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General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

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50th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 8 November 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser . . . . . (Qatar)

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

Agenda item 112

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/66/300)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/66/300.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this document?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 112?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 30

Report of the Security Council (A/66/2)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am very pleased to welcome to the General Assembly the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Ambassador José Moraes Cabral, who will shortly present to us the annual Security Council report (A/66/2).

As the Assembly knows, genuine efforts have been undertaken in recent years to strengthen the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Under my presidency, I want to continue — and to accelerate — that process. This report is one of the main instruments for cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. In close dialogue with Ambassador Moraes Cabral, I have decided to devote an entire meeting of the General Assembly to the consideration of the Council's report, and to consider separately the agenda item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I have done so because I deem it important to consider each matter thoroughly. I know that many Member States are eager to be better informed about the work of the Council, and I thought it would be appropriate to focus our work this morning on the activities of the Security Council only.

During the reporting period, the Security Council faced tremendous challenges. Just to cite a few examples, the Council had to react to the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, the establishment of the State of

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South Sudan and developments in the Arab world, in particular in Libya, Yemen and Syria.

On certain issues of tremendous importance, including peacekeeping, post-conflict peacebuilding and counter-terrorism, it is crucial that the Security Council and the General Assembly work hand-in-hand, to ensure the success of the Organization in its endeavours. Together with the rest of the United Nations system, the Security Council devotes a lot of time to cross-cutting issues, such as the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, children and armed conflict and women and peace and security. For all those reasons, today's meeting is of crucial importance to ensuring that we are all working in the same direction. As President of the General Assembly, I attach great importance to strengthening cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council, to ensure better protection and consolidation of the values of the United Nations.

Since taking office as President of the General Assembly, I have met with every President of the Security Council. We have had intensive and fruitful discussions on how to better coordinate our work and to improve the cooperation between us. Our teams have been in constant contact to ensure the smooth conduct of the work in both organs, to avoid conflicting agendas and to find ways to work in a common direction. I will continue that practice with every new President of the Security Council.

In conclusion, after hearing from the President of the Security Council, I encourage members to express their views on the report of the Security Council. I hope that our discussion today will allow us to make progress on strengthening our joint efforts.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral, President of the Security Council, to introduce the report of the Council.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal), President of the Security Council: I would like, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on behalf of the members of the Security Council, on your election as President of the General Assembly.

It is an honour for me, as President of the Security Council for the month of November, to introduce the annual report of the Security Council (A/66/2). More than a regular reporting exercise pursuant to the United Nations Charter, I see this moment as one of the most important in the relationship of both principal organs of the United Nations and as an excellent opportunity to debate and exchange views with the general membership on the report on the work of the Council. I am therefore grateful to you, Mr. President, for having made it possible this year to devote an entire debate to the consideration of the Security Council's annual report.

The report covers the period from August 2010 to July 2011. The introduction to the report was prepared by the delegation of Germany, which held the presidency in July. I wish to thank Ambassador Peter Wittig and his team for their efforts in preparing the introduction, to which I call attention, because it gives a helpful overview of the different activities under the responsibility of the Council during the reporting period. Allow me also to thank the Secretariat, which prepared the other parts of the report now before the Assembly.

I would also like to highlight the monthly assessments by each presidency, which are mentioned in the report. They contain information, on a monthly basis, on the most relevant activities carried out by the Council on each item of its agenda, thus adding to overall comprehension of the report. Those monthly assessments are an important exercise regularly undertaken as part of the responsibility of each presidency. They aim to inform the wider membership about the work of the Council, and I would like to call attention to them as well.

During the reporting period, between resolutions and presidential statements, the Council adopted nearly 100 decisions. That number confirms the continuing trend, in recent years, of an increasing workload. The Council continued to hold a considerable portion of its meetings in public — 204 out of a total of 231. Open meetings, including open debates, increase transparency in the work of the Council and allow for enhanced participation by the wider membership and the international community. Presidencies of the Council and of the General Assembly continued throughout this year to meet regularly, and monthly briefings by the Presidents of the Council to the wider membership on the Council's work continued to be held.

Meetings with troop contributors have also taken place as a regular practice, in particular prior to any decision with impact on United Nations peacekeeping

mandates, as a way to enable collecting relevant inputs. Those practices represent useful steps to promote better dialogue with the general membership on the work of the Council. We encourage delegations to make use of those opportunities, to increase such interaction.

The Council continued its implementation of presidential note 507, on working methods. Presidencies have promoted useful practices aimed at increasing efficiency and expediency, such as streamlining introductions made by the President and the use of videoconferences in open briefings or debates to provide updates from the field. Consultations of the whole are progressively more interactive and flexible. Council members having agreed to reduce the use of speakers' lists and to make better use of the "Other matters" item to discuss issues of concern. Interactive dialogues have also continued to be held by the Council as a useful consultation practice.

The Council continued to increase the work time it devotes to conflict prevention, keeping on its agenda, on a monthly basis, a briefing by the Department of Political Affairs on issues of emerging concern.

During the period of the report, as in previous years, many of the activities of the Council were centred on situations in Africa, including the Sudan, Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia and the question of piracy off African coasts. The two missions conducted by the Council this year were to Africa — in October 2010 to the Sudan and Uganda, and in May 2011 to Ethiopia, where the Council held a consultative meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council, the Sudan and Kenya. With its referendum on independence and the subsequent process of the admission of the Republic of South Sudan to the United Nations, South Sudan was also the focus of close consideration by the Council.

Developments in North Africa and in the Arab world since January ranked high on the Council's agenda. The Council paid close and active attention to the evolving situation in the region, with the situation in Libya featuring prominently in its programme of work. The Council acted swiftly and decisively by adopting resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011), and the situation was closely followed by the Council. The situations in Yemen and Syria were also under the active consideration of the Council in a number of briefings and in consultations of the whole. Consideration of the situation in West Africa and the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa continued in view of the elections in numerous countries in the region, as well as cross-border threats to regional peace and security, particularly transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking and its negative impact on peace, security and development in the region.

In that context, the Council emphasized the importance of a regional approach to conflict prevention, and encouraged the recently established United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in Libreville to facilitate coordination among the Economic Community of Central African States, the United Nations and regional organizations. Under the item on the situation in the Great Lakes region, the Council's attention was also brought to bear on increased attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Council members condemned the attacks and emphasized the need for the effective protection of civilians. In that regard, they welcomed the leadership shown by the African Union in its recent initiative to develop a regional strategy on the LRA.

The Council continued to regularly review the post-conflict situations on its agenda, such as in Burundi, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. I wish to highlight one aspect underlined in the report, that is, the fact that for the first time, the Chairs of the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission delivered a joint statement to the Council, which is a positive development, suggesting closer cooperation between the Council and the Chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations.

Peacekeeping operation mandates and sanctions regimes were extended and adjusted as a result of the periodic consideration of such issues under the regular agenda of the Council. In that context, however, I wish to highlight two peacekeeping missions that were terminated by the Council during the reporting period — the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. Also, the United Nations Mission in Nepal was terminated early this year. I take the opportunity to pay homage to the men and women who participated in those missions, and the respective contributing countries, and to thank them for their important role for the benefit of the international community.

With regard to the sanctions regimes mentioned in the report, I would like to highlight the adoption of resolutions 1988 (2011) and 1989 (2011) as very important steps to further support political dialogue in Afghanistan, while countering the threat to international peace and security posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliates and strengthening the effectiveness of targeted sanctions by further enhancing fair and clear procedures.

The Council continued consideration of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on a monthly basis. The implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) was closely followed, as well. In Asia, the situations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal and Timor-Leste were closely considered by the Council. In Europe, the Council continued its consideration of the situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cyprus and of the reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. In another region, Haiti was the focus of close attention by the Council, in particular efforts to stabilize the country following the 2010 earthquake, and, more recently, the presidential elections.

The issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction was also in the Council's focus. Through the adoption of resolution 1977 (2011), the Council extended the mandate of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) for a period of 10 years, which enhances the Committee's ability to support implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and provides for two comprehensive reviews — one after five years and one before the end of the mandate. Regular briefings were also conducted by the Chairs of the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1737 (2006) and 1718 (2006) on implementation of the sanctions regime concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Democratic Republic of Korea, respectively. The Council also benefited from regular joint briefings by the Chairs of the three subsidiary bodies of the Council dealing with counter-terrorism, that is, the 1267, the 1373 and 1540 Committees.

Open debates continued to be organized by the Council as a regular practice. One debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations was held, with the participation of the Force Commanders of 13 United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa, the Americas and the Middle East.

Post-conflict peacebuilding was the focus of other debates, the first held at the high-level summit in September 2010, followed by other open debates in October 2010 and, more recently, in January, which focused for the first time on institution-building.

On children and armed conflict, the Council held an open debate in July, leading to the adoption of resolution 1998 (2011), which expanded the criteria under which the names of the parties to armed conflicts can be included in the annexes to the periodic report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, namely, those parties to armed conflicts that engage, in contravention with applicable international law, in recurrent attacks on schools and hospitals.

On the protection of civilians, the Council held two open debates, one in November 2010, after having adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/25), with a useful update and aide-memoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict annexed to the statement, and the other in May 2011.

New challenges to international peace and security were also considered in the discussions of the Council. Open debates on the interdependence between security and development, the impact of HIV/AIDS on international peace and security, and climate change and its impact on the maintenance of peace and security were held during the reporting period. Moreover, briefings on the impact of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking on global peace, security and development, by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and on small arms and light weapons, by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, were also held during the reporting period. That demonstrates the close attention that the Security Council attaches to those emerging challenges to international peace and security.

On women and peace and security, an open debate was organized to mark the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The Under-Secretary-General for Gender and Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict were invited to brief the Council, and on subsequent occasions when that matter was considered by the Council.

Concerning the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, in December

2010, the Council adopted resolution 1966 (2010), by which it decided to establish the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals with two branches to continue their jurisdiction, rights and obligations and essential functions once they completed their work.

Also during the reporting period, the Council took a decision by acclamation, recommending to the General Assembly that Mr. Ban Ki-moon be reappointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a five-year term of office.

I could go on and on in referring to matters that were under the consideration of the Council during the reporting period. However, time is short and I believe that it is more useful to listen to Member States. Many other aspects, surely as important, were left to mention, but members can find reference to them and to all that I have underlined in the report itself.

The annual report before the Assembly includes an important number of analytical, descriptive and statistical information on the work of the Council, the preparation of which requires a significant effort both by delegations in the Council and by the Secretariat. We should seize this opportunity to discuss the report and to benefit from members' comments and suggestions. Obviously, there is always room for improvement. I will be glad to take suggestions back to my colleagues in the Council and to exchange views and reflect further on ways to improve the comprehension of the report, while keeping its accuracy and value as a record.

Mr. Tag-Eldin (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to express our sincere wishes for the blessed Eid al-Adha, especially to our Muslim brothers. We hope that this will bring blessings to the Muslim nation and the entire world, and peace, security and felicity to all.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the pleasure to speak today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, the Movement commends you, Mr. President, on your decision to separate the two General Assembly debates — on the consideration of the report of the Security Council, and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters — and to devote a distinct debate to each of these two important agenda items in order to give them the proper attention they each deserve.

In past years, the majority of Member States tended to concentrate more on the issue of Security Council reform. Now the Assembly has a good opportunity to properly reflect on the annual report of the Security Council, making the debate more meaningful and focused, without prejudice to the link between the question of Council reform and the Council report, as the latter represents a component of the overall reform of the Council, according to decision 62/557.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Movement would like to take this opportunity to thank Portugal for presenting the Security Council's annual report for the period from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011 (A/66/2), and also to thank Germany, which held the Council's presidency in July, for its work in drafting the introduction to the report.

Our debate today provides an opportunity to analyse the progress achieved and the challenges confronting the work of the Security Council. The General Assembly's consideration of the report should not be limited to reviewing past activities but should, rather, draw lessons so as to introduce new perspectives and proposals for the coming year in a forward-looking exercise.

The accountability of the Security Council to the General Assembly is well established in the United Nations Charter, and the consideration of the Council's annual report by the Assembly is one of the most important elements of that relationship. The Non-Aligned Movement therefore stresses that, while Member States have conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the Council acts on behalf of the general membership in carrying out its duties under this responsibility. In this context, the Movement further stresses that the Council should report and be accountable to the Assembly, including through the submission of special reports for the consideration of the Assembly, in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 1, and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

Moreover, with regard to the process of preparing and introducing the Council's annual report, the Movement welcomes, as a step forward, the informal meeting with the general membership convened by Germany, the Council President in July. This is the fourth consecutive year with such a meeting, following in the footsteps of Nigeria, Uganda and Viet Nam in the preparation of the introduction of the report. We encourage the members of the Council to continue this practice, which contributes to enhancing the quality of the report, and to develop it further. At the same time, necessary action should be taken to ensure the timely submission of the report to the Assembly in order to allow more time between its adoption in the Council and the Assembly's debate, to permit Member States to thoroughly examine and analyse it.

On the other hand, NAM notes the Council's mounting workload and the multiplicity and complexity of the issues on its agenda, as reflected in the number of public and private meetings, as well as the number of resolutions, presidential statements and statements to the press. These reflect the increasing challenges that the international community is facing in the areas of peace and security.

The Security Council dealt with many situations and crises and considered many issues on almost all continents. African issues remain at the forefront, representing more than 70 per cent of the Council's work, particularly in the context of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Council also devoted considerable time to thematic and general issues, including terrorism, the protection of civilians, women and peace and security, peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding, piracy, non-proliferation and other issues.

The validity of the report's introduction should be in its analytical nature. It should seek to capture the most important deliberations in the period under review and to assess the Council's ability to deal with the problems at hand and to signal difficulties, as well as to identify areas where improvements can be made. That is why the Non-Aligned Movement consistently calls upon the Council to submit a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report to the Assembly, assessing the Council's work, including cases in which it has failed to act, as well as the views expressed by its members during the discussion of the agenda items under its consideration.

The Movement further calls on the Security Council to elaborate the circumstances under which it adopts different outcomes, such as resolutions, presidential statements, press statements or elements to the press. It is imperative that the General Assembly be aware not only of the specific decisions that were taken but also of the rationale, reasons and backgrounds under which they were reached, bearing in mind the significant impact that Security Council decisions may have on world affairs.

Paragraph 10 of resolution 65/315, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, welcomes the improvements in the quality of the annual report of the Council and encourages the Council to make further improvements as necessary. The Movement is of the view that there is still a dire need not only to maintain such improvements but also to enhance and promote them.

The Non-Aligned Movement notes that the annual report relied on the monthly assessments of the Council's rotating presidencies. Comprehensive and analytical monthly assessments, if prepared and submitted in a timely manner, would definitely contribute to improving the quality of the annual report. That would provide a more coherent account of how the work of the Council evolves each month in dealing with issues on its agenda. It is also important that the annual report contain concise and analytical information about the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies, including counter-terrorism committees, sanctions committees, working groups and international tribunals established by the Council.

The inclusion of a chapter on working methods in the annual report and a related part in its introduction is only a step in the right direction. The Movement expects the Council's upcoming reports to contain a more detailed presentation on the measures the Council has taken to improve its working methods, including the implementation of existing measures set out in presidential note S/2010/507, in order to properly assess the progress achieved in this regard. NAM also encourages a more detailed account of the activities and outcomes of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, including suggestions on how to enhance the quality of the report.

During the reporting period, the Council's work was characterized by an increase in the number of

public meetings. The Movement believes that the quantitative increase of those meetings should be associated with a qualitative one by providing real opportunities and a more meaningful exchange of views, to take into account the views and contributions of non-Council members, particularly those whose interests are or may be directly affected by possible decisions of the Council.

Furthermore, while the Movement acknowledges the open debates held on various issues of concern to the international community which fall under the competence of the Council, it notes that the Security Council report does not reflect the general observations and positions expressed by numerous non-members of the Council during those debates, and in this regard requests that this issue be addressed in future reports.

NAM also welcomes the continued holding of briefings and consultations by the Council with the troop-contributing countries as part of the effort to plan and execute peacekeeping operations more effectively and with clearer mandates. In this regard, the Movement encourages the Security Council to further enhance its relationship with the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries, including through sustained, regular and timely interaction. Meetings with the troop-contributing countries should be held not only when mandates are drawn up, but also during their implementation; when considering amending, renewing or completing a mission's mandate; or when there are serious developments in the situation on the ground.

In this context, the Security Council Working Group of the Whole on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations should involve troop-contributing countries more frequently and intensively in its deliberations, especially at the very early stages of mission planning.

Moreover, developing the concept of a monthly briefing from the Department of Political Affairs is in line with the continuous calls made by the Movement to allow briefings by Special Envoys or Representatives of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to take place at public meetings of the Security Council.

NAM supports the continued and increased cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union (AU), particularly the AU Peace and Security Council, and emphasizes the need to provide the African Union with assistance in terms of capacity-building and adequate predictable resources so that it can deal effectively with conflict on the continent. The Movement also welcomes the Security Council's field visits to a number of countries in Africa, which have provided an excellent opportunity to garner accurate information and allowed for a proper assessment of the situation on the ground.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, which continued to be considered on a monthly basis during the reporting period, the Non-Aligned Movement expresses its disappointment and frustration at the fact that the Security Council failed to successfully address this long-standing conflict and was not able at least to take meaningful action on the basis of the consensus and aspirations of the international community. In the same vein, the Movement regrets that the draft resolution submitted earlier this year in the Security Council calling for the immediate cessation of all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory was not adopted by the Council, as had been hoped for and expected.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement strongly believes that there remains much room for improvement in the quality of the annual report of the Security Council, with a view to ensuring that the challenges facing the Council, its assessments and the rationale for its actions, as well as its decision-making processes, are duly reflected.

It is imperative for both the General Assembly and the Security Council to strive to complement each other, while respecting each other's mandates, in order to achieve the noble objectives of the United Nations and to enable it to remain relevant and capable of meeting the existing and emerging threats and challenges facing the international community.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the group of five small nations (S-5), comprised of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, regarding agenda item 30, on the report of the Security Council. Our group is particularly committed to improving the working methods of the Security Council.

Let me first thank the President of the General Assembly for holding this debate. We deem it important that this year it is being held separately from the debate on item 122, on the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of

the Security Council and related matters". This will allow us to conduct more meaningful exchanges on each item.

The S-5 thanks Germany for its efforts and commitment in drafting the report, and Portugal for its thoughtful presentation. The report summarizes, with the relevant details, the activities conducted by the Council and indicates its priority areas, as reflected by those activities. In that regard, it is a clear and well-organized document. However, we would have welcomed the inclusion of more elements of reflection or analysis.

Going beyond a strictly summary presentation and including additional elements such as insights into the Council's decision-making processes would have facilitated Member States' conclusions about the contents of the report and the work of the Security Council.

Throughout the years, the report of the Security Council and the debate thereon have become a rather ritualistic exercise that, as a result, has only modest relevance.

To reverse this situation, we encourage both the Security Council and the General Assembly to take the kind of bold and innovative steps that could allow better use to be made of this annual report. If such steps are taken, we will be able to draw greater and more tangible benefits from its contents and the discussions thereon, in the context of our common endeavour to strengthen international peace and security under the United Nations Charter, while fully respecting the tasks, mandates and competencies of both the Assembly and the Council.

In that connection, the S-5 wishes to offer some comments and suggestions on the way in which the annual report could be drafted, the nature of its contents and ways of improving discussions on the report.

The substantive involvement of all Member States at an early stage of the drafting process would be a step in the right direction. That could be done, for example, through an interactive open debate, with the exchanges therein reflected in the report. Such involvement does not exist today. Moreover, given the length of the report, the lack of an analytical perspective and the usual delay in making it available well in advance of presentations, delegations are severely restricted in their capacity to make their own analysis of the document. This hinders the possibility of making meaningful contributions and affects in particular small delegations with limited resources.

As for the issue of substance, the S-5 would have welcomed a greater highlighting of the linkages between thematic, regional and country-specific issues. We suggest that this be taken into account in the drafting of future annual reports.

We welcome the consideration of the working methods of the Council, especially the manifest determination to make its work more transparent and the debates and consultations more open and interactive. While we note with satisfaction that the annual report lists a number of steps that the Council has taken to improve its working methods, it would be useful if the report also presented a more analytical assessment of the implementation of presidential note S/2006/507 and its follow-up note S/2010/507. The ideas of the S-5 on how to make further inroads in connection with these issues are included in a draft resolution under agenda item 117, on "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", which has been the subject of consultations on the part of the membership of the Organization.

We notice that there have been no further advances in the format of the discussion itself. Therefore, the small five suggest, again, that in the future our discussions be conducted in a more informal, inclusive and interactive way.

Clearly, the Charter of the United Nations delegates the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security to the Security Council. A more substantive and interactive dialogue between the two main bodies of the United Nations and among Member States based on the annual report would not be meant to undermine that prerogative. However, the Council could benefit from input from the wider membership on this matter to help it better discharge its functions. At the same time, a political discussion with the Member States would have the added benefit of a larger buy-in and broader political ownership of decisions taken by the Security Council.

In that way, the annual report would present an excellent occasion not only to review and evaluate the past, but also for all parties to exchange lessons learned in order to discuss options and strategies for

the future. In other words, a discussion on the annual report should not be mainly a retrospective exercise but a prospective one as well. Such a discussion need not be a formal exercise, and the small five group indeed suggests a possible format organized around a series of workshops clustered around situations and/or issues.

In concluding our remarks, we would like to highlight the increase in the number of open debates organized by each month's Council President. At the same time, we recall that although the debates demonstrate a greater willingness for openness and inclusion, they do not, alone, translate into meaningful discussions. In that context, it is necessary to implement the procedural changes that will make debates less formulaic and more conducive to discussion. We particularly welcome the possibility of making the consultations within the Council more spontaneous, lively and productive.

We encourage future Security Council presidencies to strengthen efforts for major enhancements of the report, which should start at its inception and develop throughout the process until its presentation and discussion.

Mr. Singh (India): I am honoured to address the General Assembly on behalf of my country on the annual report of the Security Council. I thank the Permanent Representative of Portugal for presenting the Security Council's annual report for the period from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011 (A/66/2). The information he provided on the enormous work carried out by the Council was in many ways comprehensive and useful. I would also like to thank the German delegation for their efforts in preparing the introduction to the report. I also place on record our appreciation of the Nigerian delegation for convening an informal meeting with Member States last month on the preparation of the report.

In our view, the report of the Security Council is an important mechanism for facilitating interaction among the most representative organ of the United Nations and its most empowered brethren. Indeed, the Charter of the United Nations itself bestows on the report a profound gravitas, as is evident from the fact that there exists a separate provision mandating such a report, rather than clubbing it with the provision for reports from other United Nations bodies. It is therefore imperative that the annual report of the Security Council highlight and analyse the measures that it has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security during the reporting period.

The General Assembly membership has repeatedly requested that this report be made more analytical and incisive, rather than being a mere narration of the Council's meetings. It is important that the Assembly be aware not only of what decisions were taken, but also the rationale for and efficacy and impact of the Council's decisions, in terms of crystallized takeaways for the Assembly membership.

In that context, it is important that the annual report and the monthly reports mention the important points made by the briefers in Council meetings, as well as the views expressed by Council members. Points of convergence and divergence should stand out from those reports so that the wider membership is able to understand the dynamics as well as the rationale of the decision-making in the Security Council.

Unfortunately, the present report continues to be a statistical compilation of events, a bland summary and listing of meetings and outcome documents. It fails to mention even the strands of the various views expressed in the Council that led the Council to take action, or otherwise.

I would still like to give some credit where it is due. The report now before the Assembly has gone some distance to address some issues mentioned in paragraph 10 of resolution 65/315, on revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, concerning the quality of the annual reports. It is our expectation that the Council will continue to take tangible steps to make further improvements in the analytical quality of its reports.

The General Assembly will benefit enormously from an assessment of the multiple dimensions of the issues concerning international peace and security, often in a wider geopolitical context, that were before the Security Council during the relevant period. Equally, it would be of immense value if the analysis were not merely an ex post rendition of the sequence of events, but contained elements of an ex ante nature that could create an enabling environment for robust handling of the various situations.

Furthermore, although, strictly speaking, analysis of economic and social issues falls within the domain of the Economic and Social Council, we feel that

nothing prevents the Council from developing the necessary wherewithal and undertaking rational analysis and objective assessment to be able to completely grasp the security implications of socio-economic challenges of an international character. In the view of my delegation, the practice of dispassionate analysis of such episodes and processes and, beyond that, ex ante prognosis, would do a world of good for the Assembly, the Council and the Economic and Social Council and their interrelationship.

My delegation has long held that the existing lacunae in the report manifest the underlying problems of the Council's representation and working methods, which remain opaque and non-inclusive. The report this year, too, continues to be a statistical compilation of events, a summary and listing of meetings and outcome documents. Since the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council and other related matters will be discussed under a separate agenda item this afternoon, my delegation will make a more detailed statement at that time.

For the time being, suffice it to say that there is no option but to recognize that the real solution not only for a more credible, legitimate and representative Council, but also for a more thorough report lies in the comprehensive reform of the Security Council, including expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, and its working methods.

Nonetheless, let us recognize that this year we have made important changes in terms of altering the format of discussion. In the morning the Assembly is concentrating only on the report of the Security Council, while this afternoon it will concern itself with the wider reform of the membership of the Security Council. I think that provides a useful departure and a useful format. It is the expectation of my delegation that we will build on the progress that we have achieved. Therefore, with hope and expectation, we look forward to altered discussions and to reflecting some of the suggestions in the next report of the Security Council and the subsequent deliberations in the General Assembly.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Portugal, Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral, for his presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/66/2). I would like to acknowledge the presence at today's meeting of His Excellency Representative Damian Feliciano, member of the Brazilian Congress.

The annual report of the Council just presented covers a period of intense activity and hard work by all Council members. Brazil has had the honour to serve on Security Council since January 2010. We congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members — Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo — and wish them every success in their important new functions.

During our mandate, Brazil has striven to honour the trust placed in us by Member States. As in previous mandates, we have sought to deal constructively with the issues on the Council's agenda, while, at the same time, remaining attentive to the needs and interests of the wider membership. We have long been supportive of improvements in the Council's working methods to make the organ more transparent, inclusive and accessible.

Brazil actively supported the revision of presidential note 507, which, in S/2010/507, consolidated some relatively recent efforts to improve interaction with Member States. Among them, I would single out informal interactive dialogues and the possibility of inviting the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission to informal consultations.

The annual report is an attempt to provide a fairly comprehensive account of the Council's activities. We remain available to all Member States to discuss the contents of the report and possible ways to make it a better tool for the benefit of the whole membership.

Last February, as President of the Security Council, Brazil made a conscious effort to involve each and every member of the Council in its deliberations, to keep them permanently informed of developments and to help build unity of purpose. We also sought to keep in close contact with all parties directly concerned with the issues of which the Council was seized. In addition, we made ourselves available to Member States that needed information or that requested the attention of the Council. In that regard, at the end of our presidency, Brazil organized a briefing for non-members to exchange views on issues covered during the month.

As we consider the annual report, it is worth noting that while progress has been made, more needs

to be done to enhance the opportunities for non-member States and other United Nations bodies to provide their input to the work of the Security Council. Brazil will continue to work, inside or outside the Council, in favour of concrete and effective reforms of its working methods, with a view to enhancing its transparency, accountability and openness to participation by non-members.

Brazil has been fully aware of the pressing issues that the Security Council must address at this crucial juncture in its history. One of the major challenges for the international community is seeking to ensure a holistic approach to conflict and post-conflict situations. We have advocated for better use of the Council's tools, including preventive diplomacy mechanisms, to tackle the root causes of problems and to empower local actors in order to help build sustainable peace and development. We are convinced that coercive measures should not be the primary method of responding to crises that are mainly of a political nature.

Our approach has been focused first and foremost on the need to pursue and exhaust all diplomatic solutions to any given conflict. The Security Council should be more involved in promoting the engagement of key players and mediation efforts by regional and subregional organizations, and the United Nations itself, as such efforts can play a significant role in defusing tensions. When diplomatic means have been exhausted and the use of coercive measures is deemed necessary, the Council must be attentive to the need to avoid harm to the population, including vulnerable groups.

Military action should be a measure of last resort. In such cases, the observance of proportionality and the definition of clear parameters are necessary so as not to further aggravate the conflict that it is trying to solve.

When the Council has adopted measures under Chapter VII, Brazil has sought to work towards unity of message and purpose, as the convergent and unified action by the Council enhances its effectiveness. In the implementation of such measures, in particular when they involve the use of force, accountability should be considered an obligation that follows from the Council's responsibility in acting on behalf of the whole membership on matters related to international peace and security.

As I conclude, I would like to express our great appreciation for the valuable interaction with, and the support that we have received from, both members of the Council and States not members.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): First of all, I wish to thank the Ambassador of Portugal for the excellent presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/66/2).

The year 2011 has been particularly challenging. Against the background of a fragile world economy and its serious repercussions, especially for the most vulnerable economies, the international community has had to face unexpected and potentially destabilizing situations.

This year will go down in history for the Arab Spring. The people of numerous countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean made their voices heard, demanding freedom, justice, participation in the political process and a more equitable distribution of wealth. The Security Council reacted to the developments in the Mediterranean and the North African region through focused debates and decisions that often helped to shape the path towards freedom and democracy.

In March, the Council took decisive action to prevent a bloodbath in Libya and harm to the civilian population at the hands of the Al-Qadhafi regime. The evolution of the crisis and the prompt adoption of resolutions 2016 (2011) and 2017 (2011) recently attest to everybody that much has been done to restore a normalcy long been denied to the Libyan people. However, much still remains to be done, particularly rebuilding the country's institutions.

In resolution 1970 (2011), the Security Council voted unanimously to refer the Libyan situation to the International Criminal Court. As Foreign Minister Frattini stated in his address to the General Assembly on 24 September,

> "we shifted from a culture of sovereign impunity to one of responsible sovereignty, rooted in national and international accountability for the most serious violations of human rights" (*A/66/PV.24, p. 10*).

No State can be allowed to commit crimes against its own population.

The Council continued to monitor the situation in Lebanon, where the United Nations is playing a key role in bringing stability. Italy remains deeply engaged in assisting the Lebanese authorities and in supporting the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, to which my country contributes with a significant force.

The Security Council was called to act in other hotbeds of change. It has manifested its solidarity with the legitimate aspirations of the Egyptian and Tunisian peoples and has raised its voice over the situation in Yemen, although the desired political transition in that country is still pending.

We would, however, be remiss if we did not mention our regret about the silence that has greeted the repression in Syria. The silence is loud, and it is inconsistent with the overall effectiveness the Council has shown in other circumstances, making good use of the broad range of instruments at its disposal to ensure that the peaceful demands of civilian populations receive the hearing they deserve.

The Security Council has maintained its vigilance in sub-Saharan Africa, a priority area for the United Nations because of the persistence of conflicts and the emergence of new threats to peace and security. The Council's action was instrumental in the preparatory process of the referendum that ratified the independence of South Sudan — to which I renew my warm congratulations on being the 193rd State Member of the United Nations. The Security Council's continued focus is driving the parties there to respect the commitments they undertook in signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, of which Italy is a guarantor.

In Somalia, a climate of constructive dialogue has been re-established and a series of basic reforms has been initiated through the road map of 6 September. It is our hope that these reforms will be carried out in compliance with the agreed timetable. Yet, security conditions must still be restored in Somalia for the sake of the rule of law, socio-economic development and the fight against terrorism. To combat piracy, we need a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of the phenomenon through an integrated strategy combining deterrence, prosecution, the rule of law and development.

Peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding are critical elements of the United Nations agenda to advance peace and security in Africa and elsewhere. Italy is proud to be a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, not only in the definition of doctrines and procedures but also in terms of financing, training, logistics and especially presence on the ground, standing as the top Western contributor of troops.

This year the Council held a series of debates on post-conflict peacebuilding, based on reports of the Secretary-General on the issue. We believe that attention must continue to be focused on the Peacebuilding Commission. In order to strengthen it, we must take advantage of the favourable momentum generated by the review and by the excellent results achieved through the country configurations.

Italy appreciates the Council's attention to the Balkans, particularly the unanimous adoption of resolution 1948 (2010) on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European-led peacekeeping force, as well as the role the Council has played in Kosovo, thanks to the active engagement of then Special Representative of the Secretary-General Lamberto Zannier.

In Asia, the development of a regional approach to solving political and security problems has been reinvigorated. That is true not only in Afghanistan but also in Thailand and Cambodia, two countries that have been encouraged to settle their age-old controversy in the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Indeed, regional integration is an effective means not just to improve economic outputs but also to address political conflicts, as the experience of the European Union integration process has demonstrated in the over 50 years of its history.

With a view to strengthening stability in Afghanistan, all regional actors must support the transition process while the Afghan authorities assume greater ownership of the political and social development of their country. Council resolutions 1988 (2011) and 1989 (2011), on threats to peace and security caused by terrorist acts, are important steps toward supporting political dialogue in Afghanistan and countering the dangers posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliates.

Those measures make targeted sanctions more effective by providing fair and clear procedures. Italy commends the stronger mandate given to the Ombudsperson for de-listing requests and remains strongly committed to cooperating with the Office of the Ombudsperson fully, effectively and transparently

to enable and promote the exercise of its independent and impartial mandate.

We share the Security Council's concern about drug trafficking and organized crime and the growing challenge they pose to security and stability in Afghanistan and in other regions of the world.

Important progress has been made in advancing the women and peace and security agenda, but we believe that the Security Council should better ensure that resolutions, including those involving the mandates and renewals of peacekeeping operations, consistently integrate and substantively advance this issue. We are also convinced that the Council would also benefit from more frequent briefings by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the relevant special representatives of the Secretary-General.

Let me conclude by saying that Italy encourages the increasing engagement of the Security Council in addressing the plight of children affected by armed conflict. The adoption last July of resolution 1998 (2011), which includes mention of attacks against schools and hospitals and of attacks or threats of attacks against protected persons in relation to schools and hospitals, as a new listing criterion for the annexes of the Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict was an important step towards more comprehensive protection of children from grave violations of their human rights.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): I would first like to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Ambassador José Filipe Moraes Cabral, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/66/2). I also wish to thank Ambassador Peter Wittig and the German delegation for their preparation of the annual report's introduction during Germany's presidency of the Council in July.

Japan appreciates that the annual report of the Security Council continues to be improved and submitted to the General Assembly in line with presidential note 507, which, in 2010, was revised under our chairmanship of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (see S/2010/507). We believe that this report not only strengthens the ties between the General Assembly and the Security Council but also plays an important role in ensuring the accountability of the Council.

Japan stands today in an advantageous position, as we have observed the work of the Security Council from the inside as well as from the outside, having served most recently as a non-permanent member in 2009 and 2010. From that perspective, allow me to use this opportunity to highlight some of our insights and contributions with respect to the work of the Security Council.

To begin with, a crucial role of the Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, is to respond to various regional developments. In this regard, Japan, as the lead country for Afghanistan and Timor-Leste, advanced the Council's consideration of those countries by organizing consultations and drafting relevant resolutions and presidential statements. We have remained committed to those two countries, even after our departure from the Council, as a member of their respective Groups of Friends.

In the African region, Japan has contributed to the consolidation of peace and security in the Sudan. For example, Japan was the first donor to announce its assistance to the South Sudan referendum in January 2011, encouraging others to follow suit. Japan also dispatched its referendum observation mission to assist the conduct of a free and fair referendum. We believe the smooth transition to independence was ensured by the strong support extended by the Council. Recently, Japan announced its willingness to contribute an engineering contingent of its Self-Defense Forces to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Japan continues to take a multifaceted approach to assisting the Sudan and South Sudan through official development assistance, private sector assistance and peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities.

In Somalia, in addition to police support, Japan has helped to expand the logistical support of the African Union Mission in Somalia and contributed to the expansion of its forces. The eviction of Al-Shabaab forces from Mogadishu was an accomplishment that resulted from concerted efforts of the international community.

However, despite those accomplishments, there have been areas in which the Security Council has not met our expectations, including the uranium enrichment activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Yeonpyeong Island incident last autumn and the situation in Syria.

While regional affairs represent the substantive work of the Council, thematic debates are no less important in setting policy. In the field of peacebuilding, the presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/7) adopted under Japan's presidency in April 2010, has served as the basis for the growing recognition of the importance of the peacebuilding approach and of strengthening ties between the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Security Council. Japan, as Chair since January of the PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned, has continued to encourage greater cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council, even after our departure from the Council.

In the field of peacekeeping, as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, Japan helped to reinvigorate the Group's discussions by inviting troop- and police-contributing countries and relevant regional organizations to its meetings. Those discussions were compiled into four interim reports (S/2009/398, annex, S/2009/659, annex, S/2010/424, annex and S/2010/696, annex). They led to a better understanding of three issues — first, the gap between Security Council mandates and the capacity of peacekeeping operations, secondly, transition and exit strategies for peacekeeping missions and, thirdly, triangular cooperation among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

Japanese Self-Defense Forces have been on the ground in Haiti assisting the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the removal of debris and land-levelling for the construction of camps for internally displaced persons. Japan is also preparing to dispatch an engineer contingent to UNMISS, as I mentioned earlier.

With regard to non-proliferation issues, Japan has been actively engaged in the discussions in both the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006), which address nuclear issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, respectively. In the 1737 Committee, in particular, Japan served as Committee Chair and contributed to the establishment of the Panel of Experts in November last year.

With regard to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Japan supported the Committee's effort to compile matrices indicating the status of implementation of relevant resolutions by all Member States. After its term on the Council ended, Japan co-organized a seminar on non-proliferation and disarmament here in New York with colleagues from Turkey and Poland, stressing the importance of relevant Council actions such as resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 1929 (2010). We plan to organize a similar event this coming December as well.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the strong support and the significant accomplishments achieved by our outgoing colleagues from Gabon, Nigeria, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon. I would also like to wholeheartedly welcome the newly elected non-permanent members, namely, Togo, Morocco, Pakistan, Guatemala and Azerbaijan. I trust that the new members will continue the renewed focus on the Council's relationship with the General Assembly, by ensuring the transparency of the Council's work through information-sharing with non-members of the Council, as they work to strengthen the maintenance of international peace and security. Japan, as a continuing partner to the Security Council, will remain committed to the work of the Council and looks forward to the day we join it again.

Mr. Guerber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The first goal set down in the Charter of the United Nations, in Article 1, paragraph 1, is the maintenance of international peace and security. According to Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the primary responsibility for that mission is conferred on the Security Council, which must act on behalf of us all. The question of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council can be approached legally, philosophically and even morally. But whichever approach one chooses, the presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is a unique moment: the sole opportunity for a structured dialogue between the two organs on one of the most important goals of the United Nations. It is through that dialogue that all of us, the members of the Security Council and the members of the General Assembly together, are held accountable to the Charter of the Organization and its primary objective, that is, the quest for a world at peace.

At the outset, Switzerland would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this meeting. Our thanks also go to the Germany for its

considerable efforts to provide us with a serious basis for reflection for today's debate, as well as to Portugal for its comprehensive presentation of the work of the Security Council from summer 2010 to summer 2011. As a member of the group of five small nations (S-5), Switzerland aligns itself with the statement delivered a short while ago by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the group.

Hardly a year goes by without events of historic proportions. But it seems to us that the 12 months covered by the report before us (A/66/2) have seen the world shaken by unforeseeable events, with profound repercussions on peace and security. Some of them have degenerated into violent conflicts that have resulted in thousands of victims, while others have proven to be peaceful vectors of change. Some have stirred the Security Council to immediate and effective action, while others have escalated over months without an adequate response from the Council. Most people would agree that the changes we have witnessed over the past few months are irreversible and will have great repercussions on tomorrow's world.

Let us assume for a moment that we are all shareholders of a market-leading company in a certain industry. Let us also assume that our company has just gone through one of the most turbulent years in its existence. Most shareholders would undoubtedly expect the company's annual report to contain an analysis of how management successfully navigated that turbulent period. As a State Member of the Organization, we had the same expectations with regard to this year's annual report of the Security Council. Unfortunately, our expectations were not entirely met.

It will probably never be possible to turn the report of the Security Council, which is a product of consensus, into a thorough political analysis. The members of the S-5 have repeatedly made suggestions for making that document more relevant. First of all, the monthly assessments by the presidencies should be prepared in a timely manner and used to analyse the work of the Council. Such assessments could then be used to prepare the annual report. The report should systematically link thematic and cross-cutting issues with deliberations on regional situations. Finally, since most Member States sooner or later learn about the differences of opinion among Council members on sensitive political issues, the Council should mention its points of disagreement in a purely factual manner.

We understand that it may be difficult in as formal a setting as today's debate to hold an in-depth discussion on the Council's response to delicate matters relating to peace and security. That is why the S-5 has long called for informal venues in which views can be exchanged between the first draft of the report and its final adoption by the Security Council.

During the reporting period, the Security Council made a number of significant decisions and took relevant action on several fronts. Let me mention just a few examples.

First, in the run-up to the referendum on South Sudan, the Council adopted a strategic approach to its work on the Sudan by conducting field missions, making recommendations to the parties and taking concrete action. In our view, that attests to the Council's capacities in the area of preventive diplomacy. Regrettably, after the referendum, that positive momentum waned.

Secondly, with regard to Nepal, we commend the Council's successful termination of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Nepal, which was a special political mission. A series of recent events in the country gives us hope that lasting peace is within reach. We hope that the Council will draw the necessary lessons from that experience for its future work.

Thirdly, with regard to Libya, we would like to also congratulate the Council on its very rapid and unanimous referral of the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court. That is a positive first step in the fight against impunity.

Fourthly, on the issue of sexual violence, in adopting resolution 1960 (2010), the Council took a historic decision to establish a mechanism to more actively combat sexual violence in conflict. In many of the conflicts on the Council's agenda, the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war is as appalling as it is systematic. The new mechanism provided for in that resolution has yet to be implemented and linked with the Council's substantive work to implement the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) in all regions of the world.

Allow me to also mention some examples of areas in which the Council could improve the quality of its work.

We think that the Council should have acted much earlier in order to prevent the escalation of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and to protect its civilian population.

We sincerely regret that a Council member vetoed a draft resolution (S/2011/24) on illegal settlements in the Middle East.

We encourage the Council to return to the practice by which the expert groups of the sanctions committees report directly to the Security Council. Their reports should subsequently be made public.

The President returned to the Chair.

Finally, with regard to working methods, we welcome the now-established practice of holding briefings by the Department of Political Affairs as a means of enhancing the Council's preventive role. Nevertheless, we must note that the Council's working methods have evolved very slowly and that the implementation of the measures listed in presidential note 507 is still far too modest.

In conclusion, allow me to thank all members of the Security Council for their unfailing commitment to shouldering their heavy workload every day. We greatly appreciate their efforts. We thank them for the transparency recently shown in the Council and encourage them to further improve their working methods.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to take part in today's debate on the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/66/2).

At the outset, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Portugal for his statement as President of the Council. We are pleased to note the efforts made to increase the analytical component of the report, in line with the requests made by my delegation in previous such debates. We encourage efforts made to follow that path in the future and to include more qualitative information.

Spain attaches great importance to positive interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The interaction and cooperation between those two main organs of the United Nations should be improved through greater transparency and accountability, which would promote the adoption of more useful methods to prevent and eliminate threats to international peace and security.

The United Nations Charter provides guidelines for interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Article 15 and Article 24, paragraph 3, provide for the submission by the Council of annual reports as well as important special reports to the General Assembly.

Among the matters addressed by the Security Council, cross-cutting issues are of special relevance to the Assembly. Issues such as the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation and disarmament, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, children and armed conflict, women and armed conflict, peacebuilding, security sector reform, the disarmament of ex-combatants and the prevention of conflict are of special interest, since the Assembly is responsible for various aspects of each of them. Greater coordination and interaction between the Council and the Assembly in dealing with all of those issues would be desirable and could include the presentation of specific reports in order to make the work of the United Nations more effective.

It would also be desirable to have greater transparency in the Council's work and greater participation by Member States in its activities and decisions, especially on those issues that directly affect them. My delegation believes that open meetings of the Council should be the norm, as non-members would then have an opportunity to be better informed on its activities. In recent years, much progress has been made, but together we must do even more.

It would also be desirable that the Council's debates more often be opened to statements by States, or made on behalf of a group of States, that have a particular interest in the issues under discussion. There should also be greater interaction and cooperation among countries contributing troops to peacekeeping operations authorized by the Council. My delegation believes it extremely important to take into account the viewpoints of contributors in adopting mandates and in extending operations, which happens to a certain extent.

Spain appreciates the important role that the Council plays in maintaining international peace and security, and believes that it should strengthen its activities in the area of preventive diplomacy before international crises arise, and should be able to act

more decisively when there are conflicts. That is fully in line with the increasing importance of tools such as mediation, which the President of the General Assembly, with good judgement and to Spain's satisfaction, chose as the main theme of the current session. Increasing interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council in that area in particular is advisable so as to fulfil the purpose of the Charter in maintaining international peace and security.

Ms. Anderson (Ireland): I welcome the fact that a separate debate has been scheduled this year on the annual report of the Security Council (A/66/2). That allows members of the Organization a fuller opportunity to comment and offer feedback on the work of the Council during the period under review.

In terms of both composition and agenda, the performance of the Security Council in 2011 has a particularly strong claim on our attention. The composition is noteworthy. As one commentator put it last year, by any standards, the Council in 2011 could be the strongest group of United Nations and global stakeholders ever assembled on the Council. In addition to dealing with the ongoing heavy agenda, that high-profile Council has had to confront the tectonic shift of the Arab Spring.

It will be important that, at an appropriate time, the United Nations membership as a whole engage in serious collective reflection on lessons to draw from such momentous months in the lifetime of the Security Council. It is probably still too early for such considered reflection, which, in any event, is not the purpose of today's debate. However, we owe it to the importance of the issues at stake to ensure that an in-depth analysis occurs before too much time has passed.

In commenting on the report before us today, I shall limit myself to three topics. From the vantage point of a non-member of the Council, I would wish to say a word about the experience of participation in open thematic debates. I have a short comment on two substantive areas of Security Council engagement, namely, peacebuilding and the responsibility to protect.

As the report makes clear, the Security Council is scheduling more thematic debates, with participation open to the membership as a whole. We are conscious that opinions vary about just how relevant and worthwhile such debates are. On the one hand, there is a clear view that the Council must recognize the increasingly complex security challenges of the twenty-first century and adapt its deliberations accordingly. But there are also those who are concerned about a possible blurring of the dividing line between the business of the General Assembly and the Security Council, or that voice fears about a dissipation of focus by the Council.

Ireland is firmly in the camp of those who see the necessity for a more sophisticated and multifaceted appreciation of the twenty-first century security challenges. We applaud the decisions to hold thematic debates that examine, for example, the interdependence between security and development or the security dimension of climate change. Nor would we ever view debates on women, peace and security as a soft focus add-on to the hard-core work of the Security Council. The role of women is central to both the problem and the potential solution of multiple crises worldwide.

However, as a delegation that has spoken in a number of Security Council thematic debates in the course of the year, we have a concern about how such debates can be made more meaningful. Like others, Ireland is selective as to the debates in which it participates. We choose to speak when we may have a particularly strong interest or a particular experience that we wish to share. The hope and intention, of course, are that our contribution can bring some added value.

There are clearly some benefits to participation. First, there is the opportunity to register a national viewpoint. Secondly, the statements remain on the record for those who may wish to trawl through them at a later date. Thirdly, the number of Member States contributing to a debate may, in itself, send an important message as to the level of engagement and concern on a particular issue.

None of that is negligible, but is it enough? It has to be said that the interactivity element in such debates is close to zero. The outcome document is typically agreed by Security Council members in advance of the debate. By the time non-members come to speak in the Chamber, it is highly unlikely that Security Council members at the senior level are present to hear them.

While we all need to have a realistic acceptance of practical constraints, I think it important that non-members of the Security Council avail of today's debate to send a signal that we wish for serious consideration of how arrangements for open thematic

debates can be made more meaningful. It was very encouraging that that point was clearly flagged in the interventions this morning on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the group of five small nations.

A coherent and effective approach to peacebuilding that draws on civilian capacities and places national ownership at its heart is an area of growing importance to Member States, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations. I was honoured to co-facilitate the 2010 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. I welcome the view expressed by Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins that that process generated significant momentum, which has reinvigorated the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission and focused them on improving the impact in the field.

One of the key recommendations of our report is the need "to create a new dynamic between a more forthcoming Security Council and a better performing Peacebuilding Commission" (*A/64/868, p. 4*). The annual report demonstrates that the Security Council is indeed showing itself to be somewhat more forthcoming. Open thematic debates on peacebuilding were held during the reporting period; the Chair of the Commission presented its annual report; and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations delivered a joint statement to the Council.

However, more needs to be done if the potential added value of the Peacebuilding Commission is to be translated into reality. The Council could, and should, be more active, more creative and more demanding in its relations with a Commission that now has an expanded agenda of six countries. The steps that the Council should take include seeking input into resolutions, mandate renewal and statements regarding countries that are on the Commission's agenda, and the participation, as appropriate, of country-configuration Chairs in relevant Security Council Working Groups, such as the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

A particular onus to invigorate and develop Council-Commission relations falls to those members of the Peacebuilding Commission that are also Security Council members. Of course, the General Assembly, together with the Council, is a parent of the Commission. As well as advocating a more forthcoming attitude by the Security Council, the General Assembly should itself seek to have more meaningful input into peacebuilding policy, not least because it can draw on the experience of the full membership of the United Nations, particularly in the area of civilian capacity.

The past year has been a significant one for the responsibility to protect doctrine. Benghazi provided a dramatic illustration of what that means. We all recall the gross and systematic violations of human rights committed by the regime in Libya against its own civilian population and the widespread condemnation of that repression, including by the League of Arab States, the African Union, the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations.

Following years of debate on the doctrine and faced with the imminent threat of slaughter in Benghazi, the Security Council was moved to act. The inclusion, for the first time, of a reference to responsibility to protect in a Chapter VII resolution provided the high-water mark so far this doctrine.

Subsequently, there was disagreement among Council members on whether the mandate set out in resolution 1973 (2011) had been exceeded, in particular regarding the protection of civilians clause. The case of Libya, as with any intervention in a complex situation, offers lessons to be learned. But it is imperative that the principle of the responsibility to protect and the progress made in relation to its application be safeguarded. A working consensus on the implementation of the responsibility to protect must be established so that, should the need arise, the Security Council will again be in a position to protect innocent civilians.

It was clear during the General Assembly debate in July that regional organizations can play a significant role in relation to the responsibility to protect. As incoming Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) from 1 January, Ireland will seek to support the implementation of the responsibility to protect agenda in an OSCE framework, including in relation to important preventive work and the building up of States' capacities to protect their own civilians.

Never more so than now, the Security Council bears a huge responsibility. But as noted at the outset, in 2011 at least, that responsibility rests on broad shoulders. Much is expected of the broad-shouldered

Council. We urge further efforts to meet the needs and hopes of these tumultuous times.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin my statement by thanking the Permanent Representative of Portugal for the comprehensive introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011 (A/66/2). I also express my delegation's appreciation to the representative of Germany for the introduction to the report prepared in his capacity as President of the Council for the month of July. Likewise, I congratulate you, Mr. President, for your decision to decouple the consideration of the agenda item on the report of the Security Council from the item "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". That simple step will enable further examination of the Council's work by the Assembly, without ignoring the natural relationship between the two subjects, and will focus our efforts on what we hope will be a fruitful analysis.

The presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is highly important and useful, due to the numerous relevant issues relating to international peace and security and because it provides a complete record of the Council's work. Likewise, it is a way of providing greater transparency to its working methods and an opportunity to identify the areas of work or procedures that possibly need improvement.

In that context, I reiterate my country's interest in achieving greater transparency in the Council's work and functions; not only because that would facilitate communication and dialogue with Member States, but also as a possible way to strengthen the image of the United Nations.

My delegation is convinced that there is room for this report to evolve and refocus to become a more substantive document reflecting the various positions of its members in relation to the highly sensitive situations and issues that it considers. Clearly, the report is a good record of the meetings and subject matter addressed by the Council; but it does not seem to be an appropriate instrument for understanding the development or evolution of a subject, and is even less so when trying to understand the reasoning behind an action undertaken.

Clearly, major, not minor, progress has been made in recent years. We therefore believe that we should not be complacent in that regard. There is nothing to prevent further progress in the right direction. In that context, we attach due importance to the report reflecting the public meetings held by the Council, which is not done today. Similarly, we believe that coordinated work among the Security Council and other bodies of the Organization and regional groups and the opportunity to listen to Special Representatives in a timely manner and hold interactive debates and consultations are of fundamental importance and must be stressed.

That type of work would make it possible to not only improve the quality and speed of responding to crisis situations on the Council's agenda, but would also make it possible to provide a more fluid and fruitful exchange of information which in turn, would allow the Council to become a stronger tool for preventing potential conflicts.

This is why I would like to highlight the unprecedented initiative of Brazil, whose Permanent Representative, at the end of Brazil's presidency of the Council, invited Member States to an informal dialogue in order to report on the main events during its presidency. That was undoubtedly a concrete step towards greater transparency. Chile regrets that it was not repeated.

In that regard, I would also like to highlight the initiative by the Colombian delegation. During its presidency of the Council in April, Colombia convened a high-level open debate on the situation in Haiti (see, S/PV.6510). That is the type of exercise we are referring to when we speak of coordinated work with the participation of other relevant actors in order to better understand the Council's decision-making processes. Action of that type would make it possible to promote a comprehensive global vision where the interests and concerns of the various actors involved are known to the Security Council, which can then to a greater or lesser extent, include those in the decisions it adopts.

I take the opportunity of that reference to Haiti to highlight the annual dialogue and the work of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to seriously address, despite the many positions represented, various issues on the international agenda that have come to the attention of the Security Council.

My delegation noted with satisfaction that the concept of the responsibility to protect has been included in the deliberations of the Council, as well as included in resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011) in the case of Libya. However, the implementation of those resolutions also leaves lessons for us to learn. In that regard, Chile believes that the terms of a mandate should be very carefully studied when it is created to authorize action, such as in the aforementioned case. The mandate must be clear, precise and for a limited duration. If it is not, it will open the way to undesired situations and, moreover, could awaken reticence among some members of the Council towards using the concept and adapting it to a specific situation.

Finally, we are convinced that ongoing adequate and fluid communications between the Security Council and the General Assembly that respect their individual purviews is fundamental in order to achieve the maintenance of international peace and security in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I cannot conclude without acknowledging the work of the Security Council in an increasingly complex international context in which peace and security sometimes seem difficult to achieve. At the same time, we also see hope in the movements and signs appearing that favour democracy and the rule of law. It is precisely these that should be the incentives driving us to seek out new mechanisms enabling us to achieve a comprehensive vision and more transparent management of the Council's work.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The report of the Security Council (A/66/2) that we are considering today merits special attention for its implications for international peace and security.

We endorse the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that it is necessary to democratize international relations and transform the unfair system of global power relationships, which is reflected in the structure and agenda of the United Nations. To that end, we have repeatedly requested that the Security Council not continue to usurp functions that belong to other organs of the United Nations system and that the countries that make up the General Assembly should have real impact on world affairs.

Today the slow and growing decrepitude of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is understood. The voices around the world declaring that the Security Council, as the expression of nations' sovereign will, has collapsed are representative and getting louder. This organ is marked by a clear contradiction: it is supposed to defend the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, but it frequently damages them.

Today we are a very long way from enjoying the peace and security to which humankind aspires. Rather than becoming more democratic, in recent years the elitism of the United Nations has become more pronounced. The champions of war and interventionism are working furiously to weaken the role of the General Assembly, which represents every Government in the world, and to monopolize and securitize every item on the United Nations agenda.

Venezuela advocates for a complete overhaul and democratization of the United Nations, with the aim of ensuring that it represents the aspirations of all the peoples of the world. This is how President Hugo Chávez Frías put it in his message to the General Assembly read by Minister for Foreign Affairs Nicolás Maduro Moros on 27 September:

> "A crucial and decisive first step towards restructuring the United Nations would be to eliminate the category of permanent member along with the right to veto in the Security Council. Likewise, the decision-making power of the General Assembly must be democratically maximized. A comprehensive review of the Charter of the United Nations is also urgently required, with the aim of drafting a new Charter." (*A/66/PV.29, p. 5*)

It is worrying that the report we are considering today highlights the expansion of peacekeeping operations mandates, responsibility for which belongs to a large extent to the General Assembly. It is also worrying that peacekeeping operations' mandates include actions in the countries where those operations are conducted that interfere in matters that are in the purview of national public institutions, such as reform of the electoral, judicial and public security sectors, among others.

The report emphasizes that a large percentage of the Security Council's activities take place in Africa. It should be noted that those activities focus on clearly military matters in which the "mediation efforts" of the United Nations are not infrequently conducted on behalf of one of the parties or to appease the selfish interests of imperialist Powers. It is worrying that the report ignores numerous recommendations and concerns that have been expressed by a majority of the countries that make up the General Assembly and whose opinions have been presented in many open debates.

So long as it is the Security Council that defines threats to international peace and security and uses Chapter VII of the Charter arbitrarily, we will continue to see an increasingly insecure world. We believe that General Assembly resolutions should be binding, that every country should be obliged to comply with them and that this organ should exercise full responsibility in matters of international peace and security. The Security Council must not continue to tailor its efforts to suit certain members so that they can carry out their ambitions to develop their expansionist interests in the countries of the South — Syria, Libya, Iran, Côte d'Ivoire, the Sudan and Yemen being just a few examples. Meanwhile, what has the Council done to stop the atrocities that Israel perpetrates on the Palestinian people?

We recognize the importance of the democratic demonstrations that have emerged in North Africa and the Arab world. Venezuelans support the legitimate aspirations of all peoples who seek to attain their sovereign human rights and enjoy democracy, freedom and independence. The people are the masters of their own destinies. The continuing outside interference by imperialist Powers in the internal demonstrations and protests of countries of the South must therefore be rejected. It is deplorable that some of the warring parties are being encouraged from the outside, instead of the promotion of an inclusive, sovereign dialogue that enables those peoples to find peaceful solutions to their differences themselves. It is deplorable that instead of promoting the quest for peace and understanding between peoples, civil wars and fratricidal confrontations are being fomented.

The influence that the big transnational economic and financial corporations have on decision-making in various organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is growing. Indeed, the imperialist wars of today are being privatized. Some countries represented on the Security Council promote harmful resolutions that support those interests.

The democratization that the United Nations system needs today must, as President Chávez said, involve a complete overhaul of the Organization. Therefore, it is imperative that we increasingly build a broad alliance between peoples and Governments so that they can work towards the democratization of the international system.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to commend you on your efforts to render the work of the General Assembly as effective and successful as possible.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since the General Assembly adopted resolutions 2864 (XXVI) and 2991 (XXVII) in 1971 and 1972, respectively, Member States have been seeking, through ideas, recommendations and proposals, to ensure that the work of the executive body reaches higher levels of effectiveness, in accordance with the rules and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the expectations of the international community. Since then, the debate on the report of the Security Council has focused on the ways to attain that goal. Despite numerous contributions and the array of resolutions adopted in this regard, there is still a great need for improvement. My delegation would like to stress the following aspects of the matter.

First is the need to improve the reporting process and the methodology. It goes without saying that the report of the Security Council has been improved in some aspects. The established practice of interaction between the President of the Council and the general membership of the United Nations has, for four years now, definitely been one of those welcomed and lauded improvements, as was mentioned in the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We also think that, despite their heavy schedules, both the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council should meet and interact more often during the session in order to make sure that concerns and proposals from the Member States are taken into consideration during the drafting

of the report, and as a means to ensure constant interaction between the two bodies.

Moreover, we have noticed the persisting lack of a real analytical approach in the drafting of the report. Its content has remained a mostly descriptive narrative, which clearly makes the report a good source of information about the Council's meetings and outcomes but certainly does not reflect the real dynamics in the Council and the context in which the deliberations were conducted and the decisions, if any, were taken. Indeed, what Member States would like to see is a report that addresses the core of the Council's work, its internal methods of dealing with sensitive issues and its attempts to solve them with a view to preserving peace and security in the world.

In fact, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/193 in 1996, Member States proposed specific steps and ways to contribute to the improvement of the report of the Security Council. In paragraph 3 of that resolution, the Assembly

> "Encourages the Security Council, in the submission of its reports to the General Assembly, to provide in a timely manner a substantive, analytical and material account of its work".

We still believe that there is room for improvement in this regard.

Secondly, it is necessary to address more broadly the issues and events marking the reporting period. That cannot be dissociated from the need to infuse some analytical spirit into the report of the Council. In my delegation's view, the report cannot be reliable, precise and useful if it maintains its current body and structure. In fact, in addition to the traditional predominant issues, we all know that each year is marked by specific events. The Council, as a guarantor of international peace and security, is required to deal efficiently with those issues and give them adequate time and effort.

The report on the Council's activities should reflect that reality. Thus a rethinking of its content and components is recommended to make it relevant for a specific reporting period, rather than enumerating the same topics on an equal basis and in the same order.

Thirdly, with regard to the Council's attention to and performance on some of the issues on its agenda, all Member States would agree that the volume and number of issues that the Council is dealing with increases every single year. That constitutes an additional challenge. Some conflicts are 60 years old or more. Some tensions arise here and there, and some new challenges suddenly appear in different regions of the world. All of these issues need appropriate attention and a great deal of responsibility and dedication to the values of the Organization.

Many of us would recognize that the Council has shown great effectiveness regarding, for example, African issues and conflicts, but it has remained paralyzed by an array of mutually exclusive interests that have made the Arab-Israeli conflict a permanent, unsolved issue on its agenda. It remains a source of great frustration and disappointment for the whole region that the Council has been unable to overcome its internal differences and restricted interests to increase its involvement in this issue and bring the required and very much needed boost to the whole peace process.

The Council's effectiveness is a common concern for all of us. It is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that the Council is taking decisions and examining the issues under its mandate in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in a manner that satisfies its ultimate goal, which is the maintenance of peace and security all over the world.

My delegation believes that some areas require more attention and efficiency and has made some comments and proposals in that regard. Those areas should not overshadow the several where the Council has made improvements. The interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council requires yearly evaluation and an ongoing quest for improvement. The reporting system and the content discussed under today's agenda item could certainly be very helpful in reaching that goal if the constructive proposals and recommendations of the Member States are taken into account forwarding the future.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome this debate as a critical opportunity for communication between the Security Council and the Member States. We appreciate the efforts made by the delegation of Germany in producing the annual report (A/66/2), and we thank the representative of Portugal for presenting it to the Assembly this morning.

As a member of the group of five small nations (S-5), we align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier today by the representative of Costa Rica.

Our point of departure in considering the annual report is the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that the Council carries out its work on behalf of all Member States. Given the absence of other opportunities, this debate should in principle be the best moment for a dialogue on the performance of the Council and the perception of it by the wider membership.

At the same time, the report in its current format and the way in which this debate is held are not conducive to a genuine dialogue. That is why the S-5 group has made suggestions to improve both the process of preparing and then discussing the report, and we have engaged with Council members that have a special role to play in this respect. We are of course aware of the limitations of this exercise and of the difficult discussions within the Council itself about the adoption of the report. We view our efforts during the past year as a work in progress and will think of options for the future. Those include the possibility not only of discussing the report in other, more informal, formats but also of having an additional basis for discussing its work, since the self-assessment of any international body will always be a limited undertaking. We look forward to continued support and interest from Council members in this respect. On the actual content of the report, we would like to offer the following comments.

Of particular interest to us, obviously, is the way in which the report deals with the issue of working methods. The report is the perfect place for the Council to report on developments in that area, to illustrate its ownership of the issue and to create a record on that subject. But the report only mentions that the Council made its debate and consultations more interactive — which we welcome. There is also a rather cryptic statement that the Council aimed at increasing the transparency of its work — indeed a key concern of the S-5 — without, however, further elaborating on it. We are left wondering whether there are other measures that were taken, but not reflected in the report — a rather curious state of affairs in an exercise aimed at transparency.

We see no indication of results emanating from the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, just a very generic statement on the role that presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) plays in the practice of the Council. In particular, there is no reference to efforts by the Council to engage in systematic implementation in that respect.

We continue to miss a systematic effort to link up the thematic discussions with the consideration of country situations in the Council. That seems indeed part of a problem that goes far beyond the actual format of the report. Thematic discussions are, for the most part, dealt with as stand-alone topics, rather than as conceptual debates, which should provide substantive and essential input for the Council's work on country situations.

Finally, like others, we believe that a more accurate record should be established by having those discussions on which the Council did in the end not find agreement reported on in a very factual manner. That could easily be done by giving equal weight to all the opinions expressed, without any judgment attached to them. We understand that this was discussed in the process of drafting the report. We hope that this effort can be successful in the preparation of the next report.

On the substance of the work of the Council, we certainly congratulate the Council for its work done in connection with the situation in South Sudan. The successful holding of a referendum and the subsequent admission of that new country as a Member of the United Nations illustrate how effective the Council can be when it is unified in its approach, even in very complex situations.

We also commend the Council for it unanimous decision to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court. That is a strong expression of the Council's willingness to fight impunity, if indeed it is followed up by concrete action to give the necessary diplomatic support to the Court in carrying out its work. In this respect, a more systematic and more comprehensive discussion of the Council's practice vis-à-vis the Court will be necessary in the future in order to generate ownership within the Council of referrals to the Court. The financial implications are only one, albeit important, aspect of this discussion.

Thirdly, we welcome the continued progress made in the Council's practice with respect to the sanctions regime established in resolution 1267 (1999), especially the work done by Ombudsperson Kimberly Prost. Late as those measures have come, they are certainly essential to putting the Council's action on the right track and to preventing lasting damage to its

record with respect to the observance of established international standards of due process.

While the Council reacted quickly to authorize the use of force in Libya, it has proven deadlocked on far less dramatic decisions, in particular on the situation in Syria, which is reflected under "other matters" in the report. In this respect we note in particular that two vetoes were cast in connection with a situation where the High Commissioner for Human Rights had indicated the need for an investigation into serious allegations of crimes against humanity. That reaffirms our belief, reflected in the S-5 papers, that rules governing the use of the veto would be of the essence. We also deplore the use of the veto in connection with a resolution on Israeli settlement policy, which ran clearly counter to the stated views of a vast majority of the United Nations membership.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We thank you, Mr. President, for the initiative to hold separate debates on the report of the Security Council and on the reform of the Council. It will facilitate fuller consideration of each item.

We thank the presidency of Portugal for presenting the Council's report (A/66/2) to the General Assembly. We also commend the Permanent Representative of Germany for important work on the report during Germany's presidency of the Security Council in July. The present report of the Council is an overview of its work, meetings, correspondence and decisions. Like earlier ones, the report is an annual compendium of all deliberations in the Security Council. The basic merit of the report is its reference value and attention to detail. While it may not rival international bestsellers in readability, its importance for Governments, researchers, academia and interested members of the public is undeniable.

Before discussing the report, I would like to refer to resolution 65/315, on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which welcomed the improvement in the quality of the annual report and encouraged the Security Council to make further efforts in that regard. We believe that the Security Council can lay down its own benchmarks for improvement in reporting by, inter alia, describing challenges, assessing actions and analyzing the decision-making processes. That will qualitatively improve the reports in the future. Similarly, the Security Council should also submit special reports to the General Assembly, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The Charter requirement for the Security Council to prepare a report and present it to the General Assembly has a lot of significance. In the discharge of its duties as the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council acts on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations. By presenting the report to the General Assembly, the Security Council offers its work for review by the entire membership.

The responsiveness of the Security Council to the Member States can be measured by its openness and transparency. In this context, our delegation welcomes the greater number of public meetings and open debates held during the reporting period. That trend should be augmented by more meaningful exchange with non-members, especially those States directly affected by a Council decision.

Transparency in the decision-making process is another area that merits close attention. It is a widely held view that decisions are taken mostly behind the scenes by a few major players. Such decisions, accordingly, lack transparency and inclusiveness. The transparency of the Security Council is also related, to a large extent, to improvement in its working methods and comprehensive reform of the Council itself. We will encourage introspection by the Council to improve its working methods, in the spirit of its presidential note contained in document S/2010/507. The inclusion of a chapter on working methods in the annual report is a step in the right direction.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the Security Council is an important element in reviewing its work. We believe that the Council has shown varying degrees of effectiveness at different stages of conflicts. In terms of addressing ongoing conflict situations, the Council has been effective in establishing peacekeeping mandates and ensuring that they are backed by timely logistic support. In this context, determination and resolve within the Council have been backed up by troop-contributing countries' commitments and an efficient Secretariat. This triangular relationship should be acknowledged and strengthened further.

The Council's effectiveness in preventing relapses into conflict is also growing with its increasing reliance on integrated mandates, whereby

peacebuilding efforts are dovetailed with peacekeeping missions' drawdown and exit strategies. The gradual consolidation of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture has equipped the Council with vital tools for handling the challenges related to possible relapses into conflict.

The Security Council's effectiveness in preventing conflicts has elicited considerable criticism. We see no change in this perception. Unresolved disputes breed discontent and any unforeseen spark can ignite violent conflict. This is particularly important in cases of inter-State disputes. Major unresolved issues, including the dispute concerning Jammu and Kashmir, have been awaiting settlement on the agenda of the Security Council for decades. Preventive strategies for addressing longstanding disputes should feature greater recourse to mediation and pacific settlement under Chapter VI of the Charter, with a view to addressing the root causes of conflicts. Greater reliance on preventive diplomacy on the part of the Council would augur well for international peace and security.

Acting on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations, the Security Council is accountable to the General Assembly. The concept of accountability and the imperative of improving the relationship between the Assembly and the Council are the principles underlying Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter. That has also been the spirit of my statement today.

Mr. Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe): Zimbabwe welcomes the opportunity to participate in the debate on the report of the Security Council (A/66/2). I join other speakers before me in thanking Ambassador Moraes Cabral, Permanent Representative of Portugal and President of the Security Council for November, for presenting to the General Assembly the report of the Council for the period 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011.

The Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership as the primary organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. The General Assembly must therefore assess whether the Council has been effective in maintaining international peace and security and whether it has reflected the views and interests of the entire membership.

The Council has been most effective, in recent years, in addressing internal crises and conflicts, mostly in Africa. Peacekeeping has been utilized to good use in several complex crises. But other situations have been grossly neglected for years. In our view, much more must be done to prevent conflicts from erupting in the first place, and to prevent relapses once a situation has been stabilized. In that regard, it is important to address the underlying causes of conflicts and to more proactively pursue a comprehensive approach focusing on peacebuilding, peace sustenance and development. The Council's actions must be conducted with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States concerned. No temporizing on this fundamental tenet will do, and no justification may be wantonly conjured up.

The ability of the Council to act effectively and responsibly in future will provide important reassurance for the international community that its concerns in the area of security are being adequately addressed. This not only calls for political will and unity on issues, but for the perception that the decisions taken by the Council largely reflect the concerns and aspirations of the general membership. In our view, greater democratization of the existing order, particularly as reflected in a reformed membership of the Council itself, increased transparency in action and the coordination of different ideas, interest and sensitivities, are essential for that endeavour to succeed.

My delegation views with concern the Council's tendency to take decisions on issues that impinge on the wider membership of the United Nations without taking into account the views of the States concerned. We call on the Council to ensure the provision of adequate opportunity for the views of the wider membership to be heard on important issues through transparent mechanisms, such as open debates of the Council, before decisions on such issues are taken. We hold the view that the Council can only succeed in implementing its actions when its decisions are taken after a rigorous process of consultations with the wider membership.

We are concerned that the Council is not dealing directly with some of the major conflicts and threats to international peace and security. The implementation of some resolutions is actively pursued while others are ignored. There is inaction even in the face of the most obvious acts of aggression. On the other hand, there is proaction, even interference, in the internal affairs of sovereign States, even where there is clearly no threat to international peace and security. The Council must

never allow itself to be swayed by the particular interests of any of its members.

We are of the view that the provisions for the pacific settlement of disputes remain grossly underutilized by the Security Council. In contrast, there is a dangerous tendency to have recourse, too often and too soon, to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, including sanctions and enforcement action, even on matters that would be better resolved through multilateral cooperation. We hope that the United Nations will not be put in a position of having to participate in precipitous interventions by misuse of the concept of responsibility to protect. We urge the Security Council not to abuse the notion of the responsibility to protect in order to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States. The limits of the use of force have been fully revealed to all in the recent past.

Moreover, we wonder who will police the implementers of the responsibility to protect and who will protect the victims or answer for the collateral damage that may arise from the implementation of this nascent principle. We call on the Secretary-General to jealously protect the Charter of the United Nations and resist all attempts to abuse the Organization to promote the narrow goals of any Member or group of Members of the United Nations.

We reiterate our concern over the Council's encroachment on the mandates, powers and jurisdiction of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by addressing issues that fall within the competence of the latter organs. We are also concerned about the Council's increased involvement in the areas of norm-setting and establishing definitions that fall within the purview of the General Assembly. In our view, this upsets the delicate balance envisaged under the Charter and jeopardizes the overall effectiveness of the United Nations system. Such a consideration of issues may, in fact, serve to exacerbate certain fraught situations.

Chapter VIII of the Charter envisages situations where the Security Council makes use of regional organizations for their proximity to and knowledge of a particular conflict. Regional organizations have become important components in the maintenance of international peace and security, as they are better placed to deal with peace and security challenges in their respective regions. For the effective functioning of the United Nations system, it is important that the Organization and its agencies be able to delegate responsibilities and, in a timely fashion, provide the necessary resources where required in support of the efforts of regional organizations. We strongly believe that regional organizations should be supported and not undermined or sidelined by the Security Council.

It is our inescapable and considered conclusion that the true effectiveness of the Council and respect for its decisions can only be forthcoming if it is judged by the larger membership to be representative of all interests. A look at the items on the Council's agenda reveals that the majority of issues under its consideration pertain to the developing world, and in particular to Africa. Yet, Africa's representation on the Council is a mere fifth of the membership. We do not wish it upon ourselves to believe that the United Nations was established to discipline Africa.

My delegation welcomes several notable improvements in the working methods of the Council, including meetings with troop-contributing countries and regular briefings by envoys. No arm of the United Nations can function well under a cloak of suspicion. As the only legitimate source of the use of force on an international scale, the Security Council needs to cultivate respect and probity among all Members of the United Nations. It must not be seen as the irresistible disciplinarian for any particular region of the world.

Mr. Beshta (Ukraine): At the outset, let me express my gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, the Permanent Representative of Portugal, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/66/2). We also appreciate the thrust of Portugal's Security Council presidency in terms of greater transparency, as well as the engagement of non-members of this body.

Received wisdom has it that every year under review by the Security Council is more challenging than the previous one. If there is a need for a case study to test this trend, the period covered by this year's report is right to the point. There was hardly a juncture over the past two decades that did not abound with traditional, new and emerging challenges to international peace and security, or with transformations of the shifting geopolitical landscapes of whole regions. While it is rather early to aim at a credible assessment of the Security Council's

performance in the face of those challenges, particularly as some of them are still evolving, I would like to try to outline at least some preliminary conclusions and possible lessons learned from Ukraine's perspective.

Clear among them, in our view, is the need to enhance the Council's engagement in conflict prevention and mediation. My country considers those two instruments to be indispensable items in the Security Council's tool kit. That approach was one of the main drivers of Ukraine's term in the Council as an independent State, from 2000 to 2001.

That is why we welcome strengthening the prognostic component of the Council's work. In this respect, a briefing on new challenges to security, to be held later this month, comes to mind. We also recognize that the so-called horizon-scanning exercise is firmly back on the Council's agenda.

Yet, my delegation is not sure how strongly we can justify keeping non-members of the Council largely in the dark with respect to issues discussed with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in monthly consultations. To our mind, regular, substantive open updates by the Security Council presidencies would be equally beneficial to Council members and the wider membership of the United Nations. The first step in that direction could be to shed some light on the concept of DPA monthly briefings mentioned in the introduction to the report.

Ukraine welcomes an ever stronger thematic edge to the Council's agenda. In our view, that tendency bodes well for the aim of ensuring a vibrant and proactive United Nations by capturing the most challenging and far-reaching trends in international relations and bringing them to the Chamber of the Security Council.

At the same time, one has to be cautious not to overburden the Security Council with matters of a cross-cutting nature that ought to be tackled with added value in other United Nations forums, first of all here in the General Assembly. In that regard, the main criteria should be the respective prerogatives and comparative advantages of the various United Nations settings, primarily the Security Council and General Assembly.

Let me briefly touch upon two general issues where the leadership of the Security Council could only benefit from greater involvement by the wider United Nations membership.

As an active contributor of military and police personnel, Ukraine cannot but welcome the fact that United Nations peacekeeping continues to figure prominently on the Council's agenda. In that context, thematic open debates — the latest on peacekeeping having been held in August under India's presidency (see S/PV.6603) — remain crucial for sustaining positive momentum. We also take positive note of some fresh practical elements, such as increased consultations with force commanders and expanding the use of videoconferencing, which allows first-hand operational information to be received in a more interactive real-time manner.

Yet, there is still a lot of room for improvement. In that connection, I refer primarily to bridging the gap between Security Council members and troop- and police-contributing countries — more simply put, between the architects of mandates and those who implement them. During a debate on this issue in the Fourth Committee a few weeks ago, some major police and troop contributors pointed to a number of instances of the lack of transparency in decision-making, especially in the context of crisis situations. Our own experience, in particular in reinforcing the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, confirms that view. That is why we would like to encourage leading Council delegations from relevant countries to avoid situations where police and troop contributors are presented with a fait accompli, learning about resolutions that direct affect their personnel or assets on the very day of their adoption.

We also see merit in examining ways of reviewing the practice and timing of decisions that address the extension of mandates of peacekeeping operations, including inter-mission support mechanisms. Taking such decisions well in advance, whenever feasible, would help troop and police contributors to bring new or extended mandates in line with their national legislation, thus facilitating timely deployments.

My delegation would like to encourage greater coherence and openness on the part of the Council in addressing the critical issue of capability gaps in United Nations peacekeeping operations. In particular, the Council's expert-level meetings with the Secretariat to address the shortage of major enablers could have

greater practical impact if they involved the very contributors of those assets.

Turning to peacebuilding, we are pleased with the closer cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council is steadily making greater use of the unique experience and advantages of the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configurations. The first-ever joint statement to the Council by the Commission Chairs is one such example. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission Organizational Committee and one of its current Vice-Chairs, Ukraine supports all initiatives aimed at furthering that synergy. An example of such initiatives is the idea of having Commission Chairs participate in the Council's working groups, such as the Working Groups on Peacekeeping Operations or on Children and Armed Conflict, when a specific country is concerned.

Much of what has been achieved by the Security Council can be attributed to the input of its rotating members. We are strongly in favour of investigating and formalizing the most effective ways of channelling and maximizing the benefit from the contribution of non-permanent members. My delegation welcomes the newly elected members of the Council and looks forward to progress in that important area.

Ukraine has always been an advocate of a strong United Nations, with the Security Council as its principal organ, entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That commitment will further guide my country's activity in the United Nations, including the possibility of our election to the Security Council for the period 2016-2017.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): My delegation joins today's debate with mixed feelings. We see some encouraging steps in some areas. For instance, we find it useful to separate discussions on the Security Council's annual report from those on Council reform in general, including its working methods. We thank Portugal for that initiative.

However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. While this year's pudding is not completely inedible, it remains disappointingly bland. Much has been said about how the Council's report could be more analytical. It should be more than just a laundry list of what statements were issued and when decisions were made. The hows and whys are also important. We understand the practical concerns of going into detail on Council dynamics and individual Council members' positions. But that does not preclude the Council from making an effort to help Member States understand how decisions were made and the process by which the Council reached its conclusions. We could start with more analytical monthly assessments by the respective Council presidencies. Progress in this area would do much to improve transparency. It would also increase accountability for the vast resources channelled to the Council and aid digestion of the Council's decisions.

It was unfortunate that there were missed opportunities for regular dialogue with the wider membership during the preparation of the current report (A/66/2). We thank Germany for continuing the practice of informal consultations with the wider United Nations membership before the drafting of the report, but we reiterate that it would be useful to also hold such consultations on the completed draft before its adoption. That would help the Council to take account of Member States' views when finalizing the report. Sustained and candid interaction between the Council members and other Member States would have helped to sharpen the focus of deliberations, bring clarity to many of the issues at hand and build trust between the Council and the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, the report before us is not without merits. We appreciate efforts to improve its content, such as the highlighting of priority issues and the giving of a sense of the Council's next steps. We are also encouraged by the inclusion of two paragraphs devoted to specific measures the Council has taken to improve its working methods.

On the other hand, the section on the implementation of presidential note 507 (S/2010/507) could have featured more detailed analysis of what has been achieved and what more needs to be done, rather than restating or paraphrasing what was already said in the introduction. It would also have been useful if the section on the annual report had included some insights into how the report had been prepared and improved, in view of previous suggestions from Member States. The chapter on the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions simply lists the Group's main activities, without going into its deliberations or conclusions. Given that the Group plays a key role in the improvement of the Council's working methods, we would welcome a more substantive and analytical account of its work. It might

also be useful to consider involving the Group in the preparation of the annual report, since the report is one of the primary tools for documenting the work of the Council. That would certainly bring greater continuity to the annual reports, which would otherwise vary from year to year.

We urge the Council to continue striving to improve the annual report and reiterate our belief in the need to take a less somnambulant approach to change. It is all very well to speak of improving transparency, increasing accountability and building trust through interactive partnership. But fine principles must be translated into concrete action, and the annual report is a good place to begin. As I said at the beginning of my statement, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In New York, it is not uncommon to have an overhyped and overpriced meal. One hopes that the next Council report will not follow that local example.

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

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/66/2?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 30.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.