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General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

47th plenary meeting
Monday, 12 November 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

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

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

The President: I wish to inform members of the reason for the delay in convening today's plenary meeting. I have been advised by United Nations Security and Safety Service that during its routine sweep of the General Assembly Hall, the canine handlers noticed an ash-like substance in the Hall. The United Nations hazmat team collected the substance and cleansed the area. The team has since declared the substance to be not dangerous.

Agenda item 111

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

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/300)

The President: 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 relative 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.

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

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 9 and 122

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

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

The President: Today the Assembly will consider the item entitled "Report of the Security Council". I hope that our consideration of the item will contribute to strengthening relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council so that together both bodies can better promote the values and principles of the United Nations.

We will also consider the agenda item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". In the 14 years since this matter has been under discussion in the Open-ended Working Group, we have realized the complexity, sensitivity and growing relevance of Security Council reform.

At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders recognized the importance of making progress on Security Council reform an essential element of the overall efforts to reform the United Nations. They committed to support early reform of the Council in order to make it more representative, efficient and

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transparent and to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions.

To further those goals, world leaders also supported efforts to adapt the working methods of the Security Council, by increasing the involvement of States which are not members of the Council.

In her speech to the General Assembly on 11 December 2006 (see A/61/PV.72), President Al-Khalifa urged the membership to take a fresh and open-minded approach to the issue of Security Council reform. Progress has been achieved and I would encourage the membership to continue in that spirit. As a result of the comprehensive consultation processes that have been conducted during the sixty-first session, we now have a clear understanding of the positions and views of all Member States, as well as the valuable reports of the facilitators.

Taking into account the progress achieved so far, the membership agreed to consider the issue during the sixty-second session so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations. Through these efforts Member States have reached a new stage that offers the prospect of achieving the goal of comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I wish to assure you of my determination to work with all of you in an open and transparent manner to establish the most appropriate process, based on the views of the entire membership. Since the beginning of the sixty-second session I have held informal consultations with all interested parties. Member States have articulated their preparedness, taking into account the progress achieved, to use the current momentum to move forward. Based on those consultations, our objective should be to develop a framework in order to begin intergovernmental negotiations by identifying and reaching agreement on the various negotiable elements. In that respect, we should be guided by the report of the Working Group (A/61/47), which the Assembly adopted on 17 September 2007, and the positions and proposals of Member States.

Member States should have primary ownership and responsibility over such a process. I therefore look forward to hearing your substantive proposals and views on how to embark on the next stage in this important process so that we can achieve concrete results during the sixty-second session.

We must bear in mind that Security Council reform is an integral part of strengthening the United Nations. I would therefore encourage all Member States to remain actively engaged and committed to addressing this issue. As President of the General Assembly I only have one request: that we work together in good faith with a view to achieving tangible results with the broadest possible agreement during this session. And as the ancients would say, "*Hic Rhodus, hic salta*": in essence, actions speak louder than words.

I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Marty Natalegawa, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): On behalf of all members of the Security Council, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We are hopeful that under your able stewardship, we will be able to enlarge the cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, it is my honour to introduce the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly, document A/62/2. This report covers the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

The annual report demonstrates a diverse agenda for the Council. The programme is vast and encompasses all major regions of the globe as well as a wide array of cross-cutting thematic issues, including the strengthening of international law, cooperation with regional organizations in peace and security and the protection of civilians in armed conflict, to mention just a few of the issues involved. The Council has on its programme of work all major aspects of the maintenance of international peace and security, including armed conflicts, threats to peace and security posed by terrorist acts, as well as issues dealing with peacekeeping operations by the United Nations and related actors, and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is an ambitious but important agenda, one which we hope will be strengthened by collaboration with our partners, including the General Assembly.

During the reporting period, the Council held 224 formal meetings, 184 of which were public, as well as 22 meetings with troop-contributing countries. There were 192 consultations of the whole, and the Council adopted 71 resolutions and 52 presidential statements.

Developments in Africa were extensively discussed throughout the year. The issue of Darfur was highlighted. There were close consultations on that issue between the Council, the United Nations Secretariat, the African Union (AU) and the Government of the Sudan. Six resolutions were passed, including resolution 1769 (2007), which authorized the establishment of a United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur. The Council received two briefings by International Criminal Court Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo on the situation in Darfur.

On 6 February 2007, the Secretary-General briefed the Council about his meetings at the AU summit in Addis Ababa with leaders of several African countries. The Secretary-General said it was essential to support peacekeeping in Darfur and the agreements reached in Addis Ababa and Abuja. An agreement was reached between the United Nations and the AU to revive the peace process by conducting a joint mission in the Sudan with special envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim. On 30 April, the Council adopted resolution 1755 (2007), which extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan until 31 October 2007.

On Côte d'Ivoire, the Council convened a number of meetings and agreed on several measures, including the adoption of resolutions 1708 (2006) and 1761 (2007), which extended the mandate of the group of experts monitoring the implementation of sanctions related to Côte d'Ivoire; resolution 1721 (2006), aimed at implementing fully the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and organizing free, fair, open and transparent elections in that country; and resolution 1765 (2007), which renewed the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Council welcomed positive developments in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, while stressing the need to address the root causes of the conflict, and guaranteed the conduct of free, fair and democratic elections in the country. The Council also welcomed the progress achieved by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and reiterated its support for that body. Furthermore, through resolution 1734 (2006), the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone.

The sanctions regime concerning Liberia was also evaluated and the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia was extended twice, by resolutions 1712 (2006) and 1753 (2007). Through resolution 1760 (2007), adopted on 20 June, the Council requested the Secretary-General to establish, within one month, a three-member panel of experts to conduct a follow-up assessment mission to Liberia and neighbouring States to investigate the implementation of the measures outlined in resolution 1521 (2003).

A possible coup attempt in Burundi at the beginning of the reporting period prompted a presidential press statement on the matter. In October 2006, a United Nations integrated office was established there, following the expiry of the United Nations operation. In June 2007, the Council welcomed talks between the President of Burundi and the leader of the Forces nationales de libération — Palipehutu-FNL — and the agreement reached by the parties.

The mandate of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea/Ethiopia (UNMEE) was extended, with some troop withdrawals. On 17 October 2006 the Council called on Eritrea to withdraw its troops from the Temporary Security Zone and lift restrictions imposed on UNMEE. The Council also called on the parties to show maximum restraint and on Ethiopia to implement fully the Boundary Commission's decision. By resolution 1767 (2007), adopted on 30 July, the Council extended the mandate of UNMEE until 31 January 2008.

During this period, Somalia remained in turmoil. Among the issues on the table were the status of the peace talks, the military build-up and its regional implications and the humanitarian situation. Last February, the Council authorized the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia and urged the Secretary-General to send a team to determine the feasibility of a United Nations peace-keeping operation. The Council stressed the need for a broad and inclusive political process and appealed to the international community to assist the AU with financial and logistical support.

Instability in Chad and its borders with the Central African Republic and the Sudan prompted the mandate for a possible multidimensional force in Chad. The humanitarian situation in the country was also a concern. A visit by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported that there was a deteriorating situation in the humanitarian dimension and that there was a pressing need for political solutions. In July 2007, the idea of sending a European force to protect

refugees in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic was also considered by the Council.

After going through precarious times with respect to political, security and economic conditions in late 2006, most Council members expressed support for the ongoing mandate of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau. There were also concerns about ongoing political and social tensions between the National Assembly and the Government, and the Council urged the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and strict respect for the constitutional framework. Last July, Council members welcomed the formation of a new Government and a stability pact that it hoped would set the foundation for genuine reconciliation.

On 9 August 2006, the Council held an open debate on peace consolidation in West Africa, urging the Economic Community of West African States and the West African States to curb illicit cross-border activities. It reiterated the importance of solidarity among African leaders for peace and security in the region as well as for addressing cross-border issues.

The Council adopted several presidential statements on the Democratic Republic of Congo: in August 2006, regarding the elections; in September, regarding the clash in Kinshasa; in November, looking forward to the installation of a democratically elected Government; in April 2007, regarding the violence in Kinshasa; and in July, expressing concern at the deteriorating security situation in the east of the country. Through resolution 1756 (2007), the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo until 31 December 2007.

In line with its extensive considerations of issues in Africa, the Council conducted a mission to Africa from 14 to 21 June 2007. The mission visited several African capitals, including Addis Ababa, Abidjan, Accra, Khartoum and Kinshasa, and met with officials from the African Union and the countries visited. Council members emphasized the importance of an exchange of views with the African Union Peace and Security Council, and it was decided that the two bodies should meet yearly. The Council also explored how the United Nations, on a case-by-case basis, could assist the AU, particularly when the AU was acting under a Security Council mandate.

The situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question continued to be considered on a monthly basis. There were seven open debates on the situation, two of which were at the ministerial level. In November 2006, a draft resolution was introduced by Qatar but not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. In December, there was a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East and the peace process over the past 10 years.

The question of Lebanon was also discussed. On 11 August 2006, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1701 (2006), which, inter alia, renewed and enhanced the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) was followed closely, as were the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) and the work of the International Independent Investigation Commission and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. By resolution 1748 (2007), the Council extended the mandate of the Commission, and, by resolution 1757 (2007), the Council established the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. In a presidential statement issued in June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/21), the Council condemned the terrorist attack against UNIFIL peacekeepers.

Iraq remained under the Council's consideration. In August 2006, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), whose goal is to assist Iraq in constitutional development, in reforming the legal and judicial system, in promoting human rights and in responding to humanitarian challenges, was extended by resolution 1700 (2006). The resolution also underlines the importance of cooperation between Iraq and its neighbouring countries, as well as the significance of the International Compact with Iraq. In November 2006, the mandate of the multinational force in Iraq was also extended, by resolution 1723 (2006), and the Council reaffirmed the hope that Iraqi forces would soon be able to assume full responsibility for the peace and security of their country. In March 2007, the Council issued a statement by the President to the press expressing support for the United Nations and its Secretary-General in promoting an inclusive and effective process of national reconciliation. In June 2007, the Council adopted resolution 1762 (2007), terminating the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

From 11 to 16 November 2006, the Council sent a mission to Afghanistan. After debate on the mission

report, which described its achievements and the challenges it encountered, the Council unanimously extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) until March 2008. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan was also extended, until October 2007. Council members voiced their concern about the security situation, including civilian casualties, and about increased violence and terrorist activities carried out by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups.

With regard to Asia, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste through resolution 1745 (2007) and supported the electoral process. The results of presidential elections in Timor-Leste were announced in May and August 2007, and the Council called upon the Government to confront the challenges facing the country. It is hoped that the election will have a unifying impact on the people of Timor-Leste and that it will pave the way for peace. The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal presented a report on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on 21 November 2006 by the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party (Maoist). The report requested United Nations assistance in implementing the agreement. The Council expressed support for a technical assessment team to be sent by the Secretary-General. Pursuant to that, a United Nations Mission was established in Nepal, and the Council reaffirmed its support for the peace process, calling for timely, fair and transparent elections.

The Council had several meetings on the situation in Myanmar during the reporting period. In January 2007, a draft resolution was introduced by the United States of America but not adopted, owing to the negative vote of two permanent members.

In Europe, the Kosovo issue, particularly the future-status process, was among the high priorities on the Council's agenda. The Council regularly considered the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo; discussed proposals for Kosovo's future-status settlement, made by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General; and dispatched its mission. From 25 to 28 April 2007, the mission visited Brussels, Belgrade, Priština and Vienna and held a dialogue on the issue with the European Union, NATO, Belgrade, representatives from Priština and the Special Envoy. However, after much effort on a draft resolution, the Council was not able to reach an agreement, and work on the draft was suspended.

The Council held several consultations on Georgia during the reporting period. The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia was extended, and the Council called for the parties to comply with the ceasefire and to refrain from violence, as well as to finalize agreements on the non-use of violence and the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Among the thematic issues taken up by the Council during the year were threats to peace and security caused by terrorist acts; non-proliferation, particularly in North Korea and Iran; civilians in armed conflict; women, peace and security; and post-conflict peacebuilding. Attention was also given to the role of regional organizations, including the African Union, as well as to genocide prevention, security sector reform, climate change and security, natural resources and conflict, small arms, and the International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

On the issue of international terrorism, in September 2006 the Council was briefed, at a public meeting, by the Chairmen of three subsidiary bodies: the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities; the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001); and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, particularly terrorists. Similar briefings by the Chairmen of those Committees were given in May 2007. In December 2006, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the review of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (S/PRST/2006/56). The Council also adopted several press and presidential statements condemning the terrorist attack in Iran (SC/8957) and the bombing of the Delhi-Lahore "Friendship Express" train in India (SC/8961), in February 2007; two suicide attacks in Algiers (S/PRST/2007/10) and a bomb attack in Baghdad (S/PRST/2007/11), in April 2007; and other terrorist attacks in Yemen (S/PRST/2007/26), in July 2007.

With respect to non-proliferation, the Council adopted resolution 1737 (2006) on 23 December 2006. It imposed sanctions on Iran for non-compliance with

the demands set out in resolution 1696 (2006). Resolution 1747 (2007) expanded those sanctions in response to continuing non-compliance by Iran. On 14 October 2006, the Council adopted resolution 1718 (2006), imposing sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Attention was also accorded by the Council to such issues as the protection of civilians and children in armed conflict situations and women, peace and security. In March 2007, the Council agreed on a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/5) conveying the view that it is essential to promote full and equal participation by women in post-conflict and peacebuilding efforts.

The Security Council's cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission moved forward. On 31 January 2007, the Council held an open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, focusing on practical steps that could be taken to improve peacebuilding across the work of the United Nations and on the importance of partnerships between the principal organs and those contributing to peacebuilding. Linkages between the Peacebuilding Commission and the principal organs of the United Nations were sought.

On 8 January 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon participated in a formal debate of the Council on threats to international peace and security. The meeting emphasized that the current global challenges and threats demanded a resolute and coherent response based on the collective security system of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council requested regular reporting on regions of potential armed conflict as well as a greater focus on peacekeeping in attaining the set objectives of missions, and stressed the importance of peacebuilding.

The Council also examined the importance of regional organizations to international peace and security. On 20 September 2006, there was a ministerial open debate on the topic. A presidential statement called on regional and subregional organizations to engage in closer cooperation and to promote conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. In a separate session on 28 March 2007, the Council convened an open debate on similar themes, focusing on Africa. As reflected by a presidential statement agreed upon at the meeting (S/PRST/2007/7), the Council recognized the important role of regional organizations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The Security Council's relationship with the African Union Peace and Security Council was taken forward during the Council's mission to Addis Ababa in June 2007, during which a joint statement was agreed between the two Councils, committing the two bodies to closer cooperation across the conflict spectrum.

The Council held an open debate on security sector reform on 20 February 2007 to discuss possible United Nations approaches aimed at fostering the creation of effective, accountable and sustainable security institutions that operate within the fabric of the rule of law and respect for human rights. In its presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/3), the Council stressed that reforming the security sector was critical in post-conflict environments to consolidating peace and stability, reducing poverty, establishing the rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

On 25 June 2007, the Council held an open debate on natural resources and conflict. In the presidential statement that was adopted after the debate (S/PRST/2007/22), the Council recognized the role that natural resources can play in armed conflict and post-conflict situations by contributing to the outbreak, escalation or continuation of armed conflict. Furthermore, the Council stressed the crucial role that natural resources can play in contributing to long-term economic growth and sustainable development.

On 28 August 2007, the Council held an open debate on the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. In the presidential statement that was adopted after the debate (S/PRST/2007/31), the Council noted the need to provide coherence and enhanced coordination, both in terms of policy and operationalization, among all stakeholders involved in conflict prevention, highlighting the determination of the Council to strengthen its role in preventing and resolving conflicts. The Council also welcomed the intention of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to hold a seminar expected to contribute to the elaboration of an effective global conflict-prevention strategy.

As a final point, the Council recognized the importance of effective working methods. The presidential note (S/2006/507) remained a practical reference in the work of the Council during the period of coverage, especially in its efforts to enhance effectiveness and transparency. The participation of non-Council members had been accommodated in various open debates throughout the year. Council members also continued to pay attention to the issue of Security Council mandate review within the relevant ad hoc committee.

On behalf of all Council members, I extend my thanks to Members of the General Assembly for the opportunity to present to Members the activities of the Council over the past year. I would also like to express my appreciation, on behalf of the Council, for the work of the Secretary-General and Secretariat staff for their invaluable support of the Council's activities and for their professionalism in the discharge of their responsibilities so that the Council can undertake its important work.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I also thank the current President of the Security Council for introducing the Council's report (A/62/2) this morning.

The annual report of the Security Council, in its very first sentence, indicates an increase in the workload of the Council, which confirms the trend of recent years. The Council is thus playing the central role foreseen for it under the Charter. At the same time, of course, the permanent pressure under which the Council operates may at times be to the detriment of the depth and quality of its discussions and the decision-making process. Under these circumstances, the Council must be particularly cautious in taking on new issues, especially issues that do not relate to clear and direct threats to international peace and security.

The ever-increasing workload also poses particular challenges in the area of working methods, in particular the question of whether adjustments to the way the Council goes about its business can create more space and time for the necessary deliberations. While it is up to the members of the Council to make those adjustments, inter alia, by taking up ideas brought to their attention from the outside, they are certainly in the direct interest of the membership as a whole, on whose behalf the Council carries out its work. We must not lose sight of the goal, agreed upon in the World Summit Outcome Document, of making the Council more efficient and transparent, further enhancing its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. The more overwhelming the internal deliberations are for Council members, the smaller the likelihood of regular and substantive interaction with the rest of Member States. Efficiency and transparency can thus very easily be combined and are, in some respects, even complementary.

Like others, we were very interested in the measures in the area of working methods that the Council adopted in July 2006. They are contained in document S/2006/507, as the Permanent Representative of Indonesia just mentioned. The extent to which — and the regularity with which — these measures are applied are, however, unclear to us. It would appear that their application depends for the most part on the respective presidency of the month and that it does not therefore do enough to create a more lasting relationship between the Council and the rest of the Member States.

This debate usually gives rise to complaints about the nature of the report of the Council, the most popular criticism being the lack of analysis in the annual report. Repeating this same criticism each and every time the annual report is discussed holds little appeal for us. It is of course, to some extent, also understandable why it would be difficult for the Council to produce the report in a manner that is significantly different from what can at this time be called its traditional format.

The discussions about format, however, hide a larger point. On the one hand, the work of the Council takes up much of our attention in private discussions and makes for a very large portion of the coverage in the media. But at the same time, there is never an open and perhaps even interactive discussion on the performance of the Council among the larger membership. Again, the agreement arrived at by the World Summit to enhance the accountability of the Council to Member States and to increase the transparency of its work has not been put into practice. On balance, it seems to us that the Council has been busier than ever over the past 12 months and perhaps also more inaccessible than ever.

As a member of the "S-5" group, the working methods of the Council are of ever-increasing

importance to us. We must distinguish between practical measures such as the format of meetings, speaking time, announcement of meetings and so on, and measures that open up the substantive work of the Council to the rest of the Member States. While measures of the first kind are very important, it is of course the latter ones that make a real difference in shaping the Council's relationship with the rest of the membership. In particular, when it comes to its thematic work and to the work of its subsidiary organs, the Council can and should significantly benefit from the input of States that are not at a given time serving on the Council but play an important role in the process of implementing its decisions.

It is therefore essential that adjustments and changes are made to the working methods on an ongoing basis. The Council itself indeed must make those changes, but substantive input and inspiration must also come from outside, and this is where the Assembly must play an important role. Such changes are a reflection of the changing nature of the work of the Council. They are thus unrelated to a possible enlargement of the Council. While they make up an important part of the comprehensive reform of the Council that has been elusive for such a long time, the improvements on working methods must proceed independently from progress on enlargement and, hopefully, contribute to creating momentum on enlargement as well.

The past year has brought quite a few developments in the area of enlargement. Two reports were produced under the leadership of your predecessor, Mr. President, that tried to show a possible new path to achieving enlargement of the Council. The intermediary approach, as it is usually called, is to our mind a compromise between the well-known positions reflected in texts that were presented before the 2005 World Summit. It should, however, not be understood as a less-than-ideal solution that we would set about to change or further refine as soon as it was adopted. Rather, such an intermediary approach should only be considered if it finds the largest possible political support, which has been elusive for all the other proposed solutions presented in the past.

Changing the composition of the Council in the framework of a mandatory review, which we all expect will take place under any proposed solution, will not necessarily prove to be less difficult than the enlargement efforts we have been engaged in for some 15 years now. We therefore need a sustainable political solution and clear indications thereon from all the major stakeholders. If and when those conditions are met, we will be ready, as the membership as a whole, to engage in the negotiating process that most States are now calling for. We wish to express our full support to you, Mr. President, in your difficult task of steering these discussions and encourage you to play a creative and active role in this process.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, and to thank the President of the Security Council, the representative of Indonesia, for his presentation of the report (A/62/2) today.

The delegation of Mexico wishes to indicate that although it recognizes the efforts made to facilitate consultations on the content of the Security Council report, that document does not, unfortunately, include substantive information on its actions on the various items under examination during the period from August 2006 to July 2007.

We believe that the presentation of the report must not be a mere step, but the means by which the Council collaborates with the General Assembly, in which all Member State are represented, and that the Council should report in a detailed manner on the fulfilment of its responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. Mexico insists once again that the capacities of the Council and of the Assembly with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security are concurrent, as clearly stated by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, transmitted to the Assembly by document A/ES-10/273 of 13 July 2004.

While the report includes a section on the recommendation for the appointment of the Secretary-General, it does not in any way include details on the changes in the election dynamic that took place in 2006. Given that the Security Council held meetings with different candidates before adopting a final decision, my delegation would have expected some indication in the report of the Council's opinion on that recent experience and its relevance to such occasions in the future.

It is also interesting to note that in the report's index, there is a section on matters that were brought to the attention of the Security Council but not examined in Council meetings during this period. In that respect, it would be desirable to know the reasons for which the Council did not consider those items that Member States or other entities brought to its attention. That would certainly increase transparency in the Council's activities and enhance Member States' confidence in bringing issues of specific interest to them to the attention of the Council.

The report of the Security Council continues to present the same deficiencies observed by almost every delegation for a number of years now. That is why we continue to ask ourselves if the General Assembly truly needs a report consisting of a compilation of Council data and documents published during the previous period.

Certainly, that issue leads us to the issue of the working methods of the Council, which has also not been solved owing to the polarized positions on the matter. A few Member States consider the Security Council not to be accountable to the General Assembly; hence the nature of the report presented to us. But for the vast majority of Member States, that position is not acceptable. We therefore wish for better working methods for the Council in order to achieve, among other things, an analytical report that will contribute to evaluating the actions of the Council. If delegations here in the Assembly consider these reports to be of little use, how much more should the members of the Council ask themselves what interest such documents serve, beyond the confines of this Organization?

It is not a coincidence that every year, on the occasion of the presentation of the report, we also debate the issue of Security Council reform. The presidency of the General Assembly, at its sixty-first session, undertook a remarkable effort to achieve progress in that area. Thanks to that initiative, we were presented with a new approach, the so-called transitional or intermediary approach, oriented towards finding a compromise solution. The debate over the extent and limitations of that approach has already taken place and was very intense, benefiting from much participation. My delegation's position was presented in the statement we made on 19 July 2007.

Several delegations clearly supported the approach, in a spirit of realistic compromise, which opened the possibility of ending the stalemate on the matter, 14 years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. That was precisely what all of the facilitators involved in the process called for. However, there were also voices, and we should acknowledge them, that rejected such an approach. In the final balance, the elements of consensus that remain are few but substantive: the status quo is unacceptable and many members, including Mexico, are willing to negotiate.

However, the delegation of Mexico considers that, in any case, intergovernmental negotiations aimed at reaching the widest possible agreement for Security Council reform should occur in a transparent and open way, within the Open-ended Working Group which already exists for that purpose, and should be based on the proposals by the facilitators from the presidency of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

In that context, we believe that the appointment of new facilitators or the establishment of any other kind of mechanism would not contribute to the intergovernmental negotiating process that we intend to start as soon as the Working Group's work resumes.

In that respect, we wish to indicate that Mexico considers it essential that, in a spirit of collaboration among all Member States, we avoid searching for or proposing unexpected options with urgent deadlines on the margins of the existing process, in order to continue the negotiations on this issue of particular interest to the international community.

We must be fully aware that, in order to launch an intergovernmental negotiation, there should be agreement on at least three basic principles: first, the inclusion of all known options; secondly, the exclusion of any element that aims at prejudging the final result of the process; and thirdly, the reaffirmation of the requisite consensus or the widest possible agreement, that is, clearly above two-thirds of Member States. Those basic principles must be carefully observed, since, otherwise, we risk creating a dangerous division in this Organization.

That is why Mexico has insisted on a gradual and cautious reform. The enlargement of the Security

Council is, in our view, viable in the short term if it is founded on the following criteria.

First, the expansion should only include the category of new non-permanent members, whose precise number and duration of mandate would be determined within the framework of the negotiations, in order to achieve a new configuration that is representative of the contemporary world.

Secondly, the introduction of the re-election principle for all non-permanent members would guarantee a more frequent and continuous presence of those States with a greater readiness to play an active role on the most relevant items of the agenda, starting with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Thirdly, accountability with regard to the performance of every non-permanent member that aspires to re-election would be guaranteed in a process with the characteristics we have outlined.

Fourthly and finally, the regulation of the use of the veto and the review of the Council's working methods should be, in our view, a counterpart to the actions that the five permanent members of the Security Council should be willing to undertake in the context of such a reform.

The process of United Nations reform is under way. However, if we do not have concrete results on the Security Council, reform will remain incomplete. Mexico is convinced that the will of States is the key to this decisive moment in this new stage of Security Council reform.

My delegation wishes to renew its full commitment to participating in the consultations that the presidency deems necessary, and to collaborate, in a constructive and active spirit, in the elaboration of a process of negotiation that will be acceptable for all Member States and will allow us to make progress on this fundamental issue on our agenda.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): First of all, my delegation would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, President of the Security Council for November, for his informative presentation on the work of the Council over the 12 months of the reporting period. We also highly appreciate the efforts to move forward the Council's reform process by the President of the Assembly at its sixty-first session, Her Excellency Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and her facilitators in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Allow me to avail myself of this opportunity to thank all Member States for the valued support given to my country during the elections of non-permanent Council members held on 16 October 2007 (A/62/PV.26). Viet Nam, elected to serve on the Council for the next two years, is fully committed to making proactive and positive contributions to the work of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation welcomes the continuing discussion of the Council's work as a way to enhance dialogue and cooperation between the Council and the General Assembly as well as other organs of the United Nations system. Aware that the Council held 184 open meetings, out of 224 formal meetings, during the reporting period, we are pleased to underscore the attempts by Council members to enhance transparency and accountability in the Council's work and their efforts to provide greater opportunities for all Member States to better understand the work of the Council and to engage with the issues of common interest and concerns on the Council's agenda. It is our hope that more concerted efforts will be made to that effect.

The statistics provided in the Council's report show a growing trend in its activities, both in scope and dimension. They also remind us that conflict and tensions are still prevalent in many regions around the world, a fact that requires the international community to show further determination and provide more resources to bring those conflicts to satisfactory resolutions. We are particularly concerned with the cycle of escalating violence and the elusive peace process in the Middle East and the fragile peace processes in some African countries, while non-traditional threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to pose serious threats to international peace and security.

In that context, we welcome the intensive efforts made by the Council and the Secretary-General in his good offices capacity to promote a peaceful solution to the crisis in Darfur and to foster stability and peacebuilding in Burundi, Somalia, Afghanistan and

Iraq. In addition, the recent encouraging developments on the Korean peninsula, in particular the inter-Korean summit meetings and the positive outcomes of the Six-Party Talks on the nuclear issue, are significant and welcome steps that promise to consolidate stability and peace on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

Much, however, remains to be done by the Council to advance the major objectives of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding in the world. In the face of various emerging challenges, the Council must revitalize itself to discharge its duties in a more adequate and effective manner. It goes without saying that the Council needs to be reformed in a substantial and timely manner.

Turning to the question of reforming the Security Council, my delegation wishes to reiterate that such reform is crucial to the United Nations reform process. Making the Council more representative and its work more democratic, effective and transparent, especially with regard to decision-making, is vital for adapting the United Nations to the realities of the current world. A modern Security Council should be enlarged in both permanent and non-permanent categories, where developing countries in particular will have more representatives to voice their views and concerns in the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the other hand, the use of the veto should be limited and the Council's working methods substantially improved, in order to make the Council more accessible and transparent to all Member States. Pending any decisions to be adopted on the reform of its membership, the Council should further improve its own working procedures and expand its interaction with other United Nations organs. Public meetings, briefings and press conferences should continue to be expanded in order to provide a timely and greater source of information on the activities of the Council to all Member States.

In that regard, we commend the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council in carrying out intensive consultations over the past year which have, in our view, generated concrete ideas and proposals to move the reform process of the Security Council forward. Accordingly, we welcome its report and support the decision to continue considering the topic at the present session of the General Assembly so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations.

We share the view that the reform process of the Security Council now stands at a defining stage where all Member States should utilize the momentum initiated by the recent efforts to move ahead. It is high time that we commit ourselves to genuine negotiations. My delegation is willing to participate in discussions and consultations with other Members in an open, inclusive and constructive manner on the issues at hand. It is our conviction that under your excellent leadership and wise guidance, Mr. President, the reform process will move much further ahead and we will arrive at a fruitful outcome that garners the support of the widest majority of the membership of the United Nations.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on the wise manner in which you have been conducting our open discussions. I wish to thank His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Marty Natalegawa, the President of the Security Council this month, for having introduced the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2), pursuant to Article 15 of the United Nations Charter.

Bahrain likewise welcomes the joint debate on agenda item 9 on the report of the Security Council and on agenda item 122 on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Those two items are interconnected and are the subject of special attention on the part of Member States.

The annual report of the Security Council comprehensively covers the work of the Council, the number of meetings it holds, and questions it has discussed at its previous session. However, we feel that the report would be more useful if it contained a more analytical evaluation of the work done by the Council during the reporting period. It could also have been a general reference tool for Member States. In view of the importance of the item on the agenda of the Assembly, Member States should have enough time at their disposal to consider the report in an in-depth manner in order to be able to examine it carefully and thoroughly, and in order to have a real and transparent idea of the discussions of the Council that are of greatest interest to the entire international community.

The Security Council should take full account of the provisions of the Charter and of General Assembly resolutions relating to the mandates of United Nations organs. Article 24 of the Charter entrusts the Council with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, that Article does not authorize the Council to take up matters that fall within the competence and prerogatives of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That impingement on the mandates of other United Nations organs is a clear violation of their powers and could complicate and even cause confusion in the implementation of the Charter. This prompts us to reaffirm the importance of cooperation and coordination among the main United Nations bodies, which is a sine qua non for meeting the various serious challenges that we all encounter.

We would not be wrong to encourage here the presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to meet periodically to discuss their respective agendas. That could only reinforce coordination among them so as to avoid any interference by a given body in the functions and mandates of the other bodies.

Clearly the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and an increase in its membership is extremely important to Member States. That item was included on the Assembly's agenda for the first time at its thirty-fourth session, in 1979. At the time, the discussion led to the Assembly's adoption of resolution 48/26 on 3 December 1993, which established the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Related Matters to the Security Council.

Since 1994, the Working Group has been working to reach agreement on various aspects of that question. However, efforts to date have been inconclusive. While it is true that when the leaders of the world adopted the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, they renewed their faith in the United Nations and once again expressed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, they also reaffirmed their commitment to support an accelerated reform of the Security Council to make it more representative, efficient, effective and transparent and to increase the implementation of its resolutions. That should encourage Member States to show more openness in their attitude in order to achieve the progress hoped for in that area.

We wish to reiterate here that the Security Council reform process must be multidimensional. We need to reach agreement on a number of principles.

First, there should be an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members pursuant to the principle of equitable geographic representation, so as to enable developing countries and least developed countries to be represented in the Council on an equal basis with the developed countries. The current imbalance needs to be remedied; it does not serve the interest of all Member States. Furthermore, a permanent seat should be given to the Arab States to be occupied on an alternating basis and in coordination with the League of Arab States.

Secondly, constraints should be imposed on the use of the veto power; it should only be used on a restricted basis pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter. Limits must be imposed that would invalidate the veto when there is a positive vote by a majority of member States of the Security Council and by a two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the General Assembly. Thirdly, sanctions should not be imposed until all peaceful means to resolve conflicts have been exhausted, as stipulated in Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter. Recourse to Chapter VII should be a last resort after all other peaceful methods of resolution have been exhausted and after in-depth discussions of short- and long-term ways not to impose sanctions have been carried out. In any event, sanctions should not be imposed as a means to punish civilians or used as an act of vengeance against them. The purpose of sanctions must be clearly defined and a specific timeline for their application established.

Fourthly, the working methods and procedures of the Council must be reformed. The principles of transparency and openness should be taken into account in the work of the Council to foster a greater participation on the part of non-members of the Council, in particular countries directly concerned by matters discussed in the Council, in keeping with Article 31 of the Charter.

Furthermore, the number of closed or informal consultations should be limited and the number of open and inclusive debates increased, in order to enhance transparency in the Council's work while not limiting

participation by United Nations Member States in open debates.

The Security Council should organize comprehensive informational briefings to keep Member States abreast of its activities. While it is true that the Charter has given the Council the task of maintaining international peace and security and has asked it to act on behalf of Member States, the Council's agenda should still be an objective and non-selective reflection of the needs and interests of all Member States. Expansion of the Council should guarantee a greater representation of developing countries and of small countries and the decision-making process should be truly democratic.

It is high time for the Council to acquire official rules of procedure, since its existing rules of procedure are still provisional and are more than 50 years old. That issue has repeatedly hampered the work of the Council and has impelled it to take inappropriate steps during these times, which are beset by challenges and crises. The lack of a finalized set of procedural rules is a serious shortcoming and should not be disregarded. Agreeing on such rules should be one of the Council's top priorities.

In conclusion, we hope that a consensual formula can be agreed upon in order to narrow differences of views. A common denominator needs to be found that is applicable and acceptable to all, guaranteeing a meaningful reform of the Security Council so that all Member States — small and large — can be represented there and so that everyone can feel that the Security Council is really acting on their behalf. This would be in keeping with the Charter and reflect and safeguard the interests and rights of all Member States, protecting them against disasters, crises and wars and guaranteeing respect for their independence.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Security Council for its annual report (A/62/2) and for its introduction to the General Assembly. Like many other delegations, Switzerland last year expressed regret that the report was not sufficiently analytical, which limited its value-added for Member States as a whole. This year we note that the report, as usual, contains a comprehensive overview of the Council's meetings, activities and decisions.

We also note some improvements. The information is placed within a more analytical context. However, we continue to believe that the document could better reflect the challenges confronting the Council as well as the assessments and analyses carried out during the reporting period. The Council's decisions on sanctions or peacekeeping put an ever-increasing burden on Member States. That clearly requires more accountability. Only if the Council is better able to explain itself will national parliaments continue to pick up the check for the Council's decisions.

We are obviously aware of the difficulties involved in producing a report which goes beyond mere enumeration of the Council's activities and meetings. Nonetheless, we encourage the Council to keep striving for a report that responds to the needs of Member States. That also applies to the subsidiary bodies of the Council whose work is hardly reflected in the report.

Reform of the United Nations and therefore reform of the Security Council continues to be of very great importance. The initiatives taken by the former President of the General Assembly and the reports of the two groups of facilitators that followed express the need for progress on Security Council reform.

Switzerland is convinced that Member States should build upon the momentum created in the informal consultations in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform. We consider that the two reports submitted by the facilitators are a valuable basis for discussion.

The time has come to give the issue of enlargement of the Security Council new impetus. The debate of 19 July in the Open-ended Working Group confirmed that none of the models presented so far will succeed in gaining the support needed to bring about Security Council reform. An intermediary approach, as outlined by the facilitators, could reconcile the various positions on enlargement, provided that Member States show the flexibility that many of us are calling for.

Switzerland welcomes the call contained in the latest report of the Open-ended Working Group to start intergovernmental negotiations during the current session of the General Assembly. For that to happen, we believe that the report of the facilitators should be transformed into a document that can serve as a basis for negotiation. That could be done by mandating one or more of the facilitators in New York or by appointing a special envoy who would conduct

consultations at the highest level in national capitals, as suggested by the Foreign Minister of Belgium at this year's general debate.

Whatever option is chosen by you, Sir, we encourage you to launch a process that results in the submission of a document for negotiation.

On 18 October 2007, *Security Council Report* issued a special paper on the Council's working methods, containing an impressive compilation of efforts undertaken since 1993 to reform the Council's working methods. It thus attests well to the importance that Member States continue to give to the issue. Switzerland acknowledges that progress has been made, but we remain convinced that more can and should be done. We believe that further improvement of the working methods of the Council would not only make it more transparent and increase the involvement of Member States in the work of the Council, but would also serve the interests of the Council itself by conferring greater legitimacy on its decisions.

The concrete proposals of the "S-5" group — Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland — are well known. Therefore, I will just recall one — the development of equitable and clear procedures in the current sanctions regimes, in particular with regard to listing and delisting. In that context, we consider that the recommendations submitted at the end of 2006 by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions, provide an excellent basis for strengthening existing sanctions regimes. Switzerland would therefore welcome the renewed efforts of that working group in order to ensure the follow-up of that important work.

We are well aware of the fact that the work of the Council has considerably increased over the past 15 years. An improvement of its working methods should therefore go hand in hand with efforts made to enhance its efficiency. We also believe that the Security Council Affairs Division should be provided with enough resources to give to the Council and its subsidiary organs the assistance they expect.

Progress on improving the working methods will not eliminate the need to enlarge the Security Council. Member States must address the need confronting the Council that it better reflect today's geopolitical realities and the need for an enhanced representation of developing countries. In other words, enlargement and improvement of the working methods should ideally go hand in hand, which means that the difficulties caused by expansion should not hamper the improvement of the working methods that a large number of Member States want to see.

Reform of the working methods is a dynamic ongoing process that will become more urgent and more crucial if we are not able to progress on the issue of enlargement.

Reform of the Security Council remains a pressing issue on the United Nations reform agenda. Switzerland is convinced that it is not an impossible mission, but declarations of intent are no longer sufficient. Member States should let action follow words. Greater flexibility on all sides is required if we want to overcome the current impasse. Working towards intergovernmental negotiations could pave the way forward. Switzerland remains committed to reform of the Security Council and will constructively contribute to such a process.

Mr. Al-Jabri (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor to speak on behalf of Saudi Arabia, I am pleased to convey to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. We are sure that you will conduct our work successfully.

I also wish to express our thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Her Excellency Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, which she conducted so ably. We thank her, in particular for her efforts to discuss the question of equitable representation on the Security Council, which is a subject of crucial importance, in order to enable the international community to adapt the Council to changes of the twenty-first century and to enhance its role in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, especially within the context of the new circumstances, dangers and challenges that are occurring worldwide. We would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts working with the General Assembly and the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the principle of the expansion of the Security Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent seats, to provide for a democratic and equitable

geographical representation in the Council. We believe that Member States have a professional and moral responsibility to show the sincere political will to implement the 2005 World Summit Outcome, adopted by Heads of State and Government, without discrimination and disregarding narrow national interests.

Specific progress towards reform of the United Nations to adapt it to the threats and challenges of our contemporary world has been made. However, reform of the Security Council through its expansion in both membership categories has only seen little progress, except for the nomination of two facilitators, the holding of meetings and informal consultations, the adoption of reports without any specific results. All of this reflects a sincere desire to reform that important principal organ which is the beating heart of the Organization as well as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms the need to intensify its efforts as a whole to reform the structure of the Security Council in order to make it more representative, more effective and more transparent and to enhance its effectiveness and increase the legitimacy of its decisions for the maintenance of international peace and security. The point is to turn it into a body that is capable of dealing with crises before they happen, not just after the event has occurred, so that mankind can be spared the crises it is facing.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also expresses the hope that the veto will be used to help the weak and to help them assert their rights, not to substitute for justice and encourage the path of tyranny and despotism.

The unjustified manner in which the veto is currently being used is a challenge for all of us and calls for our attention. The misuse of the veto has resulted in the continuation of the chronic problem of the Middle East, which has lasted for more than 60 years. Resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly have been adopted but not implemented because of this unjustified use of the veto, which has prevented the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Finally, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has participated in all consultations at various levels both within and outside the United Nations. We have stated our positions and have listened to the statements of other Member States, which have contained many positive and constructive ideas. But those statements will remain merely theoretical unless they are put into practice. This leads us to the conviction that the members of the Security Council — particularly the permanent membership — must play an important role in addressing this issue in a rational manner, because the Council cannot ignore the changes that have occurred in the world since the establishment of the Organization. Those changes require that all of us agree to make radical changes in the Security Council in accordance with a geopolitical formula.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ambassador Marty M. Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for the presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/62/2), which covers the period from 16 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. I take this opportunity to highlight the excellent work that Indonesia is doing as a Council member.

The report of the Security Council was issued as an official document just a few days ago. The fact that the report was presented so late prevents the General Assembly from being able to consider it in depth. We hope that such a situation does not recur in the future. This is a very important item on the Assembly's agenda, and all of us, as Member States, need a reasonable period of time to prepare to participate in this debate.

This year, the format and approach of the report are very similar to those of previous years. Clearly, much more needs to be done regarding the report's contents.

In carrying out its duties, the Council acts on behalf of all Member States. In that connection, Cuba stresses the Council's responsibility to be accountable to the General Assembly, in accordance with the Charter.

Cuba calls once again on the Security Council to submit a more comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly. The report should assess the work of the Council, including the cases in which the Council has failed to act as well as the views expressed by its members during the consideration of the items on its agenda.

We also reiterate our appeal to the Security Council, in keeping with paragraph 1 of Article 15 and paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter, to submit special reports to the Assembly for its consideration. Furthermore, the Presidents of the Security Council must ensure that their monthly assessments are comprehensive and analytical and that they are issued in a timely manner.

Mindful of the need to maintain the balance among the functions and powers of the principal United Nations organs, Cuba opposes the tendency to seek to equate reform of the Organization with the granting of greater power to the Security Council. Once again, we emphasize the need to fully respect the functions and powers of the principal organs, in particular of the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among them pursuant to the Charter, as well as the need for Member States to put an end to any attempt to transfer items on the Assembly's agenda to that of the Council.

The Security Council must abide strictly by the provisions of the Charter and by all resolutions of the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

We call attention to the danger of interference by the Security Council in matters that clearly fall under the functions and powers of other principal United Nations organs and their subsidiary bodies. Close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs is essential if the United Nations is to be able to remain relevant and face existing, new and future dangers and challenges.

Cuba remains particularly concerned about the Security Council's establishment of norms and definitions that go beyond its areas of competence. We reiterate that, under Article 13 of the Charter, the General Assembly has primary responsibility for the progressive development of international law and its codification. We also stress that the Security Council's decision to initiate formal or informal debates on the situation in any Member State or any matter that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

In that context, Cuba urges the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to hold regular debates and to coordinate among themselves regarding the agendas and work programmes of those principal organs. That will ensure increasing coherence and complementarity among them so that they are mutually reinforcing and respect one another's mandates.

We urge the Security Council to take fully into account the General Assembly's recommendations in the area of international peace and security, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 11 of the Charter. We are opposed to any attempt to transfer items from the agenda of the Assembly or of the Economic and Social Council to that of the Security Council, and to encroachment by the Council on the functions and powers of the Assembly.

We need to make progress on Security Council reform as an integral part of the current process of United Nations reform. It is unacceptable to maintain the status quo. Cuba supports the General Assembly's decision to continue its consideration of the issue of Council reform at its sixty-second session so as to achieve concrete results through intergovernmental negotiations.

Expansion of the Council's membership should address its lack of representation of developing countries. At the same time, Council reform must not be limited to the membership issue; it must also address substantive issues related to the Council's agenda, its working methods and its decision-making process.

Transparency, openness and consistency are key principles that the Security Council must observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures. Regrettably, the Council has failed to follow those important principles on many occasions. These cases include, inter alia, its reluctance to hold open debates on a number of very important issues and its restriction of participation in some open debates.

The Council must comply with the provisions of Article 31 of the Charter, which permit any country that is a non-Council member to participate in debates on matters that affect it. Closed meetings and informal consultations must be kept to a minimum and should be the exception, not the rule.

Cuba's position is that the process of Security Council reform, which should be carried out in a comprehensive, transparent and balanced manner, should include the following objectives. We must ensure that the Council's agenda reflects the needs and

interests of both developing and developed countries, in an objective, rational, non-selective and non-arbitrary manner. We must ensure that expanding the Council will help to make it a more democratic, representative, responsible and effective organ. We must ensure that the Council's rules of procedure, which have remained provisional for 50 years, are formalized to enhance their transparency. And we must democratize the Council's decision-making process, including by limiting the use of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination. In that context, the concept of voluntary self-restraint is insufficient and cannot be considered an option.

Cuba emphasizes the need to take the following measures. We must increase the number of the Council's public meetings and ensure that they provide real opportunities to take account of the opinions and contributions of the greatest possible number of United Nations Members, particularly non-Council members whose affairs are being considered by the Council.

The Council should allow briefings by the special envoys or representatives of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to take place in public meetings, apart from exceptional circumstances, and further enhance its relationship with the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, including through sustained, regular and timely interaction. It should also ensure that its subsidiary organs function in a manner that would provide adequate and timely information on their activities to the general United Nations membership.

I would like to conclude by extending our best wishes for success to the incoming new members of the Security Council: Costa Rica, Croatia, Burkina Faso, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Vietnam. They can always count on Cuba's willingness to engage constructively in consultations and negotiations towards reforming the Council as an effective forum in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Al-Murad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the President of the Security Council for the month of November, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Mr. Marty Natalegawa, for his presentation of the Council's report to the General Assembly (A/62/2). In the report, the President of the Council affirms that the year has seen a marked increase in the size and scope of the Council's activities. In that regard, we also associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We also congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Council — the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam, Croatia and Costa Rica — for two-year terms beginning in 2008.

The item currently under discussion by the General Assembly is undoubtedly one of the most important items on its agenda, and last year's intensive deliberations on the subject of expanding the Security Council attest to that. Furthermore, the support of the heads of State and Government for the prompt reform of the Security Council, expressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, is a fundamental element of the comprehensive effort to reform the United Nations in order to make the Council more representative, more efficient and more transparent. That will consolidate the Council's effectiveness and the implementation of its resolutions, and is yet further proof of the importance that States Members of the Organization attach to the issue of equitable representation in the Security Council and the means to improve its methods of work.

The discussions of the Working Group over the past five years have highlighted the urgent need to restructure the Security Council's apparatus and to increase the transparency of its procedures and methods of work. However, despite the agreement in principle by Member States on the concept of making necessary changes and reform, the Working Group has not reached agreement on the substance of the changes that should be made, despite the fact that 14 years have already elapsed.

Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the progress made in the discussions of the Working Group with respect to the procedures and the methods of work of the Council. There is almost general agreement on many of the measures and proposals sought, and there are even some procedures and methods of work that the Council itself has already begun to apply.

We cannot but commend that improvement in the procedures and methods of work of the Council, and express appreciation to Council members who were conscientious in periodically informing the rest of the membership on developments in the Security Council's implementation of the concept of transparency. We also commend the initiative of the President of the General

Assembly at its sixty-first session, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, to prompt discussions by the Working Group in August of last year on the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The position of the State of Kuwait vis-à-vis the issue of Security Council reform proceeds from the following principles. First, Kuwait strongly supports the activation and reform of all United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, in order to enable them to perform the main task entrusted to them by the Charter of the United Nations — the maintenance of international peace and security.

Second, any change in the composition of the membership of the Security Council must not affect its efficiency and effectiveness in taking decisions to confront international threats and dangers. Any such change must contribute to enhancing the legitimacy and credibility of the Council's decisions.

Third, with regard to reforming and improving the procedures and working methods of the Council and to promoting its relations with other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, we support all proposals seeking to make the Council's work more transparent and clear, and to facilitate the flow of information to and from the Member States of the United Nations. Kuwait recognizes the need for full respect for the functions and powers of the principal organs, in particular the General Assembly, and to define the Council's role in discussing issues that threaten international peace and security.

Fourth, we affirm the importance of codifying the measures taken by the Security Council in order to improve its working methods without waiting for a consensus to be reached on the other issues, such as the size and composition of the Council and its decision-making process, especially since the codification of such measures will not necessarily entail any amendment of the Charter. We also note that the time has come for the Council to adopt permanent rules of procedure.

Fifth, Kuwait supports the maintenance of the mechanism to elect non-permanent members of the Council, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 23 of the Charter. That will improve opportunities for small States, of which we are one, to become members of the Council and contribute to its work.

Sixth, as to the right of veto, we note the importance of limiting and regulating the scope of its use, inter alia, by restricting its application to issues that fall under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Finally, if an agreement on the increase of non-permanent seats of the Council should be reached, the distribution of those seats among the regional groups must take into consideration the substantive increase in the number of States in the Asian Group.

In conclusion, we hope that an agreement can be reached on a consensual text satisfactory to all sides that can guarantee the performance of the Council of its functions, pursuant to the Charter, without impediment.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): Allow me at the outset to associate myself with the statement to be delivered by the Ambassador of Angola on behalf of the African Group, and to express my deep appreciation to Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for her concerted efforts to push forward the issue of equitable representation on and reform of the Security Council, particularly since that important issue constitutes an integral part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations.

I would also like to commend the five facilitators and the Ambassadors of Chile and Liechtenstein for their extensive efforts and valuable reports, which were crowned by the adoption of the report of the Open-ended Working Group containing its draft decision adopted by consensus. The delegation of Egypt looks forward to continued efforts on your part, Sir, to steer the open-ended working group towards our common aspiration for a successful resumption of deliberations during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that the sixty-first session resulted in increasing momentum in dealing with the enlargement and reform of the Security Council in a manner that raised the expectations of many on the prospect of reaching an agreement on a clear vision that would garner the widest possible support of Member States. However, the positive nature of our deliberations on the aforementioned issue, partly in light of the reports of the facilitators and their stipulation of a set of alternatives, coincided with the arduous attempts by some parties throughout the past session to push the African continent to change its

unambiguous position, enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and confirmed by subsequent African summits, beginning with the Sert summit, rather than seek a consensus on the substantive issues under consideration.

In the aftermath of the submission of the two reports of the facilitators and the two ambassadors, and the subsequent exhaustive deliberations that took place on them, some voices were raised, emphasizing the need to send a message to the last African summit in Accra, to convince African leaders to amend the African position and to allow a greater degree of flexibility in dealing with some aspects of the Ezulwini Consensus, especially the right of veto. The African leaders, however, decisively rejected those attempts and insisted on upholding the full implementation of the Ezulwini Consensus, with all its elements. The Consensus has represented and will continue to represent the just demands capable of rectifying the historic injustice against Africa caused by the denial of its legitimate right to permanent membership and the subsequent inability of any of its States members of the Security Council to exercise the right of veto, despite the continent's numerical preponderance and the complexity of interests it seeks to defend in the Security Council.

In light of the failure of the attempts of those seeking to amend the common African position at the Accra summit, new alliances began to emerge between parties advancing only their national interests. They viewed draft resolution A/61/L.69 as a means to circumvent the demands stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus, especially its insistence that the right of veto be extended to the new permanent members as the most important African demand insofar as what it represents with respect to increasing the ability of the African continent to influence the work and resolutions of the Security Council. The African States were once again able to keep their position intact and to reinstate the right of veto in the focus of discussions in the Open-ended Working Group in the next phase, side by side with the other elements enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus, until Africa gets its equitable right to a just representation that would allow it to influence Security Council dynamics.

The events that unfolded during the discussion of the report of the Open-ended Working Group in the sixty-first session necessitate an evaluation of what has been achieved so far, within a correct and substantive framework, in order to agree on a collective means by which we can achieve our common objectives of enlarging and reforming the Security Council at the earliest possible date, based on the widest possible agreement commensurate with the important nature of that issue. The intermediate arrangements proposed by the report of the five facilitators and the two ambassadors introduced a number of alternatives under each of the five categories for discussion, allowing each party with a vested interest in the process to envision the model that best suits its objective and materializes its aspirations in the enlargement process.

It is time, therefore, to put those different alternatives to the test through all available mechanisms, as well as the diplomatic and political tools and capabilities at our disposal, including intergovernmental negotiations, as stipulated in the decision adopted last year. Since our presence here is not in a personal capacity, but rather as permanent representatives of our Governments, we would like to stress that the mention of intergovernmental negotiations as one of the options for moving the process forward is merely an acknowledgement by the General Assembly of an already existing mechanism. Hence, our agreement or lack of agreement over any issue is to be understood within the framework of such negotiations, carried out in either a principal or a subsidiary organ of the United Nations.

If such intergovernmental negotiations are to begin on that very important issue, they should be based on a clear vision put forward by a State or group of States, and only when that State or group of States has the inherent conviction that the vision it advocates can attain a very wide degree of support, exceeding the required two-thirds majority stipulated by the Charter. Such a proposed vision should be negotiated and evaluated by all members of the General Assembly, but until one or a group of States can come up with such a vision, which we have been actively seeking to formulate for the past 14 years, it is Egypt's view that the President of the General Assembly should lead more consultations — and I repeat consultations and not negotiations — within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group to narrow the difference in positions between the conflicting interests of all stakeholders. Such consultations could be undertaken with the aim of reducing the number of alternatives stipulated under every category of the facilitators' reports with a view to creating a positive environment

that could lead to the eventual introduction of a vision that could work as a basis for negotiations based on a proposal or proposals from Member States.

This approach differs fundamentally from that of the draft resolution sent by one of the aspiring nations only to the African countries at the end of last week — and we all know why it was sent only to African countries — in a new attempt to overcome the African position set out in the Ezulwini Consensus. The draft resolution endeavours once again, unfortunately, to terminate the role of the Open-ended Working Group, the most appropriate democratic framework incorporating all Member States, and to replace it by calling upon the President of the General Assembly to initiate intergovernmental negotiations in the same manner that was rejected by Member States in draft resolution A/61/L.69, submitted at the sixty-first session.

Despite our great confidence in the wisdom and integrity of the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and in his ability to lead us to success, the President's neutrality, transparency and objectivity in dealing with that sensitive issue and the fact that the President does not represent a Government require that we keep his high office away from this intergovernmental negotiating process. We should rather seek to enhance the President's ability to conduct consultations, and not negotiations, within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group and in the same successful manner followed by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, and even more successfully.

Our agreement on the inclusion of intergovernmental negotiations as one of the alternatives for considering the subject matter in the coming phase should not be interpreted in any way as a renunciation of the African position as defined in the Ezulwini Consensus or as agreeing to limit our ability to address the question through intergovernmental negotiations, distinct from other diplomatic means and capabilities. It is merely derived from the desire to explore all ways and means to guarantee the emergence of new creative options that might acquire the desired wide support. But to achieve that, we should not limit our discussions to interim arrangements, particularly as the report of the facilitators itself opens the way for each State or group of States to maintain their original positions, if they believe that this is the ideal way to achieve the international objectives. Accordingly, positions of all stakeholders, described by the report of the facilitators as "maximalist", will continue to constitute their formal positions, while, at the same time, not affecting their ability to exert extra efforts to reach a compromise that meets the widest possible support.

In this context, I would like to stress once again that Egypt will not abandon the lofty interests of Africa in order to achieve narrow national goals. Our vision for permanent membership is clear. It is based on the conviction that a permanent member without a veto right is merely a non-permanent member in the Security Council for an extended term — or forever. We believe that permanent membership without a veto will not change the balance or structure of power in the Security Council and will not accomplish the objective of protecting and defending African interests in the Council. Our perspective is based on the fact that Africa legitimately deserves to have no less than two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats. Furthermore, we do not believe that the veto issue should be considered within reform of the working methods, which should concentrate only on promoting the transparency and accountability of the Security Council when it addresses the interests of Member States.

As Member States, we have to strive to surpass our national interests and have a more realistic vision concerning our regional and international interests. It is time to abandon the narrow coalitions of those who seek to impose particular views so as to achieve their national interests. We should aim for global coalitions to achieve the international goal of creating a more democratic Security Council, a Council that better represents the general membership of the Organization. Consequently, we are looking forward to consultations under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly, in his capacity as the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, and to any subsequent negotiations, discussions or consultations that might take place between Member States on any new substantive vision — submitted by a State or group of Member States with the aim of achieving the interests of all of us. We look for a collective understanding between the G4, the Uniting for Consensus group, the African Group, and all others who have interests — the small States and islands States, developing and developed countries and States representing different cultures and civilizations. All these represent the

elements of diversity that could enhance the representative character of the Council — thus achieving good governance at the international level, side by side with good governance at the national level.

Egypt is confident that we will reach an expansion of the Security Council on solid foundations, built on solidifying the principles of justice and equality in rights and obligations, which would, in turn, allow the Security Council to become a platform for democracy and transparency that would deal with matters involving Member States with due respect and dignity.

While expressing our sincere appreciation to Mr. Natalegawa, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for presenting the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, we note that the report includes only brief references to the cases considered by the Council within the past year. African issues continued to be at the forefront of the Council's agenda. The report mentioned briefly the developments that have taken place in the countries concerned within the year. Moreover, the report continues to follow the same trend of previous years, which we have criticized several times. It includes only an enumeration of the meetings and the documents of the Council. This approach lacks adequate scrutiny and evaluation of the deliberations of the Council, the positions of its members and the motives behind its resolutions and the presidential and press statements issued by the Council.

Furthermore, the Council, despite our continued express concern, continues to interfere in the competence of the General Assembly, a matter which has an impact on the sensitive balance between the main organs of the Organization. Also, the failure of the Security Council to act on some issues relating to the maintenance of peace and security such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties constitute further sources of serious concern for us. This was very clearly addressed in the Havana Declaration by the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, which called for a greater role of the General Assembly in addressing those issues when the Council fails to address them, owing to a lack of unanimity among its permanent membership.

All of this confirms the necessity of expediting the process of reforming the working methods of the Security Council and of rapidly agreeing on the enlargement of its permanent and non-permanent membership. This alone can conclude the process of reforming the United Nations, as we continue to believe that United Nations reform is not complete without the reform and expansion of the Security Council.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke In Spanish*): As reflected in the report today before the General Assembly, the Security Council experienced an increase in the volume and scope of the questions on its agenda between 1 August 2006 and 31 July 2007. This debate allows us to pause and reflect in the same constructive spirit in which Peru has been participating in work of that body for more than 22 months.

A large part of the heavy agenda of the Security Council consists of intrastate conflicts, which, for the most part, take place in States marginalized from progress, with weak institutions and precarious development indicators. In order to prevent these types of conflicts from multiplying and to prevent countries from relapsing into such situations, we continue to believe that the Council should address both the military aspects and those of institutional rebuilding, which it has prioritized, as well as give attention to other structural factors, such as poverty, social exclusion, environmental degradation or transnational crime.

While it is not our purpose to examine these cases in detail, we do need to recognize that the progress made in Liberia, Sierra Leone or in Haiti require substantive action to address structural factors involved, so that these cases can become successful experiences, as we all wish. Activities in this regard will, of course, be consistent with the understanding agreed in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit (A/RES/60/1) that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

We should also recall that, faced with the danger of more genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, we have the responsibility to protect populations from these scourges. This requires us — the Member States of the United Nations and of the Security Council in particular, to remain vigilant in order to effectively protect these populations, when the State called upon to do so cannot — or will not — fulfil its obligations. The International Criminal Court

is likewise a guarantee that those responsible for such atrocities do not remain unpunished. For this reason, we appeal to all countries to accede to the Rome Statute.

At the same time, inter-State conflicts that are still not resolved, such as the question of Palestine or demarcation between Eritrea and Ethiopia, continue to deserve special attention. The indefinite persistence of these and other such situations is highly injurious to the key objectives of the Security Council in that renewed efforts are required to achieve peace in the framework of international law and to fulfil commitments of mutual respect. To this end, it is essential for the parties to have the will to resolve them.

As to elements that still await more effective action from the Security Council, Peru would reiterate its view that the United Nations needs to have available the strategic reserve force which would enable Blue Helmets to be deployed with the necessary urgency. Some of the situations considered in the present report of the Council, for example, could have been handled with great diligence had such a reserve force existed.

Equally acute is the need to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation regimes of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and related systems. Peru supports the actions of the Security Council aimed at avoiding proliferation among State and non-State actors and at the same time believes that the multilateral system should redouble its efforts with this purpose in mind and make progress on the collective commitments entered into. We need the development of cooperative security to buttress the structures of peace and security and to avoid arms races globally, regionally and subregionally.

Terrorism has grown into a scourge of universal scope that needs to be condemned and combated without concessions. In whatever guise or shape, whatever may be its motivation, terrorism is unacceptable. In this fight, the multilateral system has given itself 13 international conventions, in addition to regional agreements and a global counter-terrorism strategy. In this regard, resolute action on the part of the Security Council is vital to facing this threat. The commitment of every State should be unequivocal. We must cooperate to ensure that States have available the operative capabilities, above all, of intelligence and police capacity, as key parts in this struggle, while at the same time preserving unlimited respect for human rights.

Likewise, there are other factors which require the Council's continued attention since they influence conflicts, such as the action of irregular armed groups, illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, smuggling of natural resources, drug trafficking and other ways in which organized crime weakens institutions, undermines social stability, jeopardizes democracy and threatens security.

At the same time, Peru believes that it essential to recognize, in particular, the role of the environment in the preservation of international security. Climate, water and forests are very distinct elements for which we need to build strategies and specific and differentiated actions if we are to avoid a worsening in the depredation of resources, deforestation, pollution, and sudden changes in climate and radiation, inter alia, that have an impact on the subsistence of certain populations and on the quality of life, present and future, of the whole planet.

On these factors it is not the purview of the Security Council to play a normative role, nor is it within its jurisdiction to negotiate and adopt universal commitments that need to be adopted in other forums and mechanisms. But it is necessary for these factors to be duly considered — in their security dimension — in specific cases on the agenda of the Council.

Likewise, we are convinced that the wide range of threats to peace and security and their interrelationship demand the assistance of other multilateral agencies and regional organizations and the active participation of the private sector and civil society, within their respective responsibilities, in order to tackle them. This approach will make the work of the Security Council more consistently effective and will situate its work in a perspective of cooperation with the multilateral system in the event of a possible conflict.

Before concluding, I would like to make the point that as far as Peru is concerned it is particularly gratifying to coordinate in the Council the work on the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. While part of this work, such as the recent adoption of resolution 1780 (2007), will be reflected in next year's report, I would like to reaffirm our recognition to the delegation of Haiti, the Group of Friends, the States that make up the 2x9 mechanism of

troop-contributing countries and the remaining members of the Security Council, together with whom it has been possible to achieve an agreement to continue supporting the process to restore security and rebuild the institutions of this fraternal country of the Caribbean.

Peru, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, discharges its responsibility and complies with the approaches guiding its foreign policy. On the basis of its own economic and social realities, its regional outreach and its profound commitment to multilateralism, Peru will continue from this Assembly and other bodies helping to constructively build international peace and security, respect for international law, and the promotion of economic and social development, as well as the defence and fostering of human rights, democracy and freedoms in the world.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank you, Sir, first of all, for convening this debate on agenda items 9 and 122. The role of the Security Council in buttressing international peace and security is clearly key. We welcome the report of the Council (A/62/2) and thank the Indonesian presidency for introducing it. Our country was a member of the Council for part of the period covered by the report and we were witnesses and protagonists in the efforts of the Security Council in carrying out its mandate under the Charter.

We are following with concern the most grave incidents affecting international peace and security and, in particular, we would like to draw attention to the situation in Darfur, in Somalia and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We do hope that the upcoming Annapolis conference will make real progress aimed at achieving a just and legitimate solution to the conflict in the Middle East within international law, as established by the various resolutions of the Security Council. We are aware of the gravity of situations that place restrictions on freedoms and that violate human rights in many countries.

As regards the question of the reform of the Security Council, we believe that we always need to keep this issue as a priority on our agenda. Every day that passes without reform makes that body more illegitimate and more anachronistic — illegitimate because it fails to represent a membership of 192 Members, and anachronistic because it manifests an historical reality that goes back 60 years.

We have looked at the proposals of the facilitators of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly in the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/61/47). The ways and means suggested are, in our opinion, the only ones that offer reasonableness and the potential to make progress and to emerge from the impasse that has been in place for some years. They include formulas for intermediate expansion that will not leave everyone satisfied for now, but which present a possible way out, creating a testing ground, getting us out of inertia and the status quo.

The intermediary approach, which might last 10, 15 or 20 years, would make it possible to increase the membership and the participation of all categories of countries and would, in particular, ensure effective access by small States to the Security Council. I wish to mention the importance of both rotation and increasing the regional factor, as much in terms of election methods — including the accountability involved in re-election — as in terms of coordinating positions. We must advance at the regional level, increasing confidence and cooperation without being divided by hegemonies or power politics. An intermediary way also provides an opportunity for the five permanent members to heed the voices of the great majority, which wants to improve the working methods of the Council, controlled today by a small group of countries.

This year, in the Open-ended Working Group, we noted that only a catastrophe such as the Second World War could create a system of privileges such as that held by the permanent five. Today’s world, fortunately, does not present a similar justifying scenario at a time when armed conflicts and social conflicts persist and there is a sustainability crisis to a degree previously unknown in history. I believe that the next stage should see us ending our speech-making and unilateral actions. In the Open-ended Working Group we must focus on procedures, formats and modalities that support negotiation. This stage, which may also be called pre-negotiation, should be tackled creatively and with the greatest possible political agreement. That is the pathway to compromise.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarus delegation would like to thank the Security Council for the report on its work (A/62/2). The work of the Council is given priority attention by the delegation of virtually each Member State.

Belarus closely follows the reactions of the Council to threats to international peace and security. In that context, it may be unnecessary for the Council, when preparing its annual report, to enumerate the activities it has undertaken. United Nations Member States expect to receive an analytical — rather than informational — document that contains in-depth analysis of situations in various hot spots of the world and of the international situation as a whole. We understand that the preparation of that kind of outcome document could cause some difficulties because of the need to reach agreement between delegations and member States of the Council. We would suggest as a first stage, therefore, that more attention be given to the analytical component when preparing the monthly reports of delegations presiding over the Council for a given month.

Once again we are discussing the reform of the Security Council. Such reform should make it more representative, more effective and more transparent. The Open-ended Working Group is doing some important, meticulous work to make real progress in defining concrete formulas for expanding the membership of the Council. We support its activities and are prepared to continue to lend the Open-ended Working Group every possible assistance.

Today it is clear that, since the Council was created, as a parallel system for organizing the world, the United Nations itself has changed. Enhancing the effectiveness and the authority of the Security Council should be accomplished in a manner that reflects contemporary geopolitical realities. We are therefore speaking of broader political participation by States in the decision-making of the Council. The reform of the Security Council should take place primarily in important areas such as the expansion of its membership and improving its methods of work. However, we believe that the Council should remain a compact and effective organ that is able to react in a timely and effective manner to threats to international peace and security.

The reform of the Council should not be confined merely to an arithmetical increase in composition. The point of the reform is for the expansion to make the Council more authoritative and more representative. Accordingly, we continue to support the idea of the Council adopting decisions if they are supported by two-thirds of those voting. It would be a correct step politically and logically. Having that kind of a system in place for decision-making in the Security Council would be in keeping with the rules adopted by the General Assembly with regard to the adoption of important decisions concerning the maintenance of international peace and security.

Belarus continues to favour the granting of an additional seat in the category of non-permanent member in a new expanded Council to the Eastern European regional group. We also believe that countries representing the African, Asian and Latin American regions are underrepresented in the Council’s current composition. Belarus is in favour of giving them an additional seat in that body in the permanent member category.

The founding fathers of the United Nations placed the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security upon the Security Council. The Council was conceived as an organ that could take decisive steps to prevent and remove threats to international peace and security. It was created, not just to be representative but to be a responsible organ with the capacity to take decisive, appropriate action for the maintenance of international peace and security. Individual cases of the Council’s inability to take timely and effective steps on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security show that it is precisely the reform of the Council that would allow it to carry out its basic functions more effectively, as the guarantor of peace and security.

Attempts made by some members of the Council to unjustifiably expand the agenda by adding items that do not fall within its competence reduce the effectiveness of its work and often undermine the authority of the Security Council. Accordingly, we think it is important to restore the balance of responsibility between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Belarus believes that the Security Council should improve its working methods. That area of Council reform should be discussed within any reform package. Even if agreement is not reached on other areas of reform of the Council, efforts to improve the working methods of the Council must absolutely be made.

In a new reformed Council, a crucial issue to be considered is the broader involvement of States that are non-members of the Council in its work. In our view, that would enhance the accountability of the Council to all Member States of the United Nations and would make its work more transparent. Member States should have direct access to Council meetings, in particular in cases when their interests are directly affected or where agenda items are discussed that have a direct relationship to those countries.

The ongoing and often emotional debates about expanding the Council have shown that there are advocates and opponents of various plans for Council reform. The presence of those different views among Member States on that issue is something that Belarus sees as a natural phenomenon. It is a normal feature of an on-going negotiating process. In our view it is important to reach the broadest possible unity of views through consultation and dialogue. However, the reform process should not be discontinued because of difficulties and because of a lack of conformity in approach. The reform of the Council will move forward and will work to the extent that Member States show enough political will, are sufficiently aware of their responsibility and have enough energy, resources and attention to advance and carry out that important cause.

Mr. Mansour (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on the way you are conducting the debate. My delegation also wishes to thank the Ambassador of Indonesia, the President of the Security Council for this month, for having submitted the report of the Security Council today (A/62/2) to the General Assembly pursuant to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

My delegation would like to make the following comments on the two items on the agenda of today's plenary meeting, namely, "Report of the Security Council" and "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

I need hardly recall that the General Assembly's consideration of the item on the report of the Security Council is the only opportunity for States Members of the United Nations, in particular for those of us that are not members of the Security Council, to consider in depth the activities of that organ and to identify measures that should be taken to make the required improvements to its working methods.

My delegation is pleased to see that, in terms of format, the Security Council's report for this reporting period (A/62/2), contains an analytical introduction in addition to the normal statistics. However, efforts should continue to further improve the quality of the report which clearly remains a compilation of the decisions and resolutions that were adopted and a rather factual description of the Council's work.

We are far from what was recommended by Member States to have an annual analytical report. Accordingly, it should be noted that the General Assembly has asked the Security Council to periodically submit to it special thematic reports on questions of international interest. To date, no report of that kind has been submitted.

Turning to the functioning of the Council, we are pleased to note that during the reporting period the Security Council held a large number of open meetings during which a greater number of States participated. We note also a definite increase in public briefings, which have given non-members of the Council the possibility of being briefed, albeit partially, about developments concerning some of the matters of which the Council is seized. Having said that, we are convinced that much remains to be done to make the functioning of the Council more transparent, which would guarantee access to information to all delegations, in particular, delegations that have items on the Council's agenda.

Likewise, I would like to come back to the question of the proliferation of public meetings on matters that fall more within the mandates of other United Nations organs such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In this regard, it remains useful to strengthen the regular consultation mechanisms between the Presidents of United Nations organs in order to remedy any encroachment or interference.

On questions of substance, the report of the Security Council shows that that organ has acted with determination to address a number of conflicts around the world, and in particular on the African continent. That enhances the Council's authority and role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

But the efforts of the Council fall short of expectations in the Middle East. Frustration at the Council's repeated failure to become more involved in settling the question of Palestine and to shoulder its responsibilities in that area poses a serious threat to the region and to the authority of the Council itself.

With regard to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, allow me, Mr. President, first of all, to pay high tribute to your predecessor, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, and to her facilitators, including my colleague, the former Permanent Representative of Tunisia, for their outstanding contribution to the item under discussion today.

The conclusions and recommendations that they submitted to Member States last spring allowed the process of consultation to be relaunched, in particular by means of proposing a new approach to unfreeze the status quo and to resolve the dilemma of expanding the Security Council, which has persisted for more than 15 years. My delegation welcomes the agreement reached by Member States in early September, within the framework of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/61/47), whereby we decided to continue consideration of the question of the reform of the Security Council

> "so that further concrete results may be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, ... as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States". (see *A/61/47, para. 21*)

Looking forward to the implementation of that understanding this year, under your guidance, Mr. President, allow me to make the following point. My country believes that the purpose of any reform of the Security Council is to strengthen equitable representation in that body, bolster its credibility and enhance its effectiveness. The Security Council must reflect the political and economic realities of today's world. It should be given the legitimacy it needs to act on behalf of the international community in carrying out its mandate under the Charter.

These objectives will be unattainable without expansion, in particular for the benefit of developing countries. The size of the restructured Council should reflect all of the sensitivities of the international community. In this context, Tunisia continues to strongly support the position of the African Union as reflected in the African consensus on reform of the Security Council, which to date remains unchanged.

In our view there must be an immediate remedy of the long-standing injustice which has denied Africa a permanent presence in the Security Council. There is hardly any need to recall that this unjust situation has been going on since the establishment of the United Nations. We would support any formula that would give developing countries in general, and Africa in particular, the role due them on the Security Council.

Finally, the question of the periodic review of the Security Council, once it has been expanded and reformed, is an essential factor of the reform programme. This consideration will help to build confidence that will allow us to make the adjustments that might be necessary in the future, but still more important, it represents a mechanism through which we would be able to assess the contribution of the new members to enhancing the effectiveness of the Council.

In conclusion, we believe that, in order to continue to enjoy the trust of Member States and of world public opinion, the Security Council should demonstrate that it is in a position to effectively tackle the most difficult questions, including by becoming more representative of the international community as a whole and of the realities of today's world. It is time to embark on that path in a determined and serious manner.

Organization of work

The President: I should like now to consult Member States regarding an extension for the work of the Sixth Committee. Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Sixth Committee would complete its work by Thursday, 15 November 2007. However, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Sixth Committee that the Committee has not been able to finish its work by Thursday, 15 November, and will need an additional meeting on 19 November 2007, depending on the availability of Conference Services.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Sixth Committee for one additional meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I wish finally to inform the General Assembly that in addition to the items scheduled for Thursday morning, 15 November 2007, the Assembly will take up the reports of the Fifth Committee contained in documents A/62/528, A/62/529, A/62/530, A/62/531, A/62/532 and A/62/533 on sub-item (a), "Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions"; sub-item (b), "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions"; sub-item (c), "Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee"; sub-item (d), "Appointment of a member of the Board of Auditors"; sub-item (e), "Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", and sub-item (f), "Appointment of members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee", of agenda item 114, respectively.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.