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New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Jayanama (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/54/2)

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Sergey Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for his succinct and balanced presentation of this year's report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. My delegation believes that the consideration of this report by the Assembly will provide an opportunity for the larger membership of the Organization to reflect upon and assess developments pertaining to international peace and security, as well as the work of the Council, during the period covered by the report.

My delegation welcomes the positive developments in the work of the Council, which reflect its increased transparency. These include the regular, sometimes daily briefings by the presidency, which are attended by an increasing number of non-members of the Council, and the increased frequency of open debates and open briefings, with the participation of non-members of the Council. At the same time, there is greater willingness on the part of the Council to engage in broader thematic debates that expand the Security Council's capacity to deal with current challenges to peace and security. These debates include items on, among others, the protection of civilians in armed conflict and protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations. It goes without saying that improving transparency in the work of the Council has enhanced the credibility of the Council vis-à-vis the general membership of the United Nations.

There have been serious discussions, both in the Council and in the Open-ended Working Group on the reform and restructuring of the Security Council, on the need to improve further the effectiveness of the work of the Council. At the core of these discussions is the importance of enhancing the process of consultations between the Council and States that are directly involved in particular issues before the Council, as well as with other concerned parties. Clearly, enhanced consultations would serve two important purposes: receiving vital information and inputs from the concerned parties, as well as putting across the views and positions of the Council to these parties. Such interactions and exchanges would certainly contribute to improving the decision-making process of the Council.

My delegation and most, if not all elected members of the Council strongly believe in the need for the Council to obtain direct information from the parties concerned, including through their direct involvement in the discussions of the Council. My delegation supports the efforts to open up the informal consultations of the Council, in which much of the work of the Council takes place, to representatives of concerned States not members

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of the Council. The presence of ministers and other senior representatives of concerned parties in the informal consultations, as opposed to the more informal setting of the "Arria formula", would enrich the process of consultations and decision-making of the Council. While they should not replace the mechanism of bilateral consultations between States and Council members, which has its own purpose, such meetings between Council members and concerned non-members in informal consultation would open up a direct channel of communication and dialogue on important issues being considered by the Council.

Insofar as the "Arria formula" is concerned, my delegation would like to see this mechanism, which is a pragmatic and useful one, being used in accordance with its original concept, specifically to facilitate an informal exchange of views between Council members and individuals, organizations or institutions on issues being considered by the Council. The permanent representative of Venezuela, in his letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council dated 15 March 1999, clearly stated the rationale and purpose of the "Arria formula", named after one of his predecessors, which he said was intended for the purpose of obtaining

> "direct assessments from individuals, organizations or institutions that could ... contribute to a better understanding of the situation under consideration". (*A/53/865*)

This clearly shows that the formula was not intended for the purpose of receiving the representatives of sovereign States that are full members of the Organization in a meeting room away from the Council Chamber.

In addition to opening up the informal consultation process of the Council, my delegation would also support utilizing more frequently the mechanism of the so-called "private meetings" of the Council, in which the Council meets in closed formal sessions in its Chamber for an exchange of views with representatives of concerned States.

We believe that all of these are constructive proposals that would serve to open up the consultation process of the Council. Their adoption would go a long way towards not only making the Council more transparent and accessible to the larger membership of the United Nations, but also improving the decision-making process of the Council as it grapples with the complex and challenging issues of international peace and security.

My delegation, like those of other Members of the United Nations, is concerned at the paralysis of the Council on some important issues. In such situations, the Council loses its credibility and effectiveness to act, with serious implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is also a matter of concern to the Secretary-General who, in his remarks at the opening of the current session of the General Assembly, alluded to it in the context of the interesting but controversial concept of humanitarian intervention, which has prompted various reactions from Member States and will surely be the subject of further debates in the coming weeks and months. We have made some preliminary remarks on this concept and will deal with it in greater depth at the appropriate time.

It cannot be denied that much of the impasse in, and paralysis of, the Council has to do with one aspect of its decision-making process: the use or threat of use of the veto, the all-powerful weapon of the permanent members. That was at the core of the Council's inaction in the face of the Rwanda genocide and the Kosovo tragedy, which prompted the use of force without the authorization of the Council. Clearly, the issue of the veto will have to be seriously addressed by the membership of the Organization, including the permanent members themselves, and ways found to circumscribe it, or at least manage it better, if the Council is to function effectively so as to avoid future Rwandas and Kosovos.

Invoking Charter rights alone in defence of the veto is not helpful, as the Charter provides not only rights, but also obligations and responsibilities. It is to be hoped that some creative way of managing the veto in the context of our times will be found and supported by the permanent members, in their enlightened self-interest and in the interest of the international community as a whole. In the face of many complex challenges ahead, the issue of the Council's efficiency will have to be addressed as a matter of urgency if we are to avoid a crisis of unmanageable proportions in the Council.

Another issue of concern to my delegation relates to the use of sanctions. While it is a recognized instrument of coercion provided for in the Charter, as a measure of last resort when all peaceful means have failed, sanctions should be imposed only after a careful analysis of their likely impact has been made. This is to ensure that the sanctions to be imposed would have the desired impact only on the target or targets of the sanctions, and not on the general population. My delegation is supportive of the ongoing discussions in the Council to consider ways and

means for the effective implementation and management of current sanctions regimes, which will also serve as useful guidelines for future sanctions regimes that the Council may decide to impose, when absolutely necessary.

My delegation is particularly concerned with the debilitating effects of comprehensive sanctions, such as those imposed on Iraq, which have very serious humanitarian consequences for the ordinary people of Iraq. We have stated on several occasions that the international community and the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, bear a heavy responsibility to ameliorate the sufferings of the Iraqi people, even as they address the important issues of peace and security in the region and the other important outstanding issues from the Gulf War. We consider it important and necessary that countries affected by sanctions be given a fair hearing by the Council. We would encourage chairmen of the sanctions committees to visit the targeted countries to evaluate the situation on the ground, whenever appropriate. We would also urge the Council to formally lift sanctions as soon as they are no longer necessary or legally required, as, for instance, in the case of Libya. Like all powerful weapons, sanctions should be utilized with extreme care so as to avoid inflicting damage on unintended targets, which, regrettably, often happens.

On the issue of peacekeeping, the Organization has clearly benefited tremendously from the experiences and lessons learned from past missions. As a troop-contributing country, Malaysia is pleased with the increased and regular interaction with the Council on peacekeeping missions in which we are involved. This contributes to better coordination and decision-making on the deployment of personnel and related matters. A continuing matter of concern for some years, of course, relates to the issue of delayed reimbursements of peacekeeping costs. Unless the situation is improved in the near future, it will certainly affect the capacity and willingness of developing countries to contribute troops to future United Nations peacekeeping missions.

It is equally important for peacekeeping missions to be established expeditiously in response to crisis situations, following the establishment of their appropriate mandates by the Council. In this regard, there is concern that deliberations in the Council are sometimes stymied by narrow and short-term budgetary approaches. This will inadvertently weaken the Council's authority and often also that of the Secretary-General in the planning and implementation of such operations. It sends a wrong message of a lack of real concern on the part of the Council to the affected parties, and runs the risk of the Council being perceived as being selective in its responses to various conflict situations. As the Council considers a number of peacekeeping operations in Africa, it is important to address this issue so as to dispel such perceptions.

The central and critical role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security is well spelled out in the Charter of the United Nations. However, in carrying out its work, the consistent support of the international community is vital to ensure the legitimacy of its decisions in the eyes of the larger membership of the Organization that are not privy to the deliberations of the Council. My delegation, therefore, warmly commends this report, as it contributes to increased understanding of, and support for, the work of the Council. It also provides an opportunity for vital feedback from Member States. As improving the Council's working methods is an ongoing process, my delegation looks forward to improved reporting of the work of the Council to the General Assembly, including, whenever possible, the submission of special reports, as provided for in the Charter.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the five newly elected non-permanent members of the Council. We look forward to working closely with them in the Council when they take their seats next year.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly is again taking up a report of the Security Council, submitted in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, and Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter. We would like to thank the Council and its President for this report.

During our consideration of last year's report of the Security Council, my delegation noted with interest the improvements made to it, particularly the inclusion of information about the work of its subsidiary bodies, including the sanctions committees, and the introduction of information about documentation, the sanctions committee and the Council's working methods. My delegation also expressed its appreciation of the new practice adopted by the Council of publishing, as an addendum, brief summaries of the Council's work, provided by former Presidents of the Council. Even if they do not reflect the Council's views, at least they provide supplementary information about the Council's work, in particular about the informal meetings and the

statements made to the press. Member States now have a somewhat clearer idea of the work of this important body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Despite these improvements to the report, in our opinion it is still in general insufficiently analytical and informative, particularly about the informal deliberations and consultations, which are not open to United Nations Members that are not on the Council. My country believes that for it to be a real tool for positive interaction between the two principal organs of the United Nations — the Security Council and the General Assembly — the report should be more analytical about the Council's work on all the items of which it is seized, in order to reflect the transparency that is sought.

My delegation hopes that the Security Council will continue to consider ways to improve its working methods and procedures, including by submitting the special reports referred to in paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter.

My delegation would like to see increased transparency in the Council's work, and it will work to that end in the Council when it takes a seat as a non-permanent member in January 2000. My delegation also hopes that the discussions in the General Assembly Working Group on increasing the Council's membership and improving its working methods will come to a successful conclusion as soon as possible so as to enhance the Council's representativity.

An examination of the report shows the prominent place occupied by African questions on the Council's agenda — in particular, the discussions on the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa, as well as the work of the Council relating to the situation in certain African countries. We wish to stress the importance that should be attached to improving Africa's peacekeeping capacity, in coordination between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations.

The latest report of the Security Council also highlights the ongoing importance of peacekeeping operations, which requires that the Organization's peacekeeping capacities be constantly improved and refined. This work includes complete implementation of the United Nations standby forces arrangements, to which my country has had the honour of adhering since June 1999, when it placed some resources at the disposal of the Organization.

With regard to general questions not related to a specific country or conflict — humanitarian matters, the protection of civilians during conflicts, the protection of children, international terrorism and so forth — my delegation wishes to stress the importance of maintaining an interactive dialogue between the Security Council and the General Assembly and of respect for the mandates and prerogatives of each of the principal organs of the United Nations.

Before concluding, I wish briefly to refer to the question of the imposition of sanctions by the Security Council as one of the instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this connection, I wish to reiterate the importance we attach to a certain number of parameters which are generally recognized by the international community and which we think should be constantly taken into account during the imposition of sanctions: that they should be used as a last resort; that their scope and duration should be limited; that their impact on civilian populations should be eased; and, finally, that they should take into account the interests of third countries, in accordance with Article 50 of the Charter.

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): The Security Council is presenting its annual report for the fifty-fourth time. This comprehensive, long document bears witness to the manifold activities of the Security Council during the period under review. The report reflects the enormous workload, which has again increased compared with the previous year. All members of the Security Council deserve our respect and gratitude for shouldering this burden in exercising the duties conferred upon them by Member States, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. It is worthwhile to recall at this stage that the Security Council, in carrying out these duties, is indeed acting on behalf of all of us, the Member States.

The statistics indicate that the tendency to meet behind closed doors is continuing. Informal consultations have taken place nearly twice as often as open meetings. This development, in our view, deserves close attention. There are understandable reasons why the Security Council needs to come together from time to time in a confidential format to allow substantial and in-depth discussions. I would also like to specifically recognize the willingness to cooperate and to provide information on the part of the Security Council members vis-à-vis the non-members.

However, there is a fundamental question of how to include involved parties prior to the actual consultations and how to enable third parties with vital interests to participate in informal Security Council meetings. In this connection, I would like to point to the laudable work of the Council's informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions. These efforts to improve the working methods of the Council complement the ongoing Cluster-II deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, and should be strongly encouraged to continue.

This raises some admittedly difficult questions. For example: how can practical procedures be found which take into account the need of involved parties to be informed, and, at the same time, the occasional need of the Security Council to proceed confidentially? Which types of procedures would be flexible enough to be available in individual cases and yet not appear arbitrary?

However, the question of access should not be looked at from procedural or legal points of view only. The broader the base of the Security Council deliberations — that is, the more countries with a just cause or vital interest to be heard will participate in the discussions — the stronger could be the democratic legitimization of the Council's decisions and resolutions in a world of increasing conflicts.

Rather, the Council should consider, in a pragmatic way, more transparent procedures, and decide whenever possible on a more open format. And — what is important — no article of the Charter needs to be changed or amended. The Security Council is, as we all know, the master of its own procedure. That means that this boils down to a matter of political will.

It may be worthwhile recalling that reform does not consist of papers and statistics. A reference book including statistics and documents may be quite useful for technical reasons. It is a kind of accounting on the part of the Security Council before the General Assembly. However, it is not enough to merely present an industrious, labour-intensive report on the Council's activities. There is, unfortunately, no mention of the challenges the Security Council is facing, let alone of its difficulties in mastering these challenges.

The crises and conflicts in the world have not become fewer. This year's report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization describes, *inter alia*, the many questions and problems that remain and to which the Security Council has not yet found satisfactory answers and solutions.

Under paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the Charter, Member States have conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security

> "In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations".

Permit me to ask: Is the Security Council up to this task, considering its present composition and working methods?

In many ways the Kosovo conflict represents a turning point. I do not want to try to add new arguments to the focal issue of humanitarian intervention. The tension that exists between the sovereignty of States and the universal applicability of human rights was addressed in a well balanced manner by the Secretary-General in his contribution to the general debate. But in order to avoid a Kosovo-type intervention in the future, we have to finally carry out the long overdue substantial reform of the Security Council. The Council must be adapted to the new realities. It must, above all, be equipped adequately to react to the crises and conflicts of today in a legitimate manner, truly on behalf of the Member States of the United Nations.

I would like to recall the address of German Foreign Minister Fischer at this session and the very concrete ideas he laid out in his speech. He said of the Council:

> "Reform must involve enlargement to include both more permanent and non-permanent members, as well as a strengthening of its decision-making powers..."

In the debate on reform we must not avoid the issue of the permanent members' right of veto, a question of key importance for the Security Council's capability to act.

> "... The introduction of an obligation for a State to explain to the General Assembly why it is vetoing a draft resolution would make it more difficult to do so and thus bring about substantial progress towards using the right of veto more responsibly. Why should not the General Assembly assume more responsibility in future, too?" (*A/54/PV.8, p. 12*)

We have to realize that without reform of the Security Council and its working methods, the legitimacy of the Council and its actions runs the risk of erosion and so will, ultimately, the entire United Nations system.

What we want is a significant, far-reaching and visionary reform of the United Nations and its Security Council to master the problems of the next century.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I wish to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, for his concise presentation of the Council's report to the General Assembly. As an elected member of the Council, we believe that efforts should continue to be made to ensure that consideration of the report is not a mere formality. It should be the basis for enhanced transparency and accountability by the Security Council. In this regard, and bearing in mind the current discussions on procedure and working methods of the Security Council, Brazil advocates the adoption of practices that bring the work of the Security Council closer to the general membership. Holding more frequent private meetings may be a good way forward. However, other constructive ideas presently under consideration by the Working Group on procedure and documentation should be pursued.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the newly-elected members of the Council: Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine. My delegation is sure that they are attuned to the expectations of the broad majority of the membership that elected them, and will therefore endeavour to make a significant contribution to international peace and security.

This has again been a very busy year for the Security Council. Unfortunately, this is not a cause for rejoicing. On the contrary, it is an eloquent sign that the international community has not been able to establish the peaceful, stable, just and prosperous society envisaged by the drafters of the Charter. The end of the millennium has not brought with it the end of the horrors of wars and genocide. Massive killings, forced displacements, widespread destruction and looting and other forms of violence have become sad reminders of the dark side of the twentieth century.

During the period June 1998 to June 1999, we witnessed the outbreak, persistence or deterioration of conflict situations in almost every continent. The challenge of dealing effectively with the international consequences of internal conflicts has been on the agenda of the Security Council daily. New crises have emerged in Africa, whereas long-term conflicts — such as the 24-year civil war in Angola — still persist. The duration and complexity of conflicts in the African continent deserve urgent and consistent attention by the Security Council.

Stability in the Balkans is yet to be achieved. The situation in Kosovo represents a daunting challenge for the international community. The Middle East remains an area of grave concern. The Council is still paralysed in dealing with the Iraq question. Asia continues to live under the shadow of nuclear tests, and more recently has faced the upsurge of violence in East Timor. In the midst of this turmoil, more than 21 million people — considered to be "of concern" by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — wander, without hope. Theirs is a distressing and real aspect of our times.

While the overall picture is worrisome, the Security Council has been capable of addressing some of these questions, within the limits of its responsibilities. We would like to stress recent developments: in the Central African Republic, where the recent presidential and legislative elections were held in a fair and orderly fashion; in Guinea-Bissau, which is preparing for elections, scheduled for 28 November; in Sierra Leone, where a peacekeeping operation will soon be deployed to help consolidate the peace process; and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where prospects for peace have improved after the ceasefire agreement of Lusaka.

The Security Council is also preparing to engage in the complex task of administering East Timor's transition to independence. The importance of the free exercise by the East Timorese people of their right to self-determination should not be underestimated. Brazil follows very closely the situation in East Timor, with which we share a common language and cultural heritage. The future state of East Timor will bear testimony to the many lines of action open to the international community within the framework of the Charter — the leadership exercised by the Secretary-General when political conditions in Indonesia offered a window of opportunity; the full backing of the Security Council at all stages of the process; the use of various diplomatic tools, in particular the innovative approach of a Security Council mission; the recognition that a "coalition of the willing" was the best option, in that particular circumstance; the mandate given by the Security Council to the multinational force; and the proposed transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, in the full sense of the term, which we all hope will take place soon. The

legal basis for all these actions is provided by the United Nations Charter, whose full potential is yet to be explored.

Another good example of the many avenues offered by the United Nations Charter is Haiti. In our comments under this same item last year, we referred to Haiti as the one remaining item on the Council's agenda that dealt with a country in our region. We are glad to be able to do so today from a different perspective. In accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1212 (1998), the question of Haiti was addressed by the Economic and Social Council at its last substantive session. Resolution 1999/11 of the Economic and Social Council requests the Secretary-General to develop a long-term strategy and programme of support for Haiti. It could be argued that the case of Haiti has set a useful precedent by focusing post-conflict peace-building actions on the economic and social constraints underlying most political crises in the developing world.

During the period in question, we have also witnessed a number of attempts to sideline the Security Council when it comes to maintaining peace and security. The Secretary-General himself, speaking at The Hague on the occasion of the centennial of the first International Peace Conference, identified what he called a regrettable tendency for the Security Council not to be involved in efforts to maintain peace and security. Brazil deplores all instances in which enforcement action has been decided upon irrespective of Security Council authorization. Whenever this occurs, the very foundations of international law are shaken. The alternative to the legitimacy provided by the United Nations Charter is an unstable order where might prevails over right.

Looking at the bright side of the twentieth century, we see signs of increasing convergence around a fundamental group of values. Tolerance, democracy, humanitarian principles, human rights and sustainable development are at the core of our aspirations for a world system whose stability is founded on justice and not force. Our challenge now is to transform this moral framework into institutions that can act as the very foundations of international society. Again, the alternative is to give way to war-making potential as the principal structuring force in society.

Mr. Monagas-Lesseur (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Sergey Lavrov for introducing the report of the Security Council for the period June 1998 to June 1999 in his capacity as President of the Council for the month of October.

Venezuela follows with the greatest interest the development of the substantive work of the Security Council in the exercise of its responsibilities, as well as the evolution of its work regarding its procedures and the transparency of its activities.

With regard to its substantive work, Venezuela reaffirms its support for the Security Council as the body with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are pleased to note the important work accomplished during the year under consideration, which has made it possible for the Organization to consistently monitor many conflict situations and to use its prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building capacities.

Seen from the standpoint of both the number of peacekeeping operations and their complexity, these activities also underscore the appropriateness of widening the discussions regarding the expansion and reform of the Council. In the same measure as the Council is increasingly making pronouncements and decisions of a binding nature, we also see an increased need for the Council to strengthen its legitimacy through a presence of Member States within it that is consistent with the new realities of Organization.

We also note with appreciation the Council's increased interest in matters related to armed conflicts whose gravity requires the attention of the international community. These include the issues of children in conflict, protection for those providing assistance to refugees, civilians in armed conflict and the threat of terrorist acts. The United Nations is called upon to enact preventive measures regarding these issues. The contribution of the Council can and must be backed up by the General Assembly in the search for general and stable solutions to these problems.

With regard to peacekeeping operations themselves, Venezuela supports the trend seen in the last year towards greater cooperation with regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. Just as we cannot fail to share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization about those situations in which the Council was not able to act and delegated its responsibilities, thereby creating a precedent that only weakens the legal foundations of the collective security system, we also wish to affirm that we attach importance to the Councils' keeping situations under review until the expected results are achieved and peace is restored.

Regarding the transparency of the work of the Council, Venezuela is following with heightened interest the improvements made in its working methods. We support in particular the practice of holding consultations with troop-contributing countries, the oral reports given by the President and the holding of open meetings on matters of general interest. We especially commend the initiative of dealing *in extenso* with conflict situations in Africa during the period covered by the report before us.

A matter of particular relevance that we would like to see carried further is the transparency of the work and reporting of the subsidiary bodies, in particular the sanctions committees. We are confident that improvements can be made in this regard in order to have an objective assessment of the scope and consequences of existing sanctions regimes.

Finally, we would like to reiterate the importance of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on the reform and expansion of the Security Council. We appeal to the Council to continue its efforts to improve the transparency of its work and its working methods, including improvements related to the presentation of its report to the General Assembly.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Since the Security Council is facing ever-increasing new challenges and the current session is the last one of the twentieth century, we believe it would be most appropriate for the deliberation of the agenda item now before us to be seized as an opportunity to review comprehensively and in the light of the United Nations Charter all aspects of the Security Council's activities in the course of the last half century.

Let me now present some views on the report of the Security Council.

We certainly take note, as we did last year, of some improvements in the format of the report, such as the inclusion of, among other things, brief descriptions of every informal consultation of the whole and monthly assessments of the work of the Security Council by former Presidents, in accordance with the measures approved by the Security Council in June 1997. We note in particular that the continued inclusion of monthly assessments in the form of an addendum to the report, although limited in their content, has to some extent contributed to improving the quality of the report and thus has helped the Member States understand instantly the activities of the Security Council during the period under review.

Despite these improvements, we regret to say that the Report is still of a procedural nature. For example, 80 per cent of the Security Council's activities are conducted through informal consultations. Hence, it would be logical that the report should contain detailed and analytical information on informal consultations of the whole.

However, the present report’s descriptions of the informal consultations consist of only one or two paragraphs on the dates and proceedings of those consultations. There is no information on the process of deliberations, including the views of Security Council members on specific issues debated in the Council.

Since the concept of informal consultations is not specified either in the United Nations Charter or in the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the continuation of that process cannot be considered normal. Moreover, excluding the parties concerned from informal consultations and failing to describe their proceedings in detail runs counter to the demand of the majority of Member States to ensure transparency in Security Council activities.

As our debates so far have clearly proved, the first priority in ensuring transparency in Security Council activities is to make the Security Council discuss all substantive issues in public while confining its informal consultations to those of a procedural nature.

Furthermore, the parties concerned should be invited to participate in informal consultations as well as in formal meetings of the Security Council, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the United Nations Charter, so that their views are duly reflected in the process of deliberations of the Security Council.

Let me also touch upon some of the challenges facing the Security Council at the threshold of the new millennium.

Although more than half a century has elapsed since the Security Council started its work in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, it is regrettable that the Council persists in taking actions that disregard the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and violate its mandate.

In 1950, in the early years after the inception of the United Nations, a certain arbitrariness existed that led to the adoption, at Security Council meetings where all not all permanent members were represented, of resolutions

authorizing the use of force. The leftover effects of those actions are still used to exploit the United Nations.

More recently, at the close of the twentieth century, the world has witnessed other arbitrary acts, such as the use of military force against sovereign States without a clear mandate from the Security Council, or even bypassing the United Nations.

Bypassing the United Nations in the use of force constitutes a serious violation of the United Nations Charter and commonly recognized international law, since this is tantamount to giving up on the commitment to confer on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the commitment to respect the sovereign rights of Member States.

If the principle of respect for sovereignty is disregarded in relations among countries, confrontations will inevitably occur between States trying to defend their sovereignty and forces attempting to infringe upon the sovereignty of other States, and, consequently, this world will never be stable.

In order for the United Nations to make a contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the building of the peaceful world to which humankind aspires, first, the principles of respect for sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutual equality stipulated in the United Nations Charter and international law should be strictly observed.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Sovereignty is the lifeline of every country. Non-intervention in the internal affairs of others and mutual equality are fundamental principles that should never be violated on any account.

Secondly, the Security Council should not take measures that might infringe upon the sovereignty of Member States. Infringing on the sovereignty of States and intervening in their internal affairs should not be allowed.

Thirdly, in order for Security Council resolutions to be effectively implemented, a system should be established that would empower the General Assembly to endorse Security Council resolutions concerning crucial issues such as the use of force and economic sanctions.

Lastly, the Security Council should review the implementation of all resolutions adopted in the past and eliminate what is left over from the cold-war era by taking courageous steps to correct those that contravene the United Nations Charter and are inconsistent with present times.

In this regard, I take this opportunity to remind all present here that around 40,000 United States troops stationed in South Korea are pretending to be United Nations forces by exploiting the United Nations flag and helmets.

In conclusion, it is my delegation's hope that the constructive proposals suggested with regard to Security Council activities will be given serious consideration during the Millennium Assembly and Summit, to be held next year.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to convey the congratulations of my delegation to Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, who, as President of the Security Council for the month of October, has submitted to us the annual report of the Council, in keeping with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the members of the Council for the high quality, relevance and balance of the report, which accurately reflect their commitment and their devotion to international peace and security, an area for which the Security Council has primary responsibility.

As is clear from the report, the Council, once again, has had a very busy year because of the many upheavals throughout the world and the frequent threats to international peace and security. The report represents the sum of the efforts made by Council members and by the Secretariat, and it is also an important stage in making the work of the Council more open and more transparent.

Progress has been made in recent years with respect to the need for greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, and we appreciate the well-established practice of making available information to non-members of the Council. My delegation welcomes the holding of open debates on various items on the Council's agenda as well as the initiatives taken by Presidents to organize public meetings on specific issues of concern to the entire international community.

Each President tries, during his monthly term of office, to organize a debate on a major theme. This is a welcome innovation, and we cannot but support this trend very strongly.

Member States were thus able to express their views on important issues such as threats to peace and security caused by international terrorist acts; protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others affected by conflict situations; the maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building; protection of civilians in armed conflict; the question of child soldiers; and the problem of displaced persons.

The report of the Security Council also gives a prominent place to the crises convulsing Africa, the continent that currently has more conflicts on the agenda of the Council than any other, including those in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

Since the issuance in April 1998 of the Secretary-General's report on conflict in Africa, the instability in the continent has prompted the Council, in the course of several meetings, to consider the crises that have convulsed Africa, as well as the proposals of the ad hoc Working Group set up to consider the recommendations contained in that report. That Working Group, which is chaired by the Ambassador of Gabon, to whom I convey fraternal congratulations, submitted its conclusions to the Security Council, which adopted them unanimously in the form of resolutions and presidential statements during September and November 1998.

In those various decisions, the Security Council defined the principles for assuring and safeguarding peace and advocated several different means and mechanisms for doing so, such as arms embargoes, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity with regard to Africa's peacekeeping capacity, security in refugee camps, illicit arms trafficking and the strengthening of peace through the efforts of regional organizations. My delegation welcomes the laudable efforts made by the Council to contain those conflicts, because without peace there can be no development in Africa.

We must remain vigilant and remember, as African leaders have repeatedly emphasized from this rostrum, that Africa needs real action to be taken, not fine-sounding declarations and resolutions. The importance that the international community attaches to Africa will be measured by concrete, positive action.

In a number of African crises, the hesitation of the Security Council and, too often, its failure to act, have led to great frustration on the part of African States. In the interests of peace and the development of the continent, the Security Council should first and foremost support the efforts of Africans to strengthen their peacekeeping capacity so that they are able to confront such crisis situations.

We have also observed too great a tendency on the part of the members of the Council to allow situations to deteriorate to the point of causing great loss of life and, often, large-scale humanitarian disaster. The attention that certain members of the council have said that they will now pay to African problems — after the lessons of Kosovo and East Timor — will be measured by their ability to anticipate unfortunate events in Africa and to take adequate preventive action. Members of the Security Council have too great a tendency to react belatedly to crises, whereas, when confronted with tragic situations in Africa, they should act quickly, before it is too late. We have even observed that, in contrast to similar humanitarian situations occurring outside the continent, responses to situations in Africa have often been delayed to such an extent that we sometimes wonder whether people in distress in Africa are treated on an equal footing with people in other parts of the world.

In order to prevent the Security Council's failure to act when confronted with such situations from having the serious consequence of gravely damaging the credibility and authority of that central body, there must be an improvement in the way in which it functions. In this context, I wish to emphasize and welcome the broad consensus that already exists with regard to some essential issues, including the participation of non-members in Council meetings, the programme of work of the Council and the briefings arranged by the President of the Council for non-members and troop contributors.

We must go further, and turn this impetus into true progress by institutionalizing it so that international peace and security in the next century can be upheld by a revitalized, more effective and more transparent Security Council. To that end, we must stop this deplorable trend of sidelining the Security Council. Indeed, for some time, Member States and regional organizations have been taking coercive measures without the authorization of the Council, or have been acting unilaterally in the name of

the right to intervene on humanitarian grounds. The support that regional organizations can provide in conflict prevention or peacekeeping should never absolve the Council of its overriding responsibility for the promotion of peace and collective security.

We must therefore discourage this trend by emphasizing the areas of competence defined by the Charter so that at the dawn of the new millennium we will have a Security Council that is in step with our changing world, one that respects the sovereignty of States and can demonstrate imagination and determination in protecting human rights and safeguarding peace throughout the world.

Mr. Onyia (Nigeria): It is an honour and, indeed, a delight for me to echo the very warm congratulations which my President extended to Mr. Gurirab, the President of the General Assembly, when he addressed the Assembly last month. Mr. Gurirab's outstanding leadership is already radiating through the deliberations of the fifty-fourth session, and the Nigerian delegation assures him of its continuous support.

We thank Ambassador Sergey Lavrov of the Russian Federation — the current President of the Council — for introducing the report this morning. May I also express our gratitude to the Secretariat for its effort in producing the comprehensive report.

This agenda item provides us with ample opportunity to examine the many activities of the Security Council, the principal organ charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, during the period under review. This debate is of crucial importance because it is the last deliberation on this issue in this century. Indeed, the activities of the Security Council deserve our special attention as we are at the dawn of the new millennium.

We would like to commend the Security Council for its significant achievements in the resolution of conflicts in various regions of the world, especially since the end of the cold war. In Africa, the efforts of the Security Council were particularly important for the independence of Namibia, the successful dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, the end of conflict in Mozambique and support for the peacemaking efforts in Liberia of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Notwithstanding those important achievements, there are still other areas where the Security Council needs to demonstrate greater commitment and decisiveness in resolving conflicts afflicting some States in Africa, as has been done in other regions.

As the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318) has manifestly shown, the root causes of conflict in Africa are varied and complex. Contemporary conflict situations in our continent reveal that they arise from multifarious factors that relate to poverty and socio-economic imbalances in society. It is against this background that we welcome the meetings of the Security Council at ministerial level on the situation in Africa. It is clear from those meetings that lasting solutions to conflict situations in Africa require far-reaching initiatives and solutions which link peace, security, good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law on the one hand to sustainable development on the other.

The role of ECOWAS in restoring peace in Liberia and in Sierra Leone is indicative of the important contribution that a subregional organization can make to international peace and security. The success of ECOMOG confirms that such regional initiatives, where they exist, stand a good chance of success if their peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts are adequately and promptly supported by the Security Council. This success, however, has come at a tremendous cost to the States of the subregion, particularly my country. Our experience reinforces our belief that ECOWAS has evolved a unique mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

Regrettably, there is a general perception that a uniform standard is lacking in responding to the outbreak of conflicts in all parts of the world. The Security Council has been slow to respond to the outbreak of conflicts in our continent — and where it has responded on time, it has not shown adequate commitment in terms of the measures and resources it has authorized to address these problems.

Peace is indivisible. We therefore urge the Security Council to place conflicts in Africa on the same footing as those in other regions, because the consequences of inaction can be very catastrophic, as has been amply demonstrated in Rwanda.

One of the critical challenges facing the United Nations as we approach the new millennium is the reform and democratization of the Security Council. In this regard, we reiterate the necessity of urgent reform of the Council and its working methods in order to enhance the Council's transparency, legitimacy and effectiveness. Nigeria has consistently maintained that the present

situation, in which Africa, with 53 States Members of the United Nations, has no permanent seat on the Security Council, is unacceptable. In addition, such reform must result in enhancing not only cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, but also its effectiveness.

While it is true that conflicts in Africa result from prevailing political and socio-cultural conditions, it is equally true that so long as Africa is not fully integrated into the global economic system, and so long as its people continue to be ravaged by poverty, disease and an unsustainable debt burden, genuine peace and security will remain an illusion on the continent. Nigeria, therefore, urges the United Nations to adopt a more holistic strategy in its plans to enhance conflict prevention and management, and to ensure rapid economic development, which are necessary conditions for stability, growth and sustainable development.

Let me use this opportunity to congratulate the non-permanent members of the Council elected for the period 2000-2001, namely Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Nigeria's commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, and to assure the Assembly that my country will spare no effort in the pursuit of global peace and security.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first of all to thank Ambassador Sergey V. Lavrov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for introducing the report of the Council to the General Assembly. My delegation is particularly pleased that the experiment begun some years ago by Brazil is now a regular practice at the outset of the General Assembly's consideration of this agenda item.

The report of the Security Council for the period 16 June 1998 to 15 June 1999, which is before the Assembly today, contains a chronology of the formal activities of the Council and a compilation of resolutions adopted and presidential statements issued during the reporting period. It constitutes a valuable reference tool for librarians and archivists. In a concise and orderly format, it contains references to documentation, resolutions, statements and agenda items considered by the Council during the reporting period.

In spite of each year's improvements in the way the report is set out, my delegation believes that much remains to be done for the information in the report to meet completely the Council's obligation to submit a complete and appropriate report on its activities to the other Members of the United Nations.

I want to reaffirm once again that, rather than a compilation and a chronological account, we would be interested in an analysis of what took place during the Council's deliberations and an explanation of the reasoning behind its decisions. This is not a trivial matter; it is part of the Council's duty to report to the General Assembly.

Rule 48 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure clearly states that, unless it decides otherwise, the Council shall meet in public. But custom has turned the exception to that rule into a general practice. With increasing frequency, the Council meets behind closed doors in informal consultations, a format which is certainly not envisioned in the provisional rules of procedure.

For the period covered by the report before us, out of a total of 360 meetings, only 121 were held publicly, whereas 239 — almost twice as many — were held in private. Public meetings constitute the only opportunity that we 173 countries not on the Security Council have to be heard in an organ which, by provision of the Charter itself, is to act on behalf of us all. The private, informal consultations, supposedly designed to deal with questions of procedure, are now the forum in which the real substantive work of the Council is carried out. For that reason, it is inexplicable that no information is included about those private meetings, which according to the report itself represented approximately 511 work hours for the Council.

Under the terms of the Charter, it is important for the General Assembly to know the substance of the consultations in which the Council debates and prepares decisions which subsequently must be accepted and implemented by all States Members of the United Nations, who have delegated to that organ the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. From us it receives its mandate, and to us it must respond. The process of accountability is part of any process that is in any way democratic.

The silence of the report regarding the case of Kosovo is eloquent. That conflict held the attention of our

Governments and of public opinion for a large part of this year. We all know what happened in the public meetings of the Council. What we do not know is what led to the total marginalization of the Council in the handling of the conflict. The substantive deliberations were conducted not only behind closed doors, but were also limited, in absolute secrecy, to the inner circle of the five permanent members. It is incomprehensible to my delegation that the report does not contain an analytical account of the reasons why the Council abdicated in favour of a military alliance to which three of its five permanent members belong, an action contrary to the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We urge the members of the Security Council to conduct their substantive work in public. This is not some generous concession they would be making to the other Members of the United Nations; rather it is a matter of complying fully not only with their own rules but with the ethical imperative of legitimacy.

We will not embark here on an analysis of the working methods of the Council, nor will we refer to the anachronistic privileges enjoyed by some of its members. This is under consideration in the open-ended working group of the General Assembly on Security Council reform. We will confine ourselves to pointing out that the lack of transparency and the extreme inequalities that prevail in the Council have made it, instead of a protagonist and advocate in the search for solutions for international conflicts, rather a politically correct observer of the exercise of global power.

As Article 24 of the Charter indicates, the Security Council is an organ conceived and designed to "ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations". Its powers refer specifically to the maintenance of international peace and security. Its responsibility consists of taking the necessary measures in a timely way to avoid the worsening of situations of conflict. If we make an analogy with the structure of a State, the Security Council is a form of the executive branch.

The Security Council is not a deliberative body and it lacks the power to enact provisions of a normative nature that are generally applicable. That is the purview of the General Assembly, the most representative organ of the international community, whose broad competence allows it to "discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter", as Article 10 provides; it "may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security", or "discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security", as established in Article 11. In fact, it can discuss any other issue as stipulated by Article 13. If action is required in the framework of the General Assembly's competence, then the Security Council will intervene.

The division of responsibility is clear: if we compare the Security Council to a limited form of executive power, that is, an action-oriented organ, then the General Assembly is the legislative authority, the organ for deliberation and the establishment of general norms.

My delegation is concerned by the trend in the Council in recent years toward making declarations of a general nature on issues of collective concern in an attempt to provide automatic legitimacy for its own actions. Let us respect the respective competence of each of the principal organs of the United Nations. It is up to the Assembly to deliberate and to establish norms and principles regarding contemporary problems. It is up to the Security Council to act in case of crisis and, above all, on a case by case basis.

The Mexican delegation reiterates that access to information is a right of all Members of the United Nations and not a privilege, as some would seem to believe. It is the obligation of the members of the Security Council to keep others appropriately informed of the matters that the Council examines and on the reasons why the Council members make their decisions. We invite the Council, particularly its five permanent members, to join in the irreversible process toward openness, transparency and reform of the working methods of the Security Council, to which my country is completely committed, as are the immense majority of Member States of the United Nations.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes this opportunity to discuss the work of the Security Council with the all the Members of the United Nations. The opportunities for dialogue between the Council and those to whom it is accountable are too rare. To Canada, as an elected member of the Council, such accountability seems obvious. We argued for it during our campaign, and in the Council we are promoting the applicability of the concepts of responsibility and accountability. Our position has always been based not only on the inherent merit of a more open, transparent and responsive Council, but also on practical considerations of effectiveness. The Council can only benefit from greater interaction with those who must ultimately give effect to its decisions.

The sheer size of the report before us underlines the unprecedented volume of Council activity. The impressive number of security issues of which the Council is seized — albeit a reminder of the number of conflicts raging throughout the world — demonstrates, nevertheless, the welcome activism of the Council since the end of the cold war. We also note with satisfaction the increase in the number of thematic debates on cross-cutting, emerging security issues. Canada was pleased to contribute to this trend with an initiative on the protection of
civilians in armed conflict. Such initiatives enable the Council to consider key peace and security issues in a broader context and in a more comprehensive manner than its usual crisis
mode allows. In addition, these initiatives have helped move the Council towards a broader definition of security. The report also registers important milestones in the Council's work, such as the suspension of sanctions against Libya and the authorization of new United Nations Missions in East Timor and Kosovo.

We are, however, struck by what is not included in the more than 400 pages of the report. The inability of the Council to address a number of key security issues this past year is cause for deep concern. Crises in which Council action is blocked by lack of agreement among the five permanent members — for example, the crisis in Kosovo — or where deep divisions persist, such as with regard to Iraq, undermine the Council's effectiveness. Political and policy differences must be overcome in the name of the collective interest; the threat or use of the veto must give way to more vigorous efforts to find consensus.

Equally troubling is the persistent trend towards allowing financial considerations to drive or dominate decision-making on whether and how to respond to clear threats to international peace and security. Too often this attitude has hindered resolute action and resulted in reliance on others — often those least capable of paying — to implement the Council's sometimes imperfectly articulated will. The Security Council's proud tradition of peacekeeping must not be allowed to fade as a result of financial starvation, bureaucratic atrophy or mere disuse.

(spoke in English)

We must also learn from our mistakes and take stock of what works and what does not.

Trust funds established to finance multinational forces, authorized by the Council to replace United Nations peacekeeping missions funded through accepted assessment mechanisms, simply do not work. Most recently, they have not worked for the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Sierra Leone, nor for the International Force for East Timor. In Sierra Leone, only $2 million was deposited into the trust fund; this sum did not cover even three days of ECOMOG operations. Given this track record, there is no reason to expect that trust funds will work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or anywhere else.

Obviously, Japan's generous contribution of $100 million to the East Timor trust fund is a significant — perhaps unique — exception, but even such a contribution will go only a very limited way towards defraying the huge costs of this important peacekeeping operation. Troop contributors will be left to pick up the lion's share of the bill, and this is not how it is supposed to work. ECOMOG has done outstanding and thankless work in Sierra Leone, taking large numbers of casualties in appallingly difficult circumstances, daring to go into harm's way when few others were prepared to do so, and thereby bringing some measure of stability to parts of the country. Nigeria — the principal contributor of troops and bearer of costs — has said it can no longer shoulder such a burden. We will, nevertheless, dispatch a hybrid force to Sierra Leone within which the ECOMOG component is still to be funded by passing the hat which we — the international community — will fail yet again to fill.

The reality of the restraints and constraints on government financing in almost every part of the world is such that the enormous costs of peacekeeping, on almost any scale, simply cannot be met by voluntary contributions. Our Governments, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, accept their obligations under the United Nations Charter to pay formally assessed peacekeeping costs on the basis of the agreed scale of assessments. They have not voted — and, I predict, will not vote — any significant amount of what our finance ministries would term "discretionary" spending for peacekeeping missions that are not commanded and mandated by the United Nations; in other words, for missions that are not classic United Nations peacekeeping operations. This is, after all, the essence of collective security.

Peace and security are fundamental, core responsibilities of this Organization. They cannot and should not be subcontracted or otherwise farmed out to regional associations or ad hoc groups of countries willing to take on such large commitments of financial and human resources. Of course, regional organizations and key regional players will continue to play a fundamentally

important leadership role in many peacekeeping operations, but the goal of a universal United Nations mandate, as long as it is obtainable, remains of paramount importance to the principles on which this Organization is founded, and ought to remain our objective in all situations where collective action to maintain or restore the peace is called for.

Thanks to the Secretary-General's insightful and, from our Canadian perspective, very welcome statement at the opening of this year's general debate, a dialogue has been launched among Member States on essential questions relating to the mission and the mandate of the United Nations generally, and the Security Council in particular, as the United Nations pursues its peace and security vocation. The Secretary-General successfully combined hard truths about the recent failures of collective security with a challenging vision for the future. That vision, which places human security at the centre of our work, is fully shared by Canada. The key challenge, that of elaborating the factors of when and how to intervene to protect civilians in armed conflict, is one which this Organization must be ready to meet.

On the Council, Canada has argued that humanitarian principles and human rights should be given greater weight in the Security Council's calculus of when and how to act, not only because of their direct impact on the peace and security equation, but also as standards which ought to be enforced on their own merits. The principles of state sovereignty and human security must be more readily reconciled in practice. As recent events have shown, failure to do so risks sidelining the Council in addressing today's conflicts.

Work towards this new definition of security must be accompanied by updated working methods, greater transparency and much less secrecy. Canada and the other elected members have done their part to open up the Council's working methods to broader scrutiny through regular briefings for interested non-members and, under Canada's presidency, the posting of a wealth of information on the Council's activities on our mission website.

To enhance the Council's effectiveness, we believe that there ought to be more scope for the participation of non-members in the Council's deliberations — whether formal or informal — when their presence could make a useful contribution to the Council's efforts to prevent and control conflict. We believe the Council should hold more open meetings. We consider that the Council ought to make more imaginative and more innovative use of other formats that go well beyond the "Arria formula" in order to permit more inclusive involvement of non-members and a better informed airing of views before far-reaching decisions are taken. The Council's decisions and procedures must reinforce the search for peace, not just the prerogatives of the most powerful. We hope that next year's report and others to follow will reflect progress on these fronts.

We look forward to working closely with the newly elected members of the Security Council, who will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to our deliberations. We will miss, of course, the five departing members, who so generously offered us wise advice from the very moment we joined their number at the beginning of this year. Two years is not a long time to get the kinds of changes proposed by so many speakers today brought to the way the Council does business. Such changes will, however, remain elusive unless the pressure for change can be sustained from one group of elected members to the next.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Sergey Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for his eloquent and objective presentation of this year's report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Indeed, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Namibia attaches great importance to this practice, which has now been in effect for seven years.

It is clear from the report that a lot of time has been devoted to African issues during the period under review. Nevertheless, Africa continues to be beset by mounting and pressing problems, which require concerted efforts on the part of the Security Council and the international community as a whole.

The Security Council has been supportive of regional efforts aimed at conflict resolution on the continent. However, we believe that resolution of these problems should not be the sole responsibility of Africans. The Security Council has to take its responsibility and not delegate it to any subregional or regional group if the credibility of that international body is to be preserved.

In the aftermath of conflicts, it is important to embark on post-conflict peace-building measures. It is equally important that emphasis be placed on prevention and minimizing recurrence.

Africa is determined to promote the use of peaceful means in the resolution of conflicts engulfing the continent. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and

Resolution is a valuable asset for our continent and must be nurtured, supported and consolidated. The Mechanism symbolizes the concrete resolve of our continent to fully assume its responsibility. To this end, the OAU will need the full cooperation of States Members of the United Nations.

By adopting resolutions 1234 (1999) and 1258 (1999), for example, the Security Council has taken the first steps in addressing the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We look forward to the full deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in that country to facilitate the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The imminent adoption of the Security Council resolution to deploy 6,000 military personnel in Sierra Leone will stabilize the situation in that country and give peace a chance. We look forward to a speedy deployment of this peacekeeping operation. Other situations in Africa should equally be addressed.

The Secretary-General has not wavered in his efforts to address African problems. In addition, last year the Security Council held the biennial ministerial meeting on the Secretary-General's report on Africa, at which and subsequent to which resolutions and presidential statements were adopted. It is our sincere hope that the recommendations contained in these resolutions and statements will be implemented by the Secretariat, Member States and other stakeholders.

The plight of civilians, and in particular of children in armed conflict, has received due consideration by the Security Council. We are gratified that the suffering of these silent members of society has been recognized and that the Security Council and all relevant United Nations bodies continue with their efforts to address their plight.

The question of the reform of the Security Council is central to the efficacy, credibility and authority of the Council. Although some progress has been made in enhancing transparency and accessibility in the work of the Council, much remains to be done. Transparency will not hinder the work of the Council; it can only enhance its activities.

Namibia's position with regard to the reform of the Security Council is clear. We favour an expansion of the Security Council to reflect the reality of the dramatic increase of the United Nations membership, which stands at 188 as of September this year.

We welcome Mali and Tunisia, which were recently elected to the Council, and wish to thank the Gambia and Gabon for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Council. Similarly, we look forward to working together with Bangladesh, Jamaica and Ukraine in carrying out the responsibilities of the Security Council.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): It is an honour to address the Members of the United Nations on the report (A/54/2) of the Security Council. I wish to thank the current President of the Security Council, Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for introducing the report. In addition, I wish to thank the members of the Security Council for the effort that went into the production of such a comprehensive report.

The report of the Security Council shows that over the past year the Council has struggled to come to grips with a wide range of both long-standing and new conflicts whose tragic effects, especially on civilians, and scope and complexity have profoundly threatened the maintenance of international peace and security.

The report shows that the Security Council's ability, and even willingness, to address conflicts timeously, consistently and impartially has been sorely tested. This deficiency, as stated by the Secretary-General in his statement to the Assembly, is nothing less than a reflection of our inability to reconcile the need for universal legitimacy with the need to effectively defend human rights.

It is therefore understandable, given the past record of our collective failures, most notably in Africa in places like Angola, Rwanda and Somalia, that some events over the course of this past year would have led many, if not most, of the Members of the United Nations to expect the worst.

But at the same time the Council continued its attempts to expand the transparency of its work by, amongst other things, holding more open meetings on a range of important issues. We trust these steps represent a recognition on the part of the Council of the importance of maintaining a sustained and transparent dialogue with the broader membership of the United Nations on the key issues affecting global peace and security.

For this trend to be meaningful, however, the Council will have to move beyond the practice of focusing on thematic issues alone in open debates — and I am not saying these are not important — towards

regular, open discussions which focus on practical ways to address specific conflicts, and more important, potential conflicts.

In short, the Council needs to regularly consult with the membership. The alternative, the continuation of the "business as usual" approach, does not look good.

In this context, over the past year the many instances in which the Council appeared unable to cohesively address conflict issues gave us little confidence. Here I am thinking of the many controversies which characterized the Council's approach to such issues as Kosovo, Libyan sanctions, the deadlock over Iraq, the descent into violence in East Timor and the largest conventional wars in Africa since the end of the Second World War, between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and in and around the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Given this environment, many members were led, once again, to legitimately question the ongoing relevance and capacity of the Security Council, and the illogical and patriarchal nature of its current composition and distribution of powers.

President Mbeki underlined these concerns in his statement to the General Assembly last month, when he said:

> "the requirement on the United Nations ... to prevent the outbreak of hostilities imposes an obligation on the United Nations that it should be seen by Governments and peoples as a truly even-handed interlocutor and peacemaker." *(A/54/PV.4, p. 9)*

More recently, however, I am pleased to say that there have been some promising signals. Positive developments and accomplishments in Kosovo and East Timor have been accompanied by further encouraging signs that the Security Council may intend to approach other conflicts, especially in Africa, with the necessary level of attention and determination, combined with an appropriate mandate, which recently proved so critical in addressing the questions of Kosovo and East Timor.

This positive new trend on the part of the Council, if it is allowed to progress beyond words into action, is in itself a constructive and appropriate response to an equal determination on the part of Africa, and its regional and subregional organizations, to take charge of our own destiny through regional interventions to resolve conflicts in Sierra Leone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi.

All that we ask, not unreasonably, is that the United Nations support these indigenous endeavours collectively by taking appropriate and meaningful action, at the appropriate time and as determined by the continent. It is especially important that the region's sincere undertakings in conflict prevention and resolution are thereafter supported by the proper Security Council mandate.

South Africa trusts that in the days, weeks and months to come this emergent new dialogue between the African continent and the Security Council will prove to be sustainable, and will prove central to bringing lasting peace to Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to other conflicts that the continent is still in the process of addressing.

For our part, as Africans we are striving to ensure that the search for indigenous solutions to conflicts in Africa's regions is accompanied by local initiatives to strengthen the democratic character of national and regional institutions, the culture of respect for human rights and the related areas of better governance and sustainable policies for economic and social development.

It is our earnest hope also that if a new spirit of cooperation and accountability comes to characterize the Security Council's current interactions with Member States, this same spirit will find expression in the debate on the reform of the composition and working methods of the Security Council over the next year.

Our future successes or failures in preventing and ending conflicts will depend largely on the collective will and action of the Members of the United Nations and, in particular, on a Security Council that is appropriately representative of the membership.

As President Mbeki stated, it will require "moral and intellectual courage" to rise to the challenge.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 16 June 1998 to 15 June 1999. We express our appreciation to Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, President of the Council this month, for his excellent introduction of the report.

The annual report reflects the extensive activities of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. During the past decade, we have seen the world community increasingly turn to the United Nations for solutions. Norway welcomes this

development. Collective international security rests on the Member States' commitment to multilateral cooperation and on their respect for the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the prevention of conflicts and the preservation of peace.

The General Assembly, in turn, has a legitimate interest in being fully informed of the activities of the Council. The annual report must be as informative as possible. Norway appreciates the efforts to make the report ever more user-friendly and useful to the membership at large. We will encourage the Council to continue pursuing these efforts.

The division of labour between the General Assembly and the Security Council that is established in the Charter must be respected. Nothing must be done that might reduce the Council's ability to efficiently carry out its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. At the same time, it is clear that questions of peace and security are closely connected to issues that are the responsibility of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General has pointedly underlined the interlinkages between United Nations peace and development efforts, as well as the need for coordination between various United Nations bodies.

The General Assembly is responsible for vital areas such as poverty reduction, development assistance, peace-building, human rights and the environment. These are crucial to understanding and tackling the root causes of conflicts. Norway therefore stresses the need for a comprehensive approach, entailing close cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Norway has consistently underlined the importance of improving transparency and openness in the work of the Security Council. Progress has indeed been achieved over the past few years. We welcome the fact that both regular and informal practices for sharing information with non-members have been established. Norway appreciates the practice of holding open orientation debates on important issues on the Council's agenda. Such debates should ensure that the views of the United Nations membership at large are taken into account in the Council's own deliberations.

Norway would like to reiterate its support for the idea that the Council should consider organizing meetings which are largely informative — such as briefings by the Secretariat or Special Representatives of the Secretary-General — as open meetings rather than consultations of the whole. This would, of course, not preclude the possibility that the Council after such briefings, would conduct closed consultations on the issue at hand.

Transparency and openness are particularly important when it comes to peacekeeping operations, which involve the participation of forces and personnel from a large number of countries beyond the membership of the Security Council. All troop-contributing nations, including those participating with civilian personnel in multifunctional operations, have a legitimate interest and need to be consulted when such operations are discussed. In advance of considering mandates for peacekeeping operations, all potential contributors should be given the opportunity to present their views. Norway appreciates the mechanisms that have been established for this purpose. It is the responsibility of all Council members and troop-contributors to make full use of such mechanisms.

Regional and subregional organizations have in recent years become ever more important instruments in United Nations efforts to promote international peace and security. In the Balkans, the United Nations is working together with organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union and others to restore peace and stability. As Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE this year, Norway has pursued the building of closer relations with the United Nations system, and closer interaction between various organizations involved in peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building in the OSCE area.

In Africa, the Organization of African Unity and subregional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, and others play a crucial role as cooperation partners, complementing United Nations efforts for peace and development. Norway is proud to be working closely with these organizations and national Governments for conflict management and development cooperation in Africa. It is vital that the Security Council remain fully engaged in the resolution of conflicts on the African continent, thus giving impetus to the progress witnessed in several areas.

The Security Council remains at the centre of the international community's search for lasting peace and security for the world's nations. This it how it should be. As we enter a new century, it is of vital importance to all Members of the United Nations that the authority of the

Council remain strong and undiminished. The Security Council can, of course, rely on Norway's full commitment and support.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing appreciation to Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and President of the Security Council for the month of October 1999, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

My delegation welcomes the opportunity for general membership of the United Nations to discuss and review the work of the Security Council. As the organ of the United Nations with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, a responsibility conferred upon it by the general membership of the United Nations, the Security Council plays a key role which directly affects the interests of all Member States.

The General Assembly is now considering the report of the Council not only in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 1, and Article 24, paragraph 3 of the Charter, as underlined in the introduction to the Security Council report, but also in the light of Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Charter. That paragraph determines that the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security is not an inherent right of the Council but a responsibility conferred upon it by the general membership; and it states that the general membership agreed, in the atmosphere prevailing 54 years ago, that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility, the Security Council acts on their behalf.

Therefore, as a member of the General Assembly, we attach considerable importance to this agenda item, for each and every Member of the United Nations wishes to know not only what the Security Council is doing on its behalf but also why and how the Council is doing it. Unfortunately, the 476-page report contained in document A/54/2 covering the period from 16 June 1998 to 15 June 1999, tells us only what the Security Council has done. There is very little, if any, analysis or treatment of lessons learned in the report despite repeated calls by the general membership, which wishes only to be better informed.

The report continues to be largely a compilation of documents. It needs to contain information on informal consultations of the whole, where most important decisions are made. It should include not only the dates and subjects of each informal consultation but also a brief account of discussions.

Informal consultations taking place among the members of the Council on issues crucial to global peace and security, sometimes have a very direct and substantive impact on the vital interests of other States. These consultations normally constitute the foundation of Security Council resolutions and statements, with very little input from the wider membership. Of course, we recognize the need for the promptness, effectiveness and, at times, confidentiality of Security Council decision-making. However, these considerations do not justify a very narrow interpretation of Article 31 of the Charter by which interested Member States are excluded from contributing to the decision-making process of the Council or, even worse, are denied access to timely and meaningful information concerning Security Council decisions, their formulation and the implementation processes.

This is not to negate the fact that over the past few years, the Council has adopted a number of initiatives to make its working methods and its report more transparent and informative. We welcome and encourage those efforts, although we do not consider them sufficient.

We are happy to see that most monthly assessments of the work of the Security Council by the rotating Presidents of the Council are included in the report. These assessments complement the report in a very useful manner. We hope that all monthly presidential assessments continue to evolve and rely less on description and more on conceptual and analytical assessment of the work of the Security Council.

The holding of an informal briefing by the presidency of the Council for States not members of the Council at the end of each informal meeting is a commendable measure. We believe that this positive step may be strengthened and become more useful if it is given some structure and uniformity. Currently, there seems to be a vicious cycle in place. The low turnout by representatives of Member States works as a disincentive for the Security Council President to be forthcoming in the briefing, but, on the other hand, representatives of Member States lose interest when the Security Council President or his representative is not forthcoming and provides little information. My delegation wishes to reiterate its suggestion, presented in the debates on this issue in the last two years, that the informal briefings by

the Presidents of the Security Council be issued in the form of a press release on the same day or the day after and that a cross- reference to them be made in the annual report of the Council.

Two years ago, on 29 October 1997, when considering this item in the General assembly, my delegation raised a point concerning the coverage accorded to the work of the Military Staff Committee. I wish to note that in this year's report, 26 lines are devoted to the work of the Military Staff Committee which, compared to the reports of the last two years, shows an increase of about 600 per cent. We consider this a good first step in the right direction.

The Security Council faced a considerable degree of upheaval last year. The human tragedy in Kosovo presented a test to the Security Council in respect of our changing world. It may not be far-fetched to suggest that even the permanent members of the Council are not too happy with the performance of the Council, let alone the general membership of the United Nations, which, by and large, feels that the Security Council failed to perform its responsibility under Chapter VII of the Charter and instead forfeited that responsibility to a regional military alliance. This should have been a wake-up call for all of us: if the Security Council is not brought up to date and democratized, then the concept of collective security contained in the Charter is bound to be compromised over and over again in the future, and the Security Council will thus be incapable of carrying out the responsibility that the States Members initially conferred upon it.

The crux of the problem lies in the anachronistic and undemocratic practice of the veto. In our view, the experience of the Security Council last year — particularly in the case of Kosovo, because of its fundamental impact on the authority and credibility of the Council — warrants a special report by the Security Council to the General Assembly under Article 15 of the Charter. Such a report should review the problems with which the Council was faced, the deadlock and the reasons which gave rise to it, and how the Council anticipates resolving a similar situation in the future. The position of my delegation on the issue of the veto has been spelled out in the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is under consideration in the ad hoc committee which deals with the reform of the Security Council.

Another important issue which is related to the experience of the Council in Kosovo and enjoys prominence in the statement of the Secretary-General is the question of humanitarian intervention. It is a truism that the international community cannot and must not remain aloof from bloodshed and massive violations of human rights when they occur within the borders of a State. However, since the sovereignty of States continues to constitute the very cornerstone of law-based international relations, care must be taken that the concept of humanitarian intervention is not deliberated in an atmosphere which cannot accommodate a truly deliberative process and in which all States cannot adequately contribute to its refinement.

Mr. Singhvi (India): Permit me and my delegation to express our appreciation to the President of the Security Council for his introduction of the report of the Security Council. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine on their election to the Security Council. Elected by the General Assembly on the basis of criteria laid down in Article 23 of the Charter, the non-permanent members help make the Security Council a little more representative and the system, with all its shortcomings, a little less imperfect.

The Charter makes it amply clear that the Security Council is one of the principal organs of the United Nations and that it is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security on behalf of all the Members of the United Nations. That is why Article 24, paragraph 3, and Article 15 of the Charter require the Security Council to submit, and the General Assembly to receive and consider, annual and special reports. The submission of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly for its consideration establishes the constitutional nexus of the accountability of the Security Council to the General Assembly, though, for obvious reasons, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is conferred upon the Security Council by the Charter, which gives pride of place to its membership.

The conferment of that primary responsibility has to be seen in the context of the composition of the Security Council, the election of all the non-permanent members by the General Assembly, the provision of the Charter that the Security Council acts on behalf of all Members and the crucial caveat of accountability in the form of submission of reports to and consideration by the General Assembly. These reports are like the hyphen that joins and the buckle that binds the Security Council to the General Assembly. An analysis of the organic instrument of the United Nations shows that the primary and penultimate responsibility of the Security Council is

linked to the consideration of its report by the General Assembly. Therefore, we would urge the Security Council, in the discharge of that primary responsibility, to confine itself strictly to the mandate embodied in the Charter, to be responsive to the comments and discussions in the General Assembly and to be procedurally transparent. The faithful observance of those norms alone can secure and reinforce a healthy constitutional relationship between the two principal organs, namely, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The General Assembly encapsulated those norms in its resolution 51/193 of 1996, which was adopted with a view to improving the reporting procedures of the Security Council. In that resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Security Council to include, *inter alia*, information on the consultations of the whole undertaken prior to action or deliberation by the Security Council on issues within its mandate and the process leading to such action; to highlight the extent to which resolutions of the General Assembly on issues falling within the scope of the General Assembly and the Security Council had been taken into account by the Council in its decision-making; and to strengthen further the section of the report on the steps taken by the Council to improve its working methods.

Though some welcome changes have been introduced, the Council's report now under discussion has not fully followed the letter and the spirit of resolution 51/193 of 1996. As a result, the General Assembly, which is called upon by the Charter to consider the report, is placed at a serious disadvantage. The consideration of the report by the General Assembly is not an empty ritual, and that is why we reiterate the rationale and the compelling need for further improvements in the reporting procedures.

The problem of an inadequate and unsatisfactory reporting system is aggravated by the Security Council's resorting to the system of meeting behind closed doors, not as a rare or occasional exception but more or less as a rule. A closed meeting in extraordinary circumstances might have some justification, but when it takes the form and frequency of an addictive habit, it violates the principle of transparency and openness, which is the leitmotif of our era. The Council's rules of procedure do not countenance the practice. Rule 48 provides that the Security Council shall meet in public unless it decides otherwise. The plain implication of the rule is that ordinarily the Security Council shall meet in public unless it decides otherwise for good and compelling reasons. Most of the time there are no such compelling reasons, and yet frequent and persistent departures from the norm of meeting in public have become quite routine.

The peoples of the world, in whose name the Charter was proclaimed, have a right to know. Members of the United Nations, big and small, have a right to know. It follows that we need a great deal more sunshine, a new standard and quality of candour and a new sense of accountability to encompass and legitimize power and responsibility. Deliberating behind closed doors and announcing the formal conclusions to the world at large is no longer an acceptable procedure for the open society towards which the world is moving.

This issue has been raised during the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on the restructuring of the Security Council and in previous deliberations on the report of the Security Council. Both non-members of the Council and the non-permanent members of the Council have in the past complained of a lack of transparency in the Council's work. I recall from the record of last year's deliberations that the need to enhance transparency was stressed and conceded by representative after representative. It was agreed that transparency applied not only to the way in which the Council carries out its work, but also to the way in which that work is reported and recorded; and that the imbalance between open meetings of the Council and the far more frequent use of the informal consultations of the whole had to be redressed. The issue has long been debated, but no real progress is in sight in spite of the chorus of consensus that once again characterizes the debate this year.

I might add that the principle of the need for transparency applies not only to the Council's deliberations but also to the work of its subsidiary bodies, in order to avoid the kind of divisive debate witnessed last year over the functioning of the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq.

Beyond the flaws in the reporting procedures and in the meetings behind closed doors, there is a deeper subterranean fault line, a malady which points to the loss of moral vision and the democratic ethos of representation in the Security Council. Many a problem confronts us today because of the way the Security Council is structured. The structure and composition of the Security Council are demonstrably out of touch with the ground realities and no longer meet the aspirations and expectations of the membership and of the international community. The solution lies in reforming and

restructuring the Council comprehensively. The inclusion of developing countries in the permanent membership would make the Council more representative, relevant and vibrant. It would also make it more effective by bringing to the Council's actions the support of a much broader spectrum of the international community. We will make our detailed comments on this issue during discussions on the agenda item entitled “Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters”. Suffice it to say that the restructuring of the Security Council is a moral imperative and a practical necessity. We are dismayed to find that there is pointless delay in translating the basic ideas of restructuring into a reality. The danger is that the delay in restructuring may make the system less relevant, less effectual and somewhat moribund. That is why restructuring has an urgency of its own.

The Security Council has rightly expressed grave concern with regard to the impact of terrorism on international peace and security. Happily, the resolution adopted by the Security Council yesterday shows that concern as the first step and as a potential spearhead of purposeful action. We congratulate the Security Council for its resolve to wage a common fight against terrorism everywhere. We agree with the consensus view of the Security Council in yesterday’s meeting that we must not be dissuaded by phony arguments about just causes and claims about the supposedly political character of acts of terrorism. Let us hope that we will now move in the direction of a global regime to effectively outlaw terrorism, whatever its pretensions and excuses may be.

The spectre of terrorism today haunts and threatens civilization itself. It imperils our common future. Organized terrorism as an instrument of policy by certain States and terrorism perpetrated by stray individuals and groups pose a clear and present danger to international peace and security. Terrorists are financed, funded, trained, encouraged, assisted and used by the Governments which nurture terrorist groups and individuals and give them their protection, patronage under cloak-and-dagger tactics and safe haven. Such state-sponsored terrorism has absolutely no place in contemporary international relations. There is often only a thin line between the troops of the States sponsoring terrorism and terrorist intruders, infiltrators, saboteurs and mercenaries, who are used unscrupulously. The purpose of such state-sponsored terrorism is to destabilize other countries and Governments, in wanton violation of the comity and conventions of international law on friendly relations between sovereign nations. It endangers international peace and security.

The Security Council must demonstrate the political will to address and combat this problem. Towards that end the international community must now prepare a global convention and a global blueprint to fight and destroy terrorism, to facilitate extradition and to prevent and punish terrorism everywhere.

Afghanistan remains a source of the deepest anxiety for peace and security in the world. Our sympathies are with the people of Afghanistan, who are in the throes of a tragic conflict, confrontation and crisis. We do not have to go far in seeking the causes of that tragedy. In that climate of intense hostility and pervasive distrust, the world community has a vital role to play. We welcome the Council’s recent action on Afghanistan, which needs to be followed up regularly, persistently and with determination. The Security Council has repeatedly expressed grave concern at events in Afghanistan and stressed the need for a peaceful political settlement. Ignoring the Council’s advice and edicts, however, the Taliban launched yet another offensive earlier this year, in July. The Council, by adopting resolution 1267 (1999) last week, has given another chance to the Taliban to end its support for international terrorism. We hope and pray that they will heed the voice of the world community and that the misery and suffering of the people of Afghanistan will be alleviated. Unfortunately, our hopes are a hostage to despair. As a neighbour, India views the situation in Afghanistan with grave concern. We hope that the Security Council will give the problem of Afghanistan the priority attention it deserves.

While regional organizations have a role in peacekeeping in accordance with the Charter, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the Security Council. This role of the Security Council has been eroded, abridged and subverted by the developments of the past few years. This is a disturbing trend and raises many intractable questions. In some cases, regional organizations may not have the resources, or the mandate, or the truly international outlook and perspective to maintain peace and security. Delegating or abdicating the Council’s responsibility for peacekeeping in such cases would simply create a chaotic void. Even in cases where regional organizations have the military capacity, they lack the universal character of the United Nations and may reflect only regional compulsions or narrow and limited approaches. Their actions therefore would appear to be partisan, unless they have a mandate derived directly from the Security Council and function under its umbrella.

The Secretary-General has aptly pointed out, in his annual report on the work of the Organization, that

> "if the primacy of the Security Council with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security is rejected, the very foundations of international law as represented by the Charter will be brought into question." *(A/54/1, para. 69)*

He added:

> "No other universally accepted legal basis for constraining wanton acts of violence exists." (ibid.)

We feel that the Security Council's role in authorizing and undertaking peacekeeping operations, when required, must be strengthened, and the universally accepted legal basis for constraining wanton acts of violence be repaired and reinstated. We cannot view with equanimity the relegation of the Charter and the relegation of the Security Council to the role of a passive spectator and its real role being pre-empted.

The Council's actions need greater clarity, equity and sense of purpose. It has to be seen to act fairly, consistently and decisively. For instance, the role of the Council in running the oil-for-food programme for Iraq, under which the Council members decide which contracts to approve and which to put on hold, has led to a situation where hundreds of contracts worth over $450 million have been put on hold, without any effective or independent avenue to improve the situation.

We welcome the Security Council debate on Africa, in which India participated. In the past, early warnings were not heeded. Often enough, the Security Council failed to respond in time to African crises or to sustain its commitments to Africa. We note that some new initiatives are afoot. We would support and participate in the operation in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is no gainsaying that Africa's problems demand a more comprehensive solution with inputs and contributions from other organs of the United Nations. This has been acknowledged by Security Council resolution 1170 (1998), which expressed the hope that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant bodies of the United Nations and international financial institutions would consider the Secretary-General's report and take appropriate action. Peace and security in Africa will depend on an all-out preventive effort, constructive multilateral diplomacy and a strong developmental perspective.

India is proud to have been in the forefront of troop-contributing countries in most of the United Nations peacekeeping efforts. While we appreciate the increased and regular interaction between the Council and the troop-contributing countries, we believe that the quality of that interaction could be improved. There should be fuller consultation with the major troop-contributing countries, especially before any change in the mandate of an operation.

The Security Council has the responsibility to redress the economic problems of third countries affected by the sanctions it has mandated. Though this matter has been under discussion in the Sixth Committee for a number of years, no tangible progress has been achieved. We hope that the Council will display a strong problem-solving approach and greater political will to give effect to Article 50 of the Charter. The mandate of Article 50 is that States affected by preventive or enforcement measures taken against another State by the Security Council have a right to consult the Council, which then has the obligation to find a fair solution to the problem.

There is a strange paradox. While attempts are being made by some to ease the Security Council out of its role in peacekeeping, which is its responsibility under the Charter, it shows a tendency to assume a proactive, and occasionally not-so-objective, role for itself in a variety of other areas like human rights, disarmament or international humanitarian law. This blurring of the distinction between the roles of different organs or bodies can create a counterproductive confusion and conflicts of jurisdiction, which are best avoided.

The United Nations enshrines a vision which delineates humanity's tryst with its new destiny. We need to strengthen that vision. We need to recast and reconstruct United Nations structures and procedural modalities to translate that vision into a living reality and to give the United Nations a new momentum on the threshold of the twenty-first century. We need to remember that peace is a many-splendoured concept, as explained by the sages and seers of ancient India who proclaimed that humankind is one family, that the quest for peace in the inner and outer space of human consciousness and endeavour ranges from the social, scientific, economic, religious, political and ecological to the ethical and the spiritual. Freedom, peace and justice, although intertwined, have a security dimension, and that security dimension has been entrusted to the Security Council so that succeeding generations may be saved from the scourge of war, violence and bloodshed. The

Security Council will, I am sure, be an instrument for fulfilling our sanguine hope and our resonant resolve in the twenty-first century.

We expect the Council to give due consideration to the constructive comments offered in this Assembly today and reflect them in its working, in its approach to problems, in its restructuring and in its next report. In the success of the Security Council lies the possibility of the success of the great human experiment in, and enterprise of, togetherness that is the United Nations.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the working methods of the Security Council, in particular the issues of transparency, Argentina has the honour of working in close cooperation with the New Zealand delegation, which has indicated to me that it endorses what I am about to say.

Ambassador Sergey Lavrov of the Russian Federation introduced to the General Assembly the report (A/54/2) of the Security Council. We thank him for the statement he made in his capacity as President of the Security Council.

Our commitment to increased transparency in the working methods of the Security Council is well known. On that matter I need only reiterate that we make ourselves available to all those Member States that are not members of the Security Council in order to continue to make progress towards that goal, which is essential for the Organization's reform process.

The latest developments in Security Council procedure have placed the presidency in a key position. The presidency is responsible for providing daily briefings to the other Members of the United Nations and the media. It is also responsible for the presentation and content of the monthly assessments which appear in the addendum to the report. It is also the President of the Security Council who is mandated to meet with the representatives of the other Members of the United Nations. This delegation of responsibilities to the presidency provides additional guarantees of transparency because the person responsible for providing information is identified.

On 23 September last, after meeting with the Secretary-General, the five permanent members issued a statement in which they affirmed that any attempt to curtail their right of veto would not be conducive to the process of reforming the Security Council. However, it must now be accepted that the exercise of the veto — as understood by the permanent members — is incompatible with the will of the vast majority of Member States. If that is not truly understood, the efforts to reform the working methods of the Council will not have a bright future.

The report shows that in the period under review more than 50 meetings of troop-contributing countries took place. We are pleased to note the good results of the initiative to institutionalize those meetings, a process led since 1994 by, among others, the delegations of New Zealand and Argentina. We hope that this practice, as set out in the presidential statements of 3 May and 4 November 1994 and 28 March 1996, will continue to benefit the countries that contribute personnel in fulfilment of the mandates of the Security Council. We do not share the objections, based on the alleged poor attendance. The goal of those meetings was, and still is, to give the troop-contributing countries a forum to express their concerns. We feel the same way about the criticism of the briefing meetings for non-members of the Security Council, based on the same arguments.

A reading of the first paragraphs of the report confirms that over two thirds of the Council's work takes place in the so-called informal consultations, to which access is still denied to non-members. However, there is no reason why such countries should be permanently denied the right to participate in the informal consultations on the basis of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter. The right to participate of countries whose interests are affected by the discussion of an issue brought to the attention of the Security Council was debated at length this year in the Working Group on documentation and procedure. Its draft report still has not been adopted by the Security Council, because some members do not agree that it should at least be made clear that there was no agreement regarding the participation in informal consultations of non-members and representatives of international organizations.

We have emphasized on several occasions that Argentina acknowledges the usefulness of such consultations. We think that they are important and frequent enough to warrant the establishment of rules for their proceedings in order to guarantee their proper functioning.

Closed formal meetings, such as the one to be held next week to hear Mr. Jacques Klein, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bosnia and Herzegovina, can be a valid mechanism for the participation of countries that are not members of the Council. Another valid mechanism is the formal open

meeting, with records and a media presence, such as that in which we heard President Chiluba of Zambia and he listened to us.

We reiterate our reluctance to utilize other types of formulas for the Security Council to communicate with Government representatives. As Ambassador Arria of Venezuela and several delegations, including our own, have explained on a number of occasions, the “Arria formula” is not the proper one for that purpose. That formula is an innovative and useful mechanism that allows the Council to establish truly informal and off-the-record contacts with individuals and organizations whose activities might be relevant to the issues on the agenda. The fact that it has been used to hear Foreign Ministers or other Ministers of Member States does not reflect either the intent or the spirit of the formula developed by Ambassador Arria, and it implies a failure by the Council to devise mechanisms for dialogue within the limits of its rules of procedure.

Meetings open to other Member countries are another forum that can be used for briefings by the Secretary-General, his representatives, and other high Secretariat officials. We are moving gradually towards the point where such oral briefings will no longer be given in informal consultations to which non-members of the Council lack access.

The influence of the General Assembly has yielded results. Let us remember that the improvements made to the report were adopted by the Council after the Assembly had adopted its resolution 51/193. Step by step, we will succeed in improving the working methods of the Security Council and in bringing them into line with democratic principles. We are optimistic, because intransigence on these matters seems less and less viable.

We pay tribute to United Nations staff members killed or wounded as they carried out activities entrusted to them by the Security Council. We believe that the Security Council must be mindful of these tragedies and consider appropriate measures to prevent such events in the future. The comments the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, made to the General Assembly on 14 October were eloquent and require a response.

In conclusion, we congratulate the delegations of Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine on their election to membership of the Security Council for the next biennium, and we welcome them to the Council.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): I wish to join previous speakers in thanking the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, President of the Security Council for the month of October 1999, for introducing the report of the Security Council. The entire membership of this Organization attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council, and the annual report is a useful mechanism to keep the wider membership informed of the Council's activities and decisions. The Charter of the United Nations provides in its Article 15 that the General Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Council. This provision constitutes the most important link between the Assembly, which is the only organ consisting of all members, and the Security Council, which acts on our behalf.

While both principal organs are vested with different and specific mandates, each in its own way serves the interest of the entire membership. As a useful tool to keep non-members informed of the Council's work, the report must reflect the objective circumstances surrounding the consideration of various issues on the agenda of the Council. We are therefore encouraged by the progressive improvements over the last few years in the Council's reports, including the present one.

Turning to the report before us, we are pleased to note a new appendix to the report, containing reports of the sanctions committees. This wider coverage of the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council is a welcome step. We are equally pleased to observe the continued inclusion of the monthly assessments prepared by former Presidents of the Security Council. We continue to hold the view that these assessments contribute to our better understanding of the considerations which were taken into account in adopting important resolutions concerning many issues on the Council's agenda. Although these assessments are voluntary in nature and do not necessarily represent the views of the Security Council as a whole, they provide a useful and valuable insight into the informal consultations where important decisions of the Council are generally considered and thus complement the report in an effective manner. The inclusion in this year's report of statements to the press made by the President following consultations of the whole of the Council add to the value of these assessments. We subscribe to the view that these assessments should be compulsory. We urge Presidents of the Council to maintain this positive practice in the meantime.

While we still hold the view that there remain some aspects of the report that need to be improved, we consider that the improvements that have been made thus far in the format and content of the report are important steps towards greater transparency in the work of the Council. Openness and transparency are particularly important for an organ such as the Security Council, which deals with vital issues of international peace and security. We strongly feel that it is the right of the international community to be adequately informed, through all viable mechanisms, of what the Council is doing in its name.

In this respect, we would like to reiterate our view, presented at the last session of the General Assembly under the same item, that the Security Council should submit special reports to the General Assembly on certain important issues. We were heartened when the Council decided to consider and review ways to improve the Council's documentation and procedures, including the provision of special reports as called for in Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter. We wish to encourage the Council to follow up that important decision with specific actions which will add to transparency in the work of the Council. We are of the view that the present efforts towards greater transparency and openness must be pursued on a sustained basis. My delegation fully supports the mechanisms and practices that have been established to that end. We believe that these efforts will increase not only the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council but its credibility as well.

While considering the report of the Council, my delegation wishes to make some remarks on a few aspects of the work of the Council. As indicated by the greater number of formal and informal meetings held and of resolutions adopted, the Council had a very heavy agenda and an eventful year. We are highly disturbed to have witnessed developments in certain areas of the world that tested not only the effectiveness of the Council but also its credibility. In these developments, the Council was marginalized and was prevented from playing its proper role in the maintenance of international peace and security. It was also with a sense of uneasiness that we observed a unique pattern of finding a solution to an unfolding crisis in the Balkans through the mechanism of a regional organization. While we are fully aware of the success stories of some regional organizations and of their increasingly active role in the work of the Security Council in the past several years, especially in the realm of peace enforcement, the actions of regional organizations must, in our view, be clearly mandated and should not bypass the Security Council if the multilateral system for the maintenance of international peace and security is to be effectively maintained. There should not be any erosion of the Council's primary responsibility. To do otherwise, however strong the justification may be, is not defensible either legally or politically.

We note with appreciation that the Council was engaged in debates on themes other than crisis situations, such as children and armed conflict and protection of civilians in armed conflict, et cetera. Consideration of these themes as part of the work of the Council is a healthy trend that deserves our full support. We hope that these thematic debates will enhance the capacity of the Council to deal with the complex causes of crises on its agenda. We are pleased to see that these debates have recently become an important feature of the Council's agenda and that the Member States have actively participated in them.

I wish particularly to refer to debate on threats to peace and security by international terrorist acts. Terrorist acts are generally indiscriminate in nature and, accordingly, endanger not only the lives of those particularly targeted but also innocent lives. As such, these cowardly acts have become an emerging source of threats to peace and security. Therefore the adoption by the Council of resolution 1189 (1998) is a right step. It is also encouraging that by that resolution the Council shows that it is determined to eliminate international terrorism. We are convinced that only through cooperation among States can there be effective and practical measures to prevent acts of terrorism.

We indeed appreciate the value of thematic debates as they contribute to the work of the Council. However, this does not necessarily mean that those debates should allow the Council to move into the area of issues or concerns not envisaged for it in the Charter. In this regard the provisions of the Charter are abundantly clear. Article 24 confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and states that “The Security Council shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations”. We hope that in discharging its cardinal duties the Council will refrain from stretching its mandate beyond what is defined in the Charter and continue to focus primarily on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Furthermore, we feel that the measures adopted by the Security Council, especially those entailing the use of force or military elements, should conform to the principles of international law and take into account the

principle of respect for sovereignty. It is also vitally important that measures with military elements should not be a convenient way of interfering in affairs that exclusively fall within the domestic jurisdiction of States.

The General Assembly has taken various steps to strengthen its link with the Security Council. I recall, in particular, Assembly resolutions 47/233, 48/264 and, last but not least, 51/193. On the other hand, the Security Council has, in response, taken many worthwhile measures. As a result, the process of interaction between the two organs with a view to enhancing the performance of the United Nations has gathered momentum, as attested by the improved format and content of the Council's annual reports and their timely submission to the General Assembly. We consider that it is important not to lose momentum. We hope that through these efforts of both organs, we will have a Council which is more transparent, open and accountable to all Members of the United Nations, on whose behalf it acts.

Mr. Francese (Italy) (*spoke in French)*: Mr. President, I am particularly happy to speak to the Assembly this evening while you are presiding.

(*spoke in English*)

First of all, allow me to congratulate the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, this month's President of the Security Council, for his clear, precise and detailed presentation of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. I also wish to compliment the Secretariat and its staff on an excellent job of preparing the document. Furthermore, my delegation is deeply appreciative of the endeavours of the members of the Security Council, all of them in favour of international peace and security. But it is particularly fitting today to express the most sincere feelings of appreciation and best wishes to the newly elected members for the years 2000 and 2001. Italy is sure that Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine will contribute new energy, increased creativity and better representativity to the supreme organ of the United Nations, an organ that draws great benefit from the frequent, regular rotation of its members.

Italy has repeatedly underlined that the General Assembly's discussion of the Security Council's report is essential to assuring effective coordination and interaction between the Council and the Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of the Charter. To achieve this, the report should provide an analytical, thorough and realistic picture of the work actually done by the Council. While much has been accomplished along these lines in recent years, a great deal remains to be done.

On this same occasion last year, Italy praised changes in the format of the report, for example the inclusion of a fifth part dedicated to the subsidiary organs of the Security Council such as the sanctions committees and the Tribunals on former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. I would be remiss not to express again this year our appreciation for a fine set of documents, which has been, we must acknowledge, improved by annexing the annual reports of the sanctions committees. It is encouraging to see that the Council has made it almost a uniform practice to distribute a document on the work of the Council at the end of each presidency, with the noticeable exception of the crucial month of May 1999. However, rather than a descriptive list of decisions, statements and resolutions, we would like the report to contain more of an in-depth analysis and a real assessment of the issues falling within the scope of the Council's activities.

For instance, already last year we proposed that the report be improved by providing more detailed information on meetings with troop-contributing countries. In sum, while the report deserves our praise as a useful reference tool, which is certainly valuable to the work of our missions, it is much harder to affirm that it provides the General Assembly with an exhaustive instrument for assessing the work of the Security Council.

For such an assessment to be possible, the Assembly would need not only copies of the Council's decisions and resolutions, but also indications of substance regarding the proceedings that led to their adoption. The report should summarize the Council's debates on crisis areas, regional tensions, humanitarian emergencies and other subjects crucial to international peace and security, including human security, as well as regional and global stability. We should be provided not only with the text of the resolutions approved, but also with relevant information on the decision-making process that led to their adoption or that might have prevented other resolutions from being adopted. Everyone knows what was done, but we do not always know what was not done by the Security Council. Without this kind of information, we have no way of knowing whether the Council has expressed its full potential or simply struggled to contain divisions within its midst.

In discussing the report, we cannot avoid turning our attention, once again, to the issue of transparency and the

working methods of the Security Council. Article 24 of the United Nations Charter affirms that members of the Organization

> "confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

In agreeing to the Charter and its provisions, Members States did not abdicate their role in dealing with world security. For reasons of expediency and urgency, they simply delegated to the Council the primary task of ascertaining emerging threats and of taking immediate action to curb them, always acting on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations.

Thus we believe that, as a general rule, the Security Council should convene in public formal session. Furthermore, briefings and reports by the Secretary-General and other high representatives of the Secretariat could in principle be delivered in meetings open to all Member States. We commend the fact that there were more formal meetings during the year under review than in the previous 12 months. Yet measures are still needed to ensure that such meetings are not dedicated only to the ritual approval of documents or to debate on matters of importance but of less urgency. More than 170 countries are informed of Council discussions only after they have taken place, and then obviously in an intermittent and incomplete way, via second-hand or third-hand news that travels from mission to mission.

International peace and security is a common good that is not the exclusive property of any one Member State or, for that matter, of those who sit in the Security Council. Council members, both permanent and non-permanent, must be held accountable for the positions they take on the important issues mandated to them. That accountability would be better provided by a more analytical and comprehensive format for the report, which, among other things, would allow Member States to undertake a real appraisal of the extent to which the Council's decision-making reflects both General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

The report of the Security Council covers June 1998 to June 1999, a period in time characterized by numerous crises to which the international community felt it was its duty to respond. Allow me to state that — while all threats to international peace and security, wherever they emerge, must, to the best of the Security Council's ability, be tackled equitably — it is Africa and the various regional crises in that continent that will, in the end, be the litmus test of the effectiveness of the United Nations. It is our firm conviction that, as regards Africa, the Security Council will have to increasingly deploy its political acumen and operational determination. The experience of the past must guide us to a better future.

It has been noted in the past months that the events in Kosovo showed a lack of unity among Council members that prevented the United Nations from playing a significant role in a major humanitarian crisis from its outset. As Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini stated in his address at the opening of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly:

> "stalemates and paralysis of intersecting vetoes must be avoided by anchoring even the strongest States to a system of rules [of behaviour] and principles [political if not legal]". (*A/54/PV.8*)

Italy remains deeply committed to a reform of the Security Council based on the experience of recent years, which has shown that the Council's ability to tackle international crises promptly and effectively is intrinsically regulated by the veto or the mere threat of its use.

We all recognize that to meet the new and manifold challenges regarding its institutional responsibility our Organization needs to adapt. In this context the reform of the Security Council is a crucial element. The Council needs to be made more representative, democratic and transparent. All regional groups and their members should feel that they are adequately mirrored in the composition of the Security Council and in its activities. The importance

of each and every Member State being truly convinced that the Council is readily accountable and effectively responsive does not need to be underlined; this is main way of guaranteeing that the United Nations has the ways, the means and the political will to fulfil the lofty goal of maintaining international peace and security.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.