United Nations A/68/PV.46

General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

46th plenary meeting
Thursday, 7 November 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe . . . . . (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Second report of the General Committee (A/68/250/Add.1)

The President: In paragraph (a) of its report (A/68/250/Add.1), the General Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that an additional item entitled "United Nations University" be included in the agenda of the current session under heading A, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in the agenda of the current session under heading A?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph (b) of the same report, the General Committee further recommended that the item be allocated to the Second Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that the item entitled "United Nations University" becomes item 174 on the agenda of the current session.

The Chair of the Second Committee will be informed of the decision just taken by the General Assembly.

Agenda item 113

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/300)

The President: As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/68/300.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this document?

It was so decided.

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The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 29 and 123

Report of the Security Council

Report of the Security Council (A/68/2)

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

The President: Today, we are here to discuss an issue that is important to each and every Member State, namely, the question of Security Council reform. Knowing well the interests and concerns that we all share in the singular goal of making progress on that important question, I am pleased to welcome you to this debate.

Many will recall that, on my election as President of the General Assembly, I emphasized the need to reinvigorate and advance the question of Security Council reform and stressed that I would make it a priority. While that commitment remains solid, the extent of the challenge is not lost on me. My team and I have been increasingly committed to identifying how to give new life to the established intergovernmental negotiating process on the question. To that end, we held consultations with virtually every interest group on the issue to ascertain the thoughts of Member States and, more important, their expectations. Based on the feedback that I received, I created an advisory group to assist me in identifying ways by which the process could move forward.

As stated in my letter of 22 October to Member States, the advisory group comprises the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Liechtenstein, Papua New Guinea, San Marino and Sierra Leone. I would like to clarify that its membership was not chosen on the basis of geographical representation. Rather, there were three primary areas of consideration, namely, the size of the group, representation of the various interests in the debate, and the fact that its members, ever mindful of their individual or group positions, would seek to look past interests and provide me with advice on how to move the discussions forward.

What is important to note is that the advisory group is not — and I cannot stress that enough — and cannot be a formal part of the established intergovernmental process. Similarly, the group does not have a negotiating mandate. That mandate belongs to Member States in the format of the intergovernmental negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform.

Equally important, the advisory group does not have a mandate to draft a resolution, declaration or document of any kind. Rather, drawing upon decision 62/557, the discussions that have taken place in the intergovernmental framework and the content of this debate, the advisory group has been tasked with providing ideas to me as President of the General Assembly to help start the negotiations that will begin on or about 15 November, under the auspices of the appointed Chair, Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan. It will be my prerogative whether or not to accept the ideas of my advisory group. I hope that the deliberations here today will provide it with food for thought.

In my time at the United Nations, I have presided over a fair number of negotiating processes. None of them can be described as easy and some were extremely difficult, but they have all taught me valuable lessons. One of those is that when representatives come to the table in a true negotiating spirit, prepared to make the necessary compromises to create an acceptable outcome, negotiations are almost always successful. Equally true is the fact that where there is no willingness to compromise, negotiations invariably end in failure. I therefore urge you not to let that be the case on this very important item, perhaps the most important on this Assembly's agenda.

Our United Nations is and must remain a place where we collectively reach compromise, a place of accommodation. The essence of the process of negotiations is compromise. Each and every side on that question must make concessions if we are to find an acceptable common ground.

At the start of the general debate, I promised that whenever and wherever true leadership was required and whenever deadlocks must be broken and processes advanced, I would do my utmost to be resolute, fair, even-handed and unequivocal. The question of Security Council reform demands that I remain true to that promise. Today, I wish to assure members that I will. However, I am sure that all understand that,

in the final analysis, the success or otherwise of the intergovernmental negotiations will ultimately depend on Member States. The negotiations are their process, and their success depends entirely on how members choose to carry them forward. Whenever I am called upon to assist members I am fully prepared to do so.

Ultimately, we are all stakeholders in the success of the process. I would therefore like to think that after the statements have been delivered in this debate, and when the time for hard negotiations comes, each of you will be willing to show openness and flexibility. That is absolutely critical if we are to make progress in the negotiations, and it is my challenge to you now: stay focused on the long-term goal and be flexible in the process.

I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council to introduce the report of the Council.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China), President of the Security Council (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of all the members of the Security Council, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I thank you for arranging today's meeting.

As the President of the Security Council for the month of November, it is my honour to introduce the annual report of the Security Council, contained in document A/68/2. The report covers the period from 1 August 2012 through 31 July 2013.

The Charter of the United Nations entrusts the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the past year, with the support of the whole United Nations membership, the Security Council has sought to actively discharge its responsibilities, urging the peaceful resolution of conflicts and undertaking a series of peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities all over the world. It has responded to a variety of security threats, leading to some positive results and playing a central role in efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Addressing hot-spot issues on the African continent has long been a focus of the Council's work. More than 60 per cent of the Council's agenda items are related to Africa, and half of the United Nations peacekeeping operations are deployed on that continent. The peace and security of Africa are inseparable from those of the whole world.

Over the past year, the Council, in close cooperation with such regional and subregional organizations as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, has worked for a settlement to the conflict in Mali through active mediation and has promoted the restoration of constitutional order and national stability in that country by taking swift actions to authorize the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Council strengthened the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and endorsed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. In Somalia, the Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to support the Somali Government's efforts for security and reconciliation as well as to enhance coordination among various United Nations agencies in Somalia. The Council followed closely the situation in the Sudan and South Sudan, supported the efforts of the African Union and subregional organizations to stabilize the Central African Republic, and undertook peacebuilding operations in Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, thus playing an important role in maintaining peace and stability in Africa.

The Council also made great efforts to promote peace and stability in the Middle East. Over the past year, the Council held monthly discussions on the Israeli-Palestinian issue and supported the efforts of the parties involved to promote the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and advance the Middle East peace process. The Council remained focused on the situation in Syria, drawing on a high number of briefings from a range of relevant senior United Nations officials in conducting a total of 28 meetings and consultations and releasing four press statements on Syria. The Council also followed closely the situation in other parts of the Middle East, including Lebanon, Libya, Iraq and Yemen. The Council visited Yemen earlier this year, reaffirming its continued support for the ongoing political transition process, in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative.

The Council has long paid equally close attention on its agenda to issues in Asia and Europe. A case that is worth mentioning is Timor-Leste. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Government of Timor-Leste and strong support from the international community, Timor-Leste

entered a new stage in its national development, and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste successfully completed its mandate on 31 December 2012.

While actively dealing with regional hot-spot issues, the Council never slackened in its close attention to thematic issues in the area of international peace and security. It adopted a series of effective actions and promoted international cooperation in such areas as counter-terrorism, non-proliferation and combating transnational organized crime. It also strengthened the capacity of the international community in collectively responding to security threats and challenges of all kinds. The Council held a number of thematic debates on such topics as the protection of civilians in armed conflict, children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding, piracy, peace and security in Africa, and the rule of law.

Those debates enabled the Council to hear the views of the membership of the United Nations and helped foster international consensus on the issues concerned. The Council worked persistently to strengthen communication and exchanges with regional organizations such as the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and conducted fruitful cooperation with them in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In order to better fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter and respond to the calls of the Member States, the Council attaches great importance to improving its working methods and has worked tirelessly in that regard. The Council held 174 public meetings over the past year. To implement the note by the President of the Council in document S/2010/507, five wrap-up sessions were convened in 2013.

During the period covered by the report, the Council also deliberated on many other issues that had long captured international attention. I will not go into details here. As a general practice, the introduction to the report was prepared by the delegation of the United States, which held the presidency of the Council in July 2013. Members of the Council also contributed to the preparation of the report, and the Secretariat worked diligently to compile it. I would like to express my gratitude to all those involved. I welcome the discussion by Member States on the report at this meeting and will be happy to convey your views to my colleagues at the Council.

Mr. Minah (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Union and to thank you, Sir, for convening this joint debate on item 29, entitled "Report of the Security Council", and agenda item 123, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", as well as the report of the Security Council (A/68/2).

Mr. President, we greatly appreciate your forward-looking and instructive opening remarks this morning. We wish to assure you of our support throughout the period of your presidency. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of China for introducing the report on the Security Council covering the activities of the Council from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013 (A/68/2). I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Zahir Tanin on his reappointment as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations and to reiterate our commitment to work with him to ensure a speedy and comprehensive reform of the Council.

At the outset, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the States members of the African Union to this very important issue. We look forward to working with all interest groups in making decisive progress during this session.We are heartened that since the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), many Heads of States and Government taking the floor during the Assembly's general debate continue to reaffirm the need to reform the Security Council in order to make it more representative, democratic, effective, transparent and legitimate. Therefore we must all continue to strive to reach an early agreement on a reform model that takes into account the core values of the United Nations: inclusiveness, democracy, accountability, equality and transparency.

Africa's continued participation in this debate is firmly rooted in our commitment to the African common position as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration on the reform of the United Nations. We remain convinced of the need for comprehensive reform of the United Nations system that upholds the very principles of the Charter for a fairer world, one based on universalism, equity and regional balance. Within this reform process, we remain persuaded that the reform of the United Nations should be all-inclusive, encompassing all the components

of the United Nations system, including the General Assembly and the Security Council.

In that regard, we continue the call for comprehensive reform of the Security Council as contained in General Assembly decision 62/557, which provides the basis of the intergovernmental negotiations and guidance on the interconnectedness of the five clusters of Security Council reform. We remain firmly convinced that the African common position continues to enjoy broad support among the majority of the membership and remains a viable option for Council reform.

We note that the main thrust of all various groups and stakeholder positions advanced to date is to ensure that the Security Council is inclusive, accountable, transparent, accessible and effective. That, we believe, will help ensure the promotion and preservation of the principles of equity and democracy and further enhance the legitimacy of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council.

We must reiterate that correcting the historical injustice suffered by the African continent — as the only continent not represented in the permanent category of the Council and underrepresented in the non-permanent category — is imperative and long overdue. In pursuit of that objective, we remain committed to building alliances on the basis of the African common position, with diverse interest groups and Member States engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations. That would be with a view to achieving the much desired reform of the Security Council.

It is manifestly clear that Africa's position is a continental aspiration, which we believe all Member States and other stakeholders are familiar with. In that regard, it is important to recall that in 1945, when the United Nations was established, most of Africa was not represented, and when the first reform took place in 1963, Africa was not considered for inclusion in the permanent category, even though it was represented.

Circumstances have now changed. It is proper for Africa to be fully represented in all decision-making organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. Full representation of Africa in the Council, we say, should be according to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. That, in brief, means no less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, if it continues to exist, and also two additional non-permanent seats.

To that end, we urge the wider United Nations membership to step up its efforts in working with Africa to urgently address what we consider an injustice. We consider that procrastination in that matter is a travesty of justice and fair play that continues to undermine the dignity of the African people and diminishes the legitimacy of the Security Council.

In seeking progress on the question of equitable representation on and increasing the membership of the Security Council and related matters, we must at this stage endeavour to reach an agreement on how to move forward with the updated third revision of the compiled text. That should take into account the various suggestions made to date, as well as the concerns raised on how to proceed with the documents, including the letter by the African Union's Committee of Ten Heads of State (C-10) of 16 May 2013, addressed to Ambassador Tanin. There is therefore a need for the membership to first agree on the principles and criteria of the negotiations vis-à-vis the five negotiables and the interlinkages, before embarking on any drafting exercise.

While taking note of your letter of 22 October, Mr. President, we continue to advise that when necessary you continue to clarify, for the benefit of the general membership, the role of the advisory group and how it relates to the work of the facilitator and the intergovernmental negotiation process, in particular the implication of that group producing a basis for the start of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Decision 62/557, in laying the basis for intergovernmental negotiations, identified the five negotiable issues that, for the most part, are interlinked: categories of membership, the question of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Council, and the working methods of the Council, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

On the question of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly and the working methods, the C-10 at all times maintained a principled position on those issues, underscoring the need to uphold the primacy of, and full respect for, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations appertaining to the powers and functions of the General Assembly. The two clusters are inextricably linked, and there has been some convergence of views in general. That notwithstanding, several concrete proposals on

how to improve the transparency of and access to the Council, including adopting set rules of procedure, remain actively on the table.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is an integral part of the reform process. We therefore reiterate Africa's readiness to work with all interest groups and other Member States to achieve decisive progress in that area — but as a comprehensive package, not in isolation in the reform process. We hope that work at this session will build on the progress made so far, as well as increase the pace to secure concrete gains ahead of the 2015 world summit. We do hope it will generate the necessary political will and the required collective flexibility for reform of the Security Council in fulfilment of the forthright vision of our principles at the 2005 World Summit.

We look forward to working with you, Mr. President, and the general membership within the intergovernmental negotiations towards a comprehensive reform, as stipulated by decision 62/557 and other relevant Assembly decisions on the reform process.

Let me affirm our commitment to the process towards achieving the acknowledged common will of the majority of the membership to correct a matter of injustice done to Africa, which in our view, should be viewed alongside Africa's demand, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. We call on the conscience of the Assembly to continue to embrace Africa's aspirations for equitable representation on, and an effective voice in, the Council.

The C-10 remains open, ready and willing to enter into consultations, both formal and informal, with all interest groups in the interest of our collective objective.

Mr. Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to express the Movement's appreciation for your pledge in your acceptance speech, on 14 June, to advance the reform processes of all the principal organs of the United Nations during the sixty-eighth session (see A/67/PV.87). I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan on his reappointment as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council for the current session. The Movement would also like to take this opportunity to thank the representative of China for presenting the annual report of the Security Council for the period from 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013 (A/68/2), and the United States delegation for preparing its introduction.

The Non-Aligned Movement attaches great importance to achieving concrete results in Security Council reform through intergovernmental negotiations on the basis of decision 62/557 and subsequent decisions, ending with decision 67/561.

The reform of the Security Council should be addressed in an early, comprehensive, transparent and balanced manner, without setting artificial deadlines. It should ensure that the Council's agenda reflects the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries in an objective, rational, non-selective and non-arbitrary manner. It should address all substantive issues relating, inter alia, to the questions of membership and regional representation and the Council's agenda, working methods and decision-making process, including the veto. It should also garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States in line with the provisions of the Charter and the Assembly's relevant decisions, particularly decision 62/557.

The enlargement of the Security Council and the reform of its working methods should lead to a more democratic, representative, accountable and effective Council. The sixteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Tehran, acknowledged the historical injustice against Africa with regard to its representation in the Security Council. It expressed support for increased and enhanced representation for Africa in a reformed Council. The Summit also took note of the African common position as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

The Movement continues to call upon the Security Council to uphold the primacy of, and respect for, the Charter in connection with its functions and powers. We stress that a decision by the Council to initiate formal or informal discussions on any issue that does not pertain to its mandate or on a situation in any Member State that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security is contrary to Article 24 of the Charter.

Sanctions imposed by the Security Council remain an issue of serious concern to the Non-Aligned Movement. The objectives of sanctions regimes should be clearly defined. Their application should be set for

a specific time frame and should be based on tenable legal grounds.

The General Assembly's consideration of the Council's annual report is a core element in the relationship between these two principal organs. Resolution 67/297, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, welcomes the improvements in the quality of the Security Council's annual reports and encourages the Council to make further improvements as necessary. Having examined this year's annual report of the Security Council, prepared in accordance with Council presidential note S/2010/507, the Non-Aligned Movement acknowledges the improvement in quality. Nevertheless, further steps are still needed to make the annual report more explanatory and analytical in assessing the work of the Council. It is also imperative that future reports reflect the general views expressed by non-Council members during open debates.

The Non-Aligned Movement remains committed to the ongoing process of the overall reform of the United Nations, including the reform and expansion of the Security Council. Any reform measures should be decided by the general membership through a transparent and inclusive intergovernmental process. The voice of each Member State must be heard and respected.

The foregoing was a statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I shall now offer few more words in my national capacity.

I would like first to associate my remarks with the statement just delivered by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President, we have received your letter of 22 October 2013 on the proposed way forward for the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council during the sixty-eighth session, including the establishment of an advisory group. We have taken note of the fact that the letter clarifies that the advisory group does not have a negotiating role and that it aims only to give you advice for producing a basis for the start of the intergovernmental negotiations that would reflect the ideas put forward in the negotiations so far.

We stress once again that the basis for the negotiations is the collective will of all Member States. In July 2012, a similar attempt to push the reset button by producing a concise document failed to garner the support of the general membership during the sixty-seventh session. Egypt believes that the same top-down approach will not be useful, but will only further complicate the process. That is why decision 62/557, which establishes the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, has set clear parameters for the process. Paragraph (d) of the decision states that the negotiations should be based on proposals submitted by Member States, not otherwise. The rationale is to maintain the membership-driven nature of the process and preserve the impartiality of the roles of both the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Mr. President, yesterday, through your letter dated 6 November, you invited Member States to identify the directions in which the search for common ground might be undertaken in the negotiations. We believe that in order to facilitate a smooth start for the intergovernmental negotiations during the current session, we should begin by addressing all concerns raised with regard to the third revision of the compilation text. Time and again, concerns were raised by the African Group on merging language and streamlining positions without agreeing first on principles and criteria regarding the five key issues. The Arab Group voiced similar concerns in its letter dated 31 October, stressing that merging positions and proposals regarding the reform and expansion of the Security Council should be done after consulting with, and obtaining the approval of, the concerned State or group of States.

We should not be looking for just any agreement. We are mandated here to seek a comprehensive agreement that allows for equitable and effective representation for all regions and groups. The African common position reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration aims at achieving the legitimate aspirations of a whole continent, comprising 54 countries. Its objective is to rectify the historical injustice to Africa regarding its representation in the Security Council. It does not seek to achieve narrow national political interests.

It is also important to duly take into account the Arab position, adopted at the summit level in 2010, requesting a permanent seat for the Arab Group in any future expansion of the category of permanent membership in the Security Council. We wish to remind the Assembly as well that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is calling for adequate representation of

the Muslim world in any category of membership in an expanded Security Council.

Mr. President, we count on your wisdom in building on the progress achieved so far in the negotiations, according to decision 67/561. We are confident that you will lead a transparent process, owned by all Member States and groups of States without exclusion, and that you will take into account all the views and concerns expressed in today's debate.

The President: I call on the representative of Algeria on a point of order.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I raise a point of order, Mr. President, to ask you to request that representatives taking the floor on behalf of groups refrain from speaking in their national capacity during those statements. We have just heard views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Egypt speaking in his national capacity, distorting the position of the Arab Group concerning the Security Council reform. I would like to protest, and I will take the opportunity to make the appropriate clarifications when I make a statement in my national capacity.

The President: The General Assembly takes note of the observation of the Permanent Representative of Algeria and his early notification that he intends to redress any grievances in his national capacity.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): Before I make a statement on behalf of the group of four (G-4) countries, Mr. President, I wish to express my thanks for your very constructive statement earlier. I wish to assure the Assembly that Japan will participate in the negotiations on Security Council reform with openness and flexibility, to use your words. I also thank the Permanent Representative of China for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/68/2).

Now I wish to make a statement on behalf of the G-4 countries, namely, Brazil, Germany, India and Japan.

We wish to take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session and to ensure you of our steadfast support. The G-4 countries greatly appreciate the fact that you have chosen to give the reform of the Security Council the attention that it deserves. We also commend the concrete initiative to drive the process forward. We further appreciate the commitment to the issue clearly stated in your letters of 22 October and 6 November.

The G-4 countries would also like to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Zahir Tanin on his reappointment as Chair of intergovernmental negotiations. We look forward to his continuing stewardship of the process.

As the United Nations approaches the General Assembly's seventieth session, it is time to reflect on past achievements, current developments and future challenges. The approaching year 2015 reminds us that 10 years after the World Summit, not everything that was agreed upon has been realized. We therefore need to intensify efforts to translate the existing agreement into concrete outcomes, by 2015 at the latest.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), which was agreed to at the highest political level, serves as a yardstick to help us deliver on the mandate given collectively by our leaders. While important progress has been achieved over the past years, including in the reform of the United Nations architecture, a severe shortcoming remains, that is, the lack of Security Council reform. Only a reformed Security Council that reflects contemporary realities will be able to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century.

It is worth recalling that the 2005 Outcome calls for an early reform — I underline early reform — of the Security Council. It is in that spirit that the G-4 countries have reached out to all regional groups. We aim to find a path that will reflect the dominant call by Member States for a reform of the Security Council that leads to an expansion in both categories of membership, the permanent and non-permanent. In so doing, we have, together with our partners, pursued a constructive approach, calling for action, not only words, and for progress, not the status quo. We are encouraged by the broad and cross-regional support that our efforts continue to enjoy.

Our position is well known. As recently as 26 September, the G-4 Foreign Ministers reiterated their common vision of a reformed Security Council. We took into consideration the contributions made by countries to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the Organization, as well as the need for the increased representation of developing countries, especially African, in both categories of membership in an enlarged Council. We

have also repeatedly emphasized that the Council's working methods need to be improved in order for the Council to become more transparent and effective. The proposals contained in our comprehensive 2005 draft resolution (A/60/L.46) remain valid.

Despite all differences among members on the context of reform, it should be not be difficult to find common ground on at least one aspect, nemely, the need to finally start text-based negotiations. Only then will there be a chance to identify areas of commonality among the membership and to engage in a real give-and-take process.

We therefore compliment you, Mr. President, on the initiative and welcome the decision to establish an advisory group of eminent ambassadors to provide input for the start of the intergovernmental negotiations. As you indicate, such input should reflect the ideas put forward in the negotiations so far and identify available options. We, the G4, firmly believe that the work of the advisory group will enable the intergovernmental negotiations to move to text-based negotiations. We congratulate our colleagues on their appointment and look forward to the result of their work and the resumption of the intergovernmental negotiations.

For our part, in response to the call in the letter of 6 November, Sir, the G-4 countries are ready to take part in collective actions in order to seek common ground on the issue of Security Council reform. We stand ready to actively contribute to that process in a spirit of flexibility. We also encourage others to show the same spirit of compromise required to engage in a negotiation process that deserves to be called so in content and not in name only. Objections to text-based negotiations run counter not only to the spirit of the Outcome but also to the basic logic of multilateral diplomacy. Let us strive together to fulfil the tasks that remain and prove that a reform of the Security Council is possible.

In conclusion, we thank you once again, Mr. President, for your initiative, which has the potential to bring us one important step closer towards our common goal, namely, a Security Council that is more broadly representative, effective and transparent.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): In today's joint debate on the report of the Security Council (A/68/2) and on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the statement that will be delivered on behalf of the L.69 Group.

Just a few weeks from today, on 17 December, the Assembly will be witness, wittingly or unwittingly, to the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1991 (XVIII), entitled "Question of equitable representation on the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council". With respect to section A of that resolution, the object was strikingly modest, that is, to increase the number of non-permanent members of the Security Council from 6 to 10, in order to take into account the changed reality of the world of 1963.

The resolution was adopted by vote in the face of constraining odds: none of the permanent members (P-5) of the Security Council found it possible to support that modest aspiration. One of the P-5 was even unable to vote, having been denied a seat in the United Nations on that day. At that time, two countries — Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago — were the only members of today's Caribbean Community that were Members of the United Nations. But as sponsors of the proposal for expansion and as active supporters of the process that led to its adoption, they were counted among the protagonists for meaningful change.

Therefore, in welcoming the convening of today's debate on the reform of the Security Council, CARICOM is conscious of the responsibility we all share to bring about meaningful reform in the best interest of the United Nations and the peoples it serves. The object of such reform, in our view, should be to make the Organization and all of its principal organs fit for the twenty-first century. It should render the Security Council more representative, democratic, accountable, accessible and effective.

In that regard, it is apposite to recall the words of the representative of one of the Member States that participated in that fateful vote process decades ago:

> "the United Nations should faithfully bear in mind, and reflect, the interests of the groups of States which really exist in the world today, rather than allow itself to become a conservative body divorced from reality" (*A/PV.1285, para. 79*).

Whatever their intended meaning at the time first spoken, those words now echo with a resonance that befits our present consideration.

Does the Security Council of today faithfully reflect the interests of the groups of States that exist in the world today? CARICOM submits that any objective answer to that question can be registered only in the negative. To the Assembly, therefore, falls the task of ensuring a positive and fitting response.

We therefore commend your leadership, Mr. President, in bringing the issue of Security Council reform once again to the fore. It is without question the greatest imperative for the future of the United Nations. That is undoubtedly the reason that world leaders at the Millennium Summit in 2000 pledged "to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects" (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*); and why, at the 2005 World Summit, they again supported early reform of the Security Council as

> "an essential element in the 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*).

They further committed themselves to continuing efforts to achieve a decision to that end and requested the General Assembly to review progress by the end of 2005.

Despite those undertakings, the support for early reform will be effectively bereft of meaning unless the Assembly acts to translate that consensus of intent into a meaningful plan of action. The world has changed so much in the past five decades that the need for a Council that is more reflective of contemporary geopolitical realties has become a greater imperative than ever before.The intergovernmental negotiations launched five years ago by decision 62/557 must now be re-energized and reoriented to produce results.

CARICOM therefore welcomes your intention, Mr. President, to provide a basis for negotiations, including options on the way forward. Such options should be based on an objective assessment of our discussions today and the nine rounds of the intergovernmental negotiations held to date. They must be presented in a practical, negotiable format in which real give-and-take negotiations can begin. As we chart the way forward, the basis presented must clearly show where the varying positions of Member States converge and where gaps remain, and must be reflective of the positions of all Member States, including, of course, the majority.

In this endeavour, we have the fullest confidence in your judgement, Sir, as President of the General Assembly. Your initiative to appoint an advisory group to assist you in this endeavour is an added guarantee that all views will be duly reflected. We have every confidence that Ambassador Tanin, whom you have reappointed to chair the intergovernmental negotiations, and the ambassadors who comprise your advisory group will act in the best interest of the process and of progress, and we congratulate them and offer them our fullest support.

CARICOM has remained seized at the highest political level of the need for definitive progress on this important issue, and our delegations are fully committed to playing a constructive role in the process. The twenty-fourth intersessional conference of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community, held in Port-Au-Prince in February, recalled "CARICOM's long-standing activism in the negotiations to reform the United Nations Security Council" and called for greater urgency in achieving lasting Security Council reform. Allow me therefore to reiterate the position of the region on the key aspects of reform of the Council.

CARICOM supports expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We call for an increase in the size of Security Council membership from 15 to 27. CARICOM maintains that the role of developing countries should be enhanced in both categories. In that regard, CARICOM has been resolute in its support for the inclusion of Africa in the permanent category of membership in the Council. CARICOM calls for provision for a special seat for small island developing States in a reformed Security Council. CARICOM supports the elimination of the veto. However, in the event of its retention, we consider that all permanent members of a reformed Security Council must have the same rights and privileges. CARICOM calls for improved working methods of the Council so as to increase the involvement of non-members in its work and to enhance its accountability and transparency. On the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, CARICOM recommends that appropriate measures be adopted to enable the

General Assembly to function effectively as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

I close by expressing the fervent hope of the Caribbean Community that under your able stewardship, Sir, the General Assembly will be able to cross the Rubicon in our quest for a reform of the Security Council that will make it more broadly representative, efficient, transparent and accountable. Without such reform, the effectiveness, legitimacy and implementation of the Council's decisions will likely wane with the passage of time.

As was the case 50 years ago and throughout the process of consideration of this important issue, the constructive engagement of CARICOM member States will be on the side of meaningful reform.

Mr. Bart (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I take the floor today on behalf of the L.69 group on agenda item 123, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

I have the honour to take the floor today on behalf a diverse group of 42 developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific that are united by a common cause — to achieve lasting and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Our group is bound by the firm conviction that expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council is imperative to better reflect contemporary world realities and achieve a more accountable, representative, transparent and, more importantly, relevant Security Council.

We congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, and we also compliment you for reappointing Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations to lead us forward on this important debate. His reappointment is a welcome reflection of the collective trust invested in him by the wider membership of the United Nations and, as rightly pointed out in your letter, helps maintain continuity based on institutional memory of the history of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Let me clarify that this statement pertains only to agenda item 123, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", and does not cover the agenda item on the report of the Security Council.

We thank you, Sir, for having imparted leadership and momentum to this seemingly intractable debate on Security Council reform by convening an advisory group that has been mandated to provide inputs in the form of options on the way forward, we hope by as early as next week. The proposed input of your advisory group will help fill in the most critical missing link in the intergovernmental negotiations thus far, which has been the absence of a text. The intergovernmental negotiations were mandated to commence text-based negotiations, and therefore conducting negotiations in a vacuum by repeatedly airing statements of known positions again and again and then going back to the drawing board belies the mandate and is simply not leading to progress.

Text-based negotiations were also the way forward proposed by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations in his letter of 25 July 2012, in which he clearly outlined the need for the production of a concise working document that would become the basis for real give-and-take negotiations.

The most recent meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations, on 27 June, also heard 33 of the 44 speakers ask specifically for the convening of text-based negotiations, with several delegations calling for these as the only next logical step, and for the text to recognize the imperative of expansion in both categories of membership, a proposal that has already received the overwhelming support of the larger membership from the floor of the intergovernmental negotiations. This, too, was recognized in the Chair's own assessment of 25 July 2012.

We therefore laud your initiative, Sir, to inject momentum into this debate by convening an advisory group to produce an input for the start of the intergovernmental negotiations by 15 November. We are assured that the intergovernmental negotiations can make tangible progress under your able stewardship this year on the basis of the President's text that is currently being discussed by the advisory group. A select few, however, appear to be holding the larger membership hostage in order to prevent it from making any kind of movement forward. Challenging the authority of a President of the General Assembly who was collectively and unanimously elected does not bode well for that

body, particularly when the President has clarified that the group's role is purely advisory in nature and does not have a negotiating role.

We therefore urge you, Mr. President, to take the process you have embarked on to its logical conclusion, because in doing so you have the full support of the overwhelming majority of the membership. The efforts of a few perpetual naysayers to any progress, if they succeed in any way in scuttling your initiative, will be only a bump in the road for any forward movement. You have all the authority necessary for the successful completion of your initiative. It is important that these discussions on Security Council reform do not go on ad infinitum. We submit that consideration should be given to conducting these discussions within some sort of time frame.

It was in 1963, 50 years ago, that the most recent expansion enlarged the membership of the Security Council from 11 to 15 — a modest increase of four, in the non-permanent category only. Since then the membership of the United Nations has increased from 113 to 193. Eighty Members have been added, but that has not altered by an inch the composition of the Organization's premier body mandated to maintain international peace and security. We are in a truly bizarre position, where nearly 75 per cent of the work of the Security Council is focused exclusively on the continent of Africa and yet since its inception that body has not had even one permanent member from the whole of the 53-strong African continent. It is therefore critical that we move ahead with a results-based timeline as an absolute imperative. Failure to do so would be seen only as stalling any progress, and all through the self-defeating plea of not imposing artificial timelines.

It is our Group's firm conviction that 2015 — which will witness the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, as well as being 10 years since the 2005 World Summit, when all our Heads of States and Government mandated us to reform the Security Council as soon as possible — would be the right occasion to deliver concrete outcomes on this pressing subject. Eight years have elapsed since we were mandated by our Heads of State in paragraph 153 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) to reform the Security Council as soon as possible in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and thus enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy in implementing its decisions. Seventy-nine of the approximately 120 Heads of State and Government who addressed the General Assembly from this very rostrum in the general debate at the Assembly's sixty-eighth session called categorically for speedy reform of the Council. We must therefore deliver on our leaders' mandate by working towards a text-based process that can deliver concrete outcomes in 2015. Failure to do so will be seen as a collective failure to deliver on what all our leaders signed on to in 2005.

As the only group whose membership has increased over the years, and in keeping with our tradition of active support for the reform process, the L.69 Group has also put forward a number of proposals for transforming our interactions and deliberations into real negotiations. We hope that the advisory group will factor the L.69's proposals into its inputs. As a group with perhaps the largest convergence of like-minded countries from the developing world, the L.69 has been able to significantly enhance its convergence with the African Group and forge a common position. It is a position that embraces comprehensive reforms and has deliberately avoided the piecemeal approach that some of the detractors of any forward movement on reforms have used to hold the process hostage. Let me reiterate that the L.69 acknowledges and supports the African shared position as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus. Such enhancement of convergence benefits the momentum contributing to the intergovernmental negotiations process, which should also be recognized in the input of the President's advisory group.

Today, when we see the Security Council's inability to respond in a timely manner to pressing issues of war and peace; when we see Council decisions being increasingly exposed to scrutiny by the public and large sections of civil society and academia, who question not just its representativeness but its credibility, even to the extent of Member States rejecting seats on the Council, we should be seen to be constructively engaged in restoring the dignity of that premier body by reforming it to reflect contemporary realities. Your initiative, Mr. President, is therefore a most welcome opportunity for us all to seize the present momentum and drive the intergovernmental negotiations process to its logical conclusion.

The L.69 Group is committed to playing its part in ensuring that the result we all envisage is not left to future generations, but brought about now and here, under your able stewardship, Mr. President.

Mr. Bernardini (Italy): On behalf of the Uniting for Consensus Group, I would first like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for reiterating your desire to make reform of the Security Council a priority for your mandate. As your letter of 22 October states, this issue is an important element in our overall effort to strengthen the United Nations Organization. That effort, I would add, is now more urgent than ever as we near the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and as the Security Council faces more compelling and challenging times. The future and credibility of the entire United Nations system will depend on what I hope we will be able to do.

We also wish to join previous speakers in thanking China for presenting the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/68/2) and the United States for preparing its introduction.

These many years of negotiations have not passed in vain. We have shared our views, in a transparent and collegial way, on a particularly thorny issue that is of interest to the entire membership. Dialogue, when open and genuine, is always constructive, even if there are differences. It is precisely in awareness and full respect of those persistent divisions among the membership, not only on the substance of Security Council reform, but also with regard to how to move the process forward, that I would like to briefly summarize the key elements of the proposal of the Uniting for Consensus Group.

We remain absolutely convinced that the creation of new permanent individual members would be a mistake. We invite the entire membership to carefully weigh the consequences of such a solution. In our view, that approach would not be in line with the interests of the vast majority of Member States from all regional groups. It would in fact benefit only a handful of the 193 Member States, and it would not be a step towards a more democratic Security Council. Such an outcome would add another unjustifiable layer of hierarchy not only within single regional groups but also in the larger framework of the international community, exacerbating rather than reconciling severe differences and divisions.

Uniting for Consensus understands the aspirations of the African Group for equitable representation and its desire to play its rightful role in the work of the Council. We recognize in particular that the African demand for equal rights and for a solution to the problem of its historic underrepresentation is a demand on behalf of and for the entire African continent. It is not the same individual pursuit of power and privilege that it is for others. We appreciate that the strength of the African position results from its unity and consensus. We also believe in regional ownership and consensus and therefore respect that position. We remain ready to continue working with Africa in promoting equal and non-discriminatory approaches for all groups with regard to their representation on the Council.

The Security Council, in line with decision 62/557, needs comprehensive reform based on all five interrelated clusters: categories of membership, the veto, size and working methods, regional representation, and the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Nobody would benefit from a piecemeal approach or rushed solutions motivated mainly by the desire to increase the number of seats in the Security Council. We should not repeat the mistakes made in the past, when attempts to push through hurried and divisive solutions both failed and made the entire reform exercise even more complicated.

In your opening remarks, Mr. President, you mentioned the need to compromise. Uniting for Consensus is the only negotiating group that has already officially tabled two concrete proposals for Security Council reform, in 2005 and in 2009, for the purpose of contributing actively to the intergovernmental negotiations process, suggesting, for example, the allocation of long-term non-permanent seats on a regional basis. Uniting for Consensus is open to considering other new ideas for the purpose of bridging the gap with other groups, taking into account everyone's proposals and legitimate aspirations.

Let me reiterate the full commitment of Uniting for Consensus to decision 62/557, also with respect to the principle that the intergovernmental negotiations are the only legitimate forum to take decisions on Security Council reform and find a solution that can garner the widest possible acceptance. In that respect, with reference to the recent decision of creating an advisory group to the President of the General Assembly on the Security Council reform process, Uniting for Consensus members have already conveyed their assessment in their letter of 21 October, which you, Sir, kindly agreed to respond to by meeting with us yesterday. You stressed the fact that the group would have only a consultative purpose and not be representative of any of the negotiating parties, that the advisory group would not have a negotiating role or a mandate to draft

or streamline any negotiating document or a basis for negotiations, and, lastly, that the advisory group would not overlap or substitute for the intergovernmental negotiations. We thank you for those clarifications.

On the other hand, as we mentioned yesterday, there are still conflicting interpretations of the group's mandate and some of them, stated publicly this morning by some Member States, do not seem to ensure the balance, equity, accountability and transparency that an issue of such complexity would require. In that regard, we draw the Assembly's attention to our aforementioned letter on the composition of the advisory group and its mandate as mentioned in your communication. Thus, as a group that has hinged its negotiating activities on the respect of those principles, we deem it crucial to reiterate today, before the entire membership, the firm position of Uniting for Consensus on the matter.

In particular, the members of the advisory group, given their undeniable experience and professionalism, will undoubtedly be able to provide the President with a useful contribution of ideas. We underscore that such a group cannot bypass the intergovernmental negotiations process and the framework provided by decision 62/557, as well as subsequent decisions of the General Assembly, and that it must not jeopardize the membership-driven nature of the process. Therefore, we do not recognize the group as entitled to perform any drafting role on behalf of Member States, including imposing any kind of negotiating text on behalf of others. That would indeed go fully counter to the membership-driven nature of the process.

Allow me to conclude by stressing that any future solution to the Security Council reform process will require bold leadership and willingness on the part of our Governments to compromise. That approach has been at the core of Uniting for Consensus's engagement in all nine previous negotiating sessions of the intergovernmental negotiations. Unfortunately, but frankly, our efforts have not been reciprocated so far. Nevertheless, let me reaffirm, on behalf of the entire Uniting for Consensus group, that we also intend to maintain that stance at the next intergovernmental negotiations sessions. We are determined to continue to engage with flexibility and a genuine political openness so that together we may update the Security Council to today's new reality, increasing the Council's accountability, transparency and effectiveness.

Mr. van Oosterom (Netherlands): I have the pleasure to speak on behalf of the Kingdom of Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

I thank you, Sir, for your timely convening of this annual debate of the General Assembly on Security Council reform. I would also like to thank you for your letters of 22 October and 6 November and for putting this issue back on the agenda. We commend your decision to reappoint Ambassador Tanin. We believe he deserves praise for his constructive and energetic role as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations process over the past few years, and we are convinced that he will continue the good work.

The intergovernmental process indeed needed an early resumption. We support your idea, Sir, to produce a basis for the start of the intergovernmental negotiations. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of an advisory group. We hope that your determination can create a new momentum, because the ultimate goal of our endeavour — a more effective, transparent and representative Security Council that reflects the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century and contributes to a more credible United Nations and a reinforced international system — remains as important as ever.

The main ideas about Security Council reform from the different groups in the intergovernmental negotiations are well known. Some are shared by a vast majority of Member States, including Belgium and the Netherlands. For instance, we believe that there should be an expansion of the Council in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. Other ideas and proposals are more recent but deserve our careful attention. In particular, support of the French proposal of a code of conduct for the voluntary limitation of the use of the veto right in case of mass atrocities comes to mind. It is both ambitious and heartening. We encourage the other permanent members of the Council to consider it with an open mind.

Whatever the proposals on the table, Belgium and the Netherlands would like to stress that all Member States should be genuinely willing to engage in a process of give and take. Compromises will be required of all of us. There is no alternative, should we indeed want to make progress. We have said it many times before — we need to take action to change the status quo.

After the conclusion of today's general debate, we will be looking forward to the first meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations. It will allow us to go into more detail. We hope it will set the stage for concrete, informed and conclusive negotiations. Belgium and the Netherlands assure you, Sir, and the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations of our full support for any genuine effort that can lead to real progress.

Mr. Guerber (Switzerland): I am pleased to take the floor in my capacity as the coordinator of the accountability, coherence and transparency (ACT) group, a cross-regional group of 22 States, to make a brief statement in relation only to agenda item 29, entitled "Report of the Security Council".

ACT is currently composed of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Lichtenstein, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania and Uruguay. The group was launched in May as a new initiative to improve the working methods of the Security Council. The name group's name — and acronym — reflects our common conviction that those qualities are needed in all the Security Council's activities.

ACT wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for providing us with this opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Security Council (A/68/2). This is the key moment with respect to the interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and is an important point of reflection on what lies behind us.

ACT would also like to thank the representative of China, in his capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, for introducing the report to the wider membership.

ACT strongly believes that the content of the report is of high importance and would welcome the opportunity to examine its content in depth before commenting on it. We were therefore pleased to receive assurances from the President's Office that he will convene a separate meeting at the end of November — presumably on 21 November — to allow more thorough debate on agenda item 29. On behalf of ACT, I wish to thank you, Sir, for giving Member States the time necessary to thoroughly read and analyse the report, thus enhancing the quality of the discussion. ACT will deliver a detailed statement on the content of the report when the debate under agenda item 29 is resumed on 21 November.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I am especially honoured to speak here today. As I prepare to leave after four and a half years at the Indian Mission to the United Nations, it is a great honour for me to see as President of the General Assembly someone whom I have always seen as a leader and who has been a great friend and mentor to me. I am very honoured, Sir, to speak here today as you preside over this meeting. Our delegation at the highest level has of course congratulated you and offered its fullest support. Please allow me at the personal level also to congratulate you and to offer the full support of our delegation as you conduct the business of the current session.

We very much welcome your initiatives and your leadership, Mr. President, to strongly invigorate the process of Security Council reform. As my colleague from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has said, this is one of the most important issues before the Organization today.

We would also like to thank the representative of China for presenting the report of the Security Council (A/68/2).

The main purpose of my statement today is to address the issue of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters. At the outset, I would like to welcome the the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, which is a most positive development and brings much-needed institutional continuity to this debate.

Before I delve into the substance of my remarks, allow me to align myself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Japan on behalf of the Group of Four, and by the representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis on behalf of the L.69 group. I would also like to lend my fullest support to the statement delivered by the representative of Guyana on behalf of CARICOM and would request all of those present to pay special heed to what he said.

Having closely followed the debate on the reform of the Security Council over the past four and a half years in New York, as well as for nearly a decade before that, I would like to submit a few myth-busters to set the record straight on some of the key issues that have recently been raised.

First, we have been involved in nine rounds of intergovernmental negotiations since 2009, all of them literally conducted in the air. That might well be the only instance of negotiations in a multilateral setting having been conducted so far without any text, which goes against the very logic of multilateral diplomacy. The process should have started off in the first instance on the basis of a text. It seems to me that anyone who says that we cannot move to text-based negotiations is a naysayer to any forward movement. For if we do not negotiate on the basis of a text, then on what basis do we conduct negotiations?

The Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, having presided over eight rounds of negotiations over five years, and having heard loud and clear the views of all interest groups and each Member State, came to that very conclusion in his letter of 25 July 2012, recommending that, as in all other United Nations processes, he should be authorized to produce what he called a concise working document to enable the process to move towards real give-and-take negotiations. That plea received broad support from the floor at the latest meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations, held on 27 June.

We subsequently learned, however, that a select handful of naysayers protested the role of the Chair and his recommendations, even though those recommendations had been recognized in the Assembly's rollover decision on the subject. To address their concern, the President of the General Assembly later formed an advisory group to assist him in providing input to become the basis for the intergovernmental negotiations, and that same group of naysayers are now questioning his authority to do so. That is indeed an outright absurdity. One simply cannot have one's cake and eat it too. It is our delegation's firm belief that, having been unanimously elected, the President has full authority to choose whom he wants as advisers, what and how to be advised on, and what to make of that advice. I must, in that context, mention that I see Ambassador Noel Sinclair here and appreciate very much his role and efforts too.

Let me reiterate that we welcome the President's initiative and hope that the input of the advisory group will help us move forward on the basis of a text provided by the President of the General Assembly.

I would also like to ask all Member States not to view text-based negotiations as necessarily inimical to the position of any group, or as diluting it, nor as the final word, for as and when such input is presented by the President to the intergovernmental negotiations, each and every Member State will have full authority to propose additions, deletions or amendments and to build upon the President's initiative. But not even to let an input emerge and to cast aspersions does not reflect well on any of us.

A second myth that I would like to touch upon today is the often-cited need for complete consensus by the same set of naysayers as being the only way forward.

On a matter as complex and pressing as Security Council reform, we all know that as and when it happens it will eventually have to be tested from the floor of the General Assembly through a vote. That is what the Charter of the United Nations prescribes. We also agree and acknowledge that we are not there yet, but to insist that no forward movement can take place until we have complete consensus is only tantamount to delaying any kind of progress.

Time and again, repeated articulations from all the major stakeholders have proved from the floor of the intergovernmental negotiations, as well as the General Assembly, that an overwhelming majority supports expansion in both categories of membership. That is also an observation made by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, having heard statements from Member States over the past five years. We therefore hope that the advisory group will factor that into its input under consideration.

The third misplaced myth that I would like to touch upon is the perceived apprehension that, through the process of intergovernmental negotiations, some countries will make it to the expanded setting, while others will not. We are at present in a process that shall not decide or indicate which countries would be members of the expanded setting. We are attempting only to negotiate, through the intergovernmental negotiations, the broad parameters of what the expanded Security Council would be like and provide workable options on each of the five key issues identified in decision 62/557.

Through the 2005 World Summit, we have a mandate from our Heads of State that we need to fulfil. If we let the small yet vocal minority of counter-aspirants to the aspirants scuttle this process going forward, then we will fail in our obligation to deliver on that commitment.

That brings me to my final submission. The exercise of Security Council reform cannot be seen to be going on till the cows come home. Recent developments around the world have increasingly brought into question not just the representativeness but also the credibility of the Security Council, and the clarion call for change is only growing louder by the day.

All those are important tidings that cannot be ignored in our collective quest to achieve Security Council reform. We need to have a results-based timeline, and the year 2015 — which will be the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and mark tenth year since the 2005 World Summit, when all our Heads of State and Government mandated us to achieve early reforms of the Security Council — will be an important occasion for delivering concrete outcomes on that most pressing subject.

We hope that we can collectively work together in a constructive and forward-looking manner, not just on the process but on the substance as well, in the interim, to deliver on that long-due mandate. Mr. President, your initiative and personal commitment are most appreciated, and in your success lies our collective endeavour.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Mr. Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China, for introducing the Council's annual report (A/68/2), for the period 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013. I also would like to thank the United States for preparing the introduction to the report and for its increased activities in the Council.

We congratulate our friends the new non-permanent members of the Security Council for the term 2014-2015. We express our support for the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and welcome the efforts of Ambassador Zahir Tanin in his capacity as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We hope that he will achieve progress towards Security Council reform and fulfil the long-awaited aspiration and hopes to reactivate and enhance the role of the Council.

More than 20 years have elapsed since discussions began on expanding and improving the modus operandi of the Council, yet the case is still faltering and requires the political will to bring views together in order to achieve the desired goals. The ever-more-frequent challenges arising in the international political arena require us to step up the negotiations and collectively to achieve a higher and nobler goal, including international consensus and viable recommendations for improving the working methods of the Council. These negotiations must include most if not all States.

In recent years, our position vis-à-vis Security Council reform has remained firm and is based on the following main principles.

First, reform of the Security Council must take place in accordance with a general vision embracing the ongoing reform and improvement of all the organs of the United Nations, and seeking more complementarity and balance in the work of the Organization. We should focus on advancing the relationship between the Security Council and the other organs, especialy the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, whose prerogatives must not be encroached upon. The Security Council's role should be restricted to the tasks entrusted to it under the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Secondly, any idea on reforming the Security Council should be shaped by our desire to make the Council more representative of the overall membership of the Organization, which reflects an international reality that has changed considerably since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945.

Thirdly, it is important to continue improving the working methods of the Security Council and adding further transparency and clarity to its work. Permanent rules of procedure must be adopted to improve and reorganize the working methods of the Security Council.

Fourthly, the veto must be exercised in accordance with specific guidelines and controls. It should be used only pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Fifthly, any increase in the membership of the Security Council must be designed to give further opportunities to small States to contribute to the Council's work. The rights of the Arab and Islamic countries should not be disregarded in the representation, given their numbers, importance and contributions to defending the purposes and principles of the Charter.

With regard to improving the working methods of the Council, including calls for rationalizing the veto,

we welcome French President Hollande's proposal whereby the five permanent members would voluntarily abstain from using the veto in cases of crimes against humanity. In that context, I would like to express our appreciation for, and understanding of, the position of Saudi Arabia with regard to membership on the Council. We share its resentment over the Council's impotence in fulfilling its responsibilities and commitments vis-à-vis the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly with respect to Arab and Islamic issues.

My delegation expresses its backing of the letter of 31 October addressed by Bahrain, the Chair of the Arab Group, to the President of the General Assembly, emphasizing the position of the members of the League of Arab States with regard to reform of the Security Council that a permanent seat should be assigned to the Arab Group in accordance with the compendium document presented by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. Intergovernmental negotiations are the only forum for reaching agreement on expanding the reform of the Security Council in accordance with decision 62/557.

The rapid challenges and intertwined issues facing the international community compel us to persist in and insistent on intensifying efforts to promote and reactivate the role and effectiveness of the Security Council in order to enable it to meet the challenges before it and to be more representative, transparent, credible and impartial.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome today's meeting, which gives all Member States a good opportunity to discuss the Security Council and its work, as well as the efforts to reform the Council. Such transparent discussions are extremely important. We are grateful to the Permanent Representative of China, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, who as President of the Security Council this month introduced the Council's annual report (A/68/2).

We would also like to thank the delegation of the United States of America, which carried out significant work in preparing and elaborating the report. On the whole, it reflects objectively the work of the Council over the past year. The Council has continued to work actively towards resolving today's most pressing challenges, a fact that demonstrates the Council's unique legitimacy in the eyes of the international community as the body charged with settling disputes affecting international peace and security. Despite all the politicized criticism, an objective comparative analysis reveals that the Council is one of the most effective international institutions.

Reforming the Security Council is clearly very important, but it should not be allowed to detract from the ability of the Council and the General Assembly to resolve real global challenges so as to avoid problems in the future. Let us not assume that a broader Security Council would be more able to find the appropriate solutions. It would more than likely complicate that process. In considering specific reforms of the Security Council, we should ask ourselves if they would genuinely lead to a more balanced Council or to a fragmented body in which certain regions and States are favoured at the expense of others. Would a reformed Council be equipped to deal with a fast-changing world?

Russia has championed making the Security Council a more representative body. However, such efforts should not affect the Council's ability to respond to emerging crises and challenges rapidly and effectively, all the more pressing today as we witness a growing number of conflicts throughout the world. We are in favour of keeping the Council as it is, namely, compact. Its optimal number should not exceed 20 members. In our view, it would be unacceptable to restrict the prerogatives of the permanent five members, such as the veto, which are a reflection of the historic contribution made by the permanent five to the establishment of the United Nations. I should also like to recall that the veto is an important factor that has prompted members of the Security Council to find balanced solutions, and infringing on that prerogative would be wrong from both the historical and the political points of view. The right of veto has in the past allowed us to avoid taking decisions that would have advanced the political agenda of a single group of States, thereby complicating efforts to resolve problems that required rapid and appropriate solutions.

We, like many others, fully support the idea of a Council reform process that would belong entirely to Member States. In that regard, we are doubtful about a non-transparent practice involving the creation of various groups with limited membership that, without a mandate from the General Assembly to do so, would seek to find grounds for continuing the negotiations. That would lead to more division among Member States, and we doubt that it would encourage a constructive reform process. The General Assembly is, of course, free to

listen to advice of various kinds, as long as it does not impose those views on Members trying to negotiate reform of the Security Council. We are convinced that the Security Council cannot be reformed through arithmetic by establishing various voting models for obtaining the minimum necessary number of votes. That would neither boost the Security Council's authority nor strengthen the world Organization.

If we cannot reach consensus on reforming the Security Council, we certainly need, for political reasons, to gain the overwhelming support of Member States, certainly more than the minimum two-thirds majority vote offered by the General Assembly. We are prepared to look into reasonable options, including interim and compromise solutions, for expanding the Security Council, provided that they enjoy the broadest possible support of Members of the Organization. Talks have shown that we are not getting any closer to a comprehensive formula for reforming the Security Council that could enjoy the broadest possible support. There is no common understanding, which makes it impossible to go forward with substantive work.

In such circumstances, we see no other alternative but to work towards converging the outcomes of talks during the Assembly. We anticipate that the efforts of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. John Ashe, and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, who is mediating the talks, will provide all the assistance required, on the understanding that the negotiation process remains firmly in the hands of Member States. We are convinced that such work must take place in a calm, transparent and inclusive manner, devoid of tentative time frames, since it is of the utmost importance to ensure that Member States of the United Nations make the right decision.

In conclusion, we believe that progress in reforming the Security Council hinges solely on the political will of Member States and their readiness to reach a reasonable compromise.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Permanant Representative of China for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/68/2) and the delegation of the United States for contributing to its elaboration. I would like to convey to you, Mr. President, my heartfelt gratitude for making the reform of the Security Council one of your priorities. I assure the Assembly of my country's firm support for any effort to advance an intergovernmental process on this issue within the framework of a General Assembly mandate, as stated in decision 62/557.

I would also like to pay tribute to the facilitator of the negotiations, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr Tanin, for his tireless efforts in coordinating discussions on Security Council reform and to congratulate him upon the renewal of his mandate during this session.

The delegation of my country associates itself in that connection with the statements made by the representatives of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the African Group, and of Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As the world undergoes profound geostrategic changes, almost all countries now recognize the need to readjust international relations and the dynamics governing them to current international and regional realities. The Security Council, which is at the very heart of those dynamics as the body charged with maintaining international peace and security, cannot be spared from such reform. The Security Council must be reformed so as to enable us to bolster its effectiveness and its ability to function, fully assuming its responsibilities on behalf of all Member States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Tunisia, which has participated in various peacekeeping operations since the 1960s, and which has contributed to conflict resolution through its contingents and its diplomacy, knows well the challenges of war and hotbeds of tensions. My country remains convinced that a Security Council with such a restrictive composition and such rigid mechanisms as today would find it difficult to meet the current needs for rapid, effective and appropriate intervention in emerging conflicts or the aspirations of peoples all over the world who see in the United Nations and its executive body the only recourse when hope has vanished. The hotbeds of tension in the Middle East, both long-standing and new, are the best illustration of that.

Within that framework, my delegation would like to reiterate its support for efforts undertaken within the framework of intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on the Security Council. The goal of such efforts is to reach, in a transparent and inclusive manner, a consensus solution that would enjoy the broadest possible political support of Member States.

In the same context, Tunisia welcomes the commitment expressed by the President of the General Assembly, Mr. John Ashe, in his letters addressed to Member States to step up efforts to give a new impetus to the intergovernmental negotiations process. That should remain the sole appropriate institutional framework mandated by the General Assembly to deal with the issue of Security Council reform.

We believe that the ultimate aim of any Security Council reform must be to strengthen equitable representation within that body. That will enable the Council to acquire the necessary legitimacy to act on behalf of the international community. That objective can be achieved only if the restructured Security Council reflects all viewpoints of the international community and gives developing countries in particular their rightful place on the Security Council.

In that context, Tunisia continues to strongly support the position of the African Union, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus. We believe that it is time to redress the current situation whereby the African continent remains deprived of a permanent seat on the Security Council. The same goes for the Arab region. That is why my country also supports the position of the Arab Group, as contained in the summary document of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The reform of the Security Council must be comprehensive, transparent and balanced. We must ensure that the Council agenda reflects the needs and interests of both developed and developing countries in an objective, rational and non-selective manner. All substantive issues must be addressed, including its composition, regional representation, agenda, working methods and decision-making process, including the right of veto. The reform must also take into account the relationships between the Security Council and the other principal organs of the United Nations, as well as full respect by the Council for the prerogatives and functions of each of those bodies, in particular the General Assembly. Such issues should be accorded the same importance and consistency as other categories of the reform.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of China for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/68/2) this morning.

The United Kingdom is pleased to make a statement on Security Council reform. It is an opportunity for us to highlight our clear commitment to reforming the Security Council so that it is more representative of the modern world. We know that the vast majority of Member States share that overarching aim. However, the proposals for what shape the reform should take differ and will require genuine negotiation to find a common view. It is time for that negotiation to start.

The United Kingdom supports broadening Council membership to include permanent seats for Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, along with permanent African representation. We also support the expansion in the non-permanent category of members. But while our positive position on reform is well established, we nonetheless welcome new initiatives that can provide much needed momentum to the reform debate, and we remain willing to work with all parties and groups that share that commitment.

In that spirit, we welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Tanin as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. He has worked tirelessly in that role, and we support his continued efforts to find a way forward in the intergovernmental negotiations. We also welcome your initiative, Mr. President, to create an advisory group and we look forward to discussing their ideas and proposals with the wider membership. The key to unlocking progress on reform is to establish a common position from which we can all move forward together.

We note the French proposal on the use of the veto and agree that it is essential that the Security Council act to stop mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. For our part, the United Kingdom cannot envisage circumstances where we would use our veto to block action to avert a mass atrocity or to stop crimes against humanity. We will continue to work within the Council to ensure that it meets its responsibilities, as set out in the Charter, and with the wider membership for a reform of the Council that both makes it more representative and enhances its effectiveness.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the United Kingdom's commitment to improving the Security Council's working methods and its efforts in that regard. Much has been achieved in the past few years to improve both the transparency and the effectiveness of the Security Council, including more open debates. We heard from my Chinese colleague that there were 174 open meetings of the Security Council in the past 12 months. There have been more Arria-style meetings and an increased use of videoconference

facilities. At the Council debate on working methods on 29 October (see S/PV.7052), I suggested measures for improving the Council's efficiency, including keeping interventions to the allotted time, and advocated that the Council expand its work on conflict prevention through mechanisms already at its disposal, such as horizon scanning. We will continue to make such proposals in the belief that an effective and transparent Council is in the interest of all Member States.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to express our appreciation to you, Sir, as President of the General Assembly, for convening this meeting. I also thank Ambassador Liu Jieyi of China for introducing the annual report of the Security Council (A/68/2) on behalf of the Council.

During the reporting period, the Council's daily efforts to fulfil its mandate to maintain peace and security covered virtually all regions of the world. African issues remained at the forefront, representing more than 60 per cent of the Council's work. The Council's vigorous engagement was essential in bringing positive developments in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Somalia.

Peacekeeping operations proved in most cases to be effective in advancing peace and security in Africa. The Council has reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by authorizing the deployment of the Intervention Brigade within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through resolution 2098 (2013).

In Mali, the adoption of resolution 2100 (2013), which established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, represented a significant step in improving the security situation and in accelerating the political process in that country.

On Somalia, we value the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia through resolution 2102 (2013) with a mandate to support the peace and reconciliation efforts of the Government of Somalia.

Such achievements would not have been possible without the Council's constructive engagement with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States. While the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the efforts of regional organizations to take ownership and to resolve their own issues should be strongly supported. The continued engagement of the AU Peace and Security Council on the pending issues between the Sudan and South Sudan is a case that underlines that point.

Among the work of the Council in other regions, the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste last year is a testament to what the international community can achieve by working together and is the model of a successful exit strategy.

Notwithstanding the progress made, the situation in Syria continues to be the biggest challenge facing the Council. Too much bloodshed has occurred, and we are deeply concerned about the continued violations of human rights and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria. The Security Council was only recently able to adopt resolution 2118 (2013) on chemical weapons and to issue a presidential statement on the humanitarian situation (S/PRST/2013/15). While their full implementation is a vital requirement, a political settlement should end the crisis without further delay. We urge that a "Geneva II" conference be held as soon as possible.

Another continuing issue for the Security Council is the process aimed at achieving peace between Israel and Palestine. The Republic of Korea supports a two-State solution, which envisages both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples living side by side in peace and security. We hope that the two sides remain firmly committed and reach an agreement within the agreed time frame.

Turning to the area of non-proliferation, the Council took robust action against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's December 2012 launch using ballistic missile technology, and its third nuclear test, in February of this year. Resolutions 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013) strongly condemned those actions as violations of the Council's relevant resolutions, and further strengthened the sanctions regime on North Korea. The adoption of those resolutions has reaffirmed the Council's credibility and authority in preserving international peace and security and upholding the principle of non-proliferation. The work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) has been instrumental in that regard.

Among other thematic issues, significant progress has been made in advancing the agenda of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The Republic of Korea, as President of the Council in February, convened a high-level open debate on the issue (see S/PV.6917), in which the Council rightly reaffirmed that protecting civilians is one of its fundamental responsibilities. The issuing of a related presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/2) underlined the Council's commitment to countering impunity and ensuring peacekeeping missions' effective implementation of protection mandates. The continuing high level of casualties in many conflict situations demonstrates clearly that the protection of civilians, particularly women and children, should remain a priority in the work of the Council.

Improving the Security Council's working methods is an important element in bolstering the effectiveness and legitimacy of its work. During the reporting period, the Council has undertaken efforts to enhance transparency and efficiency as well as to strengthen interaction with the wider United Nations membership. Encouraging developments include the holding of wrap-up sessions and briefings by the presidencies, the use of formats such as informal interactive dialogues, and the convening of meetings with troop- and police-contributing countries on a more regular basis. We are pleased to note that the Security Council Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has advanced transparency in the Council's work through the adoption of presidential notes S/2013/515 and S/2013/630.

The Republic of Korea believes that in pursuing reform of the Council, all of us should also strive to strengthen its democratic underpinnings so as to enhance its accountability to the general membership. In that connection, we are of the view that the only plausible way to bring about a more representative, democratic and effective Security Council is through the holding of periodic elections.

We thank the President of the General Assembly for his letter dated 22 October, which conveys his intention to continue intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We remain convinced that Security Council reform should be firmly based on a membership-driven and comprehensive approach, as stipulated in Assembly decision 62/557. In line with that, the intergovernmental negotiations are the only forum for reaching an agreement on the issue, which is of critical importance for the future of the United Nations.

The Republic of Korea, as a current non-permanent member of the Security Council, will continue its efforts to realize a more accountable and efficient Council.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United States is pleased to participate in this annual plenary debate on the important topic of Security Council reform. First, however, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Liu Jieyi of China, for his introduction to the Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/68/2). The report, a requirement under Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, ensures that all Member States can be kept apprised of the Council's work throughout the reporting period. This year, the United States delegation was responsible for preparing the introduction of the annual report. One of our goals was to keep it as concise and readable as possible, while also summarizing the large amount of content. My delegation thanks the current and former Council members who assisted in that task.

Today's debate occurs just before the twentieth anniversary of the creation of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform in December 1993, when we adopted resolution 48/26 by consensus. Since then, 79 different Member States have served as non-permanent members on the Council. We have collectively addressed many different topics over that period with those many partners, each of whom contributed to the important work of the Council. Their contributions demonstrate that we need a Security Council that better represents twenty-first-century realities and is maximally capable of carrying out its mandate and effectively meeting the global challenges of this century.

The United States is open to modest expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Any consideration of which countries merit future permanent membership should take into account their ability and willingness to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to other purposes of the United Nations, and to exercise the heavy responsibility that comes with Security Council membership.

My delegation welcomes the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan to chair the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council

reform, and we look forward to resuming those meetings this month. Mr. President, we have also read attentively your letter dated 22 October, in which you notified Member States that a new advisory group had been formed to produce a basis for the resumption of intergovernmental negotiations. The United States looks forward to receiving the group's ideas.

Finally, we should all approach the upcoming sessions on Security Council reform constructively. We know that many Member States feel that the issue has in fact been studied far too long without action. But hopefully, by working together, we can consider a way forward that is agreeable to the broadest possible majority of United Nations members and that can best promote the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the United Nations.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the two very important subjects of how the Security Council has been working in the past year and how its reform has been proceeding. We thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Liu Jieyi, for introducing the Council's annual report (A/68/2).

The leitmotif of this discussion is the accountability that accompanies the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accountability helps improve the Council's efficiency and effectiveness. It also creates conditions for comprehensive reform of the Council's composition and working methods.

Small, incremental and yet significant measures have been taken on working methods in the form of presidential notes. The Council has focused its efforts on transparency, interaction and dialogue with non-Council members, and on strengthening cooperation with the troop- and police- contributing countries. The process of appointing the chairs of the Council's subsidiary bodies is also being made more transparent, balanced and inclusive. Wrap-up sessions, revived during Pakistan's presidency of the Council in January, have been widely applauded. Pakistan has re-energized the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping, which has this year taken up the important subjects of safety and security, new technologies, robust peacekeeping, transition and drawdown.

The Council owes much of its success to United Nations peacekeeping, particularly its multidimensional missions. Pakistan takes pride in its role as a troop-contributing country. Resolution 2086 (2013) on a multidimensional approach to peacekeeping, adopted during Pakistan's presidency in January, gives a blueprint for handling complex crises, inducting post-conflict peacebuilding into the conceptual and early planning stages of peacekeeping missions, and preventing the relapse of conflicts.

In terms of the conduct of its business, the Council is efficient and effective. The agenda is for the most part predictable. Very little time is devoted to procedural debates or wrangling. Members go straight to the heart of the substance. Even the configuration of the agenda is well known. Roughly two thirds of the agenda relates to Africa. The working environment is collegial. Of course, differences exist on a wide range of issues that are resolved through negotiations. We have proposed that communication between the permanent five, the non-permanent members and the general membership during serious crises be improved by using the office of the President of the Security Council.

On issues not related to the Middle East, the Council's delivery and results range from good to outstanding, depending on various situations. The Security Council has succeeded in Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. It has attained impressive progress in Mali despite daunting challenges. The Council has shown resilience in chronic conflict situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and South Sudan, which require strategic thinking and the support of regional partners for achieving durable peace. Yemen is moving towards stability and democratic governance and Timor-Leste is undergoing a successful transition. In the years to come, we would welcome close United Nations involvement in Afghanistan as it negotiates delicate and momentous political, security and economic transitions.

New paradigms and concepts have emerged from Council's resolutions in the realm of peacekeeping. These are, first, a region-wide approach, such as in the Sahel and the Great Lakes region; secondly, robust peacekeeping manifested by the induction of the Force Intervention Brigade in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; thirdly, deployment of unmanned aerial systems and growing demand for them; and fourthly, the growing cooperation of the Council with regional and subregional organizations, especially in Africa.

On the Palestinian issue, the Council plays a peripheral but very significant role. The Council, through its debates, keeps the spotlight on the Middle East. We sincerely hope that the negotiations between Palestine and Israel, renewed with the help of the United States, will lead to a genuine and result-oriented peace process.

The Council has moved swiftly in launching a process for securing and destroying Syria's chemical weapons. We hope that the newfound goodwill between countries with influence in the region, and the successful collaboration on the chemical weapons issue, will pave the way for the "Geneva II" conference and enable it to engender a political solution.

Let me turn to the issue of Security Council reform. Pakistan fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. While addressing the Assembly in September, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan said:

> "The United Nations needs reform ... that reflects the interests of all, not just the ambitions of a few ... The intended reforms must ... plan for a dynamic future, not entrench or replicate outdated historical patterns based on privileges." (*A/68/PV.15, p. 22*)

We oppose in principle the notion of new, individual permanent members because it runs counter to the avowed objectives of transparency, democratization and inclusive decision-making. There should no new centres of privilege.

Pakistan is a member of the Uniting for Consensus group, which is one of the major stakeholders in the reform process. We also subscribe to the positions of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We will engage constructively with all sides to make progress on reform.

Within the confines of this approach, we have also expressed our respect and understanding regarding the African common position, the Ezulwini Consensus, which we see as a collective demand of the entire continent and a position based on consensus and legitimacy. That is fundamentally different from the individual pursuit of permanent membership by a few countries from other regions, which runs the risk of exacerbating divisions and tensions. The African position is a special case and should be treated as such. We will continue to be supportive of Africa's just cause for a greater role in the Security Council.

We need to explore the best ways of moving forward in intergovernmental negotiations. At this stage, it is better to have clarity and common understanding, or the "common ground" mentioned in your letter of yesterday, Mr. President. Decision 62/557 clearly spells out the framework and mandate of the intergovernmental negotiating process, and sets the following parameters.

First, it is a membership-driven process based on the positions and proposals of Member States and groups. Secondly, the goal is to achieve a comprehensive reform comprising the five key issues: categories of membership, veto, size and working methods, regional representation, and the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Thirdly, it is a process to be pursued in good faith, with mutual respect, and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner with the objective of seeking a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance of Member States.

We are now into the sixth year of the intergovernmental negotiations, a process that has swung between high expectations and frustrations. The rationale for starting the negotiations was that no proposal for reform of the Security Council had been able to muster the required support in the General Assembly. All Member States and groups agreed to engage in a negotiating process to find a solution. Such an engagement would be useful only in an environment of flexibility. Without the readiness to meet half way, progress was bound to be difficult. In the past five years, the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations has also made frequent calls for flexibility. That, incidentally, is the crux of the President's letter issued yesterday and his remarks made today.

In comparative terms, let us look at the negotiating positions and postures of some groups. The Uniting for Consensus group has always been ready for negotiations and has demonstrated flexibility. It took the bold initiative to unilaterally shift from its initial position and come up with a revised proposal, the Italy-Colombia document. Our compromise proposal is an attempt to aggregate and reflect the interests of large, medium-sized and small States as well as regions. Ours is not a take-it-or-leave-it-proposal. It is subject to negotiations.

On the other hand, we see the Group of Four sticking to their original position, while paradoxically asking others to be flexible. They would rather foist their position upon others as a fait accompli. For them, other reform issues are peripheral. Their position seems to be anchored in power politics. They seem to be saying that, because of their political stature and economic prowess, they now qualify for special status at the United Nations, whereas other Member State do not. At times one gets the impression that they scuttle negotiations or press the Chair to produce documents that do not reflect wider interests.

I am afraid that, in this process, the majority-minority calculus will not work. We cannot precipitate decisions by mounting political pressure before important anniversaries, and there are no procedural shortcuts. In all sincerity, last year the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations sought the general membership's approval to produce a short document to serve as a basis for negotiations. But since that would have been contrary to the comprehensive and Member State-driven nature of the intergovernmental negotiations process, the Chair was not given that mandate.

We have immense respect for you, Mr. President, because of your high standing and professional qualities. You were unanimously elected by the entire membership. You have our support for the entire spectrum of issues on the agenda of the General Assembly. We respect your prerogative to seek advice and to consult. We were, however, dismayed when we received your communication of 22 October. The Uniting for Consensus group responded to your letter along the following lines.

First, the process to establish the advisory group lacked transparency, inclusiveness and extensive consultations, which are necessary to clarify the objectives, terms of reference, composition and working methods of such a group.

Secondly, your letter stated that the group is advisory in nature and does not have a negotiating role, but you also point out that the group's purpose is to produce a basis for the start of the intergovernmental negotiations that reflects the ideas put forward in the negotiations so far. In other words, it will put forward a synthesis or a shorter document — those are my words, not the Uniting for Consensus group's words.

Thirdly, a similar mandate sought by the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations was not given to him by the general membership last session, as I mentioned earlier.

Fourthly, such a group cannot bypass the intergovernmental negotiations process and the framework provided by decision 62/557 and it must not jeopardize the membership-driven nature of this process. Only the intergovernmental negotiations can take decisions on matters and procedures that impinge on negotiations.

As stated by the representative of Italy, who spoke on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group, we do not recognize the advisory group as being entitled to perform any drafting role on behalf of other Member States or imposing any kind of negotiating text. That would run counter to the membership-driven nature of the process.

Privately, Sir, you conveyed to us and reiterated today that you have not authorized the advisory group to draft a resolution or a document that would serve as a basis for negotiations. Your assurance on record should quash the misperception created by the earlier communication. However, misinterpretations persist, as we have heard today by some who have shared their understanding and perception that the advisory group will in fact produce a concise text that would form the basis for negotiations, and a new term, a "PGA's text", has been used.

At this point, it is very important to have absolute clarity about the next steps in the reform process. Course correction is important to ensure transparency and inclusiveness and to pursue Security Council reform in full conformity with the intergovernmental negotiations framework. We remain confident that on the President's watch there will be no cherry-picking, no slant towards one position or another. We deeply appreciate Ambassador Zahir Tanin's resolute efforts as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations process for the past five years. It is important that we make progress. Now is the time to build bridges and forge consensus. As President of the Assembly and a neutral and independent guardian of the process, you, Sir, are best placed to play that role.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The United Nations was established as a result of the Second World War. Its purpose is to prevent the scourge of war and maintain international peace and security.

In the course of nearly 70 years since its inception, the international situation has undergone major and profound changes. The United Nations membership has increased tremendously. Common threats and challenges faced by all countries have multiplied. The expectations of Member States for the United Nations and the Security Council increase continuously. As the main organ of the United Nations with a mandate to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council must adapt to the changing international situation through reform so that it can better fulfil its sacred responsibility given by the United Nations Charter.

The priority in reforming the Security Council should be to increase the representation of the developing countries, in particular the countries of Africa, and provide more opportunities for medium-sized and small-sized countries, which constitute the majority of the United Nations membership, to enter the Security Council and participate in its decision-making. Since Security Council reform involves the future of the United Nations Organization and the fundamental interests of the entire membership, it can be achieved only through democratic discussion and patient consultation among Members to build upon common understanding and to search for a package solution based on the broad understanding among Member States.

On the advancement of the reform of the Security Council, I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, the reform of the Security Council must be moved forward in the right direction. The Council is mandated with the important responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The purpose of Council reform should be to safeguard its authority, increase its efficiency, expand its representation, and strengthen its role so that it can better meet the expectations and the trust of Member States.

A highly effective, responsible, and representative Security Council is in the common interest of all Member States. All countries should work together in that process, taking into consideration each other's concerns and interests for the sake of promoting mutual trust, an essential ingredient in a joint effort to advance Security Council reform. Reform should be conducive to the long-term development of the United Nations and the common interest of the broad membership in the United Nations.

Secondly, Security Council reform should reflect democratic consultation and uphold the solidarity of Member States. At present, serious differences still exist on the question of Security Council reform and related matters, which should be settled through continuous, extensive and democratic consultation. Security Council reform cannot be achieved at the expense of the solidarity among Member States, nor can progress be achieved to the detriment of the solidarity that exists among Member States. Only consensual decisions, based on broad consultation, can gain the unanimous trust and support of Member States and stand the test of time and history. Setting up arbitrary timelines for pressing forward on reform of specific aspects, when conditions are not mature, is not conducive to substantive reform. That leads to deviation from the right direction of the reform and will therefore make the process even more difficult to carry out.

Thirdly, intergovernmental negotiations are a universally recognized platform for discussion of Security Council reform. Maintaining the authority and role of the intergovernmental negotiations will help keep the reform process on the right track. Intergovernmental negotiations must be guided by the principle of ownership by Members States and must be based on their positions and ideas. Without the common understanding and the authorization of Member States, positions and negotiating options cannot be streamlined.

China has noted that the President of the General Assembly, in his letter to the entire membership dated 22 October 2013, has established an advisory group on Security Council reform. China has also taken note of the explanations made by the President this morning. China has exchanged views on the issue with the President and the countries concerned. We believe that the advisory group can advise the President of the General Assembly informally, but has no negotiating mandate or drafting role.

Security Council reform can be advanced only in the intergovernmental negotiations framework. China hopes that Member States will continue the intergovernmental negotiations during the current session of the General Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 62/557 of 15 September 2008 and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. We will continue to work actively with other Member

States to find a formula that enjoys broad consensus and that is in the long-term interest of the United Nations and the common interest of Member States.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. We reiterate our support for his efforts and look forward to working with him. My delegation also aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group and of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For the past several years, we have been working to reform the Security Council, improve its working methods and expand its membership in order to enable it to respond to the existing challenges in the international arena and to fulfil its basic mandate in the maintenance of international peace and security. Member States have made great efforts during previous sessions of the General Assembly to expedite the reform process. However, we have so far not achieved any tangible progress. The latest events in some regions of the world have demonstrated the importance of a quick response and movement and the need for the Council to take adequate measures for the maintenance of peace and security and for protecting thousands of people who face genuine threats to their lives.

The delegation of Libya is determined to support efforts to reform the Security Council and is committed to cooperating constructively with all parties concerned. We will support all efforts to achieve genuine reform of the Council that would make it more just, in terms of taking into account the opinions and interests of all groups. Such broader representation would make the Council more reflective of contemporary realities, quicker to respond to threats to the security and stability of peoples, and more capable of effectively performing its mandate in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Libya therefore stresses the importance of correcting the historical injustice done to the African continent, which has not been represented in the permanent category of membership in the Council, in contrast to all other continents. It also stresses the importance of working to recognize Africa's historical right, end its marginalization and give it the opportunity to be equitably represented in the Security Council, in both categories, permanent and non-permanent, in accordance with the African common position stated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Any expansion of the permanent category Council membership should include a seat for the Arab States as well, in accordance with the decision of the Arab Summit held in Sirte in 2010, and the compendium document prepared by the head of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Libya believes that the reform of the Security Council should also include the introduction of genuine improvements in its working methods, activities and procedures, including, as a first stage, ensuring the restriction on the use of the veto power in cases of crimes against humanity, genocide or foreign occupation, until that right is completely abolished. Transparency and openness should prevail in the work of the Council. Non-members should be able to contribute to its work, particularly the countries most directly concerned with the issues on its agenda.

We welcome your commitment, Mr. President, expressed in the letter you addressed to Member States on 22 October 2013, to support efforts to reform the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, and your action to establish an advisory group to provide inputs and recommendations on the reform process. However, we would like to reiterate that the role of that advisory group should not be parallel or equal to the intergovernmental negotiations.

In that regard, we would like to stress decision 62/557 as the cornerstone for the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council and the expansion of its membership. That decision has reasserted Member States' ownership of that process, and we are committed to continuing the negotiations, provided that the positions and proposals of all groups and individual delegations are taken into account.

The reports submitted by the Council to the General Assembly do not reflect the Council's commitment to what has been stipulated in Assembly resolutions regarding the report, in particular with respect to reducing the narrative part and including analytical reports on the issues upon which the Council had taken decisions, the positions of the various member States and the reasons that led the Council not to take firm positions on important issues related to international peace and security. We hope that future reports of the Security Council will be more useful and include

the reasons that have prevented the Council from implementing its mandate to preserve international peace and security. We also hope that the General Assembly, at the appropriate time, will be able to fill in the gaps that have been left by the Council owing to the application of double standards and the use of the veto power or the threat of use of that power, as has been the case over the past few years.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to start by welcoming Ambassador Tanin's reappointment as facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We thank him for all his efforts to make his working paper on reform more concise and pragmatic. In that spirit, we welcome the establishment of an advisory board that will support your efforts, Mr. President, and those of the facilitator.

The intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform began in 2009. They followed on the heels of earlier discussions and initiatives on the same subject. Indeed, the process has been ongoing for 20 years now. It is clear that we have failed to move forward on that issue. Certainly, the debates on the subject are now a little more interactive, and many initiatives have provided fuel for the debate. However, none of them have been able to achieve concrete results.

France hopes that the new round of intergovernmental negotiations will provide an opportunity for Member States to finally agree on an ambitious reform programme. In that regard, we hope that the advisory board that you have established, Sir, will be able to present a text that, while drawing on the various initiatives presented by Member States, will present a pragmatic and realistic synthesis. France hopes that having a text for further negotiations will enable us to take real steps towards a substantial reform of the Security Council.

Member States have the serious responsibility of supporting an ambitious reform of the Council so that it can better and more accurately reflects the realities of today's world, while strengthening the Council's ability to fully assume its responsibilities in terms of maintaining international peace and security.

As members know, France's requirements for reform have not changed. The reform of the Council must take into account the emergence of new Powers that are willing and able to assume the responsibilities of a permanent presence on the Security Council and that are, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, able to make a significant contribution to the work of the Council. It is in that context that France supports an expansion in both categories of membership and supports in particular the candidacy of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council and an increased presence of African countries, including among the permanent members.

Similarly, France supports efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council, insofar as that involves increasing its transparency and efficiency. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Assembly of France's initiative on the voluntary limitation of the exercise of the veto, which has been promoted at the highest level by our President, Mr. François Hollande. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Laurent Fabius, has also spoken on the subject.

The limitation of the exercise of the veto would involve the five permanent members of the Security Council voluntarily and collectively suspending their right to exercise the veto when mass atrocities are under consideration. It would thus be a voluntary process — a code of conduct — which would therefore not require a revision of the Charter. It would not in fact be a reform of the Security Council.

The criteria for that self-limitation remain to be defined by the permanent members of the Council themselves, who need to consider and agree on practical arrangements for the adoption of such a code of conduct. They must, for example, agree on a definition of mass atrocities. The outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (resolution 60/1) and a number of international conventions, including the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Rome Statute, can guide us in that respect.

They will also need to define the warning mechanism or mechanisms that could trigger such self-limitation. France is considering, for example, the possibility of the Secretary-General playing a central role in that regard, in the spirit of Article 99 of the Charter. France has also proposed that 50 Member States could call upon the Security Council to meet when mass atrocities occur. Those proposals could allow us to start discussions on the subject, in particular with academia. To that end, France is planning to involve all the actors involved in the discussion, including research institutes and non-governmental organizations working on the

issue, who could share their thoughts with us in a very useful way.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Let me at the outset thank the delegations of China for introducing the report of the Security Council (A/68/2) and of the United States of America for preparing it. Allow me to also express my appreciation for your convening, Sir, today's debate on the topic.

The annual report of the Security Council discussed today covers a period during which my country was a member of the Council. Looking back, one issue certainly stands out in my memory — namely, the long deadlock in the Council caused by three double vetoes and the terrible impact that had for the Syrian people. While the Council has found a common voice again, it is too little, too late for the more than 100,000 dead, the wounded, the starving and the displaced.

But even beyond Syria, that episode raises a larger question. Is the Security Council, as we see it today, still able to effectively address current and future challenges? Members know our view that it is not. In that context, I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered earlier by my colleague, Ambassador Yoshikawa, on behalf of the Group of Four countries. Let me add the following points in my national capacity.

After many years of discussions on Council reform — first 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, and now in the intergovernmental negotiations — we have reached a point where the positions of Member States are well known to all, where everything has been said, and much has been tried in order to move forward. But despite all of the stated commitment to reform, we are being held at a standstill. Understandably, frustration is growing among Member States.

We welcome new initiatives, such as the establishment of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group and the French proposal on veto limitations. But important as these initiatives are, they do not go to the root of the problem. Germany remains convinced that only a real structural reform of the Council will make it more effective and representative of the world we live in today. I will not go into the details of Germany's position. It is well known and has been placed on record numerous times. Let me rather make a few remarks on how we see that the current standstill could finally be overcome.

Your initiative, Mr. President, comes at the right time. We strongly welcome your decision to establish an advisory group of eminent Ambassadors to provide an input that reflects relevant opinions on the issue and indicates the options, which could serve as a basis for the resumed intergovernmental negotiations process. We appreciate your explanation of the purpose of the group, which shows that the criticisms that we have heard regarding your initiative are indeed unfounded. I would also like to congratulate our colleagues on their appointment to the group and look forward to the results of their work.

The work of the advisory group could provide much needed momentum. In our view, which is shared by many here in this Hall, the most useful product of your initiative, Mr. President, would be an operational text that would enable Chairman Tanin to resume the intergovernmental negotiations process on that basis. Let us be honest. Despite the most laudable efforts of Chairman Tanin, the intergovernmental negotiations process has thus far been a negotiations process only in name, not in substance.

Of course differences exist among Member States on the content of the reform. But, frankly, that is no excuse for not being able to agree on one simple aspect, namely, to finally start true and genuine text-based negotiations, as we are used to doing on a daily basis in the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

We hear calls for compromise and flexibility. However, at the same time, no such flexibility or willingness to compromise is forthcoming from those who call for that flexibility when it comes to allowing negotiations to start. That runs counter to the normal processes of the Organization and the basic logic of multilateral diplomacy.

We have said repeatedly that we stand ready to actively contribute to genuine negotiations in a spirit of flexibility. Let us start a negotiations process whereby we can identify the common ground and see if and how the positions of Member States evolve. Let us finally engage in real give-and-take negotiations on this important issue.

To summarize, there has been enough talk. Let us see some action. Germany stands ready to contribute.

I wish, Mr. President, to thank you once again for your important initiative and for giving the issue of Security Council reform the attention that it deserves. If anything, today's debate will make clear to everyone where Member States stand on the issue. Are they part of the broad majority that wants progress or part of the blocking minority that is eager to maintain the status quo?

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.