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General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

56th plenary meeting

Thursday, 20 November 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann . . . . . (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 9 and 111 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/63/2)

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

Miss Alipate (Tonga): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, namely Fiji, Nauru, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, the Kingdom of Tonga. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this discussion on agenda item 9, on the report of the Security Council, and agenda item 111, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We wish to commend the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, the current President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the annual report of the Council (A/63/2) on behalf of its members.

When we embarked on the reform of the Security Council, it was with a vision to make the Council more representative, more effective, more efficient and more relevant. It has to live up to the realities of the twenty-first century. This is imperative, given the concerns of the Council's increased workload and the consequent overstretching of its capacity.

In 2001, the Secretary-General pledged to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention, specifically encouraging the Security Council to consider innovative mechanisms as well as any other early warning or prevention cases brought to its attention by Member States.

Opinions that sudden threats to international peace and security, such as climate change, should not be dealt with by the Security Council deny the very role which the Charter has assigned to it and clearly contradict the very spirit of the current reform process. The Security Council is not only competent, but also mandated to deal with threats to international peace and security. It is of utmost importance to all organs of the United Nations to fulfil their respective mandates.

The solution is therefore not to limit the scope of the work of the Council. The increased workload of the Council is reflective of the changing times and evolving challenges. Consequently, the solution has to include flexibility and relevance. The capacity of the Council needs to be enhanced so it can be flexible enough to take on new challenges within its purview as stipulated in the Charter. Thus, we should continue to focus on how to make the Security Council more, not less, relevant to address today's threats.

In terms of improving the transparency of the Council's working methods, we maintain our support

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for an increased amount of open debates and meetings, provisions for more regular structured briefings to address the concerns of non-members, an increased level of input in the decision-making process from the United Nations membership for determining the format for particular Council meetings, improving the effectiveness of the wrap-up sessions and encouraging and facilitating improved interaction with troop-contributing countries by conducting regular meetings to discuss substantive matters and concerns. This is particularly relevant for those troop contributors which are not members of the Security Council.

On the issue of equitable representation and the increase in the membership of the Security Council, the Security Council should be more broadly representative of the international community as a whole and the geopolitical realities of today. To achieve these goals, the Council should be expanded both in permanent and non-permanent categories. We are of the view that during the debate on the topic, which has continued over a period of 14 years, we have had ample opportunity to express our opinions on the matter.

We welcome the decision by the President of the General Assembly to convene the intergovernmental negotiations in an informal plenary on 21 November 2008 and pledge our support and hope for a successful and speedy conclusion.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the report of the Security Council (A/63/2) on agenda item 111, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We listened carefully to the introductory statement by the President of the Security Council, Mr. Jorge Urbina of Costa Rica. We also listened to his enlightening comments made in his national capacity and would like to thank him for his presentation of relevant comments and his frankness in analysing the function of this important organ of the United Nations.

Everything that has been said in the debate on this subject up to this point can only encourage us to continue to work towards change and to break with sometimes old-fashioned approaches and a system that, as we see by its deficiencies in transparency, has seen its day. From this point going forward, we need more inclusive work to make the Security Council truly an instrument for the governance of the world, in sync with the twenty-first century.

The world has changed. The aspirations that have seen light since the creation of the United Nations are not based on the relationship of force inherited from the last World War, but on shared ideals and renewed faith in modernity. Of course, we are still facing so many historic challenges, but the world of 2008 is not the world of 1948. This has to be understood once and for all.

Those who were irreconcilable enemies are now working together to design a way forward towards a future of progress and a world at peace for their descendants. Those who were colonized are sovereign today, those who had suffered under apartheid are now in charge of their country, those who were treated as underdeveloped, who suffered from the ostracism of unjust, inadequate and unequal State relations are now the driving forces of progress in the world, having emerged as respected and respectable economic Powers.

The world has changed. It is no longer possible to see its evolution and to build our common future through the lens of a bygone era. My point is that the structures and mentalities of the old world that still exist in United Nations bodies must give way to more representative structures and mentalities — those of the emerging twenty-first century that are more adapted to the changes we have witnessed. There must be more openness to the legitimate demands of the peoples of this new world.

For so many years now, we have endlessly discussed reform of the Security Council and it seems that each time our efforts are doomed to failure or that we keep going around in circles like people involved in mystical incantations. All of this brings us back to square one where we are denied the hope of moving forward.

The time has come to abandon this ritual incantation and to start a new cycle of negotiations with the sole goal of success this time around. We need to resolutely move on to this new decisive stage in intergovernmental negotiations. We need to set aside the clever trick and little deals among partners of the moment to clearly and persistently tackle the challenge with a real political desire to reach lasting solutions which will enable the Security Council to be more

efficient, to take into account the views of all and to take decisions in the interest of peace, security and the well-being of all.

Accordingly, we must accept that the smallest, most vulnerable States will have a voice. We must accept that Africa be duly represented and that its enormous potential plays in its favour. Africa is not and will never be a mere pawn on the chessboard of the world. Africa wants to be a full-fledged partner in building new international relations based on equity, ethics and renewed political determination to build peace, to handle sustainable development and to take joint responsibility for climate change.

We seek to get to grips on a solution and not to be a source of problems of the world. Africa wants to combat the inequalities of international relations. It wants to resist the iniquitous jeopardy suffered until now. Furthermore, it will always be against the version of history that wants it to remain subjected, living on the crumbs magnanimously left in a world where only the powerful remain solvent.

That is why Africa is calling for — and it is only fair to accord it — two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats, as we have been requesting since the Ezulwini Consensus.

Intergovernmental negotiations which will soon be starting must open the way to a new era of constructive discussions about and adequate proposals for a Security Council that is adapted to the twenty-first century. We should not be subjected to any delaying tactics, the consequence of which would be hard to tolerate. Now we need to lance this abscess.

In this regard, we are pleased to note that the statements that we have heard from the beginning of this debate are clearer in their proposals, more in accord with the political will underpinning them and reveal more profoundly the underlying reasons for them. There is a healthy trend in these discussions which bodes well for future debates.

At the same time, a lot of time has been lost in fruitless or, regrettably, deceiving debates. The discussion we are looking forward to must be open and not based on any kind of trickery or delaying tactic. Participants must be prepared to accept the ideas and opinions of all sides. Together we should reduce the distance that still separates us, work towards finding common ground and, in a realistic way, give the world a functional, credible, efficient and democratic organ that can represent the aspirations of peoples and the will of States. We are ready to work with all to create that crucial instrument for a better governance of the world.

Let us make no mistake about who the adversaries are in this debate. Let us not seek easy culprits for our collective inertia or scapegoats with low morals. No useless or futile invective about the intentions or the ulterior motives of one and another in this new page that we are opening in the history of that unique precious body, namely, the Security Council. Above all, the small countries are not responsible for the current situation. We are all aware of the changes that must take place for the Security Council to be more effective, more suited to our times and, in particular, better able to handle the security of all. We need to have the political will to be successful in this task, without which we are doomed to this little parlour game, in which one gets exhausted in specious reckoning to figure out who is eligible and who is not, who is with whom or who is against what.

Let us avoid falling into the trap of simplicity, because our designated tasks now are anything but simple. Let us not believe that proposals — however such intelligent and legitimate they might be — that take into account only the interests of one group to the detriment of the others can enable all obstacles to be removed, all challenges surpassed and the difficulties overcome. We would like to believe that, but the experience of 15 years of endless discussions indicates the opposite. Who will take the responsibility of leading us once again into a dead end?

I would like to state very clearly that what we want now is not to sit in the back rows of a silent film theatre, but precisely to participate in solutions to our common problems and to be the guarantors of those solutions. What we want is an in-depth change in world governance, so that it can better serve peoples and the international community. What we want is that account be taken of the interests of all, in particular, of the smallest, the poorest and most vulnerable countries. This is not, in our view, about a frantic race to obtain some all-powerful right of veto, but about our right to contribute, at least to making the veto irrelevant, thereby shifting the challenges and balance of power into another area: that of dialogue and the interests of all in the face of the great threats of our time. That is

why we wish to see the implementation of decision 62/557 as soon as possible.

We would like to begin the intergovernmental negotiations as soon as possible, but without haste and while safeguarding the work of the existing legitimate organs. I would not want our Assembly to become a talking shop in search of the lost ark of the Security Council. May the negotiations begin and may everyone take a stand and express his opinion in all honesty.

Cape Verde is not one of those countries that promotes a general position as long as it benefits then. We will work in a spirit of openness, watching out for the interests of all countries but holding a course set collectively with the aim of finding a solution acceptable to the greatest number and leading towards the expected changes in the Security Council. No one is expected to depend on the ambitions of some or the interests of others, however legitimate. No one is expected to act as a stepping stone for those who place individual goals above collective interests. Like many who want to see global governance restored, we want to serve as a bridge between visions of the world that are still far from each other. We want to serve as the anchor point for the constructive convergence of the various possible options. We want to unite, without trampling on anyone's rights, and move towards consensus with the consent of all. That is the miracle that is expected of us and we know today that we can succeed, because nothing is impossible for those who aspire to success.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council, contained in document A/63/2?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Several representatives have requested to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Okuda (Japan): Thank you, Sir, for allowing us to exercise the right of reply. My comments are related to the statement by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, Japan firmly believes that the qualifications of a given country for permanent membership in the Security Council should be based on that country's real contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. Since its accession to the United Nations, Japan, as a nation committed to peace, has worked hard to promote disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, supporting United Nations action for peace and stability in the world, such as peacekeeping operations, and contributing to world development and prosperity.

Secondly, it is regrettable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea indiscreetly referred to the abduction issue, the unfortunate past and other issues. My delegation cannot accept such a reference. The abduction issue is a humanitarian matter that needs to be resolved. Japan has been facing up to its past with sincerity and consistency since the end of the Second World War. Japan has always maintained its policy to resolve any issues, including the abduction and any territorial issues, through dialogue and consultations.

With regard to Japan's position on Security Council reform, it has been publicly stated many times in the General Assembly and other forums. It is well known that Japan stands ready to contribute actively and constructively to international peace and security at any time.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Yesterday, we followed what was said about the Sudan in the statement made by the so-called country Saint Vincent. Perhaps it is the fate of the Sudan, a leading country in its continent, an African country with a long history and an old cultural heritage, to have been beleaguered by the conflict in Darfur, which has opened the door to each and everyone, from all walks of life, to talk shamelessly about the Sudan in the manner in which the representative of Saint Vincent spoke yesterday. We would not have cared and we would not have wanted to waste valuable time in these deliberations to reply to inconsequential and petty remarks. However, the delegation of the Sudan asked for the floor to clarify a few facts.

First, what the representative of Saint Vincent does not know, or what he perhaps is deliberately ignoring, is that the Security Council, about which he is talking, sent an international commission of inquiry to Darfur in 2004. That commission submitted its report to the Council at the beginning of 2005, in

document S/2005/60. He should consult that report, because the report of the commission that visited Darfur and undertook investigations emphasized categorically to the Secretary-General and the Security Council that what is happening in Darfur is not genocide and does not even resemble genocide.

Secondly, of course, we all know that there is one State, well known to all of us here, which has, unlike all other members of the international community, described what is happening in Darfur as genocide. I do not need to mention the name of that country, but I will mention certain fixed principles.

It is not surprising that major countries with colonial interests and ambitions have their own agendas towards small, developing nations. That is what history, both past and contemporary, has taught us. It is a pity, however, and regrettably so, that a country, a fellow developing nation, should come to this forum not to express its own position but rather to regurgitate what was taught to it. This is indeed strange.

The report of the Security Council to which the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines refers does not include a single clause that mentions genocide or ethnic cleansing, but if Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to declare itself a guardian of international peace and security, why did its representative not have the courage to refer equally to what the world is witnessing now — massacres in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan? Why did he not make even the slightest reference to those who have tainted the international arena and turned international relations into a butcher shop? Why did he not mention that? Instead, he finds himself shamelessly blaming the Sudan.

The Sudan sees today's meeting as a forum for transparent deliberations by the General Assembly on the reform and expansion of the Security Council — not on the issue of Darfur. Under no circumstances did we expect this forum to be exploited by those who are beating the drums of war.

In conclusion, there is a difference between those who express their own position — even if we disagree with them — and those who stand here by proxy to repeat the words dictated to them by others.

Mr. Chabi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): May I begin by thanking you, Sir, for allowing my delegation to exercise its right of reply.

My delegation questions the tenor of the remarks by the representative of South Africa in our debate on the report of the Security Council. He stated that the Security Council was unable to resolve the issue of the Sahara. This is not just a distortion of truth but, even worse, shows bad faith with regard to one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The truth is simple; we do not need to disguise it. Allow me to outline this to the General Assembly and recall for the representative of South Africa that the Security Council is playing an active role in putting an end to these various regional conflicts, pursuant to the provisions of the Charter, contrary to the allegations of the representative of South Africa.

Over a period of a year and a half, the Security Council has adopted three resolutions of substance which, today, consolidate an entire negotiation process and have allowed four negotiation rounds to be held. This new and promising momentum has been made possible thanks to our action, which has been welcomed by the international community, in particular by the Security Council, where, need I recall, South Africa is indeed present. This is a result of the credible efforts made by the Kingdom of Morocco. Three resolutions — 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007) and 1813 (2008) — were adopted unanimously by the Security Council, with South Africa among them. I would say here that resolution 1813 (2008) was adopted on 30 April 2008 under the South African presidency of the Security Council.

My country is certainly not alone in observing a certain incoherence between South Africa's desire to play a main role on our continent on the one hand and, on the other, its inclination to undermine and diminish the patient work which the Security Council has carried out with regard to the Sahara by adopting a negative view towards the salutary moves taken to resolve the disagreements. Here, we can understand that what is happening might be disconcerting for South Africa because it does not tally with its view, which is far from being shared by the majority of Member States. South Africa cannot act as a spoiler or lead this Assembly astray by ignoring the significant efforts of the Security Council and the international community.

Lastly, my country hopes that South Africa will abandon its biased position and contribute in a neutral, constructive and responsible way to a negotiated political solution to the Sahara dispute. Were it to do

so, it would make a contribution to overcoming the difficulties and obstacles with regard to the construction of the Maghreb. My country wishes to see this become an area of peace, democracy and shared prosperity.

Mr. Shin Boo-nam (Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise the right of reply in regard to what the representative of Japan mentioned about territorial issues.

I formally reiterate the position of the Republic of Korea that Dokdo Island has always been an integral part of our territory, which is proven by historical records, geographical facts and supported by the rules and principles of international law.

Mr. Sin Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would again like to comment on the statement made by the representative of Japan in this General Assembly.

Whenever opportunities are provided, Japan has pretended that the issue of its past crimes against humanity is groundless. This is truly hypocritical and brazen-faced behaviour which turns over the facts that are historically real and proven. As is already well known, Japan stands alone as the only country in the world that did not even reflect on its tremendous crimes against humanity and did not make proper and honest reparations.

In the past, Japan forcibly drafted 8.4 million Koreans, killed more than 1 million and forced more than 200,000 women and girls into sexual slavery as comfort women for the Japanese army. After its defeat in the war, Japan destroyed documents related to its crimes in fear of having those crimes disclosed to the world at large. Destroying documents will not be enough to delete Japan's dirty crime-laden traces.

Japan claims that it has apologized for its tremendous large-scale crimes against humanity, but it is indeed only a tricky and malicious move to divert international opinion. It is de jure and de facto a customary practice of Japan to say that it has repented for its past crimes when it finds itself cornered at a political impasse. And it denies everything it has promised to do as soon as the environment becomes more favourable.

Recently, high-level officials of the Government of Japan have openly declared and asserted that there is no evidence or documentation that prove the possible nature of comfort women with respect to the Japanese army; the Government even went so far as to deny completely the involvement of its Government and army in these dirty crimes. This is the authentic nature of Japan's position towards its blood-stained history. To this day, many of the survivors live through pain and trauma as a result of that sexual slavery.

At present, with formal authorization from and connivance by the Japanese Government, factual content about past crimes has been removed from or distorted in history textbooks in Japan, and those responsible for human slaughter in the past are praised and honoured as heroes.

It cannot be denied that that is what is happening now. A country like Japan that denies the resolution once and for all of the issue of past crimes will surely repeat, again and again, the same path of crimes against humanity. That is the lesson that we have all learned throughout history. That is why we take so seriously the issue of Japan's crimes and its recent political moves against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including open moves to seize Tok Islet, which is the sacred territory of Korea, and its violent and organized repression of Korean residents in Japan.

If a permanent seat is given to such an irresponsible and brazen-faced country as Japan, it will be the same as encouraging Japan's ambitions for its old dream of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which will give rise to an extremely dangerous threat to the entire international community.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): We reiterate our position on what we view as the regular working methods of the Security Council with regard to addressing the situation in Western Sahara. Our view is based on our experience as a non-permanent of the Security Council for the last two years. We would also like to reiterate our view that the Security Council should consider the conflict in Western Sahara through a balanced approach, based on the principle of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Mr. Okuda (Japan): The first remark I would like to make is with regard to the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Korea. Japan maintains a consistent policy about Takeshima Island, which we will not repeat on this occasion. Both countries have their own positions on this issue. However, the important thing is for both countries to work together for a mature partnership in the future.

The second remark I would like to make is with regard to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. With respect to our position on the past, we explained our position in exercising our right of reply, and I will not repeat what I said then. However, I have to mention that Japan has conducted talks with the Democratic People's Republic on the issue of the resolution of issues relating to the unfortunate past as part of the process of normalization talks aimed at establishing diplomatic relations, and it will continue to do so. The allegation by the Democratic People's Republic that Japan refuses to settle the issue of the past simply does not reflect the facts. For our part, we wish to remind the Democratic People's Republic that it must take concrete steps to advance normalization talks.

Mr. Chabi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to stress that the position of South Africa on the question of the Sahara is not balanced. The partiality of the position of that country on the disputes in the Sahara is well known. That country has repeatedly demonstrated flagrant bias, contrary to the efforts of the international community to resolve this dispute. For its part, the Kingdom of Morocco remains actively engaged to find a solution to this question with the support of the international community and under the aegis of the United Nations.

Mr. Sin Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I apologize on behalf of my delegation for taking the floor once again. My delegation considers that it has the obligation to reiterate its position with regard to the issue of Japan's crimes, since the Japanese delegation seems not to understand even the essence of its crimes.

Japan's crimes are not only issues of the past, but are also issues of the present. The recent rash acts and blind behaviour in which Japan has used every possible means and ways to grab Tok Islet, which is the sacred territory of Korea, and its flagrant violation of the human rights of Korean residents in Japan and the repression of their sovereign right to organize are typical examples.

Crimes perpetrated by Japan can neither be made to fade away with the passing of days nor be covered up, no matter how desperately Japan tries to do so. That is why the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea asserts that Japan has no right to become a permanent member of the Security Council, which has the mission of maintaining international peace and security.

Japan must, first of all, completely liquidate its crimes of the past, if it truly longs to get inspire the trust of the international community. Japan's insincerity has reached such an extreme that even its allies have adopted resolutions urging Japan to liquidate its past crimes as soon as possible. Japan would be wise to think about and follow the examples shown by other countries in honestly resolving issues of the past, instead of trying to evade its responsibility.

With regard to the very irresponsible remark just made by the delegation of Japan, no, Tok Islet is fully part of the sovereign territory of Korea. There is no room for further consultation or talks or whatever form of dialogue there could be. Once again, I reiterate: Tok Islet is Korean territory.

That is why we say that Japan is causing instability in the North-East Asia region. Through this kind of very irresponsible statements by the Japanese delegation, we can easily see that. The more Japan tries to evade its responsibility, the more it will lose the trust of the international community.

Mr. Shin Boo-nam (Republic of Korea): I would like to exercise the second right of reply regarding the territorial issue raised by the Japanese delegate. I would like to reiterate the Korean Government's firm position that Tok Islet is not the object of either a diplomatic negotiation or a territorial dispute between two countries.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 9 and agenda item 111.

Agenda item 105

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/528)

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 6 of its report that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office

beginning on 1 January 2009: Ms. Aïcha Afifi (Morocco); Ms. Renata Archini (Italy); Mr. Vladimir Alekseevitch Iosifov (Russian Federation); Mr. Alejandro Torres Lépori (Argentina); Ms. Susan McLurg (United States of America).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint those persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/529)

The Acting President: In paragraph 4 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009: Mr. Vyacheslav Anatolievich Logutov (Russian Federation); Mr. Richard Moon (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); Mr. Hae-yun Park (Republic of Korea); Mr. Thomas Thomma (Germany); Mr. Courtney Williams (Jamaica); Mr. Wu Gang (China).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint these persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

(c) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/530)

The Acting President: The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 5 of its report that the General Assembly confirm the reappointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. Masakazu Arikawa (Japan), Mr. Madhav Dhar (India) and Mr. Nemir A. Kirdar (Iraq) as members of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009 and the appointment of Ms. Linah Mohohlo (Botswana), to fill the remainder of the term of Mr. Khaya Ngqula (South Africa), effective 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2009.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to confirm the reappointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. Masakazu Arikawa (Japan), Mr. Madhav Dhar (India) and Mr. Nemir A. Kirdar (Iraq) as members of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009 and the appointment of Ms. Linah Mohohlo (Botswana), to fill the remainder of the term of Mr. Khaya Ngqula (South Africa), effective 1 January 2009 and expiring on 31 December 2009?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: In paragraph 6 of the same report, the Fifth Committee also recommends that the General Assembly reappoint Mr. Ivan Pictet (Switzerland) as an ad hoc member for a one-year term beginning on 1 January 2009 and Mr. Simon Jiang (China) as an ad hoc member to replace Ms. Afsaneh Beschloss (Islamic Republic of Iran) commencing on 1 January 2009.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to reappoint Mr. Ivan Pictet (Switzerland) as an ad hoc member of the Investments Committee for a one-year term beginning on 1 January 2009 and Mr. Simon Jiang (China) as an ad hoc member to replace Ms. Afsaneh Beschloss (Islamic Republic of Iran) commencing on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

(d) Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/531)

The Acting President: In paragraph 4 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009: Mr. Fatih Bouayad-Agha (Algeria); Mr. Shamsher Chowdhury (Bangladesh); Mr. Vladimir Morozov (Russian Federation); Mr. Wang Xiaochu (China); Mr. El Hassane Zahid (Morocco).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint those persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

(f) Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/63/532)

The Acting President: In paragraph 4 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members or alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009: Mr. Gerhard Kűntzle (Germany); Mr. Andrei Vitalievitch Kovalenko (Russian Federation); Mr. Lovemore Mazemo (Zimbabwe); Mr. Muhammad Muhith (Bangladesh); Mr. Philip Richard Okanda Owade (Kenya); Ms. Valeria María González Posse (Argentina); Mr. Thomas Repasch (United States of America); Mr. Jun Yamada (Japan).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint those persons as members or alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2009?

It was so decided.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a) to (c) and (e) to (f) of agenda item 105?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 154 (*continued*)

Judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/63/548)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered this agenda item at its twenty-third plenary meeting on 9 October 2008.

In his letter, the Secretary-General refers to article 13 bis, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991, which reads:

> "In the event of a vacancy in the Chambers amongst the permanent judges elected or appointed in accordance with this article, after consultation with the Presidents of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General shall appoint a person meeting the qualifications of article 13 of the Statute, for the remainder of the term of office concerned."

In that regard, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that, on 30 June 2008, Judge Wolfgang Schomburg notified the Secretariat of his resignation from service with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, effective 18 November 2008. After consultations with the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and the President of the Security Council, the Secretary-General appointed Judge Christoph Flügge to replace Judge Schomburg.

In the absence of a relevant agenda item at its sixty-second session, the General Assembly could not take action on this issue. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the appointment of Judge Christoph Flügge to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for the remainder of the term of office of Judge Schomburg?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 154.

The President took the Chair.

Agenda item 110

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: I have been looking forward to this opportunity to take up the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly. We will now come face to face with concrete proposals that will enable us to reassert the Assembly's responsibilities as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations in the months ahead.

As members know, the democratization of the United Nations is the overarching priority of my presidency. I believe that we need to take radical steps to regain the authority of the General Assembly so that it can perform its duties as the most democratic organ of the United Nations.

We are certainly the most representative body of the international system, but I do not think we can say that we are the most democratic. Yes, each Member State has a vote in the Assembly, and that is what makes it unique within the international community. However, until the Assembly restores the authority assigned to it under the Charter, our democracy will fall short of exercising the real leadership that the world requires at this juncture in its history. It is imperative to re-establish the balance among the principal organs of our Organization and to ensure that the powers assigned to each in the Charter are fully respected. That is what I see as the ultimate goal of this process of revitalization.

My predecessor wisely established the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly to, inter alia, identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly. For the first time, the report before us (A/62/952) provides us with an overview of the recommendations and changes that have been made over the past 16 years of reform efforts.

We thank the Working Group for presenting us with its comprehensive review, and we must now implement the recommendations that will improve our working methods and our efficiency. The report identifies changes that are already helping us to re-establish the Assembly's credibility as the chief deliberative and policymaking body, and we need to act on those resolutions not yet implemented that will further streamline our work.

Before we consider the report prepared by the Ad Hoc Working Group, I would like to make some brief comments that will help us move forward to implement specific changes that, I believe, we should and can institute during this sixty-third session. I think that we have clear opportunities to improve the exchanges between the General Assembly and other United Nations organs and the broader United Nations specialized agencies that make up the United Nations system.

It has been recommended that the Assembly President meet on a monthly basis with the President of the Security Council to review its workplan and to consult on specific issues of particular concern. I would suggest that such meetings take place with the entire Assembly to permit more direct and dynamic exchanges between the two organs. The same could be done on a periodic basis with the President of the Economic and Social Council, thus providing opportunities to create more synergy between the Assembly and that Council.

I have perceived a sense of isolation in the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in my contacts with colleagues from other duty stations. While they come together with the Secretary-General once a year, we would all benefit from briefings to the Assembly itself and could undoubtedly contribute to the important work that they are doing. Let us find opportunities to host those exchanges so that they can be both informal and candid and can provide real added value to our work.

We all agree that the procedures for selecting the Secretary-General should be formalized. The Secretariat is an enormously important organ of the United Nations, and the Secretary-General should be selected in a transparent and inclusive process. Let us resolve to put into place procedures for the timely review of candidates, well before the next election. There are many resolutions cited in the report that will help us to put together procedures and to define important parameters for the position, including term length and possible re-election.

I am also inspired by the enthusiastic response to the exchange between the General Assembly and the panel of experts that we convened a few weeks ago. Those consultations on the international financial crisis brought all of us together to examine collaboratively both the urgency and magnitude of the problem and practical steps to deal with them, resulting in the establishment of a high-level commission that will continue to provide guidance and innovative ideas regarding how the Assembly can contribute to the new international financial architecture that, as all of us recognize, is needed.

The Assembly has demonstrated new agility in taking up urgent issues before us by drawing on the enormous reserves of expertise that exist within the United Nations system, as well as drawing on experts in the field. No country alone can convene such diverse experts from around the world in such a timely manner. We must continue to seize these moments and organize meaningful and action-oriented responses.

Therefore, let us be practical in our response to this valuable report and identify opportunities for immediate action. That will be the real measure of our

vitality and of our determination to provide the dynamic leadership expected of us.

Mr. Delacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I should like at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on the revitalization of the General Assembly. The European Union would also like to express its gratitude to the former Assembly President, His Excellency Mr. Srgjan Kerim, for his efforts during the sixty-second session to revitalize the Assembly, in particular by convening thematic debates on issues relevant to Member States. The European Union is confident that you, Mr. President, will continue that process.

The European Union would also like to express its gratitude to the two co-Chairs, Ambassador Eladio Loizaga, Permanent Representative of Paraguay, and Ambassador Andrzej Towpik, Permanent Representative of Poland, for the work accomplished within the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly.

The European Union has heard well the appeal of the President of the General Assembly for democratization of the United Nations and the place that the General Assembly should take in that regard. As members are aware, the European Union is firmly committed to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations given central role in that framework. Our objective is to strive to establish an effective multilateral system based on international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Strengthening the United Nations is a priority for Europe. That is why the European Union remains convinced that, at this stage, it is essential to move swiftly ahead with the reforms of the United Nations system decided upon at the 2005 World Summit. We remain resolved to participate actively in a genuine constructive dialogue with all United Nations Members to push those efforts forward.

The process of reforming United Nations operational activities remains a priority for the European Union. Efforts to strengthen the capacity of United Nations bodies to unite their development activities should continue. We must also take into account cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, sustainable development and human rights. The European Union supports the pragmatic from-the-ground-up approach that has been proposed, and we are convinced that the lessons learned in the pilot countries should play a significant role in comprehensive reform efforts undertaken at the central level.

The European Union is aware of the need to continue to reform the principal United Nations organs, in particular the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, in order to improve the representativity, transparency and effectiveness of the system.

The authority and functioning of the General Assembly must be in keeping with the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions. The European Union stresses the importance of the full implementation of resolutions related to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. In that regard, we have noted with satisfaction the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly and welcome the adoption of resolution 62/276.

We are counting on the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly — which is open to all Member States — to consider ways to strengthen the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, in particular on the basis of its relevant resolutions. More specifically, the European Union wishes to stress the following points.

First, the European Union believes that the best way to effectively revitalize the General Assembly is to ensure the implementation of the resolutions already adopted on the issue. In that regard, we must have a tool at our disposal to ensure follow-up on their implementation.

Secondly, in the same spirit, the Secretary-General could, in his annual report on the work of the Organization, present precise information concerning the mandates adopted by the General Assembly during the year, including information on the status of their implementation.

Thirdly, with regard to the functioning of the Assembly's daily work, we believe that further consideration should be given to the potential offered by modern technologies. The voting system could be duly improved in the context of the provisions — including the financial provisions — of the capital master plan.

Fourthly, in the same spirit, the European Union deplores the late issuance of many reports, which has a negative impact on the functioning of intergovernmental bodies. In that context, we recall the need for timely dissemination of the necessary documentation in all official United Nations languages. Once and for all, we must put an end to the recent trend; the quality and timeliness of our debates depend on it. We are counting on you, Mr. President, with the assistance of the Secretariat, to ensure strict compliance with the resolutions and rules governing the use of languages in various United Nations organs and forums, rule 51 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure and the provisions of resolution 61/266, on multilingualism.

Fifthly, while recognizing that further progress is needed, the European Union welcomes the qualitative improvements made in the annual report of the Security Council.

Sixthly, and finally, with regard to another issue currently being discussed, the European Union recalls the importance of implementing the relevant Charter Article and resolutions concerning the General Assembly in the process of selecting the Secretary-General.

The European Union will be fully involved in the efforts of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during this sixty-third session. We will continue to contribute in a constructive and pragmatic manner to the efforts to improve the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, I would like to express the gratitude of the members of NAM to Their Excellencies Ambassador Eladio Loizaga of Paraguay and Ambassador Andrzej Towpik of Poland for their excellent work in co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-second session.

In adopting resolution 62/276, the General Assembly decided to continue to assess, during the current session, the extent to which all its previous resolutions and decisions related to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly have been implemented. At the outset of this debate, the NAM would like to recall the validity and relevance of its principled positions regarding this matter.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which must be guided by the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability and achieved through consultations, is a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations and that its objectives should continue to strengthen the role and position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

The Non-Aligned Movement also emphasizes that the improvement of the General Assembly's procedural and working methods is only a first step towards more substantive improvements aimed at restoring and enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly, including in the maintenance of international peace and security as stipulated in Articles 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 35 of the Charter.

In this respect, the NAM welcomes the decision by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, to put the current meeting under the theme of the democratization of the United Nations, which remains intimately linked to the revitalization of the Assembly.

The NAM further welcomes the proposal of the President to hold a high-level dialogue on the democratization of the United Nations, including a meeting that would focus on the revitalization and empowerment of the Assembly.

The NAM, while expressing its readiness to continue to support all ongoing efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the Assembly, wishes to state that it will oppose any approach that seeks to undermine or minimize the achievements of the General Assembly, diminish its current role and functioning or raise questions about its relevance and credibility, or could lead to such results. In this respect, the NAM notes with growing concern continuous attempts on the part of the Security Council to

encroach upon issues that clearly fall within the functions and powers of other principal organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies. The Non-Aligned Movement underscores, once again, the need to fully respect the functions and powers of the principal organs, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among those organs in accordance with the Charter.

The Non-Aligned Movement has previously expressed its satisfaction regarding the central role played by the General Assembly both during the preparatory process of the 2005 World Summit and during the follow-up phase, which allowed it to reassert many of its prerogatives. In the light of the gravity of the current financial and economic crisis, the NAM is of the view that the Assembly has an equally important role to play in bringing together all the members of the international community to address this issue. On the other hand, members of the NAM remain convinced that genuine revitalization of the work of the General Assembly cannot afford to avoid addressing the main issue of the lack of adequate resources made available to the Organization as a whole.

Finally, the Non-Aligned Movement looks forward to the establishment of the ad hoc working group on General Assembly revitalization called for by resolution 62/276 and expresses its readiness to participate, along those lines, in its work in order to arrive at a detailed and fair assessment of the status of the implementation of all previous decisions.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to greet you, Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation and to underline the efficient manner in which you are guiding our work. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Ambassador from Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The General Assembly is the only universal body of the United Nations and the principal deliberative, policymaking and participative body. Its mandate is comprehensive. It includes matters relative to disarmament and the maintenance of peace and security, as well as economic, social, political and cooperation matters. In this context, my delegation assigns great importance to the process of revitalization of the General Assembly and considers it an essential component of the reform and strengthening of the Organization.

I would like to express Colombia's appreciation to the Ambassadors of Paraguay and Poland for their work as facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. Thanks to their practical approach, today we have a chart that reflects the status of implementation of the operative provisions contained in the resolutions on the revitalization of the Assembly, which should serve as a model to be included in future reports on the matter. Similarly, my delegation is pleased by the manner in which the report of the Working Group (A/62/952) reflects the diversity of the discussions on this issue during the previous session. Its contributions are an important starting point for the continued consideration of this matter.

We believe that in order to achieve positive and tangible results we must maintain the pragmatic and realistic vision exhibited by the facilitators, as indicated by the President of the Assembly some moments ago. Our work must always have as its objective the full exercise of the authority of the Assembly, as well as achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency in its work.

At the same time, my delegation notes with regret that there is not a greater willingness on the part of Member States to achieve tangible and substantive results in the process of revitalization of the Assembly. We must recognize that, in spite of the specific progress achieved in recent years, the general balance on revitalization remains precarious. We note with concern that year after year we repeat the same topics in our statements without these resulting in effective Assembly reform.

Considering that this is a topic whose principal objective is to strengthen this central body of our Organization, we would like to see a list of speakers for this debate as extensive as that for the joint debate on the report of the Security Council and the expansion of its membership. Similarly, attendance at the meetings of the Working Group on General Assembly revitalization unfortunately pales in comparison with that of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform. The imbalance in the will and interest demonstrated for both processes speaks for itself.

In relation to the recommendations included in the report of the Working Group, I should like to refer

to two issues in particular. Regarding the use of new technologies in the voting system of the General Assembly, my delegation notes with interest the recommendations presented in the report and supports deeper examination of the matter in order to achieve tangible results. We believe it is important for the Assembly to have the necessary means to process with greater efficiency the counting of ballots in elections held in this body.

Likewise, we support the idea of creating a working document that collects those provisions on revitalization that are relevant to the daily work of the Organization. Such a document could serve as an important guide for our work within the General Assembly and as a reminder of the need to fully implement those resolutions that have been adopted.

Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Colombia continues to view with concern the imbalance that exists in the relationship among the main bodies of the Organization and the appropriation of General Assembly topics by the Security Council. According to the Charter of the United Nations, the Assembly should have a more active role in the consideration of matters related to peace and security. Similarly, the examination of topics such as human rights and humanitarian law are of the unique and exclusive competence of the General Assembly.

The views expressed by Member States during the debate on the report of the Security Council reflect a certain frustration with the existing relationship between the Council and the General Assembly and with current communication between these bodies. As expressed by my delegation last Tuesday, we recognize the efforts carried out to improve communication between the Council and the rest of the membership. However, this improvement in communication should not depend on the good will of whichever delegation happens to hold the Council presidency but should be institutionalized in the working methods of the Council.

Colombia views positively the extension of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group in order to continue the consideration of the revitalization of the General Assembly. We have made significant progress in identifying some of the areas on which we must focus our efforts. It is of great importance to take advantage of the progress achieved, so that during this session of the General Assembly we can realize tangible results in terms of revitalization.

Colombia firmly believes in the central role of the General Assembly as the principal organ of our Organization. My country reiterates its commitment to continue contributing to its revitalization and calls upon all Member State to show the necessary political will to achieve our objective. As the President of the Assembly stated, the full implementation of all resolutions related to revitalization is a necessity. My delegation will continue supporting all efforts aimed at reinvigorating the role of the Assembly, given the great challenges facing our Organization.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): First of all, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to thank you for convening this meeting to discuss one of the most important items on the General Assembly agenda. I would also like to thank Ambassador Eladio Loizaga of Paraguay and Ambassador Andrzej Towpik of Poland for their leadership in overseeing the Working Group during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by Ambassador Mourad Benmehidi of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Since 1991, when the item on General Assembly revitalization was first officially recognized and subsequently included in the agenda of the Assembly, untiring efforts have been made and various measures have been adopted by the General Assembly in many resolutions aimed at strengthening its authority and leadership so as to enable it to effectively play its role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In this connection, my delegation appreciates the work done over the past year by the Working Group, as can be seen from its report in document A/62/952 and the factual chart on the implementation of all relevant resolutions, both of which have been circulated to Member States. We believe these documents can serve as productive inputs for thorough discussion and fair assessment of the status of the implementation of those resolutions, which is vital to further progress in revitalization. We reiterate Viet Nam's commitment to work closely with other Member States for full implementation of resolution 62/276 of 15 September 2008 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Bearing in mind the ongoing nature of the process, we would like to emphasize the following points. First, as a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, revitalization of the work of the General Assembly should continue to aim at strengthening the central role and authority of the General Assembly in the entire United Nations system. In view of the increasingly complicated developments in many parts of today's world, special meetings held by the General Assembly involving high-level participation — such as those held since the opening of the sixty-third session on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, Africa's development needs, the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and, most recently, the dialogue on interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace — deserve commendation and need to be further promoted. If properly organized and conducted, such meetings can produce across-the-board assessment, objective analysis and visionary recommendations and can help pull together the resources badly needed for their implementation. In the same vein, we support further General Assembly discussions on current global issues in the fields of peace, security, development, humanitarian affairs and human rights and, in particular, on the "three-Fs crisis" — financial, food and fuel — which would take into account fully the interests and concerns of the membership and of developing countries in particular.

Secondly, my delegation shares the view expressed by many speakers that, in order to achieve tangible results, it is essential to implement those resolutions related to the revitalization of the General Assembly that have been adopted to date. To that end, we believe that the status of implementation should be evaluated, the reasons determining that status analysed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and lessons drawn in order to ensure the practicality and usefulness of recommendations made.

Thirdly, improving cooperation and coordination among the General Assembly and other principal organs of the United Nations, other international institutions and civil society, as well as among the Main Committees and subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly, remains urgent for ensuring the success of United Nations reform in general and of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly in particular. With that in mind, while we welcome the regular briefings by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the periodic meetings between the General Assembly President and the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, my delegation would like to see these practices improved in quality and made more interactive in nature with a view to ensuring their substantiality and effectiveness, thus contributing to the better performance of the Organization.

We share the view of the President of the General Assembly regarding the intertwined challenges and opportunities the world is facing today. In this context, revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is all the more important and imperative than ever before, for, in turn, this process will help enhance United Nations reform so as to fulfil the Organization's role in leading the international community to successfully address the challenges and make full use of the opportunities at hand. In this undertaking, my delegation assures the Assembly, the Ad Hoc Working Group, which we hope will be set up in due time, and its Chairs, of our full support and cooperation.

Mrs. Vargas Walter (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In that regard I would like to add some comments on this important item. Firstly, my delegation would like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly for the presentation of the report and also for the efforts in the preparation of the inventory/chart of all relevant resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly. We consider the chart a useful tool for assessing the status of the implementation of those resolutions.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a decisive element in a genuine reform of the United Nations. We cannot hope for an Organization that takes democratic and effective action if the General Assembly does not fully exercise the power bestowed upon it by the Charter. The revitalization should reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as is well recognized by the Charter and the Millennium Declaration.

It is important that, when that process concludes, the Assembly strengthens its independence as an organ for comprehensive debate, where the freedom of its

Member States to address issues of interest to them is not restricted or limited.

We underscore the need to achieve an adequate balance among the principal organs of the United Nations in accordance with the Charter. It is also important that Member States of the Organization put an end to any attempt to transfer General Assembly agenda items to the purview of the Security Council. The Security Council must strictly abide by the provisions of the Charter, as well as all resolutions of the General Assembly, which is the principal organ of the Organization, and it must stop meddling in questions that are clearly within the functions and powers of other United Nations principal organs and their subsidiary bodies.

My delegation would like to state its concern at the establishment of rules and definitions by the Security Council that exceed its competence, disregarding the fact that, in accordance with Article 13 of the Charter, the General Assembly has the primary responsibility for the progressive development of international law and its codification.

My delegation believes that, in order to avoid irregularities that set precedents within the United Nations system, the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council must hold regular discussions and coordinate among themselves with regard to the agendas and workplans of their respective principal organs, so as to establish increased coherence and complementariness among them, in a manner mutually reinforcing and respectful of the mandates of each one of them while avoiding duplication of work and encroachment on their respective assigned roles.

Cuba reiterates the fact that that the revitalization of the Assembly must not be a merely bureaucratic process. All States must implement General Assembly resolutions, and multilateralism must not be used by a few powerful countries only to serve their own interests. At the same time, we further hope that, as a result of such process, the interaction between the Secretariat and the General Assembly will be strengthened, so that the former can respond in a more effective manner to mandates set by Member States.

My delegation would like to conclude its statement by reiterating that the Assembly may count on the Cuban delegation's full willingness to continue its constructive participation in the work in progress on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Mansour (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First, I wish to congratulate the President of the Assembly on his manner of conducting this debate, which is of special importance to Member States. I also wish to congratulate the Ambassadors of Poland and Paraguay for their considerable efforts during the sixty-second session of the Assembly as facilitators for the agenda item on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Once again this year, the Assembly continues to debate the item on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. It must be recalled that this is a process that requires the commitment of all Member States, whatever their various approaches may be. To that end, the heads of State and Government reaffirmed, at the World Summit of September 2005, the central role played by the General Assembly as the principal deliberative organ of the United Nations responsible for setting policy in the Organization. We associate ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on the agenda item for today's plenary meeting. Nonetheless, I wish, here, to make the following comments.

My delegation believes that strengthening the role and the authority of the General Assembly requires, inter alia, the inclusion on its agenda of clearly topical issues that are of crucial importance both for the Organization and for the international community. It also requires planning of major thematic debates, so that Member States can agree on the principal substantive and topical questions.

Accordingly, we welcome the high quality of the thematic debates organized at previous sessions, a practice certain to continue under the current presidency. At the same time, we believe that the structure of those debates would gain by being modified in order to establish an interactive dialogue among Member States. The results of the debates should be taken into account when elaborating joint action in the United Nations.

Likewise, my delegation believes that strengthening the role and the authority of the General Assembly also requires recognition of its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed, while it is commonly acknowledged that Article 24 of the Charter confers the primary responsibility in that

area on the Security Council, that responsibility is not exclusive. The General Assembly should therefore take up more questions of international peace and security in conformity with the relevant Articles of the Charter.

The question of the reports that the Security Council is required to submit to plenary in keeping with the relevant Articles of the Charter should also continue to be discussed. Despite repeated appeals of Member States, the Security Council continues to submit annual reports that are factual in nature. The Council also should be able to submit analytical reports to the General Assembly, including ones on specific subjects.

Among other subjects, the question of the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations should also be discussed in depth. That discussion should be continued here, in the plenary, and also within the context of an approach based on cooperation and maintaining the balance and respecting the roles that the Charter confers on each of the organs.

I wish to make the following comments on the methods of work of the General Assembly. My Government is pleased to note that several steps to improve the working methods of the General Assembly have been implemented, in particular the use in recent years within the Main Committees of interactive debates, round tables and question and answer sessions. Those practices have enriched our deliberations and the decision-making process in the Main Committees. However, those efforts have fallen short of the expectations of Member States.

On another subject, we believe that several of the measures that have been proposed during debates on improving the working methods of the Assembly but have not yet been the subject of decisions should be re-examined. That, inter alia, applies to the proposal on the organization of the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly into two substantive periods per session, and to harmonize the best working practices of the Main Committees, which, must I recall, do vary.

Finally, I would like lend my delegation's support to the mandate set by the Assembly in September, when, in resolution 62/276, it decided to establish, at its sixty-third session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly to identify ways to enhance the role, authority and effectiveness of the General Assembly, inter alia, by building on relevant resolutions, and to submit a report thereon.

In this context, we believe that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is an ongoing process and that it needs to be pursued with determination.

Ms. Alzhanova (Kazakhstan): At the 2005 World Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively the full range of global challenges.

The United Nations General Assembly, which enjoys universal membership, is a unique intergovernmental body dealing with all critical issues around the globe. Strengthening this main organ requires political will and commitment on the part of all Member States. For almost twenty years, repetitive Assembly resolutions have focused on the need for further work on revitalizing the role and authority of the Assembly and strengthening its performance so it fully exercises the power that the United Nations Charter accords it. The final objective of this process is the General Assembly as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

Revitalization of the General Assembly is a core element of the whole United Nations reform process and is closely linked to the reform of other United Nations main bodies and their working methods. Yet, while the division of labour between three principle organs of the United Nations is reflected in the Charter, there is still debate on the issue of the disparity of power, which most likely derives from different interpretations of respective Charter provisions. While the cost of the lengthy debating process in the Assembly has been too high, the cost of overcoming the gap caused by misinterpretation is not. It requires just a strong political will in the part of Member States.

Kazakhstan notes certain progress in efforts to improve the efficiency of the General Assembly and its methods of work. In this regard, my delegation would like to commend the co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Paraguay and Poland, for their practical approach, which offers a detailed analysis of the status of implementation of existing resolutions and decisions on revitalization in the inventory chart. The chart is a very handy instrument for assessment that

consolidates main and relevant provisions of relevant resolutions, distributed among three main clusters. We commend the recommendation that the next report of the Secretary-General on the revitalization of the General Assembly use the chart devised by the co-Chairs as a model.

Browsing through the chart, one notices that most of the resolutions are either implemented or have ongoing status. For some, Member States are indicated as the implementing entity. Thus, together we all have to find the root causes of our poor performance and offer a constructive strategy for delivering the results.

It will not be possible to implement all the recommendations on the revitalization of the General Assembly without a competent and professional United Nations Secretariat. The Secretariat should be staffed with people who are the most suitable to perform the tasks at hand. In this regard, it is very important to ensure that the measures to strengthen the Secretariat achieve their main goal — to improve its efficiency.

As a positive shift, we would like to point out that the President of the General Assembly now meets periodically with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council with a view to ensuring increased cooperation, coordination and complementarity of the work programmes of those three principal organs.

Moreover, in recent years, the Presidents of the General Assembly have been proactive in addressing the most pressing global issues through thematic debates and informal plenary meetings. We expect that during the current session, the President will lead Member States towards the commencement of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, which is one of the most acute issues of the entire organizational reform process.

Other measures that have been implemented include the utilization by the Main Committees of the practice of interactive debates, panel discussions and question-and-answer sessions in order to enhance informal, in-depth discussions and to bring together experts from various fields. Those practices, inter alia, have enabled a dynamic and candid exchange with heads of departments and offices, representatives of the Secretary-General and special rapporteurs, thereby adding to deliberations and decision-making processes in the Main Committees. Yet we believe that this process should not replace the reforms that are aimed, first and foremost, at strengthening the authority of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its expectation that progress should be achieved on the revitalization process of the main United Nations body during its sixty-third session.

Mr. Afifi (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly is discussing today one of the most important items on its agenda. This item acquires its importance from the nature of the role and authority of the General Assembly of the United Nations as the chief deliberative and policymaking body and the most democratic organ of the Organization. It has these qualities not only because it comprises all Member States, but also because of its responsibility for supervising the balance of competence of the main and subsidiary organs, as well as for observing the implementation of their mandates and taking the necessary measures to fulfil them, if deemed necessary, as would be the case if one of those organs was to exceed its mandate and infringe on the responsibilities of another organ or not fulfil the purposes and principles set out in the United Nations Charter.

We would like to express our deep appreciation for the role of the Permanent Representatives of Paraguay and Poland during the past session and their efforts to coordinate our discussions on this important issue, which were crowned with a report that, as all previous speakers have mentioned, shows quality and efficiency (A/62/952). We would like to reaffirm our commitment to move towards implementing the recommendations contained therein.

Egypt would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, I would like to underscore a number of additional important points.

First, revitalization of the role of the General Assembly is an ongoing process based on the effective implementation of Assembly resolutions on this issue as well as on negotiations on additional steps aimed at consolidating what has been achieved, on the one hand, and at adding additional measures to revitalize the Assembly, on the other. This will be in accordance with agreements reached on this issue during the sixty-second session. However, these efforts will not succeed if we limit ourselves only to discussing ways to streamline the Assembly's programme of work and the

mandates of its Main Committees, or if we only seek to reduce the number of meetings or the reports submitted to it. A clear and objective plan is required, one based on an integrated strategy to enhance the Assembly's capacity to uphold its responsibilities and to respond effectively to international developments as well as to the needs of the peoples of the world.

Secondly, we elected the eighth Secretary-General of the Organization, by his appointment by the General Assembly by consensus upon recommendation of the Security Council.

The discussions that accompanied that process have highlighted the need to continue searching for ways to solidify the role of the General Assembly in the process of selecting a Secretary-General, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and in line with General Assembly resolutions 51/241 and 60/286. This must be accomplished by establishing a clear mechanism that would allow the General Assembly to evaluate the candidates, as well as present their names to the Security Council for examination.

In addition, tighter control is required over the standards that the Security Council uses in offering its recommendations to the General Assembly, especially by banning the use of the veto in selecting the Secretary-General in order to ensure equity and equality among the members of the Council on the one hand, as well as to establish a balance between the Security Council's authority in making such recommendations and the General Assembly's authority in appointing the recommended candidate on the other.

We must put an end to the Security Council's attempts, increasing day by day, to infringe upon the authority of the General Assembly. We must reaffirm the need to respect the separation of authority and functions among the main organs, as stipulated by the Charter; and we must tie that to the General Assembly's authority and specialization in supervising the way the Security Council undertakes its main responsibilities, which requires finding a remedy to the imbalance in the institutional relationship between the two organs. We must not view this issue as an attempt to undermine the competence of the Security Council in favour of the General Assembly, for each of these two organs has its own responsibilities that determine the purpose of their existence. Moreover, members of the Security Council are also members of the General Assembly, which means that activating each of the two main organs' roles and maintaining a balance between them is of common purpose and in the common interest of all Members of the Organization.

The need to revitalize the General Assembly also applies to its main role in issues pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 35 of the Charter. This role should not be limited purely to funding United Nations peacekeeping operations in areas of war and conflict, but it also should be embodied in the General Assembly's playing a real and tangible role in preventing conflict as well as in contributing to the process for settling conflicts.

It is also tied to the need to activate the General Assembly's treatment of cases where the Security Council is unable to undertake the responsibilities conferred on it by United Nations Member States for the maintenance of international peace and security, as a result of the use, misuse or the threat of use of the veto, in a manner that would reflect the Security Council's inability to understand the nature and dimensions of a number of important issues that threaten international stability. This could have a negative impact on the chances of reaching settlements on those issues and could prolong conflict, as well as increase human suffering.

In the same context, it is important, while implementing the reform plan, to activate the roles of the General Assembly and its relevant committees in order to implement the concept of "one vote for every State" and not place obstacles in the way of implementing issues mandated by the General Assembly. Also, we must not seek to dismiss the role of the General Assembly's supervisory functions — through the use of financial contributions, which are evaluated on the basis of the ability to pay — as a means to pressure the Secretariat and the Organization and affect its neutrality. Here, we must indicate the need to achieve a balance and rebuild confidence between developing and developed countries and the Secretariat on a more equitable basis, so the General Assembly can assume its responsibilities without any outside influences or pressures.

The General Assembly President's address at the opening meeting of the sixty-third session called for democratizing the United Nations based on several important considerations. It reaffirmed the call issued by world leaders in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

which stressed the need to commit to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter during the reform of the Organization. They also affirmed that the credibility of the Organization and its enhanced capacity to undertake its responsibilities are now more relevant to the ability of the General Assembly to exercise its institutional authority, as well as to entrench the balance between it and other organs.

We look forward to participating effectively in the high-level dialogue that the General Assembly President intends to hold on this issue, and we hope that it will witness a real effort to reach international agreement on several steps that aim to bolster the General Assembly's ability to undertake its responsibilities, even though the differences over this issue remain and are increasingly tense as a result of the desire of some to monopolize certain main and subsidiary organs by assuming these responsibilities without supervision in blatant contradiction to the purposes and principles of the Organization.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): We thank the President for convening this debate on the orientation of the body that best represents the aspirations of the global community. Let me reiterate our support for his efforts to enhance democracy within the larger United Nations Organization. We also express our gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Paraguay and Poland for their work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly and thank them for their report on the subject.

To address the international imbalance in the socio-economic fields and to help promote peace, the General Assembly, with the broadest membership of nations, should actively play its due role, in accordance with to the Charter. Indonesia will continue to play its part in the formulation of measures to strengthen this body.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

To energize the General Assembly, we must all aim to strengthen its role as the principal deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. In this regard, we need to continue to evaluate the status of the implementation of relevant resolutions. Additionally, we should identify new ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, including by building on previous Assembly resolutions.

The implementation of the relevant decisions and resolutions on revitalizing the General Assembly cannot be emphasized strongly enough. The international community reposes its trust in this esteemed organ and wants it to set norms and to act in a timely manner when addressing the world's ills. Greater and better results that positively impact people everywhere require all Assembly Members to implement their own calls and commitments, as contained in the documents adopted at this forum.

We support some form of mechanism at the Secretariat level to track the implementation of resolutions and keep the members of the General Assembly informed on the progress of implementation.

It is crucial for the General Assembly to continue to work actively in the areas of global development, peace and security. It must show leadership in policy debates and in developing norms for effectively dealing with existing and emerging challenges of collective concern, such as food, energy, climate change and the financial crisis.

My delegation appreciates the General Assembly President's convening of recent discussions on the global financial crisis. We hope that these will be followed up effectively, with special consideration for policy proposals aimed at countering the contagion of the crisis among developing regions.

To properly deal with the complicated and multifaceted international challenges of the twenty-first century, it is vital that relations among all principal United Nations organs are balanced and that there is cooperation and collaboration on the pertinent issues. It goes without saying that all United Nations entities must perform their roles in accordance with their respective mandates. But they should seek ways to create synergies for targeted purposes, in the spirit of the global partnership for development and peace.

In this context, it is essential that the Assembly also reflects on how the ongoing deliberations on Security Council reform, United Nations system-wide coherence and the mandate review can contribute to revitalizing the General Assembly.

The Assembly has an important role to also encourage and support the United Nations peace facilitation architecture and further efforts in

peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, at both Headquarters and field levels. The relatively nascent United Nations institutions, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, require strong support from the Assembly, as well as the entire United Nations system.

Without prejudice to the United Nations Charter Article 12 and in line with Article 11, paragraph 2, as well as General Assembly resolution 377 (V), the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, the Assembly should play its due role in facilitating the promotion of international peace and security.

Moving forward, we believe that the General Assembly's resolutions should be more streamlined and action-oriented. We also need to plan and organize our work in the different committees efficiently, with focused debates and outcomes. Furthermore, it is important that repetition and overlap of mandates are avoided. But we must ensure that the rationalization of work is not carried out at the expense of substantive matters.

Mr. Sumi (Japan): I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening today's meeting to discuss one of the most important items on the General Assembly agenda, namely, the revitalization of its work. Since the General Assembly is represented by all the Member States of the United Nations and is mandated to deal with all questions or matters within the scope of the United Nations Charter, revitalizing its work is the core of the United Nations reform process.

We are in the middle of useful, major thematic debates and panel discussions, and Japan appreciates this initiative. I am convinced that the outcome of the High-level event on the Millennium Development Goals held on 25 September would not have been so successful without the substantive contribution made by the General Assembly's thematic debate held last April entitled "Recognizing the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015". I also believe that the thematic debate on human security held in May was extremely fruitful, since it could promote understanding by the United Nations Member States of this very important concept relating to all the major activities conducted by the Organization, such as development, international peace and security and human rights. I strongly expect that the thematic debate on that occasion will enable the concept of human security to be incorporated further into the work of the Organization.

Another thematic debate held in April, entitled "Toward a Common Understanding on Management Reform", although a contribution to recognition of the current agenda by Member States, did, however, duplicate certain discussions already held in the Fifth Committee. In this regard, I would like to point out that, considering the limited resources of the United Nations, holding thematic debates requires a careful selection of themes and content on a case-by-case basis.

Secondly, the General Assembly must continue to deploy its utmost efforts in improving its work, discussions and decisions in order to make them more effective. It is more important than ever to further focus the work of the General Assembly on priority issues and to relay action-oriented messages by streamlining its agenda, reducing the volume of submitted documents and tackling its activities with improved effectiveness. In this context, I would particularly like to request the Secretariat to share, in advance and with transparency, full information regarding the agenda items directly covered by the plenary of the General Assembly, such as the schedule of discussions or actions on resolutions, with all the Member States through, for example, the *Journal*.

Japan also commends the regular meetings between the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly, as well as the practice whereby the Secretary-General provides the General Assembly with timely briefings and reports on various fields. We expect cooperation and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations to be strengthened, improved and encouraged as the revitalization process continues.

Furthermore, Japan welcomes the close relationship between the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission, as the General Assembly is the organ that provides overall guidance to the Peacebuilding Commission, and we appreciate the active discussions on that Commission's annual report to the General Assembly.

Finally, my delegation would like to stress the importance of the implementation of what has already been agreed upon. Meaningful revitalization of the General Assembly is possible through timely and fair implementation of the decisions and measures adopted.

In this regard, I appreciate every effort made by the Ad Hoc Working Group and the Secretariat. However, those efforts must be continued, and I believe that the ad hoc working group to be established at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly under resolution 62/276 should again focus on reviewing and monitoring the status of implementation of relevant resolutions.

In anticipation of forthcoming constructive discussion on this agenda item, my delegation reiterates its commitment to contributing to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Yaroshevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The question of the revitalization of the work of the United Nations General Assembly is a priority matter for Belarus. This item is a topical one for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well, and Belarus fully supports the NAM statement.

The outcome of the negotiating process to revitalize the work of the General Assembly at the previous session was the adoption of resolution 62/276. That resolution set the format for work on this issue at the sixty-third General Assembly session. It also endorsed the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, as well as the table that reflects the status of implementation of previously adopted resolutions.

This far-reaching result was achieved, inter alia, thanks to the efforts of the two co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly — namely, the Permanent Representative of Paraguay, Ambassador Eladio Loizaga, and the Permanent Representative of Poland, Ambassador Andrzej Towpik. We congratulate them on their creative and innovative approach. Their careful handling of delegations' proposals produced concrete practical results. The positive experience of the Ad Hoc Working Group acquired at the previous session should also be used in other negotiating processes that are taking place in the General Assembly.

Work to revitalize the activities of the General Assembly is not an end in itself. It should not be conducted as a mere nod to that annual tradition of doing something in that area. The main purpose of that work should be to create the conditions needed to enhance the effectiveness of the General Assembly and to align its mandate with current demands and the international situation.

The work done in recent years in the Ad Hoc Working Group is beginning to produce some initial results. Thematic debates are now regularly held on urgent international questions. The President of the General Assembly has the organizational capacity to form a strong team of professionals in his office. The leading media have reacted to the work of the General Assembly and the media are paying more attention now to events that are taking place in this very Hall.

However, much still remains to be done. For example, we propose that we work out a mechanism for the Secretariat to record the most interesting and constructive views and proposals made during the General Assembly's thematic debates. That recording of ideas should be followed by their analysis. Following that analysis, it would be a good idea to prepare recommendations on the possibility of implementing a delegation's proposals. Valuable ideas should not lie fallow, but should be seized and put into practice. Perhaps, Member States should take the appropriate decision to create such a mechanism to record such ideas.

There is a need to enhance the role of the General Assembly in resolving issues of international peace and security, particularly through expanding the possibility for States Members of the United Nations to convene special extraordinary sessions of the General Assembly.

The Belarus delegation believes that the model and the contents of the table that was drawn up at the sixty-second session on the status of implementation of the provisions of previously adopted resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly should serve as a point of departure for work on that issue at this current session of the General Assembly. Now, we can see better what the Secretariat and Member States need to work on jointly to ensure that the role of the General Assembly is in keeping with the lofty status of the United Nations accorded by its Charter. The table clearly shows those areas and decisions where progress has been absent or insignificant. It could serve as a guide for action for the United Nations Secretariat and Member States.

Even today, we must draw attention to the inadmissibility of significant, unjustified delay in the preparation of reports for Member States, and, in a number of cases, the reports were prepared, but were not sufficiently specific.

We also believe that it is high time to start thinking about finding ways to really involve the General Assembly in the process of selecting candidacies for the post of Head of the United Nations Secretariat. The fact that no provisions under the category Election of the Secretary-General have been fulfilled causes profound concern and requires due action to be taken. On the one hand, the interests of the General Assembly in electing the Secretary-General of the United Nations are a stumbling block in the Security Council-General Assembly context. On the other hand, however, satisfying those interests would be a real opportunity to improve the atmosphere of trust among the principal organs of the United Nations and to establish a genuinely equal cooperation among them on that matter.

The Belarus delegation intends to continue to make a constructive contribution to the negotiating process on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly of the United Nations and is prepared to propose ideas to enhance that work within the Working Group.

Ms. Yusof (Malaysia): It is a pleasure for Malaysia to participate in this debate on agenda item 110 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. It is even more of an honour for my delegation to participate in this year's debate under the stewardship of a General Assembly President who has made democratization of the United Nations a cornerstone of his presidency. We hope that in his efforts to democratize the United Nations, he will be able to imbue the General Assembly with renewed vigour and a sense of ownership in the issues being discussed.

Allow me to take this opportunity to align my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly has been a subject of plenary debate since 1991. However, only two short years ago, in adopting resolution 61/292, the General Assembly established the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly to address that issue. We are pleased to see that the Working Group has been hard at work in discharging its mandate this past year.

In that regard, the work of the co-Chairs of the Working Group, Ambassador Loizaga of Paraguay and Ambassador Towpik of Poland, must be given due recognition. By May 2008, the co-Chairs were able to circulate a matrix of all the relevant provisions on the revitalization of the General Assembly. Malaysia welcomes that step forward by the co-Chairs. That is the crystallization of what Malaysia and other NAM members have requested since the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. With the publication of the matrix, it became much easier to identify which relevant provisions have been implemented and which still remain to be so.

The matrix itself, however, is merely a procedural aspect to the ongoing deliberations in the revitalization of the General Assembly. Substantively, the General Assembly must reclaim its central role, including in the maintenance of peace and security, as laid down in Article 11 of the United Nations Charter. Relations between the other organs of the United Nations and the General Assembly must be strengthened, and the contents of meetings that take place between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should be disseminated to the wider United Nations membership. As the chief deliberative organ of the United Nations with universal membership, the General Assembly and Member States must be kept in the loop.

One of the matters that has always been a subject in the debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly is the issuance of documentation, or more specifically the late issuance of reports by the Secretariat. After going over this matter again and again, it is perhaps ironic that the Secretary-General's report on the revitalization of the General Assembly, contained in document A/62/608, was also issued late. The report was only made available to Member States on 10 January 2008. Malaysia agrees that the late issuance of any report should be accompanied by an explanation, citing specific reasons for the delay. That would help assist Member States in understanding the problem.

Malaysia has always welcomed the holding of thematic debates in the General Assembly. However, we believe that the decision to hold those thematic debates must be done in concurrence with the general membership of the Assembly. That would allow Member States the opportunity to prioritize the

thematic debates to be held throughout the year. We understand that all subjects should be equally important, but also that there exist certain priorities when resources are finite.

Thematic debates and high-level segments must also be action-oriented in order to ensure that optimum benefit is derived from the holding of those debates and segments. A lot of effort, publicity and resources go into the holding of those thematic debates and high-level segments. It is only fitting, therefore, that those debates end with some form of outcome or proposal.

Thematic debates, panel discussions and high-level segments are the General Assembly's way of ensuring that it maintains its finger on the pulse of today's fast-paced world. Malaysia welcomes the recent initiative of holding an interactive panel discussion on the global financial crisis. The timing could never have been better.

In conclusion, Malaysia looks forward to working constructively within the Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly at this sixty-third session. Malaysia believes that there is great potential in this Working Group and is confident that the Group's discussions will further contribute to the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly as a whole.

Mr. Bhandari (Nepal): At the outset, the delegation of Nepal would like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly for their diligent work on the preparation of the report (A/62/952). My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf the Non-Aligned Movement.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is the highest organ embracing the acclaimed values of universal democratic representation and the sovereign equality of nations.

The President of the General Assembly has rightly highlighted the importance of the democratization of the United Nations. That should start with the revitalization of the General Assembly so as to allow it to play its role as the principal organ of the United Nations.

First, we need to strengthen the Office of the President of the General Assembly and its coordination with the heads of the other organs, the Main Committee Bureaux and the Secretariat.

Secondly, we need to protect the jurisdiction of the legislative authority of the General Assembly by allowing it to proactively adopt legislation, putting an end to the current practice whereby the Security Council adopts resolutions of a legislative nature.

Thirdly, the deliberative authority of the General Assembly should be strengthened, bringing in more frequent discussions on issues of pressing concern to the membership. The General Assembly should play a more proactive role in finding solutions to the world's emerging crises, such as climate change, the food crisis and the global financial crisis. The General Assembly should also focus its efforts on the challenges of development, such as in the implementation of internationally agreed goals, especially in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small States and countries emerging from conflict. With regard to all those issues, the General Assembly should aim to produce result-oriented outcomes, rather than serving as a mere deliberative talk shop.

Fourthly, we should be making more efficient use of the budget-making authority of the General Assembly as a step towards revitalizing that body. We need to strengthen the budgetary authority of the General Assembly, especially its Fifth Committee, over the functions and activities of all the organs of the United Nations.

We welcome the practice of informal briefings by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, which enhances transparency and accountability within the United Nations system. It would be more useful to have such briefings at regular intervals, such as once a month.

It is imperative for us to strengthen the capacity of the General Assembly to implement its resolutions. At the same time, we should not overburden the General Assembly with repetitive and obsolete mandates.

The image and authority of the General Assembly reflects upon the image of the United Nations. If we fail to revitalize this most important organ, our Organization will not serve the purpose it was created for. Therefore, we must strive to make the General Assembly more proactive, stronger and more efficient.

On behalf of the delegation of Nepal, I would like to pledge our strong support for the continuous revitalization of the General Assembly so as to make it capable of taking on the numerous challenges we are facing today, with a view to enabling it to fulfil the objectives of the United Nations, as per its Charter.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express our appreciation to the presidency for the way in which it has carried out the work of this General Assembly and for addressing one of the most important issues on the United Nations agenda.

May I also express our gratitude for the work done by the facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly, Ambassador Eladio Loizaga, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Paraguay, and Ambassador Andrzej Towpik, Permanent Representative of Poland.

We also explicitly associate ourselves with the statement of the Ambassador of Algeria, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is today a fundamental element not only of the reform process of the United Nations system, but also of the process of adjustments and changes demanded by people throughout the world, made urgent by the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Second World War and manifested, in all its poignancy, in the financial crisis that is affecting the world today.

We find ourselves at a historic time, when the General Assembly, the principal deliberative, standard-setting and representative organ of the United Nations and the sole multilateral, universal intergovernmental forum, must at last show leadership on today's global issues. Thus, we believe that the revitalization of the General Assembly is a task that cannot be delayed.

Revitalizing the General Assembly means its strengthening as a special forum to promote dialogue and cooperation in the search for solutions to problems affecting peace and the social and economic development of peoples. The revitalization must provide for full respect of the powers and functions of this highest forum, as set forth in the Charter, with strengthened coordination of its work, particularly with the Security Council.

We also believe that revitalizing the General Assembly must be geared to ensuring that the United Nations can respond effectively and legitimately in matters concerning the promotion of peace. But the Assembly should also address the economic, social and environmental issues affecting the poor of the world, given the consequences for world security and stability and the horribly unjust inequalities prevailing in the world, in particular in developing countries.

The process of revitalizing the General Assembly is contingent on the political will of member States. The process must be based on the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability by means of open and participative consultations. We deeply believe that the process of strengthening and reforming the Assembly will be possible only if the principles and purposes of the Charter and the resolutions of the Assembly are fully respected by all States, without exception, regardless of the role they play today on the international scene in building a multipolar world. There must therefore be no first-class and second-class countries. The legal equality of States and respect for sovereignty and self-determination must be the pillars of an Organization based on equity and fairness.

The President of the General Assembly can count on the support and contribution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the strengthening of the role of the Assembly and its revitalization, one of the unresolved issues facing humanity today. I also assure him that our delegation will actively participate in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, which, as he knows, is working in accordance with resolution 62/276.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to begin by associating itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation would like to reiterate its congratulations and gratitude for the excellent job done by the co-facilitators, Ambassador Eladio Loizaga, Permanent Representative of Paraguay, and Ambassador Andrzej Towpik, Permanent Representative of Poland. We acknowledge their leadership, the transparency with which they conducted the consultations and their efficient work in carrying out a careful inventory of the implementation of resolutions on this matter, through which we can now analyse the status of the mandates of the various resolutions. This process led to the adoption of resolution 62/276 by consensus, which

demonstrated the political will of our States to strengthen the General Assembly and re-establish its authority.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a central element in the genuine reform of the United Nations. It is of paramount importance to reassert the key role of the Assembly as the principle deliberative, normative, and policymaking organ and as the organ that is the most representative of the States Members of the Organization. Since a balance must be struck between the principle organs of the United Nations, Member States must strengthen the thematic agenda of the Assembly and ensure that the Security Council fulfils its objectives and mandates in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter.

Today's world demands that the General Assembly pronounce itself in a timely, informed and decisive manner on those matters that affect and concern all of us. The financial, food, energy and climate change crises require careful analysis, concerted responses, political commitments and guidelines for action. This is the role of the Assembly, and we therefore welcome the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene a discussion panel on the financial crisis and to create a group of experts providing Member States with detailed information, analysis and alternative ways out of the financial crisis.

We must also work on the three pillars recognized by heads of State in the 2005 World Summit Outcome: security, development and the environment. Thus, it must be recognized that all United Nations organs must work in a coordinated fashion on these matters. It is also important that the outcome of the deliberations and the commitments undertaken as a result of those deliberations receive public recognition and recognition by the international community as a whole. The promotion of the work carried out by our Organization must be made known and accepted not just by our Governments, but by all social actors and by public opinion in general.

It is therefore imperative that the mandate for revitalization include urgent measures to improve and strengthen interaction between the Secretariat and the General Assembly so that the implementation of mandates can be carried out effectively. It is urgent for us to work on improving the mechanisms of interaction, monitoring and accountability between the various organs of the system.

Ecuador also believes it necessary to define in greater detail the road map and results achieved at this session regarding the matter we are addressing today. My delegation believes that we are meeting at a special time, since the President of the Assembly has given high priority to the democratization of the United Nations.

The revitalization of the Assembly is the cornerstone of this process. It is therefore important to move resolutely forward and to continue on this path, which has proven itself to be open, inclusive and transparent. We now need to achieve more tangible results that improve the balance between the various organs of the system and efficiency in the policymaking and deliberative work of the General Assembly and in the implementation of the agreements and mandates of the Assembly.

In conclusion, Ecuador reiterates its ongoing readiness to support the actions of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly in order to achieve progress in this regard. The President of the Assembly can therefore rest assured of the support and active participation of my delegation.

Mr. Siva (India): India is happy to participate in the debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly. This is one of the most important issues on the agenda of the Assembly at its sixty-third session, as it addresses fundamental questions about the structure and functioning of the world order.

India would like to align itself with the statement on this issue made by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation would like to take note of the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly created pursuant to a decision of the Assembly at its sixty-first session. The Group has painstakingly catalogued decisions in this regard and divided them into three main clusters. These clusters deal with, first, working methods, documentation and agenda, inter alia; secondly, selection of the Secretary-General; and finally, the role and authority of the Assembly. This helps us obtain an overview of where the revitalization process stands.

A review of the situation reveals, to our regret although perhaps not to our surprise, that very limited

progress has been made on this issue since it was introduced into the agenda of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. My delegation acknowledges the importance of progress where it has taken place, particularly in those areas where practical results have been obtained. However, there is a limit to the extent to which discussions relating to time limits on speeches and provisions relating to modern technologies will revitalize the Assembly.

India's position on this issue is guided by its desire to have a more effective United Nations. India also wants an Organization that is more responsive to the priorities and aspirations of the Member States, particularly the developing countries, which constitute the vast majority of Member States.

India believes that the General Assembly will not be empowered merely by strengthening procedures. It will be empowered only if its position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is respected in letter and in spirit. This requires that the Assembly take the lead in setting the global agenda. The convening power of the United Nations must be used more decisively, particularly on economic issues. The Assembly must also restore the centrality of the United Nations in development matters. The thematic debates have been a step forward, as have been the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council. However, more needs to be done.

The benefits of involving the General Assembly in international economic governance have been made evident during the current financial crisis. A section of its membership drawn from the global South has consistently pointed out that the economic orthodoxies proposed by a group of nations have grave shortcomings. These fears, often voiced in this Assembly and its Committees, have been validated by recent events. Events have also underscored the importance of giving a representative body such as the Assembly a much greater say in shaping the international economic and financial architecture, particularly in the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Control over legislation, over materials and over men confers power. Within the United Nations system, it is the Security Council, with its opaque working methods and widely accepted need for reform, that controls certain vital legislation and senior manpower. While the Assembly has some influence through the Fifth Committee and the budgetary process, there is a fundamental disparity of authority between the Council and the Assembly.

One of the more egregious examples of how disparity manifests itself is through the process of selecting the Secretary-General. India's view is that the General Assembly, being the voice of the international community, must be given a greater say in the process of selection. Several mechanisms to put in place a more inclusive and transparent procedure for the appointment of the Secretary-General, in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter, have been proposed. Efforts in this direction are better undertaken when a selection process is not on the horizon or under way. This is an appropriate time.

In our view, the appointment of high-ranking United Nations officials at the level of Under-Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General should also be subject to scrutiny by the general body of the Member States as represented through the General Assembly. Thus, candidates for such senior positions should be required to be confirmed by the Assembly. This practice is observed in many countries and is consistent with the principles of democracy and representative governance.

The issue of preventing encroachment upon the mandate of the General Assembly and of making the Security Council more responsive to it must also be addressed. The Assembly's competence in areas such as the process of standard-setting and codification of international law must be scrupulously respected.

I would like to conclude by submitting that it is only the presence of political will that will revitalize and empower the General Assembly. It is only political will that will provide the Assembly with the tools and the mechanisms that will enable it to have a role in the making and implementation of international law and in the creation and maintenance of a just and equitable world order.

The revitalization of the General Assembly has been on its agenda for the past 18 years. India believes that there must be meaningful progress in the areas I have outlined to prevent this debate from becoming a sterile discussion.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): It is no coincidence that the joint debate on the report of the Security Council

and the reform of that organ has been almost immediately followed by the debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly. Linking them is a common thread: the unique role and authority of the Assembly and the need to keep it strong and relevant in its relation with other principal organs and with the international community as a whole. This has been one of the priorities of the current President of the General Assembly, even since before he took office, and my delegation welcomes his leadership in this endeavour.

Much has been said on the revitalization of the General Assembly and, in line with resolutions we have adopted, I will be brief.

There are several aspects to the matter, many of them of high political significance. Among them, I would single out the role of the General Assembly in the selection of the Secretary-General and the relationship between the Assembly and the Security Council. But today, I wish to mention one element that my delegation deems crucial: the role of this body itself in its revitalization.

To a large extent, it is up to the member States represented in this Hall to take the measures needed to maintain the vitality of the General Assembly. The Charter grants it full authority to consider whatever issue it sees fit, including those related to international peace and security, without prejudice to the functions and powers of the Security Council. We are masters of our agenda and of our political initiatives. We should use that authority and clout to preserve the Assembly as a central actor in the international system.

This is something we have been doing more and more often in recent years. The thematic and interactive debates and similar actions constitute a perfect example. They help to keep the General Assembly involved in the discussion of key global problems. More importantly, they contribute to generating global responses to such problems. This is the case, for example, with the debate organized by the President of the Assembly this past October on the current financial crisis.

We can also ensure the vitality of the General Assembly — and, depending on the issue, the Economic and Social Council — by exploring their functions as channels of communication between limited-composition initiatives and the larger international community. One good example, once again in the economic domain, is the financial crisis. The Assembly, with a political approach, and the Economic and Social Council, with a technical one, could help to articulate what is being discussed elsewhere in the international financial institutions and related forums and involve the broader membership of the United Nations. Each instance has its proper role to play, and we should be cognizant of their specificities, but they can certainly establish a dialogue and profit from that dialogue.

All this, and more, is within our power. It is a matter of us having the will to take up issues and articulate initiatives. The General Assembly is unique, as it brings together the whole of the international community. We, the member States, should be diligent and sometimes bold enough to use it to promote the realization of the goals enshrined in the Charter and agreed to in numerous instruments. Every time the Assembly acts, we become more likely to make a difference on the ground, even if indirectly.

We should not shy away from negotiating the required decisions to make the United Nations and its organs more legitimate, democratic and representative. In so doing, we will be working to allay the threats to life on the planet and improve the well-being of our peoples.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 110.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.05 p.m.