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New York

President: Mr. Kerim . . . . . (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 9 and 122 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/62/2)

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

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I am particularly honoured to address this Assembly on behalf of the African Group regarding a question of particular interest to our continent, which is Security Council reform. Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, as this matter remains unfinished business.

I would like to commend the Indonesian presidency for the presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/62/2). The African Group also takes note with appreciation of the notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations concerning matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security included on the agenda of the Council (A/62/300).

The Security Council report submitted to us devotes an important place to the African continent, since African issues continue to be, as rightly referred to in the report, at the forefront of the Council's agenda. Despite the prevalence of conflicts, positive developments are occurring in several countries in post-conflict situations, changing the gloomy picture sometimes presented of the continent to the world. We are pleased that the Security Council has regularly kept on its agenda the consideration of post-conflict situations in those countries.

The African Group welcomes in particular the Security Council's adoption of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/42) on its relations with regional organizations in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. With regard to the African Union (AU), the Security Council's mission to the AU's headquarters at Addis Ababa has enabled a very productive exchange of views on matters of mutual interest. The African Group therefore encourages the two bodies to continue that dialogue in order to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes in the area of peace and security.

While addressing the Security Council last week on behalf of the African Group in the debate devoted to the role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.5776), I mentioned that Africa has been the stage for useful experiences in the areas of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding — and, consequently, for the work of the Security Council. However, Africa is also fully aware of a central issue involving its relationship with the Council: the continent is not adequately represented in the Security Council.

The time has therefore come to redress the historical injustice done to Africa, in order to close a chapter that followed two world wars and to move forward in the search for collective security by

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working together in a more inclusive, transparent and democratic manner. For that reason, and in conformity with the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, Africa is asking for not less than two permanent seats on the Council — with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of the veto — in addition to five non-permanent seats. It would be the responsibility of the African Union to select Africa's representatives on the Security Council — a question to be given due consideration in accordance with acceptable criteria to be determined collectively at the level of the African Union and the United Nations, respectively. Africa is in principle opposed to the veto, but, if it is to be maintained, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council as a matter of justice. The Ezulwini Consensus is an integrated package that contains all the elements to which I have referred.

While addressing the General Assembly at the opening of its sixty-second session, Mr. President, you rightly stated that

> "If we want the United Nations to play its full role, we will have to do more and do it more effectively — both operationally at the country level and with regard to management at Headquarters. We also need the courage to move to a new stage leading to concrete results on Security Council reform". (*A/62/PV.1, p. 2*)

We fully endorse that view, and we commend you for your foresight and courage. You can therefore count on the support of the African Group.

The African Group is committed to strengthening the United Nations, including the Security Council, whose thorough reform will enable it to be more legitimate, representative and effective and, consequently, in a better position to perform its primary responsibility as provided for by the Charter of the Organization.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): First, let me thank His Excellency Ambassador Marty M. Natalegawa, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, for his introduction this morning of the report (A/62/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

Finland is a firm supporter of comprehensive Security Council reform. It is imperative that we build upon the work already done during previous sessions of the General Assembly and take the Security Council reform process forward. A process must be put in place that keeps the discussion going and achieves concrete progress soon. We support you, Mr. President, in your efforts to facilitate that process.

Finland views Security Council reform as an essential element of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. Despite the progress made in many areas of overall United Nations reform, Security Council reform has not advanced. In order to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations system, we need to proceed on that reform as well.

The reform of the Council must aim at increasing both its legitimacy and its effectiveness. The Council should better represent today's world community. The number of both permanent and non-permanent members should be increased, without extending the right of the veto. It is also important to guarantee the possibility of smaller States having an opportunity to serve in the Security Council. As an important part of comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the reform of its working methods and procedures is also vital.

A more representative, and therefore more legitimate, Council will also be more effective in carrying out its functions. It is now important to take the much-needed next step under your able guidance, Mr. President.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of November for his valuable introduction this morning of the annual report of the Council (A/62/2). I would also like to thank the former Chairperson and facilitators 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 for their outstanding efforts in managing the meetings of the Group during the previous session. I wish the Group every success in pursuing its important role in reaching solutions through compromise that will help to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Over the decades, the Security Council has made substantial efforts to maintain international peace and

security, to contain numerous emergencies, complex internal crises and regional and international tensions, to combat terrorism; to prevent war crimes, genocide and human rights violations, to build peace in post-conflict areas, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and to address other aggravated security challenges that pose a threat to human survival. Nevertheless, the outcome of these efforts and endeavours failed to meet our expectations and was associated, in some cases, with multifaceted failures to address some important matters on its agenda. This presented obstacles to the solution of certain issues, relating to the transparency of Security Council resolutions. The Security Council demonstrated total silence in certain cases of emerging security developments that threatened international peace and security, and it exceeded its mandate in some cases as specified in the Charter. There has also been excessive resort to Chapter VII of the Charter to address issues that do not necessarily pose an imminent threat to international peace and security. Additionally, the Security Council has intentionally fallen short in pursuing other resolutions relating to more pressing security issues, such as the developments in Palestine and the Middle East, which have been on the agenda of the Council since its establishment.

As we consider the inconsistencies in the current actions of the Security Council, we can see that they stem from its uneven structure, which was based on the international political and geographical reality of 1945, with some amendments made in 1963. In light of the current political, geographical, demographic and economic developments in the twenty-first century, we emphasize the importance of enabling the Security Council to play its natural and effective role of shouldering responsibility to orient international relations and implement international law, which requires urgent action to redress, in a systematic manner, the shortcomings in its working methods, as well as to ensure a total change in its structure and its response to today's regional and international political, geographical and economic changes and events.

My country has closely monitored all initiatives and deliberations held thus far at the bilateral and regional geographical levels and all formal and informal consultations organized by the General Assembly, including those pertaining to submitted draft resolutions. We also have followed other inclusive discussions held by facilitators appointed by the former President of the General Assembly and whose results were reflected in a final report issued last September. My country is deeply concerned with the unilateral positions expressed by some countries on this matter, which have prolonged the inability of the international community to achieve any progress and have increased the complexity of the matter on more than one level.

We therefore call on all concerned parties, including States and regional and political groups, to show the necessary political will and reflect a flexible, transparent and open approach in order to bring together disparate views and achieve international consensus on this matter. Our consultations must cover all aspects of this matter as an integral part of the comprehensive reform process of the United Nations system.

In this context, we also reiterate our position in favour of increasing the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council. This expansion should be based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable and fair geographical representation. It should also ensure the required political international balance in the representation of small and developing countries, so as to reflect the concerns and interests of all peoples and all regions. We also call for the allocation of one permanent seat, in addition to at least two non-permanent seats, to the Group of Arab States, which would be filled on a rotating basis and in accordance with the practices endorsed by the League of Arab States in the framework of consultations and discussions with both the Group of African States and the Group of Asian States.

Efforts to reform the Security Council must not focus only on the size of an enlarged Council or on membership categories or regional representation, but also on other important issues such as the development of its agenda and its procedures and working methods, including its process of international decision-making and its relationship with other international entities. These reforms should also take into consideration the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries in a reasonable, objective, non-arbitrary and non-selective manner. Therefore, we support open views expressed in this regard, including efforts aimed at achieving an early reform in the Security Council in accordance with the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit.

In this context we request, first, the establishment of checks and balances on the use of the veto in order to reduce its use and commit the Security Council to submitting reports to the General Assembly on matters in which the right of veto was used. This would help in evaluating and overruling this right under the agenda item entitled "United for Peace" and in accordance with the progressive interpretation of Articles 11, 24 (1) and 35 of the United Nations Charter. This would ensure an impartial and democratic decision-making process within the Council, particularly on complicated and emergency matters in which urgent action is needed in order to avoid bloodshed and protect innocent lives and property, in pursuance of the principles of the Charter, the foundations of international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Secondly, the Council should not, in accordance with Articles 41 and 42 of Chapter VII of the Charter, impose sanctions except for cases of aggression that pose an imminent threat to international peace and security. Sanctions should be imposed only after all other peaceful means have been exhausted, in accordance with the provisions of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, and only after elaborated extensive studies on their direct and indirect consequences in the short and long-term. This will help to avoid the risk of these sanctions turning into collective punishments on targeted States that punish innocent populations.

Thirdly, we also call for expanded opportunities for non-member States to participate in the activities of the Security Council and in activities that are directly related to matters under the Council's consideration. This would include countries whose interests are directly affected by its resolutions or countries that contribute to its peacekeeping operations with troops or equipment. We also believe there should be an increase in the number of open plenary meetings, particularly those involving draft resolutions on the deployment of peacekeeping missions in accordance with Articles 31 and 33 of the Charter and in the issuance of special, periodic and annual reports based on facts and documented information as well as analytic context in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter.

Fourthly, we must formalize the Security Council's rules of procedure in order to improve the Council's transparency and accountability, including non-infringement on the mandates of other regional and international entities and organs, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the Charter. The Security Council should strengthen its coordination with those organs so as to enhance its capacity and means to contain existing disputes and conflicts and prevent their serious implications for humankind from becoming realities.

We hope that our ongoing deliberations on this item will lead to a common and practical international approach in carrying out substantial and positive reform of the Security Council so that it can meet today's growing challenges in the area of international peacemaking and protect humanity from the destruction of war and the gross violations of human rights, and other grave threats in today's world.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Ambassador of Indonesia, President of the Security Council, for presenting the report of the Council to the General Assembly for the period August 2006 to July 2007 (A/62/2).

We note with interest the inclusion of a brief introduction written by the delegation of China, which held the Council presidency for the month of July 2007. The introduction summarizes the work carried out, including the organization of the work of the Council. We are grateful for the effort to provide qualitative information, which enables the General Assembly to better evaluate the Council's work.

However, it is essential to draft a more comprehensive report that goes beyond the compilation of lists and addresses substantive issues, such as the criteria used by the Council in its decision-making. That would help to increase the transparency of its work and to enhance the assessment capacity of the General Assembly, as the central organ and authority of the United Nations system. To that end, it would also be helpful if the Council submitted special reports more often.

Clearly, the global reality presents challenges and opportunities for the Security Council. In that connection, without prejudice to the Council's ability to obtain information about topics of interest to it, we note with concern its tendency to address matters outside the sphere of competence entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Year after year, upon receiving this report, we have noted the constant increase in the amount of the Council's work. That is yet another reason why, for the sake of greater efficiency, that organ should stop addressing matters that are within the purview of other bodies in the United Nations system.

I should also like to highlight the progress described in the report concerning the situation in Haiti. In that connection, we appreciate the Council's efforts, particularly the one-year extension of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. We are confident that the Mission will be able to consolidate the constitutional and political process taking place in that country.

Reform of the Security Council complements the process of reforming the Organization and must continue to be a priority for the Assembly. In its current configuration, the Council does not match current realities in terms of either its representativity or its working methods. The status quo is not appropriate. We need reform that transforms the Council into a more democratic, representative, transparent and accountable organ.

My delegation recognizes the significant progress made within the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform during the previous session of the General Assembly. We highlight the efforts and the leadership of Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, former President of the General Assembly. Likewise, Colombia thanks the facilitators for their efforts and for the presentation of their reports, which should serve as a point of departure for the next phase in the consideration of this matter.

It is undeniable that momentum has been created by the Working Group's efforts, particularly the identification of alternative ways to expand the Council's membership — including the transitional approach — that can serve as a basis for seeking the broadest possible agreement. The report of the Working Group, and in particular the reports of the facilitators, also serve as a basis for carrying out the General Assembly's decision to consider this issue at its sixty-second session with a view to achieving further results, including through intergovernmental negotiations.

Despite the consensus reached, various issues remain unresolved as a result of the environment in which the Working Group's report and the Assembly's decision were adopted. We need to restore confidence and to create positive conditions of transparency and goodwill. Attaining those objectives will be possible only if Security Council reform is considered in an open and participative forum where all States can express their points of view.

In that connection, my delegation reaffirms the role of the Working Group as the principal and only forum for considering this issue. The establishment of forums that could infringe upon the mandate and scope of the Working Group would be harmful to the reform process. Any further alternatives regarding this issue must be aimed at supporting the Working Group's efforts and building on the progress made within in it.

In that context, the Working Group must first set about defining a format, parameters and elements for possible intergovernmental negotiations. This first stage must be conducted in a consensual manner and without the imposition of artificial deadlines. Substantive aspects should not be considered until the framework, modalities and components of the negotiations are clear.

While we must not prejudge the outcome of the process, our goal must remain to create a more democratic and more representative Security Council in which current privileges are not perpetuated. My delegation reaffirms its support for the transitional approach, with an increase in the number of non-permanent seats and the possibility of re-election, provided it does not lead to a de facto permanent membership through repeated re-election.

Considering an increase in the Council's membership must not eclipse the priority of continuing to review and adjust its working methods in order to achieve a more democratic and transparent body with greater accountability. As on previous occasions, my delegation reaffirms the need to increase the participation of non-member States so that the decisions taken within this body can better reflect national and regional realities, on the basis of the particularities of each situation.

Moreover, my delegation believes that the Security Council's accountability to the General Assembly is the only way to achieve genuine transparency in the work of the Council and to strengthen the role of the Assembly as the Organization's sole universal deliberative and decision-making body.

Colombia, as a country that is part of the Uniting for Consensus movement, reiterates its willingness to contribute to an open and constructive process vis-à-vis the development of this issue, and expresses its readiness to consider proposals that could lead to the widest possible agreement among the Members of the Organization. We call on all other States to maintain an open and flexible approach with regard to this process.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): May I express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of the Republic of Indonesia, this month's President of the Security Council, for his introduction this morning of the report (A/62/2) of the Council covering the period from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, for the leadership she provided to find a way forward 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 latest annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly was adopted by the Council on 25 October 2007, and published as an official document just last week. It would have been more helpful had it been made available much earlier. My delegation hopes that that situation will be remedied in the coming years.

Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In carrying out its duties, the Council acts on behalf of the Member States. In that regard, we believe that the Council must be accountable to the General Assembly in a manner consistent with the Charter.

The question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council has been on the agenda since 1979. Although there has been intensive debate on that important topic for many years, there was little progress until early this year, when the President of the General Assembly — the predecessor to the current President — urged members to focus on five key issues. Following extensive discussions on the key issues, a report was submitted to the President of the General Assembly in April 2007. We are encouraged to note that consultations were subsequently carried out with the membership on how to move the process forward, and that a report was subsequently submitted in June 2007. During the consultations, many members reiterated that the reform of the Security Council must be an integral part of the ongoing reform process of the United Nations and that the reform of the United Nations would be incomplete without a meaningful reform of the Council.

Notwithstanding new ideas that have emerged from the consultations, including the considerable interest in, and openness to, the intermediary approach, there still remain significant differences of views among members on the reform of the Security Council. Nevertheless, in a broad sense, all of us agree on the fact that no meaningful reform of the United Nations will be achieved without the reform of the Security Council itself.

We share the view that the United Nations must be reformed to be in step with today's global realities. However, the reform must not only reflect the increase in membership of the United Nations, but must also take into consideration the need for representation on the basis of equitable distribution, mutual benefit and cooperation.

In order to transform the Security Council into a more representative organ that is capable of addressing contemporary political and economic realities, its membership must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. As developing countries are underrepresented in the Council, any reform must address that inequality.

After more than a decade of intensive discussions on this important matter, we are not yet much closer to our goal. In the meantime, there is much that can be improved with regard to the Council, even as it is presently constituted. That only needs political will.

First and foremost, Article 24, paragraph 2, of the Charter should be respected to ensure that the Council's actions are in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In that regard, we fully share the view expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement that the decision by the Security Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on the situation of any Member State or any issue that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

The expansion of the membership of the Council will make it a more representative forum. However,

expansion alone will not guarantee the effectiveness or transparency of the Council. Security Council reform must place special emphasis on substantive issues — as well as on its agenda, working methods and decision-making process — to make the Council more transparent and democratic.

The Council agenda should reflect the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries, ensure openness, transparency and consistency and abide by the provisions of the Charter, including Article 100, paragraph 2. Those are measures that can be taken immediately while we await the eventual reform and enlargement of the Security Council.

At the 2005 World Summit, heads of State and Government expressed support for the early reform of the Security Council as part of the overall reform of the Organization. Let us work constructively to reform the Council to make it more representative, effective and transparent and to further enhance the legitimacy of its decisions.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I would like to start by thanking my colleague from Indonesia, the President of the Security Council for the month of November, for introducing to the General Assembly this morning the report (A/62/2) of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

It is clear from the report that the serious issues before the Security Council are increasing, both in number and scope, and encompass all major regions as well as many cross-cutting thematic issues. However, let me limit my brief statement to the other agenda item under consideration today, namely, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Once again, this debate is being held early in this new session of the General Assembly. In fact, we have been speaking about this issue for nearly a decade and a half 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 impasse on this fundamentally important issue does not reflect well on the United Nations. It is all the more lamentable, given the fact that no one disagrees with the conclusion of the 2005 World Summit, which acknowledged that early reform of the Security Council was

> "an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations — in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions". (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*)

In an interview you gave to BBC Radio recently, Mr. President, you stated,

> "Reforming makes sense only if you achieve by that more transparency, more efficiency, and you reflect what is today's world situation."

We could not agree with you more, Mr. President. The stakes are high, and an equitable resolution on the reform questions of the Council could greatly add to comprehensive security. Our goals of reform of the Security Council are therefore far too important to abandon. We must continue to seek solutions with open minds and renewed vigour.

Throughout the years, Iceland has advocated a more representative and thus a more legitimate Council through expansion in membership, mirroring the changes that have taken place in the overall membership of the United Nations. We have also advocated more transparency and inclusiveness in the work of the Security Council. On this basis, Iceland was one of the sponsors in July 2005 of resolution A/59/L.64, better known as the Group of Four proposal, which, as we all know, never came to a vote. In a nutshell, Iceland's position has been the following: increase in both the permanent and the two-year elected members of the Security Council, a Council totalling about 25 countries, working methods reform based on the suggestions in the Group of Four and/or the so-called S-5 draft resolutions, as well as increased representation of developing countries. Since the tabling of the Group of Four proposal, we have had in-depth discussions on various models and possible compromises.

The valuable work on these issues during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the extensive efforts of the "5 plus 2" Permanent Representatives and inputs from all sides did frankly not produce much in the way of formal results other than the decision to continue the consideration of the issues during the present General Assembly session. However, we have the feeling that everyone now realizes more fully the need to show increased flexibility.

Ideas have been put forward, not ideal ones perhaps, but maybe the best possible substantial solutions at this time, as acknowledged by the five facilitators. These ideas need to be developed further. We are looking for new avenues and ways, which will have to encompass the issues of enlargement and working methods.

In the latest report of the Open-ended Working group from last September, we all agreed to continue our work on Security Council reform, including through intergovernmental negotiations during this session of the General Assembly. We welcome this call.

If fundamental previous positions are to be changed during the forthcoming negotiations and the idea of a defined period of transitional arrangements is to be adopted, an agreement has to be reached on a mandatory review after a specific number of years. If such compromises are to be negotiated, it must be done without prejudice to original positions.

Regardless of how our negotiations develop in the weeks and months ahead, they must be marked by a transparency that gives all Member States equal opportunities to participate. Or, as Ambassador Heller of Mexico said this morning, we must have a spirit of collaboration of all States.

Finally, we would like to congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council. Iceland, as a first-time candidate, hopes to join them on the Council for their second year there.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by thanking the President of the Security Council for this month, His Excellency Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council. I would also like to commend the efforts of the Secretariat in producing this report.

According to the report, African issues remained at the forefront of the Council's agenda, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Burundi, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic all began the transition from conflict towards stability. We welcome and encourage the efforts of these countries and their peoples to consolidate the peace and stability that is necessary for nation-building.

In many other parts of the continent, however, instability continued, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. The humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan is still ongoing. The timely and full deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is essential in moving the political process towards a comprehensive agreement. We hope to see improvements in both Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the coming year.

The security situation in Iraq is still unstable. We support the efforts of the international community, including the Security Council, to promote an inclusive and effective political process in Iraq, aimed at preserving the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Republic of Korea remains committed to helping Iraq implement the International Compact with Iraq and has been maintaining its troop presence there since 2003.

Lebanon has continued to experience political crisis and instability in recent months. We support the continuing efforts of the Lebanese Government and the Security Council to establish peace and stability in the country. Through our participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the Republic of Korea is pleased to contribute to that endeavour.

Elsewhere in Asia, we are deeply concerned about the unstable security situation throughout Afghanistan. Re-establishing lasting security requires a multidimensional strategy, coordinating military, police, political, and economic and social activities. The international community must continue to assist Afghanistan in its transition to peace and stability.

Turning to non-proliferation, the nuclear issue in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has rightfully attracted the attention of the international community. The recent inter-Korean summit and the progress at the Six-Party Talks have created considerable momentum for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We welcome the significant progress at the Six-Party Talks last month in Beijing, at which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea agreed to the disablement of its three main nuclear facilities by the end of this year. We hope that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will be achieved quickly and effectively, contributing to peace and security in the region and beyond.

We fully recognize the importance of reforming the Security Council to make it more representative, accountable, transparent, efficient and democratic. We believe that these principles are widely shared among

Member States and that they should be upheld in our efforts to reform the Council. Given the enormous implications of Security Council reform for the future of the United Nations, my delegation has long held the view that any proposal on Security Council reform should garner the general agreement of the membership, well above the required majority in the General Assembly. We believe strongly in this principle of general agreement, which should be applied at every stage of our negotiations.

An integral part of reforming the Security Council is improving its working methods. We welcome the initiatives that have so far been put forward to enhance the transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of the Council's work and we are pleased to see that the Council itself is considering several such initiatives. We support the steps taken so far by the Council in this regard. Building on this progress, we believe that further reform is needed to make the Council more transparent, democratic and efficient.

On the issue of its membership, we share the position of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group that the best way to reform the membership of the Council is through an increase in non-permanent, elected seats, not through the addition of permanent members. The UFC proposal would make it possible for each region to devise its own arrangements to ensure that large, medium and small States are all represented in an enlarged Security Council.

Many delegations have pointed out that the current composition of the Council is based on the world of 1945, and thus fails to reflect the changes over the past 60 years. We agree. By exactly the same principle, we believe that we should not freeze into place a new structure based on today's realities. The pace of global change has never been greater, and it seems reasonable to expect that in a few decades the world might be different from today in ways no one could have predicted.

We believe that the addition of permanent members would not be in the best interests of the United Nations or its Member States. It would be contrary to the values that we have developed over time and seek to promote. It would undercut the effectiveness of the Council. It would heavily impair its accountability as well. There is no democracy where a single election entitles the winner to remain in office in perpetuity. For those reasons, we are opposed to the addition of new permanent members to the Security Council.

The Republic of Korea believes that the discussion of Security Council reform during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly should build upon the progress made during the sixty-first session. Given the stark differences of view on a number of core issues, we believe that the intermediate approach proposed by the facilitators during the sixty-first session is our best hope for progress. My delegation would like to emphasize once again that the Open-ended Working Group is the legitimate place to discuss Security Council reform, both because Member States agreed on its continuing role for the sixty-second session and because it can accommodate the views and concerns of the majority of the membership in a broadly representative, transparent and democratic process of debate.

My delegation strongly believes that we should avoid creating an atmosphere of confrontation among Member States, which could seriously divide the United Nations and endanger the United Nations reform process as a whole. We should refrain from presenting unilateral proposals that force divisive and potentially damaging discussions among Member States. In this regard, we cannot but note with concern that a draft resolution had already been circulated prior to today's discussion.

The Republic of Korea remains ready to engage constructively in further discussion, with a view to reaching general agreement on this critical issue. In that regard, Mr. President, we would welcome an initiative on your part to move the process forward, which we trust would be carried out in an impartial and all-inclusive manner. We hope that, in our collective wisdom, we can find a method consistent with our shared values by which to reform the Security Council so that it can better fulfil its mandate.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Charter of the United Nations designates the Security Council as the principal organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the past year, the Council has continued to work actively in addressing regional hot-spot issues, maintaining regional stability, helping with the post-conflict reconstruction of the countries concerned and preventing the proliferation of weapons

of mass destruction. My delegation is encouraged that the Council has achieved impressive results on all those fronts. While fulfilling its responsibilities, the Council is also trying continuously to explore ways to improve its working methods, enhance transparency and strengthen communication and interaction with other United Nations organs and all parties concerned. I am convinced that the Council will stay on that track.

As President of the Council for the month of July in 2007, China drafted the introduction section of the annual report of the Security Council to the Assembly (A/62/2). Other members of the Council, based on their experiences, put forward many proposals on that section and finally reached consensus. We hope that the report gives an accurate, comprehensive and balanced account of the work of the Council. It is true that there is still much room for further improvement in the work of the Council. China is ready to continue to make efforts, together with others, in that regard so as to enable the Council to better fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter.

Since the 2005 World Summit, there has been a series of positive results in overall reform of the United Nations, thanks to the common efforts of all Member States. As an important component of United Nations reform, reform of the Security Council has been the focus of attention by all sides and remains a tough issue, involving complex difficulties of various kinds. It is encouraging to note that, as expected by all sides, certain new dynamics and positive developments emerged in the discussions on Council reform during the last session of the Assembly.

First of all, strong political consensus has emerged among all Member States that the Security Council needs to improve its working methods and increase its representativity. If Council reform can achieve a “soft landing” and produce further positive achievements, it will open a window of opportunity to increase cohesiveness among the Member States and enhance the effectiveness of the multilateral machinery.

Secondly, while adhering to their respective positions, the majority of Member States are adopting a more pragmatic approach towards the Security Council reform process. As stated in the report of the five facilitators appointed by the previous President of the Assembly (A/61/47, annex II), a significant number of Member States displayed flexibility, expressed willingness to explore a viable compromise solution and held the view that any reform formula should enjoy the widest possible political acceptance by Member States. Compared with two years ago, all parties concerned are leaning more towards constructive consultations and practical cooperation on the question of Council reform.

Thirdly, at its sixty-first session, the Assembly took note by consensus of 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/61/47), mandating the Group to continue its work during the sixty-second session of the Assembly and agreeing to launch an intergovernmental negotiation process on Council reform. The report submitted by the five facilitators summarized well the positions of all sides and the possibility for progress and put forward some valuable recommendations, which broadened the horizon for future consultations.

While the political will of Member States is crucial to the progress achieved so far, we must not forget the important role played by Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, the President of the Assembly at its previous session. China appreciates the approach taken both by Ms. Al-Khalifa and by the facilitators she appointed of always dealing with Council reform in a constructive way and engaging in extensive consultations with all sides to seek a consensus that accommodates the concerns of all. That is an important practice in the discussion of Council reform, and we should continue to follow that approach.

Reform of the Security Council involves the vital interests of all Member States, and the aforementioned progress was not easy to come by. It therefore makes it all the more important that we cherish the current positive momentum, maintain adequate flexibility and continue our constructive consultations, with a view to achieving general agreement on concrete formulas for Council reform. China is open to the launching of an intergovernmental negotiation process. In our view, agreeing to start the negotiations is the first step of the process, and we must define the basic framework and content of the negotiating process so that we all know what will be negotiated and how the negotiations will be conducted.

China believes that, as an open platform with the participation of all 192 Member States, the Open-ended Working Group could and should play an important role in the future negotiating process. That will ensure that the negotiations are open and inclusive and that all Member States participate equally. Regarding the negotiating process, we must first reach agreement on the entire framework through full consultations among all sides, because an edifice can be built only on a firm foundation.

Simply stated, years of practice have attested to the extreme sensitivity and complexity of the issue of Security Council reform. Real progress on this issue requires all sides to adopt new thinking and new initiatives, build upon the current positive interactions and reach the widest possible consensus through patient consultations. We call on all sides to take as a priority the maintenance of unity among Member States, show genuine political good faith, take practical measures to meet their interlocutors half way and, at the same time, avoid any unilateral action that might complicate the situation, all with a view to creating a favourable political atmosphere for working out a general agreement through negotiations.

China has consistently supported the necessary and reasonable reform of the Security Council and is willing to continue to explore, together with others, appropriate formulas and ways for reforming the Council. We also support the continued effort by the Security Council to improve its working methods, efficiency and decision-making procedures so as to give greater expression to the views of the broader United Nations membership.

I wish to reaffirm our position that reform of the Security Council must accommodate the interests and concerns of all sides and put priority on increasing the representation of developing countries, especially African countries. Any formula on Security Council reform that does not address the concerns of Africa can hardly win endorsement of the entire United Nations membership and will not have the backing of China. That is one of China's fundamental principles regarding Security Council reform.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): Like previous speakers, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his presentation of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/62/2. The Council's reports have been the object of much comment over the years, given their potential as a major point of interaction between these two principal organs of the Organization. That potential takes on great significance because, according to Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the States Members of the United Nations confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.

In as much as the Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Member States in the maintenance of international peace and security, and while few would argue that the report is not comprehensive, many countries, the Bahamas included, agree that it could and should be more substantive and analytical, presenting a reflective view and assessment of the Council's activities. It is also in this vein that the Bahamas supports the idea of an interactive exchange between the Security Council and the General Assembly when these reports are being considered by the latter.

The report before us today certainly illustrates the breath of the actions undertaken by the Council on our behalf, and the report reveals that there has been a continuous increase in the volume and scope of the Council's activities. The greater number of these activities was, in our view, rightfully geared towards bringing resolution to a number of conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly in Africa. We commend the Council for its focus in this area, especially in the light of the acknowledged nexus between peace, security and development and of the need to ensure that Africa makes significant strides towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Bahamas also welcomes the Council's sustained focus on our sister Caribbean nation, Haiti, through the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in an effort to resolve the complex challenges confronting that country. Here, we note with satisfaction the Council's adoption of its resolutions 1702 (2006) and 1743 (2007) during the period covered by the report, extending the mandate of MINUSTAH on both occasions. Security Council resolution 1780 (2007), which was adopted just last month and which extends the MINUSTAH mandate for a full year, is equally welcome and appropriate. It is absolutely imperative

that the international community continue to provide Haiti with the required assistance and support for its stabilization and reconstruction in the months and years ahead.

The Bahamas also takes a keen interest in the work of the various counter-terrorism bodies of the Council, particularly their efforts to increase coordination in their respective fields of work, as well as their provision of technical assistance to those States in need. The sometimes Herculean effort required to implement critical counter-terrorism measures adopted by the Security Council, as well as to meet reporting obligations under various resolutions, continues to pose a challenge to many States, particularly small States. The Bahamas would encourage the Council to continue its efforts to coordinate much-needed assistance to States in all aspects of their counter-terrorism obligations, in our collective fight against that scourge.

In tandem with the report of the Security Council, we are also, appropriately, considering the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council contained in document A/61/47.

The Bahamas acknowledges the service and efforts of the Member States that are members of the Security Council. We believe it is vital that all Member States with the capacity to serve on the Council be given an opportunity to do so and, therefore, we feel that the expansion of the membership of the Council is appropriate and should be given careful and due consideration. A Council that is truly representative of the present world must more equitably reflect the current membership of the Organization, allowing developing countries, including small developing States, to play a greater role in its activities.

Expanding the membership of the Security Council is, however, only one dimension of the reform that needs to take place in that body. The other, equally important, dimension is reform of the Council's working methods. Many Member States continue to place great emphasis and importance on the working methods of the Security Council as a means of making the body more transparent, inclusive, accountable and effective.

The Bahamas welcomes the Open-ended Working Group's call for continued consideration of these issues during the current session of the General Assembly. We believe that intergovernmental negotiations on all aspects of Security Council reform are the next important step in advancing this process. My delegation looks forward to participating fully in that exercise.

The adage which states that with great power comes great responsibility applies most appropriately to the Security Council. We believe that primary among the Council's responsibilities is that of engaging regularly and constructively in dialogue with those on whose behalf it acts, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. My delegation sincerely hopes that this debate and the ensuing relevant discussions will all contribute to that end.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to commend you on your efforts to work with Member States to achieve comprehensive and much-needed reform of the United Nations. During the general debate held here in September, heads of State or Government identified numerous new challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Peace, security, conflict mitigation and reform in the broader Middle East, post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa, non-proliferation and the fight against extremism and global terrorism are just a few of the issues that the United Nations will be called upon to address. The Security Council, as the primary guarantor of international peace and security, must be able to continue to deal successfully with these and other threats to global security.

The United States recognizes that the world has changed, requiring the United Nations, including the Security Council, to adapt. The changed world suggests that the modernization of the Security Council and the greater United Nations system is both appropriate and timely.

Regarding Security Council reform, we believe that expansion of the Council must ensure that its ability to respond with agility, credibility and efficacy to threats to international peace and security is preserved. Qualified candidates for permanent membership must have demonstrated their ability to act as responsible stakeholders in responding to global challenges to peace and security. They must also maintain a strong commitment to democracy, human rights and non-proliferation and provide substantial peacekeeping or financial contributions to the United

Nations. Those requirements suggest only a modest expansion of the Council.

As President Bush said in his address to the General Assembly (see A/62/PV.4), the United States continues to support Japan's candidacy for permanent membership. Other nations should be considered as well, although we have not made any decisions about which other countries might qualify.

The United States does not have a specific proposal for Council expansion. Despite our openness to the prospect of expansion, we have noted that persistent differences among Member States' positions have prevented previous proposals from garnering widespread support. We therefore look forward to reviewing new proposals to achieve a modest expansion of the Council that are capable of achieving broad-based support.

The United States continues to believe that comprehensive reform of the entire United Nations system is needed to increase its effectiveness and credibility in addressing the new challenges of the twenty-first century. Expansion of the Security Council should be part of a meaningful package of reforms in other priority areas. We support efforts by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to achieve our shared goal of attaining a balanced and comprehensive reform of the United Nations, and we believe that such efforts will serve to reinvigorate 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.

I look forward to hearing the views of other Member States and hope that this discussion will take us one step closer to achieving our shared goal of United Nations reform: to make this Organization as effective as possible to deliver for the next 60 years, on the goals for which it was created.

In conclusion, let me express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for helping this body engage in a constructive dialogue on this important issue. I would also like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Natalegawa of Indonesia, for his remarks introducing the annual report of the Council (A/62/2). The report provides all Member States with a transparent and comprehensive review of the intensive work of the Security Council.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by thanking you for convening today's plenary meeting. My delegation attaches great importance to this joint debate on two items: the annual report on the activities of the Security Council and reform of the Council. It provides a timely and useful opportunity to reflect on the way forward on the key issues involved here: structural reform of the Council and improvement of the Council's working methods.

At the opening of the sixty-second session's general debate (see A/62/PV.4), Sir, you identified Security Council reform as among the five priority topics to be addressed during this session. Japan welcomes your strong interest in this issue. We place high expectations on your role as President of the General Assembly in advancing Council reform and achieving concrete results during this session.

First, I would like to touch briefly upon this year's report of the Security Council (A/62/2). I thank Ambassador Natalegawa, the President of the Council for this month, for his presentation of the report to the General Assembly. The report describes the continuing active work of the Council, which has primary responsibility for international peace and security. It also indicates how the Council has incorporated efforts to tackle new challenges in its work. In that context, some criticism has been raised, stating that such efforts constitute encroachment by the Council on the responsibilities of the Assembly. As the concept of security expands, however, Japan believes that positive outcomes will be attained as a whole when the Assembly and the Council work together in a complementary manner within their respective areas of responsibility.

Japan supports the effort to increase the transparency of the work of the Council. We note that this year the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the able leadership of Ambassador Burian, the Permanent Representative of Slovakia, urged all relevant actors to ensure the implementation of the recommendations contained in the note by the President of the Council (S/2006/507), in the preparation of which my delegation actively participated, and that the Group continues to explore measures to further enhance the transparency of the work of the Council.

It is an important development that the Working Group held a discussion on how to improve the report drafting process; this is evidence of the Council's own efforts to improve transparency. Japan would like to express its sincere appreciation for the dedicated work of the mission of Slovakia and would like to urge all Members, Council members and other relevant actors to redouble their efforts to implement fully the recommendations contained in the Note by the President.

Japan welcomes the fact that momentum towards the realization of Security Council reform was gained during the past session and carried over to this session. The majority of the political leaders of Member States stressed the necessity of Security Council reform during the general debate of the current session. We therefore welcome today's timely debate and hope that it will accelerate the move to the next phase of the process.

At the end of the past session, the Assembly decided that the question of Security Council reform should be considered during the sixty-second session of the Assembly, so that further concrete results might be achieved, including through intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved so far, particularly at the sixty-first session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States.

I have exchanged views with almost every Permanent Representative to the United Nations here in New York since recently assuming my post. I am encouraged that the view is very broadly shared that the current composition of the Council should be reformed as soon as possible and that we should produce concrete results on this matter during this session.

Security Council reform has been under discussion in the Open-ended Working Group for the past 14 years. Through those discussions, the position of each country has been made quite clear. We are concerned that if we again defer reform and the current composition of the Council continues to remain unchanged, not only will the effectiveness and representativeness of the Council be compromised in the years to come, but its credibility will be increasingly questioned.

With that in mind, we should enter into the negotiation process on Security Council reform as soon as possible. This issue is our common responsibility, as the present representatives of Member States — our responsibility to the generations to come. States Members of the United Nations have agreed solemnly to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter. Therefore, the composition of the Council must be reformed to reflect the current world reality and to make the Council more representative and more effective. As we reflect on the history of international relations, we must demonstrate to the world that we have the wisdom and indeed the capacity to reform the Security Council through diplomacy and negotiations.

The reform of the Security Council is not a matter for just a few Member States. At issue is the enhancement of the functions of the principal organs of the United Nations. Enhancing the functioning of the Security Council is integral to that crucial task. Without meaningful reform of the Security Council, therefore, the reform of the United Nations will be incomplete.

In order to enhance the functioning of the Security Council, we must reform its composition to reflect today's world and to address effectively the needs of the twenty-first century. To achieve that goal, it is necessary that those countries that have major responsibilities in implementing the decisions of the Security Council with regard to international peace and security should occupy permanent seats in the Security Council.

We continue to stress that the Security Council must be reformed through modifications that include an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, with the inclusion of both developed and developing countries, so as to make the Council more representative, more efficient and more transparent while enhancing its credibility.

In September, a new Cabinet was formed in Japan. The position of the Japanese Government on the reform of the Security Council remains unchanged. As Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stated in his policy speech in the Diet on 1 October,

> "In order to be able to make further contribution to the international community, Japan will pursue United Nations Security Council reform and permanent membership in the Security Council."

I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the many delegations that have expressed their support for Japan in that regard.

Japan also continues to attach great importance to improving the working methods of the Council, as an important pillar of Security Council reform. We look forward to further progress in that area.

We reaffirm the necessity of achieving concrete results on Security Council reform during the current session. During the general debate in the plenary on 28 September, Foreign Minister Koumura of Japan urged Member States to take such action. It is now time for us to move Security Council reform to the negotiation phase. Japan will participate actively in intergovernmental negotiations and in a flexible manner, with a view to achieving concrete results during this session.

We hope that you, Mr. President, will continue to provide us with the necessary guidance on this vital question. We would like to request that you exercise your leadership in initiating a negotiation process and that you convene an appropriate forum for such negotiations at the earliest possible date.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for providing us with an opportunity to assess the state of play in the reform of the Security Council and to reflect on how the process should move forward, while we attempt to take advantage of the productive and substantive work done during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Indonesia for his introduction this morning of the annual report (A/62/2) of the Security Council.

Two years have already elapsed since the 2005 World Summit, at which heads of State and Government declared that "We support early reform of the Security Council — an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations." (*resolution 60/1, para. 153*)

In the two years since then, we devoted most of our attention and energy to other aspects of United Nations reform. As a result of our joint efforts, important results were achieved, showing that a convergence of political will is attainable even on the most complex issues. Some momentum on Security Council reform was regained during the sixty-first session. We thank the former President of the General Assembly for her commitment to that objective and for putting in place a methodology of work that led to the elaboration of two far-sighted reports.

We also wish to take this opportunity to commend the work done by our competent and skillful colleagues — namely, the Permanent Representatives of Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands and Tunisia — and to congratulate them for the quality of the reports they have prepared.

While exploring new and innovative ideas based on the two different concepts of transitional approaches and intermediary arrangements, the reports prepared during the sixty-first session managed to move the debate from the repetition of initial static positions to the introduction of a new dynamic in the discussions. That approach allowed us to discern some movement in the area of Security Council reform.

Many questions still remain unresolved in the various aspects addressed by the reports, notably with respect to the review exercise, the categories of membership, the question of regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council and working methods. The Portuguese position on those issues is on record. At this stage, I would just like to highlight two very important ideas that emerged from the work done during the sixty-first session that we find to be in tune with our long-standing positions.

The first is that the debates held during the previous session and the reports I have mentioned stressed the need to duly consider the concerns of medium-sized and small States. We were wary of some of the ideas flagged during the debates of the sixty-first session that pointed to the notion that the interests of medium-sized and small countries should be dealt with in the framework of working methods — assuming that agreement on Security Council expansion was first and foremost a matter of concern just for major and medium Powers. Notwithstanding the apparent importance of enhanced working methods that would ensure better access to the work of the Security Council, we are of the view that the enlargement of the Council — which definitely needs to be pursued — must contemplate the concerns of medium-sized and small States and take into consideration the impact of the relative positions of those States in the international community. After all, we must not lose sight of the fact that, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States.

The other idea is contained in the conclusion contained in the April report of the five facilitators,

namely, that a definitive solution to the question of the veto might not be feasible at this stage and that Member States might wish therefore to address it in the framework of the review process. In fact, it is our belief that the requirement for concurring votes, established in Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, should not be expanded beyond the current permanent members of the Security Council.

We now face the responsibility of making good use of the work done during the sixty-first session to seize and build on the momentum achieved, so that further progress can be made in the current session of the General Assembly. We need to find appropriate ways to implement the provisions set out in paragraphs (d) and (e) of the draft decision contained in paragraph 21 of the report (A/61/47) 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. We rely on your guidance, Mr. President, and your experience and wise advice in the process of defining the best way to move forward. But we also know that your authority and wisdom cannot replace the political will of the membership and its ability to strike compromises.

As the June report of the two facilitators puts it,

> "While the continued leadership of the President of the General Assembly will be essential, substantive input from Member States will be indispensable in order to take the discussions to the next stage." (*A/61/47, annex IV, para. 26*)

And referring to the recommendation to start intergovernmental negotiations, the facilitators concluded that "Member States should have primary ownership of such a process". *(A/61/47, annex IV, para. 27).*

Portugal stands ready to engage in a process of negotiations that is truly intergovernmental, open, transparent and inclusive. This phrase may sound like mere jargon, but we believe that it is profoundly true, in particular on the subject of Security Council reform, in which every Member State has a stake.

Mr. **Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Events of recent years show clearly that global problems of security — such as, settling acute regional conflicts, fighting international terrorism and fighting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — demand collective approaches. The best forum for working out such issues is, indeed, the United Nations, which has a unique legitimacy. So we see our basic task to be the strengthening of the United Nations as a universal mechanism to consider and settle problems facing mankind.

Of course, changes in the world today and the emergence of new challenges and threats require that the United Nations and its main bodies adapt to the new realities, and that includes the Security Council. For example, it would be in the general interest to make more active use of the peacemaking potential of the United Nations. Qualitative improvement would include making the Military Staff Committee, a charter body, under the Security Council, fully operational. That organ could work in a new format, involving all members of the Security Council.

Reform of the United Nations, including such an important element as enlarging the Security Council, is not an end in itself. Any changes must be geared towards enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations and strengthening its central role in peacekeeping. It is essential, in deciding on reform, that we be guided by the need to preserve the inter-State nature of this world Organization. In order to achieve this goal, one has to have the broadest possible agreement of Member States on all changes that are being envisaged.

Every year, all States Members of the United Nations have an opportunity to gather together and discuss the results of the work of the Security Council, as reflected in its annual report, which was introduced to us today on behalf of the Council by its President, the Ambassador of Indonesia, Mr. Marty Natalegawa. Such an open and transparent debate is extremely important.

The fact that, as in the past, the Council has been actively involved in settling the most important contemporary problems shows that the international community and the members of the Council themselves are showing the proper respect for the irreplaceable and unique principle of the legitimacy of Council decisions. That underlies the entire process of the settling of international peace and security issues. But at the same time, that means that the Council bears a heavy responsibility vis-à-vis the decisions it takes and ensuring that those decisions are implemented.

One important factor here is improving the interaction between the Council and other bodies within the United Nations system, namely, the General Assembly, the Secretariat, new entities such as the Peacebuilding Commission, and also regional and other intergovernmental organizations. Another factor would be improving the working methods of the Council. We have to make sure not only that we adopt resolutions and make declarations or statements, but also that we take a strategic approach, trying to ensure implementation of the decisions that we have taken, and that we continue improving the partnership and dialogue with countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations and with other players in peacekeeping.

The range of views and approaches of Members to this question of increasing the membership of the Security Council is still is very broad. We support the idea that we continue in this session seeking a common denominator through collective and transparent efforts, inter alia, through negotiations and showing the necessary flexibility and patience.

We fully support the view that reforming the Council should ensure the broadest possible support by Members of the Organization. In any event, there should be a larger majority than simply the legally required two-thirds majority of Members of the General Assembly. Our common task is to lay a foundation for further consolidation of the authority and potential of the Security Council as the principal body for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We all carry a heavy responsibility to ensure that poorly thought out steps to reform the Council don't lead to polarization and division among Member States, thereby weakening instead of strengthening the United Nations and the Security Council, and also thereby complicating efforts on other reform tracks in the Organization.

Russia's position of principle on the reform of the Security Council is well known and includes a lot of room for flexibility. We are ready to continue the painstaking work of bringing approaches closer together, so that we can choose the optimal model for future Council membership. We are ready to consider any reasonable option for increasing membership, including the so-called intermediary approach, if it gets broad agreement within the United Nations. One key guideline is that the Council should be more representative, but that should not be detrimental to its ability to do its work in maintaining international peace and security.

Accordingly, we support the idea that the Council should not be too large. We believe that it would be counterproductive to curtail the powers of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the veto as a whole.

There is a continuing positive trend in the working methods of the Security Council — including enhancing openness in the work of the Council and increasing dialogue with non-members. A lot has been done within current procedures to ensure that interested States are able to report their views to members of the Council and to get fuller and more up-to-date information about the work of the Council. The facts and statistics cited by the President of the Council this morning speak for themselves in this respect.

Today, our common task is to focus on implementing the changes that were agreed to in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Those changes are designed to promote greater transparency and openness in the work of the Council. The experience of reaching agreement on those changes — and it was not always easy — clearly showed that only initiatives to improve working methods of the Council that enjoy consensus support of its members can really help us to achieve progress in reforming this primary organ of the United Nations.

Rational transparency in the work of the Security Council includes developing dialogue between the Sanctions Committees and a broad range of States and regional and other organizations so as to improve the sanctions regime, and ensure strict compliance with embargoes imposed by the Security Council on arms deliveries in conflict areas. We are ready to continue with a constructive and transparent exchange of views, inter alia, within the Assembly's open-ended working group of the whole on the whole range of issues relating to expanding the Security Council.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to thank the representative of Indonesia, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, for presenting the report of the Council to the General Assembly (A/62/2). The report indicates a significant increase in the volume and scope of the Council's activities last year.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Union (AU) by the Permanent Representative of Angola, Chair of the AU for November, and with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also wish to congratulate the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, Viet Nam, Croatia and Costa Rica on their recent election as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the period 2008-2009.

The United Nations has changed since it was founded on 24 October 1945, when 51 Member States signed its Charter. Today, the Organization has more than 190 Member States. In the light of that fact, combined with the ever-increasing number of global and intertwined problems and interests caused by globalization, the Organization must be restructured and modernized, especially with respect to the Security Council, which bears responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Reform of the Security Council has seen no progress for more than 14 years. In 1993, given the importance of the matters addressed by the Council, which is the United Nations organ entrusted with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 48/26, establishing an 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. Without the Security Council, the backbone of the United Nations, and without peace and security, there would be no economic or social development.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania firmly believes in the purposes and principles for which the United Nations was established. Therefore, we believe that there must be more equitable representation within the Security Council, given the right of the African continent to occupy a permanent Council seat. Indeed, Africa is the only continent not to have a permanent seat on that important and sensitive body. Because the majority of armed conflicts and disputes have taken place on African soil, Africa cannot be excluded from permanent representation on the Council. We must correct this great injustice. Seventy per cent of the resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolutions, deal primarily with the developing world, particularly Africa. It is thus worthy to have Africa participate in adopting such resolutions. This can come about by granting Africa a permanent seat on the Council alongside the current five permanent members.

My country fully supports the Sirte Declaration and the Ezulwini Consensus, which set out the legitimate and just claims of the African continent. Specifically, the African continent is requesting two permanent seats with veto power and two non-permanent seats. Thus, Africa would have two permanent and five non-permanent seats in total. In the light of the Arab and African components of the continent's social fabric, it should be up to the African Union to decide which States should occupy those seats.

It is high time for serious and substantive reform of United Nations bodies, particularly the Security Council, which must be expanded to lay the foundation for true democracy within the United Nations system. We hope that the Ezulwini Consensus, which clearly reflects the positions and interests of African countries, will be respected as the foundation for any future consultations and arrangements decided upon by the General Assembly. My delegation also supports the legitimate requests of Germany and Japan for permanent Council seats, given their important roles in the maintenance of international peace and security, their considerable efforts to ensure sustainable development in developing countries, and their contributions to United Nations efforts in that regard.

Mr. **Badji** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My country, Senegal, endorses the statement made by His Excellency Mr. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, permanent representative of Angola, on behalf of the Group of African States. In my national capacity, I should like to make a few additional comments following the presentation of the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2) by the permanent representative of Indonesia, whom we thank.

The Senegalese delegation believes that, more than a mere ritual at every session of the General Assembly, the submission of the Security Council's report to this principal body of the Organization should be an opportunity for Member States to discuss in depth the initiatives and actions taken on all our behalf by that important organ, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

However, we must acknowledge that, in its current form, the report of the Council does not give us enough information about the motivations and reasons behind Council action or non-action. Therefore, it does not give us information that is likely to lend itself to fruitful discussion. That is why we express once again our hope to receive more detailed and analytical reports from the Council.

More than ever before, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is a timely issue that concerns a large majority of Member States. The reason is that reform of the Council has become necessary, owing to two requirements: modernization and justice.

Modernization is required because today, no one denies any longer that the world's realities are totally different from those that formed the basis for the Council's structuring in 1945. Justice — as that word is being used here, equitable representation within the Security Council — refers to an obligation to ensure justice in the redistribution of roles and responsibilities within a reformed Council. Thus, Senegal believes that any effort to achieve equitable representation must begin by correcting an injustice, namely, that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Senegal, which shares the Common African Position, believes that an increase in the number of Council members in the two current categories, permanent and non-permanent, remains necessary. Indeed, the two challenges to which I have referred — adjusting the Council to new geopolitical realities and making it more equitable — require that we expand both categories. However, we believe that, whatever the number or formula chosen, the representation of developing countries and small States must be increased.

With regard to the right of the veto — which is, quite rightly, the object of much criticism — we believe that the demands of modernization and justice in action require that we deal with it in a realistic and responsible manner, bearing in mind that a single country cannot and must not block or paralyse Security Council action, often for interests that are different from those of the international community as a whole. If we want the United Nations to maintain its credibility and authority, we must ensure that the action or inaction of the Security Council is based on just motives that are in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Her Excellency, Sheika Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, involved Member States in a dynamic process guided by seven facilitators, during which, many views and positions were expressed by States, groups of States and interest groups. The report of the two last facilitators appointed by Ms. Al-Khalifa (A/61/47, annex IV) proposes several possible paths that could serve as the basis for intergovernmental negotiations. The concept of reform in stages, based on the intermediary approach which involves a review clause, seems interesting and could enable States to overcome certain differences of opinion. This idea, however, does not exclude the possibility of the proposed reform being sufficiently ambitious, thus responding to the views widely expressed by Member States.

The momentum from which the question of Security Council reform benefited during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly deserves to be sustained and strengthened during the present session. We count, Sir, on your diligence so that all Member States commit themselves anew to deepening the process already under way. What is at stake is definitely worth it, if we want the Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, to enjoy greater legitimacy, credibility and authority.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting of the session of the General Assembly. I would already like to express my sincere gratitude to you for doing so because I am convinced that this meeting will move the reform of the Security Council forward. You yourself stressed at the opening of the sixty-second session on 18 September (see A/62/PV.1) that you would take the mandate of the sixty-first session's decision (see A/61/PV.109) seriously and build on the momentum created in the past few months. We are ready to support you: to support you in your endeavour to start negotiations on concrete text proposals. And we will show flexibility.

Many colleagues have already spoken today. When I try to summarize today's discussion, I think there is one common feeling: Security Council reform has reached a critical stage. There is a shared sense of urgency: if we are not able to achieve reform during

the sixty-second session, we will lose momentum and we will lose public support in many countries, where it will be said that the United Nations is unable to reform itself. The United Nations system as a whole will lose credibility and, in particular, the most important body for the maintenance of peace and security, the Security Council, will, in the eyes of many, lose legitimacy — at a time when the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council are crucial if we are to resolve a number of vital issues.

The conclusion I draw from today's discussion is that the overwhelming majority of members have a clear sense of our common responsibility. We have to bring about reform of the Security Council during the sixty-second session in order to make the Security Council more legitimate, more effective, more representative, more accountable and more transparent. Our discussion during the sixty-first session showed that there is enough common ground for a reform project. We have a good chance of achieving the required two-thirds majority.

What is the way forward? First, as to procedure: we have to start negotiations as soon as possible, and that means in the next few weeks. We need an appropriate mechanism to initiate intergovernmental negotiations. Your guidance, Mr. President, and your leadership immediately following this debate are needed in two ways. First of all, we need a format for negotiations. We all know that this cannot be done in the Open-ended Working Group. Intergovernmental negotiations need a more efficient forum if we want to see results soon. And we need a tool for negotiations. This tool, a proposal for a consolidated text, should be elaborated on the basis of progress achieved so far. This text will, at this stage, not be a draft resolution but rather a text outlining a result in a clearer way than the facilitators' reports during the sixty-first session. There should also be a precise road map for the negotiations and a time frame within which to finish the negotiations, with a result to be achieved during the sixty-second session.

Secondly, on substance, we still believe that the Group of Four proposal would be the best way forward. However, as we have mentioned, we are open-minded and we do not rule out a two-step or intermediary approach. However, the following considerations should be kept in mind. If an intermediary approach is to be considered, it must bring about real change. We cannot simply settle for the lowest common denominator. We must create a formula for a Council that will reflect today's political realities and that will truly change the balance of power in the Council right from the start of the intermediary period. Otherwise political frustration in many parts of the world will further increase over time, and we will thus have failed to meet the very objective of the reform.

A mandatory review must be an integral part of the solution. The option for a more comprehensive reform and a review of the first reform drive must not remain a vague promise. Any solution we envisage must contain a mandatory review within a clear time frame and a clearly defined mandate.

The decision will possibly have to be made by a vote, which, according to the United Nations Charter, will have to be by a two-thirds majority. The aim is a more legitimate Council. What we want is not just a larger Council. What we want is a different Council, one that will be more legitimate, more transparent, more representative, more effective and more reflective of today's political realities. It is not enough to add more two-year seats or to take similar half-measures.

We urge Members to join us in showing flexibility, thus paving the way for results-oriented negotiations. It is high time for us to get down to work, start negotiations and produce clear-cut results.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to thank you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and to thank also the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Natalegawa, for the report he presented to us on behalf of the Security Council (A/62/2).

We would also thank you, Mr. President, for having us meet today to discuss this very basic issue, namely, the reform of the Security Council. It is our hope that the debate will enable us to move ahead together towards defining the framework of negotiations that should lead us to a bold reform of the Security Council. You have made this one of the priorities for your term of office, which you recently confirmed in your letter of 8 November. I would assure you of the French delegation's full support.

France's commitment here has been and remains unswerving. As the President of the French Republic said in the General Assembly on 25 September,

> “in this world where the fate of each of us depends on the fate of others, the United Nations should not be weakened; the United Nations must be strengthened. Reforming the United Nations so as to adapt it to the realities of our world is an absolute priority for France. We cannot afford to wait any longer”. (*A/62/PV.4, p. 2*)

It goes without saying that we must mobilize to strengthen the central institution of the United Nations — the Security Council — in the areas of peace and security. How can we move ahead after so many years of discussion? First of all, we must remember that the necessary expansion of the Council must be geared towards strengthening its authority and its effectiveness. That is why we favour increasing the membership in both categories, with new permanent members Germany, Japan, India, Brazil, and fair representation for Africa.

And then we have to acknowledge the recent work done by the General Assembly. The decision we took on 17 September called for us to achieve concrete results on the basis of progress made, particularly at the Assembly’s sixty-first session. We believe that the report of the Working Group is useful in that it offers a balanced account of the current state of affairs, and we should draw inspiration from that.

If we want to have the Security Council evolve in a direction that is more reflective of the realities of the world today, then we must all show flexibility and creativity with respect to the modalities of the reform. France is ready for that. We are open to an intermediate approach that, without prejudging the final outcome, would enable us to move forward.

The time has come to start negotiating. How? Here again we are ready to examine any appropriate modalities in a practical manner. We count on you, Mr. President, to set forth the next stage for our work, in close consultation with the States most concerned. There is little time left because reform is more essential now than ever before, and we must therefore actively continue our efforts.

In conclusion, may I simply confirm that France is ready to do this work in a spirit of openness and with a firm determination to succeed.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): Mr. President, thank you for convening this timely debate. The reform of the Security Council relates to the foundations of this Organization and, therefore, to the international order. In the consideration of the reform of the Council, including the improvement of its working methods, the legitimacy and effectiveness of our collective decisions on matters pertaining to international peace and security are at stake.

As mentioned in the report of the Security Council now under consideration (A/62/2), and consistent with past trends, the volume and scope of issues before that body increased in the period from August 2006 to July 2007. However, outdated institutional structures impair the capacity of the Council to face the challenges posed by such an expanding and increasingly complex agenda. To succeed, we need a Security Council that is more representative of the membership and fully reflective of contemporary international realities. With greater representation and political realism will come enhanced legitimacy and effectiveness.

Those are the fundamental considerations at the heart of Brazil’s position on Security Council reform. Like the overwhelming majority of members of this Assembly, we favour the increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats, and a greater representation of the developing countries, which are able to contribute to the reinforcement of peace and security. We also support the improvement of the Council’s working methods.

These are the ultimate goals that Brazil, with like-minded countries, will pursue in the intergovernmental negotiations mandated by decision 61/561, adopted September. Brazil is ready to engage in negotiations with flexibility, in a spirit of understanding. I am confident that all delegations will display the same attitude.

We view the September decision as an invaluable opportunity to change a status quo that Member States have proclaimed to be unacceptable, a historical opportunity we cannot miss. It follows 14 years of extensive discussions in the Open-ended Working Group, which has reached its limits in producing the required reform. We should move ahead and not continue endlessly with the same procedures. We need to establish substantive negotiating dynamics capable of delivering concrete results that lead to a meaningful reform of the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter.

This will only be possible if the appropriate setting for the negotiation is put in place in a timely

manner. The process should start without delay, preferably in this month of November, and proceed steadily so that it can be successfully concluded in the present session of the General Assembly. Time is of the essence. The longer we delay the reform, the wider the gap between the Council's outdated structure and today's political imperatives. Gradualism has been draining our energies for 14 years and, as such, has only served those who do not want a meaningful reform of the Security Council.

We trust you, Sir, to lead us. We are persuaded that, guided by the relevant provisions of the September decision, you will organize the negotiating process so that it will allow all to participate in an inclusive, transparent and result-oriented mode. You will certainly have in mind paragraph (d) of the decision that I have just mentioned, wherein clear instructions have been given regarding our future work, which must be based on concrete elements. The General Assembly has chosen to pursue the negotiations, building on the progress achieved and the positions and proposals of Member States. Incidentally, a number of proposals have been presented to the Assembly, and facilitators have contributed to this process after extensive consultations, which we must recognize.

One possible practical manner to move forward could be to determine, in an objective and transparent way, the substantive elements of the Security Council reform that garner the broadest support in this Assembly. In any event, we believe that all delegations agree to have a Member-driven process.

The day-to-day management of the negotiating process is also a matter that you, Mr. President, will judge how best to handle. My delegation, for one, would be honoured to take part in negotiations held under your direct guidance. However, we would understand if you prefer to appoint a coordinator or facilitator to assist you. In any case, we will rely on your sustained leadership and wisdom.

As all Members agree, without Security Council reform as mandated by our leaders in the 2005 World Summit, the goal of United Nations reform will not be attained. It is our hope and expectation that the negotiations will soon be initiated. Such negotiations should do what our predecessors have tried but never realized. An enlarged and enhanced Security Council will strengthen the United Nations and invigorate multilateralism.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to pay tribute to your wise leadership, Mr. President, and to thank you for making Security Council reform a priority during this session.

We also associate ourselves with the important statement made by the representative of Angola on behalf of the African group.

We would like to reconfirm our firm and deep belief in the importance of Security Council reform. Reform should be at the forefront of the agenda for the overall reform of the United Nations, because reforming the Council is key to enabling the United Nations to respond more consciously and effectively to the serious challenges facing the world today and fully discharge its responsibilities in support of multilateralism and the principles of justice, law and equality in international relations.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is an item that has been on the agenda of the Assembly since 1979, and yet no real progress has been made. That can be seen in the rather modest account of what has been achieved to date, despite the importance of the subject and the commitments made by the Presidents and heads of State at the 2005 World Summit for an early reform of the Security Council as an essential element in the overall reform of the United Nations. We therefore do regret the slow pace of the progress achieved thus far, and we hope that there will be a renewal of the political will on the part of Member States, so that we can adopt a coordinated, determined approach and settle this matter by consensus as soon as possible, in service to the common concerns and interests of all.

We have repeatedly and urgently called for an integrated and comprehensive reform of the Security Council so that the Council can reflect realistically the geopolitical developments of the world today and respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people of the third world, especially the developing countries and Africa. We reiterate our firm and full support for the African position as set forth in several African Summit meetings. The Organization's work is negatively impacted by the current composition and working methods of the Security Council, which infringes on the mandates of other bodies, falls short of carrying out

its principal mandate — the maintenance of international peace and security — and takes a disturbingly selective approach in deciding which issues are included on its agenda. Thus the Council's structure and working methods must be reformed in order to re-establish the institutional balance among the various organs of the United Nations.

Credibility must be restored to the Council's ability to discharge its mandate in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter. The need to truly reform the Council arises from certain tragic developments in various parts of the world, particularly the Middle East. Here, the Security Council acts as a mere spectator, disregarding international law, conscience and legitimacy. We need a new Council that is able to take up the various challenges in accordance with the law and with impartiality, transparency and credibility. That is sadly lacking in the Council today because of a lack of democracy and the presence of a threatening atmosphere. Threats are made by a minority of its members, who manipulate the Council for their own narrow purposes and selfish national interests. The Council has become part of the problems and not a solution to them.

We hope that Member States will successfully accomplish this historically necessary work and we reaffirm our full support for conducting a serious and responsible dialogue that will lead to the desired reform under your wise leadership, Sir. Reform the Security Council now and make this session a turning point so that our children will not repeat 20 years from now what we have said today.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): The report of the Security Council (A/62/2), now before us, is a factual account of the Council's work during the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. Two hundred and twenty-four official meetings, 71 resolutions, 52 presidential statements and 47 press statements — the report is full of such facts and figures on the Council's efforts to fulfil its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Impressive facts, indeed.

But there is another fact that also demands our full attention, not just today, but during this entire Assembly session. That is the fact that there is now a window of opportunity for Security Council reform. The Council is arguably the signature organ of the United Nations. The report on its work over the past year, as presented this morning by the President of the Council, is a clear testament to that. The Council Chamber is the one room where cameras from all over the world regularly roll, the one room where resolutions might bring about the resolution of the conflicts besieging our post-cold war world, and the one room where international order can be forcefully reshaped or restored through joint international action.

Right before us lies an opportunity to further enhance the Council's contribution to international order and to forge a more representative, transparent and effective United Nations and a Security Council better equipped to deal with the insecurities of the twenty-first century. Reforming this centrepiece of the United Nations must necessarily be a centrepiece of United Nations reform.

The need for Security Council reform has long been evident to all partners in this Hall, but it has nevertheless been part of a long and seemingly never-ending debate — I say "seemingly" because last year we finally and fortunately pushed the envelope and forged ahead towards real negotiations. That momentum was generated in large part by the transitional approach spearheaded during that session. It is an approach that offers quite a lot of potential to do something quite unusual, historically speaking, in the reform debate: unite us rather than divide us. For each and every one of us, it offers the opportunity to have our cake and eat it too. We can all have meaningful progress on Council reform, but at the same time we can all keep our original aspirations on the specifics of it. If the Council is to be reformed at some point in the near future, then an intermediary approach is, I believe, the way forward, and this session of the Assembly is the first and probably the only opportunity to do so. So, progress through intergovernmental negotiations is now in the air. After years of wandering around, we finally got to that bridge — and now we must cross it.

At this point, leadership to guide the membership towards the destination of reform is as crucial as it ever was. To be more precise, we need to establish a mechanism that will translate the current momentum into the early start of results-oriented intergovernmental negotiations, building on the progress achieved thus far, particularly at the sixty-first session. The Netherlands has always been a staunch supporter of Security Council reform and will continue to be so, especially at this hour of opportunity.

At outset of this debate, Mr. President, you showed your resolve and your determination to make the most of this opportunity. You have indicated where you stand, and we stand with you.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to thank Ambassador Marty Natalegawa of Indonesia, President of the Security Council, for presenting the Council's annual report (A/62/2) to the General Assembly.

This joint debate is an important opportunity for the membership to undertake a strategic review of the work of the Security Council and of our collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Council. The Council acts on behalf of the entire membership as the primary organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. The General Assembly must assess whether the Council was effective in maintaining international peace and security: did it reflect the views and interests of all Member States? Did it act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter?

Paradoxically, while some believe that the Security Council is the only United Nations organ that performs, there is also widespread dissatisfaction about its work and decisions. Transparency and openness could help to ease some of that dissatisfaction. Unfortunately, the Security Council's annual report, while providing a good statistical record, fails to offer sufficient information or analysis, particularly with regard to its decision-making process. Decisions are evolved mostly in closed-door sessions, if not behind the scenes by a few key States. The Council has not responded to the call for special reports on important issues. Nor is there a consistent effort to maintain institutional interaction with the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, for example, through regular briefings by the Security Council presidency to the President of the General Assembly.

The Security Council has been most effective, in recent years, in addressing internal crises and conflicts, mostly in Africa, and considerably less effective in resolving threats to and breaches of international peace and security, which is its primary mandate.

Peacekeeping has been utilized to good effect in several complex crises, from Sierra Leone to Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Timor-Leste. Still, other situations, most notably Somalia, have been grossly neglected for years. However, much more needs to be done to prevent conflicts from erupting in the first place and to prevent relapse once a situation has been stabilized. In that regard, it is important to address the underlying causes of conflict and pursue more proactively a comprehensive approach focusing on post-conflict peacebuilding and development. The Council's actions must be conducted with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States concerned.

As regards inter-State conflicts, the Security Council's record has been most unimpressive. Major unresolved issues, including in our own region, remain asleep on the agenda of the Council. Even in the case of some important issues on the active agenda, particularly the Middle East, the Council's role has been sidelined. It does not deal directly with some of the other major conflicts and threats to international peace and security.

We have witnessed inaction and delay even in the face of the most obvious acts of aggression and breaches of peace. We have witnessed double standards and selectivity; threats and the use of force and other forms of coercion; non-implementation of certain Council resolutions; and non-transparent, non-inclusive, partial and partisan decisions by the Council. That is where we have the starkest realization of the influence and control of some permanent members and other major Powers, which, in small and secretive conclaves, make decisions that primarily reflect their interests and that are often inconsistent with the priorities and aspirations of the vast majority of United Nations Member States. It is therefore not surprising that, despite the revival of a greater number of public meetings of the Council, there has been little tangible improvement in transparency and understanding of the decision-making process of the Council.

Those are the issues around which revolves the other aspect of our debate today, that is, the reform of the Security Council. The stated objectives of reform are to make the Council more representative, transparent, accountable and effective, thus enhancing its legitimacy and credibility. The central and crucial question is whether we can achieve those objectives by enlarging the coterie of the powerful few, or by strengthening democratic representation, role and influence of the general membership of the United Nations in the Security Council. We believe the latter is the right and only feasible approach.

That belief is the basis for our principled opposition to any increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council. Indeed, most of the dissatisfaction with the Council can be attributed to the existence and role of the permanent members. We are therefore totally unconvinced by the argument that this dissatisfaction, and the consequent erosion in the Council's credibility, will be resolved by adding more permanent members. On the contrary, the problems will be compounded by increasing the number of permanent members, each one of which will seek to ensure the protection of its own national interests in the work of the Council. Indeed, that would lead to a complete paralysis in the performance of the Council.

Permanent membership for a few individual States will deny the opportunity for equitable representation to the rest of us. Only an acceptable formula with an increase in non-permanent members and rotation can provide the means for such equitable representation for all States. Such rotation, combined with regional representation, may also offer possibilities for a fuller representation of countries members of various groups of States. That could better reflect the complex current realities. Those realities consist of a few large Powers; a number of medium-sized States; a majority of smaller States; and the emergence of regional organizations, which are playing important roles in international and regional peace and security.

The position of the Uniting for Consensus group is flexible and realistic. It allows variable arrangements and different possibilities and options, including rotation and longer-term presence, through re-election, and providing a greater relevance to regional representation. Such arrangements can also accommodate the interests of sub-regions such as the Arab Group, the Caribbean Community and Central America, and political groups, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which has legitimate political and regional interests to promote and defend in the Council. The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Islamabad a few months ago, reiterated the demand for adequate representation of the Islamic umma in any category of expansion in the Security Council.

Since, under any proposed scheme for Council expansion, new seats will be allocated to the regions, the countries of those regions should be able to determine the nature of representation of those seats. It is not for one or more major Powers to determine such representation. Furthermore, equitable geographical distribution, envisaged in Article 23 of the Charter, would make little sense if a seat allocated to a region were to be occupied permanently by one country.

That is why we respect and understand Africa's position. Africa's demand for permanent seats is for the entire region and is therefore different from other proposals that seek permanent membership for individual States. As we understand it, against the two empowered seats that are sought by Africa, representation on the Council could be from two or, through rotation, a larger number of African States, under arrangements to be made by Africa itself. Africa would thus retain the power to ensure accountability on the part of those States that would represent it and act on its behalf in the Council. The African model of regional representation, if it is applied to all regions, appears to be an approach that may help to evolve agreement on Council reform. Using the African model, other regions could also be enabled to decide their own arrangements for representation of their respective regions on the Council.

We are all aware of the history of this reform debate. The positions of Member States and major interested groups on various aspects of Security Council reform are well known. All support the objective of a comprehensive reform. Our leaders committed themselves to that objective at the Millennium Summit and at the 2005 World Summit. However, major differences have persisted on the nature and the modalities of achieving reform.

After years of impasse, there was a positive movement last year. The Uniting for Consensus members took the lead, launching the call for a negotiated solution, at a high-level open meeting in New York co-hosted by the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Italy on 20 September 2006. The subsequent process, led by Assembly President Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, assisted by several facilitators, led to presentation of two reports based on wide consultations with the entire membership (see A/61/47). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Al-Khalifa and her facilitators for their important and sincere contribution.

The facilitators' reports concluded that: first, none of the past proposals had the required support; secondly, in order to be implementable, any reform

formula must garner the widest possible political acceptance of the membership, in any case well above the required two-thirds majority; and thirdly, a compromise intermediate approach was the only feasible option. The reports were generally welcomed and appreciated as constituting significant progress on the reform issue. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1), also noted the main recommendation of the facilitators that Member States consider an intermediary approach as a compromise solution with a view to unblocking the process.

To achieve further progress, we must build upon the progress achieved so far, particularly in the sixty-first session, as reflected in the reports of the facilitators. That was decided by the Assembly on the recommendation 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. It was also decided that the Working Group should continue efforts during the sixty-second session aimed at achieving general agreement among Member States in the consideration of all issues relevant to Security Council reform. Those are the parameters of the framework for the next steps in this reform process.

The difficulties faced in adopting the report of the Open-ended Working Group (A/61/47) last year illustrated how divisive this issue can become. The positive dynamic and the progress achieved through the facilitators' process were almost derailed by the unilateral draft resolution submitted by some States. That move gathered weak support, and the report was eventually adopted by consensus. However, that unilateral and partisan move eroded confidence and trust in the process. We will need to rebuild that confidence and mutual trust. We are therefore disturbed that professions of flexibility heard here are accompanied by the reiteration of demands that are clearly unacceptable and by assertions that the decisions on this issue will be taken by a vote.

Uniting for Consensus believes that the reform issue can only be advanced through an approach based on consensus-building and garnering the widest possible support of the Member States, with regard to both substance and process. We support negotiations. Indeed, the Uniting for Consensus group was the first to call for negotiations. However, negotiations are meant to lead to agreement, not to a vote.

To ensure a successful outcome, negotiations must be carefully planned and prepared. In the first place, there must be clarity and agreement on the basis, parameters, framework and conditions for negotiations. That should include confidence-building measures to prevent unilateral moves and pre-emptive initiatives that could disrupt the process. Based on the recommendations agreed at the last session of the Assembly, the following four elements should serve as the parameters for intergovernmental negotiations envisaged by the General Assembly.

First, the discussions and negotiations should take place within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group. That is the established mechanism. We do not favour — and indeed, we will oppose — restricted conclaves from which the vast majority of Member States would be excluded.

Secondly, the aim should be to build on the progress achieved at the sixty-first session, that is, the two reports of the facilitators, which recommend exploration of an intermediary approach. Submission of unilateral proposals will not advance — indeed could retard — the process.

Thirdly, the objective must be to achieve general agreement, as decided by the Assembly, that is, to reach a compromise, as recommended by the Open-ended Working Group and endorsed by the Assembly. Any process which envisages a vote will be contrary to the objective of reaching general agreement.

Fourthly, there must be commitment against any unilateral or pre-emptive move, such as the submission of draft resolutions or proposals and calls for a vote by any side while the process is under way, at least for the duration of the sixty-second session of the Assembly.

We believe that you, Sir, as President of the Assembly, should hold informal consultations to determine the conditions and framework for negotiations. As has been the practice in the past, you could appoint one or more vice-chairs of the Open-ended Working Group to assist you in the process. But we would urge you to strongly discourage the culture of putting forward draft resolutions and of threats of voting as a means of achieving what needs to be discussed and agreed in negotiations. There can be no discussions and negotiations in an environment of threat, coercion and pressure.

Uniting for Consensus is keen to build on the progress so painstakingly achieved during the previous session. Artificial deadlines, however, will surely divide us once again. We are confident that under your guidance, Sir, we will be able to carry forward our work in an atmosphere of trust and mutual confidence to achieve a compromise negotiated solution through the broadest possible agreement of Member States. We are ready and willing to work with you for the achievement of that objective.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada welcomes this opportunity to share views on the annual report of the Security Council (A/62/2) and to return to the important subject of Security Council reform.

The report of the Security Council makes plain that the complexity, variety and volume of Council business continues to expand at a dramatic pace. With more than 90,000 military, police and civilians deployed in peace support missions worldwide, the United Nations is making a vital contribution to the reduction of armed conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace and development around the world, not least through the oversight of elections and support for the peaceful consolidation of civilian governmental authority in States as varied as Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Afghanistan.

Working in cooperation with regional organizations, the United Nations has made great strides in making peace operations a more effective international tool for saving lives, assisting democratic transformation and creating a conducive environment for economic recovery. We are deeply indebted to the Council, the Secretariat and above all the peacekeepers and all those who serve the United Nations in the field for their tireless efforts.

However, despite the progress made so far, the Council's report leaves no room for doubt that, for far too many people in this world, the dream of a life of peace remains unfulfilled.

The importance of the decisions of the Security Council to the daily lives of millions of people around the world underscores the genuine urgency of reforming the Council to ensure it is more representative, more effective, more transparent and more accountable. Comprehensive Security Council reform remains a critical unfinished piece of business within our larger United Nations reform efforts and merits renewed consideration during this session of the Assembly.

Canada believes that the Council's legitimacy would be enhanced by increasing its membership to include a broader representation of the world's regions. My delegation understands the wish of some Member States to have regular access to Security Council membership, and for this reason we are open to the consideration of elected renewable terms in the context of negotiations on enlargement.

However, we take the view that those negotiations must also result in significant participation of middle Powers and smaller States, which have an equal — if not greater — stake in the success of the multilateral security system, and whose contributions should not be taken for granted.

While Canada supports the objective of Security Council expansion, it must be secured in a manner consistent with the fundamental principles of fairness, democracy, accountability and flexibility. Otherwise it will not enhance, but rather diminish, the authority of the Council. For those reasons, it is important that agreement on Security Council expansion be achieved through negotiations. Any changes made have the clear support of a very broad consensus based on a wide cross-section of Member States. Putting such a fundamental issue to a vote would only prove highly divisive.

Canada continues to believe that it is not in the best interests of the institution itself to add new permanent members to the Council. That is based on the view that the discipline of regular elections is the essential mechanism for ensuring Council accountability before the Assembly and on the conviction that there are ways of making the Council more representative, such as expanding the non-permanent category of membership, without conferring special rights, in perpetuity, on a privileged few.

While the question of Security Council composition has dominated the debate on Council reform in recent years, it is clear that the legitimacy of the Council depends not only, or even primarily, on its composition but rather on its effectiveness. In other words, it is not just about who takes the decisions but, most important, about the quality and timeliness of those decisions.

For that reason, Canada believes that Council effectiveness should be at the centre of the debate. We see two key areas where the need for change is particularly urgent and where the potential for progress is well within our collective grasp. First, the Security Council's working methods should be improved to increase accountability, inclusivity and transparency, to promote evidence-based decision-making and to limit the use of the veto. Secondly, the Security Council's normative framework should be updated, so that it is better equipped to meet the demands of the changing security environment of the twenty-first century.

Thanks to organizations such as Security Council Report and the dedication of a number of Council members, particularly the elected members — I recall, in particular, Japan's work while recently on the Council — the Council is a more transparent body today than at any other point in its history. But at a time when the Council's work has increasingly far-reaching implications for all Member States in areas such as counter-terrorism and non-proliferation, Canada believes more could, and should, be done.

First, we urge the Council to redouble its efforts to enhance consultation with the broader membership, for example by making more frequent and systematic use of informal exchanges and by increasing the regularity of substantive briefings for Member States, including on the work of subsidiary bodies.

Secondly, we encourage the Council to expand and deepen the practice of public and open debates, which allow the broad membership to contribute their perspectives and ideas to the Council's consideration of the international peace and security agenda.

Thirdly, where States have capacity challenges in meeting Council obligations, such as in counter-terrorism, we would encourage the Council to identify opportunities for, and facilitate the furnishing of, greater technical assistance.

Fourthly, there is an acute need for better and more publicly available information to assist in Council decision-making. In that regard, my delegation strongly supports efforts to provide better aggregate data to the Council, for example on trends in global conflict, civilian protection and humanitarian access, in order to facilitate evidence-based decision-making.

Fifthly, the Council would also benefit from a serious consideration of the use of the veto. We all know the inhibiting effect that the veto — or even the threat of the veto — can have on Council deliberations. There have been several regrettable occasions in recent years when the spectre of the veto had the effect of dampening debate and delaying much-needed action. In our view, the veto can rarely be justified. It is not, and was never meant to be, a tool for avoiding debate on certain issues. For that reason, Canada believes that any use of the veto should be publicly explained and justified.

We also strongly believe that the veto has no place in deliberations on situations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and we urge the five permanent members to commit themselves to voluntarily restrict its use in those situations, which shock the conscience of humanity.

For the vast majority of Member States, it is those reforms that, in the first instance, would pay the greatest dividends in terms of access to and accountability of the Security Council. Canada believes that those and other changes to the Council's working methods could significantly enhance its effectiveness and, in so doing, its legitimacy. We encourage the Council to consider adopting such measures in the months ahead.

In the meantime, allow me to reiterate my Government's strong support for the draft resolution on working methods circulated by Singapore, Liechtenstein, Costa Rica, Switzerland and Jordan. We believe that the draft resolution merits serious consideration by Assembly and Security Council members alike and encourage the drafters to initiate broad-based consultations as soon as possible.

(*spoke in French*)

The second area that Canada believes should be studied as soon as possible is the normative framework within which the Security Council takes its decisions. One typical example is the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Canada believes that it is important to strengthen the protection of civilians and the related norms and to operationalize those norms so that the international community can continue to put those principles into practice.

The Council has demonstrated that real progress can be made. But real efforts must also still be made. The protection of civilians means that the Council must be permanently committed, and must be vigilant in

monitoring and following up those cases in which resolutions have laid out clear instructions on that point.

Agenda items on women and peace and security and on children and armed conflict, to which the Council has committed itself, also require systematic attention, implementation and institutionalization. It is important that the Council be able to demonstrate political will and the capacity necessary to make use of whole range of tools available to it in achieving that goal, in particular by using effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

In conclusion, Member States have dedicated a lot of time and energy to the question of the composition of the Security Council over the past few years, and they were right to do so. At the sixty-first session of the Assembly, 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 made good progress. In the coming months, we should make use of the two reports of the facilitators (see A/61/47, annexes II and IV), bearing in mind the goals of representativity, democracy and accountability, transparency and effectiveness.

But if Members are unable to reach an agreement in the near future on the enlargement of the Council, then let us nevertheless move ahead in areas, such as norms and working methods, where we believe that taking measures quickly could achieve concrete results for Member States. My delegation stands ready to deal with those crucial issues with renewed flexibility and energy in the coming months.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.