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General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

27th plenary meeting
Monday, 14 October 2002, 10.00 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 117 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/57/440/Add.2)

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/57/440/Add.2. In the letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/57/440 and A/57/440/Add.1, Kyrgyzstan has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7

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

Note by the Secretary-General (A/57/392)

The Acting 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.

In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/57/392.

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

It was so decided.

Agenda items 11 and 40

Report of the Security Council (A/57/2 and Corr.1)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters: Report of the Open-ended Working Group

The Acting President: I give the floor to the President of the Security Council, Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I have the privilege, in my capacity as

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President of the Security Council for the month of October 2002, to introduce the annual report (A/57/Corr.1) of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

At this stage, I should like, on behalf of the Council, to express my congratulations to you, Mr. Jan Kavan, on his election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that, during his mandate, the relations between our two organs will be further strengthened to encourage optimal promotion of the purposes and principles of the Charter. We are also aware that, since Mr. Kavan assumed office, he has engaged Council members in a constructive and encouraging dialogue with a particular view to increasing the fluidity of exchanges between the two organs.

The report under consideration covers the period from 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002. I should like to draw members' attention to the note by the President of the Security Council dated 22 May 2002, published as document S/2002/199. That document sets out the changes introduced to the format of the Council's report and the improvements made to it. I shall return to this later.

As members will have noted, the Security Council was very active between June 2001 and July 2002. It was able to consider in detail some issues that have been on its agenda for many years, and in some cases it was able to sharply reduce difficulties related to those items. Thanks to the determination and imagination of Council members, other, more recent, issues have been dealt with appropriately, with convincing results. Thus, specifically with respect to Africa, the Security Council, with its characteristic seriousness, has addressed the crisis situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Ethiopia and Eritrea, in Burundi, in Somalia, in Western Sahara, in Liberia, in Sierra Leone, in Guinea-Bissau and in the Central African Republic. I should like to emphasize and to welcome the fact that some of those crises are on the way to being resolved.

States member of the Assembly are aware that the Council has created its own Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. That Working Group, which is chaired by Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius, to whom I should like to pay tribute, has done remarkable work in the few months of its existence.

Also, with regard to the African part of the work of the Security Council, I should like to emphasize two steps that have had a significant impact on the way the Council addresses African issues, whether they relate to conflict management or to post-crisis situations. The Council's mission in May 2002 to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to other countries of the region gave it first-hand experience of the reality on the ground. Likewise, the workshop organized in July 2002 on the situation in the Mano River Union countries helped us to understand better the complexities and implications underlying certain conflicts in West Africa.

Other important matters before the Council are being addressed assiduously and with a commitment to progress: the Balkans, Cyprus, Iraq and the Middle East. Some of these have seen developments that have been welcomed by the entire United Nations community, in particular, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan.

As members are aware, the Security Council, in its work, goes well beyond the strictly conflictual aspects of the crises of which it is seized; when necessary, it also deals with them in a cross-cutting manner from a thematic perspective, as in the case of women or children in armed conflict, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, on 14 February 2002, the Council agreed on a new mechanism aimed at improving cooperation with troop-contributing countries. It also adopted by consensus, after difficult negotiations, resolution 1422 (2002), concerning matters including the legal situation of peacekeeping contingents.

Another threat to international peace and security that has mobilized the Security Council is terrorism. Faced with that scourge, the Council undertook to go beyond its specific areas of work and decided to take the bull by the horns. It set up a Counter-Terrorism Committee, which has become authoritative thanks to the dynamism of its Chairman, Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, and to the fortunate involvement of all States members of the Organization.

The Council devotes much time to following up on the implementation of sanctions that it is obliged to impose on certain States. At the same time, it has continued to consider — under my presidency and after the excellent work done earlier by Bangladesh — the

best possible way to improve the effectiveness of sanctions and to minimize their adverse consequences on civilian populations or on third States. That very delicate exercise also leads us to evaluate the mechanisms for imposing, suspending and lifting sanctions.

All the issues that I have mentioned are merely a glimpse of the colossal amount of work done by the Security Council during the period under consideration. I should also like to stress the approach that the Council has chosen to renew its relations with non-States members not of the Council and with international public opinion.

It will be recalled that, during the debate on this agenda item during the fifty-sixth session, Assembly members put forward a number of ideas with regard to a better presentation of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly. The Council has taken account of them, and I should like to stress here that the credit for that goes in large part to the Mission of Singapore. In that regard, I should like to express once again our deep appreciation to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani and his team, whose commitment made it possible to properly focus the innovations included in the present report. Thus, the report is more than 300 pages shorter than last year's report, while containing more statistics on the deliberations and results of Security Council activities. The reduced format in which this report is submitted has saved the Organization approximately $300,000.

With regard to those statistics, we should emphasize that the Security Council held 264 official meetings, 91 more than during last year's reporting period; it adopted 75 resolutions, 23 more than last year; it adopted 47 official presidential statements, 12 more than last year; and it published 61 official communiqués and held 26 meetings with troop-contributing countries.

The holding of a large number of public, as well as Arria-formula meetings demonstrates the Security Council's clear desire to make its work more transparent and effective, with the objective of promoting the maintenance of international peace and security.

Another important improvement is the inclusion in the introduction of the report of an analytical overview of the Council's activities.

I would like to invite members of the General Assembly requiring further information to refer to document S/2002/603 of 6 June 2002, drawn up by the Secretariat and circulated as a document of the Council; the note from the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2002/199 of 22 May 2002; and the record of the 4616th meeting of the Council held on 26 September 2002 (S/PV.4616). Members of the Assembly will find in those documents an exhaustive record of all of the innovations that I have just summarized.

Next week the Council plans to hold an interactive debate on the outcome of the Assembly's work today and tomorrow. This demonstrates the interest and expectations of the Security Council with respect to the judgements and useful proposals that are submitted to it by the General Assembly. We are particularly interested in the response of members to our working methods and our work, which is always sensitive in nature and often complex.

In conclusion, I would like solemnly to express my appreciation to all the members of the Council without exception for their commitment and their dedication to the cause of peace and security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his enlightened vision and the Security Council secretariat for its professionalism and invaluable daily support.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I am grateful to the Permanent Representative of Cameroon for introducing this year's report (A/57/2 and Corr.1) of the Security Council so comprehensively and ably, and I echo his expression of gratitude to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for supporting the Council so effectively.

I am delighted that this debate concerns a report of the Security Council whose format is much improved in comparison with those of previous years. I pay tribute to the initiative and energy of Ambassador Mahbubani and the delegation of Singapore in leading the Council in the production of a slimmer and more informative report. The United Kingdom was pleased to contribute to the new format by providing the draft of the introductory section, in which for the first time the Council has laid out a description of its substantive business over the year.

I believe that this innovation goes some way towards responding to the wish of the General Assembly to have a fuller and more interactive debate

with the Security Council on the business on the Council's agenda, virtually all of which is of great importance to the United Nations membership as a whole. I believe that the two institutions are beginning to understand each other better in this area. The Council is making a genuine attempt to be more open and transparent in its business. The period under review — mid-June 2001 to the end of July 2002 — was an exceptionally busy one. The Council has nevertheless taken care to hold as many open meetings as possible to encourage the wider membership to remain in touch with its business. The United Kingdom presidency in July this year, for instance, scheduled 29 open meetings — a record to date. I wonder whether that record will last for long.

The Council's output in resolutions, presidential statements and statements to the press continues to increase at a rate which challenges our capacity to manage all of the requirements put upon us. We must continue changing in order to keep up.

I hope that members of the General Assembly recognize that we have tried to be more transparent in quality as well as in quantity. In that context, I wish to place on record my gratitude to members of the General Assembly for their exceptional response to the overtures of the Counter-Terrorism Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). Their cooperation has been vital to that exercise, and I hope that the Committee's willingness to explain its work programme, its methods of business and its general approach to the implementation of that resolution has been one of the features behind the excellent work we and the members of the Assembly have done together since October 2001.

On the subject of combating terrorism, of course, we have only just begun, as the ghastly attack this weekend in Bali demonstrates. I express my sincere condolences to the Indonesian authorities and to the families of all the victims of that dreadful attack.

The opening up of the Council goes beyond the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Many elected members of the Council have been exemplary in living up to their campaign promises to keep the wider membership informed. I welcome that, provided that necessary confidences are kept. I hope that permanent members, too, have been marked for progress in that area. The United Kingdom has no illusions: it needs — and it has — a constituency in the wider membership as a whole. We look for, and we must earn, the support of the Assembly and its constructive contributions to Council business, whether in the area of troop contributions or general ideas, and we will continue to be as open as possible, beyond formal meetings, in our exchanges with Member States, individually and collectively.

The Security Council has also become more operational and more targeted in its handling of the peace and security agenda. Since September 1999, we have developed — to an extraordinary degree, I think — the practice of sending missions to troubled regions of the world that are on our agenda. The improvements — relative, perhaps, but improvements nonetheless — in the situations in East Timor, which is now our glorious new Member, Timor-Leste; in the Balkans; and in Sierra Leone are evident. Our four missions in successive years to the Great Lakes area, under able United States and French leadership, are at last beginning to bear fruit. In New York we have begun to develop resolutions and mandates that are better tailored to, and more carefully aligned with, the realities. While there is still room for improvement and for more productive exchanges with troop contributors in particular, I believe that we are heading in the right direction. We have to remember that Security Council members, primarily responsible as we are for maintaining international peace and security, are not the only actors in any particular situation. The parties on the ground in a conflict or post-conflict situation have a greater responsibility, and usually a greater opportunity, to make constructive progress than do we in New York. But the Security Council has to show the responsibility, the power and the authority of the United Nations; and we have to demonstrate leadership if it is lacking in the situation on the ground. I believe that there are many instances where the Council has done these things over the past year.

Before I touch on one or two specific issues, let me also comment on the Council's practice of taking up generic themes in our debates. We believe that progress has been made, and significant encouragement given in the right quarters, in our debates on gender issues, on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, on children and armed conflict, and on human rights within the rubric of peace and security.

Again, like so many parts of the United Nations, we are struggling to move from the general to the particular, to produce results that really matter on the

ground. But I am pleased that, during the United Kingdom presidency of the Council in July, we were able to conduct a forward-looking debate on gender issues, which now need to be mainstreamed into the work of the Security Council, and that in addition we managed to hold an interesting workshop on the lessons learnt in Sierra Leone and on how to apply them to accelerate the process of bringing peace and the beginnings of prosperity to the West African subregion as a whole. Every operational organ or the United Nations, not excluding the General Assembly, should conduct self-assessments of its performance now and again.

I want to make a personal comment about the nature of our political work at the United Nations. The Security Council maintains a high profile and receives broad media attention, because it deals with political and security situations of a high intensity, at least in the short term. But the United Nations was never really constructed for — and has only rarely been very good at — resolving political and security issues in short order. The great power, and the great utility, of the United Nations is in setting longer-term trends across a whole range of global issues — economic, social, environmental, cultural and, of course, political, because all these elements have to evolve in a political context.

The commanding underlying theme of the work of the United Nations is development, which means the more equal distribution of the world's opportunities among the world's peoples. Conflict prevention and conflict resolution are, in that sense, a subcategory of our work to promote sustainable development. Members of the Security Council need from time to time to reflect that, important as they may regard their efforts in that Chamber, the results must contribute to the wider success of the work of the United Nations. Mutual cooperation and respect between all the organs and institutions of the United Nations are essential, if we are collectively to be assessed as operating successfully.

Against that background, it remains significant that the lion's share of the Council's work — about two-thirds, in fact — continues to be on African conflicts. The scorecard is mixed. The situation in Sierra Leone is much improved over two years ago, thanks in part to prompt and courageous action by the Council and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), backed up by significant other input, during 2000 and 2001. Ethiopia and Eritrea peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts continue to be modestly encouraging, and I believe that the progress now developing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has, for the first time, the potential to offer the prospect of peace for that troubled country.

But on all three of those issues, much more remains to be done. The situation in Angola has taken a turn for the better this year, and I hope that Angola will benefit from an upgraded United Nations presence and from the engagement of a new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The news is less good on Burundi, where the Council has not yet found it possible to become fully engaged. And Somalia and the Sudan continue to present the international community with seemingly intractable problems. Africa remains the biggest challenge for the Council's agenda. Britain and France will work in increasingly close partnership to meet it.

The Council did some excellent work on Afghanistan during the period under review. Much of the credit for the change in the situation there is due to the Secretary-General and to his Special Representative, Lakhdar Brahimi. But the Council moved swiftly to set in place the framework for the International Security Assistance Force and to establish the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Afghanistan is an excellent example of where the United Nations adds value with a light footprint. But the story there is certainly not finished.

The Middle East peace process remains an issue with respect to which the Council continues to have difficulties. Perhaps it is the most troubled of all the issues before the Council. But we have made progress in some respects: monthly briefings from the Secretary-General or the Secretariat; and a greater degree of consensus, or near-consensus, on the decisions of the Council in the period under review than in the period before that. Perhaps we should have been ready to accept that on occasion a rapid press statement may be more effective than a long wrangle leading to failure on more ambitious propositions. The Council needs to focus on where, within the political realities, it can make a difference and add value. I am particularly pleased that the European Union members of the Council have worked well together on this vital issue. More of that will be seen in future.

Another issue in that neighbourhood has risen fast on our agenda recently. Member States will be generally aware of the latest state of play on Iraq. The issue will shortly come to the Security Council as a whole, but in recent days not even the permanent members have been in a position to do any negotiation in New York. The United Kingdom believes that the United Nations must rise to the challenge on Iraq's repeated violations of international law. Disarmament under United Nations arrangements is the objective. To achieve this, we have to give the United Nations inspectors the strongest powers possible to ensure successful disarmament and to make it crystal-clear to Iraq that, this time, it is complete disarmament or serious consequences. It is important that the Council should consult the membership as a whole before taking action, and the United Kingdom is pleased that the open debate on Wednesday will allow full discussion of the issue.

I should comment, finally, on Security Council reform. The United Kingdom remains committed to achieving a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Our approach at the fifty-sixth session continued to be one of narrowing the areas of disagreement. The United Kingdom regrets that there has been little progress so far this year. Despite all the frustration that is understandably felt, the United Kingdom remains committed to making real progress on Security Council reform during this new session of the General Assembly, and we will support the President of the General Assembly in any constructive initiative which he takes to this end.

But reform does not mean just change in the membership. Continuing improvements in our working methods are equally important. As I have made clear, the United Kingdom supports a Security Council which is transparent and which relates to the wider membership. I would add only that the membership of the General Assembly has to play its part too. General Assembly reform is itself essential, and we must try in our debates to get away from prepared speeches and predictable statements of national position. The United Nations has work to do and results to achieve which make a difference for people riven by conflict and poverty. The way in which we debate and interact can make a significant difference.

Perhaps the constant emphasis from the British on pragmatism, results and cooperation brings smiles to the faces of our colleagues. But does not the United Nations, and do not the billions of people dependent on our effectiveness, now need those things more than ever before?

Mrs. Ahmed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank 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, under the leadership of the Ambassador Mahbubani, for its ongoing work in the framework of reforming the Security Council in order to increase its membership, achieve equitable representation within it and address related matters. We also thank the Ambassador of Cameroon for introducing the report under consideration.

My delegation wishes to call attention to paragraph 20 of the Secretary-General's report "Strengthening of the United Nations: An agenda for further change," in which the Secretary-General asserts that no progress has been achieved in the work 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. Despite the fact that the General Assembly established the Working Group over 10 years ago, there is no clear understanding on how to improve the Council's working methods or increase its membership. This failing will have a negative impact on the general concept of international peace and security.

The process of reforming and strengthening the Organization cannot be completed if it does not include one of its most important organs, entrusted with allaying threats to international peace and security, as provided for in Article 24 of the Charter, which assigns the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization.

The reform of the Security Council is one of the main challenges facing the United Nations at the dawn of this millennium, despite the fact that States are agreed on the need to change the Council's composition. Regrettably, however, there has been no clear agreement on the form which such changes are to take. It is now up to the General Assembly, the supreme organ of the United Nations, to present practical proposals and in-depth analyses and to make

recommendations on matters related to international peace and security.

The improvement that has been made to the Security Council's work by increasing the number of its plenary and open meetings, thus making it more open, effective and transparent, is insufficient. In this context, we urge the Council to open all of its meetings and to eschew secrecy. This will bring further integrity and transparency into its work. The Council must respond to earlier proposals that it engage in consultations with the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations, such as the Economic and Social Council, and that it present periodic reports to the Assembly, as necessary. It is truly essential that the Council's decision-making process be improved in order to promote even more openness and transparency.

The principle of equitable representation is set down in the United Nations Charter. It is imperative that this principle be taken into account in all matters relating to recruitment, appointment and election to various seats in various bodies. In this context, we would emphasize the African position, defined at the meeting of African leaders during the Millennium Summit and at other African summits on this issue, on the reform of the Security Council and increase in its membership. This position calls for the continent to be assigned two permanent and non-permanent seats. In this context, we point to the large increase in the membership of the United Nations, which now stands at 191 States, most of them developing countries.

The use of the veto is incompatible with the concept of justice and equality that is called for in relations among States and highlighted by the Charter. Adopting Security Council resolutions through dialogue and consensus is the best way to ensure transparency, integrity and justice. We therefore join others who share the opinion that the right of veto, as a contravention of established principles, should be abolished and that the arbitrary use of this right should be limited until that comes about. This will help to secure more equitable representation within the United Nations, in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality among nations and other relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter. The comprehensive reform of the Security Council to which we all look forward cannot be achieved if some States continue to uphold their narrow interests at the expense of the reform process.

In conclusion, I wish to stress the importance of establishing a balance and of activating cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. This will preserve the genuine expression of the will of the international community, represented most fully by the General Assembly, including in the search for solutions to problems which the Security Council has hitherto failed to solve. Prominent among these issues is the situation in the Middle East and the need to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): As I look around the Hall, I must confess that I regret the poor turnout we have this morning. When we walk in the corridors, the most frequent complaint we hear is that the Security Council is not open and transparent. Here, at a time when we have an opportunity to discuss the Security Council, there is such a low turnout. I hope that, in the course of the day, the turnout will improve.

In two and a half months, Singapore will complete its term on the Security Council. The question we are most frequently asked is this: "Well, how has the experience been?" Clearly, it is not easy to summarize what has been a rich and complex experience, but we have found a helpful analogy, which, like all analogies, is necessarily imperfect.

Joining the Security Council, especially for the first time, as it was for Singapore, is like suddenly jumping on a moving train. We scramble into the last compartment. The train keeps moving on rapidly, often at a quickening pace. We move from compartment to compartment, trying to understand the inner workings of one of the most important vehicles of international peace and security, but in two years we do not quite make it into the engine room. Certainly, we never make it into the driver's seat.

When the two years are up, we will be thrown off this moving train. It will keep on moving with five new passengers. We are not giving away any great secret if we reveal that the main directions of this train are set by the five permanent occupants. How could it be otherwise? I want to add, however, that even the permanent occupants have found the need to adjust to a rapidly changing international landscape.

Over time, we have found that it has become easier to look into the compartments of the train, whether you are inside or outside. More open meetings have been held; more wrap-up sessions have been held;

more briefings have been provided; and certainly the Counter-Terrorism Committee, under the leadership of Sir Jeremy Greenstock, has been a model of openness and set new standards for Security Council transparency.

In that regard, let me mention that the latest terrorist attack, in Bali, only reinforces the importance of the battle we are fighting against terrorism. We condemn that attack. We also offer our condolences to the families that lost their loved ones.

This year's annual report clearly signals a significant effort by the Security Council to respond to the concerns expressed by Member States at the Assembly's annual debate on this item. I will not go into the details of the changes, because the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, already spelled out the changes in a statement he made earlier today. But I would like to point out that it is nice to see the report go from its size last year to its present size — I think it is about half the size of what it was last year. I also want to thank those who have commended Singapore for its contributions in that regard.

But the most significant innovation is not found in the report. Instead it can be found in the provisional verbatim record of the Security Council meeting that took place when the report was adopted, on 26 September 2002. That record is contained in document S/PV.4616. As the President of the Security Council said earlier, we should also refer to this document when we participate in the debate today. We hope that this document will be read carefully by all participants. Let me explain the significance of that provisional verbatim record. Last year, when the Council met on 18 September 2001 to adopt its annual report (A/56/2), both Ambassador Valdivieso of Colombia and I were surprised that the report was being adopted without any discussion. As Ambassador Valdivieso said last year,

> "we should not limit ourselves to hearing an explanatory statement from the Secretariat — from Mr. Fall — but … members of the Council should also make comments on the subject." (*S/PV.4375, p. 3*)

Fortunately, this year Ambassador Valdivieso's wish has came true. This year, for the first time ever, all 15 members of the Council made comments, both on the report and the work of the Council. Many incisive and insightful comments were made. In the full text of my statement I cite the comment made by Ambassador Gerard Corr of Ireland. I will not read it out, but members will notice that he makes an important point, namely, that the world that the Council deals with in the issues on its agenda is inherently untidy in many respects. I want to add that the same untidiness and complexity about which Ambassador Corr spoke bedevilled our efforts to try to improve the annual report. We thought last year that reducing the size of the report should have been an open and shut case. Unfortunately, we met heavy resistance, for reasons we do not yet fully understand. Of course, we discovered that the Council is a conservative institution. But I also want to add here the comment made by Ambassador Levitte on 26 September 2002:

> "If we take a look at the development of the Security Council's working methods since its creation more than 50 years ago, we can see that we have gone from a period of hibernation to a period of increasingly rapid development." (*S/PV.4616, p. 7*)

I noticed that he was quite honest in talking about hibernation. He then added that "If we compare the Council to the General Assembly, we could say that in this friendly competition, the Council has taken the lead." (*ibid.*)

One question that we need to ask in assessing this year's annual report is clear: have the innovations gone far enough? The simple answer is obviously not. Some manifest absurdities remain in the present report. Look, for example, at page 191 of the report, where, as Ambassador Valdivieso has said, there is a laughable description of the Council's consideration of the Nobel Peace Prize. Pages like that can clearly be removed from the report. We hope that next year's report will again be half as thin as this year's report. We think it can be done. Unfortunately, we will not be there to do it.

Despite the enormous time and effort we have put into trying to transform the report, one key point we would like to make is that the General Assembly does not need to rely solely on this report to assess the performance of the Security Council. Certainly, it helps to get the perspective of the passengers on the train. But often those watching from outside can see the direction of the train more clearly than the passengers in the train. In the case of the Council, the results of the Council's work — both its successes and

failures — are clearly visible and tangible. In our statement today we will not do what several other delegations will be doing: looking at specific items regarding the Council's performance, its successes and failures. In a statement we made in December 2001 we gave an assessment of the successes and failures for that year. In that regard, I urge members to look at document S/PV.4445, of 21 December 2001.

We also stated our views in connection with the successes and failures over the past year in our statement in the Council on 26 September 2002 (see document S/PV.4616), so we will not repeat what we said then. But we want to suggest that as we assess the performance of the Council, it may be useful if all of us could try to arrive at some agreed criteria for how we should assess the performance of the Council. In this regard, when we spoke in the Council on 26 September 2002, we suggested four questions. They are on the record, but let me just mention them quickly.

The first question is an obvious one: has the Council successfully managed the issues under its purview? Have lives been saved or improved by the Council's work? Secondly, has the Council improved its procedures and working methods to generate greater efficiency and effectiveness in its work? Thirdly, has the Council become more transparent and open in its work and in its relationship with the wider United Nations membership? Fourthly, has the Council enhanced or diminished its credibility and prestige in the international community? At the Council debate on 26 September 2002, Ambassador Greenstock suggested an additional question. He asked "whether the Council has responded adequately to the greater demands put upon it by the process of globalization" (*S/PV.4616, p. 11*). He added that we have to recognize that the world is moving faster than the Council.

That indeed is the central challenge of our times. The world is certainly racing ahead. The multilateral institutions are either standing still or moving slowly. Each institution should evaluate what it has to do to catch up. Hence, as one of the two suggestions we provided on 26 September 2002 to improve the performance of the Council, we said that the Council should do more strategic reviews of its work, more often than the one time we do so when we meet in the annual retreat with the Secretary-General. Indeed, it is surprising for a body as important as the Security Council not to meet more often to engage in an overall strategic review of its work.

That is, again, why we are glad that the President of the Assembly has decided to cluster the two items today. Items 11 and 40 go hand in hand. The expansion of the Council — on which there is no longer any debate; we all agree that it should be expanded — goes hand in hand with its performance. The purpose of the expansion is to enhance performance, not to diminish it.

For the record, I should say that we have expressed our well-known views on Security Council expansion. We will not repeat them today, as they are in our past statements. But we want to emphasize one dimension, namely that to achieve enhanced performance we have to address squarely the question of the veto. Again, the full of this statement includes an extended quotation from Inis Claude's classic book entitled *Swords Into Ploughshares*. In that book the author talks about the understanding that was reached when the veto was created. Perhaps one of the key points he makes is that that the third objective was "to gain assurance that the most powerful members would initiate and support positive collective action within and on behalf of the organization in times of crisis".

The point here is simple and clear: the purpose of the veto is to promote collective, not national, interests. There was, I guess, from the beginning, and even now, an implicit social contract. The power of the veto was conferred by the Members that ratified the Charter of the United Nations. In return they expected the veto to be used to promote collective security.

Herein lies the nub of the problem we face. All Members of the United Nations, both the veto-bearing and non-veto-bearing Members, have made a commitment to promote the principles of the United Nations Charter. Yet each time we cast a vote, whether in the General Assembly or the Security Council, more often than not we put our short-term national interests ahead of our long-term collective interests. This is a deep structural problem that undermines the performance of both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

I want to conclude by citing one simple example of how this deep structural problem seriously cripples efforts to improve the performance of the Security Council, a goal that we all ostensibly share. The only effective way to improve the performance of any organization, whether it is in business — certainly in the last few months we have seen how confidence in

this sphere can be dramatically eroded — or in government or non-governmental organizations is to hold the organization accountable. So, too, the Security Council has to be held accountable. The only question is, who is going to hold the Council accountable?

The only effective way to hold the Council accountable is to commit a large amount of resources to monitoring its work. It is important to recognize that the growth of that work has exploded in recent years, both in quantity and complexity, and hence a significant amount of resources, both material and intellectual, will be needed to adequately monitor and assess the performance of the Council. I can say this having served as a member of the Council for the past 22 months. Even as one serves as a member, it is almost impossible to follow everything that the Council does because of its different working groups, sanctions committees and the other sub-bodies of the United Nations. Therefore a tremendous amount of resources will be required in order to really monitor the Council. The question here is, who will do the job? One obvious candidate is the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform.

While we emphasize the importance of accountability, I want to stress that the pursuit of accountability will serve the interests of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. For the Security Council, greater accountability will inevitably lead to an even better performance and, consequently, to greater prestige and standing on the world stage.

The General Assembly, on the other hand, provides the legitimacy that ensures international compliance with Security Council decisions. Without the General Assembly, the Security Council would be essentially half a body. Hence there is an essential symbiotic relationship between the Council and the Assembly. Each needs the other. The greater the trust and confidence between these two vital organs of the United Nations, the better the international system will be. Therefore it serves the interest of both to equally promote the pursuit of accountability.

Finally, as we did last year, under the Irish presidency of the Council, this year the Council will, under Cameroon's presidency, discuss the comments and suggestions raised at this Assembly general debate, reflect on the key points made and consider further improvements to the Council's working methods, its work and future reports.

Last year the Singapore delegation rendered a small service to the Council by compiling all the summaries of the statements that were made during this debate and distributing them to members of the Security Council. We will be happy to provide the same service this year.

We will do our best to contribute to the discussions in the Security Council to maintain and improve the relationship of trust and confidence between the General Assembly and the Security Council. As I said earlier, the President has made a major contribution by clustering these two agenda items together. Both in symbolic and in substantive terms, the Council has sent a clear message that the Security Council and the Open-ended Working Group need to cooperate closely. We hope this will happen in the coming years.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): Let me first express our condolences to the Indonesian and Australian delegations, as well as many others for the hundreds of innocents killed in the brutal attack in Bali over the weekend. We mourn for those killed and pray for the injured of every nationality. Nothing can justify this terrorist act. The United States will stand with you in ensuring that those who committed this are brought to justice.

The United States is committed to strengthening the Security Council and to help it perform its important functions more effectively. Enlarging the Council is a means to that end, not the end in itself. A reformed Council, with Japan and Germany assuming permanent seats and with an expanded number of rotating seats, would better enable the Council to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter.

The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform is entering its ninth year of deliberations. This is indicative of the complexity of the issues that remain to be resolved. They include a balancing representation between the developed and developing countries, achieving appropriate and equitable representation among regions and ensuring that Council enlargement does not curtail its ability to act promptly and decisively.

Despite these challenges, we want the Open-ended Working Group to succeed in building as broad a consensus as possible. To move forward, it is necessary to seriously analyse the various models for an

expanded Council, to determine how to make it stronger and more effective. This will require genuine and broad support. To get there, we cannot divorce the discussion from issues of the expanded Council's ultimate size and composition. Doing so merely ensures more delay.

It will come as no surprise that we will continue to oppose efforts to limit or eliminate the veto. These initiatives only serve to stifle progress on the important task ahead of us. The veto remains an essential element of the Council's ability to maintain international peace and security.

In bolstering the effectiveness of the Council, the United States will work through the Open-ended Working Group and in any discussions to ensure that the Council continues to be the lynchpin of international peace and security. We will also join with others in making the Council more transparent and representative of the entire membership. That is important work, and we are fully engaged. We hope that we can make real progress on all these issues in the coming session.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): The pursuit of security poses a dilemma. As the Secretary-General wisely noted, no State can increase its level of security to the detriment of others. Inevitably, other States construe as a veiled threat any unilateral action aimed at acquiring greater guarantees of security. Absolute security for one State necessarily means absolute insecurity for others.

This dilemma can only be solved through multilateral action. It is impossible to ensure the sovereignty of one State at the expense of the sovereignty of others. All nations have an equal right to sovereignty, in a climate of mutual respect and cooperation. Only joint action will enable us to attain — jointly — greater security, peace and freedom.

In this context, the Security Council is the only universal mechanism that makes it possible for all of us collectively to enjoy true security. We must not allow the Council to be weakened by unilateral action. We cannot accept the Council's exclusion from the most important decisions of international peace and security, thus eroding its authority. We cannot consent to it becoming an instrument of a small group of States, thus losing its legitimacy. We cannot accept the concession of additional privileges to the permanent members or the exclusion of the elected members from the decision-making process, who thus lose their representation.

The world expects greater leadership from the United Nations. The people demand firm and decisive action of the international community. For that reason, we must support and strengthen the Security Council. All States must scrupulously observe the absolute prohibition of the use of force. The Security Council must never transfer, abandon or renounce its primary responsibility to maintain peace and security. The members of the Security Council must always act in the spirit of the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter. Their actions should never be motivated by internal political considerations.

In previous years, my delegation was highly critical of the work of the Security Council. We questioned, in particular, the creation of peacekeeping operations without the necessary human and financial resources as well as the imposition of sanctions regimes that harmed the innocent civilian population. The situation has changed. Recently, we have witnessed the adoption of more realistic mandates in keeping with the resources available. Undoubtedly, the Security Council has learned from its mistakes.

However, we fear that this newly found caution might have led the Security Council to shirk from its primary responsibility of facing firmly, decisively and courageously all threats to international peace and security. We believe that the Council did not do all that it could have done to solve the most recent crises in the Middle Fast, in the Indian subcontinent and in Afghanistan.

It is essential that the Security Council today assume all its responsibilities. It cannot continue reacting to political and military crises with feeble declarations to the press. It cannot continue condemning massive violations of human rights with empty declarations and ephemeral commitments. This organ must take up again the leading role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The adoption of resolution 1373 (2001) gave us new hope. It is evidence of the capacity of the Security Council to face new challenges as long as the necessary political will exists. We would like to see the same readiness and commitment in the implementation of all

the other resolutions adopted by this organ, including those on the various arms and diamonds embargoes.

In the long run, increasing the Security Council's legitimacy and its capacity for action is vital. In this context, the process of the reform and revitalization of the Council plays a central role in the design of the future structure of the international community.

The work of the Security Council must be genuinely transparent. We have noted the efforts to hold a greater number of public meetings. However, most of them are devoted to the consideration of general topics, which, by their nature, correspond to the General Assembly, the main deliberative body of the Organization. True transparency will be attained only when the consultations among the Council's members and the periodic presentation of reports by the Secretary-General or his representatives are held in public meetings.

The reform of the Security Council must transform it into a more representative and democratic organ. Unfortunately, its efficacy has been limited by the most serious injustices in its composition, working methods and decision-making process. The current structure of the Security Council does not reflect either the current composition of the international community or the present distribution of power among nations. In particular, it is essential that the Security Council reflect not only the military capability of the various actors in the international community but also their economic influence and, above all, their moral authority.

Costa Rica favours an increase in the membership of the Security Council to make possible the greater representation of developing countries in that organ. However, an increase in the Council's membership is only a secondary and subsidiary aspect of the reform and revitalization process. The regulation, limitation and eventual elimination of the veto must be the main goal of the reform process. The existence of the veto right as a unilateral privilege is in itself an affront to the basic principles of justice. That unjustifiable and anti-democratic privilege has paralyzed the Council and has contributed substantially to the erosion of its legitimacy.

We cannot talk of a genuine reform of the Security Council unless those imbalances are corrected. Regrettably, after nine years of negotiations reform efforts have yet to bear fruit. We believe it is necessary to reconsider the process in depth.

I wish to conclude by expressing the condolences of the Government and the people of Costa Rica to the people of Indonesia and to the families of all the victims of the abominable terrorist attack in Bali.

Mr. Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Permanent Representative of Cameroon and current President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the Council's annual report.

Peru is thankful for the efforts to improve the report's presentation. My delegation welcomes especially the introductory chapter as a good starting point for reflection and analysis of the Council's treatment of the issues before it.

However, while this year's report has a more adequate logical order, it still fails to present a clear and integral vision of international peace and security at the present time.

If a person reads a report of the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, for example, whether the reader agrees or disagrees with its assessments, he or she will gain a clear picture of the international economic and financial situation. That is not true in the case of the report of the Security Council.

While it is true that the report of the Security Council is intended for the Member States of the General Assembly, it is no less true that it provides an excellent opportunity to offer the collective society of the world — investors, the academic sector, civil society, students and the general public — a clear and transparent message illustrating the difficulties and lessons learned with respect to the challenges presented to international peace and security.

For example, a student of international relations who would like to obtain an overall view of world security from the report of the principal organ of the United Nations, the Security Council, would become lost in interminable lists of documents, written in near-cryptic jargon or intended for the few who are familiar with such subjects, as we diplomats are.

It is certain that, in this globalized world, the Security Council's intensive work and its principal efforts are not well communicated, are mostly

unrecognized and/or are poorly understood. In that context, it runs the risk — as do other organizations or international bodies — of becoming merely a suspicious entity, lacking real significance, that says nothing to the international community and might be overlooked or superseded by unilateral actions or measures taken by regional bodies.

My country is making these comments because it supports the work of the Security Council and wants to see a Council that is more efficient, more successful, more open to cooperation, more transparent and more understanding of the needs of the international community. Peru believes firmly in multilateralism and in collective security as fundamental mechanisms for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Last year, the Security Council began the fight against terrorism through an interactive process between that body and the rest of the Member States that has been very positive. The Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee, led by Ambassador Greenstock of the United Kingdom, promoted an ongoing and open-ended debate with non-Council members. That is an advance to which my country has contributed through the participation of an expert in the Committee. We should also like these open-ended meetings to continue in the future.

This process can be seen as part of the increase in open Security Council meetings, held both to consider individual topics and to present Secretariat reports on the various items on the Council's agenda. That is another encouraging fact, as is the continuation of the wrap-up sessions, which Peru firmly supports because they offer all States the opportunity to contribute to the development and consolidation of collective international security.

However, that positive aspect has its negative side, which is that the proposals and ideas presented in open meetings do not go beyond the Council Chamber. Why not include a summary of such meetings in the report of the Security Council? That would be valuable information clarifying the status of a particular topic at a particular time. The country presiding over the Council could summarize open meetings. Because of their factual character, including them in the reports of the presidency or of the Council should not pose a major problem.

My country also believes that the Council's report should include the arguments presented by the permanent members of the Security Council that exercise the veto power, in addition to information on Council resolutions that have not been complied with — all as part of complete and transparent information about the Council, not only for the General Assembly, as I have said, but for the entire world. Otherwise, I reiterate, the international community outside the United Nations will not have a clear idea of what is happening in the Council. Such a complete lack of information clearly runs counter to the culture of global access to information in which we live as a result of the advances in telecommunications and in democracy. If good information is to exist, there must also be transparency within the Council itself, where some areas of debate and decision-making seem to be the permanent members' private domain.

I conclude by pointing out that these ideas and proposals have been presented mainly with the objective of strengthening the image of the Security Council, as part of the current process of fostering transparency and democracy that is spreading throughout the world as the new global culture of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to express our sincerest condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia and to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack that occurred in Bali.

This is the first time we are discussing together two priority items on the Assembly's agenda: the report of the Security Council and reform of that body. The results of this first experience will demonstrate in practice whether we should do the same in the future or whether it would be more convenient to return to the practice of two separate debates.

We welcome the new format of the report of the Security Council, particularly the inclusion for the first time of a brief analytical summary. That constitutes a step forward towards the objective of having truly substantive reports on the work of the Council. The Council's report should reflect not only what has been done, but also what it has been impossible to do and why. As Member States, we have the legitimate right and the duty to consider in depth the Council's work and to determine if the Council is really acting on behalf of all and fulfilling, as it should, the lofty responsibilities conferred on it by the Charter.

There is no logical reason why the rules of procedure of the Council continue to be provisional 57 years after the establishment of that body or why they have not been amended in 20 years. Any changes to the rules adopted by the Council or to those that apply in practice should be set out in the rules of procedure.

It is true that the number of open meetings has increased — that is a positive development. But the closed informal consultations, which are not even provided for in the provisional rules of procedure, continue to be the rule rather than the exception.

Not only must the number of open meetings be increased, but such meetings should provide a real opportunity for the opinions and contributions of non-members to be properly taken into account.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the informative briefings by the Secretariat and representatives of the Secretary-General should take place in public meetings of the Council, not behind closed doors, as almost always happens.

The wrap-up meetings at the end of each month should become an established practice and be open to non-members of the Council in order to permit a genuine interactive exchange.

We consider the open debate on the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa to have been positive. At the same time, we wonder why such discussions are not extended to the work of other groups and subsidiary bodies of the Council, such as the Working Groups established to consider sanctions and peacekeeping operations.

We raised concerns in a number of Security Council debates about the increasing tendency of that body to assume functions outside its purview. One particularly dangerous example of action by the Council in an area outside its mandate occurred this year with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1422 (2002) on the International Criminal Court. That resolution extended to an unacceptable extent the authority of the Security Council to amend international treaties — the exclusive right of the States parties to such treaties.

The Security Council is not the appropriate body in which to debate treaty law or the International Criminal Court, for the simple reason that the Charter does not authorize it to do so.

While the Security Council goes beyond its authority on some subjects, we are concerned by its lack of action in other areas, such as the occupied Palestinian territories. It is unacceptable for that body to continue to turn its back on the suffering of the Palestinian people and fail to give serious consideration to the Secretary-General’s proposal to establish a multinational protection force in the occupied territories.

We are convinced that many of the problems that currently affect the work of the Security Council can be resolved only by a far-reaching reform of that body. Council reform is certainly the most urgent priority task of the general United Nations reform effort, and the outcome will to a great extent dictate the future of the Organization. The Security Council is not, and cannot be, effective given its current composition and methods of work. It is neither democratic, nor equitable, nor representative. It does not reflect the current global realities nor does it represent the interests of the membership of the United Nations.

Even non-permanent members of the Council are effectively ignored when — as we have seen in recent weeks — permanent members make decisions with regard to questions that are of key importance to the international community and the future of the United Nations.

Nine years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Council, very little progress has been made on the key issues of such reform. Today, the membership of the Security Council represents scarcely 8 per cent of the total number of States Members of the Organization, which has increased almost fourfold since 1945.

How can the Security Council fulfil its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security without appropriate representation within that body of two thirds of the world’s population living in the developing countries?

It is inexplicable that Africa does not have a single representative among the permanent members of the Council, given that most of the items on the Council’s agenda relate to conflicts on that continent, and that there are no permanent members from such a turbulent region as the Middle East.

With a view to rectifying the inadequate level of representation of developing countries, we should

ensure the inclusion as permanent members, with the same privileges as the current permanent members, of at least two countries from Africa and two from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as two developing countries from Asia.

The anachronistic privilege of the veto should be done away with. No one can seriously argue that the almost 300 times that the veto has been used was in the interests of the international community, to say nothing of the even greater number of so-called silent vetoes or threats of veto, which have frequently determined the course of action in meetings behind closed doors.

We cannot expect real leadership from a body some of whose permanent members, sheltering behind the veto privilege, practise on a daily basis double standards and selective policies that give priority to narrow national interests instead of to the aspirations of the international community.

If the use of the veto is not restricted at least to actions under Chapter VII of the Charter, before being finally eliminated; if we do not do away with the practice of so-called informal consultations by re-establishing open meetings as the main way of holding discussions and taking decisions; if the provisional rules of procedure are not given final shape; if the opinions of non-members of the Council are not properly taken into account; if there is no transparency and democracy; and if we do not put an end to hegemony, there will be no true reform of the Security Council.

I should like to conclude by expressing our sincere congratulations to all the countries that have been elected as members of the Security Council for next year, and to wish them every success in their important work.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to express my gratitude for the decision to convene this joint debate on two items of great interest to Members of the United Nations. As we all know, the question of Security Council reform involves more than a mere increase in membership, and is directly related to the working methods of that body and its methods of reporting to the General Assembly, including the annual report on its work, which is currently before us.

We therefore thank Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Permanent Representative of Cameroon and President of the Security Council for this month, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council. For the first time, the report includes an analytical section on the work of the Council containing elements of interest to all States Members of the United Nations. This year, the members of the Security Council agreed on guidelines regarding the preparation of the annual report. This is an innovation. We believe that the format has been improved, but the report is still far from being the substantive, useful document required by Member States if they are to evaluate the work of that body. Mexico will try to ensure that in future the analytical section of the report includes progress indicators regarding the work of the Council, as well as a section containing proposals for the improvement of its work.

In recent years, a significant number of the members of the Security Council have tried to improve its interaction with all Members of the United Nations, as well as to enhance the transparency of that body. In order to limit the confidential nature of the Council's work, they are improving the dissemination of information regarding its activities and promoting more informative public meetings so as to enable non-members of the Council to gain access to the information that the Secretariat provides on various subjects and to offer their opinions. That would make it possible for them to offer their opinions regarding the Council's decisions. The dissemination of information through statements to the press, informational documents and the Internet, as well as greater interaction between some members of the Security Council and the members of the General Assembly, have contributed to enhancing the Council's transparency.

Mexico, in the context of its work in the Security Council since January 2002 as a non-permanent member, has promoted greater transparency in the working methods of the Security Council, as well as greater democratization in its decision-making process. Mexico has thereby endeavoured to abide by the provisions of article 48 of the provisional rules of procedure, which states that the Council shall meet in public. We hope that the resistance to change shown by some members of the Council is easing and that this will lead to a greater rapprochement between the members of this body and of the General Assembly.

Wrap-up meetings of the Security Council, at which there is an interactive dialogue between

members and non-members of the Council, are further proof of increased openness. This has been supported by some countries, but others who do not believe in the usefulness or the validity of such meetings continue to have reservations on the subject. For this reason, these meetings have not been held as regularly as my delegation would have wished.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretariat, whose contribution made possible the publication in June 2002 of a document regarding procedural developments in the Security Council in 2001, and of an index to notes and statements by the President of the Security Council relating to documentation and procedure. Mexico will work to ensure the institutionalization of the rules and working methods, which have been provisional for more than 50 years.

In connection with the subject of working methods, the work 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 is contributing to the elaboration of measures to enhance the methods of work of the Council. This is one of the key aspects of the reform package.

In recent years, it has been noted that the positions of a large majority of delegations in the Working Group have led to major improvements in the working methods of the Council. These improvements have been the result of initiatives by non-permanent members wishing to be in the vanguard of change.

As regards the Council's decision-making process, the Working Group has stated, as have the majority of delegations, that the use of the veto privilege should be limited to decisions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter. We hope that we will have the support of all permanent members of the Council in this connection.

As we all know, with respect to so-called cluster I items, which relate to an increase in the membership of the Security Council, the Working Group has before it a broad range of proposals. The formulas proposed vary with respect to the number of new members and the categories of new members. Mexico has made a constructive contribution to this process. We are in favour of an increase in the number of non-permanent members, which would also lead to better geographical representation.

Discussions on this aspect of reform have been intensive and prolonged, but not very successful. This is due primarily to the fact that the numerous positions that have been taken regarding the increase in membership are very varied, and, in the majority of the cases, irreconcilable.

Member States are convinced that there is a need to agree on a broad reform in the Security Council and have been working very hard towards that end. Like the majority of States, the Government of Mexico believes that any decision regarding the reform must be comprehensive and address the issues of an increase in membership, the decision-making process, the question of the veto and an improvement in the working methods of the Council.

In the quest to achieve this goal, we must bear in mind the following questions.

First, rapid or partial solutions, or the establishment of deadlines or set periods for reaching agreement, must be avoided.

Secondly, the goal of the reform is for the Council to become more representative, transparent and democratic. It must be capable of dealing with the challenges of our era.

Thirdly, any reform whose primary goal would be to increase the number of permanent members would only exacerbate inequalities and enlarge the membership of the "club of the privileged", currently made up of five members.

Fourthly, in assigning new seats, new realities must be borne in mind, including the consolidation of the European Union, which is an important protagonist in the international arena; the principle of equitable geographical distribution; and the fact that it is unjustifiable to give special privileges to even more countries.

Fifthly, the real use of the veto and the so-called "hidden" use of the veto by permanent members in most cases has a negative impact on the decision-making process in the Council. The restriction or elimination of this anachronistic privilege must be firmly and decisively promoted.

Negotiations in the Working Group are at an impasse. Nine years of work in the Group have shown that the reform of the Security Council is a highly sensitive subject politically, and for that reason only a

plan leading to a general agreement, as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 48/26, would be legitimate. The reform of the Council must lead to greater representativity of the various regions as well as to changes in its working methods, including, as I said earlier, the limitation or elimination of the veto privilege. The veto must no longer be something that is untouchable.

It is a fact that the pace of negotiations in the Working Group is far from ideal. It must be made clear, however, that this is due to the positions taken and the complexity of the subject material and not to the Group's methods of work. The Working Group is, and must continue to be, the appropriate forum for negotiations to achieve an overall reform, in keeping with the General Assembly's mandate. To disband the Group would set a dangerous precedent: it would mean ignoring not only the work that has already done but also its importance as a representative and democratic body of the General Assembly in which participation by all States Members of the United Nations is guaranteed.

We believe that one way of advancing the Group's work would be to agree to work on the increase in non-permanent membership in order to encourage negotiation on the package of reforms and to enable agreements to be reached on the various elements of the package.

The Working Group has sought to find imaginative and innovative formulas for expansion that would lead to an increase in membership, taking into account the increase that has occurred in the membership of the Organization as a whole. This would ensure greater representativeness in the Council and greater legitimacy for its decisions.

However, in this exercise we must not ignore the fact that Article 23 of the Charter clearly defines the criteria for the election of Council members. On that basis, the Working Group must make a greater effort to determine the membership profile of an expanded Council and should not focus solely on mathematical formulas, the contents of which might be subjective. From this perspective, we also believe that the work of the Working Group will be incomplete if we do not know the opinions of the five permanent members of the Council, since they hold the power of veto over any reform and over the terms that they are willing to accept if membership is to increase.

We are confident that the Assembly will appreciate the work of the Group next year to advance the negotiations on comprehensive Security Council reform, in which all States Members of the United Nations will participate.

Before concluding, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Mexico, to join others who have expressed condolences for the victims of the terrorist attack in Bali.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by thanking the President of the Security Council for October, Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, for his detailed introduction of the Council's report, submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter.

On behalf of Algeria, I also take this opportunity once again to congratulate Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council. I am convinced that those countries will not fail to make a constructive contribution to the Council's work.

Consideration of the Security Council's report is the major mechanism whereby the General Assembly, under paragraph 3 of Article 24 of our Organization's Charter, evaluates action by the Security Council throughout the period covered by the report. Thus, the exercise in which we are engaging today should be not a mere formality, but a precious opportunity for our Assembly to consider the Council's activities in depth and to identify measures to be taken to improve its working methods. Such interaction is, indeed, in the interests of the Council itself, which should exploit it by co-opting and making appropriate use of the ideas and innovative and constructive proposals which, I am sure, this debate cannot fail to generate. Following this debate, the Assembly could take any action it may deem necessary, as is its prerogative.

With regard to the format of the document before us, I pay particular tribute to my friend Ambassador Mahbubani and the entire team from the Singapore mission for their efforts to give the report its current format, in response largely to the comments and criticisms made by Member States on the debate we held here on this subject last year. The brief, analytical and precise document before us today is indeed a considerable improvement over the reports of preceding years. It is considerably shorter, which has

permitted substantial savings for the Organization and facilitated our reading and understanding.

As to the functioning of the Council, we note that, during the period under consideration, the Council held a greater number of public meetings, in which a greater number of States participated. We also note a net increase in public briefings organized by the Secretariat, allowing non-member States to be better informed on the development of certain issues dealt with by that body. Algeria nevertheless believes that it would be appropriate for the consultations following those meetings to be open on a systematic basis to parties interested or concerned with a view to hearing their opinions. This would give the Council a better understanding of subjects and thus help it take more informed decisions.

We would also note our conviction that the wrap-up meetings, open to non-members following the work of the Council at the end of each month, offer an opportunity for views to be expressed on subjects of interest in an analytical, synthetic, candid and open manner. We believe that this practice should be maintained and encouraged.

With regard to substance, the Security Council's report shows that, over the period under consideration — June 2001 to July 2002 — the Council not only reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security, but also acted directly in addressing a large number of problems affecting the world. Following the attacks of 11 September 2001, it firmly and promptly addressed the global threat of terrorism by adopting resolutions 1363 (2001), 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). It also showed resolve and pugnacity in dealing with the issues of Afghanistan, Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Angola and Burundi.

In our view, the Security Council missions to various conflict zones or to post-conflict areas were very useful in going to the very heart of the problem and in seeking the support and cooperation of the parties concerned. In the Great Lakes region as in Ethiopia/Eritrea, these missions had a positive impact on local actors. In the light of such success, we encourage this type of initiative and action and call for them to be formalized and extended to other conflict areas.

However, we regret to note that, in some cases, the Council has been hesitant to deal with certain issues with the same political will and has not shown the same resolve. More serious yet, we have even noted an implicit sanctioning of non-respect of resolutions by certain Members, which has seriously undermined the Council's authority. We regret in this respect that certain important Council resolutions have remained dead letter and not been followed up. This situation has often encouraged the recalcitrant party to a conflict or any given situation to continue to defy the Council's wishes and to undermine its credibility.

In the Middle East, where the Council has a manifest responsibility, it has been unable, despite the adoption of numerous resolutions, to make any significant progress in encouraging or facilitating the peace process or, indeed, in protecting the Palestinian population in the occupied territories. The case of resolution 1435 (2002), which was painstakingly negotiated and adopted just two weeks ago, attests to the Council's powerlessness to ensure respect for its own resolutions. As soon as the text was adopted, Israel effectively rejected it and declared, in all impunity and with its customary arrogance towards the international community, that it would not take it into consideration.

It is therefore the credibility of the Security Council itself that is at stake. This will be further eroded, if the Council does not manage to reverse the trend and show the whole world that it is capable of assuming its responsibilities in managing and solving the various conflicts that have been on its agenda for a long time. The Council should therefore have a comprehensive policy based on equity and justice. It should adopt a clear and coherent approach to dealing with the issues entrusted to it by the Charter, particularly those related to international peace and security. In other words, there is a need for deep-rooted reform.

It is not just a matter of abstract theory to say that our Organization unfortunately continues to be caught up in the criteria of, and subscribe to, the logic of an agelong gone, despite the fact that the world order established by the Second World War has undergone serious changes, not only in terms of geopolitical structure but also because of the major changes that have taken place in inter-State relations. In the wake of the upheavals in international relations, nine years ago the General Assembly placed the question of the

reform of the Security Council on its agenda and established an Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of that issue, with a view to strengthening the Council's effectiveness and reforming its working methods.

While the Working Group has made some progress with regard to addressing issues pertaining to the Council's methods of work, the Group continues to experience great difficulty as a result of major differences of opinion with regard to reaching a consensus on the more substantial issues, in particular in connection with Council expansion and the use of the veto. It should be noted that the lack of progress, or indeed the blockage, on substantive issues is essentially due to the lack of political will on the part of various countries that have raised further obstacles and pretexts to delay, or even prevent, the emergence of the desired consensus. Proposals and suggestions designed to convince us to give up the ambition of full and comprehensive reform or to try to get us to be satisfied with partial reform for the time being have been advanced at various times. Should we give in to pessimism and accept the status quo or should we redouble our efforts to bring about genuine reform in both the Security Council, so it can better fulfil its mandate, and the General Assembly, so that it may re-assume its prerogatives as the principal representative deliberative body of the United Nations?

My delegation is well aware of the fact that we should not prolong discussions indefinitely on such an important and sensitive issue. We believe that giving up the momentous and noble undertaking of completely reforming the Council would mean a sort of abdication in the face of the difficult nature of the task. We should instead continue our efforts with perseverance and determination to arrive at an acceptable solution that will not compromise the prospects for comprehensive reform.

With regard to improving the functioning and working methods of the Council, my delegation is pleased to note the increasingly active role of the Council in the prevention and resolution of international crises and conflicts. We also note with satisfaction the introduction by the Council of positive measures aimed at creating greater transparency in its work, particularly by opening its briefings by the Secretariat to all Member States. However, we believe that it is necessary for the Council to finally take a decision regarding its rules of procedure and to institutionalize arrangements regarding a number of measures already taken to improve its working methods and transparency, so that the positive changes are not subject to the goodwill of any particular President or member of the Council.

Despite the increasing number of public meetings held by the Council, which we believe in fact increase its effectiveness, we note with regret that closed meetings, in which all important issues are dealt with and during which decisions affecting Member States are taken, remain the customary practice. In fact, closed meetings should be held on an exceptional basis. We also note that those who exercise exorbitant veto power determine the final outcome of the Council's deliberations in advance among them.

My delegation also believes that it is necessary for the Council to consult on a regular and continuous basis with the States and regional and subregional organizations directly or indirectly concerned by the situations discussed by the Council. In this regard, the Security Council should take steps to more effectively implement Article 50 of the Charter, concerning the right of every State to consult the Council if it faces difficulty in the implementation of preventive or coercive measures ordered by the Council. Similarly, and in addition to the new spirit of partnership and cooperation, further efforts should also be made with regard to troop-contributing countries in order to involve them in drawing up the mandate for the forces dispatched by the United Nations.

The Gordian knot of our exercise, which for my delegation is a greater source of concern and frustration, is the total lack of progress on substantive issues. Whether with regard to the size or composition of the Council, the criteria for the selection of new permanent members or even the issue of the veto, to mention just a few issues, the gap separating the positions of different countries, far from converging upon desirable compromises, has in fact grown and become more pronounced, with each State maintaining its own position and no one demonstrating any willingness to give in or be flexible.

On the issue of the veto, my delegation believes that this matter is intrinsically linked to the question of enlargement, whose consideration is at the very heart of the issue of Council reform. My delegation fully supports the idea advanced by almost all delegations that the right of veto is anachronistic, discriminatory

and anti-democratic. We would therefore like to see progressive restriction of this privilege, which should be limited solely to matters falling under Chapter VII of the Charter, until such time as it is eliminated. Until this privilege of a by-gone era is better regulated and eventually abolished, we would hope — although we do not harbour many illusions — that, in the face of urgent pressure from the rest of the world, those who hold the power of the veto will demonstrate pragmatism and utilize the veto only in exceptional circumstances.

With regard to the expansion of the Council, we believe that it is urgent and necessary to correct the current imbalance by ensuring more balanced and equitable geo-political representation and by strengthening the participation of developing countries. In this connection, my delegation would like to reiterate its support for the specific proposals made by the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, particularly those concerning an increase in the number of Council members. The proposals of the Non-Aligned Movement all demonstrate the wish to strengthen the effectiveness and representative character of this important body.

In addition, my delegation would like to highlight the fact that any enlargement in the composition of the Council should take into consideration the desire expressed by Africa at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit held in Harare in 1997. In accordance with that position, the Council should be enlarged by 11 seats. As a matter of fairness, and given that Africa is the Council's main priority and that the continent is home to the largest number of Member States in the Organization, Africa should be given two permanent rotating seats having the same privileges as other permanent members and two non-permanent seats to be shared in accordance with the OAU criteria and any future new elements or refinements to be made to those criteria. We consider that an increase in the membership of the Council to at least 26 members would give the Council greater legitimacy, representation and credibility without reducing its effectiveness in any way.

Mr. Schumacher (Germany): I would like to begin by thanking all delegations for their strong support for Germany in the elections to the Security Council. We take this as an overwhelming vote of confidence for German foreign and United Nations policy. Let me assure you once again that our membership on the Council will be guided by the principles of transparency, accountability and reconciliation of interests.

Germany welcomes the progress achieved in streamlining the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly. The report before us is the result of a considerable effort undertaken in the Security Council Working Group on Documentation and Procedures. The cost of the annual report was significantly reduced, which in itself is an important achievement in times of overall budgetary constraints. Most importantly, the report offers a more analytical introduction, highlighting areas where the Council needs to remain engaged and where its decisions remain to be implemented. We encourage the Security Council to continue to pursue that approach in its future reports. The degree to which the Security Council has become more operational and effective in its approach to questions of international peace and stability needs to be positively highlighted. As a future member of the Council we will contribute to those endeavours.

On Security Council reform, I am afraid I can be rather brief. Our position is well known. In this year's general debate, we heard a great number of delegations reiterate their feeling that the composition of the Council no longer reflects the realities of today. It is an overwhelming perception here and outside this Hall, in the academic and the political world, that this Security Council no longer reflects the new geopolitical order of the world. It lacks legitimacy. We fully share that view.

Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore had a much nicer image of a moving train which he jumped on and will have to jump off in two months' time. I hope that this train will stop to reconsider its schedule, together with the railway company. That company is, as I understand it, the Members of the United Nations and the General Assembly.

At the beginning of this session of the General Assembly, we admitted two new Members to the United Nations. That very happy occasion highlighted once again how rapidly United Nations membership has grown over the past 57 years. Membership during that period has almost quadrupled. Neither the changes in contributions to peace and security nor the increasing stake of all regions of the world in international affairs is presently reflected adequately in the composition of the Council. We reiterate our belief

that this has to change if the United Nations system as a whole wishes to maintain and increase its authority.

Germany therefore supports an increase in the number of seats in both categories, a review process to assess that reform after a given period of time, a first step towards a veto reform as suggested by Foreign Minister Fischer, and further progress in reforming the Council's working methods, a process which has already gained very positive momentum.

We can only warn against proposals apparently aiming at interim solutions, such as increasing only the number of non-permanent seats and thereby restricting the great regions of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean — and to a certain extent even Asia — to non-permanent seats forever. Interim solutions are makeshift solutions, and makeshift solutions are bad solutions. They run counter to the expressed will of our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration: "to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects".

While we understand the desire to breathe life into a rather deadlocked reform debate, we believe that heading in the wrong direction would, in the end, only cement forever the present state of affairs. Germany would, therefore, not be able to support such a proposal.

We continue to believe that narrowing and consolidating the various reform options contained in the report of the Open-ended Working Group might be a first step towards embarking on a meaningful Security Council reform. In addition, the question should be raised of whether, after ten years of work, the Open-ended Working Group has not exhausted its means and strength and should receive a new, more focused political impetus and mandate from the General Assembly.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As have all other delegations, we would like to express our shock at the bombing incident in Bali resulting in numerous deaths and casualties among innocent people. We strongly condemn those acts, and we wish to extend our condolences to the Government of Indonesia and to the families of all those killed or injured in the incident.

Allow me to express my appreciation to the Chair of the Working Group on Council reform established during the last session of the General Assembly, Mr. Han Seung-soo, and the two Vice-Chairpersons, Ambassador Ingolfsson and Ambassador Durrant, for their tireless efforts to ensure the smooth functioning of the work of the Working Group. We believe that the newly elected Chair of the Working Group will certainly guide the work to a positive conclusion. We would also like to thank the Ambassador of Cameroon for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council.

The Chinese delegation has already expressed its views on the annual report. I wish to stress that this year's annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly makes use of a new format that highlights the main points and reduces the report's volume. That is in keeping with the demands and desires of the Member States. It is also a result of the cooperative efforts of the Council members.

In the past year, the working method of the Security Council has been improved through increased transparency and enhanced efficiency. That momentum must be maintained. In the past year, the Security Council, as the primary organ for maintaining international peace and security, has adapted to situations, given prompt consideration to major issues and taken actions at the right time. In particular, after the terrorist acts of 11 September, the Security Council swiftly passed resolution 1373 (2001) and established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, thus providing an indispensable avenue for international cooperation on counter-terrorism.

At this critical moment, when major changes are taking place in Afghanistan, the Security Council has to act in solidarity for important decisions, in playing the major role towards full implementation of the Bonn Agreement and for the elimination of the Taliban and the Al Qaeda base.

Moved by the Security Council, and with the effort of all sides, positive changes have taken place in some of the areas of conflict in Africa. However, the work of the Council is still far from meeting the aspirations of the African countries. The Council should grasp the right time to work harder and give positive support to the African Union and other regional organizations to work for concrete results in the resolution of disputes in Africa.

At the same time, we would like to point out that the role played by the Security Council in the Middle East on the Palestinian question is still not satisfactory,

despite the fact that the Council has adopted resolutions and declarations. Nevertheless, the situation in the Middle East has not improved.

Furthermore, the security situation in Afghanistan is still a matter of concern. This remains an issue that the Security Council must face.

In the final analysis, the major issue of international peace and security — how and when the Security Council should effectively assume the role and responsibilities entrusted to it by the United Nations Charter — is still an issue that deserves our deep and continuing consideration.

Allow me now to make some observations on the reform of the Security Council. In the more than 50 years since its inception, the number of Members of the Organization have grown from 51 to 191, the majority being developing countries. As humankind steps into the twenty-first century, the challenges it faces have become ever more complex. While undertaking the sacred mission of maintaining international peace and security, adapting to new situations to better meet new challenges, the Council should keep pace with the progress of time and carry out appropriate and necessary reforms.

The primary task of reform should be to redress the lack of balance in the Council's present composition, so that representation of the developing countries could be increased on a priority basis, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. This is the aspiration of many Member States, as well as the common understanding of the majority of Member States.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is an important part of its reform. The Council has our support in its efforts to improve its working methods, to increase the participation of non-members and to enhance transparency, while ensuring its efficiency and authority.

In recent years, the Council has made significant efforts, with widely recognized results. The Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", states that

> "The Security Council has significantly improved its working methods over the past few years ... The Council has become more transparent, offering greater opportunities for the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in its work. There has been an increased number of open meetings with participation by non-members of the Security Council, briefings for the wider membership of the Organization, and improved arrangements for consultations with troop-contributing countries". (A/57/387, para. 21)

Our delegation believes that, with the common effort of Member States, more progress will be made in this respect by the Council.

The reform of the Council affects the direct interests of all States. The complexity of contradicting interests requires a gradual process of reaching a broad consensus, based on serious study and in-depth deliberations. There cannot be any 'quick fix'. In dealing with this important issue, it is necessary for us to have not only a sense of urgency but also, and even more so, patience and wisdom. At present, the Open-ended Working Group remains the appropriate forum for this discussion.

China is prepared to participate actively in the discussion on Security Council reform and to work with all others for the further enhancement of the role of the Council, so that it can better assume its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security, entrusted to it by the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): At the outset I would like to extend our deepest condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia, and to the victims and their families for the heinous terrorist attack that was perpetrated on the island of Bali last Saturday. We offer special condolences to the Government and people of Australia, who have sustained the largest number of deaths and injuries. As a people and a country which has been targeted by terrorism for so many years, we share the pain and agony of those who were affected by this latest manifestation of international terrorism.

The State of Israel joins with other Member States in support of reform of the Security Council, both in its structure and its working methods, with a view to more equitable representation and greater transparency that would increase the effectiveness and credibility of this body.

The past 57 years have shown that the world changes, often at an incredible pace, but that the wheels of change revolve much more slowly inside

these halls. Since the last expansion of the Security Council in 1965, more than 70 new States have become Member States of the United Nations; the global structure has been drastically transformed; and the agenda of the international community is far different from that envisaged by the authors of the Charter.

All these changes, when taken together, have influenced the Security Council's capability to fulfil its primary responsibility to the maintenance of international peace and security. The end of the cold war, the advances made in the field of decolonization, and the challenges of globalization have all contributed towards the advancement of humanity as a whole. At the same time, new threats and unseen enemies, such as international terrorism, rampant disease and increasing disparity between the developed and the developing countries, pose a new sort of challenge to international peace and security.

The United Nations must adapt itself to these new realities, and, in the process, the Security Council must change as well. At the same time, we must exercise great care to maintain the effectiveness of the Council.

Israel believes that expansion of the Security Council is important, in light of the marked increase in membership in the United Nations, and in order to more faithfully reflect the vast multiplicity of interests of Member States. What is needed, however, is to strike a proper balance between ensuring that the Council reflects the larger will of the Organization and the need to preserve the Council's ability to meet its responsibilities under the Charter.

Israel further believes that improved access to Council proceedings can only serve the interests of the Organization. Greater reliance on open meetings and more efficient and reliable methods of conveying information to Member States will undoubtedly increase transparency and confidence in the work of the Council. This will not only bring Member States closer to the work of the Council, but also provide greater understanding for the Council's decisions among the international community as a whole.

Israel supports such change insofar as it will advance the Organization towards the ultimate goal of increased efficiency and effectiveness. Such change must therefore reflect general agreement among Member States so as to foster cooperation rather than increase divisiveness.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my delegation's belief that the key to greater credibility and effectiveness lies in the Council's ability to embody the broadest range of cultures and opinions while retaining its ability to function coherently and effectively.

Mr. Tayeb (Saudi Arabia) *(spoke in Arabic):* Allow me first of all, in the context of the consideration of the report on the work of the Security Council submitted to the Assembly, to pay tribute to the Council for its efforts last year to maintain international peace and security.

Likewise, we would like to affirm the crucial importance we attach to the fact that the Security Council is fully discharging its mandate and playing its role in the maintenance of international peace and security in an effective manner throughout the world. Indeed, we believe that we cannot dissociate the active and effective role of the Security Council from the implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the re-establishment of peace and security throughout the world. The Security Council's clear determination to preserve international peace and security is pivotal in the process of bringing about peace and prosperity throughout the world.

We deeply appreciate the interest that the Security Council has shown in the question of the Middle East, as reflected in its adoption of four resolutions, most of them unanimously, over the period under consideration. However, we must express our concern at the fact that most of those resolutions have not been implemented, as the report itself shows.

Indeed, the State of Israel has refused to implement the resolutions calling for an immediate ceasefire and for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel has prevented the deployment of a fact-finding team concerning the atrocities perpetrated by the Israeli forces in the Jenin refugee camp. This refusal to implement Security Council resolutions demonstrates once again that State's scorn for the decisions of the United Nations, the Security Council and the international community. This is a matter of great concern in the context of international relations, as it could undermine the Council's work, effectiveness and legitimacy.

Israel's persistent refusal to implement Security Council resolutions shows its determination to continue occupying Palestinian and other Arab territories and to undermine efforts towards peace in the Middle East.

The Arab side, for its part, has shown a sincere determination to establish peace. This was made clear in particular at the Arab Summit held in Beirut last March, which adopted the initiative put forward by His Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz to establish a comprehensive and just peace in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to make possible the signing of a peace agreement leading to Israel's full withdrawal from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories; the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds as its capital; and the establishment of peaceful, normal relations between Israel and Arab States.

The day after that decision was taken, Israel perpetrated the worst possible crimes and massacres against innocent, unarmed Palestinian civilians and besieged the legitimate Palestinian Authority.

Given Israel's failure to comply with the Security Council's resolutions and efforts to promote peace in the region, the international community must take the necessary measures in order to maintain the prestige and credibility of the Council. Such action should have the same weight and force as other measures taken by the Council vis-à-vis other States that have failed to comply with its resolutions. Israel must submit to the will of the international community and accept the implementation of the relevant decisions of the Security Council. This alone will be a guarantee of peace, security and stability in the Middle East.

My country has noted with great satisfaction the role played by the Security Council in the strengthening of stability and the settlement of conflicts in a number of regions of the world, including Africa, the Balkans and Cyprus. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia fully supports the efforts undertaken by the Council and the Secretary-General to strengthen peace and security in those regions.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia fully supports international efforts to combat terrorism, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). My country will spare no effort in pursuing the perpetrators of such acts, as it believes that terrorism poses a threat to all humankind.

However, in this respect we should make clear the following points. First, terrorism is a global phenomenon that does not relate to any single nation, religion or race. We should therefore not attribute it to any people or religion. Secondly, occupation by foreign forces is the worst form of terrorism and should be eliminated just like other forms of terrorism. Thirdly, resistance against foreign occupation is a legitimate act under international instruments and the relevant decisions of the United Nations. Fourthly, in the context of the combat against terrorism, it is not permissible to strike against innocent peoples.

With regard to agenda item 40, concerning equitable representation in the Security Council and other related issues, my country's delegation fully agrees with the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration as concerns the need for continual change, adaptation and learning in the Organization, in order to ensure the continued importance of its role. No reform within this Organization can be comprehensive and complete unless it involves the long-awaited expansion of the Council.

Growing appeals for reform in the functioning of the United Nations, in particular of the Security Council, reflect the feelings of a number of Member States. Indeed, we are still far from attaining the purposes set out in the Charter, and in particular the very raison d'être whereby it was established, namely to preserve succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to promote peace, security, social development and prosperity for all.

The establishment in 1993 of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council reflected agreement among Member States on the need to increase the membership of the Council so as to ensure equitable geographical representation and to enhance transparency of its activities. However, we deplore the fact that so much time has elapsed without agreement being reached in the Working Group on several issues, including the number of new Council members, including permanent members, and the question of the veto.

In the context of reforming the Council's working methods and increasing its membership, several issues should be taken into account. First, any reform effort should seek to ensure that the effectiveness of the Council and its ability to deal with threats to

international peace and security are not put at risk. Secondly, the role of the Council should not be limited to the maintenance of international peace and security but should include conflict prevention and peace-building in the aftermath of conflicts. Thirdly, all Member States throughout the world must comply with Council resolutions, without any selectivity. Fourthly, the transparency of the Council's working methods must be increased.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I should like at the outset to express, on behalf of my Government, profound condolences to the Government and the people of Indonesia, to Australia and to the other countries whose nationals were lost, as well as to the bereaved families of the victims of the terrorist bombing in Bali. We condemn the bombing in the strongest terms, and express the hope that the perpetrator or perpetrators of that heinous act will not escape punishment.

My delegation welcomes the clustering of the two items under consideration in an effort to improve the efficiency of the work of the General Assembly. We also wish to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, for introducing the fifty-seventh annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. We consider the annual reporting by the Council to the General Assembly on its work to be an important occasion for the larger membership of the Organization in order to be better acquainted with the work of the Council during the reporting period. It reinforces the institutional relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, as provided for in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. In this regard, we welcome the Council's decision to hold an open meeting last month for the purpose of discussing the report before submitting it to the General Assembly. This reflects the seriousness with which the Council undertakes this annual reporting exercise, as well as the Council's sense of accountability to the larger membership of the Organization, in whose name it acts.

My delegation welcomes the new and improved format of this year's report, which reflects the Council's willingness to improve its method of work and ensure that it evolves in response to the many comments made by the larger membership over the years. We welcome the attempt that has been made to provide an analysis of the work of the Council during the reporting period — an analysis which many delegations had called for in the past. My delegation commends Council members, including the delegations of Singapore, the United Kingdom and others, for their serious effort to improve the format and quality of the report.

We look forward to further improvements in future reports, particularly in the analytical part, with the inclusion of more details of Council decisions and actions, leading to a better understanding of the issues dealt with in the Council. The Council could, for instance, enlighten the larger membership on circumstances that have had an impact on its final decision on a particular issue. A more detailed description of the public and private meetings of the Council — instead of a mere listing of such meetings — would certainly be more helpful to the larger membership. We consider the permanent web site of the presidency of the Security Council to be extremely useful in enabling us to follow the work of the Council.

On the substantive aspects of its work, it is clear that there has been a tremendous increase in the workload of the Council during the reporting period. As in recent years, a major focus of the work of the Council was on Africa, which still demands the full attention of the Council. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the ad hoc working group on Africa, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius. The Council can certainly claim its fair share of the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded to the Secretary-General and the United Nations as a whole for their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The successful establishment of the Transitional Administration in Afghanistan, peaceful elections in Sierra Leone and the independence of Timor-Leste are among the outstanding achievements of the Council during the period under review. We congratulate the Council, as well as the men and women from many nations who serve in United Nations missions, for their contribution in maintaining international peace and security.

However, my delegation is disappointed that on the issue of the Middle East and Palestine, the Council has not been able to play the role expected of it. We welcome the fact that the Council has discussed the issue of Palestine with greater frequency, holding several open debates and regular monthly briefings on the situation on the ground. We note that a total of 21

Council meetings were held on that question, and that four resolutions were passed and two presidential statements issued.

Unfortunately, the increase in the number of meetings on the subject did not have an impact on the situation on the ground. Either Israel continued to ignore or manipulate the Council's resolutions or — more often than not — the Council was not able to do anything meaningful because it was prevented from doing so. We strongly believe that had the Council approved the establishment of a United Nations or international monitoring presence in the occupied territories, much of the violence that has occurred could have been avoided and the situation today would be more conducive to a negotiated settlement.

The question of Palestine is one of the oldest items on the agenda of the Council, yet resolving it has not been possible. The failure of the Council to exert its authority on this issue undermines its credibility. It is time for the Council to play a more active role on this issue and to contribute to the amelioration of the situation on the ground.

Another issue on which the Council continues to be at an impasse relates to the situation in Iraq. The unresolved question of Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction has stood in the way of the lifting of the sanctions imposed on that country. The matter is currently being actively discussed once again in the Council — or more accurately, among the Council's permanent members. In dealing with this issue, the Council is facing one of the most difficult and critical moments in its history. Upon its decision may hinge war or peace; this is a decision that will affect not only the people of Iraq, but also the entire international community. Clearly, it is the hope and expectation of all peace-loving nations that the issue can be resolved peacefully through diplomacy rather than through military action, as is being actively advocated in some circles.

On an issue as important as this, it is imperative that the views of all of the members of the Council be brought to bear on its final decision. It is dismaying that, at a time when the Council is opening itself up to the larger membership through its open debates and briefings, the 10 non-permanent, or, more accurately, the 10 elected members of the Council continue to be kept in the dark, according to many of them, as the permanent members have engaged in private consultations among themselves for the past several weeks.

The sidelining of the elected members of the Council is against the very spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter. While it distinguishes between the two categories of membership of the Council, the Charter does not otherwise discriminate between the permanent and non-permanent, or elected members, each of which is entitled to the same right to be consulted on all issues before the Council, even if they do not enjoy the right of veto.

In addressing the question of Iraq, the Council should heed the words of the Secretary-General, who, in his statement to the General Assembly on 12 September 2002, urged us to rededicate ourselves to the principles and purposes of this Organization and to the centrality of the multilateral process. Equally resonant are the remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, a permanent member, at the Council's open meeting on 26 September 2002, in discussing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, when he said that:

> "States cannot play a unilateral role in the modern world, but they must play a role that adds power to the collective objectives of the United Nations." *(See S/PV.4616)*

Both of these statements are extremely pertinent at a time when the Council is trying to exert its own authority and that of the United Nations in the process of the resolution of the question of Iraq.

Malaysia strongly supports the call made by the Secretary-General and by other world leaders for restraint and for the peaceful resolution of the issue, so as to spare the Iraqi people further suffering. We hope that all diplomatic avenues will be explored and cooperation extended by all the parties concerned. We urge Iraq to allow the unconditional return of United Nations arms inspectors and to comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Council must act with courage and wisdom and consider all aspects and implications of its action. Its very prestige and credibility hinges on this.

The Security Council should also listen to the views of the larger membership of the Organization. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the decision of the Council to convene an open meeting on this issue on

Wednesday 16 October. We look forward to participating in that important debate.

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Chairman of the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee for his dynamic leadership and the Committee's other members for their contribution towards the effectiveness of the Committee. We also wish to commend all States Members of the United Nations for their cooperation in the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001). This is an excellent illustration of the effectiveness of the multilateral approach when all Member States fully cooperate in the implementation of Council resolutions.

We would have hoped that the same level of cooperation would have been extended by all Member States in the implementation of all resolutions of the Council. Regrettably, this has not been the case. There has been, unfortunately, selectivity in the approach taken to the implementation of Council resolutions and in enforcing compliance without discrimination — a fact to which the Secretary-General has himself alluded. My delegation hopes that in view of the efforts being made to enhance the credibility of the Council — about which much has been said these days — this fact will not be lost on Council members.

My delegation wholeheartedly supports the call made by some members of the Council for the adoption of clear and precise indicators to measure the work of the Council. We believe that one such indicator, which would also reflect the effectiveness of the Council, would be the level of compliance by Member States in implementing the resolutions of the Council.

My delegation regrets that, despite the efforts of Mr. Kavan's predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, there has been no breakthrough in the Group's work. While the Working Group has contributed significantly to the reform of the Council over the years, particularly in improving its working methods, there has been no progress with regard to the major issues, namely, the expansion of the Council and the question of the veto.

The debate on these important issues continues to be contentious, circular and repetitive, even as we are approaching a full decade of these deliberations in the Working Group next year. It is therefore not surprising that the level of interest has declined in recent years. It has been two years since our heads of State or Government, resolved in the Millennium Declaration to, inter alia, intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Unless there is greater political will on the part of those concerned to move the process forward, these deliberations might well end up as an exercise in futility. The tenth anniversary of these deliberations would be a good occasion for us to take stock of the work of the Working Group and to ponder where we should go from here.

We hope that under the leadership of the current President of the Assembly, a new momentum will be generated in the Working Group, so that something more tangible could be achieved as we enter the tenth year of these deliberations. In the meantime, the progress made thus far in respect of the Council's working methods should be codified — as suggested by the Secretary-General — to ensure that the agreements reached on these issues remain a permanent feature of the Council. This is important for purposes of marking the progress made so far and for purposes of continuity, as, aside from the permanent members, other Council members come and go, once they have served their very brief term.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate the delegations of Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their recent election as the new non-permanent members of the Security Council beginning 1 January 2003. We are confident that they will not only serve the United Nations and the international community well in discharging their responsibilities as members of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, but also enrich the deliberations of the Council.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me begin by offering my delegation's condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia and to the families of those who lost their lives as a result of the recent brutal terrorist attack in Bali.

At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou of Cameron, the President of the Security Council, for having introduced the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly.

Having carefully considered the report submitted by the Council, we recognize and welcome the visible improvements made in both its content and format. In

general, instead of simply compiling or quantitatively describing its activities, the Council, this time, has submitted a document that is more analytical and has taken into account basic criticisms levelled at it for many years by the members of the General Assembly. What has been done is a contribution to the improvement of the Council's reporting method. We commend all members of the Council, especially Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore and his team, for pressing forward and accomplishing this outcome.

We note that the report has a new format. It is streamlined, more focused and concise and shorter, avoiding overlapping and repetition, thereby also reducing the cost of its production. Thus, we believe that, to some extent, the present report has rectified a defect in the way the Council previously reported to the Assembly. While it is dramatically reduced in size, it also provides more statistical information on the Council's activities.

As to the content of the report, we are pleased to note an analytical overview in the introduction to the report. This is the most important innovation in the report and represents an effort made this year to address the main criticism repeated year after year in the General Assembly's debate on the Council's report. This section for the first time focuses on areas of Council activities which are of interest to the entire membership of the United Nations.

As the report indicates, a record number of open meetings of the Council was held in the period under review. Apparently, the Council has never in its history held so many public meetings. This is a fact that has had a positive impact on the Council in the area of transparency and openness in its work and its relationship with the wider United Nations membership. It has enabled the Council to provide greater opportunity to non-members of the Council to participate in its work. It is important that the Council build upon this achievement and enhance closer links between the members of the Council and those of the General Assembly. The record shows that, in the period under consideration, the Council also opened up to civil society through Arria-formula meetings, which enable the Council to meet with the representatives of non-governmental organizations. There should be no doubt that the Council is still at the beginning of a long road and that a lot has yet to be done with a view to democratizing its work.

In general, the working methods of the Council, too, have noticeably improved over the past few years. Undoubtedly, the ideas expressed and progress made in the course of the deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Council played an important part in this respect. Better procedures and working methods can generate more efficiency and effectiveness and bring the Council into tune with the general membership. We believe that the Council missions to regions affected by conflicts are valuable instruments. Monthly wrap-up meetings also provide an opportunity for an interactive discussion among members and non-members, even though there are members who have reservations about such meetings.

We acknowledge that the period under review was extraordinary for the Council in a number of ways and uniquely busy. The events of 11 September set the tone and overshadowed the work of the Council for the whole period. Thus, the Council was expected to play an important role in coordinating the international fight against terrorism. It also needed to deal with the chaos created by the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The swift action of the Security Council in adopting resolution 1373 (2001) and in establishing the Counter-Terrorism Committee was its main achievement with respect to combating terrorism, and a united Council at a critical moment in the history of Afghanistan played an important role through its swift decision in pushing for comprehensive implementation of the Bonn Agreement. From now on, it is important that the Council continue to contribute both to the fight against terrorism, thus enhancing the role of the United Nations in this area, and to upholding the effective engagement of the international community in Afghanistan.

The Council has had its share of successes and failures. While it has thus far been effective in dealing with terrorism and the situations in Afghanistan, East Timor and Sierra Leone, some issues on its agenda clearly need more attention. The Council has had a serious level of engagement with issues related to Africa and there have been some positive developments in African conflicts. However, there is still a gap between the work of the Council and the expectations of African States and people.

The Middle East is the area in which the Council has achieved the least and clearly fallen short of expectations. While we appreciate the fact that there is now a monthly briefing of the Council on the Middle

East, we note that the record of the Council on this issue has yet to improve. It has yet to take measures with a view to implementing its resolutions, the latest of which is resolution 1435 (2002). There is no doubt that the credibility of the Council will erode over time if it is habitually seen to be unable to meet its responsibilities with regard to outstanding issues on its agenda.

Allow me to briefly touch upon the important issue of the reform of the Security Council. Nine years have elapsed since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. The debate in the course of the last session of the Working Group has in fact proved that significant differences remain on such substantive matters as the size and composition of the Security Council, especially an increase in the permanent membership, and the power of veto. In other words, the fundamental question as to how to advance from the Security Council that we have now to a more representative and democratic, but no less efficient, organ has yet to be answered.

Nevertheless, the impasse or lack of progress in the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council should be viewed as a direct product of the enormous importance of the issue and the diversity of views and interests. Despite the lack of progress on the main issues, we still believe that the process of the reform of the Council should not be subject to any predetermined and superficial timetable. Any attempt to impose a premature, hasty decision would run the risk of doing harm to that very delicate process, which is so important to all the States Members of our Organization.

We are of the view that, due to the importance of the Council's reform and while respecting the principle of the equality of all Member States, all efforts should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among the Member States.

As to the objectives of the reform of the Council, we continue to believe that the objective of the reform process is and must remain to make the Council more representative, more democratic, more transparent and more accountable, thereby helping to strengthen its efficiency and to increase its authority and that of the United Nations as a whole. We believe that the attainment of these objectives requires, inter alia, that the membership of the Council be expanded to at least 26 so that the developing world can be better represented.

Moreover, the opinion of the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations that continue to express their dissatisfaction about the use of the veto as an undemocratic instrument in the decision-making process of the Security Council should be heeded. The general support for limiting and curtailing the use of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination needs to be explicitly reflected in the final outcome of the Working Group.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 27 September 2002 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, in his capacity as chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of September, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the Observer of the Holy See in the debate on agenda item 31, "Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion".

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear a statement by the Observer of the Holy See in the debate on agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.