United Nations A/59/PV.28

General Assembly

Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

28th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 13 October 2004, 11.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping. . . . . (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Agenda items 11 and 53 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/59/2)

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

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): It is a pleasure for my delegation to welcome the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, contained in document A/59/2, which provides a brief overview of the Council's activities in the past year in the area of international peace and security.

This meeting is always a good opportunity for Member States to review the work of the Council, an assignment that we gladly look forward to. We therefore thank the Council members for the report.

May I also welcome the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, His Excellency Mr. Julian Hunte, for his active role as Chair of the Working Group and for his determined efforts to win common agreement on these issues.

We live in a constantly changing international political climate that challenges and tests the strength of our Organization. Over the past year, old threats and new challenges have continued to grip many parts of the world, directly affecting many of our Member States. In this regard, my delegation would like to comment on some of the important issues contained in the report that have had such an impact.

Despite the fact that the Council has regularly considered the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, the situation on the ground has not improved and, in fact, has worsened. The implementation of the road map that envisions a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is far from becoming a reality. My delegation still considers the road map as the feasible option, as long as the relevant parties, particularly the Israeli side, show genuine willingness to implement the plan.

Regrettably, for the better part of the history of the issue of Palestine, the Council has been prevented from adopting a just and balanced approach to the matter. If permitted to do so, the Council could persuade Israel to withdraw its forces from the occupied territories and to cease settlement activities, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions. This is a critically important issue that could jeopardize the credibility of the Council should it fail to ensure the implementation of its own resolutions.

Concerning other events in the region, the Iraqi issue has been dominating the work of the Council during the past year. In that regard, my delegation

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

04-54926 (E)

0454926

welcomed the adoption of resolution 1546 (2004) on Iraq that has returned sovereignty to the people of Iraq. Unfortunately, peace, security and stability remain major concerns there; increased violence has further deprived ordinary Iraqis of a stable and peaceful environment in which to live.

Indonesia reiterates its call for the United Nations to play a leading role, particularly in establishing appropriate conditions on the ground in Iraq in preparation for elections scheduled for January 2005. There is no question that the United Nations has the best credentials to assume this role to enable Member States to participate in post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. It is our strong hope that the Council will be able to find innovative ways of achieving those objectives.

To create conditions for peace elsewhere, the Security Council has collaborated with regional organizations in pursuit of that multifaceted goal. We commend the Council for this form of collaboration. In many instances, these partnerships have proven fruitful in building and maintaining peace because of the intimate knowledge the organizations have of regional conflicts and their willingness to commit resources to solve the conflicts efficiently. In order to make this endeavour a success, adequate resources and funding need to be allocated at all times. It is my delegation's belief that this practice should be further enhanced and more clearly defined, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter that deals with such interaction.

In spite of known limitations, the value of these evolving partnerships is clearly demonstrated in Africa, where the Security Council has enlisted the support of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union to help resolve several disputes. For instance, the African Union is playing a key role in mediating the crisis in Darfur, the Sudan. Also, the application of the African Union-supported Joint Verification Mechanism to the situation in the Congo has also yielded positive results and should lead to a peaceful resolution of that crisis. Moreover, the Council has received recommendations from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa to help resolve conflict situations in that subregion.

While commending the work of the Council in combating terrorism, we wish to emphasize that cooperation among Member countries to deal with this global threat is of paramount importance. On efforts to curb the spread of weapons of mass destruction, permit me to express Indonesia's concern over actions with law-making implications that have been taken by the Security Council to achieve the goals of non-proliferation and to counter terrorism. Despite our concern about the liberal application of its powers under Chapter VII of the Charter in this regard, Indonesia is fully committed to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

Indonesia is also of the opinion that a strong and active relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is essential to the effectiveness of the United Nations. For this to succeed, there are steps that need to be taken.

First of all, the interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council must, in the interest of all Member States, be governed by transparency. Towards that end, there must be increased dialogue and exchange of information between both bodies, with the Council taking the wishes of the Assembly into consideration in its decision-making process. This is critical, because the Assembly is an integral part of the system of collective security established by the Charter. One way in which the Council can keep a finger on the pulse of the Assembly is by convening more formal meetings on the issues before it, thereby hearing the views of interested parties before it makes decisions or adopts resolutions.

Secondly, the Council should accept, as an article of faith, the necessity of regularly informing Member States of the nature and scope of its activities and deliberations. Towards further enriching its work, the Council must also provide the opportunity and means for concerned Member States to communicate their views to it. An important tool in that regard is institutionalized consultations between the Presidents of the Assembly and the Council.

Thirdly, about three years ago, the Council began a series of month-end wrap-up sessions, reviewing the work it had done during that period with non-members of the Council. Those sessions were widely hailed throughout the Organization because of their great usefulness. Unfortunately, for nearly two years now, the wrap-up sessions have not been held. In our view, such an important vehicle of communication between the general membership and the Council — one in

which the outgoing presidency directly accounts to Member States — should be resumed.

My delegation would like to point out that it is of the greatest importance for the Charter-mandated responsibilities of organs of the United Nations to be maintained and respected, guaranteeing that the checks and balances of the Charter are not trampled upon.

Indonesia reiterates its position that only a transparent, democratic and representative Security Council, whose membership and practices reflect twenty-first century realities, will be capable of guaranteeing the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated by the United Nations Charter. We are strongly convinced that reform in that body is required in order to bolster the legitimacy and credibility of its decision-making processes.

We have to recognize that reform of the Security Council remains a key issue. While support for the enlargement of the membership of the Council is widespread, there has been no consensus on how to go about that reform. For 10 years, the Open-ended Working Group has sought to resolve the issue, but the prospect remains uncertain.

In principle, reform of the Security Council should be conducted comprehensively and reflect today's geopolitical realities. Though my Government advocates and supports the enlargement of the Security Council, it believes that its existing structure, combining permanent membership with non-permanent membership, should be retained, not set aside.

In that regard, the presence of Indonesia, as the world's largest moderate Muslim nation, should prove beneficial to the deliberations of the Council. Its practice of pluralistic democracy, its experience in mediating conflicts and its vast contribution to various peacekeeping operations — whether in Cambodia, the southern Philippines, the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Georgia — and its abiding commitment to international peace and understanding qualify it to assume such a role.

Finally, we also look forward to receiving inputs from the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. However, reform of the United Nations should not only be conducted in the context of Security Council; it must impact the entire United Nations system, as stipulated by the 2000 Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to join previous speakers in expressing my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for introducing the annual report of the Council to the current session of the General Assembly.

The report is indicative of the Security Council's performance and approach to issues of high significance and sensitivity that impact international peace and security. It not only provides an opportunity for the general membership to get better acquainted with the work of the Council, but also helps to maintain and improve the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as suggested by the Charter. That relationship cannot remain healthy unless the views and concerns of the entire membership are duly noted and respected by the Council in discharging its important responsibilities.

The report of the Council deserves to be given careful and due consideration in terms of both its format and content. On the format, the present report has been prepared in a concise, better focused and improved manner, which in our view could be seen as an indication of the Council's willingness to streamline and improve its method of work. We also note that, in dealing with a wide range of issues, the Security Council had an intense pace of activities during the past 12 months.

In the meantime, a significant number of measures were taken to improve transparency and openness in the work of the Council. They include the improvement of the format of the Council's annual report; holding more open meetings and open debates, as well as briefings for non-member States; and consultations with regional groups. Undoubtedly, those are few but the right steps to bring about a positive impact on the work of the Council and its relationship with the wider United Nations membership. Indeed, a closer link between the Council and the general membership is imperative to enable the United Nations to address effectively the issues and crises that adversely impact international peace and security.

The positive trends in the working methods of the Security Council should not be restricted to certain areas. Transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities and approaches. Sadly, the Council has appeared to neglect those important factors on

numerous occasions. In that respect, reference may be made to such instances as the surprise scheduling of open debates with selective notification, reluctance to convene open debates on some issues of high significance, restricting participation in some of the open debates, and discriminating between members and non-members of the Council as far as the sequence and time limits of statements during open debates are concerned.

A disturbing fact is the Council's attempt to gradually encroach on the powers and mandate of the General Assembly by addressing some issues, including through thematic debates, which traditionally fall within the competence of the General Assembly or even the Economic and Social Council; or its attempts to enter the areas of standard-setting and establishing definitions that fall within the legislative and standard-setting purview of the General Assembly. Furthermore, in recent years, we have witnessed an increase in the number of subsidiary organs of the Security Council. It is therefore imperative that those subsidiary organs of the Council work in a way in which the general membership of the United Nations can receive adequate information on their role and functions.

To further increase the transparency of its work and improve its working methods, the Council should seriously take into consideration the relevant provisions of the Charter and the resolutions that clarify its relationship with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, especially resolution 58/126. Accordingly, rule 48 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, which calls for the Council's meetings to be held in public, should be thoroughly observed; consequently, the closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum, as the exceptions they were meant to be.

The prevailing state of affairs in international relations points to formidable challenges that we all face. This situation has prompted the Council to resort quite often to Chapter VII of the Charter to deal with certain incidents. However, a careful review of that trend reminds us that the Council could have opted for alternative provisions to respond more appropriately to particular cases. We therefore share the view that the Security Council, instead of resorting to excessive use of Chapter VII, should develop a mechanism to determine how the provisions of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter can be fully utilized for the pacific settlement of disputes and what role the Security Council, the Secretary-General and other United Nations entities, as well as regional arrangements, can play in resolving disputes and conflicts through peaceful means.

From the substantive point of view, the report covers a wide range of issues that were dealt with by the Council during the period under consideration. I will, however, confine my statement to a number of issues that are of great importance and sensitivity to my country.

Over the past 12 months, the situation in Iraq has dominated all regional and international developments and, accordingly, has featured prominently on the agenda of the Security Council. The adoption of five resolutions on the subject by the Council during that period is a clear indication of its determination to address the question of Iraq. We welcome further United Nations involvement in Iraq and the enhancement of the pivotal role that this world body can and should play in that country. We view the Security Council's resolutions as forming a solid basis for enabling Iraq to regain its full sovereignty and preserve its unity, political independence and territorial integrity, particularly through the holding free and fair elections, as scheduled, and the speedy withdrawal of foreign forces from the country.

In Iran's view, the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular must redouble their efforts and play a more proactive role in helping the Iraqi people, at this crucial juncture, to move smoothly through the difficult process under way with a view to ending their suffering.

We note that the situation in Afghanistan also continued to be regularly considered by the Council throughout the period under review. The Council's initiative to send a mission to Afghanistan was a positive step in the right direction. We share the observations made by the Council mission that the peace process and the political process in Afghanistan need to be supported by the international community in order for security and stability to be restored there.

The Council's decision to extend the mandates of the international and United Nations missions in Afghanistan in order to help the Afghan authorities to secure a healthy environment for free, fair and credible elections was praiseworthy. The recent massive turnout of the Afghan nation for the presidential election was a positive and welcome event which well illustrates that

the Afghans are willing and able to take their destiny in their own hands. It certainly marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Afghanistan. Iran welcomes that development. We will spare no effort to help the elected Government in Kabul to overcome the challenges that the Afghan people face. We also believe that the United Nations has a huge responsibility to play a more effective role in helping the Afghan authorities to restore security and stability and to rebuild the country.

The situation in the Middle East, especially the Palestinian question, received the attention of the Council throughout the period under consideration. We note that the Council continued to convene monthly meetings at which members received briefings from the Secretary-General, his Personal Representative and Special Coordinator or other high-ranking Secretariat officials on the situation in the Middle East. That undoubtedly helped Council members not to lose sight of the grave situation in that region. However, we are of the view that the Council was rendered ineffective and unable to address adequately the question of Palestine, despite the gravity of that issue.

We observed with dismay that, during the period under review, attempts to adopt resolutions on the Palestinian issue in the Security Council were thwarted three times, even though earlier relevant resolutions of the Council were totally disregarded by Israel. In fact, the Council's approach on the Palestinian issue fell well short of our expectations. No doubt the credibility of the Council will erode over time if it is habitually seen to be unable to meet its responsibilities with regard to outstanding issues on its agenda.

Allow me now to briefly touch upon the important issue of the reform of the Security Council. The membership of the United Nations has increased from 112 in 1963, when the Council was last enlarged, to 191 today. Indeed, the composition of the Security Council must be changed, principally to reflect the increased membership of the countries of the world, particularly of developing countries. Almost 11 years have passed since the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council began its deliberations on the issue. We note with appreciation the efforts made by the Working Group, especially the important initiative of the Chairman, to stimulate an active discussion on substantive topics relating to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

However, the debate that took place during the course of the previous session of the Working Group has proved that despite some limited success in the area of work methods, significant progress has yet to be made on substantive matters, such as the size and composition of the Council and the veto power.

Clearly, the impasse that is hindering the evolution of the reform is the result of the complex nature and the enormous importance of the issue. Despite the lack of progress on the main issues, we still believe that the process of the reform of the Council should not be subject to any predetermined or superficial timetable, since any hasty decision would run the risk of harming this very delicate process, which is of vital importance for and of great interest to the entire membership of the United Nations. Because of the fact that the reform of the Council will have a far-reaching impact for the whole world, every effort should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among Member States.

As to the objectives of the reform of the Council, we continue to believe that the Council, as the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must become more democratic, more representative, more accountable and more effective, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

There are a number of options available to make that a reality. Two approaches seem to enjoy the greatest support among Member States. The first relates to the ways and means of improving the working procedure of the Security Council, and the second, to agreement on increasing the non-permanent membership of the Council, pending general agreement on the issue of increasing the number of permanent seats.

Under such circumstances — with developing countries being more fairly represented on the Security Council and the question of the representation by more than 1 billion Muslims being adequately addressed — the democratization of the Security Council would gain pace and, hopefully, lead to a genuine reconsideration of the most undemocratic practice in the Council, that is, the use of the veto. In that regard, the opinion of the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations, who continue to consider the use of veto to be a discriminatory and undemocratic instrument in the

decision-making process of the Council, should be heeded.

The general support for limiting and curtailing the use of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination needs to be explicitly reflected in the final outcome of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council and, hopefully, in the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

I would like to close by assuring you, Mr. President, of our full cooperation on the important issue of the reform of the Security Council. We are confident that, under your skilled and able stewardship, the Open-ended Working Group on Council reform will function successfully and will have a fruitful outcome.

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): I would like, first, to thank the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for having introduced the report before us.

We have been considering the issue of United Nations reform for years, and we have now reached the point at which we have to contemplate the new face of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. The report of the High-level Panel, expected in less than two months, must fully take into account the views and ideas of all and allow for a far-reaching approach that will yield the desired results. I believe that the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly must be viewed mainly from that perspective.

In that context, the report we have before us, however informative, nevertheless creates a feeling of uneasiness. The functioning of the United Nations system is not satisfactory, and the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is not what it should be. The shift of attention from the Assembly to the Council is a symptom rather than a remedy. That shift could, in fact, be the last line of defence against the erosion suffered by the United Nations system in recent years and which has been gradually dethroning the Organization as the primary instrument of contemporary international relations.

As we try to work towards effective multilateralism that revolves around the United Nations, it is of primary importance to restore, or to construct, a truly interactive dialogue between the two main political organs of the Organization. Further transparency and accountability are also required. Those attributes are even more crucial at a time when, beyond any differences of opinion on functions and competences, we all realize the need for an integrated approach and for interdependence between the issues dealt with by the General Assembly and those addressed by the Security Council.

I would also like to succinctly describe our own contribution to the discussions aimed at reform of the Security Council, which is the most important instrument at our disposal in the United Nations system, entrusted with the primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. In the process of the ongoing deliberations, we must consistently take into account that the outcome of such reform will indicate the level of the Security Council's effectiveness and, concurrently, the level of its ability to execute its functions and powers, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

As a small State whose primary source of protection is the rule of law and strict adherence to international legality, Cyprus has always maintained that the credibility and legitimacy of the Council must be ensured, first, through broader and more equitable representation of Member States in its composition; secondly, by taking into account the realities and the criteria embodied in Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter; and thirdly, through securing efficiency, both in the work of the Council and in the implementation of its resolutions.

We are supportive of a contemporary Security Council whose structure will adequately reflect the tremendous change in the global political reality since the inception of the Organization and whose composition will comprise a more balanced representation of all geographical groups. To that end, we look forward to the report of the High-level Panel and to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, and we anticipate that Member States will rise to the occasion and seize the opportunity to pursue a strong follow-up.

It must also be underlined that the concept of security today is a multifaceted one and that it no longer pertains only to traditional threats. It is therefore imperative that we adopt an all-inclusive approach with the broadest possible perspective in order to combat security deficits, regardless of their nature.

We also believe that we should do more to involve troop-contributing countries in the deliberations and that all major stakeholders must have ample possibilities to adequately make their views known, thus adding value to the decisions of the Council. Simultaneously, one should bear in mind, first, that the spirit and practice of effective multilateralism must respect and uphold international legality and protect individual and collective human rights; and secondly, that such multilateralism not only encompasses, but also derives from, the comprehension and consideration of local realities and particulars, on the basis of which it must then proceed to formulate proposals.

Cyprus believes that the effort under way to reform the Security Council must be comprehensive and far-sighted. In the spirit of those principles and with the aim of reinforcing the legitimacy and efficacy of the Council, we are supportive of increasing both its permanent and its non-permanent membership. In that respect, we believe that the joint French-German position on expansion of the Council could provide a basis for meeting those requirements that will enable it to fulfil its role in the maintenance of international peace and security, always having as a priority the best interests of the peoples whose security the Council is mandated to safeguard.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): The delegation of Nauru joins previous speakers in congratulating Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, President of the Security Council, on his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council (A/59/2). My delegation also takes this opportunity to thank the former President of the General Assembly, The Honourable Julian Hunte, Foreign Minister of Saint Lucia, and Ambassadors Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador and Christian Wenaweser of Liechtenstein for their good work in revamping our debate in the Open-ended Working Group by focusing on the key elements in reform of the Security Council.

The Security Council, as noted in the report, has been seized with a wide range of issues, from civil conflicts in the African region to the consolidation of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region — particularly in our neighbourhood — to the revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the strengthening of action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). We are pleased to note the Council's action in extending the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor to 20 May 2005 and the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville to 31 December 2004. Those two Missions have been success stories for the Council and for the United Nations as a whole, and it would be a great pity if the decision to end those two operations were premised on saving money when millions of dollars continue to be poured into other conflict regions. The premature termination of missions before real peace and economic development has taken root could lead and has led to breakdowns in the peace process, as we have seen recently in Côte d'Ivoire and Haiti.

The failure of Israel and Palestine to come to the peace table by way of fulfilling their obligations under the road map, in cooperation with the Quartet, has continued to bring senseless misery to their peoples. In our view, the failure of the Security Council to adopt resolutions to address breaches of international law and of the Council's own resolutions has exacerbated the situation, as a divided Council is powerless. That situation should be corrected, as it could and would send a signal to the parties to the conflict that their actions and counter-actions are being condoned.

Iraq and Afghanistan have featured prominently in the Council's work over the past 12 months. The paths that brought them to the refuge of the Council were different, and that is being reflected in the manner in which peace and security and democracy are being achieved in those two countries.

Nauru is pleased to see the Council reaffirm its support on the solution to the question on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara by resolution 1541 (2004). However, it should do more to bring the process to closure so that the people of Western Sahara can enjoy freedom and economic and social development through the right to their resources and land.

Nauru has submitted two reports to the Counter-Terrorism Committee but is late in submitting the third report. The main reason for that is the lack of capacity in our country to generate the necessary legislation and other actions required under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The requirements under resolution 1540 (2004) have made the work more arduous. To that end, the question of joint reporting by the Pacific Island countries through our regional Forum

is being evaluated, and it is our sincere hope that the proposal will be entertained by the Council when it is formally brought to it for consideration.

Under the 2000 Biketawa Declaration, the Pacific Island Forum has made significant efforts in enhancing peace and security in the region among which the most noteworthy is the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The Forum is currently evaluating what assistance it could offer Nauru to ensure that the current economic and social situation does not give rise to instability and security problems. We believe that the United Nations and the Council should look at that model as another way to support the Council in maintaining peace and security in conflict regions.

Reforming the Security Council has been a fundamental part of United Nations politics for decades. While we all agree on the idea of increasing the membership of the Council in order better to reflect the membership of our Organization, so far, the only consensus among us on this issue is that the process will be arduous because of the different approaches that delegations have. Despite the complexities of this issue, we have seen, through our work on cluster II, that good progress has already been made towards making the work of the Security Council more transparent.

We recognize the inextricable linkage between the question of the veto and the question of Security Council expansion. However, we believe that the signal we have from the permanent members of the Council, whose support is essential, is that they could entertain the question of expanding the membership of both categories, but we have not heard anything positive — or anything at all — about fiddling with the veto power. Therefore, to us this is a no-go zone, and to insist on dealing with this issue in conjunction with the expansion suggests ulterior motives. Despite the major obstacles before us, work should continue in developing a good framework for the reform process to move forward.

On the issue of the expansion of the Council's membership, my delegation reaffirms its support for the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council. My delegation believes that countries that are willing and able to make a meaningful and effective contribution to maintaining world peace should be considered for permanent membership. To that end my delegation supports the aspirations of Germany, Japan and India for permanent membership.

Finally, our effort on the question of Security Council reform is going to be complemented and, hopefully, reinforced by the work being undertaken by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. The report of the Panel will be submitted by the Secretary-General at the end of this year, and we look forward to participating in the deliberations on the report.

Mr. Goonatilleke (Sri Lanka): Over the years, the Open-ended Working Group has considered various issues involving the reform of the Security Council. Among those issues are size, the question of geographical representation, criteria for membership, the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, accountability and the use of the veto by permanent members of the Council. We welcome the progress made so far by the Working Group and its report to the General Assembly.

The negotiations that began a decade ago have made it possible for the Working Group to gather considerable amount of information on the rationalization to be undertaken. During the course of its work, various formulas have been presented by interested delegations and groups to the Working Group. However, despite the initiative taken by the Chairman to stimulate discussion during the fifty-eighth session, thus far no finality has been reached on any of the issues. Consequently, the Working Group will have to continue its deliberations well into the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

During this year's general debate, more than 140 Member States focused on specific areas of Security Council reform, including its ideal size, the question of regional representation and related matters. In considering the size of the Council, we must take into account the current membership of the United Nations in comparison to the 112 members that comprised the Organization in 1963, when the Council was enlarged to 15 members.

Bearing in mind the crucial role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the binding nature of its resolutions, it is widely accepted that the Council should be expanded to represent the geopolitical realities of the day, and not those that existed some 60 years ago.

In that regard, much has been said about the efficiency and the effectiveness of an expanded Council. While there is reason to accept that the Council should not be expanded to the extent that it becomes unwieldy, we have to admit that efficiency and effectiveness of the Council cannot be ensured by limiting its size while ignoring the reality on the ground. Those and other concerns should be addressed by introducing measures to improve the working methods of the Council.

My delegation agrees that the expansion should reflect the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Among other issues, due consideration should be given to the Council's lack of representation of developing countries, which represent the vast majority of the United Nations membership. Sri Lanka shares the view expressed by many delegations at the current session that the expansion of the Council should be in respect of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories and that this exercise should be undertaken in such a manner that it makes the Council truly representative of the membership of the United Nations.

In that regard, I would like to quote from the statement made at the Assembly's 3rd meeting on 21 September, by Her Excellency Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of Sri Lanka, regarding the expression of interest by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan in permanent membership on an expanded Security Council:

> "Sri Lanka supports their candidatures, as they comply with the objective criteria applicable to the expansion of the permanent membership of the Security Council. Sri Lanka would also wish to see a consensus emerge on the permanent representation of Africa in the Security Council. Africa must be included in a final determination on the future composition of the Security Council. It is hoped that the Open-ended Working Group will continue to exert efforts to resolve all outstanding issues expeditiously."

From the point of view of the great majority of the membership, among the issues the Working Group needs to address is the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Given the importance of the responsibilities entrusted to the Security Council by the United Nations Charter and the limited membership of the Council in relation to that of the United Nations, it is evident that there should be a closer working relationship between the two branches of the Organization. It has been argued that, by paragraph 1 of Article 24, Member States have conferred on the Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and that the Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization. It is in that context that most delegations have urged that that relationship should be enhanced and that the Council should increase the accountability and transparency of its work.

We fully understand the difficulty of resolving these issues, taking into consideration the numerous views and proposals that have been presented to the Working Group. On the basis of the interest displayed by members in resolving the issue of expansion, the Working Group has to decide whether issues should be addressed in a piecemeal fashion or if it should come up with comprehensive proposals involving all issues under discussion.

As we are aware, the Working Group has been labouring to fulfil its mandate for over a decade. Given the length of time we have been involved in this exercise and the urgency of reaching final decisions, it is important for the Working Group to present a comprehensive set of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly. Moreover, we believe that the Working Group should decide on a time frame within which it would submit its recommendations.

Finally, a large number of those delegations that took the floor during the general debate last month also referred to the work currently undertaken by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary-General, whose report is to be issued in December. My delegation hopes that the report will also give new momentum to the work undertaken by the Working Group in regard to reforming the Security Council. At the same time, Sri Lanka expects that sufficient time and opportunity will be available to the Member States to carefully study, discuss and reach conclusions prior to deciding on the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): On behalf of the delegation of Tuvalu, I would like first to thank the Security Council and the Secretariat for the work they have done to prepare the report before us. Tuvalu also

appreciates the work of the Security Council in its endeavours to maintain to international peace and security over the past years. We acknowledge in particular the support of the Security Council in efforts to restore peace to, among others, the people of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, in the Pacific region.

Despite our being new to the United Nations, we observe with great anxiety the growing challenges and threats confronting the security environment. The international fight against terrorism and alleged weapons of mass destruction, the consequences of wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and civil unrest in the Middle East and parts of Africa clearly underscore the complex nature of the work of the Security Council. They also clearly underscore the urgent need for appropriate reforms to be made in the United Nations to ensure a more efficient and responsive Security Council.

Tuvalu therefore welcomes the ongoing efforts to reform the Security Council, as highlighted in the report before us. The efforts of the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, Mr. Julian Hunte, to revitalize the work of the Open-ended Working Group established to consider aspects of Security Council reform are commendable. However, we feel that those efforts will be in vain unless the Open-ended Working Group is properly enabled to complete its task as required.

Tuvalu supports the importance of wider consultations on security issues through relevant avenues, particularly through opportunities for public debate in the Security Council and the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The reporting requirements of the latter, however, should be accompanied by assistance, in the form of national and regional measures, especially to countries with the least capacity to cope with such requirements, such as Tuvalu.

For Tuvalu and many small island developing States, security should be seen in its multidimensional nature. Our national security is threatened by environmental degradation emanating from outside the country. Here I refer specifically to the environmental impact of climate change and sea-level rise and to the loss of biological diversity. The impact of climate change has the potential to threaten the survival of our entire nation. As a result, we firmly believe — and I am sure that many vulnerable island developing countries share my sentiments — that those environmental concerns should be part of the reform agenda of the Security Council. This, in essence, is widely accepted, including in the Millennium Summit Declaration and elsewhere in the context of the United Nations. It therefore warrants intensifying the efforts of all Member States to achieve comprehensive reform in the Security Council. Indeed, in view of Tuvalu's unique, extreme vulnerability — which it shares with many small island developing States — to external forces including terrorism and environmental degradation, we fully support that view.

As stated by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu during the general debate this year, it is our strong belief that, to maintain its legitimacy and relevance to all, the United Nations needs to reassess its role and its functions so as to better reflect the reality of today's world to ensure equitable participation and representation in its main bodies.

It must be emphasized that the primary role and responsibility of the Security Council with respect to the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security is crucial to everyone. To weak and vulnerable Member States such as Tuvalu, it is critical to ensuring their very survival.

In that respect, the issue of enlarging the membership of the Council is a vital one. Given that the United Nations now has 191 Members and that the membership of the Security Council has increased only once, in 1965, from 11 to 15, Tuvalu shares the view that the restructuring of the Security Council should first and foremost address the issue of membership in the Council, consistent with the principles of democracy and transparency, and also to bring about equitable representation of all regions on the globe, particularly the developing countries and small island developing States, in this vital organ of the United Nations.

In that vein, Tuvalu supports an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats in the Security Council. We believe Japan deserves a permanent seat, in view of its substantial contribution to international development, peace and security. We also believe that Germany, India and Brazil are also very appropriate candidates, for similar reasons.

Finally, but most importantly, we firmly believe that, in view of their extreme vulnerability to external forces — as recognized, as a special case, at the Rio

Summit and in all other international development agreements — small island developing States should also be considered for permanent representation in the Security Council. That would make the Security Council and the United Nations truly universal and democratic.

Ms. Pęksa-Krawiec (Poland): As has been stated by many previous speakers, we all await the results of the deliberations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We hope that the Panel's recommendations will give us new impetus to look from a different perspective at the possible ways the international community should answer the new threats and challenges.

Poland, as one of the main proponents of the idea of establishing the Panel, definitely has great expectations as to the results of its works. At the same time, however, we are realists and we know that the Panel cannot find the cure to everything or present us with detailed solutions in every aspect of reform. Therefore, in assisting the Panel, each of us should continue searching for ways to improve the work of the United Nations system in order to make it more reliable and effective. We all have responsibilities in that regard and we cannot believe that maintaining the status quo for another 10 years, just because we are afraid to fail, is really the best way to proceed.

In the Polish view, it is the word "responsibility" that should guide our deliberations on the needed changes in the United Nations system, including those of the Security Council. Since the performance of the Council is central to the effectiveness of the United Nations, both the Council's members and the entire United Nations membership have the responsibility to strengthen its role and legitimacy.

I thank Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry of the United Kingdom, the President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the Council's annual report. Let me just mention three aspects in that regard: the obligations of the Council in the process of making and executing decisions; the responsibilities of Council members; and the responsibilities of the whole membership regarding the reform of the Organization.

During the general debate, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, elaborating on the Polish initiative of adopting a new political act for the United Nations, stated that the gap between the mandating and the implementing functions of the United Nations is too wide.

Therefore, we believe that it is the responsibility of the members of the Security Council to take the lead in providing political and material support for the implementation of the Security Council's decisions. The credibility of the Council can be ensured only when its decisions are taken in a transparent way, with the involvement of the broader membership. The complexity of the new threats and challenges to international security makes it necessary to establish better coordination between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, both in the day-to-day work of those organs and in longer-term planning.

The leading role of the Council should also be seen in the process of promoting closer cooperation with the troop-contributing countries. The established mechanisms of consultation still need improvement, especially when it comes to substance. The troop-contributing countries should be given more influence in the process of the creation of missions and in the elaboration of their mandates. They should also be better involved in the assessment of ongoing operations and the situation on the ground and in ways to improve it.

A new mechanism for discussions with groups of interested States or actors concerning any given crisis situation should also be taken into consideration. While preserving the rule of transparency, such meetings of the Council should have a rather informal format to allow partners honestly and in depth to assess problems and to elaborate ways to deal with them. While open debates of the Council are still needed and certainly have great value, informal meetings could help to resolve problems and in deciding about the needed tools.

Cooperation with regional organizations, especially those involved in the implementation of Council resolutions, is yet another tool that needs to be further enhanced. As in the case of the secretariats of those organizations and the United Nations Secretariat, there is a also vital need in the Council to establish genuine working, problem-oriented relations with other institutions that would complement the formal exchanges of letters and structured debates.

As to decision-making, the most discussed problem is still the question of the veto power. We are

not calling for that prerogative of the permanent members to be abandoned at this moment, but we are of the opinion that it has to be used in a responsible way and only when there is a need to protect international law, the principles of the Charter or the wider United Nations membership, but not the particular interests of countries.

As to the second aspect, the Republic of Poland believes that Security Council reform should be built on the assumption that being a member not only grants additional privileges, but also increases responsibilities. Therefore, while discussing the issue of the expansion of Security Council membership, we have to remember that the key to a more effective and legitimate Security Council does not lie in the number of its members, but rather in their qualities and their true resolve to act in the common interest.

Poland's position on the question of Council enlargement remains the same. We are of the opinion that an enlarged United Nations needs a bigger, more representative and democratic Security Council. Therefore, we support changes in both categories of membership. We recognize the readiness of two countries, Germany and Japan, to contribute on a larger scale to peace and security and to take upon themselves the responsibilities of the permanent members of the Council. We also share the opinion that other major contributors from Asia, Africa and South America should find permanent seats in the Council.

At the same time, the group of non-permanent members should be enlarged in a way that will reflect the changes in the regional groups. In that context, let me recall the justified position of the Eastern European Group to be better represented in the Council. The Eastern European Group has more then doubled its membership since it was created. The unique history of its members; their recent experience dealing with many kinds of conflicts and overcoming various threats; and the Group's growing role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and, recently, development assistance give it not only the right to be better represented, but also the obligation to use its experience in the work of the Security Council.

Let me conclude with my third remark. The number of delegations that have decided to speak on this agenda item illustrates how important the issue of Security Council reform is to the Members of the United Nations. We all recognize that, like the United Nations as a whole, the Council has to change and adapt to be better able to face contemporary challenges. But we have to treat the reform of the Council with responsibility, not emotion. We have to address the subject as just one of the elements of the comprehensive adaptation of the United Nations system to the current international environment. We cannot allow ourselves to make that long-awaited adaptation and change to become a hostage to particular interests, which, while undoubtedly important and urgent, are just a part of the whole picture.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): In the period covered by its report, the Security Council faced major challenges calling for the adoption of bold decisions. Delegations to the Council made every effort to analyse situations involved on the basis of the highly enlightening reports submitted to them by the Secretary-General. Thus, the Council was able to forge the consensus necessary for action on most of the issues before it, although the use of the veto in some cases paralysed it and revealed its limitations, notably with respect to the situation in the Middle East.

My delegation welcomes the sustained attention that the Security Council has paid to the problems of the African continent. We call on the stakeholders in the various critical African situations before the Council to spare no pains to accelerate their settlement so that the continent may devote its resources to promoting sustainable development in the context of the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We welcome the ongoing mobilization of the Council to settle the humanitarian crisis in Darfur and the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere.

I wish to draw attention to the Security Council mission to West Africa last June, which enabled the Council to send the parties on the ground the clear message that they must forge solid consensus at the local level in order to make progress on resolving situations before the Council. I also underline the Security Council's expanding interaction with the African Union and subregional organizations.

Conflicts on other continents are moving towards the restoration of peace and stability. The exception is the situation in the Middle East, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the situation in Iraq, where uncontrolled violence prevails and where the

heavy loss of life continues to bring grief to humankind, with no end in sight.

The Council has made great efforts to combat terrorism, as demonstrated by the report on the revitalization of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (S/2004/124) and the creation of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, as well as the Council's unanimous adoption last week of resolution 1566 (2004), which reaffirms that there can be no justification for terrorist acts against civilians.

The Security Council's consideration of questions that clearly affect international peace and security is another important part of its activities. We believe that the thematic debates are very useful as they enable the Council to anticipate challenges and allow States not members of the Council to participate in the search for solutions.

With respect to the Council itself and its working methods, I stress the need speedily to reach consensus on Council reform, in particular on the increase in Council membership. It is fortunate that during the general debate most Member States reaffirmed their desire to make the Security Council more representative of the entire international community, given that the international situation has changed considerably, that the number of Member States has grown from 51 to 191 since the creation of the United Nations and that new States possess a certain weight in demographic, economic and military terms.

Benin's position on this important question is in alignment with that of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union. Benin believes that United Nations reform, in particular Security Council reform, will strengthen the Organization's universality and its ability to contribute effectively to the realization of the purposes enshrined in the Charter, notably the promotion of economic development and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Benin believes that any Security Council reform must take into account the legitimate aspirations of the developing countries, in particular the African countries, while preserving the Council's effectiveness and proper functioning.

Benin has no objection to the candidacy of the friendly countries of Japan, Germany and Brazil as permanent members of the Security Council. However, the scope, the nature and the modalities of the increase in the Council's membership should be founded on the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic distribution in order to ensure the effective representation of the various regions, according to arrangements they decide upon among themselves. To be clear, there cannot be a partial or selective increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent Council members that disadvantages the developing countries.

In that context, Africa, like each other regional group, should have two permanent seats on the Security Council. Any other solution would cause a de facto imbalance and the overrepresentation of one regional group to the detriment of the others. In other words, Africa is justly calling for two permanent and two non-permanent seats in addition to the three it now holds.

Benin believes that the veto power should be extended to new permanent members of the Security Council. Moreover, non-permanent members of the Security Council should be granted the veto power, in rotation, during the month they hold the presidency of the Security Council, given the important role of the country holding the presidency and its political responsibility for Council decisions taken under its presidency.

With that in mind, Benin awaits with great interest the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenge and Change established by the Secretary-General to consider the challenges and threats confronting the world today and the changes that the United Nations must make to respond to them. My country will actively participate in the consideration of the Panel's conclusions in order to make the best use of them for the Organization's future and for all humankind.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): The changes that have taken place in the international situation are compelling an increasing number of countries to review their vision of the status and the role of the United Nations and to revisit the question of how to reform the United Nations to enable it to respond more effectively to the challenges facing the international community.

Uzbekistan believes that the United Nations should remain the main component of the architecture for global security and collective international cooperation. The Organization's effectiveness depends

directly on our collective efforts to reform it. In that context, we should note that in the process of reforming the United Nations, we should ensure that the practical work of all its organs is focused on issues of truly high priority. The United Nations is faced with the challenge of adapting its mechanisms to new international realities.

In that connection, given the fact that new threats and challenges to international peace and security have appeared on the world scene, there is an urgent need to speed up the reform and the reorganization of the Organization, particularly of the Security Council. In that context, we believe it is important that reform of the Security Council enhance its role, authority and effectiveness. In the light of the events that have occurred with respect to the Iraqi crisis, the Council should work to restore the trust of the international community and demonstrate that it is able effectively to resolve the most difficult challenges before it. The Council must be able to respond appropriately to new challenges and threats. The Council's powers and means to prevent conflict should be enhanced by creating an operational mechanism giving the Council the right to use pre-emptive enforcement action.

Uzbekistan favours expanding both categories of membership of the Council according to the political and economic potential of countries and on the basis of equitable geographic representation and other criteria. But an increase in any category of Council membership should include representation of both developed and developing countries.

We reaffirm that we view Japan and Germany as credible, worthy candidates for permanent membership of the Security Council. However, I should note that increasing the membership of the Council should not be an end in itself and must not reduce the Council's effectiveness, thus jeopardizing the effectiveness of the Council's work. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council should continue to consider all relevant issues, fully taking into account their political and practical importance for both the future Security Council and the United Nations as a whole.

Like all Members of the United Nations, Uzbekistan also hopes that the recommendations of report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, to be issued in December of this year, will open up new prospects for truly enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization.

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President of the Security Council, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his clear presentation of the report of the Security Council (A/59/2) to the General Assembly.

I also wish to hail the improvements made in the methods of work and procedures of the Security Council and to thank members of the Council who keep non-members regularly apprised of the Council's deliberations, thus contributing to transparency. I wish further to express our deep thanks to the former Chairman and Vice-Chairmen 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 effective and remarkable conduct of the Group's deliberations.

The General Assembly's discussion of this question gives us the opportunity to reaffirm the position of the State of Kuwait, which is based on the following established principles.

First, we stress the importance of codifying the measures taken by the Security Council to improve its methods of work without waiting for agreement on other issues such as the Council's size, composition or decision-making process.

Secondly, Kuwait supports an increase in the membership of the Security Council. But the increase should not be too big; we must maintain the Council's effectiveness and the efficiency of the decision-making process, enabling the Council to continue to confront the disputes that pose a threat to international peace and security.

Thirdly, the increase in the membership of the Security Council should be in line with the principles of equal sovereignty of States and equitable geographical representation. Let me stress that the interests of small and developing countries should not be overlooked in this exercise. Fourthly, a permanent seat should be allocated to the Group of Arab States. That seat would be occupied on a rotating basis and through coordination among members of the Group. Fifthly, we note the importance of placing limits and controls on the scope of the exercise of the right of

veto; it should be exercised only on issues that fall under Chapter VII of the Charter. Sixthly, a realistic attitude should be adopted in dealing with changes in the number of members of certain geographical groups, especially the Asian and Eastern European Groups.

Finally, we express the hope that a consensus formula will eventually be worked out to the satisfaction of all parties, while maintaining the efficiency of the work of the Security Council without any impediments.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.