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Tuesday, 12 December 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa . . . . . (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sow (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 9 and 111 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/61/2)

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

Mr. Towpik (Poland): I believe that this debate on reform of the Security Council is taking place in new and more favourable circumstances. Let me stress the following points in particular.

First, our efforts in reforming the United Nations have led to important results. The establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and the changes made in the Economic and Social Council all prove that progress is feasible, even on complex and sensitive issues. It is clearly an encouraging sign as concerns efforts related to Security Council reform.

Secondly, our thinking on Security Council reform has become deeper and, I would say, more mature. Several drafts of a solution have been presented. Their advantages and disadvantages have been extensively considered. The discussions have become more comprehensive. We have been debating not only the expansion of the membership of the Security Council but also possible changes in its working methods. Such changes are intended, inter alia, to expand the involvement of non-members and regional organizations in the work of the Council and to increase the transparency of its work and enhance its effectiveness.

Thirdly, during the previous session of the General Assembly we had good, rich and useful exchanges of views on this issue, in the framework of both the Open-ended Working Group on the question of Security Council reform and in the General Assembly. In particular, we noted with satisfaction the broad scope of the discussion and its constructive spirit, which dominated the July debate in the General Assembly.

The debate also seemed to indicate that the various proposals that had been previously put forward were not necessarily mutually incompatible. Those who presented drafts were encouraged to enter into consultations among themselves.

Fourthly, both during the July debate and in later declarations, a new approach to the problem emerged. It was suggested that, given both the complexity of the problem and the urgent need for progress, we could also explore the idea of intermediate or transitional steps which could gradually lead us to a resolution of the problem.

Thus in recent years we have seen a proliferation of various initiatives on the question of Security Council reform. Today, the dominant feeling seems rather to be the need to bring together those initiatives

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and to try to find a solution that may be acceptable to the majority of the Members of the United Nations.

In that spirit, I would like to offer a few comments relating to how my delegation sees the purpose of this debate and its possible follow-up.

First, we see this debate as the resumption of a dialogue on a difficult but unavoidable and important part of United Nations reform. At the beginning of the debate, the President of the Assembly stressed that "we should be prepared to look at this matter with fresh and open minds" (see A/61/PV.72). And, indeed, we hope that the debate will be resumed with goodwill and with the determination to find an acceptable solution.

We also believe that the reform of the Security Council should cover both its composition and its working methods. The two processes — Security Council expansion and the improvement and development of its methods of work — even if they are dealt with on separate tracks, are mutually complementary. Each can facilitate the finding of a solution for the other and help move forward the reform of the Security Council as a whole.

The changes in the methods of work of the Security Council should lead to closer cooperation on the part of the members of the Security Council with non-members and regional organizations, to greater transparency in its activities, and, in the end, to greater accountability on the part of Security Council members.

We welcomed the July results of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions (see S/2006/507). We also noted with appreciation the work and the draft of the so-called group of five small nations – the "Small Five" (S-5). Their ideas and proposals undoubtedly inspired the discussions in the Security Council Working Group and remain an important guideline for further endeavours in this direction.

When approaching the problem of the two categories of membership of the Council, we should first of all base ourselves on the philosophy underlying the provisions of the Charter relating to the Security Council. That philosophy, which is still valid, is that the presence in the Council of the major world actors and contributors to the United Nations and their cooperation are not only desirable but necessary if the Council is to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

At the same time, we believe that the membership of the Council should better reflect the broader membership of the whole United Nations and that it should represent all regions. This relates to both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of the Security Council. In this process of adjustment of the membership, no regional group should be a loser. This applies in particular to the Eastern European Group, whose membership has doubled in recent years.

The idea of reviewing — after a defined period of time — solutions that can be agreed upon now has already found a broad level of approval. The commitment to such a review will ensure that we do not create a kind of eternal structure. To the contrary, we envisage possible changes of circumstances and the possible adaptation of today's decisions to unpredictable future developments. The non-extension of the veto power to new members of the Council would guarantee that we do not create new obstacles on the way to such adaptation.

Allow me to conclude with the following observations. We strongly believe that, while dealing with an old problem, we are at a new and more promising stage of the debate. We have not yet overcome all of our difficulties, but a kind of middle ground in our thinking about the problem is gradually expanding, and new ideas have emerged which require our careful consideration. All of this allows us to take a step forward. The only question I have is, "After this discussion, what then?"

I believe that we should not lose the momentum that we have gained in this debate. Thus, it would be helpful if the President of the Assembly would encourage and organize further informal and limited discussion on this issue and request the Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on Security Council reform to undertake such consultations and, as promptly as possible, report back to the General Assembly.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I would like first and foremost to thank the President for having convened this joint debate and for her words of encouragement regarding Security Council reform expressed at the beginning of our deliberations. I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of Qatar, the current President of the Security Council, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 (A/61/2).

I will focus my statement on the two agenda items that are before us today. Under the report of the Security Council, I would like to highlight the issue of Timor-Leste. During the period covered by the report, Timor-Leste experienced a serious deterioration in its political and security situation. The international community reacted promptly, acknowledging that its sustained support was paramount to ensuring that Timor-Leste would continue to progress on the path of the consolidation of its sovereign institutions.

Portugal, along with other partners and with the support of the Security Council, responded to the request for emergency assistance in the security field formulated by the Timorese authorities. At the same time, the Secretary-General and the Security Council undertook a comprehensive assessment of the situation on the ground and a review of the international approach to Timor-Leste. This process led to a strengthened engagement by the United Nations, through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1704 (2006) and the establishment of the United Nations Mission Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Major tasks lie ahead in the fields of national reconciliation and dialogue, security sector reform, economic recovery and institution-building in key areas such as justice, rule of law and human rights. Priority attention must also be paid to the preparation of the forthcoming 2007 elections.

Portugal will continue to lend its full support and contribution to United Nations efforts. We welcome the recent appointment of Mr. Atul Khare as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and we look forward to the full deployment of UNMIT and to sustained support from the United Nations to Timor-Leste. Also, and as the major bilateral donor to Timor-Leste, Portugal will continue to pursue its cherished partnership with this young but promising country.

Allow me now to say a few words on Security Council reform. I would like to begin by commending the work and efforts of the two Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, Ambassador Paulette Bethel of the Bahamas and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands.

Since the 2005 World Summit, several important measures and decisions have been adopted in the reform process for our Organization. Much has been done, but one major issue remains to be addressed, namely, Security Council reform. We must not lose sight of the mandate entrusted to us by our leaders in September 2005 when they agreed to "support early reform of the Security Council — an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations" (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*).

Although momentum on this issue is not at its greatest, statements by delegations yesterday and today prove that belief in the need for Security Council reform is shared by almost all Members of this Assembly. And just last week, the Secretary-General urged us, once again, not to delay action on Security Council reform. This demonstrates that maintaining the status quo is not an option that would serve this Organization and that the more the reform process advances the more a sense of lack of accomplishment regarding Security Council reform becomes apparent.

The Portuguese positions on Security Council reform are on record and were reiterated before this Assembly in the debate that took place in July. At this stage, I would just like to recall one point, namely, that according to Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Organization's Members.

There are a number of consequences that derive from this assertion. As for membership, I would stress that the legitimate aspirations for accession to the Security Council by medium-sized and small countries, which comprise the vast majority of the United Nations membership, must be taken into account. Therefore, we remain wary of proposals that would make it almost impossible for medium-sized and small countries to serve in the Security Council.

We believe that, at this stage, we should reflect on how to proceed and move the issue forward. We need to engage on a path that would set the conditions for substantial progress during the current session of the General Assembly. As we all know, the task is difficult, but difficulty must not be an excuse to postpone issues that are vital for the credibility and efficiency of the Organization.

Portugal continues to believe that transparent and inclusive negotiations based on principles, values and criteria are susceptible to making Security Council

reform a reality. Strong political input and commitment by our leaders, incentives by the President of the Assembly and support from the Secretary-General would significantly raise the chances of a successful outcome. Portugal stands ready to contribute to such a process.

Mr. Chem (Cambodia): I would like to express my sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly for allowing me to speak on these two important agenda items, namely, "Report of the Security Council" and "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I would like to join other delegations in thanking Ambassador Nassir Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and President of the Security Council for this month, for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly as contained in document A/61/2.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered to the Assembly by Ambassador Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, Permanent Representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

With regard to United Nations reform, in recent years it has been clear that every State Member of this world body wants the United Nations to be reformed. However, when the opportunity was provided to effect reform, we encountered a deadlock on this very important issue because too much emphasis was placed on the reform of the Security Council alone.

In this regard, I believe we should learn from the present lesson and try to avoid repeating this mistake in the future. In other words, we should take a step-by-step approach by first tackling such minor problems as strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council to deal with issues of development, since such an approach is less controversial and since there is more inclination to support that type of reform. Next, we should consider revitalizing the General Assembly as the sole body comprised of representatives of all States Members of the United Nations. Afterwards, we could move forward to the reform of the Security Council. We have to start first with issues where consensus can be easily obtained, and then move on to the more difficult ones, thereby avoiding a complete stalemate in the United Nations reform process.

My words here are not a call for the reform of the Security Council to be neglected. We have faced difficulties to advance reform since our discussion in the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. Since then, there has been a lot of rhetoric on the subject of reform, but no real practical progress. It remains of great importance, however, that the complex issue of Security Council reform should be tackled in a comprehensive, transparent and balanced manner.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Once again, we meet to discuss two reports — one from the Security Council, reporting on its work for the year 2005-2006, and the other from the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council.

Before engaging those reports, allow me to thank Ambassador Al-Nasser of Qatar, President of the Security Council for the month of December, and Ambassadors Bethel of the Bahamas and Majoor of the Netherlands, who are the current co-facilitators for the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform.

My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Ambassador of Niger on behalf of the Group of African States.

My delegation has noted that, in both reports before us today, there is little new. The Security Council report continues to provide a factual recount of its activities during the year, despite the calls from the United Nations general membership for an analytical report.

We welcome the role of the Security Council in the resolution of conflicts in the world, particularly in Africa. The transition from conflict to peace in such countries as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi and, recently, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is testimony to what the Security Council can achieve when it assumes its responsibilities.

We remain concerned, however, that for more than 50 years, the Security Council has not succeeded in bringing about any positive change in the situation between Israel and Palestine. The failure of the Council to find a lasting solution to that crisis has denied hope to millions of Palestinian people. Even the Israelis

cannot be satisfied or even feel safe surrounded by conflict. If the Council continues to fail to give hope to the people of the Middle East, that can only lead to some engaging in violence and counter-violence, which does not help anyone or any party. We urge the Security Council to act decisively and to assume its Charter responsibility by working urgently to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. My delegation is among those that have always reiterated that peace between the Palestinians and Israelis will come when there are two States existing side by side and with secure and well-defined borders — the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

My delegation is also among those that were particularly perturbed by the Council's delay in addressing the military incursions into Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank in June and July of this year. While the Council was stalled in non-action, many innocent civilians lost their lives and critical infrastructure was destroyed. The Council must transcend the divisions and national interests among its members and speak with one voice on urgent situations, or face the erosion of its credibility as an organ mandated to maintain international peace and security on behalf of all of us.

On a promising note, we welcome the improvements reported in the working methods of the Security Council, contained in document S/2006/507. We acknowledge that this is an effort to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. While those are modest measures, they remain meaningful steps towards improving the work of the Council. The challenge is ensuring that those measures are implemented and made permanent. The General Assembly should hold the Council accountable for the implementation of the measures it recommended for itself. However, we will be more pleased when those reforms become permanent so that the Security Council can have predictable rules that can be followed by everyone.

Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter envisages situations in which the Security Council may utilize regional organizations by virtue of their proximity to and knowledge of a particular conflict. With the end of the cold war, regional organizations are increasingly becoming essential building blocks in the global security system. Regional organizations are better placed to deal with peace and security challenges in their respective regions. For the effective functioning of the United Nations system, it is important that the United Nations and its agencies be able to delegate responsibilities and provide the necessary resources, where required, in support of the efforts of regional organizations. South Africa strongly believes that the Security Council may soon have to define in clear terms how it can utilize regional organizations that are ready to assist in making the world a safer place.

The regional organizations are well placed to intervene sooner than the Security Council's processes of deliberation would allow. It is in that conviction that my delegation welcomes the current discussions for African Union-United Nations cooperation in Darfur, and we urge the parties to expeditiously explore that possibility so as to facilitate the alleviation of the suffering of the people of Darfur.

The United Nations Charter has placed significant responsibility in the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. That responsibility gives the Council a far-reaching impact on the lives of many people in the world. That therefore gives urgency to the efforts to expand and transform the Security Council.

The Open-ended Working Group was established because Member States recognized the need to reform the Council. However, since its establishment, the Working Group has remained deadlocked, particularly on the vital issue of enlarging the Security Council in the permanent and non-permanent categories. It has met continuously for more than a decade without producing any concrete recommendations on the way forward. In other words, the Working Group has become a forum for endless debate.

Thus, when the heads of State and Government met at a Summit held in New York last year and took a decision to intensify the efforts to resolve that issue as part of the overall reform of the United Nations, they were aware of the futile discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. By requesting the General Assembly to find common ground on that matter, the Summit recognized that the Working Group had outlived its usefulness and that a new reality had to come into being.

My delegation believes that what is now needed in place of the discredited Open-ended Working Group is a mechanism to negotiate and find a way to bridge the differences on the enlargement of Security Council. We as Member States have the responsibility to ensure

that the Security Council remains the universal repository of our efforts in the maintenance of peace and security by taking that bold step to reform it. The time has come to arrest the erosion of the Council's credibility and to seek agreement on the composition and working methods of a reformed Council. My delegation believes that the reform of the Security Council is possible. All we need is for Member States to engage in serious negotiations about creating a Council that will serve us all in the context of the new geopolitical realities. We have to stop pretending that the status quo is acceptable to everyone. That is the least that people in all regions of the world expect us to do at this sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the President of the General Assembly for the initiative to convene this meeting to consider in a joint debate the report of the Security Council (A/61/2) and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

El Salvador notes with concern the progressive deterioration in international peace and security and the emergence of new and increasingly complex potential sources of conflict in various parts of the world. That reaffirms the urgent need to adapt the multilateral bodies responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security to the current multipolar reality.

Since the 2005 World Summit, the international community has focused its debates on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council on two possible models for Council reform. Those models have also been the subject of countless discussions and negotiations, but neither of them has prevailed thus far.

That situation, however, does not diminish the value of the opportunities that have arisen during the international community's interaction to consider and promote these models. New ideas have emerged and elements for consideration have been consolidated regarding pragmatic options. Nevertheless, we need to recognize the limits of such interaction, because at this point the arguments of both sides have been exhausted. That shows the urgent need to promote comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make it open, democratic and transparent in the eyes of all Member States, also taking into account its working methods.

El Salvador believes that the incoming Secretary-General will have the enormous task of leading a new cycle of debates on comprehensive Security Council reform from a more pragmatic perspective, addressing those aspects that appear to have been recognized by all Member States as essential components that will enable us to achieve such reform.

El Salvador is convinced that comprehensive Security Council reform is a responsibility shared by all United Nations Members, not the privilege of a few. For that reason, it is worthwhile to recall a number of aspects of the debate begun at the 2005 World Summit, including the concept of permanent, rotating regional representation and the notion of permanent seats assigned to regional groups, whose representatives could be chosen by each of the existing regional groups in accordance with their own circumstances.

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, our country believes that there is a new impetus for regional and subregional interaction and integration, which forms the basis for new leadership options to face shared development challenges. Therefore, El Salvador is prepared to support those options at the appropriate time.

Furthermore, it is essential that we continue considering ways to improve the Security Council's working methods. That is a topic for ongoing debate, and it can undoubtedly make a very positive contribution to comprehensive Council reform.

In conclusion, let me express once again my Government's willingness to continue considering the proposals that can be presented on this subject, given the urgent need to reform the Security Council in a comprehensive manner in order to respond to the new challenges and complexities of this century.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for introducing the annual report of the Council (A/61/2). I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of France and to the Secretariat for their work in preparing their respective contributions.

The document before us encompasses a wide range of issues dealt with by the Security Council during the reporting period. There were many areas of focus, including Africa, the Middle East and

Afghanistan, which are covered in detail in the report. The serious and continuing threat to global peace and security posed by terrorism was another important agenda item, which has continued to be a primary focus of the Council.

Kazakhstan welcomes the Security Council's continuing efforts to address ongoing conflicts. We commend the efforts made by the Council to strengthen the role of the United Nations in creating a stable and secure environment. Kazakhstan believes that United Nations peacekeeping operations constitute one of the main elements of the maintenance of international peace and security. They are among the key instruments available to the Security Council in the settlement of conflicts and disputes.

The General Assembly and the Organization as a whole have recorded important achievements since the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1). They include the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission.

However, Kazakhstan shares the view that the failure to reform and expand the Security Council remains a glaring shortcoming. We fully recognize the importance of Council reform in overall reform of the United Nations, and we believe that such a sensitive issue should be addressed in a way that contributes to our common efforts to make the United Nations stronger, more efficient and better equipped to meet new challenges.

Our delegation shares the general view that the present composition of the Security Council does not sufficiently reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. We view with very great concern those instances that betray an inability on the part of the Council to respond in a timely and effective manner to emerging security concerns. In that regard, Kazakhstan supports reform based on principles that will ensure a more accurate reflection of global realities. We must enhance and revitalize the Security Council so that it can fully carry out its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

Acknowledging that reform must make the Security Council more representative and effective and more accountable to the wider United Nations membership, Kazakhstan has repeatedly voiced its continued support for expanding the Security Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent seats. We are convinced that enlargement of the Security Council should be carried out in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical representation, taking into account the contributions of the States concerned to the development of the world economy and global security.

Kazakhstan attaches significant importance to the issues related to the working methods and practices of the Security Council. Our delegation fully supports the view that the Council should continue to adapt its working methods in order to make its work more transparent and more democratic, in a way that can better serve the interests of the entire membership of the Organization. In that context, we would like to emphasize the efforts made by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. Their proposals on the Security Council’s working methods deserve our careful examination.

We also welcome the work being done by the Council’s Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which includes efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council’s work as well as to bring about stronger interaction and dialogue with the membership of the United Nations.

My delegation appeals to all Member States to work with great determination to make progress on the reform of the Security Council. We are convinced that a reformed Security Council that reflects the new political and economic realities of the world will continue to play an effective role as the principal United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me to express our appreciation to Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and President of the Security Council for this month, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/61/2).

Despite the statistical and factual nature of the Security Council’s reports to the General Assembly, submitted in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter, they provide Member States with useful and valid information on the volume and variety of the international peace and security issues that the Council deals with. It acts on behalf of the entire

membership — hence the legitimacy of the Council's international resolutions.

Iraq inherited a number of issues from the previous regime that are still under consideration by the Council and which require review. First and foremost is the question of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). On more than one occasion, the Government of Iraq has called for a review of the UNMOVIC mandate with a view to terminating it, because the conditions that led to the Commission's establishment are no longer in existence.

Furthermore, the Commission has had no activity in Iraq since the fall of the previous regime. The Foreign Minister of Iraq spoke on this matter before the Security Council last June (see S/PV.5463). Similarly, the President of Iraq referred to the matter in his statement before the General Assembly at the current session (see A/61/PV.16). Our Prime Minister also confirmed this situation in his letter dated 11 November 2006 to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/888*). In addition, the final document adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement at its meeting in Havana last September also called for terminating the mandate of the mission. Iraq is hopeful that the Security Council will review UNMOVIC's mandate with a view to terminating it as soon as possible.

When we consider the various other questions considered by the Security Council, whether they be related directly to international peace and security or to have conditions affecting international peace and security, it is obvious how necessary the reform process in the United Nations is.

The most important aspects of Security Council reform involve increasing the membership of the Council in both of its categories, and improving the Council's working methods.

Increasing the membership of the Council has become important in the light of the great changes witnessed by the world since the establishment of the United Nations. The world's population has more than tripled since the establishment of the Organization. New States have come onto the scene; they have had a great impact on international relations and the global balance of power, and they greatly contribute to the activities of the United Nations in every field. That is why the Council should be expanded in a manner that makes it more representative, more democratic, more accountable and more transparent.

Yet it seems to us that the consultations on the proposals to expand the Council, which led in the latter part of the sixtieth session to the preparation of three draft resolutions on an increase in the membership, have reached the saturation point. This state of affairs compels my delegation to give priority to improving the working methods of the Council, since that issue touches upon the interests of the majority of States Members of the United Nations, and since there has been no increase in the membership since the General Assembly and its Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council began discussing the issue about 15 years ago.

Although we have achieved some progress in discussing new ideas about reform and its direction, we have failed to take firm decisions on implementing these ideas. The reason for this failure might be that we have allowed the question of improving the working methods of the Security Council to be held hostage to an increase in its membership. Therefore, we think it is high time to achieve concrete success on improving the working methods, particularly since this could be achieved without amending the Charter of the United Nations.

Moreover, past improvements to the Council's working methods have not been reflected in the rules of procedure of the Security Council, which have remained provisional since the establishment of the United Nations and which have not been amended for more than 20 years.

Accordingly, my delegation considers that the ideas contained in the draft resolution (A/60/L.49) of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — deserve attention and study in order to give the Security Council reform process a strong impetus that could help us to take practical steps towards an increase in the membership.

I would like to focus on the following points related to improvement of the Council's working methods. First, we would hope to see expanded participation in Security Council meetings, including the participation of non-member States in closed consultations on issues relating to their fundamental interests. Article 31 of the Charter should be fully

implemented, which would give rise to a more positive reflection of the principle of openness and transparency.

Secondly, we would like to give regional organizations a role in maintaining international peace and security and in preventing conflict. Such an approach requires full implementation of Chapter VIII of the Charter. While that approach does not affect the commitments and responsibilities of the Council, it would nevertheless enhance respect for and the protection of human rights.

Thirdly, sanctions regimes should be based on a balance between their effectiveness and the negative effects that sanctions have on civilian populations. We must ensure that the purpose of imposing sanctions is to rectify the mistakes of the targeted regime and not to destroy a State or its social structure. Sanctions regimes should target individuals, regimes and entities; they should not constitute collective punishment of peoples or countries.

Finally, the right of veto should be limited to matters under Chapter VII of the Charter; it should not be used in cases of genocide or grave violations of international humanitarian law.

Although the cornerstone of United Nations reform is Security Council reform, we hope that reform will take place throughout the Organization so that a balance can be created among the three principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the mandate enshrined in the Charter. The hope is that the Organization can truly lead the world in facing challenges to international peace, security and development.

Mr. Soborun (Mauritius): Allow me at the outset to congratulate Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa for having convened this important meeting on the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. May I also add that my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Niger on behalf of Africa.

Let me also join my colleagues in thanking Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar, President of the Security Council for the month of December, for his detailed presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/61/2). The annual report provides an opportunity for members of our Organization to appreciate and assess the performance of the Council during the period under review.

My delegation has followed with keen interest and appreciation the efforts of the Security Council in promoting peace and stability in Africa, in particular in countries that are facing conflicts and humanitarian crises in the region.

We acknowledge that the Council's work is, by its very nature, complex. Indeed, the growing complexity of the Council's daily work stems from the fact that the current challenges exceed by far those posed by the classic pattern of inter-State conflict.

However, while noting the gradual broadening in both the volume and scope of the work of the Security Council, we share the growing concern about the gradual encroachment by the Security Council on the powers and mandate of the General Assembly. Over the years, there has been a growing tendency by the Security Council to hold discussions on thematic issues that were traditionally considered by other organs of the United Nations. It is therefore high time that we implement the relevant resolutions, which aim at facilitating appropriate accountability by the Security Council to the General Assembly. We also believe that, in order to improve the Council’s transparency and accountability, there is an urgent need to formalize its rules of procedure, which remain provisional.

The failure of the Security Council to act in a timely and impartial manner in certain cases has, to say the least, drawn wide-ranging condemnation on the part of a large number of Member States, civil societies, non-governmental organizations and the rest of the international community. There are therefore valid reasons for a restructured and reformed Security Council that is able to meet the challenges posed by the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century — a Council with equitable representation that uses more efficient and effective methods in the conduct of its work, as called for by world leaders at the two Summits held so far during this Millennium.

It is not my intention to present long and exhaustive arguments as to the benefits of Security Council reform. Those have been sufficiently dealt with by Member States and by major stakeholders over the past 15 years. Suffice it to say that the 60-year-old Security Council has changed very little in terms of its working methods and representativeness, and, as such,

is obviously not able to appropriately meet the needs or respond to the aspirations of an ever-changing world in terms of population growth, society, economy, culture and politics.

We all are aware that in 1945 Africa did not belong to the Africans and that most of Asia was not owned by the Asians. The same applies to the Latin American and Caribbean countries. Today we have 53 sovereign African States, 53 Asian States and 33 Latin American and Caribbean States. Fairness demands that these groups of countries be accorded their legitimate share in all the important global decision-making bodies, including the Security Council. That is absolutely essential to evolve the right mix of synergies so as to create harmony, peace and security in the world.

Before I proceed any further, allow me to seize this opportunity to commend Ms. Al-Khalifa's predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, who was also very keen on bringing the question of the reform of the Security Council to a successful conclusion. The general debate that took place on 20 July 2006, near the end of his tenure as President, more or less concluded that there could be no genuine United Nations reform without a restructured Security Council. Furthermore, an interesting outcome of that general debate was the fact that a large number of Member States, including developed and developing countries, landlocked and island States, and at least two permanent members of the Security Council favoured the so-called group of four proposal, which calls for permanent seats for Japan, Germany, Brazil and India, and they also gave support to the proposals made by the group of five small nations (S-5).

A large number of Member States, as well as many of those who support the group of four and S-5 proposals, also agreed that Africa needs to be represented in the Security Council as a permanent member. In that context, I would like here to reiterate the position of Mauritius as spelt out by the Prime Minister of Mauritius in his statement to the sixty-first plenary session of the General Assembly:

> "It is unacceptable that the African and Latin American and Caribbean regions are not represented in the permanent membership of the Security Council. It is also morally and politically unacceptable that the world's most populous democracy is still denied a seat as a permanent member of the Council. It is imperative that a reformed Security Council should include India among its permanent members". (*A/61/PV.16, pp. 12-13*)

We believe that the veto power is one of the crucial elements that is somehow preventing the expansion of the Security Council, particularly in the category of the permanent membership. It is generally pointed out that those that possess it want neither to part with it nor others to have it, too. However, it is evident that the misuse of veto power not only renders the Council ineffective and incapable in the face of urgent security and humanitarian crises, but also results in its being held hostage by a privileged few, to suit their own agendas. That is definitely not in the true spirit of multilateralism.

My delegation is therefore prepared to align itself with any proposal calling for the restricted use of the veto power and to limit its use to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

To conclude, my delegation, together with others, is ready to make its contribution to move forward the process of Security Council reform in terms of its expansion, equitable representation thereon and improvement in its working methods.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): Allow me first to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the Security Council for this month, Ambassador Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of Qatar, for his lucid introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 (A/61/2).

We also welcome the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/60/47). I would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of the Niger on behalf of the African Group.

Once again, the report of the Council clearly reflects its busy schedule over the past year. As indicated in the report, during the period under review, the Council met in 259 formal meetings, of which 217 were public, in addition to holding 24 meetings with troop-contributing countries. During that period, the

Council adopted 81 resolutions and issued 65 presidential statements. The Council renewed 26 mandates, including those of peacekeeping operations, and created one new mandate. No mandates were terminated.

Equally important, in our view, is the partnership between the Security Council and regional organizations, since the regional dimension is quite often useful when dealing with conflicts. We deem the budding cooperation between the Council and the African Union to be useful and believe that it needs to be strengthened, particularly since most of the conflicts are in Africa. Since the Council spends 60 to 70 per cent of its time on Africa, we expect more from the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

We also wish to commend the Council for dealing with country-specific issues, as well as for holding thematic debates, since both are necessary for the execution of the Council's mandate. The thematic debates provide occasions for in-depth consideration of topical issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. In view of the current conceptual understanding of security, we believe that the problem with the thematic debates relates not to the encroachment by the Council on the purview of other organs but to the implementation of the outcomes of those debates.

We have also found the Council's missions to areas of conflict — four of which were held during the period under review — to be very useful. Such visits enable the Council to gain an on-the-spot understanding of situations through engagement with local and other players.

Elsewhere, we wish to commend the Council for playing a pivotal role in the global campaign against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Counter-Terrorism Committee has been a shining example of transparency. It is our fervent hope that that achievement, which is worthy of emulation, will be reflected in the Council's dealings with Member States in other areas.

We also applaud the continued effort to further improve cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries, as reflected in the growing regularity and frequency of meetings in that area. My delegation believes that this consultative mechanism can be beneficial to all the parties involved in peacekeeping activities and to the United Nations as a whole. We appreciate the Council's interaction with civil society and non-governmental organizations in keeping with the Arria formula as a way of bridging the gap between Council members and the outside world.

It is our view that the Council, as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should focus more attention on the Middle East problem, which poses the greatest threat to international peace and security.

Consideration of the report of the Security Council is taking place at a time in history when — because of the Iraqi problem, threats of nuclear proliferation and the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question — the eyes of the international community are focused on the role of the United Nations as the body with the collective responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Naturally, in the circumstances, the role of the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, comes to the fore.

The collective responsibility which forms part of the foundation of the United Nations demands the cooperation of all Member States. The Security Council cannot discharge this onerous responsibility effectively and legitimately unless its membership is truly representative and reflects the composition of this lofty Organization, which currently has a membership of 192.

We cannot seriously talk about United Nations reform without touching on its most important organ and the heartbeat of the system: the Security Council. Yet, 13 years since commencing discussions on the issue, we are nowhere near agreement. We cannot continue to discuss Security Council reform ad infinitum. We should rise above parochial interests, regional rivalries and jealousies to bring the discussions to closure.

My delegation wishes to reiterate the need to enhance the credibility of the Council through substantive reform guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation. A reformed Security Council should be transparent in its activities and more responsive to the interests of the general membership in matters deriving from its mandate under

the Charter. Advocacy for democratic governance and transparency should be applicable both at the national level and on the international plane. This is all the more important as all States Members of the United Nations are called upon and obliged to share the burden of the maintenance of international peace and security through, inter alia, assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget, the provision of troops for United Nations peacekeeping missions and the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Security Council under chapter VII of the Charter.

Against this background, Ghana continues to subscribe to the Non-Aligned Movement's position on all aspects of the question of increasing the membership of the Security Council, as complemented by the African position duly reflected in the draft resolution that the African Group introduced during the previous session of the General Assembly. Africa, with its 53 Member States, has called for the allocation of two permanent rotating seats and two additional non-permanent seats. It is both politically and morally unacceptable that Africa and the Latin American and Caribbean regions are excluded from the category of permanent members.

It would be remiss of me if I did not touch on the veto power granted to the five permanent members. While acknowledging that the Charter grants an exemption from the principle of the sovereign equality of States by granting the five permanent members the veto — which is an important tool in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities — we believe that the veto also stifles discussion and consensus, and we call for restrictions on its use and for its eventual abolition. It is an anachronistic mechanism.

Finally, my delegation is ready to join others in undertaking the reform of the Security Council.

We would also like to congratulate the new non-permanent members — South Africa, Panama, Belgium, Italy and Indonesia — on their election to the Security Council. I am confident that the new members of the Council will join us in working for a more transparent, accountable, efficient and representative Security Council, in line with the general reform of the United Nations, in order to make the Organization more effective in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Regarding agenda item 9, "Report of the Security Council", I would like, first of all, to thank the Permanent Representative of Qatar, Nassir Al-Nasser, in his capacity as President of the Security Council for this month, for his introduction of document A/61/2. Unfortunately, we have not been able to study the report in detail because it was issued very shortly before the date set for its consideration by the Assembly.

The increase in the Council's work over recent years has had a detrimental effect on the efficiency with which reports on its activities have been presented. The result is that reports are very long and almost entirely statistical in content, with limited analysis of the events reported on. This tendency is also clear in the work of the subsidiary bodies and as concerns issues such as the improvement of the Council's working methods, which have not been dealt with in the detailed manner that we believe would foster a more complete and satisfactory debate.

With regard to agenda item 111 on Security Council reform, Uruguay, as we have said in the past, agrees about the need for the Security Council to be reformed with a view to adapting it to current circumstances and new challenges. Uruguay believes it necessary for the Council to increase in membership, while becoming more efficient, representative, democratic and transparent. Therefore, we also believe it essential to improve the Council's working methods.

Accordingly, we welcome the fact that the members of the Security Council are also working to that end and we understand that it is essential for there to be an exchange of information and views among members of the Council and those interested States that are not members of the Council before defining the different mechanisms needed to improve the work of that body.

Ever since the earliest work towards the establishment of the United Nations, Uruguay has expressed its opposition to the use of the veto. We therefore reiterate that it is not possible for us to support any solution that would envisage an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council which, in that capacity, would have a right of veto. The inequity and inequality among sovereign States caused by the veto would not be reduced by giving that right to a few more States.

Uruguay vigorously supports the strengthening of the international normative framework established to

promote democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. We understand that the question of human rights is no longer the exclusive purview of the domestic jurisdiction of States and therefore we understand also that nothing should prevent the application of the principle of the responsibility to protect. We fully agree with those Member States that have taken the position in this forum that in all cases of genocide or humanitarian catastrophe collective action should be taken through the Security Council without a veto being cast.

Uruguay's position dates from the time of the very creation of the Organization. At the San Francisco Conference, the delegation of Uruguay drew attention to the need for members of the Security Council to be admitted to that body without differences of prerogatives or rights, accepting the fact that the countries that had borne the heaviest weight of the war should be guaranteed seats, but not indefinitely. A fixed-term deemed to be appropriate would be proposed.

Uruguay, which has supported the model submitted by the G-4, but without the veto, hopes to be able to cooperate with due flexibility in the forthcoming stages of dealing with these questions. We hope that the negotiations will be open, direct, inclusive and, in particular, transparent.

Mr. De Palacio España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Spain welcomes the opportunity offered by this joint debate today and we would like to begin by thanking in particular the Permanent Representative of Qatar for introducing the report on the work of the Security Council (A/61/2).

We have come here to share some thoughts about the question relating to the reform of the Security Council in all areas, under agenda item 111. In these times of change, when we are exchanging views about everything we have achieved so far in reforming the Organization, the question of the reform of the Security Council remains an outstanding item. This is in spite of the valuable and serious initiatives presented over recent months to make progress and put forward proposals to bring about a democratic reform in which Member States carry out their tasks with responsibility and within a framework of equality and representativity.

The fact is, however, that in spite of the formulas proposed by Member States, it has not been possible to establish a negotiating framework that would make it possible for us to make progress in settling on the elements of a possible agreement. The formal initiatives for the reform of the Security Council submitted in the previous session made it clear that it would not be possible to bring about reform unless there is genuine negotiation among all members of the Organization. There can be no reform which could become a reality without negotiation to make possible the widest possible agreement on the part of all the States.

Therefore, if this Assembly wishes to make progress towards a solution in reforming the Security Council, the issue of what should be the parameters for such a negotiation must be seriously addressed. In an open negotiation, we must deal in an orderly and systematic way with such matters as the desirable number of members of the Council that would continue to make it operational and efficient; the equitable distribution of members in accordance with regional groupings; the duration of mandates and the possibility of re-election — once or successively — as well as possible periods of ineligibility between elections; the eventual work of regional groups when they propose new members for election; the majorities required for decisions in an new, expanded Security Council; and ultimately, and not least important, the fundamental question of the working methods of the Council.

In this respect, at the 95th plenary meeting of the sixtieth session, held on 20 July, my delegation indicated its support for the draft resolution presented by the delegations of Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Singapore and Switzerland on reforming the working methods of the Security Council. This draft resolution contains proposals of great value with regard to strengthening the relationship among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; participation in the Security Council's work of States that are not Council members, where appropriate, particularly in its subsidiary bodies; and the two key questions of the effective implementation of Security Council resolutions and the fair and rational use of the veto. As was the case with the reform of the composition of the Security Council, we hope that this draft resolution relating to its working methods can be considered with the broadest support possible on the part of all Member States.

For serious and open negotiations on reforming the Security Council, it is indispensable to have a

commitment to formulas that promote equality of all Member States — excluding the option of new permanent members, which does not enjoy the necessary support within the Organization — in accordance with the criteria laid down by the Charter, as was shown clearly over the last few months.

Similarly, we would have to ensure the responsibility of members of the Council to the membership as a whole, and that is to be achieved through re-election. We believe a decision of such importance as the reform of the Security Council cannot be adopted without first building a broad consensus on which to base the future work of one of the principal organs of our Organization.

My delegation believes that the process to follow to achieve the objective of reform should be conducted from now on by the President of the General Assembly in such a way, as has been pointed out previously, that all relevant questions can be examined in an orderly manner. On this point, we must repeat that the limit for moving forward, in our opinion, is the idea of creating new permanent members whose role cannot be justified in accordance with the model of the Organization, which we want to strengthen to meet the challenges of our century. It is important that those States that have proposed the creation of new permanent members be willing to accept an understanding whereby all other options, no matter how divergent they might seem, would be discussed with a view to achieving a broad consensus.

The informal meeting in which heads of State and Government, ministers and delegations from many States participated on 20 September was, in our opinion, a milestone in the process of discussing Security Council reform. The new context in which we find ourselves — which presumably acknowledges the limit of everyone's position and the need to reach broader agreements — should lead us to the beginning of a true negotiating process, for which we are fully prepared. Thus, we hope to succeed in transforming the Security Council to make it more effective, transparent and democratic in order to serve the objectives of the Charter and all Members of the Organization.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the Permanent Representative of Niger, on behalf of the African Group. However, I wish to make a few points to express Nigeria's views on a number of issues.

The debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for more than a decade. Our leaders underscored its importance during their Summit in September 2005, when they called for reforms in the United Nations, including the Security Council. This debate is thus welcome. Nigeria believes that, given the stalemate in the protracted informal consultative process, the time is ripe for a new approach that should be led by the President of the Assembly to give momentum to our deliberations. Such an approach would give meaning to the good intentions expressed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1).

The report before us (A/61/2), although lacking in appreciable details and analysis, nonetheless highlights the following points: first, most of the issues before the Council are daunting and complex; secondly, some of the issues are recurrent; thirdly, no region is devoid of threats to international peace and security; and fourthly, the issue of international peace and security, as variously recognized, is indeed a collective matter that requires the support of all.

It is therefore evident that, if the Council is to be able to address the issues before it — some of which have lingered for too long — urgent reforms are required. In that regard, I should reiterate Nigeria's view that the Security Council, in pursuit of its functions under the Charter, should initiate formal or informal deliberations on the situation in a Member State only when it is abundantly clear that there is a credible threat to international peace and security. Furthermore, Nigeria shares the view that any Member State whose matter is under consideration by the Council should be given the opportunity to be heard not only in open Council meetings, but also in closed ones. That would promote fairness and equity and also enhance the legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

Undoubtedly, neither the wider membership of our Organization nor the framers of its Charter intended from the outset that the Council should become divorced from accountability, legitimacy and transparency in its decision-making process. Hence, Nigeria strongly supports the call for improvements in

its working methods and for reporting to the General Assembly in a manner in keeping with the Charter.

Nigeria also believes that, as the Non-Aligned Movement has consistently stressed, there is merit in formalizing the consultation process among the presidents of the three principal organs, namely, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. That would help to align the agendas of those principal organs and would also minimize duplication and encroachment, especially on matters that are of concern to many Member States.

Nigeria is pleased with the Security Council's efforts to increasingly shoulder its Charter responsibilities. We are particularly pleased with the Council's cooperation with and support for regional organizations to resolve conflicts, especially in Africa. As we are all aware, the Council has worked assiduously with the African Union and subregional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States in resolving conflicts in southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The series of visits by Council members to our region and dialogues with regional leaders, including President Olusegun Obasanjo, have enhanced better understanding of the issues at stake in our search for durable solutions.

Member States have demonstrated their commitment to reforms in the United Nations through the replacement of the Human Rights Commission with the Human Rights Council and the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. But those measures are not exhaustive. Rather, they point to the need for a more comprehensive transformation of our cherished Organization for the better. We must resist the temptation to settle for cosmetic changes, when what we need is a fundamental transformation of the organs of the Organization.

It is against that background that Nigeria would like to restate and reaffirm its support for Africa's position on reform of the Security Council as defined in the decisions taken by African heads of State and Government since 2005. Lest there be any doubt, that includes expansion in Africa's representation and exercise of benefits in the permanent membership of the Council. Increasing the size and representation of both the permanent and non-permanent categories of Council membership would, in our view, enable the Council to gain in stature and credibility as well as ensure that its decisions receive the widest possible support from the international community.

The challenge before us is to overcome the reluctance of some Member States to move in that direction — a reluctance that lies at the heart of the stalemate in our deliberations. Given this state of affairs, Nigeria would encourage Member States to demonstrate in practical terms their support in principle for expanding the membership of the Security Council. The issue of the exercise of the rights and benefits of members of an expanded Council should not be used as an excuse to hinder a consensus on that aspect of reform.

Unfortunately, the question of the veto has been seized upon by some to block Africa's legitimate demand and quest for representation in the permanent membership of the Council. We must not forget Africa's long-held view that the use of the veto has become anachronistic and should therefore be abolished. That position is not new in Africa; it predates both the report of the High-level Panel (A/59/565) and the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). Indeed, it is reflected in the draft resolutions submitted by the Group of 3 plus one and the African Group, which should provide a platform for reaching a consensus on this important matter.

Without detracting from the African position, that would suggest that there is room in our debates to find creative and acceptable solutions to the vexed question of the veto. In fact, contemporary developments — especially the most recent debates and decisions of the Council — have cast the problem in higher relief. Nigeria thus calls on Member States to exercise the political will and flexibility required to achieve this goal in the not-too-distant future.

While Nigeria respects the views of those Member States that insist on the need for consensus before a decision on Security Council reform is taken, the search for consensus should reflect a common desire for accommodation informed by shared objectives — in this case, urgent reform of the Council. We hope that Member States will set aside narrow interests and support the overdue reform and expansion of the permanent membership of the Security Council. We should allow ourselves neither to be diverted from that objective nor to succumb to the temptation to

abandon this important but uncompleted aspect of United Nations reform.

Nigeria looks forward to your able leadership, Madam President, in urging Member States to rise above their differences and to establish a mechanism that would make it possible for formal negotiations to commence in the General Assembly under your leadership. We wish to assure you of our cooperation and readiness to embark on that exercise at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to express my delegation's thanks to the Permanent Representative of Qatar, President of the Security Council for the current month, for introducing the report of the Council (A/61/2). I should also like to express my delegation's support for the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the Permanent Representative of Niger, on behalf of the Group of African States.

We are meeting today to discuss once again two important items that have been on the agenda of the General Assembly for many years and on which no conclusions have been reached. We have tirelessly studied those two items in order to find a successful solution to the issue of Security Council reform, which is at an impasse and which at the same time is considered a prerequisite for overall United Nations reform.

Everyone here knows full well that it has been impossible to transform the Security Council into a democratic, impartial and transparent mechanism that truly guarantees international peace and security. Everyone also knows that the Council has sometimes been used to interfere in States' internal affairs or to provoke them. And it is no exaggeration to say that the Security Council was even one of the instruments of the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon, because it stood by as a powerless spectator without taking any measures for 34 long days, while the Israeli destruction machine demolished Lebanese infrastructure and brought Lebanese homes down on the heads of their inhabitants. We have also seen how the Security Council has dealt with the massacres perpetrated against the Palestinian people by Israel, the occupying Power, and how the crimes of the occupation have been justified under the pretext of self-defence. All of those shameful Security Council positions result from the domination exercised by some States, permanent Council members, and from their excessive abuse of the right of veto.

If that situation persists, the international community will no longer need the Security Council. And I do not believe that any of us needs a Council whose budget we all pay while it is used by a handful of States and peoples. Nor do I believe that we need a Security Council that abuses Chapter VII of the Charter and uses it to deal with certain ethnic or religious groups whenever the opportunity arises. We do not need a Security Council that practices selectivity and the policy of double standards and acts according to the diktat and interests of one Power or group of States.

The Security Council's resolutions related to the maintenance of international peace and security must be impartial and fair and must reflect the genuine collective will of the international community. However, that collective will has not been truly reflected because of the virtual monopoly on the veto exercised by a few States. That privilege has become an instrument to support aggression and humiliation against the weak, has led to the paralysis of the international community and to the imposition of the policy of fait accompli.

For many years, we have worked tirelessly to find a successful solution to the issue of Security Council reform through the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group, but we have failed. We, the Member States, have worked diligently for the past two years, with more intense activity than ever before. We have submitted proposals, made contacts and engaged in consultations and even negotiations, but we have made no significant progress on Security Council reform. We remain at square one. The reason is that the privileged States hang on to their privileges, refusing to relinquish them or to share them with others. Given that situation, we must all help to rid ourselves of national egoism and act rationally in order to serve the collective good of the United Nations and bring about peace, security, development, prosperity, freedom and human rights for all. The Security Council's credibility must be restored through an improvement in its working methods and an expansion of its membership, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

But in order to achieve that, the criteria decided on at the end of the Second World War should no longer be used, and States' size or military or economic

power should no longer take precedence. What must be taken into account is the ability of States to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, setting aside national aspirations or desires for hegemony, putting various cultures and continents on an equal footing and ensuring non-discrimination among Member States in rights and duties.

The African continent has suffered more than other continents from the arrangements that resulted from the end of the Second World War. For example, Africa was absent from the Security Council, as most of its States suffered from foreign occupation, colonialism and racism. African States are now independent and represent more than one quarter of the membership of the United Nations; justice must be done. Africa's rights must be recognized, and those historical injustices must be rectified. Africa's marginalization must end. Africa must have fair representation in an expanded Security Council. It must have a permanent seat in the Council as well as non-permanent seats in a number commensurate with its size.

Libya, a member of the African Union, supports the Common African Position, which is the outcome of the fifth African Summit meeting, held at Sirte, on 4 and 5 July 2005. That Position was reaffirmed in the two special summit meetings of the African Union held at Addis Ababa on 4 August 2005 and 31 October 2005, respectively. In accordance with that position, two permanent seats would be allocated to Africa, with all privileges due a permanent member, including the right to veto, together with five non-permanent seats.

Africa wishes to receive the privileges given to other continents, among others the veto. That does not mean that we support increasing the number of countries that have the veto power. Rather, we would prefer that the right of veto be abolished. However, for the time being its use should be restricted. There can be no true reform of the Security Council if the veto is not eliminated. But until the veto is abolished, it would only be fair for Africa to have that privilege, as other Member States do.

The report of the Security Council submitted to us does not give us a clear picture of what takes place in the Council, nor does it reflect the Council's commitment to the resolutions of the General Assembly by including, for example, an analysis of the considerations on the basis of which Security Council resolutions are adopted.

The report contains no thorough analysis of the situations of States members of the Security Council, nor does it offer reasons that might explain the powerlessness of the Security Council vis-à-vis the serious crises that threaten international peace and security. We hope that the report of the Security Council in future will be more serious and will show clearly what the Council has done in the process of discharging its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and what the General Assembly has done to remedy the paralysis that afflicts the Council from time to time because of use of the veto.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): This is an important debate. It is the annual occasion for the United Nations membership as a whole to come together to discuss the work of the Security Council, as presented in the annual report introduced earlier today on our collective behalf by the Ambassador of Qatar. I must say that, if you look at the report, if you listen to some of the interventions which I have just sat through, the two do not come together. I want to be quite clear that I represent a Security Council which I believe to be working pretty efficiently, that can do better, but does not correspond to some of the comments I have just heard.

I should like today to address three main issues: first, the policy challenges the Council is facing; secondly, reform of Council working methods; and, thirdly, the unresolved issue of reform of the Council itself.

The Security Council has rarely figured so centrally in so many pressing issues as it has over the past year. In one month alone, July 2006 — the last month covered by the report — the Council confronted four major challenges in addition to its regular business. It looked at the North Korean missile test; how to end sustainably the crisis between Israel and Lebanon; how to implement the Darfur Peace Agreement in the Sudan; and, lastly, Iran's refusal to suspend its nuclear enrichment activities. Those are four central issues affecting the maintenance of international peace and security, and the Council tackled and dealt with each of those issues.

That the Council should be so engaged on the big issues of the day is both a success for the multilateral

system and a challenge to it. It shows that the international community and the Council members themselves recognize the indispensable and unique legitimacy of the Council in addressing challenges to international peace and security. But it also places a heavy responsibility on the Council to ensure it can take decisions and then deliver on them. That requires us to be more timely and to act before it is too late, to take our rhetoric about conflict prevention and responsibility to protect and put both into practice, to sharpen our tools and improve our use of them. It challenges us all, particularly Council members, to respond coherently when our decisions are ignored.

There are no easy answers. Part of the response is to improve Council interaction with others, with the Assembly, with the Secretariat, with regional organizations and other actors; with new bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission. Part of the response is to improve the way we work as a Council, making sure that we not only adopt resolutions and statements, but think strategically and ensure follow-up to our actions.

This leads me to my second theme, reform of Council working methods. I would like to pay tribute to the outstanding leadership on this issue by the Ambassador of Japan. He had the vision to see that the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, whose chairmanship had rotated monthly, needed to be taken seriously and put on a more workable footing. Japan has driven the work of that Group with energy and enthusiasm, as well as with pragmatism and a focus on making a real difference.

The compendium of changes agreed by the Working Group last summer will — if we implement them — make the Council more effective internally and more transparent and inclusive externally, including towards the Assembly. In my view, the Council has nothing to lose and everything to gain from this approach. Our common challenge now is to focus on implementing what has been agreed — changes which in themselves are modest individually but whose cumulative effect is a substantial change in favour of transparency and openness.

Reforming the working methods is a necessary part of the reform of the Council, but it is not sufficient. There has been insufficient progress in the debate on Council enlargement in the past 12 months. This is a real source of concern to my Government. Let me be clear: the responsibility for that rests rather more with the Assembly than it does with the Security Council. The United Kingdom has long supported the Group of Four, and will continue to do so. We support Germany, India, Japan and Brazil for permanent membership of the Council on their individual and collective merits. But permanent African membership is also overdue. And we want to see more non-permanent members, thus improving the Council's accountability and transparency.

But we are not wedded to a single model of reform. What we want above all is to see progress, to see a model of enlargement that can attain the necessary support in the United Nations membership and which will deliver a more representative and effective Council. For that reason, Prime Minister Blair, in a speech in May this year at Georgetown University, stressed that he was sure reform was needed in order to adapt the Council to today's world. He urged the United Nations membership to agree, if necessary, on some form of interim change that could be a bridge to a future settlement. We are open to new ideas from across the membership that will give life to the debate and — more than that — that will take us beyond the debate to permit decisions and to reform the Council.

My hope, therefore, is that when this debate takes place next year, the Assembly will have seen a reformed Council through improved working methods; a more effective and successful Council in terms of its decision-making; and a Council on its way to enlargement and real, structural reform. My Government will be an active participant in all of that work.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): At the 2005 World Summit, our leaders expressed their support for the early reform and expansion of the Security Council as an essential element in the overall effort to reform the United Nations in order to reflect today's realities. To date, there has not been any substantial progress on this matter, despite the fact that this is not a new issue. Security Council reform has been in discussion for the past 13 years in working groups specifically created for that purpose. Furthermore, extensive debate has been under way within the United Nations, starting with the High-level Panel, including deliberations in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of

the Security Council and other Matters Related to the Security Council.

The proposals made so far on Security Council enlargement have not managed to create a basis for consensus, although we all share, to a large degree, the same need and the same goal of a more effective and more accountable Security Council that is more representative of today's world.

We fully agree with the recent statement made by the Secretary-General in Geneva that no reform of the United Nations will be complete unless the Security Council is included. We share his sense of urgency and his reasoning regarding bringing the Council into the twenty-first century. We continue to believe that the comprehensive reform and expansion of the Security Council will bring it into line with contemporary geopolitical realities and reinforce the collective security system of the Charter, thus contributing to the strengthening of the United Nations as a whole.

My country remains in favour of the Council's enlargement in both the permanent and the non-permanent member categories. Such an enlargement will increase the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the Security Council, thereby enhancing its multicultural and multidimensional character and rendering it more representative of the world we live in.

In this respect, we would like to reiterate our support for the principles contained in the draft resolution of the Group of Four, which Greece has co-sponsored. We hope and encourage all members to work together constructively with a view to reaching an agreement that can be supported by the largest possible majority of the Organization.

Part of the Security Council reform is also the improvement of the working methods of the Council. In this respect, we take note of the proposal of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5). It is a step in the right direction, but we do not consider it encompassing enough to lead to a comprehensive reform of the Council.

Reform is an ongoing process, because an international organization should always stay in touch with reality. Nevertheless political momentum is necessary for every major step forward. The impetus behind the ambitious effort that started with the High-level Panel's report is almost exhausted. Many goals have already been achieved, and in many fields we are close to reaching most — or at least some — of our initial wishes. In order to effectively face today's serious global threats and challenges, the Security Council should not lag behind. We strongly believe that Security Council reform cannot be further delayed, and in this regard we hope that, by the end of the sixty-first session, we will all be in a position to take that much-awaited action.

Mrs. Silkalna (Latvia): I would like to begin by thanking Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the Permanent Representative of Qatar, for having presented the report of the Security Council (A/61/2). The report remains essentially a collection of facts — facts that reflect the large number of challenges to international peace and security. Fittingly, we are debating the report jointly with the question of Security Council reform. That aspect is fundamentally important to the successful reform of the United Nations. Regrettably, after more than a decade of debate, and particular efforts last year, a widely agreed solution to the issue of Security Council reform still eludes us.

Numerous States Members of the United Nations have not served on the Security Council and may not do so for quite a long time yet — if ever. However, we are all constantly affected in direct and indirect ways by the decisions made in the Security Council. My delegation therefore appreciates this opportunity today to briefly state our position.

The composition of the Security Council in its present form suffers from unbalanced representation. The world has grown and changed in the past 60 years, and the Security Council needs to adapt accordingly. While the Security Council Chamber has been expanded over the years to seat 15, the Trusteeship Council Chamber next door now seats 192.

Regrettably, mistrust and resentment towards the Security Council — generated by the current imbalance — has harmed the overall reform process and will also no doubt continue to hamper many of our diverse efforts until the Security Council becomes more representative.

We believe membership should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. In our view, a number of Member States — such as Germany, Japan, India and Brazil — are well equipped and qualified to assume the responsibilities of a long-term presence on the Security Council. Having said

that, we believe the right of the veto should not be extended further, and that its current use could be made more transparent to the wider membership.

It is laudable that efforts towards the reform of the working methods are being made within the Security Council. The proposals by the members of the group of five small nations — the so-called "Small Five" (S-5) — have much merit. In our view, they should be considered alongside the question of enlargement.

The proposals of the Group of Four, which we have supported, evidently are not acceptable to a broad majority; nor, for that matter, have any other proposals for enlargement garnered enough support. Now is the time for all Member States, in particular the aspirants to new permanent seats, to propose and consider new and more viable ideas. Latvia will consider all new models for enlargement that may lead to an expansion of the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories within a reasonable time frame.

Our hope is for sincere, constructive efforts among Member States to finally achieve a breakthrough on reform in the coming year.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): It is my delegation's view that the reform of the Security Council constitutes an important part of the overall reform of the United Nations — a process that we as Member States committed ourselves to through the 2005 Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1). Norway's long-standing priority has been to ensure that the Council operates coherently and efficiently and that the composition of the Council reflects the current configuration of the membership of the United Nations. Consequently, we support the expansion of the Security Council.

There are several reasons why Norway believes the expansion of the Council is necessary. Over the past six decades, the overall membership of the United Nations has almost quadrupled. The Security Council should reflect that growth in order to ensure the Council's legitimacy and efficiency. Norway is also an advocate for the interests of small countries in the rotation of non-permanent seats. Consequently, Norway supports a balanced enlargement of the Security Council — an enlargement in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members, where small countries and developing countries are duly represented.

We cannot discuss the expansion of the Security Council without addressing the question of the right to the veto. We have consistently encouraged permanent members to refrain from exercising their power of the veto. In order to ensure an efficient Council, the Norwegian view has been that the power of the veto should not be extended to the new permanent members of an enlarged Council. We therefore welcome earlier statements made by the Group of Four that it is their intention not to exercise the right to the veto.

The improvement of the Council's working methods continues to be important. The draft resolution proposed by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland aims at improving the dialogue between the General Assembly and the Security Council. While the draft resolution fully respects the Security Council's competencies, it positively points to areas where cooperation should be deepened. It is Norway's view that an enhanced and structured dialogue between the General Assembly and the Council would lead to the strengthening of both.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): We wish to thank you, Madam President, for convening this joint debate on agenda items 9 and 111, respectively entitled "Report of the Security Council" and "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". We also wish to join other delegations in thanking the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and President of the Security Council for the month of December for his introduction of the report of the Security Council (A/61/2).

At the outset, we would like to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation wishes to make a few additional remarks in its national capacity.

The Charter of the United Nations confers tremendous power upon the Security Council, particularly its permanent members. However, with power comes responsibility — responsibility to exercise power justly and fairly while placing the broader interests of humankind over narrow and parochial national interests. That power should not be exercised to settle old political scores or to intimidate small States. Unfortunately, over the past decade,

Rwanda has been at the receiving end of that abuse of power by a particular permanent member. We believe that such actions do a great disservice to the Council and succeed only in undermining its credibility.

Reforming the Security Council without addressing its flawed working methods and decision-making process would render such a process incomplete, and even futile. Indeed, a fundamental reform of the Security Council's working methods and decision-making process must be at the very heart of a comprehensive reform process, so that an expanded and reformed Council is seen by all States, and especially by small States such as Rwanda, to be more transparent, credible, legitimate and representative.

We welcome the modest efforts by the Council to improve its working methods following the recommendations of its internal Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. At the 2005 World Summit our heads of State recommended that we enhance the accountability of the Security Council to the general membership of the United Nations and increase the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of its work. Clearly, a lot remains to be done before we can truly say that the expectations of our leaders at the World Summit have been met.

When issues affecting a particular State or group of States are before the Council, there needs to be a greater effort by Council members to consult those Member States, as they have a greater local knowledge of the issues under consideration. That goes beyond merely inviting such countries to participate in Council meetings under Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter of the United Nations. There should be participation in both discussions and decision-making on issues. That would greatly increase the legitimacy and implementability of Council decisions.

We welcome the joint meetings between the Security Council and the African Union during the reporting period. It is essential that that consultative process continue, and perhaps become more frequent and formalized. Regional organizations often have considerable local knowledge and experience that could enrich the deliberative and decision-making processes of the Security Council.

On the issue of the enlargement of the Security Council, Rwanda remains committed to the African Group's position. However, it is clear that, although there is consensus among Member States about the necessity for the enlargement of the Council, we are still deeply divided about how that enlargement should be brought about. Indeed, we are so divided, and positions are so far apart, that it is difficult to envisage a breakthrough any time soon. The question we should then ask ourselves is whether all reform should be put on hold until consensus emerges on the issue of enlargement. It would appear that the wait may be too long, and that there is a danger that the momentum for Security Council reform that we built up last year will be completely lost. It may therefore be plausible for Member States to consider beginning the reform process with the working methods of the Security Council, where there is greater agreement. While doing so we should consider whether reforms to the working methods are indeed possible, or even sustainable, without our simultaneously addressing the issue of the Council's composition.

Rwanda believes that the differences can only be narrowed by further open, transparent and interactive debate in the General Assembly. Member States must also adopt a constructive and flexible spirit in that process, because, clearly, it is only by doing so that we can hope to meaningfully reform the Council any time soon. Only by each of us surrendering a little can we hope for collective gain.

We remain optimistic that consensus on this important issue is possible, as regards both working methods and the composition of the Council. We believe that by working together constructively we can reform the Security Council to make it more transparent, credible, legitimate and accessible, as well as to expand its membership to make it more representative. That is what our leaders mandated us to do at the World Summit.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): During the past year, a number of important results have been achieved in the efforts to reform the United Nations. However, for the United Nations to be relevant, legitimate, effective and capable of dealing with the many new threats and challenges that we, the international community, all face together, the reform process must continue. As we are in the midst of trying to implement decisions already taken, we must not lose sight of the fact that reform of the Security Council is an essential part of the overall effort to reform the United Nations. The Security Council's composition, size and working methods must all be addressed.

Sweden believes that the Security Council should better mirror today's world, which requires stronger representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Any reform of the composition of the Council should, in our view, be subject to a recurrent and effective review mechanism. Such a mechanism could open up the way for future changes — for instance, a seat for the European Union on the Security Council as the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy develops.

We want the Security Council to be an effective body that can act quickly and in a transparent manner. It is therefore our firm conviction that the power of the veto should not be extended to new members. Instead, we would like to see a veto-free culture promoted in the Council. In addition, the Security Council's working methods should be reformed. Its openness, transparency and interaction with other United Nations bodies must be strengthened.

We should now find ways to move forward. This issue should be approached with an open mind and readiness to show flexibility. Reform of the Council should help to enhance its legitimacy. Therefore, any reform needs to enjoy the broadest possible support. We should now start a process to garner such support, while taking into account the legitimate claims of some countries to be better represented on this, the most powerful body of the United Nations system. I can assure the Assembly that Sweden will continue to engage actively in a constructive dialogue on how to reform the Security Council.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): Today's debate is most timely. We have reached a point where we must at last proceed with an honest assessment of the work of the Security Council — and more so of the debate that has been taking place for many years regarding the reform of the Council — and agree on the way forward. I would like to thank Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar and President of the Security Council, for introducing the report (A/61/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

Without underestimating the relevance and importance of the information contained in the report, I would like to suggest that it proceeds from a rather static and formalistic view of the relationship between the two main political organs. At a time when we are talking of reform and change, I believe that we are entitled to have the ambition to build a more dynamic, interactive and dialectical relationship. Beyond any differences of opinion on functions and competencies, we all realize the need for an integrated approach and the interdependence between the issues dealt with by the General Assembly and those dealt with by the Security Council.

Going beyond received ideas and stereotypes, we need a flexible and pragmatic approach, in particular as concerns reform. To a certain extent, the expansion of the membership of the Council seems to be a generally shared wish; but, at the same time, for most of us it is desirable only if it improves the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council. Of course, we must still agree on the definition of those two notions. But, in any event, they are inextricably interlinked. Indeed, it is its capacity to actually maintain or restore international peace and security that is the raison d'être of the Security Council and the justification for its unique character. It can therefore be legitimate only if it is effective. At the same time, however, it can only be effective if it is legitimate.

We are fully in Aristotle's teleological dialectic. Those two conditions are necessary to one another but not sufficient. Most of the time, effectiveness also requires efficiency and other elements. Legitimacy also requires a democratic element and an element of credibility, acceptance, accountability and representation. In that connection, I must say that, without questioning the lofty and legitimate ambition of every State Member of the United Nations to serve in the Security Council, at least from the perspective of smaller States, membership is not necessarily the primary or sole component of democratic character. Transparency, accountability, access, upholding and defending international legality and association with the work of the Council, in particular through an interactive relationship with the General Assembly, could be as important as, if not more important than, an elusive and exceptionally scarce potential membership. That is why the debate on working methods is inextricably linked to the enlargement debate. Both elements must eventually be addressed, preferably simultaneously but certainly in the framework of an integrated and comprehensive approach.

It seems to me that there is currently momentum for this debate. There is also prima facie broad agreement that reform of the Council, including its expansion, is necessary and can improve both its

effectiveness and its legitimacy. If that is so, the main question before us is how to achieve that reform. I believe that we need to focus primarily on the process and the methodology. Then, without abandoning legitimate ambitions, we need also to define, in realistic terms, the realm of the feasible.

There have been some very interesting ideas derived from the philosophy of intermediate or transitional arrangements, as well as other opinions and innovative thoughts on all or some of the elements of Security Council reform.

In response to your appeal, Madam President, I have myself shared with a number of colleagues, in the context of brainstorming, an idea of an evolutionary and gradual approach that goes through various stages before achieving the end result. The main conceptual difference between transitional and evolutionary is that, while in the former one makes a change valid for a specific span of time and counts on an aleatory future agreement, in the latter one already has, in the amendment of the Charter, both the path that will be followed and the final result that will ultimately be reached. At the same time, one offers something up front, both in terms of an increase in the number of non-permanent members and in terms of differentiation of the new potential global players and a clear midterm perspective, both in terms of time horizon and content, while respecting the sensitivities of the quasi-totality of members.

We also need to think afresh about the veto and the role of the permanent members. Without trying to pre-empt reflection on this issue, and in the framework of the integrated approach I am asking for, can we not, for instance, revisit the mechanism of the Acheson, or Uniting for Peace (resolution 377 (V)) and other customs established throughout the relevant practice, such as the fact that the abstention or non-participation of a permanent member in a decision of the Council does not prevent the adoption of the relevant draft resolution? Rather than a frontal attack against the veto or the privileged membership, can we not instead build a more inclusive approach?

On methodology and the process, I believe that — under the guidance of the President of the General Assembly and through a far-reaching, frank and open debate through informal gatherings of ambassadors in various formats, possibly by associating members of academia and other interested persons, but in a systematic, intensive and constructive manner — we can reach general agreement on the rules and modalities of the process that will provide the legitimacy of any decision, even if such a solution is a compromise that most probably will not be 100 per cent satisfactory for anyone.

We also need commitment on the part of all of us to reach agreement. Indeed, more than a *pactum de negotiando* — a commitment to negotiate — we need a *pactum de contrahendo* — a commitment to conclude. Whether a vote or consensus, or a combination of both — one alternating with the other in a complementary manner — is the proper course of action, the right course of action will be the one that all of us accept as useful, necessary and catalytic.

By now, we all know the positions and visions of most States or groups of States. Revisited from the perspective of an integrated approach, and taking into account the interdependence of the issues and the finality of the action of the United Nations, those visions may be of great value and may contain the necessary common ground that will allow us to move forward, provided that we go beyond the issue of respective functions and competencies, the marking of respective territories and a narrow approach of national interest by Member States. That will be reflected in terms of complementarities, synergies and the level of participation in the Security Council as a functional responsibility intimately and inextricably linked with the actual capacity to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Organization in the field of the maintenance and restoration of international peace and security.

Mr. Bonavia (Malta): I would like, at the outset, to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of Qatar and current President of the Security Council, for his presentation to the General Assembly yesterday of the exhaustive and enlightening annual report of the Security Council, contained in document A/61/2.

Slightly less than half the membership of the United Nations has taken the floor in the past two days on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Yet again, it is evident that diverging views reign supreme on this sensitive issue. Indeed, the time is more than ripe for the General Assembly to engage

itself in substantive negotiations on this theme. My delegation feels strongly that rigid national positions need to be avoided, in order to identify a collective solution that responds to the shared concerns of the entire United Nations membership and to the imperatives for far-reaching reform in the international system.

We feel the urgent need for a consensual approach and the broadest possible agreement through further negotiations involving all parties concerned, in order to arrive at a solution that can pass the ultimate test in the General Assembly. We believe that we need to redouble our efforts to reach effective agreement on this issue. Taking into account the present impasse, there is no solution in sight without negotiations among all parties concerned. At this juncture, I would also like to underscore that that solution should provide for meaningful and effective reform without forcing divisive and potentially damaging procedures on the General Assembly as individual States vie for special status.

A meaningful reform process needs to grapple with those weaknesses through concerted action. It is in that spirit alone that we share the view of those who maintain that Security Council reform must deal simultaneously with the two-pronged problem of working methods and the expansion of the membership. Accountability is not simply a function of reporting and transparency; it is just as much a function of the method and manner in which membership is chosen. Timely and effective responses are indeed affected by the availability, and abuse of, the power of the veto, but they are also affected by the balance and range of representation within the Council membership.

My delegation firmly believes that we need to adequately address the problems that exist in the Council in terms of both substance and procedure. In that regard, we endorse the approach taken by the group of five small nations — the “Small Five” (S-5). The Group’s draft resolution (A/60/L.49) is to be commended for tackling head-on the more critical and sensitive issues, without precluding the thorny question of the veto. At the same time, the S-5 initiative can readily be integrated within the broader process of reform — which, in our view, must inevitably also deal with the question of enlargement.

With regard to enlargement, my delegation is among those that believe that the way forward does not lie in concentrating on the question of permanent membership. Rather, we should show ourselves to be more flexible to the subject by examining formulas that reaffirm, rather than erode, the very principle of rotation. Flexibility is a must, as it would permit breathing space for a fresh approach — indeed, an approach that would foster inclusiveness and demonstrate the ability to accommodate the interests and concerns of every Member State.

As a small State with limited expectations of Council membership, we also consider all proposals in terms of the rotation options for membership that they open up for the membership of the United Nations in general. We are not convinced by the argument that an increase in the number of permanent members will create more space for the rest of the membership.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that we must identify ways by which the negotiations process can move away from its long-standing inertia. One point that seems to be emerging from the current discussion is that, regrettably, we do not yet have the main elements around which consensus can be built.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): Much has been said on this subject, and there is danger of treating this important matter as one of routine or ritual, and carrying on business as usual. But judging from the large percentage of Member States participating in this debate, this issue cannot be shrugged off. The Security Council must be reformed to reflect the geopolitical realities of today. There is no justification for the continued existence of a category of permanent seats monopolized by certain countries that are only there because they shared in the spoils of victory in the Second World War.

Every Member State, small or big, should have an opportunity to serve on the Security Council on equal terms. My delegation has in the past, in this Hall, also questioned the existence of a veto which is the preserve of the five permanent members. This is what I said in my statement to the Assembly on 11 November 2005: “The present arrangement of five permanent members with a monopoly on the power of veto cannot be rationally justified” (*A/60/PV.50, p. 16*).

My delegation reiterates the same view today. However, so long as that category of membership exists, Africa demands that it should have

representation on the Security Council with the same status and exercising the same privileges, including the veto. That is no endorsement of that historical anachronism; rather, it is to say that, as long as that anachronism exists, we too should have such status until such time when that category is — hopefully — abolished. Accordingly, Africa has demanded at least two permanent seats, with the power of the veto, as well as five non-permanent seats.

There are timorous souls in this Hall and the corridors of the United Nations who have given up on Security Council reform because any suggestion of abolishing the permanent category with the veto or of expanding the permanent category by admitting new members with the power of the veto would be vetoed by any of the present Permanent Five. The reform of the Security Council has therefore been held hostage by five members. But history has shown that this type of stubbornness cannot persist forever in the face of a principled stand and determination. Eventually any of the Five will feel ashamed to cling to this archaic notion. We should therefore soldier on down the path of justified reform.

In order to move the process forward, the delegation of Uganda has in the past suggested that we could start with the less problematic issue of expansion in the non-permanent category. The expansion of that category would give more voice to developing countries in the Security Council. Eventually, we shall tackle the hard nut of the permanent seats, with the power of the veto. Some members have suggested the establishment of a category of some sort of permanent membership, but without the veto. Indeed, the Secretary-General also suggested that approach in his proposals. The reason behind this suggestion is to appease the present five permanent members and to endorse their continued privileges because, again, of the fear of any of them vetoing any reform that would do away with their privileges. Uganda has said that we do not want to join the Council as second-class citizens.

Our suggested gradual reform of the Council can also include tackling now the reform of the working methods of the Security Council. At present, much of the Security Council is shrouded in secrecy yet it makes decisions that affect the entire international community. Worse still, in those decisions that affect a particular Member State, that State is not given an opportunity to be heard. That is against the principle of natural justice. Such an opportunity to be heard should be a matter of right. To make matters worse, even when a Member is allowed to participate, its representative is only called upon to take a seat at the Security Council table, but must keep mum. That is a mockery of justice. This ritual should be done away with. A member should be given the right to speak once invited to the table. My delegation salutes the recent trend to allow more open debates where Member States that are not members of the Security Council can participate.

The reform of Security Council is long overdue. Let us move from rhetoric to action.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): This plenary meeting is devoted to consideration of agenda items 9 and 111, which pertain to the report of the Security Council (A/61/2) and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Although both items are being considered independently, as is appropriate, they are also related. We believe that they have an impact upon the international community's vision of a more representative, democratic and transparent Security Council that can respond effectively and speedily to the new challenges in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it — albeit not to it alone — by the Charter of the United Nations.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Ambassador Nassir Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar and President of the Security Council for the month of December, for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council, to which I now turn.

Although the report was provided to us at a late hour, my delegation believes its presentation was relevant for it serves to meet the requirements set by the Charter as well as the need to give account of the Council's work before the full General Assembly, which includes all Member States. We wish to point out that, although we have taken note of the progress made in the Council's working methods, the format of the report still lacks the substance and analysis that would have made possible a more thorough understanding of the important and sensitive tasks assigned to the Council. We hope that the members of the Council will use this debate in the plenary Assembly to draw conclusions that will lead to progress in the submission of a report that is more

substantive and not limited solely to a descriptive and chronological accounting of the subjects under its consideration.

We say that because we believe that consideration of the Council's report by Member States should not be a mere formality, but should instead reaffirm the responsibility of the Assembly for issues of fundamental importance to the entire membership of the Organization. We Member States have the right and the duty to know the work of the Council and to analyze it fully, given that, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, the Council acts on behalf of all Members and that its decisions affect the entire membership of the United Nations. We need a report that allows us to become familiar not only with the substance of the Council's debates but also with the positions taken by its members with regard to the items under its consideration.

We therefore support and encourage the statements made by preceding speakers with regard to requiring that the report of the Security Council include a more interactive component involving the General Assembly, given that the Assembly is the principal organ of these two main organs of the Organization. The maintenance of international peace and security is a commitment for all of us.

We acknowledge the progress made with regard to open meetings of the Council. As far as possible, such meetings should be the rule and not the exception, to allow Member States an opportunity to express their points of view on subjects that affect both Members and the Organization itself. It is also to be hoped — optimistically, perhaps — that open meetings will be taken into consideration by Council members prior to the adoption of resolutions, rather than presenting them as faits accomplis.

We also express our concern about the expansion of the Council's functions to the detriment of other organs, and in particular of the General Assembly itself. In addition, we are concerned about the normative nature of Council resolutions, which is assuming legislative competencies that exceed the mandate conferred by the Charter.

With regard to agenda item 111, my delegation agrees with what has been said by earlier speakers, namely, that there is a need to reform the Security Council and that such reform must be comprehensive and include both working methods and the expansion of membership so as to make the Council more legitimate, inclusive, representative and transparent.

I should also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the position of the Republic of Paraguay as regards the issue of equitable representation on the Security Council and the increase in the number of members. Paraguay favours expanding the number of Council members while bearing in mind geographic equilibrium and the new geopolitical reality in which we live. We support expanding the number of members in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, including developed and developing countries alike, taking into consideration that the latter are underrepresented in this important organ. Expanding the number of members will make the Council more representative, thereby improving the legitimacy and credibility of its actions.

Likewise, the issue of the permanent members' right of the veto should be addressed as a fundamental aspect of the reform process. We should aim at the gradual but eventually total elimination of the veto. A first step in that regard should be to strictly limit its use to issues considered under Chapter VII of the Charter. We could also leave open the possibility of periodic reviews of the reform, so as to analyse the Council's functioning in accordance with future needs and realities.

My delegation hopes that through open, frank and transparent dialogue among all Member States, we will ultimately move ahead with the reform process, thereby fulfilling the mandate entrusted to us by heads of State at the September 2005 Summit.

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

I shall now call on speakers who wish to speak in the exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): My comments pertain to the statement made this morning by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

First, we firmly believe that the qualifications of a given country for permanent membership in the Security Council should be judged on the basis of that country's contribution to the purposes of the United Nations, in particular to the maintenance of international peace and security. Japan, as a nation committed to peace, has been contributing to international peace and security for over 50 years, and

has also worked to promote and strengthen regional and international security. In accordance with its constitution, Japan has consistently adhered to an exclusively defensive security system, on the principle that it should never become a military Power. Japan does not posses any nuclear weapons, nor does it export weapons, and it has been actively involved in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Secondly, regarding the issue of the past, we cannot accept irrelevant linkage between the issue of the past and the permanent membership of Japan. Japan strongly rejects the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea implying that Japan had committed a holocaust, which is not true.

Mr. Sin Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in connection with the remarks just made by the Japanese delegation.

In its statement earlier this morning, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea mentioned nothing but the truth. Yes, Japan has a big purse and contributes in some ways to the activities of the United Nations. But that does not necessarily mean that those generous donations can be taken as a contribution to maintaining international peace and security. Why? The reason is simple: because any country with a big purse can contribute, but here only unselfish and good-hearted contributions are genuine and helpful contributions.

Japan now embellishes its past crimes against humanity by, for instance, distorting its past history of war crimes, while at the same time claiming that international judgments on its war crimes should be reviewed. What does all that really mean? It means that Japan very much wishes to repeat its past history of aggression and crimes against humanity.

Based on the facts of reality, we have come to believe that Japan's contributions, whatever form they may take, are nothing but a set of tricks just to hide its weird intentions. My delegation urges Japan to recognize its past crimes and to provide due compensation before attempting to realize its aspirations for permanent membership in the Security Council. That is, and will be, the only way for Japan to regain the trust it has lost in the international community.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): I do not want to take any more time, but I must reiterate and add to what I have said in reply to the allegation that has been made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is totally not true and which we oppose.

Japan would like to draw the attention of all members here to the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 8 October, claiming that it had conducted a nuclear test. In addition to that country's launching of ballistic missiles in July, and despite the Security Council presidential statement strongly urging it to refrain from conducting such tests, that act, which poses a grave threat to the peace and security of not only Japan but also all of East Asia and the international community, is totally unacceptable.

On 14 October, the Security Council swiftly and unanimously adopted resolution 1718 (2006), which sent out the international community's resolute message of condemnation of that act and which included measures to be taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the other Member States of the United Nations. Japan strongly urges the Democratic People's Republic to sincerely implement the resolution. For its part, Japan intends to make the utmost effort to ensure the steady implementation of the resolution, in cooperation with other countries.

Those are the facts. All Members of the United Nations know the facts. I should not repeat this once again, but Japan's record of 50 years of adherence to the United Nations clearly shows that Japan is truly a peace-loving country that contributes to the cause of the United Nations, humankind and humanitarian affairs. I think that is a very commonly known fact. I would ask members to take that point into consideration.

Mr. Sin Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): It is not really the wish of my delegation to again take the floor but, having listened to the statement made by the Japanese delegation, my delegation is somewhat compelled to respond, given that the Japanese delegation was quoting facts.

Truth and hypocrisy cannot co-exist. While listening to the Japanese delegation — which is seeking in vain to cover up its dark ambition, even at this plenary meeting where Member States are discussing crucial issues — my delegation has come to a de jure conclusion that there is truly no chance for Japan to become a responsible Member State. Since a

factual matter has been raised by the Japanese delegation, it is also a fact that, with the United States threat intensifying day by day, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no other option but to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in order to defend the interests of its people and State, and chose the route of developing nuclear weapons. There is no question about that.

I would like to appeal to all representatives to understand that my delegation is certain that with Japan as a permanent member of the Security Council, the world's peace and security, in particular that of Asia, will be seriously threatened and damaged.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the exercise of the right of reply.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/61/2?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has just completed its joint debate on agenda items 9 and 111, on the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Seventy-five delegations spoke during the debate. The large number of speakers and attendees in the Hall is a clear reflection of our interest, as well as our desire, to move forward on this matter.

We began the debate by considering the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Many Member States commended Qatar for its presidency of the Council, in particular its efforts to open up the Council's work through informal briefings. On this agenda item, many delegations recognized the complexity and relevance of the work of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Several positions emerged during the debate. First, Member States welcomed the Council's efforts to reinvigorate its working methods, as reflected by the report of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which was initiated by Japan. Secondly, concerns were expressed that the Council's work continues to encroach upon the functions and powers of the General Assembly. Thirdly, while Member States welcomed the comprehensive nature of the report, they thought that it should be more analytical. In addition, a large number of Member States commented that they did not have sufficient time to thoroughly consider the report, due to its late submission. Overall, the majority of speakers devoted a large portion of their interventions to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

I was pleased to note that the tone of the discussion was very constructive, and that many members welcomed the invitation to reconsider this matter with a fresh and innovative perspective.

Many delegations referred to the acknowledgement of world leaders in the 2005 Outcome Document that early reform of the Security Council is an essential element of the overall reform of the United Nations. Indeed, many delegations emphasized that the time is ripe for concrete action on Security Council reform. Nevertheless, many of the views expressed remain broadly similar to well-established positions on this issue. There does, however, appear to be consensus on the need to expand the Council to better reflect our world in the twenty-first century.

However, there remains a divergence of views on whether enlargement should occur in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership or only in the latter. If the Council were expanded to include new permanent members, there are also divergent views as to whether those members should be entitled to have the power of the veto.

The debate also evolved to consider the idea of transitional arrangements.

Many members insisted on the need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council involving both expansion and the improvement of working methods.

I have listened carefully to the comments and suggestions made by speakers with regard to the way forward. There appear to be three possible options that have been presented. First, the process could continue within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group. Secondly, the onus could be on Member States themselves to find a way forward. Thirdly, the President could lead an open and inclusive process of consultations and negotiations to reach the broadest possible agreement.

I very much appreciate those proposals and views. They confirm that members remain interested in seeing a concrete and satisfactory conclusion to this important outstanding reform agenda. I will revert to members shortly with my views on how to organize our deliberations on this matter during the sixty-first session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 9?

It was so decided.

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

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.