United Nations A/53/PV.40

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-third Session

40th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 21 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti . . . . . (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 11

Report of the Security Council (A/52/2)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Sir Jeremy Greenstock, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom), President of the Security Council: It is a privilege for me, Sir, to be called upon to address the General Assembly under your presidency and to follow in the footsteps of many distinguished predecessors from a wide range of Member States, including my own, in introducing the annual report of the Security Council, covering the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998.

The members of the Security Council continue to attach great importance to the timely preparation and submission of this annual report in accordance with the provisions of Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. As in previous years, the report was issued to all Member States in draft and was adopted at a public meeting of the Security Council. The members of the Security Council also took care to submit the report to the Assembly in good time before the start of the general debate on 21 September. The members of the Council remain indebted to the Security Council secretariat for their hard work and professionalism in contributing to this, and for their unstinting efforts on so many other matters throughout the course of the year.

As the annual report for this period makes clear, the Security Council has had another very busy year. This does not in itself demonstrate high productivity, but rather reflects the many problems related to the maintenance of international peace and security with which the Council has had to deal. During the period under review, the Council held over 100 formal meetings, adopted 61 resolutions and agreed upon 41 statements by its President. The subject matter of the questions before the Council remains as wide-ranging as ever. The situation in Africa occupied much of the time of the Council, and was considered as a general item in its own right. But the report of the Council, which records the consideration of issues arising also in Asia, Europe, Australasia and Central America, shows that peace and security issues are not confined to any one geographical region. It is also noteworthy that the Council has considered certain aspects of peace and security from a global perspective, for example its consideration of protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, and of the role of civilian police and other aspects of peacekeeping operations. I am sure that today's debate in the Assembly, which is an important event as part of the process of dialogue between the Assembly and the Security Council, will deal not just with the history and the statistics but also with the substance of some of these issues.

May I comment on the format and composition of this report, which shows some significant developments in comparison with its predecessors. The members of the Council have taken careful note of the need to enhance

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the transparency of the Council, a concept which applies not only to the way in which the Council carries on its work, but also to the way in which that work is reported and recorded. It has long been a concern of many members of the Organization that the analytical nature of this report should be enhanced. In response to those concerns, the President of the Security Council set out new guidelines for the content of the report in a note of 12 June 1997 (S/1997/451). That decision is reflected for the first time in the report before us today.

Members will have noted that, in accordance with that decision, this year's report includes, as background, a descriptive list of the decisions, resolutions and presidential statements of the Council for the year preceding the period which is covered. For the 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998 period covered by the report, the report now includes, for each item of substance, a description in chronological order of the consideration by the Council of the subject and of the actions taken by the Council on that item, including descriptions of the decisions, resolutions and presidential statements, and a list of communications received by the Council and of reports from the Secretary-General. It also includes information on the dates of formal meetings and informal consultations, on which subjects were discussed, on the work of subsidiary organs including the sanctions committees, on the documentation and working methods and procedures of the Council, and on matters brought to the attention of the Council but not discussed by it in the period covered. The appendices now include full texts of all the resolutions, decisions and statements adopted or voted upon by the Council during this period, together with information about meetings with troop-contributing countries. All in all, the intention of these changes is to make the report more comprehensive and easier to use, and to set out a more detailed record of the work of the Council during the past year.

Another significant development is the inclusion in this report, for the first time, of brief assessments of the work of the Council prepared by representatives who had completed their functions as President of the Council. These assessments were prepared by each President under his own responsibility, though they were prepared in consultation with the other members of the Council for the month during which he presided. They do not represent the views of the Council as such, and naturally each report reflects in some respects the individual perceptions of each President. But members of the Council believe this new approach is one which is helpful and informative and which will provide a useful insight into the substance of the work of the Council during the course of the year.

Although this report of the Council is, for these reasons, rather fuller than those of previous years, I must recall that it is not intended as a substitute for the official records of the Security Council, which provide a more substantive account of the Council's deliberations. The report should be read, for the purposes of this discussion in the General Assembly, in conjunction with other official documents of the Council, to which it constitutes a reference guide.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to assure you and all the members of this Assembly that the members of the Council will listen attentively to the debate which is being held today. As in previous years, members of the Council value this opportunity for a dialogue, and will give careful consideration to the points which are put forward.

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): For the fifty-third time, the Security Council is presenting an annual report to the General Assembly. As in previous years, Germany welcomes this presentation. The report is the result of enormous efforts made by the Secretariat staff to give the general membership more than a rough idea of the work of the Council and the issues the Council dealt with between June 1997 and June 1998. Let me seize this opportunity to thank all those involved in this time-consuming endeavour.

At the same time, the report also seems to be a strong indication that far more efforts are needed to bring about a comprehensive reform of the Organization. Of course, everybody knows that the report of the Council is only one element of the badly and urgently needed overall reform of the Security Council.

Allow me to elaborate on these points in more detail and in the following sequence: first, workload and effectiveness of the Council; secondly, innovative elements in this year's report; and thirdly, the necessity to aim at more comprehensive reform measures.

With regard to workload and effectiveness of the Council, the report reflects the enormous workload of the Council in the past 12 months. The numbers have been mentioned by the President of the Council. Among other things, the activities of the Security Council considered by the report cover wide areas of conflict, mostly in, but not limited to Africa. The former Yugoslavia, Georgia and Tajikistan also figured on the agenda, as did Asian countries such as Afghanistan and Cambodia. The report uses more than 300 pages to cover these and other

questions, without counting the 48 additional pages which reflect the monthly assessments of the respective Presidents of the Council. Altogether this adds up to over 60 pages more than last year's report. In other words, the report, whose drafting apparently absorbs a great deal of time and effort, has again grown considerably.

I really wonder how many of us might have read every single page of the report or at least substantial selected parts of it. The report undoubtedly has its merits as a reference document. However, the question remains of whether it could be done in a more comprehensive, more effective and less time- and paper-consuming manner.

I would now like to address the innovative elements in this year's report. There can hardly be any doubt that the innovative elements in this year's report are the monthly assessments of the work of the Council, which have been included as an addendum to the report. The assessments represent the reaction of the Council to the requests for a more analytical report which Germany and many other countries have made repeatedly in the past. The inclusion of the assessments deserves broad applause. It is a new effort to add life to a routine exercise and, like many new efforts, it had a rather slow start. Germany would like to encourage all future presidencies of the Council to be as open, forthcoming and analytical as possible, since there hardly seems to be any other way for thorough analysis but through individual assessments.

Germany has noted with appreciation the early presentation of the report, on 9 September 1998.

I would now like to comment on the necessity of aiming at more comprehensive reform measures. The report informs the general membership about the work of the Security Council in the past. My delegation would like to see improved information and to see participation take place not in the aftermath of events but at the time of their occurrence. In addition to calling for more transparent working methods, Germany firmly holds the view that the composition of the Security Council has to be changed. The current membership no longer corresponds to the realities of the world. The pivotal and comprehensive Security Council reform proposal of the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Razali Ismail, continues to be, in the view of many delegations, a constructive basis for further discussions.

Reform does not consist of papers and documents, as well written as they may be. For the first time, there is the chance for a true and complete overhaul of the Security Council, which in its present composition is no longer capable of meeting the expectations of the membership, let alone those of the international community and the public. The United Nations can count on Germany and our active commitment during this session to work to benefit the entire Organization.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers on this item be closed at 12 noon today. If there are no objections to this approach, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I therefore ask representatives who wish to participate in the debate on this item to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, President of the Security Council for the month of October 1998, for introducing the report of the Security Council. I would particularly like to thank him for the succinct and focused oral presentation he has just made, which places the report in the right context, thereby providing a framework for an in-depth discussion of the subject.

My delegation notes that the current report is the first submitted by the Security Council pursuant to the measures initiated by the Council in June 1997 aimed at enhancing the analytical nature of the report. My delegation finds the report a great improvement over those submitted by the Council in the past. Its modified format and more rational organization of its content have contributed to its overall readability. We particularly commend the more organized layout of the report, which consists of a set of three sub-headings setting out brief but useful background information on the issues dealt with by the Council, their actual consideration by the Council and a description of the communications received by the Council during the period under review. In terms of its coverage of the decisions of the Council, we find the report more descriptive, which therefore makes it an important and much needed analytical tool for Member States that are not members of the Council.

One innovative change in the format of the report which my delegation finds particularly useful is the assessment of the work of the Council by the President of

the Council for each particular month, prepared under his own responsibility. While these assessments do not constitute the collective views of the Council as a whole but are prepared following consultations with members of the Council, they give an important overview of the work of the Security Council during a particular month. Overall, these assessments, which are written in a balanced, objective and non-controversial manner, contain pertinent and useful observations and comments by the President of the Council during the month in question with respect to the work of the Council, particularly in regard to improved working methods of the Council and the contribution of each President in that direction. My delegation would therefore encourage the continuation of such monthly presidential assessments, which we hope could be further improved in future.

My delegation would like to pay tribute to the Council for its increasing preparedness to be more open and transparent in its work in response to the expressed wish of Member States that are not members of the Council. This new openness is reflected by the increased flow and sharing of information with non-members of the Council, either through the early availability of draft resolutions to interested States Members of the Organization, the regular or sometimes daily briefings by the President of the Council, or more formal or open debates. Through such openness, Member States that are not members of the Council no longer have to depend on newspaper accounts of the deliberations and decisions of the Council, as was largely the case in the past. This has enormously facilitated the work of interested permanent missions in their reporting to their Governments and has contributed to a great extent to improving the image and credibility of the Council vis-à-vis the States Members of the United Nations.

We are particularly grateful to the members of the Council for giving, during the period of their presidency, detailed daily briefings to non-members immediately following the conclusion of informal consultations of the Council. These are especially useful to interested Member States that follow the issues closely and that are expected to take part in the formal debates that sometimes follow these informal consultations. We would like to commend the high quality of the briefings given by the Presidents of the Council, compared to previously, and hence the noticeably increased attendance at these briefings. I should add that non-Council members find equally useful the established practice of announcing in the *Journal of the United Nations* the issues scheduled for consideration in the informal consultations under the agenda item entitled “Other matters”.

On the substantive aspect of the work of the Council, my delegation would like to touch on a few issues it considers important, namely with respect to sanctions and peacekeeping. On the question of sanctions, while my delegation recognizes that they are a legitimate instrument of enforcement provided for in the Charter and serve specific purposes, we would like to reiterate the point we made in the General Assembly that sanctions should be an instrument of last resort, when all other means have failed. They should be imposed only if absolutely necessary. They should have clear and specific objectives and parameters, and they should be clearly targeted, with specified time-frames and appropriate review mechanisms based on a fair and objective evaluation of the effects and effectiveness of the sanctions.

This is important in order to ensure the credibility of the Council, for while the decision to impose economic, military, financial or diplomatic sanctions may easily be taken through the adoption by the Council of a simple resolution, their implementation usually raises a large number of problems for the international community, including the neighbouring States. Sanctions can, and usually do, take a very long time to work. They can cause enormous collateral negative effects to innocent and blameless civilians, including women, children, the aged and the infirm, in the target States as well as others before they achieve their objectives. Unless they are perceived as being fair and can be effectively carried out with the strong and consistent support of the international community, sanctions may run the risk of being challenged, thereby undermining the prestige and credibility of the United Nations itself.

In this regard, therefore, it is important for the Council to take a careful look at the use and practices of sanctions with a view to ensuring their efficacious and judicious implementation, in the interest of ensuring their continuing international support. It is particularly important that sanctions not be perceived as punitive instruments in the hands of one or two Council members which are intent on punishing a particular country or countries that they do not like. A step in the right direction in this regard is further to improve the working methods and practices of the various sanctions committees, such as through increased transparency of their working procedures, greater access to information by non-Council members and increased consultation with the affected States. My delegation would also encourage the Chairmen of the sanctions committees to put into effect the practice of giving oral briefings after each meeting, in

the same manner that the President of the Security Council does following the informal consultations of the Council.

It is also important for the Council to consider in greater depth the "dual-use" principle adopted by the sanctions committees, particularly when it is applied in the context of requests for humanitarian consideration. This is because almost all goods necessary for human survival have some military use. Furthermore, because military and economic sanctions are often imposed as a package, it is politically difficult for the Council to lift economic sanctions while maintaining those relating to the military.

With regard to peacekeeping, my delegation is gratified at the way that peacekeeping operations have benefited enormously from the lessons learned from past experiences. As a troop- contributing country, Malaysia is equally pleased with the increased and regular interaction between the Council and troop- contributing countries. This contributes in no small measure to increased awareness and appreciation on the part of the Governments concerned of the problems and requirements of peacekeeping. It is also helpful in terms of generating continued support by States Members of the Organization for such peacekeeping operations, currently and in future. In this regard, it is important for troop-contributing countries to be reimbursed on a timely basis — hence the importance of all Member States' paying their peacekeeping contributions on time, in full and without conditions.

My delegation notes the increasing reliance by the United Nations on regional partners in managing regional conflicts, including the undertaking of peacekeeping operations. While such a division of labour and sharing of resources may be the appropriate thing to do, especially at a time of severe financial constraints on the part of the Organization, it is imperative that in doing so there should be established clear lines of authority, responsibility and communication between the United Nations and the regional organizations concerned. At the same time, it is important to ensure that in all these efforts there is no abandoning of the central and critical role of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, in the maintenance of international peace and security, as enshrined in the Charter.

There is no denying the central and critical role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. However, in carrying out its work it is important that it have the strong and consistent support of the international community in order to ensure the legitimacy of its decisions in the eyes of non-members of the Council, which sit on the outside and are not privy to its deliberations. To the extent that this annual report of the Security Council contributes to this increased understanding of and support for the work of the Council, my delegation warmly commends it. As improving the working methods of the Council is an ongoing process, my delegation looks forward to better reporting of the work of the Council to the General Assembly, including, whenever possible, the submission of special reports, as provided for in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): I would like to note at the outset that on questions involving the working methods of the Council, and particularly issues of transparency, New Zealand has the privilege of maintaining close coordination with the delegation of Argentina. That delegation has informed me that it is in sympathy with the statement that follows. I should also like at the outset to join the Permanent Representative of Malaysia in thanking the President of the Security Council for his presentation of the Council's report this morning.

Under this item the Security Council endeavours to address the General Assembly's right to be informed of the measures the Council has decided upon or has taken in order to maintain international peace and security during the period under review. This requirement is spelt out in Article 15 and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter. It arises from the essential nature of the relationship between the two organs, whereby the Security Council acts on behalf of the wider membership represented in this Assembly.

The present report of the Security Council in document A/53/2 sets out the many important issues that were brought to the Council's attention and the action taken by the Council between 16 June 1997 and 15 June this year. If I may begin by indulging in a little parochialism, a question of special significance to my own delegation was the Council's consideration of a United Nations role in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, as called for in the peace Agreement signed at Lincoln University in New Zealand in January of this year. We remain grateful to those members of the Council that took a particular interest in the matter and contributed to the positive outcome which has led to the establishment of a small United Nations political office in Bougainville to monitor the peace process.

Looking farther afield, the report records how the Council necessarily devoted a good deal of effort over the

past year to the situation in Africa, including consideration of the Secretary-General's valuable report on "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". Given the importance of the topic, a very large number of delegations were represented at the open meeting of the Council on 24 April 1998, and many Member States non-members of the Security Council spoke. The Council subsequently adopted resolution 1170 (1998) which among other things established an ad hoc Working Group on the Secretary-General's report.

I would also like to refer to the Security Council's crucial role, through the adoption of resolution 1172 (1998), in giving expression to the international community's condemnation of nuclear testing by India and Pakistan in May this year. Our satisfaction at this outcome was, however, unfortunately tempered by the relatively low turnout for the open meeting on Saturday, 6 June, when the resolution was adopted. This was largely attributable to the fact that notice of the possibility of this Saturday meeting was only provided by fax to Missions long after the close of business on Friday, 5 June. In my own Mission, the relevant fax was recorded as having been received well after midnight. I am just not sure how many conscientious Missions are still at work at that hour on a Friday night.

I would add that many Member States non-members of the Council that did manage to take part in the 6 June meeting were given further cause for concern when the Council proceeded to adopt the relevant resolution before permitting them to speak.

But to turn to the report itself, there are a number of distinct improvements in this year's report which we wish to recognize. We are particularly pleased to see included in document A/53/2 as an addendum the monthly assessments done by the former Presidents of the Council. This represents an encouraging step towards greater transparency. The assessments of the former Presidents are an important contribution to our understanding of the considerations that informed the Council's decision-making. They allow us, the wider membership, a glimpse into the closed world of the Council's informal consultations, where most Council decisions are in fact made.

We are also pleased to see that this year's report returns to the practice of telling us how many informal consultations of the whole were held on each question before the Council. As my colleague from Argentina commented on this very occasion last year, the quantity of informal consultations that the Security Council holds is not a superfluous or irrelevant fact. Rather, and I quote him,

> "it is information that gives non-members an idea of the extent to which the work of the Council has been conducted by means of procedures for which there is no record whatsoever". (*A/52/PV.39, p. 10*)

We will have more to say specifically on the working methods of the Council under agenda item 59, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Many delegations in recent years, whether while serving on the Council or in the context of the Open-ended Working Group dealing with the reform of the Security Council, have put forward useful ideas for its modernization. Our own cooperation with Argentina has its seeds in the year 1994, during which we served together on the Security Council. We wish Argentina and the four other newly elected members of the Council — Canada, Malaysia, Namibia and the Netherlands — every success in the continuing effort to make the Council more democratic and accountable.

Some of the proposals that have been made from time to time for improvements have taken root, as this report shows. But as is often the case with so many good ideas, practice can fall short of principle. It seems to my delegation that the heart of the problem lies in the imbalance between open meetings of the Council and the far more frequent use of informal consultations of the whole for taking decisions. Meetings held in private can obviously be useful at times. But they should not have been permitted to become the normal modus operandi for any part of this Organization.

As *The New York Times* columnist A. M. Rosenthal reminded us on 6 March this year in a powerful piece of writing headed "The Secret Council", it wasn't always this way. The great majority of meetings were in fact held in public during the first 20 years after the Organization's creation. Council members could and did meet privately, but, as Mr. Rosenthal notes,

> "the purpose was to have some quiet conversation, not to close the real business to the public".

Open meetings stimulated a good deal of public interest in the United Nations, something it sorely needs now, despite the impressive efforts of our Secretary-General on the celebrity "rubber-chicken" circuit —

efforts which are of course admired and supported by us all.

All of us here are indeed fortunate to be living at a time when access to information has never been greater. It is the cornerstone of democracy and one of the truly positive effects of globalization. When it comes to issues of international peace and security, people around the world want to know what their diplomats and Governments are doing in their name. It seems to me very worrying, therefore, that the Security Council continues to cling to the habit of secrecy in so much of its decision-making, when the tide is so clearly running the other way.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for his introduction to the report covering the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998, contained in document A/53/2.

Articles 10 through 17 of the Charter of the United Nations refer to the functions and powers of the General Assembly. Pursuant to Article 15, the Assembly shall receive and consider both the annual reports and the special reports issued by the Security Council. Likewise, in Article 24, paragraph 3, the Charter establishes that the Council shall submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration.

These two provisions establish a link of the greatest importance for the performance of the United Nations, a link that reflects the fact that when the Security Council acts in conformity with the Charter, it does so on behalf of the Member States. At the same time, there is an organ within the Organization, the General Assembly, in which all Member States are represented, and it is vested with a broad mandate covering the various issues and questions within the framework of the Charter.

The importance of the report of the Council to the Assembly is further underscored by the fact that in Article 15, paragraph 1, the Charter makes a separate reference to the report of the Council, highlighting it and distinguishing it from all the reports of the various other organs of the United Nations submit to the General Assembly. These are referred to in paragraph 2 of that same Article.

We believe it is appropriate to give a brief account of the steps taken by the General Assembly with a view to strengthening the link the Charter establishes between the main organs of the Organization, in particular between the General Assembly and the Security Council, through various means, including the system of reports.

General Assembly resolution 47/233 of 1993 recalls that the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of States and that the General Assembly is the only principal organ consisting of all Members in which each State an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. In its operative part, it encourages Member States to participate actively in a substantive and in-depth discussion on, and consideration of, the reports of the Security Council in order to fulfil the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Resolution 48/264 of 1994 invites the President of the General Assembly to propose appropriate ways and means to facilitate an in-depth discussion by the Assembly of matters addressed in the reports of the Security Council.

The process that was begun by the resolutions to which I have referred underwent significant development with the adoption of resolution 51/193 on 17 December 1996. That resolution encourages the Council, in the submission of its reports to the General Assembly, to provide a timely, substantive, analytical and material account of its work. The resolution urges the Security Council to take a set of measures regarding the content of its reports to the General Assembly: first, to include information on the consultations of the whole undertaken prior to action or deliberation by the Council on issues within its mandate, and on the process leading to such action; secondly, to include the decisions, recommendations or progress of work of the subsidiary organs of the Council, in particular the sanctions committees; thirdly, to highlight the extent to which resolutions of the General Assembly, on issues falling within the scope of the General Assembly and the Security Council, have been taken into account by the Council in its decision-making; fourthly, to strengthen further the section in the report on the steps taken by the Council to improve its working methods; and, finally, to include information on requests received under Article 50 of the Charter and actions taken by the Council thereon.

Almost two years have elapsed since the Assembly adopted that resolution which, in broad terms, traced the path for a useful flow of information from the Council to all the States Members of the Organization represented in the General Assembly, thus permitting the Assembly to carry out thoroughly the role assigned to it by the Charter.

From the report before us, we note in particular the Council's endeavours to improve the content and features of its annual report. Given its importance for proper understanding of the process that precedes adoption of decisions by the Security Council, the inclusion of information on consultations of the whole therefore constitutes an important step. It is desirable to continue broadening and developing this practice. The same applies to the inclusion of the decisions and recommendations of the subsidiary organs of the Council, in particular the sanctions committees.

My delegation wishes to welcome the addition to the report of monthly assessments of the Council's work by the respective former Presidents. This is without doubt the most noteworthy, innovative and positive event to point out. Even if such assessments are included as an information tool and do not represent the opinions of the Council, they constitute an important step in the right direction, aimed at enhancing transparency and enabling the Assembly to carry out a judicious and objective evaluation of the work accomplished by the Council during the relevant period.

We would also like to underscore the Council's consultations on its working methods held during the period covered by the report, as well as the consideration of the position paper prepared by 10 Council members on that issue. We have read the position paper with great interest. My country concurs with the recommendations contained therein, in particular with those tending in the same direction as the proposals presented by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, proposals on which there is unquestionably general agreement.

It is of great importance for the informal working group of the Security Council on documentation and other procedural matters to continue its consideration of these matters so as to arrive at substantive agreements that will contribute to transparency and greater democracy in the functioning of the Council.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): I should like to join previous speakers in expressing my delegation's appreciation to Sir Jeremy Greenstock, President of the Security Council for the current month, for presenting the annual report covering the work of that organ from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998.

For the past several years, consideration of the Council's annual reports by the General Assembly has offered a special occasion for addressing a number of wide-ranging issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, which ultimately is the supreme *raison d'être* of this world Organization.

Judging from past experience, as well as from the debate which is taking place now, this is a good opportunity to dwell on the substance of the issues before the Security Council and to consider the manner in which it carries out its responsibilities as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Evaluation of the structure and content of the annual account of the Security Council's activities is also an important subject, and we therefore welcome the new format of the Council's report, which contains a number of useful improvements and innovations aimed at enhancing its analytical nature.

I have no intention of questioning the topicality of these subjects, but I would like to place particular emphasis on the issue of the relationship between the Security Council and other current or potential contributors to the maintenance of international stability.

In recent years, we have witnessed growing demands for the development of a strong *esprit de corps* between all the actors in contemporary international relations with the capability to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security. These demands are nurtured by the realization that a coherent engagement and partnership between the United Nations membership, various organs of this Organization, its specialized agencies and regional arrangements, as well as other actors, such as non-governmental organizations, constitute an essential condition for ensuring the success of the efforts of the international community to address and avert the manifold threats to global security.

In view of the requirement for more integrated and coordinated action in this area, we strongly believe that the time has come for the Security Council to make a quantum leap in elevating its relationship with all the constituents that make up together what is called the international community. Primary attention in this respect should be focused on the relationship of the Security Council with the Member States from which it derives all its power and responsibility.

It is undeniable that, over the past few years, the Security Council has taken many worthwhile steps to increase the openness and transparency of its activities.

We welcome this progress and encourage the Security Council to continue this pursuit. However, all the valuable practices which the Council has introduced so far cannot substitute for its genuine interaction with the Members of the United Nations that are not members of this organ.

My delegation is strongly convinced that the cornerstone for such a relationship is laid down in Article 31 of the Charter, which says that

> "Any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected."

In the view of my delegation, the contents of Article 31 actually imply that non-members of the Security Council are provided with the same rights to influence the decisions of the Council as its members, except for the right to participate in the voting procedure. I think that all we need now is strict compliance with this very clear message of Article 31. It would be difficult for my delegation to concur with any other interpretation of the Charter provisions to which I have referred.

I do not wish to leave the impression that my delegation challenges the practice of the Council's informal consultations, which under some circumstances can represent a useful means of facilitating the search for a compromise in order to ensure prompt action by the Organization. However, neither this practice nor any other consideration can prevent the Council from starting a new phase in the history of its relationship with the increased membership of the United Nations as a whole. What we do challenge and would like to get rid of is the current *modus operandi* under which the overwhelming majority of Member States are practically excluded from the decision-making process of that very important organ, which, in carrying out its duties, acts on their behalf. In this connection, I cannot but fully support the concern voiced by the Permanent Representative of New Zealand with regard to the Council meeting of 6 June this year.

The relationship of the Security Council with other principal organs of the United Nations is another area in which the provisions of the Charter could be better exploited in order to strengthen international cooperation in dealing with traditional as well as new threats to global stability.

Thus, the Security Council's interaction with the General Assembly should not be limited to the discussion of the Council's report now taking place, even if the Assembly's consideration of annual reports of the Council represents some kind of a dialogue between these two main organs of the United Nations. As a more far-reaching step that could significantly elevate such interaction, the Security Council should re-evaluate the potential of its right, enshrined in Articles 11 and 12 of the Charter, to request the General Assembly to make recommendations with regard to situations threatening international peace and security.

The economic, social and humanitarian crises that threaten global stability compel the international community to think more seriously about new mechanisms of multilateral action, as well as new forms of cooperation between the existing institutions. Thus, we cannot but note the growing interest in the initiative of the President of Ukraine, which he personally presented in this General Assembly Hall in 1995, to establish a United Nations economic security council.

Touching upon the same problem, the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization highlighted the need for new forms of cooperation between the principal organs of the United Nations and its Member States. Furthermore, he included a timely reminder of the dormant provisions of Article 65 of the Charter, under which the Economic and Social Council may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist the Security Council upon its request.

In recent years, the Security Council has intensified its dialogue with regional and subregional organizations. We think that this is a good sign. It is widely believed that regional action, as a matter of decentralization, delegation and cooperation with the United Nations, can not only ease the burden of the Council, but also contribute to a deeper sense of general responsibility for the present and future of the planet, as well as to the further democratization of international affairs.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations continues to grow and in some cases has reached considerably higher levels. In particular, we would refer to the successful examples of such cooperation in resolving the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. These days, the international community is witnessing the establishment of another unprecedented pattern of cooperation in its efforts to

achieve a peaceful solution of the situation around Kosovo.

However, in order to avoid situations in which regional action, instead of being part of the solution, becomes part of the problem, it is imperative to keep the activities of regional organizations under the effective control of the Security Council, as prescribed in Chapter VIII of the Charter. It is also important to emphasize that, under the existing norms of international law, the relevant decisions of the Security Council constitute the only grounds for enforcement measures that may be taken by regional organizations, as provided for in Article 53 of the Charter.

By offering these brief but certainly not exhaustive remarks, my intention was to emphasize that the Security Council has a special role to play in establishing a new pattern of international cooperation as we approach a new era with new challenges.

I would like to conclude by expressing my delegation's gratitude and appreciation to all members of the Security Council that have participated in its work during the period covered by the report under our consideration for their valuable contribution to its activities. The manner in which they have performed their duties will be beneficial to all the candidates for non-permanent seats in the Security Council, including my own country, Ukraine, which aspires to be elected to that organ for the period 2000-2001.

This is also an opportune occasion to offer our congratulations to the representatives of Argentina, Canada, Malaysia, Namibia and the Netherlands on the recent election of their countries to serve as non-permanent members in the Security Council, starting 1 January 1999. My delegation would like to wish these countries every success in discharging their very important responsibilities.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly is today considering the report of the Security Council covering the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998, submitted in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, and Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations. I should like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, who is presiding over the Council for the month of October, for following the healthy practice of personally introducing the report.

It is gratifying to note that the members of the Security Council are increasingly sensitive and open to the call of the majority of the Members of the United Nations for information relating to the daily activities of that body. However, we believe that we are far from winning the battle for a detailed, substantive and analytical annual report.

It must not be forgotten that we, the Members of the Organization, delegate to the Security Council responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It receives its mandate from us. It must answer to us.

Access to information is a right, not a privilege, of the Members of the United Nations. It is the duty of the members of the Security Council to keep others properly informed with regard to the issues that it considers and the reasons for the decisions that it takes or considers taking — decisions that, in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter, we all must accept and carry out.

In this regard, the monthly assessments prepared personally by some of the former Security Council Presidents are extremely useful, because they are unquestionably more complete and analytical than the bare factual descriptions included in the section of the report relating to the questions considered by the Council during the period in question.

We are particularly grateful to Costa Rica for issuing its assessment as an official document of the Security Council, and especially for the attachment on working methods. Such initiatives are certainly encouraging because they show that within the Council there is a recognition of the need to improve the work of that body and to reflect upon measures that could be taken to that end.

My delegation, together with most of the delegations represented here, is convinced that in preparing their annual report, the members of the Security Council must take into account the criteria established in resolution 51/193, adopted on 17 December 1996, in particular the measures referred to in paragraph 4 of that resolution.

It would be of particular interest to the Assembly to have information about what happens in the so-called informal consultations of the Council, mysterious conclaves that have become common practice. In those closed meetings, about which we know very little, decisions are taken that may affect all of us.

A transparent Security Council that reports fully and in timely fashion to the General Assembly is a goal that

we can attain only with the cooperation of the members of that body. In that respect, we acknowledge the efforts that have been made and urge that they be redoubled, taking into account the recommendations of the General Assembly, which is the most important, representative and democratic body of the United Nations — the body from which the Council derives its authority and jurisdiction. Rather than merely receiving an account of events or a compilation of documents, we would like to know the legal and political foundations underlying the decisions taken by the Council.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm that Mexico will continue to play an active part in deliberations on this issue that are taking place in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Mr. Ortega Urbina (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998. We would like to express our appreciation to Sir Jeremy Greenstock, President of the Council for this month, for his excellent introduction of the report.

The work of the Security Council is of the greatest importance to all Members of the United Nations, and the annual report is a useful tool for keeping us informed of the activities of the Council. The General Assembly has a legitimate interest in the activities of the Council. The report must be as informative as possible. The efforts to make it more user-friendly are therefore greatly appreciated, and the more analytical nature of the report demonstrates the willingness of the Council to acknowledge requests made in previous meetings for better information.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have different responsibilities, and the division of labour between the two bodies, established by the United Nations Charter, must be respected. The Council's primary responsibility for preventing conflict and maintaining international peace and security is essential, and nothing must be done that might reduce the Council's ability to carry out its responsibilities in an efficient manner. At the same time, we must recognize that questions of peace and security, conflict prevention and conflict resolution are closely connected to issues that are the responsibility of the General Assembly. These issues include development and the reduction of poverty, development assistance, efforts aimed at reconciliation and confidence-building, human rights, environmental issues and the need to provide all countries with opportunities to participate in the global economy. The activities of the General Assembly are important for combating the root causes of conflicts and promoting an international environment conducive to peaceful cooperation and development. The need for close cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly and the Security Council must be emphasized.

We have already had the opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for the holistic approach chosen in the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and development in Africa. The report has laid out a path which we, the Member States, should follow. Important first steps were taken when this report was considered by both the Security Council and the General Assembly. The challenge now before us is to further develop this comprehensive approach to the issues before the United Nations while at the same time maintaining a clear distinction between the responsibilities of the various United Nations bodies.

We would like to underline the need for greater transparency in the work of the Security Council. There has been progress over the last few years, and we appreciate the now-established practices for sharing information with non-members. The regular briefings by the President of the Council are important and helpful. The informal briefings given by several members of the Council are also very helpful to members of delegations who spend a considerable amount of time waiting outside the Council's meeting rooms hoping to pick up information.

We also support the idea that the Council should consider the possibility that meetings which are largely informative in nature — such as briefings by the Secretariat or by the Secretary-General's special representatives — be organized as open meetings rather than consultations of the whole. This would of course not preclude the possibility that the Council, after such briefings, would conduct closed consultations on the issue when this is considered useful.

Norway has welcomed the principle of open orientation debates on different issues on the Council's agenda. We are convinced that this practice can be further developed. It is of course important to make sure that such debates are organized and scheduled in such a manner that the views of the membership at large can be

taken into account in the Council's own deliberations on the issue at hand.

It is of particular importance to secure openness and transparency when peacekeeping operations are considered. All countries participating in these operations, including countries that participate with civilian personnel in multi-functional operations, have a particular need to be consulted when such operations are discussed. When a mandate for a new operation is considered, all potential contributors should be given opportunities to present their views. We appreciate the mechanisms established for this purpose and underline the responsibility of all — Council members and troop contributors alike — to make full use of such mechanisms.

Transparency is also important for regional and subregional organizations that cooperate with the United Nations. These organizations have proved themselves to be important instruments for the promotion of peace and security. In Africa, the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations continue to be valuable partners of the United Nations in its efforts to promote peaceful development. In other parts of the world, regional organizations are also becoming increasingly important in conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building. The crisis in Kosovo has reminded us what a valuable partner the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) can be to the Security Council and the Secretary-General in crisis management in Europe. Our goal must be a better unity of purpose and the integration of United Nations peacekeeping efforts with those of other stakeholders. Norway will assume the chairmanship of the OSCE in January next year, and we are determined to further refine the already well-established working relationship between the United Nations and the OSCE. It is our firm belief that greater collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations is needed to enhance our common ability to prevent conflicts and reduce the need for future peacekeeping operations.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance my Government attaches to the work of the Security Council and to the Council's ability to carry out its mandate. It goes without saying that the Council can rely on Norway's continued and loyal support.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): At the outset, allow me to thank Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his useful presentation of the annual report of the Council. This practice, initiated five years ago and maintained since then, enhances the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Our thanks also go to the Security Council secretariat for its efforts, without which the timely submission of the report would not have been possible.

The consideration of the Council's report by the General Assembly provides a useful occasion for the general membership to look at how effectively the Council is fulfilling its obligation to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, and also at the manner in which it is discharging its cardinal duties. At the same time, this is an occasion for non-members of the Council to present their views on the challenges, both present and future, in the important task of saving ourselves and posterity from the scourge of war, thus contributing to carrying out the tasks of the Security Council.

My delegation is very pleased to note that the new measures set out in the note by the President of the Security Council of 12 June 1997 (S/1997/451) are reflected in both the format and the substance of the report before us. This is a most welcome manifestation of the importance attached by the Council to the views and comments that have been made by the general membership over the years on enhancing the transparency and openness of the work of the Security Council. One of the most important of the new elements that further enhance the substantive and analytical character of the annual report is the monthly assessments provided by the former Presidents of the Security Council for the period under report. Although these assessments are prepared by former Presidents of the Council under their own responsibility, they are the result of consultations involving other members of the Council and thus reflect the generally shared perspectives of the Council members. We find that some of the assessments are presented in a bold and frank manner. This enables us to appreciate the differences in perception among Council members on certain issues. It is, in our view, an indication of an incipient democratization in the Council. In this regard, we would like to urge that this constructive and healthy trend be encouraged as far as possible.

The statistics provided in the report on the number of resolutions, decisions and presidential statements of the Council indicate that last year the Council had a vast agenda, including some dangerous situations in certain parts of the world, and that the workload of the Council

was heavy. It promises to remain so in view of the issues and ongoing conflicts of which the Council continues to be seized.

As reflected in the report, last year there were new situations that threatened peace and security. In dealing with these situations, the Council in some instances had to resort to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. Although it is acknowledged that the Security Council has the right to take the necessary measures when international peace and security are clearly threatened, the Council should resort to sanctions only after other measures have been duly exhausted. In our view, it is also important that humanitarian crises should not be used as pretexts for invoking Chapter VII measures. Frequent use of sanctions by a unique organ such as the Security Council, where democracy is conspicuous by its absence, may be perceived as the coercive political tool of a few powerful countries on the Council rather than as a useful international policy tool to deal with threats to international peace and security. As experience clearly shows, the existing sanctions that have been imposed on some countries are frustratingly difficult to lift for a variety of reasons, which prolongs the misery brought by those sanctions to the countries concerned and the economic difficulties of third countries which are required to implement the sanctions. Despite the fact that a new trend concerning sanctions is taking shape in the Council, this should not encourage an obvious tendency in the Council to resort to sanctions at the first opportunity. We would like to suggest that the principles on sanctions set forth in General Assembly resolution 51/242 should guide our decision-making on this matter.

Situations which would require the application of sanctions regimes may be very few. However, their implications for regional peace and security are always serious enough to warrant special arrangements to ensure the smooth flow of up-to-date information to the general membership on the decisions and activities of the Security Council concerning sanctions regimes. Furthermore, it is legitimate for the general membership to expect such information. In this regard, submission of special reports by the Security Council to the General Assembly in accordance with Article 24 (3) of the Charter and mechanisms such as special briefings would facilitate the smooth flow of information to the general membership. Myanmar favours the view that the Security Council should submit special reports to the General Assembly on specific important situations. These special reports would complement the annual reports of the Security Council and would promote and enhance the interactive relationship between the two principal organs of the United Nations.

My delegation is pleased to observe the commendable initiatives taken by some Presidents of the Council on the issue of working methods of the Council. I refer in particular to the position paper on working methods of the Security Council prepared by the elected members of the Council. My delegation subscribes to the proposals contained in the paper for the democratization and improvement of the working methods and decision-making of the Security Council. It is encouraging that the members of the Council were able to consider the issue, although in a preliminary manner. This signifies that Council members appear to be committed to the enhancement of transparency and openness in the Council's work.

Before concluding, I wish to state that we, like all other members, welcome Security Council resolution 1121 (1997), which established the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal as a tribute to those men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in peacekeeping operations under the operational control and authority of the United Nations.

Finally, I would like to stress that it is the responsibility of all of us to enhance the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council in all its aspects. As proven by this year's annual report, we do not shy away from this important duty. We believe that the present debate on the annual report, together with other existing mechanisms and channels set up for this purpose, will make us understand better the priorities and preferences of both organs. We also hope that the debate will contribute to the further improvement of the annual report of the Council.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): The General Assembly is meeting today to discuss the report of the Security Council for the past year, submitted for the consideration of the Assembly. My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom, President of the Council for the month of October 1998, for introducing the report. As usual, the report is a guide to the activities of the Council for the period under review. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its appreciation for the comprehensive report, which reflects the ongoing rationalization of the Council's documentation and procedures.

The submission of this report by the Security Council and its consideration by the General Assembly will enhance the cooperation between the two principal

organs of our Organization. This is essential because the Security Council executes its mandate on behalf of the whole membership of the United Nations. We note that during the year under review the Council held a total of 103 formal meetings, adopted 61 resolutions and issued 41 presidential statements. This impressive record of activity shows how seriously the Council takes its assignment of maintaining international peace and security. However, it must work harder to match its record of meetings, statements and resolutions with a corresponding record of accomplishment in order to resolve the conflicts before it.

My delegation attaches great importance to the activities of the Council on matters of direct relevance to my region, Africa. Conflicts, especially in the continent of Africa, dominated its agenda during the period under review. The Council held meetings on the situation in Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic, Angola, Western Sahara, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo and Somalia, culminating with the recent meetings on the causes of conflict in Africa and the promotion of sustainable peace and development on the continent.

Africa is indeed endowed with immense natural and human resources. Unfortunately, it has had more than its fair share of regional and internal conflicts on the Security Council's agenda. These conflicts have adversely affected the unity, security, progress and socio-economic and political development of our continent and have generated serious apprehensions on the part of the international community. They have also brought alarming human suffering and deprivation, creating swarms of refugees and internally displaced persons. My delegation is pleased that the Council is currently giving special consideration to the root causes of these conflicts with a view to finding appropriate mechanisms to resolve them. Africa is a force to be reckoned with in international affairs. There can be no global peace or world prosperity without the stability and development of the African continent, which must be assisted to come out of its cycles of instability and poverty.

My delegation shares the Secretary-General's views contained in his report on African conflicts that long-term solutions to conflict situations on our continent require a holistic approach linking peace, security, good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law and sustainable development.

At this juncture it is appropriate to draw attention to the link between peace and development. In many conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, socio-economic inadequacies are a significant aspect of their underlying causes. It is time to review our commitment to the linkage between peace and development in order to ensure the transformation of the fragile peace which still exists in many post-conflict situations in Africa and elsewhere into real and sustainable peace. Our actions and decisions in our quest for a peaceful and secure world must be guided by the fact that peace and development are mutually reinforcing.

However, my delegation wishes to reiterate here the need for the urgent reform and democratization of the working methods and procedures of the Security Council in order to enhance its transparency, its legitimacy and, ultimately, its effectiveness. The membership should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We have continued to assert that Africa deserves two permanent seats in a reformed and expanded Security Council. We have also stated unequivocally that the present status quo whereby Africa — with 53 Member States of the Organization — has no permanent seats in the Security Council is both unacceptable and increasingly untenable.

The reform of the Security Council must also encompass the proper relationship between it and the General Assembly. This relationship ought to be improved upon in terms of closer cooperation, closer coordination and more regular consultation in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of the work of our Organization. The Assembly should play a more active role in the maintenance of international peace and security, a domain that has so far been dominated by the Council. After all, although the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it does not have exclusive responsibility for it.

We cannot end this statement without drawing attention to the now obvious fact that the Security Council needs the initiatives of regional institutions as a necessary adjunct to the maintenance of international peace and security. The success story of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the West African subregion, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone, clearly demonstrates that such regional initiatives, where they exist, stand a far greater chance of success if they are adequately and promptly supported by the Security Council in its peace-making and peacekeeping efforts. This success is further proof of the necessity for cooperation and consultation between the United Nations and subregional organizations. ECOMOG represents a unique initiative by a subregional organization within the

framework of regional arrangements with regard to crisis management and conflict resolution.

Finally, we would like to remind the Security Council not to relent in its efforts to provide ECOMOG with the technical and logistical support it requires to execute its ongoing mandate in Sierra Leone. We appreciate the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the United Nations office in Freetown, as well as its involvement in the disarmament and demobilization of the combatants and the deployment of military liaison and security advisory personnel to Freetown. However, it is our view that much more needs to be done on the part of the international community to strengthen cooperation in very concrete and real terms between the United Nations, on the one hand, and subregional and regional organizations, on the other hand, in their complementary role in the maintenance of global peace and security.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to extend my thanks to Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for presenting to the General Assembly the report of the Council for the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Secretariat for the preparation of the excellent report submitted to us.

I would first like to begin by making two general comments. First, the submission to the General Assembly of the annual report by the Security Council is a constitutional requirement in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of the Charter. It highlights the fact that the Council is accountable to the Assembly in its capacity as representing the United Nations membership on whose behalf the Council undertakes its tasks. Indeed, the report represents the link and the concrete relationship between the two organs spelt out by the Charter, in particular with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The discussion of the Council's report is a key tool for the General Assembly to carry out its mandate in following up on the work of the Council and to discuss the measures taken by the Council in order to issue recommendations relative to these matters. I would like to say here that, along with the provisions of the Charter governing the relationship between the Assembly and the Council, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice delivered in 1962 contributed a great deal in confirming this relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council in an official manner.

Secondly, many of the points I will make have already been adopted in General Assembly resolution 51/193, adopted on 17 December 1996. The primary objective of that resolution was to provide international affirmation of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council and to provide the greatest possible amount of democratization and transparency in international relations.

We must admit here that the present report represents a notable improvement over previous ones. It is more coherent and user-friendly, and we appreciate this. However, I think there is great room for improvement, and here I should like to remind the Assembly of the paper submitted by the group of 10 — the countries that are non-permanent members of the Security Council, including Egypt — on 22 December 1997, and which the President of the Council, the Ambassador of Costa Rica, attached to his report as Security Council President for that month and which included recommendations to improve the working methods of the Council.

In this context, allow me to make the following comments.

First, this year's report is still using the narrative style, which we have always criticized. As a result, the reader of the report cannot sense what are the real currents of thought prevailing in the Council. We believe that the report should be divided into objective, analytical and descriptive parts, thereby reflecting the background for the issues considered by the Council, its activities over the year and the viewpoints of all the parties involved, as well as the circumstances surrounding the adoption by the Council of its various resolutions, on every issue.

For the report to bear fruit, the General Assembly should be able, after considering it, to give its specific opinion on the issues covered by the report, either through an independent follow-up outside the purview of the mandate of the Council or through specific recommendations to the Council with respect to its opinion on the issue, in accordance with the text of Article 10 of the Charter.

Second, one might say that the report, to a large extent, still seems like a compendium of documents

already distributed to and read by Member States, which is a waste of time and money. It is not really of value from a functional or a political perspective, and runs counter to the United Nations austerity policy. Anyone who is interested in the issues discussed by the Council does not need to drown in endless lists of the titles of communications received by the Council or resolutions adopted by it, and so on. I think that the report can merely cover documents which are not included in the compendium of the Security Council's decisions and resolutions.

Third, any organ, to function effectively, needs a constitutional framework governing its responsibilities, mandate, rights and duties. It also requires a procedural framework that defines its *modus operandi*. We do not think that the Council can continue its work without clear rules of procedure governing its methods of work, because the rules of the Council are still provisional — and here I do not deal with why they have remained provisional all these years — and they do not apply, for example, to closed consultations in which everything done by the Council is prepared. For example, a State cannot just ask to participate in private meetings to express its point of view before the Council on a matter of interest to it, though the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter and of rule 37 of the rules of procedure allow this.

Fourth, it is said that there are undefined and unrecorded practices that govern the Council's closed consultations. These have developed as a matter of custom and have no written records. The group of 10 non-permanent members of the Council specifically highlighted, in the introduction to the paper submitted in December 1997 and which I mentioned earlier, that

(*spoke in English*)

> "A process of registration of such practices should be embarked upon to provide elements of clarity and certainty without in any way hindering the Council from developing and further articulating these practices."

(spoke in Arabic)

I think that this is very important because the Council does not work in a procedural void.

Fifth, the descriptive part of the report should contain a factual summary of discussions held in private sessions, especially, and as I mentioned earlier, in view of the fact that the Council carries out the bulk of its work at private, non-recorded private meetings.

Sixth, the assessment made by the President of the Council, under his own responsibility and in his own capacity, represents progress yet does not express the opinion of the members of the Council. It is also an instant photographic record of what happens inside the Council, and here we think that the assessment should have an analytical element and should be adopted by the Council itself.

Seventh, holding meetings under the "Arria formula" is a good practice which we encourage, but in order for it to be fully beneficial, it must be more flexible, because until now it has taken the form of private meetings to which usually high officials coming from capitals are invited to meet with Council members. We think that these meetings should be open to Permanent Representatives. The report should contain an objective description of those meetings or deliberations. No further proof of the need for records for the Council's meetings is required beyond the fact that the members of the Council had asked Ambassador Arria of Venezuela last year to remind them of the background for his initiative, in this regard.

Eighth, the report lacks an analysis of the situations leading to the imposition of sanctions and of the objectives and consequences of such sanctions. I think that an evaluation of the results achieved is needed in the report to assess how effective the sanctions are, how supportive they are of, or in consonance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and their impact on the domestic and regional fronts of the targeted country. Here we would like to draw the attention of the Council to the working paper on sanctions adopted by the General Assembly within the framework of "An Agenda for Peace". We were hoping that the Council would benefit from it.

In this connection, I think that the Council should think about affording members on which sanctions are going to be imposed and other affected States the opportunity of expressing their views to the Security Council before such sanctions are imposed or renewed.

Ninth, the meetings of the sanctions Committee should be official and public, with records taken during private sessions, both of which should be featured in the report.

Tenth, we welcome the continued practice of holding consultations between the Council and Members contributing troops to peacekeeping operations. However, in order for the consultations to really understand the reality of the problems faced by such forces in the field, they should not become routine meetings. I think that allowing the troop-contributing States enough time to consider the various relevant reports of the Secretary-General would increase their objective contribution, thereby enriching the meetings by allowing both the political and military dimensions to be taken into account. The report should objectively reflect the deliberations of such meetings instead of merely stating when they were held, as is the case with the present report. It is high time the Council invited troop-contributing countries to partake in decision-making regarding the use of armed forces of Members, in accordance with Article 44 of the Charter.

Finally, in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter, along with the annual report submitted by the Council to the General Assembly, special reports are required on specific issues of which the Council is seized. Here I would like to remind the Assembly again of the joint paper submitted to the Council by Egypt and Indonesia in 1996. It included an exhaustive list of cases in which the Council should submit special reports to the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I have unfortunately to express my regret that the report of the Council to the General Assembly did not heed the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 51/193. Nor does it explain why that resolution was not heeded.

One final point: I hope that the Security Council will heed the rising calls for a fresh look into its working methods so that whatever actions it may take will have more credibility and legitimacy.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, chairing our work.

(spoke in English)

I wish to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, for his balanced and objective presentation of this year's report to the General Assembly. We attach great value to this practice, which was introduced in 1993 by my predecessor, Ambassador Sardenberg, and we are glad to note that it has now become an established tradition.

The Security Council has continued to meet on an almost daily basis during the period covered by this year's report — and in the four months that have elapsed since then — to tackle a multiplicity of challenges in different parts of the world. To start with our own region, we note that there is only one remaining item on the Council's agenda that deals with a country in the Americas — specifically, the situation in Haiti. Although the return of democratic rule to that sister nation has yet to give rise to the kind of institutional consolidation conducive to an improved social and economic environment, Haiti's problems should not continue to be viewed indefinitely through the prism of the maintenance of international peace and security.

In line with the philosophy espoused by the Secretary-General in his latest report on the work of the Organization — a philosophy that we ourselves have been advocating — the time has come for placing Haiti in a different United Nations context, with the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly taking up their responsibilities in promoting longer-term peace-building tasks, which the Security Council is not in a position to assume and should not assume.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recent trip to Latin America, which included visits to Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico, came at a moment of heightened regional awareness of the importance of international cooperation for the peaceful settlement of disputes. As we make strides to harmonize and integrate our region on the basis of shared humanism and respect for international law, we also remain intent on stressing our commitment to the multilateral system for the maintenance of peace and security, as embodied in the United Nations Charter. Latin America has played a pioneering role in building up and living by a culture of peace. The Treaty of Tlatelolco established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone 30 years ago. The few remaining territorial disputes in the area are being effectively dealt with by diplomatic negotiation. Only a few months ago, at the southernmost tip of South America, in Argentina, the declaration of Ushuaia was adopted, on the creation of a zone of peace and cooperation free from weapons of mass destruction — a zone encompassing the six countries that are members or associated States of the Southern Cone Common Market: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile.

As we aspire to associate peace with justice and greater economic opportunity for all, in our part of the world we will continue to work closely with those in other regions who share these aspirations and are ready to

join hands in promoting a worldwide move away from belligerence and instability, with a strong United Nations at its centre. We are happy that next year we will have the company of Argentina in the Council. We would also like to acknowledge the excellent contribution made by Costa Rica.

Current trends, however, do not allow us to feel entirely confident that the world is becoming a safer place or that the Security Council's authority is not at risk. As the more utopian expectations raised by the end of the cold war subside, it is disquieting to note the persistence of intractable conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkans and the fringes of the former Soviet Union, as well as in several parts of Africa. The nuclear testing in South Asia has added a new and worrisome dimension to that region's security problems.

At the same time, it may be even more unsettling to witness our commonly accepted basis for legitimate international action in the field of peace and security — the United Nations Charter — being circumvented, for whatever reasons. Without going into the individual merits of specific decisions by regional organizations and other non-universal bodies, these waivers — proclaimed outside the United Nations legal standard — are symptomatic of a lack of confidence in the Council's judgement, which should be a matter for deep reflection by all Member States. It would be truly disheartening if the post-cold-war period, instead of setting the stage for an era of greater international cohesion, were to degenerate into new patterns of fragmentation and spheres of influence, to the detriment of the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter.

This Organization experienced a moment of renewed confidence in its capacity to articulate constructive diplomatic responses to international crises when Secretary-General Kofi Annan returned from Baghdad with a Memorandum of Understanding re-establishing cooperation between the Iraqi Government and the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). Nevertheless, a sustained pattern for such cooperation has yet to be achieved. Until the day that Iraq is in full compliance with its obligations, the Security Council will not be in a position to turn the page on the consequences of its past aggression against Kuwait. At present, the concept of a comprehensive review of what has been achieved and what is lacking under the sanctions regime offers the best possibility for progress and deserves to be approached in earnest. Full cooperation by Iraq with UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency must, of course, be established beforehand.

In Africa, the promise of peace associated with the end of apartheid has yet to be translated into the true African renaissance imagined by Nelson Mandela. The stark contrast offered by the nightmarish conflict in Angola would suffice to dispel any illusions. The defiance with which Jonas Savimbi continues to systematically flout his repeated commitments to disarm and join in the building of his country has provoked, in the region and beyond, a degree of outrage that is reserved only for a handful of other notorious figures in our contemporary world. Still, no end to the suffering of the Angolan people is in sight, while the Council seems powerless to make sure that its own resolutions are implemented.

In the Balkans the cycle of intolerance unleashed by the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia is still running its course of pain and devastation. We have followed with increasing uneasiness the plight of the Kosovar people and agree with those who believe that the international community has a collective responsibility to prevent humanitarian crises from degenerating into human catastrophes. The international community must try to reach a better understanding, however, on the multilateral basis for resorting to coercion on humanitarian grounds. The open debate in the Security Council on this issue — which took place very recently, in September — did not come to a clear convergence of views, and further discussion is certainly necessary on this matter. Let us recall that, however, that at present the only accepted basis for using force without Security Council authorization is Article 51 of the Charter, which provides for the legitimate right to self-defence. This provision does not allow for enlarged interpretation.

The Security Council's credibility was greatly enhanced at the beginning of this decade, when it appeared that working towards consensus was in the best interest of all its Members. But as the international community grapples with the turbulence provoked by financial instability, and potentially destabilizing precedents are established in the international political sphere, some observers have begun to talk — somewhat ominously — of the end of the relatively benign post-cold-war period.

In order to re-establish confidence in our institutions and in our capacity to work towards consensus, we must agree on certain fundamentals. United States President Bill Clinton, in his courageous statement made in Rwanda in March, pointed out that the only crucial division among the peoples of the world at the dawn of the new millennium is the line between those who embrace the

common humanity we all share and those who reject it; those who find meaning in life through respect and cooperation and those who embrace war. This is a pronouncement with which we agree entirely.

Such a philosophy is incompatible with an attachment to outdated oppositions between East and West or between North and South. It is diametrically opposed to the dark prophecies contained in false notions such as the so-called clash of civilizations. Peoples from all walks of life, irrespective of creed, culture, or ethnic background, are beginning to appreciate the benefits of cross-fertilization between different traditions. Today it is possible to contend that the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi is just as relevant to the moral upbringing of students in industrialized countries as is that of Raoul Wallenberg to those of developing ones. Our times have made a reassessment of old stereotypes possible and a better understanding of our common destiny as a species an imperative. Concepts of East and West, North and South, have to be seen in this perspective.

The only instruments at our disposal that will succeed in joining together all those who embrace our common humanity are those capable of being perceived by the entire international community as representative of universal interests. The United Nations is the only such organ in the field of peace and security. The Security Council should be its respected voice. We must strive to preserve its authority and work towards its enhanced stature.

In order to ensure that the Security Council does indeed maintain its role in promoting peace in the years to come, it will be essential for Member States to confront the urgent need to finalize the process of United Nations reform by agreeing on the shape of an expanded and modernized Council. The elements of a reform that is both meaningful and feasible are known to each and every one of us. They involve expansion in the two categories of members, permanent and non-permanent, with the presence of developing countries in both of them, on a non-discriminatory basis vis-à-vis developed nations. Reform also implies added transparency both within the Security Council — in the relation between permanent and non-permanent members — and in the relations of the Security Council with other bodies, particularly the General Assembly. It requires a decision-making process that combines fairness with effectiveness, realism with equity.

The gradual erosion of the legitimacy and credibility of the Security Council is not a risk for the distant future. It is a process that has already started. It is incumbent upon us, Member States, to stop this process and indeed to reverse it. Reform is not a panacea. It will not change by magical fiat the old thinking of some and the diffidence of others. But it is an indispensable requirement. We may choose to ignore it only at our own peril.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Costa Rica is particularly gratified, Sir, to see you presiding over our meeting today. We are glad to participate in the consideration of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering its work during the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998.

Over the last 22 months, my delegation has been honoured to represent the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States as one of the elected members of the Security Council. In that capacity, Costa Rica has striven to be a worthy representative of our Group and to promote the basic principles of our foreign policy: the promotion of human rights, respect for international humanitarian law, fulfilment of the principle of non-intervention, absolute compliance with the prohibition of the use of force and the promotion of democracy as the best way to achieve the right of peoples to self-determination.

We are convinced that the activities of the Security Council must necessarily be guided by these clear-cut and generally applicable principles. We believe that a constant effort must be made to avoid yielding to the temptation to seek pragmatic and easy ways out of the crises that the Security Council addresses. We believe that, since the Security Council deals with the most serious and sensitive situations affecting international relations and threatening peace and security, the Council should seek correct and lasting solutions to such crises.

In the context of the consideration of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, I wish to highlight just a few aspects of the work of the Council. First of all, I will note the complex nature of the causes of crises and the need to find integrated solutions to them, including the carrying out of multidisciplinary peacekeeping missions and operations. Secondly, I will draw attention to the need for the Council, in its proceedings, to observe strictly the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality of States, as well as the norms embodied in the Charter of the Organization. Thirdly, I will refer to the need for the measures adopted by the Security Council — in particular, sanctions — to adhere strictly to international humanitarian law and to be

limited exclusively to such measures as may be absolutely necessary.

Furthermore, taking into account the fact that the bulk of the Security Council's work in this period has been focused on Africa, I shall be referring to the situation in that continent. I shall also be mentioning the nuclear tests that took place in May this year, which, in our view, represent one of the gravest events that took place in the period under consideration.

First of all, all the crises that are on the agenda of the Security Council have complex causes. Nowadays, the sources of threats to international peace and security transcend traditional concepts and include economic and social issues, and in particular, issues relating to the failure to respect human rights. We believe that we must move on from the traditional concept of political armed conflicts among States to embrace a much more integrated and comprehensive concept of threats to peace and security. Such a concept would include situations of extreme poverty, critical economic and social underdevelopment, the violation of human rights, massive flows of refugees or internally displaced persons, ethnically-based civil wars, extreme degradation of the environment, terrorism and even certain socio-political phenomena such as corruption, drug-trafficking, international crime, fundamentalism and intolerance, all of which have become required items on the global security agenda.

We believe that we must find multidisciplinary solutions to these crises and develop and establish specific proposals and mechanisms for well-defined action in response. In this context, peacekeeping missions cannot continue to be designed exclusively from the military perspective, but must also include political and humanitarian components. Today, peace and security can be built only through a comprehensive undertaking that goes beyond ceasefire monitoring to encompass other, indispensable elements in the transition process from conflict to peace and democracy, such as the promotion of economic development and human rights, the building of trust among various political actors, and the monitoring of elections.

Secondly, it is essential that the Security Council scrupulously respect in its proceedings the principles of sovereignty and the sovereign equality of States, as well as the norms embodied in the Charter of the Organization. The Security Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations when it discharges its primary function of maintaining international peace and security. That is why the Council's activities should not and cannot be secrets kept from States Members of the Organization. Its functions require the basic criterion of transparency. The Security Council's action must also be effective, however. We must therefore acknowledge that, on certain occasions — exceptional, to be sure — some confidentiality and privacy are required in the decision-making process.

Moreover, if the Security Council is to work effectively, it must receive the broadest possible information from the membership. This need, together with the basic criterion of due process, requires the strict application of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, which permit States Members of the Organization which are not members of the Security Council to participate in discussions without the right to vote.

These considerations prompted the elected members of the Security Council, in December 1997, to present a position paper on the Council's working methods. The document is reflected in the report under consideration as part of the monthly assessment prepared by my delegation for December 1997. Many aspects of this position paper have been incorporated into that organ's practices. Unfortunately, some key proposals have yet to be incorporated.

As we noted in that paper, we take the view that the convening of open meetings of the Security Council should be the norm. Informal consultations, in the strict technical-legal sense, are not meetings of the Security Council. No decision may be taken at such consultations, nor do they fulfil the obligations articulated in Articles 31 and 32 of our Charter. We believe that all States Members of the Organization, and in particular the States directly interested, are entitled to express their views on situations under consideration by the Council in the earliest stages of that consideration.

We also believe that the Secretary-General and his representatives should submit their reports to the Security Council more frequently and in public meetings. It is simply unacceptable for the Secretary-General to regard certain information as secret and for most Members of the Organization not to have access to it. We therefore call on the Secretary-General in the future to present his reports, as a general rule, at public meetings of the Security Council.

Furthermore, we are particularly glad to welcome the incorporation of the monthly assessments prepared by

former Presidents of the Security Council into the annual report to the General Assembly. We believe that the inclusion of these assessments represents a significant contribution to the quality of the report before us.

Thirdly, we feel that the measures adopted by the Security Council, in particular sanctions, should conform strictly to international law and to healthy political thinking. The adoption of any measure that entails the use of force or military elements must satisfy all the vital legal, political and strategic requirements. Any action of this kind requires the clear authorization of the Security Council in each specific case, and we do not believe that authorizations should be granted without clear limits or a basis in a subsequent decision of other organs or groups of States. To do so would involve the Security Council's renunciation of its primary and untransferable responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This consideration is particularly pertinent nowadays, especially in the light of developments in the Balkans.

Any measure adopted by the Security Council must clearly define its political, strategic and practical goals, as well as a pre-established programme of subsequent action. In any event, any measure taken should guarantee the provision of humanitarian assistance to the victims of conflict and the scrupulous respect for and promotion of human rights.

When the measures adopted take the form of sanctions or prohibitions, these should comply strictly with international humanitarian law and be confined exclusively to such measures as are absolutely indispensable. We feel that sanctions are solely a means of collective self-defence for the international community, designed exclusively to exert pressure on Governments or authorities that threaten peace and security. That is why sanctions should not become a method — more or less covert — of intervening in affairs that fall essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States. They should be used as a last resort, before the use of force is authorized, in cases in which there is a clear and objective threat to international peace and security.

In addition, and as a necessary corollary to the aforementioned principles, sanctions should always be interpreted and applied so as to ensure the well-being of the civilian population. Humanitarian exceptions are vital elements of any sanctions regime. In this respect, my delegation prefers sanctions designed to punish the leaders responsible for unlawful policies directly, rather than the population at large. This kind of sanction, however, should be particularly respectful of the human rights of the individuals involved, make the assumption of innocence and avoid affecting minors. Moreover, because of their punitive nature, sanctions should be interpreted in a restrictive way by those responsible for implementing them.

Similarly, my delegation does not accept the existence of perpetual sanctions. Any sanctions regime must be temporary and based on clear and objectively determinable conditions for its lifting. A sanctions regime that is not subject to a deadline is in itself a violation of the basic rules of peaceful coexistence among people. In this context, we welcome the new developments with respect to the Lockerbie terrorist attack and the sanctions against Libya.

Costa Rica also believes that sanctions must necessarily be accompanied by dialogue among the parties so as to enable the Government subject to a sanctions regime to change its policies and thus adapt its conduct to the requirements of the international community. Sanctions are not an end in themselves, but should be part of an overall strategy designed to find a peaceful political solution to the crisis from which they have arisen. Costa Rica therefore supports the Secretary-General's proposal for a comprehensive review of the relationship with Iraq as soon as that country resumes its cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the period under consideration, the Security Council's agenda was dominated by various crises in Africa. Experience has taught us that the use of force has not settled African disputes or resolved the serious problems besetting the peoples of that continent. On the contrary, those wars have exacerbated the human tragedy.

We must acknowledge that the international community cannot and must not seek to impose on African countries external solutions that are alien to their way of life and their national and regional experiences. It is for Africans themselves to define and establish, through their own regional and subregional structures, their own models for achieving peace, development and respect for fundamental freedoms and rights. In this regard, we believe that a new vision is required for African countries, one that takes into account their exceptional situation and their own priorities and is designed to promote the building of a genuine and sustainable peace. In this context, it is furthermore vital, in parallel with that process, for the leaders of Africa to show a creative,

responsible and unprejudiced attitude with regard to a number of political issues.

In conclusion, I should like to refer to the nuclear tests carried out in Asia in May this year. My delegation believes that among all the events of the period under consideration, those tests have some of the widest repercussions. We believe that they are a challenge to the repeatedly expressed will of the international community, a dangerous ingredient in the build-up of nuclear tensions and an assault on international peace and security. We are afraid that similar incidents may occur in the future, forcing the Security Council to consider the matter once again.

For my delegation, these months have been a period of arduous labour. Our commitment to the basic principles that I outlined earlier — respect for sovereignty, sovereign equality, democracy and human rights — has remained unswerving, while at the same time we have striven to apply these principles to the harsh realities faced by the Security Council.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): First of all, I should like to say that my delegation takes note of the report of the Security Council submitted to the General Assembly.

In ensuring international peace and security, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the responsibility of the Security Council is important indeed, which is why all Member States are paying special attention to the activities of the Security Council.

The attention given by Member States to the activities of the Security Council has increased considerably, particularly in the present international situation, after the end of the cold war. A large number of countries expect the Security Council to act properly, in accordance with the functions and principles envisaged in the United Nations Charter, and their enthusiasm to directly participate in and contribute to the Council's activities is growing more than it ever has before.

This reality gives rise to the need for United Nations Members to review in detail and from a new angle all aspects of Security Council activities and to bring about radical changes, so as to ensure that the Security Council makes a real contribution to the maintenance of peace and security.

The non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected, and the Council carries out its duties on behalf of the general United Nations membership, pursuant to Articles 23 and 24 of the United Nations Charter. It is therefore certain that the Security Council should have its work reviewed and assessed by the General Assembly, which comprises 185 Member States. We should seize the opportunity to do so during our deliberations on the item now before us.

In my delegation's view, it is essential for the Security Council to ensure impartiality and transparency in all its activities. In this regard it is important for the Security Council to decisively improve the quality of its annual report. The report presented to the General Assembly lacks information needed for correctly assessing the annual work of the Security Council. It is of a procedural nature, containing only the dates of meetings, resolutions and so forth. Accordingly, the report does not help us to have a proper understanding of the Council's activities.

The Council's annual report presented to the General Assembly should certainly give a substantive and analytical account of its annual work, not simply remind Members of the records of the meeting — which have already been made public — so that the positive and negative aspects of the Council's work can be differentiated. For this purpose, the report should include detailed information concerning, in particular, the process of adopting and implementing resolutions and of informal consultations and the activities of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council.

In recent years we have often heard complaints from Member States that the activities of the Security Council lack impartiality and transparency and that the Council is dealing with disputes in an unjust manner according to the will of certain countries. In order for the Security Council to make a real contribution to the maintenance of peace and security through just activities, it should discard its way of thinking and its working methods, inherited from the period of the cold war.

If the Security Council continues, as it has in the past, to deal with matters in a biased manner, without taking into account the views of the parties concerned and by persistently maintaining informal consultations as its main working method under the pretext of ensuring efficiency in the Council's work, no one can expect positive results. Rather, this will fuel confrontation among the parties concerned, thus further aggravating disputes.

The activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security should be undertaken in a way that will reflect the views of the international community; and the views of the international community should be formed in a democratized and open forum on the basis of the principle of impartiality, not in an undemocratic and closed Security Council. To this end, the parties concerned should be allowed to participate in informal consultations, their views should be respected and the process should be made public.

We oppose the current working method of the Security Council by which, through informal consultations, certain big Powers are depicted as defenders of the peace and weak countries are depicted as breakers of the peace. This was manifested recently by the fact that Japan, which is obsessed with groundlessly finding fault with us, abused the Security Council so as to slander my country unjustifiably. Japan brought the issue of our satellite launch to the attention of the Security Council. Given its nature, that issue is not one that should be discussed in the Security Council.

In this regard, we cannot but call into question, first, that the Security Council took up the issue of our satellite launch, even though there is no doubt that it was not a matter to be dealt with by the Security Council, and, secondly, that the Security Council issued the so-called press statement after discussing the issue in a private room, by a trick of Japan, and then described it as though it were the view of the international community.

This clearly shows how impartiality is being ignored, how the view of the international community is being fabricated in a closed setting of the Security Council and how the Council is being abused by certain countries for their own political purposes instead of fulfilling its mission for the maintenance of international peace and security.

If the Security Council is to ensure impartiality in its activities, it is also important for it to draw appropriate lessons from its past serious wrongdoings resulting from abuses committed by certain big Powers for their own purposes and to take corrective measures in conformity with today's changed situation.

As is well known, in 1950, the United States illegally brought the Korean question to the Security Council for discussion, without our being present, and forcibly engineered the adoption of a resolution in contravention of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter. This led to the abuse of the name of the United Nations by the United States and its intervention in the Korean war. Even today, the United States is attempting to justify the presence of its troops in South Korea.

We cannot remain indifferent to the abuse of the name of the United Nations by the United States in order to use its armed forces and achieve its military strategy. We believe that the Security Council should take effective measures to rectify this kind of past wrongdoing.

At its thirtieth session, in 1975, the General Assembly adopted resolution 3390 B, calling for the dissolution of the United Nations Command in South Korea on the basis of recognition of the urgent need to take new, decisive measures for terminating foreign interference in the internal affairs of Korea in order to guarantee a durable peace and accelerate its independent and peaceful reunification on the Korean peninsula.

In line with this resolution, we have been making continuous efforts to put an end to the abuse of the name of the United Nations by the United States. In April 1994, we advanced a proposal to hold negotiations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States on replacing the old armistice system with a peace arrangement and, in February 1996, made a proposal to conclude an interim agreement between the two countries until the signing of a peace agreement and to establish a joint military mechanism for implementing that agreement.

However, the United States, failing to respond positively to the United Nations resolution and our peace-loving proposals, is still camouflaging the United States command in South Korea as the United Nations Command, in order to deceive the world and distort the truth, as if the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Member States of the United Nations had belligerent relations.

This abnormal situation has lasted for nearly half a century. Nevertheless, the Security Council has taken no measures yet to resolve the situation. This indicates that, despite the changed international situation, the Security Council is still under the influence of the United States and certain other big Powers, which has the negative effect of putting its credibility in question.

The Member States of the United Nations should not turn away from the current situation in the Security Council, but should pay due attention to enabling it to

make a substantial and effective contribution to peace and security by democratizing it and ensuring its impartiality.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Greenstock, for submitting this annual report to the General Assembly. The report has duly reflected the Council's work in the year from mid-1997 to mid-1998.

The international situation is undergoing profound changes at the turn of the century. It has become the common understanding and shared aspiration of all Member States of the Organization to maintain lasting peace, create a secure environment for development and establish a just and stable world political order. According to the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council, as an important organ of the United Nations, shoulders major responsibility for the maintenance of world peace and security. In carrying out its duties, the Council should listen to the views of the vast number of Member States so that its actions will fully and truly reflect the will of the entire membership of the Organization. In this light, the Chinese delegation would like to make the following observations on the work of the Council.

First, the functions and role of the Council as laid out in the Charter should be further strengthened. Practices over the past year have shown that the Council is irreplaceable in the leading role of maintaining world peace and security. We believe that the Council should follow strictly the stipulations of the Charter and act in accordance with the will of the majority of Member States in its work. Only by so doing can it retain its authority.

Secondly, the United Nations should enhance and expand its cooperation with regional organizations in maintaining world peace and security. The United Nations has had fruitful cooperation with relevant regional organizations in Africa and Central Asia over the past year. China is in favour of regional organizations playing a constructive role, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, and it calls on the United Nations system to provide meaningful support to regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), that are in need of necessary funds and technical expertise.

At the same time, we maintain that any multinational military operation carried out with the authorization of the Council should strictly regulate its activities according to relevant provisions and should standardize the mechanism of fulfilling its obligations to the Council, reporting to the Council and following the political guidance of the Council.

Thirdly, over the past year the Council has been more, rather than less, involved in the internal conflicts of some countries. We are of the view that in dealing with these important and complicated issues, the Council should strictly adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter, act upon the consent or request of countries involved and make the utmost effort to help resolve the conflict through peaceful means. We are not in favour of interference in the internal affairs of a country in the name of alleviating humanitarian crises, or the use of military threat or intervention with wilful invocation of Chapter VII of the Charter.

In this connection, we are also opposed to placing all the problems of conflict areas on the agenda of the Council. This does not conform to the principles guiding the division of work among the various organs of the United Nations; nor does it facilitate the effective functioning of other United Nations organs, especially the General Assembly. This practice may also sometimes overwhelm the priority issues before the Council and affect the Council's effective functioning.

Fourthly, concerning the question of sanctions, we are of the view that wilful and frequent resort to sanctions will not help resolve conflicts or disputes. On the contrary, it will only further complicate a matter, inflict suffering on the people of the country under sanction and cause economic difficulties or losses to third countries that have to observe the regime. There have already been cases like this. Once again we call for early implementation of the relevant principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 51/242. We maintain that when sanctions are unavoidable, the specific target, scope and duration should be clearly defined, and sufficient consideration should be given to humanitarian concerns. We do not favour the current situation, where it is all too easy to impose sanctions but difficult to lift them.

Fifthly, the importance that the Council is requested to attach to African issues must be translated into concrete deeds. African conflicts remained very much on the agenda of the work of the Council last year. The prolonged turmoil on the African continent has evolved against a profound historical background and is the result of various complex internal and external factors. China has all along been of the view that the Council should consider seriously the legitimate demands of African

countries and respond positively to their appeals, and that it should give effective support and coordination to the efforts of African countries and regional organizations in solving the problems of Africa.

We are pleased that for two consecutive years the Council has held meetings at the level of foreign ministers exclusively to discuss the problems of Africa. We hope that Council discussions on the African issue, which have been elevated with regard to the level of participants, will also go deeper on substantive issues, with a view to finding an effective way to help accommodate the real concerns of African countries and promote lasting stability and development in Africa.

The Council acts upon the common will of Member States. In order to make it easier for Member States in general to gain more comprehensive acquaintance with the Council's work, the Council has worked tirelessly in recent years, in response to General Assembly resolution 51/193, to improve its working methods, including the way in which it drafts its report. As was pointed out earlier by the President of the Council, further improvement has been made on the basis of past experience in the way the present annual report on the work of the Council was drafted. In particular, the report now contains monthly assessments of the Council's work written by the successive Presidents after consultation with other members of the Council. We hope that these measures will help further improve the transparency and the effectiveness of the Council's work.

China is in favour of continued efforts to improve the Council's work so that the Council will be able better and more accurately to reflect the will of Member States, and to carry out the tasks set out in the Charter more effectively by drawing on past experiences and lessons and by pooling the wisdom of Member States in general.

Organization of work

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): Concerning agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", I have requested the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Mr. Jørgen Bøjer, to coordinate the informal consultations on the draft resolutions under that agenda item, and he has graciously accepted.

May I request those delegations intending to submit draft resolutions under agenda item 20 to do so as early as possible in order to allow time, if need be, for negotiations with a view to reaching consensus on the draft resolutions.

Announcements

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The 1998 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held on Wednesday, 4 November, and Thursday, 5 November, in the morning.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1999 programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Friday, 13 November, in the morning.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1999 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will take place on Thursday, 3 December, in the morning.

Members are requested to consult the *Journal* for the announcements on these activities for further details.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.