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New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte . . . . . (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council

Mr. Gopinathan (India): I would like to convey my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador John Negroponte, Permanent Representative of the United States and President of the Security Council, for his presentation to the General Assembly of the report of the Council for the period from 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003.

Before proceeding further, I wish to convey a sense of our disappointment over the discontinuance of the practice, of convening an open meeting of the Security Council to consider its draft report to the General Assembly. As many of us will recall, the practice was instituted last year, at the initiative of Singapore, who is unfortunately no longer on the Council, with the intention of improving the quality and consideration of the report within the Council before its presentation to the General Assembly. We would like to voice our apprehension that this worthy practice, launched last year, might end up as an isolated attempt. In our view, this would be a disservice to the general membership, which stood to profit immensely from the views of members of the Council on how they themselves perceived and evaluated the work of the Council during the period under review. We would not like to infer that the discontinuation of this useful practice represents any weakening of the Council's collective resolve to continue with a sprit of reform and greater transparency in the working of the Security Council.

We agree with the conclusion contained in the report that the last 12 months have represented a steady increase in the workload of the Security Council. Admittedly, the Council has had to confront some of the most difficult issues during this period.

It would be remiss on our part not to reiterate our deep regret over the inability of the Council to reach satisfactory agreement on the issue of war and peace in Iraq in the first quarter of this year. We can only attribute the inability of the Council to arrive at a collective and unified decision on the major issues placed before it to the lack of balanced representation in its current composition.

The Prime Minister of India did touch upon this imbalance when he stated in his address to the current session of the Assembly on September 25, "For the Security Council to represent genuine multilateralism in its decisions and actions, its membership must reflect current world realities" (*A/58/PV.11, p. 14*). Within the United Nations, there is ample recognition of the need for the Organization and its architecture, in the maintenance of international peace and security, to adapt to the needs and realities of the times. The Secretary-General himself underscored this point when he said that to regain the confidence of States, and of world opinion, the Security Council must become "more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geo-political realities of today" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

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The Council's preoccupation with Iraq did not, despite the best intentions of its members, afford it sufficient time for a more serious examination of other major issues on its agenda relating to the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan. In the area of counter-terrorism, while every effort has been made by the Council to maintain the momentum achieved, mechanisms are yet to be put in place that would hold countries accountable for their genuine commitment to and actions in the fight against terrorism originating in territories under their control. The Council needs to move from the inexhaustible stage of helping to establish legal and financial frameworks to a more serious examination of the actual contributions — or lack thereof — by Member States to counter-terrorism efforts. Only by doing so would it have come to grips with the real issues at hand.

The non-permanent members of Security Council have taken upon themselves the responsibility, based on their long-term interests, to pursue the agenda of greater transparency and reform in the working of the Security Council. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. In the period under review, new and ingenious methods appear to have been invented, designed to confuse and often exclude the general membership from specific projects being pursued in the Security Council.

We would like to comment, by way of illustration, on a few instances in the functioning of the Security Council that may be perceived as attempts to obfuscate or limit access to it by the general membership.

Delayed decision-making on the format of discussions to be followed is a case in point. In at least one instance, the President of the Council delayed a decision on the format of discussions to be followed on an important but controversial thematic topic until a very late stage, at which point the subject was declared open to the participation of the general membership. We are not in a position to fathom the reasons behind such actions. We can only hope that they were not intended to deny time for adequate preparations by delegations seeking to intervene on the given subject.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

A second case in point is the Council's experimentation with different modes of participation under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure. The decision by the Council presidency to restrict participation in an open debate on an issue of import to a late stage and to only one or two candidates per region could, by its very selectivity, have resulted in acts of omission or exclusion. Moreover, as is well known, some regional groups, such as the Asian Group, do not have the mandate to discuss and decide on issues other than elections. Such factors could well have added to the impracticability and undemocratic nature of the decision taken.

A third case in point is discrimination between members and non-members of the Council on time limits for statements. In a recent incident the President of the Council declared a time limit for statements during an open debate on a subject of considerable importance. However, while members of the Council were allowed to give full reign to their views without observing any time limit, the general membership was subjected to the strictest implementation of a restrictive time limit. That incident was considered serious enough to produce considerable adverse reaction at meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group.

The discriminatory treatment between members and non-members of the Council tends to be pronounced during the so-called ministerial-level meetings of the Council, which now are held increasingly in two segments, one for the members and the other for the less privileged. In that context, we would also like to state that expecting non-members to be content with reading parts of their statements and circulating a longer text is unrealistic as long as the provisional verbatim records reflect only what is actually spoken in the formal meetings of the Council.

A fourth case in point is the surprise scheduling of open debates with selective notification. In a recent instance, an open debate of the Council was scheduled in response to a serious incident which occurred over a weekend. Some non-members of the Council did learn of the meeting and were able to make statements under rule 37. Others were fortunate if they happened to learn of the event from television broadcasts. The issue here continues to remain one of selectivity and arbitrariness.

I must hasten to point out that the issues referred to are not being raised with the intention of castigating those involved, but with the desire to bring to the attention of the larger membership of the General Assembly and the select membership of the Security Council the areas where greater transparency, predictability and some even-handedness would be

welcome, and could add to the Council's effectiveness. In our view, if the Council followed some rules-of-thumb in its practices, it would go a long way in assuring the general membership of the Council's sincerity in attempting to take into account the membership's concerns during Council deliberations. We shall attempt to list a few suggestions in that regard.

Unless an item is introduced in reaction to major events of the day, all open debates involving the participation of the general membership of the Organization must be announced at the beginning of the month, when the programme of work is presented and adopted. Surprise scheduling should be avoided wherever possible and, if absolutely unavoidable, measures to inform all members concerned through the mail or by facsimile, electronic mail or telephone communication to the relevant missions would be desirable.

All non-members of the Council wishing to participate under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure should be allowed the time they require to convey their views. If that is not possible due to the exigencies of the situation — and we believe this should be truly exceptional — a standard pre-announced time limit should be imposed upon all, members and non-members alike, without any discrimination.

The increasing resort to new and fanciful thematic issues as the crowning glory of non-permanent member presidencies should be rationalized and restricted, in order to better utilize the time available for the consideration of pressing current issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The idea of wrap-up sessions, presumably conceived to allow for stock-taking at the end of a month's work, should not be utilized to promote controversial issues that selectively advance the national agendas of members concerned.

Briefings by Council presidencies to non-members of the Council tend to be arbitrary and ad hoc in their scheduling. Some presidencies tend to attach due importance to that process, while others have been indifferent to this requirement. It has been observed that, in several instances, despite the scheduling of briefings to the general membership, such briefings either do not take place at all or are carried out in a perfunctory manner. In fact, briefings to the media are far more comprehensive and regular than those to non-members. Briefings by Council presidencies need to be regular, thorough and qualitative if the Council is to fulfil its commitment to ensuring adequate transparency in its functioning among Member States of the Organization.

In conclusion, we express the hope that the existing and aspiring non-permanent members of the Council will take up with renewed vigour the process of improving the accountability and working methods of the Security Council in a manner that would bring it into a more harmonious functional relationship with the larger membership of the United Nations.

Mr. Thamrin (Indonesia): It is a pleasure for my delegation to welcome the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/58/2), covering the period 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003. I would like to express our appreciation to the President of the Council, Ambassador Negroponte, for his clear and capable introduction of the report. As usual, the report provides a quick overview of the Council in the last year in its area of responsibility, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. As we all know, the Council's report for the past year was very helpful in that respect. This is always a good opportunity for Member States to take a look at the work of the Council in the course of the previous year, and one that we always look forward to. We thank the members of the Council for the report.

Before I go any further, I would also like to welcome, on behalf of my delegation, the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. This is a very important issue to my delegation and to other Member States of the United Nations, and we always welcome this annual opportunity to contribute to it.

The report of the Security Council before us is a very important document. It faithfully details the work of the Council within the period under consideration. Unfortunately, it remains little more than a blow-by-blow account, one that could easily have been prepared by individual Permanent Missions to the United Nations or obtained from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. It contains previously publicized documents, but little analysis or explanation of the Council's actions and decisions, though many delegations have requested this in the past. Moreover, the report shows very little evidence of its purpose as an important accounting to the Assembly. What makes the report even more difficult to understand is that it is still being

sent late to Member States every year. There is therefore a clear contradiction between its contents and the amount of time needed to process it. Unless there is significant analytical input, it is difficult to see why a report with a cut-off date of July cannot reach Member States within the following month.

In that connection, it is curious to consider, for instance, that despite all of the events that took place in connection with Iraq during the period under review, the report devotes just over two pages to the subject, without a word beyond what was already known to Member States. For an institution concerned with the maintenance of peace and security, the annual report contains almost no mention of the hostilities. Indeed, the report refers only to the President of the Council being informed of "the commencement of military action" (*A/58/2, p. 7*) and meeting "the period of conflict in Iraq" (*ibid.*).

There should be no mistake about this: when the Council reports to the Assembly it is not a matter of a concession by one body of the United Nations to another, but the fulfilment of a Charter obligation. This obligation should be wholly and consistently fulfilled, in the interest of the peoples of the United Nations, by both the Secretariat and the Security Council. Our request is for a document that is useful to the wider membership of our Organization because it is timely, informative and analytical.

Despite the foregoing, we are pleased that the Council was able to accomplish so much with its increased workload during the period covered. We note the progress in its work in such areas as African conflicts, the Middle East and counter-terrorism. Particular mention must be made of the Council's focus on the situation in Africa, where there has been renewed instability in some countries, notably Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. The Council demonstrated laudable commitment when it sent two missions to different locations on the continent at the same time.

Similarly, the work of the Council in connection with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially the implementation of the Quartet road map, deserves commendation. Indonesia has always supported the road map and has urged its faithful implementation. In our statements to the Council, we have also taken the view that the Council should maintain a proactive stance. It is to be hoped that, despite recent setbacks in that process, the Council will find ways of encouraging the parties, thereby steering the process carefully and with determination towards the stated objectives.

My delegation is gratified at the progress that continues to be made in some of these conflict situations, and the intervention that is therefore possible, not only in averting humanitarian crises, but also in promoting peace and democracy.

Before concluding my comments on the report, I would like to note that, while the Council tried to encourage greater transparency in recent years by organizing monthly wrap-up sessions that were open to Member States, that pattern has not been followed during the past year. In our view, what is needed are more — not fewer — such occasions; they are important contributions that can be duly reported in the Council's annual reports to the General Assembly.

It remains a matter of great concern to my delegation that no substantial progress has been made on the issue of Security Council reform nearly 10 years after the Open-ended Working Group was established. The events of the early part of this year underscore what we have continued to stress — comprehensive reform of the Council is long overdue, if the decisions of that body are to continue to enjoy the support of the larger membership of this Organization.

There can be no doubt that a transparent, democratic and representative Security Council, whose membership and practices reflect the world of the twenty-first century — not of the first half of the twentieth century — is the only structure capable of achieving this goal. We should not place this overriding objective after national or narrower interests.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): In my statement I will refer to both agenda items — one on the report of the Security Council and the other on Security Council reform, thus joining those who believe that the joint debates serve well both the substance of the issues and the efficient use of time.

At the outset, let me thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the comprehensive report on the work of the Council during the past year, and in particular Ambassador Negroponte of the United States, the current President of the Council, for introducing the Council report. We welcome the continuation of the structure and approach of the report introduced last year, once again making the report concise, easier to read and analytical.

During the past year, the Council, and consequently the Organization, has been tested severely. The unity of purpose and action of the Council has been and continues to be called into question. I am, of course, referring to the Iraqi crisis. As the Secretary-General notes in his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the climate of cooperation and consensus was seriously eroded by the war against Iraq. We call once again on the members of the Council to strive for solutions for Iraq that will command wide international and Iraqi support and will improve security in the country, speed up the process of Iraqi democratization and institution-building and foster a climate of social and economic well-being for the Iraqi people.

This and other crises of today's world demonstrate, in our opinion, increasing global interdependence in the sphere of security, whereby the Council holds primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe these crises also serve as a stark reminder of the urgent need to adapt the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent composition, as well as its working methods, including the right of veto, to cope efficiently with the geopolitical realities of today's world. I shall address the issue of Security Council reform in the latter part of my statement.

On a more positive side, we commend the continuous trend towards greater transparency in the Council's work. Still, we should aim for greater transparency in the future work of the Council. The increasing practice of holding open Council meetings contributes significantly to that end, as it provides opportunities for the general membership to participate in the Council's work. We especially welcome the growing use of Council field missions, such as those that have been conducted over the past year in Central Africa and West Africa, as well as the meetings held by the Council with troop-contributing countries.

Furthermore, we commend the Council meetings held on the topical issues of our times. Slovenia has been a longstanding proponent of the Council's addressing the protection of civilians affected by armed conflicts and the prevention of conflicts. Recognizing the importance of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations, we are particularly pleased with the Council's ongoing attention to women and peace and security. The same goes for the issue of children and armed conflict. During the last open debate on this issue, Slovenia was among those that welcomed the innovative, yet, in our view, necessary practice, of listing those entities still recruit children into their armed forces.

I wish to take this opportunity particularly to welcome the recent open debate of the Council on the subject of justice and the rule of law and the role of the United Nations. Conflict-management and post-conflict resolution cannot be successfully dealt with without addressing the rule of law from its various points of view, among others, by including this essential component more often in peacekeeping operations.

Both the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia are cases in point on the importance of justice in bringing about the difficult process of national reconciliation. We believe that it is the role of the Council, and indeed, in its own interest, to uphold the integrity of the Statute of the International Criminal Court in the area of preventing and settling disputes.

We welcome the Council's attention given to Africa, particularly during recent months. The French-led European mission in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo set a very positive example of how the prompt successful cooperation of regional partners in crisis management is indeed feasible. The recent signing of the Memorandum of the European Union-United Nations Joint Declaration on Crisis Management is an important step in the right direction, one that Slovenia also welcomes in its capacity as a European Union acceding State. It should also serve in exploring more ambitiously the issue of strengthened cooperation of the United Nations, notably the Security Council, with existing regional organizations.

Let me now touch upon the question of the reform of the Security Council. Without jeopardizing our intent, we could re-read our statements of last year, and express our thoughts of last year to the effect that the Security Council is simply not reflecting the reality of today's world, and that we should therefore not be surprised when problems of authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council are raised. But again, that would not sufficient to meet our needs today, not because last year's assessments would no longer be accurate, but because the urgency of reform and the momentum for change are much greater.

Over the past year, the entire Organization — primarily, of course, the Security Council — has encountered serious challenges. As the Secretary-

General, Kofi Annan, said in his address before the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session:

> "... we must not shy away from questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal.
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> "Among those instruments, none is more important than the Security Council itself" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

The Security Council is too important to be left on the margin of our discussions and eventually of our decisions related to United Nations reform. Security Council reform should be a part of United Nations reform.

The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform has been a useful forum that has produced a number of good ideas still relevant to today's purpose. Yet we must face the fact that its work is at an impasse. We cannot afford another 10 years of fruitless debates. We need a more ambitious framework based on a common perception of the need for change. Such a debate must start immediately if we wish to take advantage of the current momentum and if we want to strengthen the Organization. We encourage the President to stimulate such a debate.

While supporting the Secretary-General's intention to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities, we trust that our search for Council reform solutions will be seen as a part of the same process and therefore as complementary to the work of such a high-level panel.

In conclusion, I want to point out once again that the momentum for change is there, and we need to seize it unambiguously. As the Secretary-General said, this momentum may be no less decisive than that in 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded. At this point in time, all of us may not yet share a concept of the end results of Council reform, but we share a perception of the urgent need for a changed Security Council that is more representative, more legitimate, more transparent and more efficient.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I should like to express Austria's gratitude to Ambassador John Negroponte, current President of the Security Council, for his concise presentation of the report of the Council (A/58/2). At the same time, my delegation commends the Secretariat for its excellent work in compiling that invaluable reference and source of information. The presentation of the report is a welcome continuation of the Security Council's dialogue with the General Assembly in discharge of its duties pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter. That dialogue will enhance the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council in promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter.

An adequate flow of information to non-members of the Security Council is a prerequisite for understanding and assessing how the Council is dealing with political issues and should therefore be strengthened. The presidency of the Security Council should play a crucial role in keeping the general membership fully informed about the Council's deliberations. The monthly forecast on the work of the Council constitutes a useful tool for all delegations. The briefings of the respective presidencies and the information they make available via their home pages have been further improved. The increase in the number of public meetings underlines the Council's willingness to take into account the views of Member States at large and to use them as input in the Council's decision-making process. We welcome the reduction in the number of closed meetings, as outlined by Ambassador Negroponte.

The inclusion in the report of a narrative overview of the work of the Security Council is a positive development. Its usefulness could be further increased with a more extensive analysis of the decision-making process in the Council. My delegation welcomes the efforts to streamline the report. Reducing the number of its pages makes the report not only more readable, but also more cost-effective.

The experience of peacekeeping operations has clearly underlined that the Council can act successfully only if it is engaged in a substantive dialogue with Member States. Austria, as a traditional provider of peacekeeping troops, particularly commends the Council for its efforts to increase the number of meetings with troop-contributing countries. Cooperation at an early stage between the Council and troop-contributing countries is essential when we consider new mandates for United Nations peacekeeping missions.

As a member of the Human Security Network, Austria welcomes the increased attention that the Security Council is devoting to the problems of civilians and children in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations by holding open debates on those issues. The recent thematic Security Council meeting

on "Justice and the rule of law: the United Nations role" is a commendable initiative that should be continued in the near future.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): My delegation very much appreciates the report of the Security Council (A/58/2) that is before us. It is comprehensive yet concise, and bears testimony to a year of hard work and high productivity. We commend all Council members for their dedication and effectiveness in the service of the Organization, and indeed of humanity at large.

Africa has dominated the work of the Council for yet another year. And once more, the Council has been able to show results. The United Nations involvement in Côte d'Ivoire has been made more robust with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, whose mandate is to assist in the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis peace Agreement. The situation in Liberia has been contained, and United Nations peacekeeping operations have commenced there with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone has helped to consolidate the tremendous gains registered in Sierra Leone since the cessation of hostilities. In conflict zones elsewhere in Africa, the Council has indeed played its part and has responded well to the many challenges.

The Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins of Angola, continues to closely monitor the situation in Guinea-Bissau. It continues to work with the Economic and Social Council through that body's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau as well as with the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau to recommend courses of action to be followed in our bid to keep the country from retreating into conflict and to strengthen its political transition.

The President returned to the Chair.

The Council has shown much concern for the dire humanitarian situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau as a result of poor economic performance and the withholding of aid. My delegation sincerely hopes that, with the new political developments in the country, the donor community will play its part to ensure that a change in attitude towards the country leads to the types of material and financial support necessary to eliminate the risk of upheaval, strife and conflict.

Overall, although conflicts appear to have simmered down in much of West Africa, their causes have not yet been completely removed. To be proactive in our efforts to prevent or resolve conflicts, we must begin to address their causes at the root. The Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should, together, begin to examine issues of governance, poverty, exclusion, corruption and other factors that bring about conflict in African countries.

My delegation welcomes the initiatives being taken to address the problem of small arms and light weapons. We call for similar measures to tackle the problem of mercenaries, whose prevalence in West Africa keeps countries in that subregion constantly in the shadow of war.

Cooperating with regional organizations, as the Council did with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Liberian conflict, could be an efficient and cost-effective means of conflict resolution. The Council should consider resorting to it more. Furthermore, in cases where inadequate resources circumscribe the effectiveness of regional organizations, the Council should examine the possibilities of making the requisite outlays to enable them to operate more easily.

We hailed the publication of the Quartet's road map for the Middle East in the hope that it would usher in peace in that unfortunate region. However, rather than abating, the situation actually worsened significantly. The Security Council must continue to be patient, but it must also become more imaginative in its search for a solution to the problem in the Middle East. Ways must be found to realize the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State, side by side with a secure State of Israel.

Iraq dominated the Council's preoccupations during the reporting period, and, although the Council did its utmost to prevent war, war in fact did break out. My delegation strongly urges the Council to set its sights on the future and begin the necessary actions to bring the United Nations to the service of the people of Iraq, as well as to respond to their emergency humanitarian and development needs. The initial experience has been bitter, with the bombing that claimed the lives of Sergio Vieira de Mello and many of his colleagues, but it should not deter us.

My delegation calls upon the Council to review its policy on sanctions, whether smart sanctions or otherwise. In the majority of cases, they hurt only the

poor innocent civilians who invariably are the very victims of the situations that brought the sanctions about in the first place. Sanctions that have a negative impact on the health, education and nutritional status of the population are not, for any reason whatever, justifiable. In many cases, the real victims of sanctions are women, children, the aged and rural communities. We expect the Council Working Group on general issues relating to sanctions to conduct a comprehensive review of the effects of sanctions on vulnerable groups with a view to advising the Council — and indeed the general membership of the United Nations — as to their real impact and effectiveness.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to set up a high-level panel of eminent personalities to make recommendations on the reform of the Organization. It is our sincere hope that the panel will thoroughly review the workings of the Security Council with a view to recommending concrete ways of reforming it, including with respect to the veto. The Council must mirror the realities of the world in the twenty-first century. It must also operate on the Charter principle of equitable representation.

Finally, let me commend the outgoing members of the Council for the invaluable service they have rendered, and, in the same vein, wish the incoming members a most successful and productive period of service.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador John Negroponte of the United States, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/58/2).

Today's discussion of that important document has attracted the close attention of delegations. Last year, the Member States welcomed the improved format of the annual report, which was much shorter and, for the first time ever, contained an analytical overview in its introductory part. It marked the willingness of the Security Council to actively respond to the concerns expressed by Member States over the years. In that respect, we commend the United Kingdom and Spain for their great efforts to streamline this year's report and look forward to further improvements of its analytical part in coming General Assembly sessions.

The Security Council has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. The report states that in the 12 months under review the trend towards a steady increase in the workload of the Council continued, along with an increase in the trend towards transparency. The Security Council maintained its busy agenda on Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and other important issues.

The Iraq file dominated the attention of the Council during the period covered by this report. We encourage the efforts made by the Security Council to define the role of the United Nations in assisting the people of Iraq to rebuild their country and create a stable and secure environment.

Kazakhstan endorses the Security Council's continuing efforts to address ongoing conflicts. We believe that United Nations peacekeeping operations constitute one of the main elements of the maintenance of international peace and security. They are one of the key instruments available to the Security Council for the settlement of conflicts and disputes.

My delegation notes the efforts of the Security Council to increase transparency in its work by holding an increased number of public meetings. We support the thematic debates, which provide an opportunity for members and non-members of the Council to focus on issues of crucial importance. We must encourage those positive trends and try to take further steps in that direction.

However, we think that the continuing efforts of the Security Council in the field of peace and security would be more effective if it conducted more interactive discussions between the Council members and non-members. We wish to see a reformed Security Council, open to dialogue and sending the international community a clear message that it stands ready to meet the new challenges.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Greenstock and to the present Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), Ambassador Arias, for their leadership in steering the activities of the Committee. The CTC has continued to work intensively to fulfil its mandate as set out in resolution 1373 (2001) by deepening its dialogue with Member States and with regional and subregional organizations. Kazakhstan is committed to supporting the CTC and to the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We hope that a multilateral approach will be taken in our future actions against international terrorism.

The Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) has continued to focus its work on the

need to address the threat to international peace and security posed by terrorism. Security Council resolution 1455 (2003) has enhanced the role of the Committee in a number of areas and has improved the implementation by Member States of the sanctions regime imposed on Al Qaeda, the Taliban and other associated groups and individuals. Kazakhstan is among 66 States that submitted their reports on the implementation of resolution 1455 (2003). My Government will continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and give all possible support to this important body.

Kazakhstan supports the continuing efforts by the sanctions committees to improve their working methods, thus increasing transparency and effective fulfilment of their mandates.

The reform of the Security Council is part of the commitment our leaders made during the Millennium Summit. For that reason, it is highly important to resume the negotiations on Security Council reform. We believe that at the fifty-eighth session the President will bring the negotiation process back to life in the Open-ended Working Group in order to reach a comprehensive package agreement on Council reform.

We also look forward to receiving recommendations from the Secretary-General on the main aspects of strengthening the United Nations system, including the reform of the Security Council, based on the work of the high-level panel that the Secretary-General intends to establish.

It is essential to strengthen the ability of the main United Nations body to respond effectively to the global challenges of the twenty-first century. We must work together to enable it to confront those challenges in the area of peace and security in a much more comprehensive and effective manner.

Mr. Maria Caceres (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The two items on our agenda — the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters — are very closely interrelated, and thus we consider that they have a common objective, namely, a more democratic, representative, transparent and more effective Security Council in the face of the challenges of today's world.

Allow me to congratulate the President of the Security Council for this month, the Permanent Representative of the United States, for his introduction of the annual report of the Council, and the delegations of the United Kingdom and Spain for having drafted the introduction, which is one of the most interesting sections of the report.

In this past year the Security Council has been through critical times and has had difficulties exercising the responsibilities that the Charter assigns to that body, an organ indispensable for the maintenance of international peace and security. Thus, the two items we are considering are more than ever before priorities on our agenda. Their consideration by Member States must not be a mere formality, but must be the reaffirmation of the responsibilities of this Assembly on issues of fundamental importance for the entire United Nations membership.

Member States have the right and duty to know and fully analyse the Council's work, since the Council acts on the behalf of all in accordance with the responsibilities granted to it by the Charter.

For the second consecutive year, the Security Council report to the Assembly shows considerable progress in terms of format and content, compared with previous reports. The introductory summary facilitates a better idea of the work, but the report does not yet exactly reflect the amount or the importance of the Council's work. Such efforts by the Council to improve its report must continue and be encouraged so that the report may truly be the useful and substantive document that all the Members would like, rather than a simple description of decisions that do not reflect the positions or discussions which took place in the Council.

We realize that in recent years there has been some progress in the Council's working methods that has led to greater transparency in the work. Efforts to hold more public meetings and the briefings by the President of the Council at the end of closed meetings represent considerable progress. Also, the public evaluation sessions at the end of the month and meetings with troop-contributing countries — most of which are not members of the Council — are meaningful steps forward which should be formalized. In addition, we highlight the briefings to non-members on the Council's travels to the field.

However, as can be seen from this report, it is still far from being the document we all desire. Most of the Council's deliberations take place during informal consultations behind closed doors. As an example, we believe that reports submitted by the Secretariat should

be considered in public meetings, with non-members invited to participate, rather than in meetings behind closed doors, as usually happens.

We also believe that after more than 50 years of provisional rules of procedure of the Council, the rules should become permanent, as is the case with the rules of other bodies of the United Nations.

Another issue that seems fundamental to us is improving communication and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as with other organs of the Organization. In this connection, we think it is indispensable that the President of the Security Council submit to the General Assembly not only an annual report, but, whenever necessary, special reports, for instance on priority issues which emerge from current concerns or specific situations which are on the minds of all Member States, such as the events of recent months. This is in conformity with what is stipulated in Article 24 of the Charter.

We hope that the views expressed in this debate by Member States that are not members of the Security Council will be taken into account by the permanent members of the Council in order to improve the dialogue between the two bodies and to improve the Council's work.

The presentation of the report of the Council should not be a simple formality to comply with our agenda. It should be a genuine and sincere review of its activities, including difficulties encountered as the activities take place.

My delegation is of the view that in order to achieve true improvement in the work and activities of the Security Council, Council reform can no longer be postponed. This is the very objective pursued by the reform process. We would like to enhance the Council's efficiency and effectiveness and improve its working methods. The Council must be democratic, representative, fair, transparent and in keeping with the reality of today. It must respond to the entire membership of the United Nations. Its working methods must provide and demonstrate greater transparency and participation, and its composition should represent the political realities of today's world.

Paraguay understands that there is general agreement among Member States on the need to reform the Security Council. The position of Paraguay on this issue has been expressed on repeated occasions. It is necessary to expand both categories of members and to include developed countries as well as developing countries, bearing in mind especially that the latter are underrepresented at present.

Likewise, a key issue of the reform which must be analysed is the question of the veto power flaunted by the permanent members. We must aspire to gradual elimination of the veto power until it completely disappears. A first step should be to limit it strictly to questions under Chapter VII of the Charter. Likewise, we should leave open the possibility of a periodic review of the reform in order to consider the functioning of the Security Council in keeping with future realities and requirements.

Ten years after the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform, there has been very little progress on important questions so that the reform may be carried out. Today we must shoulder our responsibilities and take the political decision to show real progress and achieve the objectives desired by most Member States. In this connection, we place our confidence in the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, and we hope that, in the next few months, we will find a way to move this process forward and achieve the outcome that we all have anticipated for so long.

I should to conclude by saying that no reform of the United Nations will have the effect we all wish for without the long-awaited reform of the Security Council, so long as it does not take place we cannot really speak of a United Nations that is in keeping with the times in which we are living — one that will truly meet the interests and aspirations of the entire international community.

Mr. Chidumo (Mozambique): My delegation welcomes the debate on the report of the Security Council and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador John Negroponte of the United States, for his introductory remarks on the work of the Security Council during the period under review.

The report of the Security Council contains an introductory section and a listing of meetings, communications received from Member States, and of resolutions and other decisions adopted by the Council.

We wish to take note of the rather new format of the report, with the hope that further work will be done to improve it in future.

The annual report should be more than a mere listing of meetings. More importantly, it should continue to strive to provide a detailed analytical account of the Council's proceedings and should contain substantive information on the environment in which discussions are held and on the decisions arrived at in the Security Council, as stated earlier by several speakers. Such a substantive report would contribute to a better understanding of Council affairs, enable Member States to take informed decisions and further bridge the gap between members and non-members of the Council.

This underlines the need for reform in order to ensure openness, inclusiveness, democratization, transparency and accountability, and to restore the credibility of the Security Council vis-à-vis Member States and world public opinion.

The report before us shows that the bulk of the work of the Security Council continued to be on Africa, with Iraq, the Middle East and terrorism as other areas of critical intervention. The Security Council should continue to work to ensure that its decisions on Africa are commensurate with the time and effort it dedicates to the continent. This includes acting as expeditiously as possible on any possible threat to peace and security on the continent. This would have been the recommended course of action, for instance, in cases such as that of Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For it to act in such a way would contribute to lessening the concerns expressed in the past by Member States with regard to specific conflicts that have emerged on our continent. The Council should not wait until a situation deteriorates to take action. Now that robust mandates have been decided by the Council, it is imperative to secure their implementation.

In the case of Liberia, within the framework of the implementation of the existing mandate, due attention should be given to the issue of the mercenary forces involved in that country's conflict, whose negative action is on record as having endangered peace processes elsewhere in West Africa. The inauguration of the Transitional Government, which took place recently, is an encouraging sign that the peace effort in Liberia, if properly supported, can and will be successful.

The recent positive developments in Burundi, which have enabled the signing of yet another important agreement between the Government and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), should be encouraged through the adoption by the Security Council of a draft resolution endorsing the African Mission in Burundi. An early involvement of the Security Council is not only desirable but also a necessity in order for it to support the African Union in its quest to settle the conflict in that country. By doing so, the Security Council would be meeting the expectations of the international community.

For all these reasons, reforming the Security Council is imperative. The democratization and expansion of that body should be accorded the highest priority in order to reflect the current geopolitical situation.

In his statement of 23 September 2003, the Secretary-General reminded us that the debate over the composition of the Security has been with us for over a decade, and that we almost all agree that the Council should be enlarged. He reminded us also that the difficulties we face in reaching agreement on this issue do not excuse our failure to do so. We could not agree more with the Secretary-General. The question is, are Member States ready to listen to the Secretary-General and to heed their own words?

In the process of reviewing the composition of the Security Council, the criteria for expansion should not be restrictive, but, rather, representative and equitable. In this context, we should not be oriented only by the military and economic power of the candidates. Other elements, such as moral authority, equitable geographical representation, the need to ensure fair representation of developing countries, and commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security should be taken into account.

In the current composition of the Security Council, Africa is the most underrepresented continent. We therefore reiterate the African position that, in order for Africa to have its fair share of seats on the Security Council, our continent should be allocated two permanent seats, with the same rights as the current permanent members, and two additional non-permanent seats.

The lack of progress in the decade-long debate over Security Council reform has done immense damage to the credibility of the Council itself. The

responsibility for breaking the prevailing stalemate lies entirely with those Member States that have so far failed to show the necessary political will, flexibility and pragmatism to come up with a new formula that accommodates everyone's interests.

The new challenges before the international community in the maintenance of international peace and security compel us all to combine our efforts towards undertaking the much-needed reforms. Let us seize the momentum and make a difference in the future of our Organization.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): In making some brief points on the annual report of the Security Council before the General Assembly, we must first comment on organizational matters that seem quite important to us. Like others, we are disappointed to see that the General Assembly has reverted to its old practice of having separate debates on the report of the Council and on Security Council reform. Given the overlap in substance between the two items and the good experience we had last year with a joint debate, we find it hard to understand this change in practice, especially in the light of the urgent need for the General Assembly to engage in a radical and effective reform.

The report itself is more concise and thus more accessible than on some occasions in the past. That is the result of an important effort by the Council and should help to advance the interaction between the two bodies, which we believe should become more substantial and meaningful over time. A number of useful suggestions have been made during the course of the debate. I would like in particular to refer to the statement made earlier by the representative of Paraguay.

The Council is clearly looking back at one of its most difficult years, due in particular to the profound disagreements among Council members on the right course of action concerning Iraq. Rarely has the work of the Council been followed with more public interest than in the past few months — and rarely have more people turned away from the Council in frustration and disappointment. The time has thus clearly come for us to rethink the established mechanisms in the area of international peace and security, and we are all indebted to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his initiative to establish a panel of eminent persons to launch and inspire this process.

We continue to believe very strongly in the transparency and accountability of the Council with regard to the membership as a whole. Again, the Council has taken important steps over the years in this area, fundamentally changing its relationship with States that are not members of the Council. The informal briefings and increasing number of open debates on a variety of topics are positive steps, and wrap-up sessions have also proved to be useful in this respect. At the same time, the character of the work of the Council has also changed, in that it takes increasingly far-reaching decisions, including decisions which directly affect the lives of individuals who have no means of recourse or appeal. It is thus all the more important that the Council be accountable for its decisions towards the membership as a whole — on behalf of which, after all, it is acting.

We warmly welcomed the initiative of the United Kingdom, during its presidency last month, to engage the Council in a process during which it will look closely into the issue of justice and the rule of law, without impinging on the role that other bodies will continue to play in this respect. Indeed, we believe that the imperative of the rule of law needs to be emphasized in the strongest possible terms — at both the national and international levels — at a time when multilateralism is more urgently needed and more forcefully challenged than ever.

As a guardian of the rule of law, the Council must also look into its own decisions and ensure that they are at all times fully consistent with the relevant provisions of international law, in particular, of course, the United Nations Charter. It is thus regrettable that during the past year the Council again made a decision that clearly does not fulfil that criterion by adopting resolution 1487 (2003). We believe that that resolution is likely to do damage to the credibility of the Council in the long term, and thus hope that it will refrain from renewing it next summer.

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

I would like to inform representatives that, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 47/233, 48/264 and 51/241, I intend to make a summary of the debate on this agenda item immediately following the conclusion of our consideration of agenda item 56, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 11.

Agenda item 56

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

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): This debate is taking place at a critical moment for the Organization. Confidence in the capacity of the United Nations to resolve the most serious global problems has been weakened and damaged.

The international community is facing a number of difficult issues regarding the future of the multilateral and collective security system embodied by this Organization. It must either choose to trust the United Nations to resolve the most important global issues or conclude that the Organization is being brushed aside by the force of events.

The international community must respond to this challenge through a process of sincere and profound reflection. We do not have all of the answers, but we are convinced that the one idea that cannot be called into question is respect for the guiding principle that led to the birth of the United Nations: a democratic commitment by all of the peoples of the world to peace and security.

Despite the fact that that objective has not been fully achieved, that idea has had sufficient power to keep this Organization alive for more than half a century. It is an objective that is shared by the countries from all continents, cultures and civilizations that together make up the United Nations.

It is clear that in order to reaffirm that objective and turn the United Nations into an effective instrument, the Organization must be reformed. Likewise, it is evident that the reform exercise must render it even more democratic and reaffirm its legitimacy and its ability to bring people together.

That democratic commitment cannot be overlooked when it comes to the reform of the Security Council. Fifty years have elapsed since the system of collective security was defined. The international system is not the same today as it was in 1945. When the United Nations was created, a system was established according to which five Powers had a privileged position with regard to collective security. That was not democratic, and Argentina questioned it at the time. It was a response, however, to a particular balance of power. Today, the balance of power is radically different.

We need to reform the Security Council, which has lost a great deal of its representative capacity and effectiveness. The paradox, however, is that some of the proposals that we have heard about during the reform exercise, rather than making that body more democratic, advocate the retention of privileges and the creation of new ones.

Today we are witness to a Council in which very delicate issues — issues that affect global peace and that could lead to the endangering of key principles of international law and have a serious impact on the United Nations — are discussed in an exclusive and exclusionary manner by the permanent members. Transparency is absent from the Council — even for most of its members.

Nevertheless, some proposals claim that the solution is to create new permanent members. Some propose increasing the number of permanent members, with new members having the same rights as current members; that is to say, with the privilege of the veto. They argue that some countries aspiring to that category of membership in fact contribute more to the Organization and are more powerful, than some of the permanent members that obtained the privilege of the veto in 1945.

Others, being more resigned — or more realistic — would be happy with a permanent seat without the privilege of the veto. Should that idea prevail, we would have a Security Council with three classes of members, much like passengers on a plane. Some — the five permanent members — would travel first class. Others — permanent members without the right of the veto — would travel in business class. Lastly, non-permanent members would travel in coach. Can that classification stand up to the test of legitimacy and equity? Could the peoples of the United Nations referred to in the preamble to the Charter trust an organization based on such new inequalities?

A few days ago, while addressing the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, I said that "the legitimacy lent by the United Nations is its principal asset" (*A/58/PV.25*). We believe that we cannot tamper with that asset, as it is what justifies the very existence of the United Nations.

There is no justification for the current aristocratic structure of the Security Council. No reasons have been

cited to convince us that a solution of that nature would bring more legitimacy and effectiveness to the United Nations. The least democratic and least transparent body of the United Nations will not be improved if we accentuate its lack of democracy.

It should be recalled that, as Article 24 of the Charter sets out, those who make up the Security Council represent us all, and not themselves alone. It should also be understood that we elect them periodically and democratically to act in our name, and that their representative character and the temporary nature of their mandates provide our guarantee. It is for that reason that, like many other countries, Argentina maintains that in enlarging the Security Council it is necessary to increase the number of non-permanent members, which are the ones who represent us with greater authenticity, and over which we may exercise greater control. Not to understand that would take us back five decades. It would be an assault on the idea of democracy, upon which we based ourselves 50 years ago so that we could live together in peace.

We understand that reforming the Security Council cannot be a partial undertaking; nor can it fail to address the veto and the prevailing position of some of its members. The working methods, transparency, informal meetings and practices of the Council should be addressed and resolved along with the question of the enlargement of its membership.

My country has always maintained that there is a need to eliminate the veto. However, in order to be realistic and to make a constructive effort, we accept postponing that goal for the moment and limiting the veto to issues falling under Chapter VII of the Charter for the time being.

We have worked for 10 years in the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group to try to find a solution to this issue. That work has reflected the points of view of all nations, since all of them have been represented in the Group. No country has been excluded. It cannot be said that the results achieved by the Working Group do not clearly reflect the thinking of the international community as a whole. If there was no agreement in the Group, it was because no such agreement exists among nations. That agreement will not exist until we accept that the Security Council's non-permanent membership must be enlarged and that the veto should be, at the very least, restricted.

Today it is possible to look at all the possible ways of finding alternatives. We can, and should, engage the thoughts of the international community to come up with other formulas. We therefore welcome the concerns of the Secretary-General, as well as his decision to establish a group of thinkers. This is a crucial moment, and it is necessary to summon all points of view in this exercise. But it should be clear that the result of this effort should be reviewed by the General Assembly, which is the only body that can take a decision on reform.

Forcing the issue by taking the solution to this problem out of the hands of the General Assembly and its Working Group is what should not happen. We do not believe that there can be a solution that does not emerge from consensus, or that has a goal other than making the Security Council more democratic and more effective. Argentina will participate in a conciliatory spirit to achieve those goals.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Let me first of all thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic, for his work in efficiently conducting the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform during the previous session. I also express my gratitude to Ambassador Ingólfsson of Iceland and Ambassador Kasemsarn of Thailand for their preparation of the Working Group's comprehensive report. It is a pity that we are losing those able colleagues from the Working Group, as both are leaving New York. I sincerely wish them success in their future endeavours.

In the process of discussing the situation in Iraq over the past year, questions have been raised as to the effectiveness of the Security Council with regard to its primary role of maintaining international peace and security. Those questions added greater momentum to the discussion on the need for Security Council reform than we have seen before. In his address to member countries at the opening of the general debate during this session of General Assembly, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that

> "If you want the ... Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 4*)

Statements from Member States followed in the general debate, and more than two-thirds of them

touched upon the need for United Nations reform, including that of the Security Council. That figure strongly indicates the increasing momentum on this issue.

On reviewing the discussions in the Working Group, which started 10 years ago, it is regrettable that we do not see any significant progress or any way out of the deadlock, despite the fact that the necessary elements to reach general agreement on Security Council reform are already on the table. Former President Kavan stated in his summary of the responses to the informal questionnaire that, "with one exception, all Member States that responded found the movement of the Working Group unsatisfactory".

Japan also expresses its strong dissatisfaction with the current lack of progress in the Working Group. We have to recognize that most of the responsibility for the stalemate lies with the Working Group itself.

Leaving the current situation as it is will call into question the ability of the United Nations to adjust itself to challenges in the world. As the Working Group is the only body established by the General Assembly to discuss Security Council reform, we must make our utmost effort to achieve concrete results in the Working Group during this session. Japan believes that, if we cannot make any progress in the next meeting of the Working Group, it may be necessary to review the way the Working Group manages its discussions. In that connection, Japan looks forward to the leadership of the new President, Mr. Julian Hunte, as Chairman of the Working Group, and of its new Bureau. I should also like to add that Japan will try its best to present new ideas to assist in the process and to promote discussion in the Working Group.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities. Japan supports that initiative and will be following developments with great interest. Although it is the Member States that can take firm and clear decisions, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his statement, I expect substantive recommendations to be made with regard to United Nations reforms that address Security Council reform in particular. Japan intends to contribute as much as possible to this initiative.

The Secretary-General also makes a strong case for United Nations reform in his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). He proposes that we set 2005 as a deadline for reaching agreement on the changes that are needed in our international institutions if they are to meet the new challenges, because 2005 not only marks the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations but is also the year in which a review of progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration will take place. Japan takes that proposal very seriously. Japan believes — as our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, said in her statement during the general debate, on 23 September (see A/58/PV.8) — that a political decision should be taken on the occasion of such a review by holding a meeting of heads of State or Government regarding reform of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular.

The perpetuation of the same basic Security Council structure as that of 60 years ago leads many to question the legitimacy of the system under which the United Nations operates. I should like to urge that all Member States take concrete action to strengthen the functioning of the Organization and thereby to restore its legitimacy. Japan reaffirms its determination to play a positive role to that end.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, for the eleventh consecutive year, the General Assembly is considering the issue of reforming the Security Council and expanding its membership. I do not wish to reiterate the positions that our statements have reflected over the past 10 years. Of course, certain parameters of the Egyptian position remain unchanged: we endorse the position of the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to expanding Council membership — reiterated at non-aligned summit conferences in 1995, 1996 and 1997 — that the Council should comprise at least 26 permanent and non-permanent members, with the possibility of expanding the non-permanent membership. That is in addition to improvements in the Council's working methods based on mutual understanding. Egypt also fully supports the African position, expressed at the Harare Summit, calling for seven African seats — including two permanent seats — on an expanded Council, with those two seats held on a rotating basis.

I wish to recall General Assembly resolution 53/30, adopted in November 1998, which stipulated that any resolution or decision on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

would require the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the members of the Assembly, in conformity with Article 108 of the Charter. The Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is prepared to reconsider this issue. However, there are a number of questions that we consider crucial if we wish the Working Group's deliberations to be truly successful. Among those essential questions are the following.

First, does the extreme slowness of the Working Group's deliberations mean that Member States accept the Council's working methods and mechanisms as they currently exist, or is there an underlying awareness of the need for reform of those working methods?

Secondly, should we wait for double standards and selectivity to become the Security Council's standard practice when it addresses international peace and security issues, or is it time for the Council to consider all threats to international peace and security on an equal footing, whatever the parties involved or whatever the prevailing political balances?

Thirdly, does the Council's current composition truly and accurately reflect the existing strategic balance, or is it true that, over approximately the past 60 years, certain forces have emerged while others have receded, and certain blocs have collapsed while others have appeared — and that all those realities need to be taken into account in the Council?

Fourthly, can the Council, as currently composed, truly maintain international peace and security?

Fifthly, is the Council truly carrying out the mission entrusted to it under the Charter in accordance with the principles established by the Charter — that is, the principles of international law and the rules of justice?

Sixthly, and most important — has the experience of the past six months demonstrated that the Security Council is truly an effective instrument for ensuring international peace and security and for guaranteeing the independence and sovereignty of States, or has it demonstrated the Council's weakness and the urgent need for reform?

In addition to those questions — which directly concern the Council and its performance — there are others of more general import that we, as Members of the United Nations, need to answer before we can agree on any expansion of the Council. Among those questions, I would note the following.

First, do the current balance of power and the role played by various parties make it possible to reform and expand the Council in a balanced manner so as to guarantee the rights of developing and developed countries on equal footing, or will the current international situation lead to the creation of a Council that is even more paralysed and less capable of acting than the current one?

Secondly, do we all really want to see simultaneous reform of and increase in the membership of the Council, or do some of us want only to expand the Council, others simply to reform it and still others neither to reform nor expand it?

Thirdly, do all parties demonstrate genuine political will and determination to agree on a package for the reform and expansion of the Council that combines justice in seat distribution and in the representation of all regional groups, while guaranteeing the Council's transparency, objectivity and neutrality?

In Egypt's statement today, we sought more to ask questions than to provide answers. I hope that these questions will give rise to a serious debate on the underlying philosophy of reform and on our real goals. Indeed, we fear that the last 10 years of debate in the Working Group may have added more confusion to the issue of reform.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The issue the Assembly is discussing today is clearly one of the most important items on its agenda, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We have been informed of the outcome of the lengthy meetings and debates that were conducted by the Working Group since last year. I would like to express our admiration to Mr. Jan Kavan, the former Chairman, and his two Vice-Chairs for their efforts and for having presided over the discussions so well.

The discussions in the Working Group have demonstrated the urgent need to reorganize the Security Council and to give greater transparency to its working methods. All the working papers submitted by many countries and organizations from the various regional groups to the Working Group and its Chairman agreed that Council reform is necessary to strengthen that body's ability to maintain international peace and security and to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Despite agreement among Member States on the principles of reform and change, the Working Group, after 10 years, has been unable to agree on the nature of the changes in question, on the number of seats by which to increase the membership or on how to improve the working methods of the Council. It is regrettable that the debates of the past few years have been repetitive. We are in a vicious circle; we must all think seriously about how to revitalize the mechanisms of the Working Group itself.

But we cannot ignore the progress that has taken place in the Working Group's discussions, especially as regards the Council's working methods. There is near-general agreement on a number of measures and provisions that the Council should adopt. Furthermore, the Council itself has already started to implement certain methods and procedures. But we are only at the beginning of this process, and we stress that we support the Secretary-General's invitation to invest this item with the greatest possible importance so that decisions would have wider acceptance, especially by developing countries.

Kuwait has repeatedly stated its position on the increase in the membership of the Council and on improving its working methods. We have done so unilaterally and through various groups, in particular the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement. The Assembly's debate on this item provides us with a good opportunity to stress the following fundamental principles.

First, Kuwait supports an increase in the Security Council membership, provided that this is moderate, with a view to preserving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council's work and decision-making in the face of challenges to international peace and security.

Second, the increase should be consistent with the principles of the sovereign equality of Member States and equitable geographical representation; it must also reflect the global character of the United Nations.

Third, with regard to the increase of permanent seats in the Security Council, we support a limited increase and consider that such seats should go to countries that have truly demonstrated, in their relationship with the United Nations, the ability to discharge primary responsibilities, such as maintenance of international peace and security, and to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter in the economic, social, political and cultural arenas. Countries should be elected to these additional seats by the members of the General Assembly, in accordance with agreed criteria and procedures.

Fourth, with regard to the reform and improvement of the working methods of the Council, we favour proposals that would promote greater transparency and a freer two-way flow of information between the Council and the United Nations membership at large. In this context, we stress the importance of implementing measures adopted by the Security Council itself to improve its working methods, without waiting for agreement on other issues such as the size and composition of the Council and the decision-making process.

Fifth, we favour the retention of the current method of selecting the non-permanent members on the basis of Article 23, paragraph 2, of the Charter, so that smaller countries have a greater opportunity to gain membership and to contribute to the Council's work.

Sixth, with regard to the veto, bearing in mind the difficulty and sensitivity of the issue, we note that the discussions in the Working Group show that there is near-unanimous agreement on the need to limit and restrict the use of the veto power. There are many important proposals in that connection, which require further consideration. We hope that it will be possible to reach a consensus that is acceptable to all countries and that would help the Council carry out its duties.

Finally, we stress our support for the decision of the Secretary-General to establish a group of eminent personalities to consider and review the working methods of the principal organs of the United Nations, as we hope this will help to generate the necessary momentum to reach consensus on the Security Council reform, so that the Council can best maintain international peace and security and deal with the challenges of the next century.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): Today's debate addresses one of the most controversial issues on the United Nations reform agenda: the Security Council. As last week's debate underscored, the Security Council must also be strengthened substantially and made more efficient and effective for United Nations reform to be truly significant and complete. In other words, we need a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Italy's position on the issue of Security Council composition is well known. We strongly believe that

the current reform process should aim at enhancing the Council's effectiveness and representative character, together with its legitimacy and credibility. Our conviction has been reinforced by the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration.

Like many other United Nations members, we believe that the creation of new permanent seats would not be in keeping with these objectives. As was stated last week and again today, that would create new centres of privilege. This would, therefore, go against the tide of history, in which priority is given, and has to be given, to an ongoing process of democratization in the handling and the management of international relations through multilateral institutions, so that every Member State, every member of this Assembly, will feel more adequately represented and taken on board.

Would this happen with the establishment of new permanent members which would not be accountable to the electoral scrutiny of the membership? Certainly not. And it would neither enhance the Council's legitimacy and representative character, nor improve the effectiveness of its actions. Indeed, new permanent members endowed with veto power would undoubtedly make it more difficult for the Council to swiftly define and implement collective actions, impairing the effectiveness of the Council's decision-making process and increasing the risk of inaction. Comprehensive reform of the Security Council should, therefore, also address the power and the exercise of veto.

On the other hand, the proposal aired by some to add new permanent members without the right to veto also entails serious drawbacks and would not increase the cohesion of United Nations membership. It would create further division in the Council membership and establish a new layer of hierarchy that would be detrimental to the United Nations. Do we really want to have a first-class membership, a second-class membership and a third-class membership? The United Nations is not a corporate concern, a company or a fund listed on a stock exchange, with class A, class B and class C shares.

Moreover, let us be clear that any enlargement of the Security Council, regardless of the composition it assumes, will be limited in number. The figure generally mentioned is between 20 and 25 or 26 members. With a higher number of members, the Security Council would not be effective and efficient. What would result, it should be clear to all Member States, would be a zero-sum game. If we increase the number of permanent members, there will be less room for the rest of the membership who agree to the non-permanent seats. We would give, let us suppose, to five Member States, who would become permanent members, and thereby take away from what the remaining Member States have the right to expect regarding the possibility for them to offer a direct contribution to shape the Security Council's actions and policies.

We are all aware that the regional groups are deeply divided over which of their countries should be elevated to permanent member status and are also aware that they cannot agree on objective political criteria for selection. Ten years of debate have demonstrated that these irreconcilable differences, which are deeply rooted in the geopolitical and historical realities of each continent, do not make the identification of new permanent members an option within reach.

The United Nations membership might decide that, after 10 years of debate, it is now time to reach agreement on a formula that can build on common ground and therefore be capable of gathering the greatest support within the General Assembly. If so, the only realistic formula would be a limited increase in the number of non-permanent members, for the time being.

Such an enlargement of the Council would increase its representative character and, indeed, the legitimacy of its actions in the eyes of the international community. An increase of elective seats would facilitate Council access and participation for all United Nations Member States. Furthermore, greater legitimacy of Council decisions would make their implementation more prompt, thus enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Council.

On the issue of representation, let me recall that back in 1993, Italy tabled a specific proposal, according to which countries that shoulder the greatest responsibilities in the maintenance of peace and security, as well as for other purposes of our Organization, could participate more frequently in the work of the Council. That proposal remains on the table. One could also contemplate a review of the current ban on the immediate re-election of non-permanent members.

In light of the strong appeal launched by the Secretary-General on the need to reform the Security Council to enable it to face the new global challenges

to peace and security, Italy, of course, is also open to working with other countries on possible innovative formulas, provided that they are balanced and reflect the basic principles that inspire our approach.

Still in my national capacity, let me add a few comments on the European Union profile in the Security Council. The more the European Union becomes a strong and cohesive international subject, the more it will be able to provide valuable inputs to the United Nations in general and to shaping Security Council deliberations.

The recently signed Joint Declaration on European Union-United Nations cooperation in crisis management is an example of the European Union's determination to enhance its role in peace- and security-related issues at the United Nations and to help the Organization achieve its goals.

We are working to fully implement European Union-coordinated actions within international organizations, pursuant to the relevant European Union Treaty provisions. Realism should not prevent us from looking forward. This process must be approached gradually, incrementally and consensually. It is our hope that the European Union will progressively enhance its capacity to contribute to an effective multilateralism centred on the United Nations.

During the recent general debate in the General Assembly, our political leaders expressed their strong commitment to reforming multilateral institutions. We now have to work to translate those pledges into effective and realistic measures that include Security Council reform. It is essential to maintain a link between political statements and their implementation and follow up. In taking an incremental approach to new action and reforms, let us identify, with realism and pragmatism, the areas where there is common ground and, on that basis, start to move forward.

May I recall what the representative of Jamaica said: let us cut the talk and walk the walk. I agree with that.

Mr. Katti (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to echo some ideas developed by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the United Nations in September 2000, particularly with regard to peace and security and thus the role of the Security Council.

First of all, there is an urgent need for the international community to reach agreement based on a programme of common security that should reflect overall consensus on the main threats to peace and security.

Secondly, it is important not to shirk from the necessity to improve, indeed change, if need be, the structure and functions of the United Nations and other international institutions to better meet present needs.

Finally, the strength of the Organization lies in its legitimacy as enshrined in the fundamental principles of international law. If, consequently, the Security Council is to gain the broadest possible support for its decisions and to be able to best fulfil its responsibilities, it must be more representative and reflect the geopolitical reality of the world today.

Three crucial ideas therefore underpin the advancement of peace and security: a common security programme; adjustment of the structures and functions of the Organization; and the legitimacy of the activities of the Organization and the need to reform the Security Council, which remains, despite the crises and critical times being faced by our Organization, the main guarantor of the maintenance of international peace and security.

We understand all the more the analysis and statement made by the Secretary-General with respect to the need for improvement — indeed change — of the structure and functions of the Organization, which is now crucial for the credibility and very survival of the United Nations — something that we have always called for.

Past experience, with its setbacks and disappointments, makes us nevertheless more guarded with regard to the possibility of thoroughly reforming the Security Council, given the many obstacles and the sometimes insufficient political will. Twenty-four years ago, the issue of reforming the Security Council was put on the agenda of the thirty-fourth General Assembly session at the request of some 10 delegations, including my own. But we had to wait for the forty-eighth session for the General Assembly to decide to establish an Open-ended Working Group, with a clearly defined mandate under resolution 48/26, to consider all aspects of the issue of reforming the Security Council. We would be greatly remiss were we to depart from that approach.

The Millennium Declaration, for its part, highlighted in a timely way the need to reform the

Security Council to give it the needed legitimacy and representativeness to achieve its mission. We hope that the issue of reforming the Security Council will continue to be considered in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in strict compliance with the principles of transparency and all-inclusive participation.

In statements before the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, throughout these meetings and those of the fifty-seventh session, I have pointed out that for the last 10 years the same delegations have been meeting, almost at the same time and same place, to reiterate their countries' respective positions, as if we were running out of imagination and creativity. I had attributed the lack of progress more to the absence of political will than to the working methods of our group. My opinion remains unchanged.

With regard to the position of my country on the reform of the Security Council, which is rather well known, I would like to stress that despite the improvement in the functioning and working methods of the Security Council, the Council has not produced the final version of its rules of procedure so as to prevent arrangements concerning diverse measures and positive changes from being subject to the whims of any one Council member. Moreover, despite concerted efforts and results achieved, we nevertheless note that, regrettably, closed meetings, where important issues are dealt with and decisions affecting Member States are made, continue to be the usual practice, whereas they should be the exception, and that those that have the exorbitant veto power continue to decide among themselves in advance the final outcome of the Council's deliberations.

My delegation also regrets that whereas the Security Council, under Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Charter, "shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations", some Council members act as if they had no other intention than to defend and promote their own national interests. My delegation also believes that the Security Council must continually and regularly consult with the States directly or indirectly involved in conflict situations that are being discussed in the Council, and with regional and subregional organizations.

The Council should also take measures to make more effective use of Article 50 of the Charter on the right of any State to consult the Security Council if it finds itself confronted with problems arising from the carrying out of measures — preventive or enforcement — taken by the Council. Finally, the Security Council must commit itself to achieving its mandate as defined by the Charter and must not exercise any function not explicitly entrusted to it by the Charter. It is not its role to legislate. That falls to the Member States. It is not its role to deal with economic and social issues. That falls to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Its main responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. That issue is so arduous, complex and demanding that the Council should devote its full attention to it without getting sidetracked.

We believe that the re-appropriation by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council of their prerogatives, which in no way compete with those of the Security Council but rather complement them, is the first step in any exercise in reform of the United Nations. It is therefore important to give full weight to the provisions of the Charter in restoring a balance between the various bodies of the United Nations.

Finally, I would like to note that, in general, with regard to working methods, there is a broad consensus to promote greater transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council, and that consequently, it would perhaps be fitting to finalize that consensus before it disintegrates.

Such finalizing of the agreement on the working methods and transparency of the work of the Council is all the more desirable given that no agreement seems to be emerging concerning the size of the Council and its composition, other than on the criteria for choosing new permanent members. There is even less agreement on the issue of the veto, which my delegation still considers an unacceptable anachronism.

I do not intend to spell out again the position of my country on all these substantive issues, but I would like nevertheless to reaffirm the support of my delegation for the specific proposals made by the Non-Aligned Movement, in particular the proposals concerning the increase in the number of Council members, which stems from the will to increase the representativeness and effectiveness of that important organ.

I would also like to stress that any enlargement of the membership of the Security Council must take into consideration the demand of Africa, as it was put

forward at the African Union Summit, held in Harare in 1997, and reiterated many times by my delegation, along with many other African delegations.

If the serious challenges facing the Security Council during the past year have shaken our Organization and impaired its image and prestige, they have also been a wake-up call for Member States to make a serious effort at reform of the Organization as a whole. The challenge will clearly be daunting, especially with respect to the Security Council, but what is at stake today is the very survival of our Organization.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): During the current session, the statements of many Member States and the Secretary-General clearly highlighted the need for urgent reform of the United Nations. The Russian Federation continues to believe that a strong and effective United Nations is a key instrument for collectively regulating international relations and establishing a multipolar world order based on the Charter and international law. This is especially pertinent today when the international community is seeking to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter new threats and challenges.

Reform of the Security Council must be geared towards strengthening the potential of this key organ for the sake of effective implementation of its terms of reference as enshrined in the Charter. We are sympathetic to the concerns of many delegations over the slow pace of progress in reforming the Security Council — reform that would allow the membership of that organ to better reflect current international realities. We also believe that given the deep disagreement among States on that specific issue, work must be done step by step and cautiously. As President Vladimir Putin of Russia said at the opening of the present General Assembly session, "… we should be guided above all by the broadest possible agreement on all aspects of the expansion of the Council …" (*A/58/PV.11*). We must not allow a split in the United Nations to occur over this issue, which is so important to many States and the entire Organization.

Russia is prepared to continue with the painstaking work of overcoming differences of opinion, primarily on the key aspect of the future composition of the Security Council. We are open to any constructive proposals regarding the expansion of the membership in all categories, on the understanding that any increase should include both developed and developing States, which must be accorded equal rights and assigned equal duties.

In this context, the Russian Federation believes that Germany, Japan, India and Brazil, as well as a State representing Africa, would be worthy candidates for any additional permanent seats as might be created in the Security Council. That approach would ensure an adequate balance of interests among the members and strengthen the trend towards consensus within the Council.

We believe that any proposal that would lead to a reduction in the prerogatives and powers of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the right of veto, would be counterproductive. Unjustified and baseless criticism of the veto only creates unnecessary tension, which is not conducive to reaching the desired agreement with regard to the parameters of the reform effort.

With regard to the question of according the right of veto to any new permanent members, it would be wise to leave any such consideration until after agreement has been reached on the specific membership of an expanded Security Council. In this respect, it will be important to keep the Council to a manageable size, since too large an increase in the membership could have a negative impact on the productivity and effectiveness of that body.

On the basis of that consistent position, Russia will continue to participate constructively in efforts to reach an agreement that commands maximum support on the reform of the Council, within, inter alia, the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly. The activities of that Group should continue to be carried out on the basis of the agreed parameters, including the principle of consensus and the cluster approach. We must also consider those recommendations that may be made on Security Council reform by the Secretary-General as a result of the work of the panel of eminent persons. We hope that those recommendations will duly take into account the existing approaches to this problem and the interests of various States, as well as of the United Nations as a whole. Ultimately, it is the General Assembly that will have to take a decision on that matter.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the reform of the Security Council will be successful only if the end result is not division, but greater unity among States with regard to that unique organ, which bears, on behalf of all of the Members of the United Nations, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of

international peace and security. Russia will continue to do everything it can to help to achieve that goal.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I would like at the outset, Sir, to express appreciation for the work performed by your predecessor in the presidency, Jan Kavan, as chairman 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, as well as by the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingólfsson and Ambassador Chuchai Kasemsarn, who, during the past year, very ably conducted the business of that Group.

The Chairman displayed a commendable readiness to accept proposals and take initiatives with a view to carrying the process forward. Particularly worthy of mention are the initiative proposing a questionnaire on the work and methods of the Working Group and the idea of circulating an informal summary of the results, which provided us with a convenient reference regarding these questions. The decision to filter out of the working documents all proposals with no identified sponsors was also useful and timely, and resulted in a considerably streamlined report. Yet, despite the fact that it has been 10 years since it was established, the Working Group has regrettably not lived up to the expectations that led to its creation.

From our perspective, the lack of results is by no means discouraging. The issues are indeed complex and involve many difficulties, but this should not distract us from continuing to seek institutional developments that adequately reflect the political and security realities of the twenty-first century and that can thus better represent our own views and interests. The need for such reform has existed for many years, but its urgency was underscored by the grievous international developments we witnessed this year. As President Lula da Silva pointed out in his address to the General Assembly on 23 September,

> "Reform of the United Nations has become an urgent task, given the present risks to the international political order .... [The Security Council's] composition, in particular as concerns permanent membership, cannot remain unaltered almost 60 years later. It can no longer ignore the changing world. More specifically, it must take into account the emergence on the international scene of developing countries. They have become important actors that often exercise a critical role in ensuring the pacific settlement of disputes". (*A/58/PV.7, p. 6*)

The events that have taken place this year on the international scene have given rise to new challenges for the international community, not the least of which are those stemming from new security strategies. They have brought into question the adequacy and effectiveness of the rules and instruments at our disposal, prompting the Secretary-General, in paragraph 91 of his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), to express the view that

> "Member States need ... to take a hard look at the existing 'architecture' of international institutions and to ask themselves whether it is adequate for the tasks we have before us".

That pressing need is made clear by the Secretary-General in several other passages in that report, as well as in his report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1).

In the specific case of the Security Council, the Secretary-General's diagnosis also points to a perceived lack of legitimacy in that organ's decisions, in particular "in the eyes of the developing world, which feels that its views and interests are insufficiently represented among the decision-takers" (*A/58/323, para. 96*). He goes on to state that "The composition of the Security Council — unchanged in its essentials since 1945 — seems at odds with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century" (*ibid.*).

Brazil is certainly in agreement with that appraisal. The very existence of new challenges to the international order is a matter of paramount concern for all, and should propel us forward, both in preserving the commonly agreed purposes and principles of international conduct enshrined in the Charter, and in redoubling our efforts aimed at reforming the Organization, in particular the Security Council. In this respect, we support the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities charged with, among other duties, recommending ways of strengthening the United Nations through reform of its institutions and processes. We note with satisfaction the fact that more than 130 of the heads of State or Government, ministers for foreign affairs and others who attended this year's general debate heeded the Secretary-

General's call and expressed their willingness to contribute to bringing the process of reform to fruition.

The Open-ended Working Group should carry on working with a view to fulfilling its mandate. Although on major issues general agreement has so far been elusive, its work on procedural and practical matters has yielded important results, thereby helping the process. The work of the Working Group could continue in parallel with that of the panel, which should present its report to the General Assembly next year.

As work proceeds in the coming months, let us keep in mind the Secretary-General's words in plenary on 23 September:

> "I respectfully suggest to you, Excellencies, that in the eyes of your peoples the difficulty of reaching agreement does not excuse your failure to do so. If you want the Council's decisions to command greater respect, particularly in the developing world, you need to address the issue of its composition with greater urgency." *(see A/58/PV.7)*

It is high time for the international community squarely to confront the question of reform of the principal organs of the United Nations, in order for them better to respond to the world's needs. The Secretary-General has pointed the way forward; let us take it.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by thanking the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, his two Vice-Chairmen and members of the Bureau for their outstanding work over the past year and, in particular, for their leadership and patience during the discussions of the Working Group during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, we are pleased that you will be guiding deliberations on this critically important issue during the next session of the Working Group. We are confident that your diplomatic skill and your commitment will enable us to make tangible progress in the work of the Group this year.

Ten years have elapsed since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. While the Group has made considerable progress in some areas of the mandate laid down by the General Assembly in 1993, the thorough and exhaustive debates that have been held to date have proved that there remain significant differences on such substantive matters as the size and composition of the Security Council, especially as concerns an increase in the permanent membership and the right of veto. In other words, the fundamental question — how to advance from the Security Council which we have now to an organ which is more representative and democratic, but no less efficient — has yet to be answered.

Nonetheless, despite the seeming stalemate on so-called cluster I issues, the Working Group managed to have a positive impact on the Council's working methods. Some of the recommendations formulated in the Open-ended Working Group over the years could be adopted and implemented by the members of the Council and, as a result, we can say that the Council is now conducting its work somewhat more transparently than in the early 1990s.

In our opinion, further progress on cluster II issues, including on modalities for the holding of meetings and consultations with directly interested and troop-contributing countries, are required in order to ensure increased accessibility and transparency.

In the meantime, and given the lack of progress on cluster I issues, it is worth reaffirming the fallback position maintained by the Non-Aligned Movement, namely that, if agreement is not reached on the expansion of the permanent membership, then the expansion should be limited, for the present, to the non-permanent seats.

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 legitimacy, efficiency and authority. That requires taking into account the dramatic changes that have taken place since the creation of the United Nations 58 years ago, such as the end of the colonial era, resulting in the increasing weight of the developing countries, and the end of the cold war. We believe that the attainment of those objectives requires, among other things, that the membership of the Council be expanded to at least 26, in order better to represent the developing world.

Moreover, the opinion of the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations — which continue to express their dissatisfaction at 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's efforts.

We believe that the interests of all States and regions should be seriously considered in this unprecedented and historic exercise, which is also crucially important for the future of the United Nations and of international relations. Therefore, the process of reform of the Council should not be subject to any predetermined timetable. Any attempt to force a premature decision could do the Organization more harm than good.

We are of the view that, due to importance of Council reform, and on the basis of the principle of equality of all Member States, every effort should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among Member States. We fully agree that all Member States should intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects, which include enlargement, decision-making and the related question of veto, as well as working methods, as reiterated by our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration. However, we believe that we need to proceed with extreme prudence with respect to the new proposals put forward in recent years, including during this session's general debate.

While setting a deadline for, and convening a summit to deal with, reform of the Security Council could give rise to helpful momentum, we need, however, to keep in mind that the impasse reached and lack of progress made in the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council is a direct product of the tremendous importance of the issue and the diversity of views and interests — not the result of obstructionism or delaying tactics. We believe that the potential of the mechanism in place has not yet been exhausted and that the Open-ended Working Group should be given further opportunities.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): Seldom has the work of the Security Council engaged world public opinion as it has during the past year. The relevance of its decisions — and, let me add, of its non-decisions — was undisputed. Yet its role and its decision-making mechanisms were the subject of fervid discussions. It has become clear once again that, first, the Security Council plays a central role in the functioning of the multilateral system, and that, secondly, the legitimizing function of the Security Council is a decisive component of that central role.

Looking at the experience of the past year, we are more convinced than ever that reform of the Security Council is indispensable in order to maintain the credibility and legitimacy of the Council's decisions and to promote respect for its decisions in the interests of peace and security.

Yet the legitimacy of the Security Council is based on its representativeness. Member States must feel represented in the Security Council in order to be able to accept and implement its decisions, which are often very far-reaching.

When the number of seats on the Security Council was increased from 11 to 15 in 1963, the United Nations had 112 Members. When the present five permanent members were chosen in 1945, there were only 51. Out of those 51, 11 Members sat on the Council. That was more than 20 per cent of the total membership. The composition of the Security Council obviously no longer reflects the current political and economic realities of the international system. The distinction in 1945 between the victors and the vanquished has lost its validity. The bulk of the Member States today come from the large regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. The economic and political distribution of weight has changed.

With the end of the conflict between East and West, more than 13 years ago now, the road to adaptation was fundamentally cleared. With resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993, the Open-ended Working Group was established. It has performed remarkable work and, as I personally remember quite well, under Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia's presidency of the fifty-first General Assembly session, brought us almost within reach of true reform. Today, its tenth report lies before us. We thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, the two Vice-Chairmen and all those who actively cooperated for their contributions.

Yet, if we are honest, we must admit to ourselves that the law of diminishing returns has long been showing its effect in the work of the Open-ended Working Group. We sometimes wonder if the continuation of the Group is still worthwhile.

The Secretary-General gave a strong new impetus to the reform of the entire United Nations system with his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). In his statement to the General Assembly, he said that the United Nations — all of us — had come to a fork in the road. And, as part of the reform, he called for a Security Council that is "more broadly representative of the international community as a whole as well as the geopolitical realities of today" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

We thank him for that initiative. We thank those speakers who, in their contributions to the general debate of the fifty-eighth session, supported that call and identified Germany as a candidate for a permanent seat. Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated in this context that

> "the Council must be reformed and enlarged. First and foremost, it must also include more representatives of the developing countries. Let me reiterate that in the context of such a reform Germany is ready to assume greater responsibility". (*A/58/PV.9, p. 24*)

Let me emphasize that Germany does not want any quick fixes in this reform effort. We want enlargement not only in permanent but also in non-permanent seats. The large regions must receive additional permanent as well as additional non-permanent seats.

We want not only enlargement of the Security Council, but also the reform of its working methods. In recent years, significant advances have been made in this area, to which Germany, as a non-permanent member, has endeavoured to contribute.

And finally, we want not just Security Council reform, but a reform of the other United Nations organs as well.

The Secretary-General in his opening statement to the fifty-eighth session laid out a challenge to the Security Council and to its ability to respond collectively to new threats to peace and security. This is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed if the Council is to maintain its credibility and its relevance.

It is in that respect that we are in agreement with the task the Secretary-General has given to the high-level panel of eminent personalities. It is also in that spirit that we will contribute to the reform debate at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Jan Kavan for his commendable efforts in presiding over the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council. We would also like to wish you, Mr. President, every success in carrying out this important and very difficult task, which we know you will be able to discharge.

Ever since the United Nations was established in 1945, those who are interested in strengthening the role of the United Nations, whether Member States or the Secretariat, have been striving to fulfil its purposes in all spheres of interest to the international community. Despite the fact that this international Organization has gone through very complicated and difficult situations, which have come hand in hand with the winds of change in the world, the United Nations has not changed to match the new developments. Therefore, it has now become most important to ensure that the United Nations can cope with those changes. Therefore, reform of the Organization is a question of critical importance and a priority responsibility for many who are interested in that matter.

Perhaps the most urgent reform is to modernize the Security Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As in previous years, the General Assembly is discussing today the most important issue on its agenda, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. We strongly believe that the document circulated with respect to this agenda item reflects a commendable effort by the Open-ended Working Group that is considering this issue. That is reflected also in the outcome of the Working Group's most recent meetings, held during the previous session.

Although the Working Group did not succeed in reaching agreement on the key issues of reform, such as working methods and the numbers for an increase in the Council's membership, the value and importance of its efforts and achievements so far is not diminished.

The General Assembly's 1993 decision to establish the Group was a decisive step forward towards the reform of the Security Council to which States Members of the Organization aspire.

All countries and regional groups want to see the Council reformed and its working methods and procedures improved. Discussions in the Working

Group over the years have focused on those issues and have led to agreement on what is needed for reform and improvement of the Council's working methods in order to increase its effectiveness and improve its performance in dealing with the important issue of maintaining international peace and security. Today there is near consensus on many of the recommendations for changing the working methods of the Security Council. Overall reform of the Council is thus an urgent and priority issue. We must make a major effort to achieve it, particularly as the membership of the United Nations has increased substantially. Newer Members of the United Nations must be equitably represented. Beyond that, the items on the Council's agenda require reform if the Council is to be able to resolve existing difficult situations. Redoubled efforts are needed to that end.

We note an increase in the number of resolutions adopted by the Council, compared with the past. This is due to an increase in the number of items on the Council's agenda. Many of these issues did not exist in the past, such as dealing with post-conflict situations in such a way as to verify accomplishments and to help in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction.

We are satisfied with the Council's improved working methods. More open meetings are being held and Member States have more opportunities to speak on a variety of items. The end-of-month wrap-up meetings provide an opportunity to evaluate and support the Council's work. A better mechanism should be found to ensure participation by States, particularly those that are directly involved in the issues at hand. The success we have had in improving the Council's working methods should encourage us to make further progress more quickly. That requires political will on the part of all States, to ensure that the Council better represents public opinion and is more democratic and transparent in its approach to all international matters.

We must demonstrate a sincere desire for that, because the Security Council is the most representative organ in the area of international peace and security and because of its importance. We must do that without resorting to the use of double standards. Permanent members of the Council must meet their responsibilities, particularly their moral responsibility, and refrain from the use of veto power when this runs counter to rights that are widely recognized by the United Nations and when it can jeopardize international peace and security.

The entire world looks to the Security Council as the main body that helps prevent conflict. Some, however, harbour doubts about the Council's credibility, particularly with regard to certain issues. We should have no doubts about the activities of the Council and should not minimize its importance, since it is a haven for all. Everyone should feel safe and secure that the Council is protecting their rights and issues and providing justice and equality for all.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.