others, in different words, have, in the last two days, emphasized the importance of laying the ground work first. As Ambassador Yousfi of Algeria said, if I remember correctly, in order for negotiations to succeed, we have to properly prepare the ground for them. The same idea was also articulated this morning by, for example, the Permanent Representative of Uganda. But I would say that the most forceful language on this point has been yours, Mr. President, because you have said that our objective should be to develop a framework for beginning intergovernmental negotiations by identifying and reaching agreement on the various negotiable elements. I do not have to add anything else to that statement. That is what is at stake.

I could very well mention many others of the 80 members who have taken the floor, but I shall limit myself to mentioning only two more. The Permanent Representative of Egypt, Ambassador Abdelaziz, stated that "the President of the General Assembly should lead more consultations" — note that he used the word "consultations" —

> "within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group to narrow the difference in

> positions between the conflicting interests of all stakeholders. Such consultations could be undertaken with the aim of reducing the number of alternatives stipulated under every category of the facilitators' reports with a view to creating a positive environment that could lead to the eventual introduction of a vision that could work as a basis for negotiations based on a proposal or proposals from Member States". (*A/62/PV.47*)

Here, too, what is at stake is very clear.

Allow me finally to cite the statement of the Permanent Representative of China, Ambassador Wang Guangya. With Asian wisdom, he stated:

> "Regarding the negotiating process, we must first reach agreement on the entire framework through full consultations among all sides, because an edifice can be built only on a firm foundation". (*A/62/PV.48*)

Mr. President, I would conclude by saying that, under your guidance, we need to set a common ground. And that common ground should not be the lowest common denominator. We have to keep up the momentum. There is no question of maintaining the status quo. Furthermore, just to put the record straight, there appears to be some subliminal message in members' statements that there is a group — the Group of Four or some other like-minded States — that is advocating negotiations. And it is never said, but it sounds as though there is another group that wishes to counter the notion of negotiations; the subliminal message is that this is the Uniting for Consensus group. Now, this situation is completely the opposite of what one would expect. Since the Musharraf-Prodi event of September 2006, the United for Consensus group has been the front-runner — indeed, the record speaks of it — the front-runner in asking for negotiations. Before the Prodi-Musharraf event, nobody was asking for negotiations. The only game in town was to sell a product as the best product available. It was a selling exercise, not a negotiating exercise.

So let us say it frankly: United for Consensus is the front-runner in asking for negotiations. I say that just to set the record straight. As I said before — because it is the central point — we need for all the stakeholders to participate in the negotiation process, because we all have an interest in it. That is why the General Assembly adopted decision 61/561 last September, of which we are all well aware. That is our guide; we do not have to reinvent the wheel. We agreed, in a consensual way, to a very important decision.

At its previous session, the General Assembly entrusted to the present session and its President the task of moving this process forward. We have to move together, and we must not be pushed. I read in the press of some countries that "we will push hard". I think it would be counterproductive to push hard. We have to push, but we must not be pushed. We have to move in an orderly and effective manner. We need your guidance, Mr. President. Above all, we trust you and we are ready to continue to work with you, and with all the States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Al-Khater (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to begin, Sir, by welcoming your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, and by congratulating you on your assumption of your high post. We assure you of our support in discharging your heavy responsibilities in the course of the session.

I also wish to pay tribute to Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa and to offer our gratitude for her prudent leadership of the sixty-first session, for her outstanding contributions towards invigorating the work of the Assembly and for moving forward with the question of Security Council reform, which will enhance the overall reform process of the United Nations.

The delegation of the State of Qatar will focus here on agenda item 112, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Reform is long overdue and the composition of the Security Council cannot remain as it was in 1945. While major decisions are usually confined to the close circle of the five permanent members, all Council members should be closely involved in the decision-making process. There should also be a mechanism to ensure the full participation of other United Nations Member States, in particular, the consultative mechanism should be enhanced through the involvement of countries directly impacted by conflict.

Non-permanent Council members should bear increased responsibility in order to reflect the positions of the larger membership that elected them. An expanded Security Council is essential in order to reflect the international community of today. Those

changes would enhance the mandate of the Council and improve its credibility as a prominent organ of the United Nations system.

Of course, no solution can satisfy all Member States, but we should be ready to achieve consensus on a complete set of proposals. It is also clear that the representation of certain regions, including Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, must be an objective and that the large contributions by those countries should be taken into account.

Now that United Nations reform has become a pressing issue, given the dangers facing the international political order, the Security Council must be fully capable of addressing the crises and threats to world peace at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Council must therefore be equipped with the necessary tools for effective action. The international community as a whole should first and foremost see Council resolutions as binding and legitimate and the composition of the Council should not remain — especially as far as permanent membership is concerned — without change, 60 years after its establishment.

The Council cannot afford to ignore the changing world, which is witnessing new geopolitical realities. Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are greater threats, as are civil wars. Although those factors should be taken into account, the appearance of developing countries on the international arena should also be recognized. Developing countries have become effective elements that are increasingly playing a significant role in settling conflicts by peaceful means.

Responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the Security Council and it is necessary for its legitimacy that its composition reflect the state of the world today. The Security Council should therefore be enlarged and additional permanent members should be added; we also need newly elected non-permanent members to enable the Council to be more representative. In our vision, a reformed Security Council should represent regional dynamics. Its composition should be flexible and better able to respond to global changes and to the new power structures. It should be a Council that does not support privilege or double standards.

Qatar remains convinced that the right of veto should be abolished and, if that is impossible, it should not be expanded for any reason whatsoever. We must not pretend that the United Nations can remain relevant and important and at the same time be a club for the few. It is regrettable — and we must state it explicitly — that the political will that is necessary to move from conceptual discussion regarding reform to actual reform is still lacking.

We are convinced that reform of the Security Council has become more urgent and cannot be postponed further. In point of fact, our countries decided in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) that joint efforts should be intensified to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects, and now we have a good chance to do that at the current session of the General Assembly.

The Millennium Declaration, which is a collective vision of all United Nations Member States for a better and more just world, should be our guiding light; we should not only comply with the Declaration in general terms but should fully implement its objectives.

Last but not least, during its non-permanent membership of the Security Council for 2006-2007, the State of Qatar has gained extensive experience in the work of that organ. It has observed the good aspects of the Council as well as its weak areas, learning more about its importance and its real scope of functions Unless the Security Council adjusts to the new realities in international relations, it will be unable to maintain its credibility and authority across the globe.

We must ensure fair representation of all Member States in the Security Council. The State of Qatar stands ready to participate actively and constructively in intergovernmental negotiations to achieve concrete results during the present session of the General Assembly in order to accomplish the difficult task of making the Security Council more effective and more representative of the new geopolitical realities of our times. Then, no one could question the Council’s legitimacy.

In that regard, we stress the need for a united position with respect to all proposals and reform issues within the United Nations. Reform should not focus exclusively on the issue of the expansion of Security Council membership. Qatar rejects that approach and will oppose pushing any weak premature draft resolution to a vote in the General Assembly. In this context we stress the need for consensus.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/62/2?

It was so decided.

The President: Allow me first of all, to avail myself of the opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007, in his capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November.

During the discussion of agenda item 9, "Report of the Security Council", Member States expressed their appreciation for the role played by Indonesia, the current President of the Security Council. However, some serious concerns were expressed regarding the report itself, in particular the lack of comprehensive evaluation of the various deliberations of the Council.

In order to preserve the balance between the main organs of this Organization and to improve transparency and strengthen cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council, many participants in the debate stressed the importance that the report should in future be more analytical and substantive. That is why we will probably have to pursue a course where we seek simultaneously to revitalize the General Assembly and to reform the Security Council.

I am particularly pleased to be able to state that we have had a very profound and, above all, comprehensive and fruitful discussion on Security Council reform under agenda item 122. It was a frank and effective dialogue, which provided valuable input for further General Assembly deliberations on this very important aspect of the overall United Nations reform agenda. It fully supported the notion that the reform of the United Nations system is one of the priority issues for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

The debate also demonstrated the clear commitment of Member States to embark upon a new stage that offers the prospect of achieving the ultimate goal of comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Delegates, you have paved the way towards the objective of developing a framework to identify and reach agreement on the various negotiable elements that would then allow us to arrive at the point to begin intergovernmental negotiations. In other words, the bridge between the results achieved during the sixty-first session and the way forward during the sixty-second session needs to be constructed. The pillars of the edifice called intergovernmental negotiations must be set up in the manner that this Assembly has defined them during the debate that we are now concluding.

First, we must bear in mind that Security Council reform is an integral part of strengthening the United Nations. It must, therefore, go hand in hand with the transformation of the wider United Nations system.

Secondly, prudent and principle-oriented guidance by the President of the General Assembly is required, although it must be based on a joint venture with Member States in good faith and mutual respect.

Thirdly, the way forward ought to be accomplished through an objective and transparent process starting with identifying the negotiables in order then to move to intergovernmental negotiations.

Fourthly, the Open-ended Working Group should carry out consultations on the framework and modalities for intergovernmental negotiations.

Fifthly, further steps must contain components and notions that will allow the membership to reach general agreement on all aspects of Security Council reform, in particular on the composition of the Council and its working methods.

Sixthly, reform of the Security Council must accommodate the interests and concerns of all sides, especially those who are currently under-represented.

Lastly, Member States should refrain from steps that could serve to undermine the current momentum and consensus and seek to continue a process aimed at achieving result-oriented solutions.

Let me briefly refer to some sparks that have characterized the debate over the last two and a half days. Member States pleaded for clear, common sense, knowing that we all have a shared responsibility to achieve results. One cannot agree more. However, this will require our combined efforts, based on pragmatism, political courage, mutual faith and respect, as well as flexibility and the political will to reach the broadest possible agreement.

There were also requests to speed up the rhythm of the process. At the same time we must avoid the danger of doing things too hastily. The speed at which we proceed should not be conditioned solely by the authority of the leadership, but rather by the political will of Member States.

On the way forward, we should bear in mind that all the achievements so far are the result of our collective actions. We cannot afford therefore, to undermine this collective political momentum by calculatingly imparting it with hesitation in order to derail or disrupt the process.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that I will count very much on your support and cooperation in conducting the process during the coming period. We should all continue to work together in a spirit of constructive cooperation and tackle all the issues and tasks set out by the General Assembly in its decision 61/561, adopted on 17 September 2007, in order to faithfully fulfil its recommendations.

With this in mind, I will shortly communicate to Member States the outline of the follow-up process.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 9?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.