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General Assembly

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Thursday, 15 November 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić . . . . . (Serbia)

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

Agenda item 108

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

Note by the Secretary-General (A/67/300)

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 relating 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/67/300. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this document?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 108?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 30 and 117

Report of the Security Council

Report of the Security Council (A/67/2)

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

The President: I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, to introduce the report of the Security Council (A/67/2).

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India), President of the Security Council: Mr. President, I would like, first of all, to congratulate you on behalf of the members of the Security Council on your election as President of the General Assembly. It is an honour for me, as President of the Security Council for the month of November, to introduce the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2). The presentation of the report is more than a regular reporting exercise pursuant to the United Nations Charter. The report underscores the importance of the relationship between both principal organs of the United Nations and provides an excellent opportunity to debate and exchange views with the general membership on the report on the work of the Council. I am therefore grateful to you, Mr. President, for having arranged today's meeting for the consideration of the Security Council's annual report.

The report covers the period from August 2011 to July 2012. The introduction to the report was prepared by the delegation of Colombia, which held the presidency

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in July 2012. I wish to thank Ambassador Néstor Osorio and his team for their efforts in preparing the introduction, to which I call the Assembly's attention, because it gives a helpful overview of the different activities under the responsibility of the Council during the reporting period. Allow me also to thank the Secretariat, which prepared the other parts of the report now before the Assembly.

I would also like to highlight the monthly assessments by each presidency, which are mentioned in the report. They contain information, set forth on a monthly basis, on the most relevant activities carried out by the Council on each item of its agenda, thus facilitating the overall comprehension of the report. Those monthly assessments are an important exercise, regularly undertaken as part of the responsibility of each presidency and are aimed at informing the wider membership about the work of the Council. I call the Assembly's attention to them as well.

During the reporting period, the Council adopted 60 resolutions and 25 presidential statements and issued 83 statements to the press. The Council held 222 formal meetings, of which 205 were public meetings. Open meetings, including open debates, increased the transparency in the work of the Council and allowed for enhanced participation by the wider membership and the international community. The presidencies of the Council and of the General Assembly continued to meet regularly throughout the year, and monthly briefings by the Presidents of the Council to the wider membership on the Council's work continued to be held.

Meetings with troop contributors have also taken place as a regular practice, in particular prior to any decision that would have an impact on United Nations peacekeeping mandates, as a way to enable the collection of relevant inputs. Those practices represent useful steps aimed at promoting better dialogue with the general membership on the work of the Council. We encourage delegations to make use of those opportunities to strengthen such interaction.

The Council continued its implementation of note S/2010/507 on working methods and sought to undertake further reform of the Council's working methods wherever possible, including by better planning and spreading out its workload, ensuring that reporting requirements were adequate to their purpose and providing for more efficient use of conference resources and more interactive exchanges among Council members. Presidencies have promoted useful practices aimed at increasing efficiency and expediency, such as streamlined introductions by the President and video conferences in open briefings and debates aimed at providing updates from the field. Council members have agreed to reduce the use of speakers' lists and better use of "Other matters" to discuss issues of concern. Informal interactive dialogues were also held regularly as a useful consultation practice.

During the period of the report, many of the activities of the Council were centred, as in previous years, on situations in Africa, including the Sudan, Darfur, South Sudan, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Somalia, and the question of piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea. The two missions conducted by the Council during the period under review were to Haiti, in February 2012, and West Africa — Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone — in May. The Council also held a consultative meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council in New York in June.

The Security Council closely followed the unresolved disputes between the Sudan and South Sudan after the latter's independence in July 2011. Following the resumption of fighting on the border, the Council adopted resolution 2046 (2012) in May to endorse the African Union road map and to demand that the parties achieve a negotiated solution for all unresolved issues after the secession within a period of three months. The Council also continued to closely follow the implementation of resolution 2046 (2012) and remained seized of the ongoing negotiations between the Sudan and South Sudan to resolve the outstanding Comprehensive Peace Agreement issues under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel.

With regard to Somalia, the Security Council's strong support for the transition process was instrumental in bringing to power the most representative Somali leadership in decades. The joint African Union-United Nations technical assessment mission resulted in a revised concept of operations for the African Union Mission in Somalia, which contributed to a significant improvement in the security situation across the country.

The Council considered the events in various countries on its agenda prior to, during and after elections that took place during the period under review. Following developments in Libya and taking note of the Declaration of Liberation, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2016 (2011) on

27 October 2011, reiterating the need for the transitional period to be underpinned by a commitment to democracy and respect for human rights, and terminating the mandates regarding the protection of civilians and the no-fly zone, as stipulated in resolution 1973 (2011).

The Security Council reacted repeatedly with concern to the worsening security and humanitarian situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo owing to the violence caused by the Mouvement du 23 mars and all armed groups. Following the deterioration of the security situation in Mali with the 20 March military coup and the northern part of the country being occupied by armed rebel and terrorist groups, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2056 (2012) on 5 July to set a comprehensive path to solve all aspects of the crisis. The Security Council also requested the elaboration and implementation of a United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Reiterating its strong condemnation of the 12 April military coup that occurred in Guinea-Bissau, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2048 (2012) on 18 May, demanding the restoration of and respect for the constitutional order.

Developments in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question and the ongoing effects of the Arab Spring, remained prominent on the Council's agenda. The Council held monthly briefings and consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and quarterly open debates on the issue. Members expressed concern at the continuing stalemate in the Middle East peace process and urged the negotiated settlement of all issues. The Council also heard briefings from the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The Council closely followed developments in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Lebanon. One of the main issues considered by the Council was the application of Palestine for membership in the United Nations. Following the adoption of various press statements in 2011, the Council in April 2012 unanimously adopted resolution 2042 (2012), authorizing an advance team to monitor the ceasefire in Syria, and resolution 2043 (2012), establishing the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria to monitor and support the implementation of the six-point proposal of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan.

With respect to the situation in Yemen, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2051 (2012), expressing support to President Hadi Mansour and the Government of National Unity of Yemen to move the transition process forward and encouraging the international community to provide active and increasing support to help the Yemeni Government meet the outstanding political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges.

The Council also continued to monitor developments in Afghanistan and countries of the Asian region, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar and Timor-Leste.

In Europe, the Security Council followed up on its long-standing interest in exploring ways and means to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its institutionalization process, as well as encouraging greater progress in the negotiations in Cyprus, and monitored the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the pacific settlement of differences through the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue.

The Security Council reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring stability and security in Haiti and to assisting that country in the rebuilding process by extending the mandate of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti through resolution 2012 (2011).

The issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction also figured prominently on the agenda.

The Council also considered issues concerning the International Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and heard reports from the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the President of the International Court of Justice.

Other priorities of the Council's work included thematic, general and cross-cutting issues. Debates and consultations were held on peace and security in Africa and support for the United Nations Office in West Africa and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

The Council commended and promoted cooperation with sub-regional organizations and in particular with the African Union via resolution 2033 (2012), which encourages the enhancement of the relationship.

The issues of children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, the protection of civilians and post-conflict peacebuilding also figured on the Council's agenda, with several important debates being held during the period. In August 2011, following an open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/17), which, among other things, sought to deepen the existing cooperation among the Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contributing countries.

During the reporting period, the Security Council also approved 25 resolutions extending the mandates of various peacekeeping and monitoring missions.

In July, the Council held an open debate on post-conflict peacebuilding (S/PV.6805) to consider the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2012/70), which was followed by an interactive dialogue focused on how to realize the Commission's full potential and bring all parties together around common strategies.

The Security Council remained seized of the threat posed by terrorism and heard regular briefings by the Chairs of the Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011), 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004). In press statements the Council strongly condemned the terrorist acts that occurred in various locations between August 2011 and July 2012.

I could go on and on about the matters that were under the Council's consideration during the reporting period. But I would rather listen to you, Mr. President, and to the representatives of other Member States. I have therefore not mentioned several other issues that are discussed in detail in the report and that may be referred to.

The annual report before the Assembly includes a significant amount of analytical, descriptive and statistical information on the work of the Council, the preparation of which required serious effort on the part of delegations in the Council and the Secretariat. I hope that Member States will seize this opportunity to discuss the report, and I will be glad to take their suggestions back to my colleagues in the Council. There is always room for improvement, and Council members will benefit from the Assembly's comments and suggestions.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to express the Movement's appreciation for your pledge to assist in advancing the process of reforming the Security Council during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan on his reappointment as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. The Movement also takes this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of India, the current President of the Council, for presenting the Security Council's annual report (A/67/2) for the period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012. We also thank the Colombian delegation for its efforts in drafting an introduction to the report during its presidency of the Council in July.

The Non-Aligned Movement attaches great importance to achieving concrete results on Security Council reform through intergovernmental negotiations, on the basis of decision 62/557 and subsequent decisions, culminating in decision 65/554. Reform of the Security Council should be addressed in a timely, comprehensive, transparent and balanced manner, without setting artificial deadlines. It should also address all substantive issues relating to the question of membership, regional representation, the Council's agenda, its working methods and its decision-making process, including the veto. It should seek to garner the widest possible political acceptance on the part of Member States, in line with the provisions of the Charter and the relevant decisions, particularly decision 62/557.

Enlarging the Security Council and reforming its working methods should seek to make it more democratic, representative, accountable and effective. In that context, the sixteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Tehran, acknowledged the historical injustice done to Africa with regard to its representation in the Council and expressed support for its increased and enhanced representation in a reformed Security Council. The Summit also took note of the African common position, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Improving the Security Council's working methods is crucial to its effectiveness. Transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that it should maintain in all its activities. The Non-Aligned Movement continues to reject any attempt to use the Council as a platform to pursue national political agendas. We stress the importance of non-selectivity and impartiality in its work. The Movement also reiterates its concern about the Security Council's continued encroachment on the

functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by addressing issues that traditionally fall within the competence of those bodies. We reject the Council's constant attempts to use thematic issues under its consideration to expand its mandate into areas that do not pose a threat to international peace and security. The Council should keep strictly within the powers and functions accorded to it by Member States under the United Nations Charter.

The sanctions imposed by the Security Council remain an issue of serious concern to the non-aligned countries. The objectives of the sanctions regimes should be clearly defined, their imposition should be for a specific time frame, and they should be based on tenable legal grounds.

The Security Council's accountability to the General Assembly is well established in the Charter. The Assembly's consideration of the Council's annual report is a core element in the relationship between those two principal organs. Resolution 66/294 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly welcomes the improvements that have been made in the quality of the Council's annual reports and encourages the Council to make further improvements as necessary.

Having examined this year's report, the Non-Aligned Movement believes that there is still ample room for improvement in its quality. The report should be more explanatory and analytical in its assessment of the work of the Council, including in those cases where the Council has failed to act, as well as of the reasons behind the various outcomes, whether in the form of resolutions, presidential statements, press releases or statements to the press. It is also imperative that future annual reports should also reflect the general views expressed by non-members of the Council during its open debates. Issues to be covered at any briefings by the Secretariat should be determined in coordination with the concerned State or party and after approval by all members of the Security Council.

The Non-Aligned Movement supports increased cooperation between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council within the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

The Movement regrets that the Security Council Committee on the Admission of New Members was not able to issue a positive recommendation for Palestine's application for admission to full membership of the United Nations, owing to the lack of unanimity among Council members on the issue. The Movement fully supports the application submitted by Palestine, which is consistent with the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

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

I would now like to say a few more words in my national capacity as the representative of Egypt. I would first like to associate my remarks with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the African Group. The consensus decision 62/557, establishing the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, set clear parameters for that process, as well as its principles and framework. Paragraph (d) of the decision states that intergovernmental negotiations should be based only on proposals submitted by Member States. The rationale is to maintain the intergovernmental nature of the process and avoid jeopardizing the impartiality of the President of the General Assembly and the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. The main objective of the negotiations is to ensure the widest possible political acceptance by Member States themselves.

The five negotiables of the intergovernmental negotiations have proved to be inextricably linked. They constitute an integral, inseparable package that has to be agreed upon in its entirety. That is why the piecemeal solutions and/or initiatives presented by some groups have failed to garner the necessary support of Member States.

The intergovernmental negotiations should be aimed at reaching a comprehensive agreement that would have an effect on the power structure of the Security Council. Egypt, along with the African Group, continues to oppose any drafting exercise that entails merging language and streamlining positions in a text without agreeing on the principles and criteria underlying the five key issues first.

The annual Security Council report under consideration today mentions in its very first page that "[m]any of the Council's activities, discussions and efforts were concerned with the situation in

several African countries" (*A/67/2, p. 1*). Despite that fact, Africa remains unrepresented in the permanent category and underrepresented in the non-permanent category of the Security Council compared to all other regions. The African Common Position, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus, does not seek to impose national political interests. It aims at achieving the legitimate aspirations of a whole continent that includes 54 countries. We aim to rectify the historical injustice inflicted on Africa with respect to its representation in the Security Council.

Enhanced representation of the developing countries in the Security Council has been one of the fundamental pillars of the reform process since the adoption of resolution 48/26. Egypt stresses the need to duly take into account the position of the members of the League of Arab States, who are demanding a permanent seat for the Arab Group in any future expansion in the category of permanent membership in the Council. We also stress the need to take into account the position of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is demanding adequate representation of the Muslim world in any category of membership in an expanded Security Council.

Finally, I cannot conclude my statement without offering a practical reminder of the urgent necessity to reform the working methods of the Security Council. Yesterday, Egypt requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to address the alarming escalation by Israel in Gaza. We deeply appreciate the earnest response of the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, in convening a meeting less than six hours after our request (S/PV.6863). Yet the Council was not able to agree on holding a public meeting. It decided on the format of a private meeting. That proves the need for more transparency in the Council's work. It shows that procedural issues raised by a limited category of Council members are able to obstruct the work of the Council.

In conclusion, Egypt reiterates the need for political will on the part of all of us, large and small, developing and developed, permanent and non-permanent members, in order to achieve an effective result that garners the widest possible political acceptance.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the group of countries that sponsored draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1 six years ago. The L.69 group brings together a diverse group of developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific that are united by a common cause, that is, to achieve lasting and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The group is strongly united in its firm conviction that expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council is needed in order better to reflect contemporary world realities and achieve a more accountable, representative and transparent Security Council.

We, the L.69 group, were instrumental in starting the intergovernmental negotiations. We remain engaged in those negotiations on the understanding that the United Nations Charter, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and relevant General Assembly resolutions require the support of a two-thirds majority of the United Nations membership for any decision in that regard.

Let me at the outset place on record the group's appreciation for the work of Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan during the most recent General Assembly session. He has been an integral and invaluable part of the intergovernmental negotiations since 2009. During the eighth round of intergovernmental negotiations, held during the previous General Assembly session, it was clear that the membership desires early reform that includes expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories and improvements in the Council's working methods.

Secondly, the membership of the Assembly acknowledges the positive and constructive role that has been and continues to be played by the L.69 group. Indeed, the fact that ours is the only group that has increased in membership over the years testifies to the group's influential role. In keeping with our tradition of active support for the reform process, we have also put forward a number of proposals for transforming our interactions and deliberations into real negotiations.

Thirdly, our group has also been able to enhance convergences with other like-minded groups, in particular the African Group. The L.69 and the Committee of 10 of the African Union have been collaborating closely on the convergences between them with regard to comprehensive reform. Let me reiterate today that the L.69 group acknowledges the African Common Position. We are of one mind in stressing that the reform we envisage is far-reaching and intended to ensure that the Council's structure and its way of doing business is fundamentally changed so as to make it reflective of current geopolitical realities.

On each of the five key issues of Security Council reform there exist clear convergences. In the view of the L.69 group, the convergences are as follows.

First, the Security Council must be enlarged in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories.

Secondly, the new permanent members should have the same prerogatives and privileges as those of the current permanent members, including the veto.

Thirdly, additional seats in an expanded Council should include permanent members from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean region as well as from the Western European and other States. There should be additional non-permanent seats from Africa, Asia, the Eastern European Group, Latin America and the Caribbean region, as well as one non-permanent seat for small island developing States across all regions. Further, regional groups should coordinate to ensure that there is regular representation for small developing States in the non-permanent category.

Fourthly, the number of the Council's members should be expanded to the mid-twenties, and it should adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of States not members of the Council in its work as appropriate, enhance its accountability to the membership and increase the transparency of its work.

Fifthly, the General Assembly's role as the chief deliberative policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations must be respected in both letter and spirit. It is the considered view of the L.69 group that intergovernmental negotiations should be started immediately with the aim of formalizing the convergences that I have just articulated.

In closing, allow me to recall paragraph 30 of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), in which world leaders resolved, inter alia, to intensify their efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. I would also like to specifically highlight paragraph 153 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), in which leaders further resolved to support early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of their overall efforts to reform the United Nations in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.

The L.69 Group remains committed to playing its part in ensuring that that comprehensive reform is not left to future generations.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate, which is helping us to focus concretely on two Security Council-related issues: the annual report (A/67/2) and the reform process.

During the period covered by the report, the Council dealt with several regional crises in Africa, particularly those in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, following military coups, and that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting from the violence wrought by the Mouvement du 23 mars. It also addressed the situation in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Yemen, and the situations in Asia, namely, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Timor-Leste. Considerable time was also devoted to thematic and general issues, such as the rule of law, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, non-proliferation and cooperation with regional organizations, especially the African Union.

In that context, we appreciate the quality of the report and its introduction prepared by our Colombian colleague, Ambassador Néstor Osorio, and the extensive efforts to make it more complete and detailed. We encourage the Security Council to continue in that direction as a way to improve its relationship with the General Assembly and to promote a greater involvement of the membership in its proceedings.

On the subject of Security Council reform, let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group, for your letter of 9 November informing us of the reappointment of Ambassador Tanin as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. As the letter duly notes, there are, within the membership, "various concerns and divergent points of view on the different aspects of this complex and sensitive matter". In addition, your letter rightly points out that "predictability and full transparency remain essential ingredients in the ongoing process." The letter concludes by informing us of your intention to work closely with the chair.

We could not agree more. We are convinced that the reform of the Security Council is one of the most sensitive and divisive topics at the United Nations, since it touches on the strategic interests of all 193 Member States. We are also convinced that transparency and predictability are needed in order to build confidence among Member States. That is why we consider the

President of the General Assembly to be the ultimate and impartial guarantor of the entire process.

Let me briefly summarize the philosophy underlying the Uniting for Consensus group's proposal. In that connection, I wish to recall that our group is the only one that entered the intergovernmental negotiations with some fresh ideas. It was a sign of flexibility that was never reciprocated.

The three principles of our platform are all based on the importance of an elected Security Council and on decision 62/557. First, regular elections are imperative in order to ensure an accountable, accessible Security Council in which membership is earned as a privileged responsibility and not granted as a permanent right to individual countries in fulfilment of their national aspirations; secondly, the election process makes the Council flexible and adaptable to the constant changes in the world's political and economic landscape; thirdly, the electoral system makes the Security Council more representative. Permanent membership, with no provision for periodic endorsement from the wider membership, has no representative character whatsoever.

In line with those principles, the Uniting for Consensus group has proposed a new category of seats with longer terms of up to six years, as well as an increase in the number of regular non-permanent members. Our proposal also provides a quota for the representation of small States in the Security Council.

We are also convinced there is a need to correct the underrepresentation of Africa, so our proposal offers a viable compromise that addresses that continent's particularities. Some of the specifics include Charter recognition, size and allocation of new seats; for example, under the proposal, 40 per cent of the new seats, in particular those with longer terms, would go to Africa. We suggest that the African representatives be selected or rotated by the African Union or the Group of African States, after which the slate would be submitted to the General Assembly for election. In that way, the ambitions of a continent, rather than the aspirations of individual Member States, would be recognized.

Finally, we feel that the working methods should be improved through greater openness and transparency, that the Security Council should be more accountable to the General Assembly — and an elected Council would be the best guarantee in that respect — and that the veto should be limited, if not abolished.

Turning now to the process, the move from a long-standing working group to intergovernmental negotiations stemmed from decision 62/557, which was adopted by consensus in 2008. That decision states clearly that the negotiations must be based on the proposals of Member States. It adds that the five key issues or negotiables should be dealt with in a comprehensive way, and thus clearly rejects any piecemeal approach. That decision must be upheld. Any attempt to force through a piecemeal approach is bound to fail. The same fate is reserved for proposals that are not mandated by or do not originate from Member States.

It is clear that Security Council reform is still a very sensitive matter on which there are deep concerns and points of divergence within the membership. After almost 20 years of failed attempts to impose contrasting visions on one another, we all need to work together to forge a genuine compromise that can gain the widest political support — hence the crucial role of the President of the General Assembly and the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations as confidence-builders who can bring the players to the same table. Yet, according to decision 62/557, the determination as to which card to play must remain in the hands of the Member States.

One constructive way to commence the session would be to have the chair consult with Member States to agree on a predictable and transparent calendar of work. That approach proved to be useful last year, and we encourage you, Sir, and Ambassador Tanin to repeat that scheme. Any proposal that has not been agreed upon or mandated by the Member States risks sending us back to square one. That is not what we want. It would also not encourage concrete progress in the reform process.

Along those lines, Mr. President, you can count on the Uniting for Consensus group's support and flexibility.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Security Council for having prepared the report on its work over the past year (A/67/2). The delegation of Belarus has studied the document carefully and takes note of its comprehensive and informative nature. We support the point of view that the report would be of even greater value for delegations, particularly those that are not Council members, if it contained elements analysing the situations in various regions of the world. In our view, that could have been

achieved by moving the elements of analysis into the monthly report documents that are prepared by the delegations presiding over the Security Council.

In the past year we have seen how important the role of the Security Council is in today's system of international relations. Belarus favours the maintenance and strengthening of that status. We consider the Council to be the major element in the maintenance of international peace and security. Unquestionably, in order to remain the cornerstone of the existing system, the Council must act in keeping with today's realities. In that context, we see no alternative but to reform that body, which was established by the Charter. Moreover, that reform must be based on a consensus approach and promote the enhancement of the Council's effectiveness.

Making comprehensive changes to the Council based on the five negotiables, as set forth in decision 62/557, is one of the key steps to transforming the United Nations into an effective mechanism for responding efficiently to crisis situations. We cannot ignore the fact that negotiations on the question of Security Council reform have been going on for more than 20 years. The parties to the negotiating process have demonstrated determination and the seriousness of their intention to achieve a final result. However, no delegation could claim that those negotiations have produced any substantive outcome to date.

To achieve results, we need to demonstrate political will and flexibility. At the same time, we oppose hasty attempts to put to a vote documents that have not been studied in detail or gained broad support from States, or that may have a negative impact on future negotiations.

We believe that reform of the Security Council must lead to a more balanced and just apportionment of powers. We support an expansion in the number of seats in the Council in order to give all regional groups additional seats on the Council. We take note of the underrepresentation of the Eastern European Group among the non-permanent members of the Security Council and reaffirm our stated position on enhancing the representation of that Group among the permanent members of the Council.

We believe it is necessary to continue enhancing the transparency of the activity of the Security Council. We welcome the expansion of the practice of holding open debates and presidential briefings, including at the end of term. We believe that it would be useful to continue the development of that practice.

Maintaining the balance of the entire United Nations system is of the utmost importance. We therefore find inadmissible the unfounded interference by the Security Council in the areas of competence of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We see a need to have non-Council members be involved to a greater degree when decisions are taken affecting their interests, for the expansion of the practice of holding open meetings and for the organization of close interaction between the Sanctions Committees and the countries affected by sanctions.

Today, we are faced with the important objectives of reforming the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular. Peace and the international order are changing at a dizzying pace. We simply have no moral right to waste yet another year in a negotiating process that is taking us nowhere. In that regard, Belarus calls on all parties to the negotiating process to demonstrate political will and readiness to compromise, which are crucial for the adoptions of the decisions needed to reform the Security Council and strengthen the Organization as a whole.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to thank the Security Council President, Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, for his presentation of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/67/2), and Ambassador Néstor Osorio and the Colombian delegation for their preparation of the introduction to the report during their presidency of the Security Council in July.

The annual report provides all Member States with a transparent and comprehensive review of the Security Council's intensive work. We hope that the report continues to facilitate the exchange of information and enhance cooperation between the two coequal principal organs of the United Nations. The United States takes seriously the importance of making sure that all Member States are informed of and appropriately involved in the Council's work. In that regard, we are pleased to see that the Council held 222 formal meetings, of which 205 were public meetings, from August 2011 to July 2012. The United States is also committed to improving the working methods of the Council, and we continue to encourage increased interaction between Member

States and the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The Security Council first met in January 1946, under Australia's presidency. At that time, former Secretary of State and first United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Edward Stettinius, Jr., said that the General Assembly, inter alia, was responsible for building the kind of world in which lasting peace will be possible, and that the Security Council must see to it that the peace is kept. Nearly 67 years later, the members of the Council remain dedicated to that mission.

As the world's principal body for dealing with global security cooperation, the Council needs to reflect the realities of the new century. We recognize that various groups of Member States have presented proposals to add both permanent and non-permanent members, and also to add veto-wielding members. The United States is open in principle to a modest expansion of both permanent and non-permanent members, but we strongly believe that any consideration of an expansion of permanent members must be country-specific in nature. Moreover, the United States is not open to an enlargement of the Security Council that changes the current veto structure. Given that up to now no proposal has enjoyed consensus among us in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, we must continue to roll up our sleeves and discuss the way forward together.

To that end, the United States welcomes the continuation of the intergovernmental negotiations at this session of the General Assembly. The United States continues to view those negotiations as the best forum to build a path toward a reformed Security Council. In our last round of intergovernmental negotiations in July, the United States indicated that the way to find agreement is not through ultimatums, but through a step-by-step approach. We welcome Ambassador Tanin's continued role as chair of the negotiation process and trust that he will guide us on such a path. We assure him of our full cooperation.

It remains essential that we work together through the intergovernmental negotiations to overcome our differences and find a comprehensive solution that addresses the common aspirations of Member States. We very much look forward to continuing that dialogue with all Members.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I have the honour to present the position of Africa on behalf of the Committee of 10 of the African Union (AU) on the reform of the Security Council. I would like to thank the President for having convened this debate on agenda item 117. At the outset, allow me congratulate Ambassador Zahir Tanin upon his reappointment as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations and to express our appreciation for his efforts during past sessions.

I would like to reiterate the commitment of the member States of the African Union to this very important issue and state that we look forward to building on the progress made during the sixty-sixth session on the basis of General Assembly decision 65/554.

We are heartened that during the general debate of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, many heads of State and Government and heads of delegation reaffirmed the need to reform the Security Council in order to make it more representative, democratic and legitimate. We must all therefore continue to seek the goal of reaching an early agreement on a reform model that takes into account the core values of the United Nations, namely, inclusiveness, democracy, accountability, equality and transparency.

It is becoming increasingly clear that after nearly two decades of debate, we seem to be gradually approaching a point where the United Nations will lose credibility if we fail to generate the political will necessary to make progress on this very crucial issue. We continue to urge Member States to be flexible in our common pursuit of a global governance system that is more representative, more democratic and more transparent.

Africa continues to engage in the intergovernmental negotiations with an open-door policy, aiming at correcting the historical injustice suffered by being the only continent not represented in the Security Council's permanent-member category and underrepresented in the non-permanent category. The Council remains at the centre of global governance in maintaining international peace and security. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) expressed the need to enhance the Council's representativeness, accountability and effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions, as well as the democratic nature of its decision-making process. Therefore, correcting the lingering historical injustice done to the continent becomes imperative and compelling.

To that end, we urge the wider United Nations membership to work with Africa to urgently address

this injustice. We are committed to building alliances in support of the African common position with diverse interest groups and Member States engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations, in conformity with the mandate of the Committee of 10, with a view to achieving an early reform of the Security Council. In that pursuit, member States of the African Union were called upon to include the issue of Security Council reform among the priorities of their foreign policies.

Africa's position is a continental aspiration, which we believe all Member States and other stakeholders are now very familiar with. In that regard, it is important to recall that in 1945, when the United Nations was formed, most of Africa was not represented, and when the first reform took place in 1963, Africa was represented but at the time not considered for inclusion in the permanent category. Circumstances have changed since then, and it is merely simple justice for Africa to be fully represented in all decision-making organs of the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council. Full representation of Africa in the Security Council, according to the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, means, first, acquiring no fewer than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto if it continues to exist. Secondly, we are claiming five non-permanent seats.

In the spirit of our commitment to address the issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters, we must now seek agreement on how to move forward with revision 3 of the facilitator's compiled text. Various suggestions have been made about how to proceed with the document. While the chair of the intergovernmental negotiation process had, inter alia, called for the document to be edited, some Member States continue to call for it to be streamlined or shortened and/or to merge the positions. More recently, the facilitator, in his letter of 25 July 2012, recommended, among other things, the need for genuine give-and-take based on a concise document to be drafted by him and the holding of a high-level meeting on Security Council reform to assess the state of play and propose ways to keep the process moving forward.

Thus there is, first, a need for a general agreement on what to do with the text. We have not yet reached that agreement. Secondly, we need further clarification from the facilitator regarding the content and scope of his proposed concise document. Thirdly, we need the added value of the proposed high-level meeting, because we have not reached any agreement since the 2005 World Summit, when heads of State and Government called for an early reform of the Security Council. In our view, it will therefore be more useful for the facilitator to provide further clarifications on his recommendations.

Correcting the present imbalance in the composition of the Council with a view to making it into a more legitimate organ, primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, remains the collective responsibility of all Member States. We hope that this session will build on the progress made during the last session and will increase the pace for a more frank and lively debate, one that will be more flexible, compromising and decisive and will generate the necessary political will that would lead to a speedy reform of the Security Council, in accordance with the vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit.

Allow me to conclude by thanking the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India, for his presentation of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/67/2), covering the activities of the Council for the period from 1 August 2011 to 31 July 2012. We look forward to an enhanced relationship between the Council and the General Assembly and improvement in the Council's working methods.

Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti (Brazil): We very much value the opportunity to discuss in the wider setting of the General Assembly the recent work of the Security Council and to reflect on ideas to make that body more representative, democratic and transparent.

Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, Permanent Representative of Jamaica, on behalf of the group of countries that sponsored draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1.

We are glad to note that the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2) highlights some of the efforts to increase the transparency of Council activities. Open debates, consultations with the troop- and police-contributing countries, field missions and outreach to country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission are all important attempts

to promote inclusiveness and enhance the effectiveness of the Council's decisions.

However, a more representative Security Council, aligned with current political realities, will be achieved only through a real reform of its current structure. That goal has been consistently advocated by a large majority of Member States, as the debates on the subject held during the Assembly's last session once again demonstrated. A large majority has also expressed support for an expansion of the Council in both categories of membership and for improvement of its methods of work.

Together with its partners in the Group of Four and the L.69 group, Brazil has been a staunch supporter of the intergovernmental negotiations since their inception. We reiterate our commitment to that process. The time has come, however, to begin a new phase in our talks. The new phase should be result-oriented and characterized by real and substantive negotiations. For that to happen, it is essential that a negotiating document with fewer options and a focus on ideas that have garnered broad support from Member States be prepared. A concise negotiating document is pivotal to kick-start the process and to lead us to tangible results.

In his letter dated 25 July the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, presented his assessment of the work undertaken during the last General Assembly session and conveyed recommendations that, in Brazil's view, constitute a sound basis for our future work. We commend him for that initiative. The letter provides us with a clear set of options that may allow us to move forward and seek tangible progress. In line with his proposals, we are ready to enter into real negotiations with a view to achieving a meaningful reform.

Progress in Security Council reform is long overdue. It is our hope that the intergovernmental negotiations will be resumed soon, building on the progress achieved so far, including the inputs offered by Member States and the recommendations presented by the chair. In this regard, we welcome the letter by the President of the General Assembly dated 9 November, in which he was reappointed Ambassador Tanin to continue to chair the negotiations in the plenary of the General Assembly. Brazil is ready to cooperate with Mr. Tanin in his work.

Allow me to conclude by thanking the President for his leadership of the General Assembly during the current session.

Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening this important meeting of the General Assembly regarding the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2) and the issue of Security Council reform. Allow me to extend my deepest appreciation to the membership of the General Assembly, which rendered its valuable support to the candidature of the Republic of Korea for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2013 and 2014.

The Security Council was actively engaged in tackling a great number of challenges all around the world during the reporting period. It remained the most relied-upon organ for the international community in the field of international peace and security. The Council's vigorous engagement was indispensable in enhancing peace and moving the political process forward in such places as Somalia, the Sudan and South Sudan, and Timor-Leste.

We have seen encouraging developments in Somalia, where the Council's support for the transition process, in cooperation with the African Union, has laid solid groundwork for the establishment of a legitimate Government.

The firm action by the Council, as envisaged in its unanimously adopted resolution 2046 (2012), countered the escalation of violence between the Sudan and South Sudan and enabled the negotiations on unresolved issues to make progress. The Republic of Korea, for its part, intends to contribute to stability and reconstruction in the region by sending a 300-member engineering corps to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in coming months.

In Timor-Leste, the active involvement of the United Nations in the country's efforts to achieve peace and stability since 1999 is now drawing to a successful end. We believe that such successful engagement by the international community in the form of United Nations peacekeeping operations — a peace investment that pays off, with a clear-cut exit — needs to be emulated.

The Republic of Korea also appreciates the work of the Security Council in managing the developments during the course of the Arab Spring in countries ranging from Libya to Yemen. We note the adoption of the Council resolutions regarding Libya, including 2009 (2011) and 2016 (2011), which offer a political basis for improving the security situation in the country. We also

welcome resolutions 2014 (2011) and 2051 (2012), on the political transition in Yemen.

Syria remains the biggest peace and security challenge of the day. The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about the mass killings of civilians and gross violations of human rights in Syria. We commend the efforts of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria and the Security Council-mandated United Nations Supervision Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic with a view to the implementation of the six-point proposal during the reporting period. We truly hope the Council will be able to build unity and act decisively on this tragic and long-standing issue, which has significant repercussions for regional security.

Regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, the Republic of Korea fully supports the two-State solution, a vision in which Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace and prosperity. We hope that a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the matter will be reached in the near future with the support of the international community.

Among other concerns before the international community are the challenges to the constitutional order in democracy. We are worried about the military coups that occurred in Mali and Guinea-Bissau earlier this year and welcome the firm actions by the Security Council, as shown in its resolutions 2056 (2012) and 2048 (2012), respectively. It is also worrying that the activities of armed elements destabilize the peace and stability in fragile regions, with the Mouvement du 23 mars — the M-23 — in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lord's Resistance Army in the Central African region and armed rebel groups in northern Mali being the cases in point. We hope the Security Council will remain firm and vigilant in responding to such destabilizing forces.

On the issue of non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea welcomes and supports the Council's swift adoption of the presidential statement on North Korea's launch of a long-range missile in April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/13). We particularly note that the statement strongly condemned the launch, underscored that it was a serious violation of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009), and expressed the Council's determination to take action accordingly in the event of a further launch or nuclear test by North Korea. We also take note of the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which includes the designation of additional entities subject to sanctions measures in May 2012.

On international cooperation for non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea appreciates the growing role of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), as shown in Council resolution 2055 (2012). We also welcome the presidential statement on nuclear security (S/PRST/2012/14), in April.

The Republic of Korea also values the work of the Security Council on thematic and cross-cutting issues. We welcome the Council's increasing engagement in issues concerning women and peace and security, children and armed conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding. We believe that the Council should make greater efforts in identifying the linkages between the thematic issues and country-specific situations, keeping the issues more focused and action-oriented so as to make a substantial contribution to improving the situation on the ground.

During the reporting period, the Council has undertaken notable efforts to enhance the participation of the wider membership in its work, including by increasing the number of public meetings and providing monthly briefings by its President. It should continue to strengthen such efforts towards openness and transparency.

The Council should also work on expanding its relationships and enhancing cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Cooperation with regional institutions has become all the more essential for finding appropriate solutions to crises and conflicts and for making optimal use of resources and capacities.

On the issue of Security Council reform, the Republic of Korea believes that the only plausible way to bring about a more representative, accountable, democratic and effective Council is through holding periodic elections. Periodic elections are essential in ensuring the democratic principle, which lies at the heart of the legitimacy of reforming the Council. Reform should be firmly based on a membership-driven and comprehensive approach, as stipulated in decision 62/557. We look forward to the stewardship of Ambassador Tanin as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform so that we can

achieve concrete progress during the current session of the General Assembly.

The Republic of Korea, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2013-2014, will spare no efforts in striving to enhance the accountability, transparency and efficiency of the Council.

Mr. Visconti (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to express my appreciation for the introductory statement of the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, and for his presentation of the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2). I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Colombia, who, as Council President in July, prepared that important report to the General Assembly. With his team, he has seen to it that the report reflects the Council's work in a complete and transparent manner. I also wish to thank the Secretariat, which supported that process. I take this opportunity to take note of the high quality of the Council's new website, which contains updated information in all languages on the activity of the Security Council. That is also progress that benefits the entire Organization.

The growing quality of the Council's reports to the Assembly is a demonstration of the continuing improvement of Council's working methods, to the benefit of all States Members of our Organization. In that context, France appreciates the work of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which this year, under the guidance of the Ambassador of Portugal, whom I congratulate here, has made numerous improvements possible. In particular, we support the thinking on genuine publicity for the debates, especially on issues of general interest, on dialogue with the troop-contributing countries and on a better taking into account of the fight against impunity in the Council's work.

The upcoming public debate on working methods under the Indian presidency of the Council will be an opportunity to exchange views with all States on the topic. On that occasion France will come back to the idea of the Council's permanent members jointly renouncing the use of the veto when the Council is seized with mass crimes and atrocities.

Beyond the improvement of its working methods, we know that reform of the Council's working methods is necessary. Many of us here have been saying that for 20 years now. To further reflect the reality of today's world, to more closely adapt to new challenges while remaining in a position to fully shoulder its responsibilities given the crises now threatening international peace and security, the Security Council must undergo an ambitious reform.

The process of intergovernmental negotiations headed by Ambassador Tanin has allowed us to make progress in our thinking. The eighth round of negotiations has made our debates more dynamic with respect to the initiatives presented by Member States or groups of Member States. That impetus must not be lost; the path charted by the facilitator should be explored through a collective effort of the Member States. In that spirit, France welcomes the decision of the President of the General Assembly to reappoint Ambassador Tanin as facilitator. We will need to work on the basis of the latest proposals.

France, for its part, supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both categories of membership. Our demands have not changed — reform of the Council must take into account the emergence of new Powers that have both the will and the capability to shoulder responsibility for a permanent presence in the Council and that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, are in a position to make a significant contribution to the Council's action in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is in that context that France supports a strengthened presence of African countries, including among the permanent members, as well as the candidacies of Germany, Brazil, Japan and India for permanent seats.

The reform of the Security Council must not be relegated to the background of our priorities. With the active and much-appreciated assistance of the facilitator, Ambassador Tanin, it is in the Assembly President's power to provide a decisive impetus to the discussions. France, like numerous other States in the General Assembly, stands ready to work actively to resolve impasses. France will make its contribution and provide its support as we continue our work.

Mr. AlJarallah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation extends with great pleasure its thanks and appreciation to the President of the Security Council for the current month, the Permanent Representative of India, for the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/67/2), as well as for the information on the activities of the Security Council for the past year, which indicates a noticeable increase in the Council's workload. We

are also pleased to congratulate the friendly countries that have been elected new members of the Council for 2013 and 2014: Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda.

We emphasize our support for the statement delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We welcome and appreciate Ambassador Tanin's efforts in leading the work of the intergovernmental negotiations. We hope to see in the current session tangible progress on the issue of Security Council reform and to realize the long-awaited historic achievement that meets the expectations of all of us to energize the Council and improve its performance.

It is appropriate that the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters should be one of the most important items on the Assembly's agenda at a time when there is an urgent need to take articulated, decisive positions that contribute to pushing forward the process of Security Council reform. Although there is a consensus among Member States on the principle of change and reform, we nevertheless have not yet been able to agree on the substance of the needed changes.

In that context, we emphasize the importance of requiring that any suggestions relating to the expansion and reform of the Security Council obtain general approval from all Member States. Over the 20 years that have passed since the opening of negotiations on expanding the membership of the Council and improving its methods of work, numerous initiatives and ideas have been put forward. However, the way remains obstructed. Political will is required for a convergence of views that might allow us to reach the desired goals. Repeated challenges in the international political arena should drive us to exert more pressure to improve the course of negotiations and affirm the importance of collective work.

In recent years, the State of Kuwait's position on the process of reforming the Security Council has remained consistent, based as it is on the five established points.

First, Security Council reform must be in accordance with the general perception that the process of reforming and developing all United Nations bodies should be continued with a view to greater integration and balance in the work of the Organization. Also, the process must focus on the role of the Security Council in relation to other United Nations bodies such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in order to curb the tendency to encroach on their areas of competence. The Council's role must be confined to the fulfilment of its functions as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations, in other words, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Secondly, any ideas for Security Council reform must stem from the keen interests of all Members, in order to make the Council more representative of the entire membership of the United Nations and to reflect current international realities, which have changed so much since the Organization was established in 1945.

Thirdly, it is crucial that we work on improving the Council's methods and ways of working, making them clearer and more transparent. This should include a list of formal and permanent working procedures aimed at improving and organizing the Council's working methods.

Fourthly, the right to the veto should be codified by regulating and limiting it through, for example, excluding the possibility of a veto except on matters that fall under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Fifthly, any expansion of the number of seats on the Security Council must allow smaller States increased opportunities for membership and participation in the Council's work. It must not overlook the rights of Arab and Muslim States, in accordance with their number and importance and the contribution they make to defending the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The rapidly increasing challenges that the international community is facing around the world should make us all the more determined to strengthen and revitalize the role of the Security Council so as to make it more capable and effective in meeting and overcoming those challenges and to ensure that it functions in a more representative, transparent, impartial and credible way.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank the President for this opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2). As we know, it is the only occasion on which the General Assembly can assess the Council's work in the area of peace and security.

We have before us a 275-page document that covers the Security Council's activities for the past year. We first wish to thank Colombia for its significant effort in compiling the report and the Permanent Representative

of India for his capable presentation. In that regard, we would like to encourage future Council Presidents to furnish the principal author of the report with monthly analytical assessments that can then provide input for exchanges between the Council and Member States as a whole in the framework of the report's preparation.

The President of the Council concluded his statement by inviting us to make suggestions for improving the report. I would be glad to respond to that invitation, but after reading the report and having gone over my speech from last year, I must admit that I am somewhat in the position of Senator Cato, who continued to repeat the same message over and over in the Roman Senate with the famous words "*Ceterum censeo*" — "Moreover, I think".

Moreover, I think, first, that in particular the link between the geographic and thematic contexts being dealt with could be strengthened. Such subjects as children in armed conflict, the protection of civilians, and women and peace and security are not abstract but are directly linked to specific places and regions.

My second *Ceterum censeo* refers to the lack of a systematic approach to certain cross-cutting issues. To cite one example, the Council's protection architecture presents opportunities for improvement. A study by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security — a kind of shadow report supported by Switzerland — demonstrates this shortcoming. The study also shows that such subjects become less important especially at times when there is a question of rapid intervention at a moment of crisis or deterioration — exactly when the risk of serious human rights violations is greatest.

To go back to the preparation of the report itself, we are pleased to see that discussions of structure are included and are continuing, because the report constitutes a vital element in the reform of the Security Council's working methods. In that regard, we particularly thank Portugal for its valuable work in chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We are also pleased that India is organizing an open debate on the Council's working methods on 26 November, and we urge all Member States to participate in those discussions. It will provide an excellent opportunity for all of us to go into those issues in depth and in more detail.

The report reflects a year that was particularly rich in events before the Security Council. As is always the case, there are both positive and negative points. We commend the Council's work on the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as resolution 2046 (2012), which made it possible to ensure regular monitoring of the situation there and which is an example of good cooperation with a regional organization. It is no exaggeration to say that the Security Council contributed in a substantive manner to avoiding an escalation of the conflict.

In the same way, after the coups d'état in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, the Council responded with one voice. In the Sahel region, however, much remains to be done, given the great tension there, and we therefore encourage the Council to continue to follow that situation very closely and not to give priority to a military approach over a political one.

It is important to become involved at a preliminary stage of a conflict, and that is true for every region of the world. If the Council can react early and preventively, it should do so. Horizon-scanning is an excellent tool for that purpose. The monthly survey by the Department of Political Affairs should be used systematically by every presidency of the Council.

Finally, if a conflict continues to deteriorate, as in the case of Syria, the Council, under the Charter of the United Nations, is obliged to act, particularly by halting atrocities regardless of who is committing them. I recall our firm conviction that in a situation where there are allegations of mass atrocities, the permanent members of the Council should renounce their right to the veto. I congratulate France on being willing to do that on condition that the others do the same. Here Switzerland holds to its belief that the perpetrators of such atrocities must be brought to justice. That is why my country has taken the initiative of sending a letter to the Council asking it to send the Syrian situation to the International Criminal Court, so that a Syrian criminal process that is independent, equitable and transparent process could be quickly established.

I hope that the Security Council will not merely be listening to Member States' suggestions and recommendations, but will also take their recommendations seriously into account and modify its working methods as a result. I would be pleased, during the presentation of the Council's report in 2013, to be able to abandon my role of Cato to play that of Galileo Galilei and say of the Security Council *eppur si muove* — that it has, in fact, moved.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to discuss agenda item 30, on the annual report of the Security Council (A/67/2). I am grateful for the convening of this meeting. I would also like to thank the Ambassador of India, Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, for his presentation of the report to the Assembly. Likewise, we express our thanks to all members of the Security Council for their valuable contribution and support in the task that fell to the delegation of Colombia of preparing part of the report before us. The Secretariat made a substantive contribution, as always, so we thank the staff as well.

The report gives an account of a complex period in the international context, with some situations in which internal and external factors limited Council action. The loss of human life we had to face is regrettable and deplorable. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that in several cases many other lives were saved, including where whole peoples were protected and respect for and defence of fundamental rights were promoted, while institutions were strengthened and civilians at risk were protected in countries where peace, stability and constitutional order were faltering.

The results during the reporting period show that communication and constructive deliberations are irreplaceable tools for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We are pleased that the dialogue with heads of State and high-level representatives from around the world was fluent and active, thanks to their participation in high-level Council meetings, and about the missions carried out by Council members so that the destiny of regions such as the Horn of Africa and Central Africa could be viewed with greater hope. The same can be said of the progress in democratic stability in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti and Timor-Leste, countries in which the United Nations will have to step up efforts to support their social development and institutional consolidation.

Similarly, in our opinion, consultations and understandings within the Council and beyond allowed for progress in situations such as that in Libya, which was able to begin the process of transforming institutions and ensuring a democratic future for its people. The international community will have to be attentive to supporting its requirements for strengthening its national capacities, in keeping with its sovereign decisions.

Dialogue was also developed with regard to thematic issues that figure ever more on the agenda. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the rule of law, cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, conflict prevention, children and armed conflict, the protection of civilians, women and peace and security, and peacebuilding were matters that we consider relevant in the work of the Council. In this regard, we remain convinced that we should pay attention to the criteria for the inclusion, consideration and scope of those thematic issues so that only those properly falling within the Council competence are debated by it.

As I have already mentioned, the question of unity in the Council is one and the same as the raison d'être of the Council. Without unity, paralysis prevails. We have seen how the lack of unity affects the resolution of important issues. Where progress has been made, it was thanks to unity, including when there were different opinions, which shows that this is the only way to maintain and build international peace and security when they are threatened or violated. The Council must work further in this area, in the sure knowledge that in doing so it will be able to respond more robustly to the matters on its agenda.

The question of perfecting the working methods of the Security Council is a topic we consider ever more necessary. Relations between the Council and the General Assembly and broadening their cooperation are of crucial importance not only because of the significance of the political universality that the Assembly represents but also because matters before the Council would benefit from additional perspective for their consideration and effective solution, which would lead to greater transparency and a virtuous cycle that would benefit both Member States and the Organization.

Similarly, based on our own experience, we deem it advisable that opportunities be provided for an exchange of views between the membership of the Organization and the country to which falls the responsibility to draft the Council's annual report. Colombia, convinced of the usefulness of such exchange, met on 30 July with a large number of countries in a public gathering so as to hear their suggestions, observations and comments.

The subsidiary bodies and the groups of experts require more precise regulations. They frequently encounter difficulties as a result of differing interpretations regarding applicable practices.

To close this topic, I would suggest that the Council deepen its dialogue with bodies of the system charged with promoting education, science, culture, agriculture, education, health and other concerns with a view to making its peacebuilding actions more coherent with the efforts, programmes, plans and projects being carried out by those bodies in the countries leaving the Council's agenda. In that way the recurrence of conflicts and situations that led to the involvement of the Council can be avoided.

I will now turn to agenda item 117, regarding reform of the Council.

First, let me thank the President of the General Assembly for his communication of 9 November informing us of the confirmation of Ambassador Zahir Tanin as coordinator of the intergovernmental negotiations. On behalf of my Government, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Tanin on his reappointment and to assure him and the President of our intention to work at his side and to collaborate to our fullest ability to ensure that this process maintains the momentum and energy achieved in recent years. Leadership, impartiality and neutrality are qualities of fundamental importance for building confidence among members and ensuring that consultations are productive throughout the process.

The Government of Colombia assigns the greatest importance to the process of Security Council reform. For several years we have joined forces with a representative group of countries from all continents having a common goal: to ensure that any modifications to the Charter of the United Nations relating to the composition and functioning of the Security Council are the product of general consensus acceptable to each and every State. Members of the Uniting for Consensus group have declared that we will work tirelessly to achieve a general agreement, which is the only way to achieve a reform that would be satisfactory to the international community as a whole. As a member of the group, Colombia has a well-known position: we advocate the continuation of the process of intergovernmental negotiations on the basis of the consensus achieved in 2008, as reflected in decision 62/557.

Experience has shown that reform must be comprehensive, transparent, balanced and equitable and that it must reflect the interests and needs of all Member States. Developing States must be better represented in the Security Council. In particular, the Uniting for Consensus group has acknowledged on several occasions that Africa has a legitimate aspiration to seek a more just representation in the Council. The group has also shown considerable flexibility and has repeatedly stated that it is open to accepting compromise solutions. For that reason, following the discussion held over the past year in the intergovernmental negotiating process, the members of Uniting for Consensus are moving forward with an internal discussion that seeks to consider and evaluate the comments made by various delegations on our model for reform.

On the other hand, the composition and categories of membership are only some of the elements covered in decision 62/557, which is a package deal, to which we attach the greatest importance. We therefore oppose attempts to prioritize one or several of those elements to the detriment of others as part of initiatives that, while they may have been inspired by selfless motivations, represent in practice an abandonment of a previously reached consensus.

We believe that in the current circumstances, it would be a step in the right direction for Member States to discuss and agree, under the guidance of the Coordinator, on a calendar of work that would allow us to make progress in the process in a clear and transparent way. In our capacity as a member of Uniting for Consensus, Colombia stands ready to participate fully in that process.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I would like to join my colleagues in thanking Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri of India for having introduced the report of the Security Council (A/67/2) and Ambassador Néstor Osorio of Colombia and his team for having compiled the report presented today. Having completed the same task last year as Security Council President in July, I can attest to the arduous work that it entails.

Of the numerous issues on the Council's agenda over the past year, the situation in Syria stands out. Unfortunately, it does so because of what the Council did not do, rather than what it did. We deplore the Council's failure to agree on an effective common approach. That has further aggravated the plight of the Syrian people and it led many in the international community and our respective peoples to ask whether the Security Council in its current form is still able to live up to the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

That has also added to the already growing frustration among Member States due to the deadlock on Council reform. Last year, in the General Assembly, even partial, modest progress was made impossible on the improvement of the Council's working methods, which is something we sincerely deplore. Against that background, we would have preferred two separate debates to be have been held, on the annual report and on Security Council reform, respectively, given that both issues deserve the undivided attention of the General Assembly.

On 9 October, the Ambassadors of the Group of Four (G-4) transmitted to the President of the General Assembly a letter containing the joint statement made by the G-4 Foreign Ministers on the margins of the general debate. The letter was also shared with all Member States. I therefore do not need to repeat its content in detail. Let me reiterate, however, the dedication of the G-4 Foreign Ministers to achieving together an early reform of the Security Council. The Ministers also called for a concrete outcome at the present session of the General Assembly and expressed their commitment to continue to work towards that end in a spirit of flexibility and in close cooperation with other Member States. Germany, individually and as part of the G-4, stands ready to continue our engagement with the President of the General Assembly, The chair, Ambassador Tanin, and Member States.

The strong support for genuine reform of the Council — which is what the G-4 stands for — was again evident during the last round of negotiations. The majority of the delegations that took the floor — from small and large countries, from the developing and the developed world — clearly called for an expansion of the Council in both categories, the permanent and the non-permanent.

We look forward to the resumption of the intergovernmental negotiations as soon as possible. We welcome the decision to reappoint Ambassador Tanin as chair. We are confident that he will continue to steer the process forward in an objective and results-oriented manner.

The agenda for the negotiations is clear. The chair has submitted his assessment of the process to date together with a set of constructive proposals on how to move the process forward. The proposals were circulated by the preceding President of the General Assembly to all Member States and were acknowledged by the General Assembly in its oral decision in September (see A/66/PV.129). They are now on the table and form an integral part of the negotiation process. Let us begin discussing those proposals and see how we can best make them operational. We are confident that that will help us to finally move towards real negotiations on this important matter.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened the present plenary meeting to discuss Security Council reform, combined with the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/67/2). Japan highly appreciates the fact that the President of the General Assembly has identified United Nations reform, which includes Security Council reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly, as one of his priorities during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I would also like to commend his reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin as the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We sincerely hope that the President of the General Assembly and Ambassador Tanin, as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, will exercise legitimate leadership in guiding us to promote substantive and meaningful discussions among Member States.

No one doubts the necessity of Security Council reform. Various efforts have been made to make the Security Council more representative, legitimate and effective. It is regrettable, however, that the issue has not seen much progress over the decades. Let us recall that the 2005 World Summit and its Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) set Member States the task of realizing early reform of the Security Council. Yet, seven years on from the World Summit, we have failed to achieve any reform of the Security Council at all. In that regard, Japan would like to remind every Member State that we have a collective responsibility to translate our political leaders' commitment into concrete Security Council reform.

The present intergovernmental negotiation process has been ongoing for nearly four years, and we have exhausted every conceivable discussion pertaining to items on the agenda. Thanks to Ambassador Tanin's leadership during the last round of negotiations, we have already acquired a clear and deep understanding of each group's position on this issue. And we must note that an overwhelming majority of Member States voiced support for the expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership, the permanent and the non-permanent. Now is the time for all Member States

to intensify the negotiations with a view to achieving a concrete outcome in the next round — the ninth — of the intergovernmental negotiations.

At the closing of sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, we Member States decised to roll over the issue to the current session (see A/66/PV.129), while taking note of the recommendations by the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, contained in his letter of 25 July. In that regard, Japan believes that in order to have a meaningful and constructive negotiation in the next round of intergovernmental negotiations, it is important for the negotiation to be conducted in line with the recommendations. Japan duly acknowledges those recommendations as "reflections" of the chair, who has guided the process forward over the past four years. In particular, Japan believes that one of his recommendations — the drafting of a concise working document — should be carried out as a crucial step to move the process forward to realizing the reform. To that end, Japan requests all Member States to engage in that important task. Of course, Japan is fully committed to contributing to that collective work.

Japan's commitment has also been demonstrated as part of the collective political will of the reform-oriented and results-driven Group of Four (G-4). The G-4 Foreign Ministers met in New York on 25 September and reiterated their determination to work in close cooperation and in a spirit of flexibility with other Member States on genuine text-based negotiations. The Ministers also expressed their determination to inject greater political momentum into the process, including with a view to holding a high-level meeting on Security Council reform, as stated in the recommendations of the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Tanin. Japan is of the view that such a meeting should take place in 2013, thereby commemorating the fifth anniversary of the intergovernmental negotiation process.

I shall now turn to another agenda item, namely, the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri of India, President of the Security Council this month, for his presentation of the report, as well as to Ambassador Néstor Osorio of Colombia and his staff for their work in preparing the report. Japan reiterates the importance of the annual report being improved and submitted to the General Assembly, in keeping with presidential note S/2010/507. We call for the relevant provisions of the note to be followed accordingly. We believe that the report not only strengthens relations between these two important organs of the United Nations but also plays an important role in ensuring the accountability and transparency of the Council. That obviously pertains to improving the working methods of the Security Council, which is one of the five clusters of Council reform. In that regard, Japan welcomes the holding of the debate in the General Assembly today and the informal consultative meeting with non-members of the Security Council on this matter on 30 July.

With regard to the contents of the annual report, Japan considers it comprehensive and descriptive. It comprises regional issues as well as thematic issues, such as post-conflict peacebuilding, children and armed conflict and some legal issues. It also contains information from other meetings, such as informal interactive dialogues with non-members, other United Nations organs and regional organizations. Japan commends the format and description of the report, which enhance the clarity of the Council's work in the report and will eventually further improve the transparency of the Council. We would have hoped to see the inclusion in the report of greater background information on the events on which the Council worked. We hope that continued efforts will be made to strengthen the substantive aspects of the report, including by improving the monthly assessments that form the basis of the introduction. At the same time, more efforts are needed to make the report even more concise.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate once again Japan's firm commitment to exert all efforts to achieve a concrete reform outcome during the present session, working in close cooperation with the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Tanin and all Member States. I would also like to request that members of the Security Council continue their efforts in ensuring accountability, transparency and effectiveness in the Council's work. In that regard, we commend the contribution made by Portugal during the past year as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): Thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to make a short statement on behalf of the Kingdom of Belgium and the Kingdom of the Netherlands on the question of Security Council reform.

First of all, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for his decision to reappoint Ambassador Tanin as chair of the intergovernmental negotiation process. Belgium and the Netherlands applaud that decision and will fully support Ambassador Tanin in his continuing efforts to take the discussion to the next level, both on process and on content. We call upon the membership to adopt the same attitude.

In its meeting of 13 September (see A/66/PV.129), the General Assembly took an important step by prolonging the mandate of the open-ended working group, in particular by taking note of the proposals of the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. In particular, we would like to highlight Ambassador Tanin's recommendation to take what he called the next logical step by having a genuine give-and-take based on a concise working document. Ambassador Tanin also recommended that such a working document should be drafted by the chair, on the basis of consultations with Member States, in keeping with the membership-driven character of the process. From the perspective of Belgium and the Netherlands, that recommendation could be a sound basis for our further work and mark the beginning of the next phase of the negotiations.

Belgium and the Netherlands are both committed to continue to support further discussion where and when possible, to keep up the momentum that has been generated, and to assist the membership to reach concrete results at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Our position is not based on the wish to achieve a specific national objective or defend a specific national interest. What drives us is the goal of an effective, modernized and more legitimate Security Council that reflects the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century, which in turn would also contribute to a more credible United Nations and a strengthened international system.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is pleased to make a statement in this annual joint debate on the Security Council report and the question of Security Council reform. We are grateful for the efforts of our Colombian colleagues, who so meticulously compiled this year's report (A/67/2), as well as for Ambassador Singh Puri's introduction.

The Assembly has heard from the President of the Security Council some of the achievements of the Council in the past year: supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia and helping Somalia back onto its feet; working with the African Union to encourage the Sudan and South Sudan to come to the negotiating table; and ensuring that the people of Timor-Leste can build sustainable peace. The Assembly has also heard of some of its failures this year, foremost among which is Syria. The failure of the Security Council to take firm action to end the violence in Syria underlines the crucial importance of ensuring that the Council not only represents the modern world but is able and willing to fulfil its core task of maintaining the world's peace and security.

The United Kingdom expresses its gratitude to Ambassador Tanin for his tireless efforts to steer the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform over the past year. We welcome his reappointment as chair. We appreciate his commitment to working with all Member States to make progress. While it is clear that there is not yet sufficient consensus on this issue, we are ready to continue working in the coming months to find elements upon which wider agreement might be found.

Member States will need to approach that task in a spirit of compromise. Security Council reform is a difficult and complex issue. We are all well aware of the many competing and strongly held views of different Member States. But we believe that there is sufficient common ground on the fundamental need for reform for us to be able to move forward in the intergovernmental negotiations.

The United Kingdom's position on Security Council reform is well known. We continue to support permanent membership for Brazil, India, Germany and Japan and permanent African representation. At the same time, it is our firm view that reform must not reduce the Council's ability to act decisively when called upon to address threats to international peace and security.

While we have our own view of what Security Council reform should look like, we are open to exploring the ideas of other Member States, if there is the possibility of taking a step in the right direction. We must all remain ready to seize opportunities to achieve consensus. The United Kingdom is willing to work constructively with those who believe that progress is possible.

The United Kingdom believes that the Council needs to operate in a manner that is as transparent, open and

as effective as possible, which is why we continue to be at the forefront of efforts to improve Council working methods. We actively encourage greater interaction between Council members during consultations and support the greater use of technology and social media, both to improve the efficiency of what the Council does and to open up its workings to a wider global audience.

We shall continue to be unequivocal supporters of Security Council reform. I hope that, during the present session of the General Assembly, we find the collective will to make some progress.

Mr. Ulibarri (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the Ambassador of India and President of the Security Council for introducing the Council's annual report to the General Assembly (A/67/2). We also commend Colombia for its excellent work in writing the introduction and compiling the report. We note the Security Council's efforts to present a more concise document with certain analytical elements. We encourage further progress along those lines. We also commend the fact that Ambassador Zahir Tanin continues to lead the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Costa Rica renews its commitment to working towards and making a constructive contribution to that process.

Throughout the world, transparency and accountability are increasingly becoming more than mere aspirations. In a positive development, they have become imperatives, not only for States but also for corporations, non-governmental organizations and the international community that is gathered here today. In honour of that ideal of transparency and in the interest of the effectiveness and representativeness of the Organization, the balance of power between the General Assembly and the Security Council needs, now more than ever, to be restored, as enshrined in the Charter.

According to the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all of the Member States and has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It is therefore obvious that the Council must inform the Assembly in a timely manner of its actions, or lack thereof, so that all Member States have the chance to exercise the necessary control and, should the need arise, take any corrective measures called for.

That is why it is important that the annual reports of the Council not be limited to retrospective accounts of actions taken, as is the case with the document that we have before us today. Such documents should be more analytical, and they should include projections. They should take a more self-critical stance, and they should include an assessment of the effectiveness of measures taken by the Council and the positions taken by its members in adopting them, as well as lessons learned, challenges and possible future strategies. In other words, they should transmit a larger, more transparent and more useful exercise in accountability.

To that effect, we call for the Security Council to present special reports to the General Assembly, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter, each time the Council decides to establish a new peacekeeping operation, substantially modifies an operation's mandate or creates a new set of sanctions. We also believe that the Security Council should present a report to the General Assembly each time a resolution is vetoed and that the permanent members that exercised the veto should explain to the entire membership the reasons behind their decision.

That last point is particularly relevant in the current global political climate, in which the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law is paramount to maintaining international peace and security, as was evident in the Security Council's debate of 17 October (see S/PV.6849). In the era of information and accountability, we must strive to garner the necessary political willingness to achieve fluid, efficient and comprehensive communication among all of the actors in the United Nations. The legitimacy and effectiveness of the multilateral system depends in large part on such communication.

Security Council reform should be an opportunity to transform the United Nations into a more effective and representative Organization. Reform should drive sound and balanced decisions, in which we can all feel that we are the partners and sponsors. Reform should strive to improve the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively and legitimately to threats to international peace and security. It cannot and should not be a mechanism for favouring some States over others that are equally sovereign. It should be an exercise in flexibility, commitment and the search for improved representativeness. For that reason, we do not consider it appropriate to increase the number of permanent members. We lean towards an increase in

the non-permanent category, with longer terms and the possibility of re-election. That is, in essence, the position of the Uniting for Consensus group, to which we belong.

For Costa Rica, reform should also include regulation, limitation and the eventual elimination of the veto power — a privilege that has often paralysed the Council and has contributed substantially to undermining its legitimacy, especially in cases involving heinous crimes against humanity. We note and welcome the growing awareness in the international community with regard to that subject.

Costa Rica also considers it indispensable to permanently improve the Security Council's working methods. Such a procedural improvement should not be conditional on a comprehensive reform. On the contrary, such improvement should be a constant responsibility, above all the reponsibility of the five permanent Council members but also of its elected members and all States Members of the United Nations.

More frequent and higher-quality reports, improved transparency, timely accountability, more equal distribution of internal responsibilities and basic limits on the use of the veto are among the improvements in working methods that should be relentlessly pursued. In our national capacity, as a member of the group of five small nations and in partnership with other Member States, we will continue to work constructively towards those goals.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The question of Security Council reform is central to the general reform agenda of our global Organization. That particular reform deals with one of Organization's principal bodies, which, according to the Charter, bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The decision taken in the matter will, to a great extent, determine the effectiveness of the work of both the Council and the United Nations as a whole for the foreseeable future.

Discussions on that extraordinarily sensitive issue have been taking place within an extremely complex and difficult framework. During the eight rounds of intergovernmental negotiations so far it has been possible to make some progress, but a universal decision that would satisfy all or at least the majority of Member States is, so far, not in sight. Russia favours making the Security Council more representative. However, efforts towards that end must not impede the ability of the Council to respond effectively and quickly to challenges as they arise. That is particularly relevant now, when we are witnessing an increase in conflict situations. It is obvious that, unless we preserve the compact nature of the Council, it will not be possible to guarantee the speed of its reactions. The membership of that body should not exceed slightly more than 20 members.

We favour further improvement of the working methods of the Security Council. We maintain our fundamental position, namely, that the Council is the master of its own working methods. We are convinced that work on this matter must be carried out in an atmosphere of transparency, taking into account the views of Member States and with the understanding that a reasonable balance must be maintained between transparency and effectiveness. Attempts to dismantle the reform package reflected in decision 62/557 are inadmissible. In any case, our priority is to enhance the ability of the Security Council to implement its prerogatives under the Charter in the maintenance of international peace and security.

For us, ideas that seek to impinge on the prerogatives of the present permanent members of the Security Council, including the historical institution of the veto, are unacceptable. It should be recalled that that mechanism is a most important instrument and a stimulus for Council members in their search for balanced decisions. Encroaching on that right would be an extremely rash step.

We support initiatives to step up the interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We should not pull too tightly on the cord that links those two major organs, but rather focus on the areas in which real cooperation between them is not only possible, but indispensable. There are quite a few such areas. For example, let us take such relevant issues today as enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding. There is room there for joint activity and for taking decisions in the sphere of mediation to deal with problems facing the United Nations. The Security Council and the General Assembly can both make substantive contributions in that regard. The most important thing is for the cooperation between them to be conducted on the basis of respect for their existing prerogatives. To a great extent, that will determine the success of the reform.

We are convinced that the question of Security Council reform cannot be resolved arithmetically simply by putting various models to a vote subject to the minimum required two-thirds vote of the members of the General Assembly. A result achieved that way would hardly enhance the authority of the Security Council and would not serve to strengthen the world Organization. We also have doubts regarding the practice of establishing specific groups of States or associations of countries that try at any cost to expand their base of support for initiatives that they have put forward or, even more dangerously, to artificially force their implementation.

In that regard, we fully support what has been said here many times from this rostrum, namely, that the formula for Security Council reform must enjoy maximally broad support from the Members of the Organization. If it is not possible to achieve consensus here, then in any case it is politically imperative to guarantee the support of a significantly larger number of Member States than the legally required two-thirds majority of votes in the General Assembly.

We are ready to consider any reasonable option for expanding the membership of the Security Council. We cannot fail to recognize the existence of strong claims to permanent seats in the Security Council, but their number, as announced so far, already exceeds the maximum possible seats that have been proposed during the intergovernmental negotiations. What is also unclear is the algorithm for determining the number of specific possible permanent member countries in the event that a significant decision is adopted on the expansion of members of the Council in both categories. A solution to such a difficult headache could be, in our view, an interim compromise decision, which could satisfy the ambitions of the influential members of the international community who are trying to play a more active role in the Security Council and would not lead to a split in the General Assembly.

In any case, the most important thing is for the decision to be based on the broadest possible agreement within the United Nations. In the light of the above, we believe it would be useful to devote the next round of intergovernmental negotiations to a comparative analysis of the advantages of the basic formulas for Council reform and also to the problems linked to them. That would assist us in having a clearer view of all of the consequences of the implementation of the various models of reform.

So far, the course of the negotiations so far does not make it possible to say that we have come closer to working out a universal formula for Security Council reform that might enjoy maximum broad support. We see no alternative to continuing the painstaking work of bringing the negotiating parties closer together. We believe that the efforts of the President of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and the coordinator of the negotiations, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, will provide assistance in the negotiations, on the understanding that ownership of that process remains with the Member States themselves. We are convinced that the work must be conducted in a calm, transparent and inclusive manner, without imposing any kind of artificial time frames.

In conclusion, I would like, once again, to emphasize that progress and reform of the Security Council hinges solely on the political will of Member States and their readiness to achieve a reasonable compromise.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein): Our collective failure to reform the Security Council is the single biggest piece of unfinished business. We have established a Human Rights Council and made it, over time, into the effective body it is today. We have created a Peacebuilding Commission, which, in spite of its weaknesses, fills a gap that existed in the institutional architecture of the United Nations. We have even made significant progress with respect to the implementation of the responsibility to protect, much as there is left to do in that regard. On Security Council reform, however, tangible progress remains elusive, let alone the comprehensive reform that we all agreed on over seven years ago.

Nobody underestimates the magnitude of the challenge we are facing, and there are good explanations as to why we have so far been unsuccessful. But the moment has long arrived when we have to ask ourselves whether we are indeed trying or just pretending to try. Most of the time, the latter seems the case, and we then must wonder whom we are trying to fool. We, as Member States, certainly know full well that the current process is not a genuine negotiation that can lead to a result. And, in fact, we all know that consensus with respect to Council reform can only mean very strong majorities that are also conducive to implementing the results — in the case of enlargement, a ratification process — but not necessarily unanimity. Let us face reality. For some — for too many, indeed — the commitment to reform has essentially been lip service. The discussions on draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2,

which we submitted last session (see A/66/PV.50) together with Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore and Switzerland, starkly illustrated that fact.

We hope that this session will bring about different approaches and bolder attempts to advance the discussions. That would entail a more in-depth exploration of what has been called the intermediate model. As is well known, we put one such model forward ourselves, but given that some quite different notions have also been included under that heading, we have given it a new name that makes clear what the model actually is. It is an enlargement model that would create a new category of seats: long-term, renewable seats. States could thus serve de facto permanently on the Council, if re-elected, without the power of the veto. Six such new seats would be added, either combined with a number of new non-permanent seats or not, which would bring the total number of Council members to 21. That new composition would be subject to a review after 20 years, which would include questions such as the creation of new permanent seats, the exercise of the veto and other key aspects of the Council's work. That enlargement model has been on the table for quite some time, and we would be happy to engage in a substantive discussion on its parameters and in particular to compare it with other models that are currently presented as intermediate.

As important as enlargement is, there can clearly be no genuine reform of the Council without measures to make its work more transparent, accountable and legitimate. The consensus at the 2005 World Summit confirmed that understanding and gave all of us ownership over it. But we have failed to live up to that commitment. The two presidential notes adopted by the Council under the reference number 507 (S/2006/507 and S/2010/507) are a disappointing record of progress, in particular as the limited measures in those two documents have been inconsistently implemented and, depending on who dictates the flavour of the month in the Council, at times ignored. The circumstances under which the group of five small nations had to withdraw draft resolution A/66/L.42/Rev.2 at the last session of the Assembly speaks volumes about the lack of accountability that the draft resolution was trying to address. We are grateful for the strong support we were given in that effort and are committed to continuing our work to that end. Working methods are as important as enlargement, probably even more so, in order to genuinely make the Security Council a better organ.

What is more, we strongly believe that reform of the working methods is indispensable if there is to be an agreement on any possible enlargement model. There is not even a remote possibility of creating new veto powers — and Liechtenstein would not support such a proposal — or of eliminating the existing vetoes. In such a situation, at the least a very modest agreement on the use of the veto will be indispensable in order to move the enlargement effort forward. Ideally, that would precede an agreement on enlargement. Changes in the current practice of the use of the veto are an urgent imperative, as we have been reminded all too often in recent months.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): We commend the President of the Security Council for the month of November, Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India, for presenting the annual report of the Council (A/67/2) and the delegation of Colombia, under the leadership of Ambassador Néstor Osorio, for preparing it.

In October 2010, the General Assembly elected and mandated South Africa to serve as an elected member of the Security Council. Cognizant of the high responsibility that had been bestowed upon us, we have carried out that honourable task. As our term on the Security Council draws to an end, we come here today to report to the Member States that elected us to that body and to account and reflect on our contribution to and assessment of the work of the Security Council.

As an elected member of the Security Council, my delegation was acutely aware of the limitations that come with being a non-permanent member of that body, but we were determined to play a meaningful and active role in its affairs. In our experience, elected members of the Council are confronted by numerous constraints that result from the dominance, in the current configuration, of the non-elected permanent members. That dominance is experienced at the very start of one's tenure, when the five permanent members allocate the chairmanships of subsidiary bodies without themselves chairing any and with little or no consultation with the members concerned. It further permeates the daily work of the Council, as three of the permanent members are the penholders on almost every country-specific mandate on the Council's agenda. In addition, the resolutions or decisions of the Council are often drafted in small groups and presented as a fait accompli to the elected members. We support broad

consultation by the Council, but its decisions should be open to debate among all its members.

Despite those limitations, we believe that we have delivered on the mandate given to us by that body, our subregion, the Southern African Development Community, and the African continent. South Africa used its comparative advantage, derived from our experience during our first tenure on the Council and our history of having been on the Council's agenda. In addition, our active work in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding on the continent of Africa and beyond has equipped us to participate actively in the deliberations of the Council. We maintain that elected members often come to the Council with the necessary expertise and knowledge to provide benefits to its work.

The annual report of the Security Council before us indicates the many areas where the Council remains engaged in resolving conflicts all over the world, particularly in Africa. The transitions from conflict to peace in countries such as Somalia, the Sudan and Timor-Leste are testimony to what the Security Council can achieve when it assumes its Charter responsibilities. We are pleased that, during the reporting period, the Council has also stimulated constructive debates on key global issues, such as peacebuilding, the protection of civilians, women, peace and security, and children and armed conflict.

South Africa is particularly pleased with the enhanced strategic cooperation between the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) and the Security Council. In that regard, South Africa piloted the adoption of resolution 2033 (2012), which was adopted during its presidency of the Security Council in January of this year and builds on resolution 1809 (2008), which was adopted during its presidency in April 2008. The aims of those resolutions are to promote greater strategic coordination between the two bodies, to secure predictable and sustainable funding for AU peacekeeping operations and to support post-conflict reconstruction and development on the continent.

The positive impact of that strategic coordination is evidenced by the subsequent adoption of resolution 2046 (2012) on the Sudan and South Sudan, in which the AU Peace and Security Council road map for dealing with the outstanding Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and post-secession issues was endorsed by the Security Council. The ongoing consultations between the Council and the AU High-level Implementation Panel, which is playing a leadership role in resolving post-CPA issues, continue to benefit the Council as it addresses those matters. That strategic coordination was rewarded when the two parties, which were almost on the brink of war, signed a cooperation agreement on 27 September that dealt with all outstanding issues.

With regard to Somalia, we recall the meeting of the Security Council on 11 January, under South Africa's presidency of the Council, in which the President of the AU Peace and Security Council participated, as well as States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, culminating in the adoption of resolution 2036 (2012), which authorized an increase in the troop levels of the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). That landmark resolution and the increase in AMISOM's troop levels severely disrupted Al-Shabaab, thus creating a security environment conducive to ending the political transition phase in Somalia and culminating in the recent election of the new President and Cabinet.

South Africa is pleased that the annual consultations between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council have become more structured and effective. In that regard, we are of the view that greater strategic coordination between the United Nations and the AU will enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council in addressing challenges to peace and security on the continent of Africa. We are confident that that continued cooperation and unity between the two Councils could be of immense benefit in addressing the challenges that we face in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and the wider Sahel region.

Despite those positive developments, my delegation remains concerned about the tendency in certain cases where the Security Council is selective in picking those elements of decisions taken by regional organizations that advance the national interest of some members. Such selectivity and double standards were visibly demonstrated when the AU's road map for Libya was undermined and ignored by the implementers of resolution 1973 (2011). Furthermore, the views of the League of Arab States on the Palestinian question have been conveniently ignored, while its views on Libya and Syria have been fully endorsed. It is important that the principle of subsidiarity be respected, if we are to establish better synergies in enhancing cooperation, especially on the African continent. We therefore call for greater consistency on the part of the Council in engaging with regional bodies.

We remain concerned that the Security Council has not succeeded in bringing about any positive change in the situation between Israel and Palestine. The failure of the Council to find a lasting solution to that crisis has denied the hopes of millions of Palestinians and Israelis. We also regret that the Council has delegated its responsibility to the Quartet, which has been moribund in its handling of that issue. South Africa is most disappointed that the Security Council could not reach consensus on supporting Palestine's bid for membership of the General Assembly or on visiting Palestine. In our view, the Council's failure to act on that matter contributes to the continued instability in the region, thereby giving rise to the tragic events of the past few days in Gaza that we all have witnessed.

We remain convinced that the credibility of the Security Council will continue to be challenged as long as the human rights of Palestinians and the people of the Western Sahara are ignored, which has been the case for decades. That harms the credibility of the Council as a guardian of international peace and security.

The past year has seen more improvement of the working methods of the Council. An encouraging development has been the use of informal interactive dialogues, which has allowed the Council to interact informally with individual Member States, the Peacebuilding Commission and subregional and regional organizations. A further improvement in the Council's working methods can be seen in the fact that elected members have been designated to serve as penholders, as with Germany on Afghanistan and South Africa on Timor-Leste, and have also become leaders or co-leaders during Security Council missions to countries on the Council's agenda. Under Portugal's able chairmanship, the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has actively promoted greater transparency and efficiency in the Council's work. Addressing such issues — penholders, the chairing of subsidiary bodies, the preparation of the annual report and monthly assessments — has led to modest but meaningful steps towards improving the Council's work.

We welcome such positive developments and encourage the Security Council to defend the significant advances made and to pursue further improvements. However, we reiterate the view that cosmetic changes to the working methods are not an adequate response to the need for fundamental reform of the Council and expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories.

Reform of the Security Council remains one of the most urgent challenges facing the United Nations today. We welcome the President's promise to assist Member States in working towards the revitalization of the General Assembly, including through the reform process. We hope that reform process will not be treated as merely one of many issues for consideration but that it will be seen in the way that the vast majority of Member States see it, namely, a priority whose urgency cannot be overstated. We wish to express our pleasure at the reappointment of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations. We have confidence in his leadership, and we assure him and the President of the Assembly of our full support as we try to make progress in the negotiations.

After many a high and low, we find ourselves today in need of a breakthrough in order to recapture the momentum of 2009 and reinvigorate the intergovernmental negotiations. My delegation is concerned about the fact that, since the launch of intergovernmental negotiations in February 2009, we have relapsed into the open-ended working group mode of restating positions. We are convinced that the current text before us, while a useful reference document for the positions of Member States and groups of States, cannot help nudge us towards concrete results. What is needed is a process or initiative that can lead towards convergence. We believe that the various exchanges in the eighth round of negotiations have highlighted areas where convergences and compromises may lie, and that, in the main, the majority of States and groups of States are calling for expansion in both categories. The African Group and the group associated with draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.2, to which we belong, share that view.

The call for expansion in both categories is based on our belief that the fundamental objective of the reform is to ensure that the Council, consistent with the Charter values of universalism, collective responsibility, fairness and equity, is broadly representative and reflects the current state of world affairs. Those values would be inconsistent with a Security Council in which Africa remained unrepresented in the permanent category. In that regard, we call on the facilitator to produce a shorter text based on the positions of the overwhelming majority of Member States. We would encourage the

facilitator to be guided, in producing that text, by his own assessment that expansion in both categories enjoys the support of the majority of Member States.

Discussions on the reform of the Security Council have gone on much too long. Now is the time to show that we are all committed to giving effect to the call of our leaders in the 2005 World Summit final document (resolution 60/1) for fundamental reform. It is our collective responsibility to conclude those negotiations in a just and expeditious manner.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I would like to express my appreciation to the President for convening today's meeting to further elaborate on and take stock of what we have achieved in the eight rounds of discussions on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Malaysia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I would like to limit my statement to discussing the issue of reform of the Security Council, which appears as agenda item 117 in the Assembly's programme of work.

We term the discussions a negotiating process, but we all know that what we are dealing with are not negotiations as we normally conduct them at the United Nations. No negotiations have actually been carried out. We have had statement-reading sessions, but hardly constitutes a negotiating process. We nonetheless continue to meet, although deep down we may quietly admit that the process is substantially where it was 20 years ago. The eight meetings we have had on the issues of the Security Council's working methods and its expansion have brought us no closer to a reformed Council. In some ways, in fact, we have drifted further apart than we were 20 years ago. We have groups and Member States that have openly stated that they want the Council to be expanded and its working methods improved, but we now see bilateral and regional rivalries coming into play. We cannot even agree on what an expanded Security Council should look like.

That was evident last year, when a draft resolution of one operative paragraph that sought to expand the membership of the Security Council, a subject on which all Member States claimed to agree, did not even see the light of day in the Assembly (A/66/L.42/Rev.2). The whole thing has become a zero-sum game. The opinion seems to be: "If I cannot make it into the Council, that other Member State should not be allowed to become a permanent member". I hear subtle voices saying, in effect, "Let us prolong these discussions without reaching any decision, as I stand to lose if country X becomes a permanent member". Then we hear the same voices asking why the reform process is slow. I am amazed and puzzled.

Most Member States profess to want a more transparent, inclusive and engaging Security Council. Almost all present here today would agree that the veto power is, without a doubt, undemocratic and morally unjustified. The irony is that, while we claim to be champions of democracy worldwide, some of us prefer an authoritarian model when it comes to the work of the Security Council. We have also heard suggestions that, while the veto is bad, new permanent members should not be denied the right to such powers. We have heard a lot of hype about improving the Council's working methods, but when we met in this Hall last May, we were told that the draft resolution on the subject had been withdrawn (see A/66/PV.108).

Let us ask ourselves: Are we really serious about wanting Security Council reform, or do we just want to seem politically correct, which is why we continue to mislead the world by claiming that we want reform of that important organ of the United Nations? It is time for us to re-examine our real intentions and to work positively to help the process move forward. In that connection, for example, while we complain that the United Nations asks too much from Member States for the financing of its operations, we, the Member States, are sometimes to blame for higher operational costs. The 20-year discussion of Security Council reform, to which there seems to be no end, is a clear example of how we have contributed to an increase in United Nations operating costs.

Where do we go from here? We can continue to pretend that we are in a negotiating process. We can meet once every two or three months to read statements prepared only so as to announce our individual views, and in the process we might ridicule the ideas of other parties. We can continue to take an all-or-nothing approach, as has been done for 20 years. We can also continue to intimidate smaller countries in the discussions and then to claim that all Member States have equal rights in this most democratic Assembly. To be politically correct, we should also continue telling the world that we want to reform the Security Council, even though deep down we know that is not what we actually want, and that we will take every possible step — political, legal and technical — to stall the

whole process and then blame other parties for their being inflexible.

By the way, the word "flexibility" has taken on a new meaning in our discussions. It effectively means: "You should agree with what I said and abandon your position". We can all agree that such shortcomings are making it much more difficult for any forward motion in the process to be achieved by Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. While I mention him, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Tanin on his reappointment as chair.

In closing, I reiterate that we should start genuine negotiations, with a workable text and reasonable timelines for the process to conclude. We have tried compilation texts in the past. That did not get us anywhere. It is time for all of us — especially the majority of members who currently have little or no say at all in matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security — to drop the all-or-nothing approach, and to not only talk about flexibility but prove that we possess it. Those of us who are part of that majority stand to lose in the current stalemate. We can continue in what is a political charade of the highest order, or we can choose to start real negotiations, with a reasonable timeline for their conclusion. Until such time, we have only ourselves to blame for our inability to play a more meaningful role in the work of the Security Council.

Malaysia sincerely hopes that we will achieve some progress as we continue to deliberate on that important issue during the current session of the General Assembly. Otherwise, we will just keep repeating ourselves.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.