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General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

30th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 15 October 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan . . . . . (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Miss Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 11 and 40 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/57/2 and A/57/2/Corr.1)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters: report of the Open-ended Working Group

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): Let me begin by joining all those who have spoken before me in condemning the recent terrorist attack in Bali, extending to the Government and people of Indonesia my delegation's condolences on the extensive loss they suffered. That sad incident further underscores the urgency of the United Nations developing realistic approaches to combating terrorism throughout the world. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee has made an impressive start. My delegation urges that it continue to fine-tune its perspectives and actions on the war against terrorism.

My delegation appreciates the completeness with which the report of the Security Council has been delivered. The achievements in the period under review have been many and impressive — a testimony to the hard work, focus and determination on the part of all members of the Council.

My delegation notes with much satisfaction the impressive achievements registered in the Council's efforts to put out the fires of war. Sierra Leone has fully resolved the conflict that engulfed its territory for a whole decade and has successfully transformed the main militia, the Revolutionary United Front, into a political party, which participated fully in the recently-held multiparty parliamentary and presidential elections. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a significant breakthrough was achieved when Rwanda and Uganda entered into an agreement with the Democratic Republic of the Congo to withdraw their troops. Other protagonists in the conflict there have also undertaken to do the same. In Angola, the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), which waged a relentless war against the Government for several decades, has formally agreed to lay down its arms and to pursue its objectives politically. In the Sudan, the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army have signed and are implementing the Machacos Protocol, heralding a process that will hopefully lead to lasting and durable peace. The hand of the Council was clearly visible in all those successes.

There are still festering problems, which the Council must continue to address with ingenuity and imagination. Liberia — and to a lesser extent the wider Mano River Union — is still simmering. The conflict in the southern Senegalese region of Cassamance has

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raged unabated for two decades now. And, sadly, new full-blown civil strife has very recently begun in Côte d'Ivoire.

Guinea-Bissau which successfully concluded its democratic transition, is still not out of the woods, having failed to secure the resources necessary for it to begin giving meaning to its democracy and building the requisite economic props for security and stability to take hold. Here, the Gambia, in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, would like to commend the Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa, under the able Chairmanship of Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, for its initiative in establishing the necessary interface with the Economic and Social Council, as the situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau so glaringly demands. We also commend the initiatives of the Council in addressing a letter of support for Guinea-Bissau to the Bretton Woods institutions and to the African Development Bank. We sincerely hope that the Council will follow up on those initiatives with a view to ensuring that Guinea-Bissau is invested with the capacities and capabilities needed for it to stay clear of the looming threat of conflict.

It is evident that the Council still has a full agenda on conflict management and resolution in West Africa, which I am sure it will address assiduously in the year to come.

The spiralling cycle of violence in the Middle East, in the year under review, has caused havoc and devastation in terms of loss of property and human life. Sadly, the pleas made by the Council to the parties to the conflict through the numerous resolutions that it passed have all fallen on deaf ears. That regrettable situation only undermines the authority of the Security Council and puts its efficacy in serious question. The United Nations Charter enjoins us all to eschew war and to adhere to peaceful means of resolving conflicts between nations. It is the responsibility of the members of the Security Council to ensure that all nations of the world — big or small, strong or weak — adhere to that sacred principle of the United Nations. Not to do so would amount to the Council's abdication of its responsibility and its betrayal of the trust confided in it.

Although the Council has endeavoured to involve non-members more in its work, including by increasing the frequency of its open meetings and periodic wrap-up sessions, there still remains much more to be accomplished in our bid to render it more transparent and more reflective of the realities of the twenty-first century. No progress has been made in our call for the permanent seats to be increased to ensure a more equitable distribution across geographic regions. Equally, no headway has been made in efforts to reform the veto.

The situation remains unacceptable to my delegation. My Government stands by the 1997 Harare Declaration of the Assembly of heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the reform of the Council, which, inter alia, calls for the composition of the Council to be democratized and for its membership to be expanded to 26, with Africa being allocated two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats. Evidently, other regional groupings have their own opinions on how the Council could be rendered more democratic and more representative of the new mosaic of the membership of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

My delegation would like to see the Working Group on the restructuring of the Council conclude its business with the minimum delay so that its report and recommendations could be submitted to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

My delegation also wishes to stress the need for the Security Council to show more transparency in the way it handles the question of sanctions, as well as the drawing up and management of travel ban lists. Individuals being singled out for sanction, as well as their Governments, must be informed of the reasons for the decision and be afforded an opportunity to defend themselves. That is the only just and democratic way to handle the matter. The current practice may only lead to the implementation of the sanctions becoming ineffective, as Governments which may feel genuinely aggrieved and yet can find no redress begin deciding not to comply.

I do sincerely hope that those issues will be given the Council's most serious attention. And as I wish the entire membership of the Council the very best in the coming year, let me seize this opportunity to commend the outgoing elected members — Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore — for their stewardship during their term of office and to congratulate the new members — Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain — on their election.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like representatives who have preceded me in taking the floor, I should like to express to the delegation of Indonesia our most sincere sympathy concerning the events that took place in Bali a few days ago.

Today, we are debating two items on our agenda, but I shall focus my comments on the report of the Security Council. There are two reasons for that. First, I would have very little to add to what I said in this Hall exactly one year ago on the imperative of moving forward with Council reform, and we would not gain much by reiterating, year after year, positions that we all know. Secondly — and here I would differ with some representatives who have spoken before me — I would have preferred to keep both agenda items separate. Although there is an obvious link between them, I think the report that the Council submits to us is sufficiently important to merit separate consideration. Needless to say, the report is one of the principal links between the General Assembly and the Council.

Indeed, as we all know, Article l5 of the Charter provides that the General Assembly "shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council". That assumes something more than a symbolic or ceremonial act; rather, it constitutes one of the branches of communication between the organs and, above all, a tool that enables the Assembly to play its role as the principal organ for deliberating, for adopting policies and for representing the United Nations.

Members may recall that the report we received last year did not even minimally fulfil the explicit intent of the Article I have cited. For that reason, we pointed out then that the report was too descriptive, excessively lengthy and totally devoid of those elements that would have enabled Members that do not have the privilege of belonging to the Security Council to evaluate its work. That, in fact, tended to undervalue the General Assembly itself.

The report that we have received this year (A/57/2) represents a step in the right direction to correct the situation I have just described. It is an improvement in respect of its length, because it is much shorter, and content, because it is more analytical. Although it does not fully meet our expectations, at least it fulfils the task of keeping the General Assembly duly informed on the Council's copious work programme during the period under review.

That programme reveals important advances that are also achievements of the United Nations. Noteworthy among them are the developments in events with regard to Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. The same can be said about Afghanistan and the operations carried out in the Balkans with the participation of the United Nations. And, although one cannot speak of progress in the Middle East — rather, the contrary is certainly the case — at least the Security Council's deliberations have contributed to keeping that matter on the priority agenda and to giving the United Nations an opportunity to participate in the work of the Quartet to find ways out of the situation.

One should also recognize that the work of the Council itself has made some gains with regard to transparency, thanks to various factors. Among them, we should like to recall the contribution of Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom, in his capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001). Perhaps because that resolution's provisions are binding on all Member States, but also because of Ambassador Greenstock's ability, his programme of outreach to delegations that do not belong to the Council deserves to be commended and imitated in similar cases. Not only has it been possible to inform all Members of Council activities on a matter of special relevance, but the Council has also heard their suggestions, observations and concerns.

In addition, the perception has been further institutionalized that Council members — particularly those that are elected — represent Member States as a whole. In that connection, my delegation is grateful to the delegations of Jamaica, Colombia and Mexico for having kept all the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States informed of Council activities.

The growing practice of holding public meetings has also contributed to the closer involvement of all States in the Council's work, at least by providing them the opportunity to express their views on subjects that the Council considers relevant, despite the fact that there is room for doubt as to whether external points of view have an appreciable influence on the decisions

ultimately adopted. Finally, the perception also exists that even the permanent members have been more sensitive than before to criticism concerning the closed nature of the Council's work. The frequent statements of Presidents whose countries belong to that group attest to such sensitivity.

Despite all that, one cannot fail to recognize that the relationship between the organs of the United Nations — especially that between the Security Council and the General Assembly — leaves much to be desired. It could be argued that the concentration of decision-making power on the highest-profile questions in this forum of 15 countries — dominated by the five permanent members, as everyone knows — has, up to now, been at the expense of the Assembly's authority. That does not have to be the case, since the Charter provides that the organs — each with its own particular composition and its own specialized area of competence — mutually support one another. But experience has shown us — and we have repeatedly lamented the fact in this Hall — that, as the Council gains ascendancy, the Assembly loses it.

That being so, the report of the Security Council implicitly reminds us of two crucial tasks that remain unaccomplished. I am referring, of course, to the ongoing reform of the working methods of the General Assembly and to the long-delayed reform of the composition of the Security Council — namely, the second agenda item we are dealing with today, one that, as I said, I will not touch upon at this time, since our views thereon have been put forward repeatedly.

One could, to be sure, speak at somewhat greater length on the agenda concerning reform and also comment on the United Nations system of governance, which no doubt is in need of modernization. It is regrettable that this part of the equation is virtually absent from the proposal just made by the Secretary-General regarding further reform of the United Nations, a proposal we shall be considering next week. In short, the unsatisfactory existing relationship between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council is a challenge that, sooner or later, we shall have to take up seriously.

In conclusion, it is hoped that, pending the reform of our principal organs, we will at least be able to strengthen the few links that already do exist between them. In this connection, one can affirm that the timid first steps taken last year in response to that challenge point in the right direction, as already stated, and that the report before us now is undoubtedly to be regarded as a small step forward.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to extend Tunisia's condolences to our sister country, Indonesia, and to the victims of the terrorist act in Bali, an act we vigorously condemn. Our sympathies also go out to the families of all of the victims.

Madam President, allow me now to join previous speakers in thanking this month's President of the Security Council for presenting the Council's report to the General Assembly in its new format. I would also like to recognize the Ambassador of Singapore, originator of this new format, for the commendable efforts that he and his team made to improve the Council's report. In this regard, we are glad that the unnecessary lengthiness of the report has been reduced. This has the double advantage of facilitating its reading and cutting the costs of its production.

As for the content of the report, we greet with great satisfaction the most prominent improvement, which is the implementation of an analytical approach in the introductory section. Clearly, we owe this important step to the delegation of the United Kingdom, who authored this part of the report. Nevertheless, the progress that has been made remains incomplete, and we call on the Security Council to extend the analytical approach throughout the entirety of the report so that all Member States can gain a clear idea of the conduct of the Council's work and the rationale behind its decisions, and therefore be able to evaluate their pertinence and recommend appropriate adjustments where needed.

We call for these changes in order to increase the transparency of the Security Council and thus improve its credibility. We should acknowledge the Council's sustained efforts to improve its working methods in response to the concerns of Member States that have been expressed here, as well as within the framework of the Working Group on Security Council Reform.

Over the course of the period covered in the report, the Council held a record number of public meetings. Furthermore, it stepped up its consultations with the troop-contributing countries and reinforced its overture to civil society by organizing several Arria-formula meetings. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations was likewise reinforced.

Sanctions were further refined by fixing time limits, taking into account their humanitarian consequences and by establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure their implementation. We regret, however, that the Council's approach to these measures was selective and tainted by political double standards, particularly in the cases of Iraq and Libya.

We do find, however, that in its quest to improve its efficiency and transparency, the Council has gone so far as to anticipate the expectations of Member States. Let me just mention, by way of example, the Council's missions to regions engaged in conflict, the wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency, the joint sessions with the Assembly's Working Group on Security Council Reform, the meetings to follow up the Assembly's debate on the Council's report and the examination of the draft report by the Council members in a public forum.

Still, we have much ground left to cover before we achieve the necessary level of transparency and efficiency for a body that we have entrusted, through the Charter, with the vital responsibility of the maintenance of international peace and security. This responsibility should be assumed with faultless credibility. The Council must base its authority on that credibility. The view expressed unanimously from the beginning of this session is that the current threats to international peace and security are so complex and so intense that they require the international community to define a real system of collective defence for diligently and effectively removing these threats. The Security Council has a primary responsibility and leading role to play in this matter. For this, we believe it is imperative that the Council act as follows.

First, a true equilibrium should be established among its permanent members and its elected members. We believe that the elected members should be associated as closely as, and on an equal footing with, the permanent members in all the Council's deliberations on all questions on its agenda. The behaviour we have observed over the last few weeks during the deliberations on Iraq, where the 10 elected members are accorded second-class status, is completely unacceptable.

Secondly, the Council should establish real interaction with non-members and take their views into account by concretely reflecting these views in its decisions. Thirdly, the Council must accord the same priority to the issues on its agenda to ensure that the national interests of Council members do not dominate decisions emanating from the Council. Internal political considerations should not count when it comes to responding to a crucial problem that may involve the whole world in a war or even in a threat of war. Fourthly, it must harmonize and rationalize its policies relating to sanctions and regulate how they conform to precise criteria, taking into account humanitarian considerations and the provisions of Article 50 of the Charter. The sanctions must respond directly to the objectives for which they were imposed.

I now turn to another aspect of reform, which is the expansion of the Security Council. The overwhelming majority of the Organization's Member States demand its enlargement but cannot find a way of doing that under the Organization's currently blocked system. It has already been 10 years since our delegations began reflecting and writing on that objective, without success. The issue is still so current that, during his press conference on the report on the reform of the United Nations, the Secretary-General was asked whether the Security Council is democratic. I will read his answer, which I find admirable because it serves as a double lesson in diplomacy and politics:

> "I think the system at the United Nations, whether in the Council or the General Assembly, is reasonably democratic. If one country prevails in a group of 15, then the other 14 have agreed with it. A veto can block a decision; it cannot make a decision. To make a decision, you need nine votes, and other members have to go along with you. So if one country gets its way, then others have voted or acquiesced." (*Press release SG/SM/8397, p. 4*)

In other words, that elegant response blames no one, for the responsibility lies with all Member States, and it is their problem if they let it bother them. In fact, we have grown comfortable with nursing our grievances while enduring, without complaint, the wrongs of an outdated system, as if the tragedies that we are now experiencing simply did not exist, as if the rebuffs that the Council receives from some parties never happen and as if a Government, contested in its own hallways and on the street, refuses even to undertake a cabinet reshuffle.

Ten years of discussion is too long a time to reshuffle an unpopular cabinet. The principles of

democracy that we have been taught demand that the majority be free to express itself, that it be able to organize to make its voice clearly heard, and that it present proposals and formulas that have already been available for years and on which we can agree. The powerful cannot ignore for too long the world that surrounds them. Over the past few years, several individuals have presented ideas that could have served as a good working basis. I am thinking particularly of the initiatives of former General Assembly President Mr. Ismail Razali of Malaysia and former Ambassador Richard Holbrooke of the United States. But neither had a long enough mandate and perhaps the timing was not appropriate. The world was still at that time relatively prosperous and terrorism had not taken on the dimensions that it has today.

The Council was enlarged for the first time in 1963, from 11 to 15 members, and we numbered some 70 countries at the time. Our predecessors were clearly wiser than we are.

A sort of gentlemen's agreement was outlined in the individual initiatives that I have just mentioned, which propose a Council ranging from 24 to 26 members. That is a very manageable number and it is a working basis that could be useful to us as a frame of reference.

We should also recall that a large majority of Member States believe that the expansion should involve permanent as well as non-permanent members. If that proposal were adopted, we could then move on to the distribution between permanent and non-permanent members. That distribution should be pursued, and if possible, completed by representatives of the geographic groups at the current session.

If we want a "*Directoir*e" that is more democratic and more representative of international reality, we must also agree on the criteria for enlargement. During the meetings of the Working Group on Security Council Reform, my delegation suggested some reference points that we would do well to reconcile, since, as a matter of principle, if we are still negotiating, it is because we have not yet reached agreement. We could make the following suggestions for criteria, but it is not a complete list: first, geographical representation — the golden rule of our Organization; secondly, economic significance and financial contributions of the countries. Japan and Germany fall into that category. Thirdly, the human magnitude of highly populated countries; I repeat, highly populated; fourthly, the use of systems of rotation, such as the one requested by Africa, which is also claiming two permanent seats.

Fifthly, we should take identities and cultures into account. The complexity of today's world requires that. Our enlarged Council should unite Western, Buddhist, African, Arab-Muslim, Latin American, Japanese and Hindu civilizations; and, as I said, my list is not exhaustive. Those rules, then, should apply to permanent members, who would all have the same rights. The negotiations on the non-permanent members should be even simpler, since we already have practices that are well established and accepted by all.

I will now say a few words on the veto. If we were to reread the declarations made over the last few years to the Working Group on Security Council Reform, we would be struck by the moral and political considerations urging unity of the Council and the unilateral or collective commitment not to make use of the veto, or even urging moderation. That nonsense has no legal validity. In law, a door is either open or closed. The veto either exists or it does not exist. We are not such dreamers as to believe, at this stage of international relations, that the veto can be completely eliminated. However, we do believe that we could make the situation more acceptable by requiring at least three permanent members to oppose a resolution. But we must do away with the single veto. We must do away with the single veto.

These remarks have no other purpose than to make this Organization and its Security Council more credible. We must, therefore, undertake a reform of the United Nations government and introduce to it, after 57 years, a greater degree of democracy.

Mr. Kmoníček (Czech Republic): I should like at the outset to express appreciation for the idea of organizing a joint debate on the report of the Security Council and the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Council. There are commonalities in these two agenda items and we can save time as well as avoid duplication by discussing them together. Moreover, the new format of the report sends a clear signal that change is possible — a signal that will, I hope, be transmitted to the battlefields on which we have been struggling with

Council reform and enlargement for eight consecutive years.

The report's new format is not revolutionary, but it makes the document more user-friendly and provides a very useful overview, including in its introductory wrap-up section. Another considerable improvement is the adjustment of the time period covered by the report. In general, the improvements that have been introduced into the report deserve to be acknowledged as a positive development leading to greater accountability and transparency in the work of the Security Council, although they may still fall short of our expectations. I praise all those who invested their efforts, under the guidance of Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore, so as to make this new format possible.

The report also adds to the evidence that there is an ongoing dynamic in the area of the working methods of the Council. Although some of the changes seem to have been somewhat self-propelled by the Council, others may have been at least inspired by the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. Such may be the case with regard to, inter alia, the relationship between the Council and troop-contributing countries; the opening up of private meetings; the conduct of some open Council meetings; and communicating and reporting to non-members. In any case, there is little doubt that the Council has benefited from the work being done by the Working Group with regard to cluster II issues, as well as from the increased interaction between the Council and the Working Group over the previous two years. I therefore encourage the Bureau of the Working Group to continue the practice of inviting Council representatives to have an interactive discussion with the Group, and I believe that further progress on the working methods and transparency of the Council is possible.

Unfortunately, on the other front — that of equitable representation on the Council and increase in its membership — the picture is rather gloomy. In last year's debate on this subject, which took place in the wake of the horrible terrorist attack, I expressed the view that as international security in the context of globalized crime calls for broader coalitions for collective action by as many States as possible, the need for a truly representative Council becomes more urgent. But the atmosphere in the Open-ended Working Group did not improve, and its progress on cluster I issues is, perhaps, more stalled now than ever before.

The position of the Czech Republic on cluster I issues is well known and seems to be close to the mainstream of opinion. Most notably, we favour enlargement in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members, as well as some reduction in areas where the veto can be applied, possibly through voluntary commitments by permanent members, and other steps which do not necessarily require Charter amendment. But in the past we have also argued for a degree of flexibility, in the expectation that flexibility may be shown by others as well.

It would, for example, be extremely helpful if we could narrow down the range of options we repeatedly discuss in the Working Group on issues such as the use of the veto, numbers with regard to the enlargement of Council and other issues. Indeed, we already have more than enough options to choose from and, contrary to what happened during the previous session, we should move in only one direction: towards reducing the number of these options so as to get closer to the core of the matter.

Even if there were some progress on cluster I, it would on its own be unlikely to make the reform a reality. We should definitely not, therefore, lose sight of other reform vistas, including those indicated in the so-called farewell statement of Mr. Holkeri, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, on 10 September 2001, especially his idea of moving our discussion to a higher political level.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to join in the unanimous condemnation expressed in the Assembly and, yesterday, in the Security Council, with regard to the Bali tragedy. I would like, on behalf of France, to convey our condolences to the bereaved families, both Indonesian and those of other countries.

I have no intention of reviewing all the subjects dealt with by the Security Council in the period covered by the report before the General Assembly. It seems important to me, however, to take this opportunity to stress the progress made in the past few months by the Council, in improving its working methods on the one hand, and increasing the transparency of its work and its openness on the other. Finally, I would like to comment in particular on the work of the Security Council on two items that appear in the introduction of the report: sanctions and the Great Lakes region of Africa.

The Security Council is making rapid progress in its working methods. The report submitted to the General Assembly for the period 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002 well reflects this positive evolution. Thanks to the work of the Working Group on documentation and procedure, and in particular the impetus provided by the delegation of Singapore, the format of the annual report has been considerably improved, as a number of speakers have pointed out. The report before the Assembly is more concise than in the past and overlaps less with other United Nations publications. Its content is thus more easily accessible and more useful.

In particular, it includes for the first time an introduction on substantive questions. This — the fruit of the collective endeavours of the members of the Council at the initiative of the delegation of the United Kingdom — presents an overview of the principal actions taken by the Council over the past year. While that supplement does not constitute the analysis that many would like to see included in the annual report, it is a step in the right direction. It could be further improved next year. To take up the point raised by Ambassador Mahbubani at the beginning of our discussion, the Council may still be a conservative institution, but the progress achieved since its creation has been enormous, and that should be recognized.

The Security Council has demonstrated once again over the past year its ability to innovate and to improve the organization of its work. Several past Presidents thus set forth monthly objectives, following the initiative taken along these lines by the French delegation in September 2001. Furthermore, monthly public wrap-up meetings are being held increasingly in order to put on record the work done by the Security Council and to elicit the views of members of the General Assembly. This beginning of a culture of evaluation of their work by the members of the Council is something that should be encouraged

During the period 2001-2002, the members of the Council pursued a policy of transparency in their work, as is shown by the record number of public meetings held in the period under review — meetings that facilitated fruitful discussion.

But it is the quality of the debates, rather than the quantity of the meetings, that counts. The interactive character of such discussions could, of course, be improved. Our public debates do meet the legitimate expectation of the members of the General Assembly that they be regularly informed about major issues. At the request of members of the Council, the Secretariat also is now regularly making public statements on such important questions as the Middle East and Afghanistan, two issues that have given rise to such a large part of the Council's work since the publication of the last annual report.

The public debate on Iraq, set to begin tomorrow and which will no doubt last until Friday, will make it possible for all members who so desire to express their views on this crucial subject before any decision is taken by the Security Council.

Furthermore, the Council has enhanced its communication with non-members, as is evidenced by the excellent work done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, as well as by the work done by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa, under the guidance of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul.

The second point that I should like to highlight is transparency and accessibility in the work of the Security Council; these two aspects go hand in hand. The Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), has continued to hold frequent consultations with troop-contributing countries — consultations that were inaugurated under the French presidency of the Security Council, in September 2001. The strengthening of this cooperation is entirely desirable. These meetings must provide a further opportunity for a meaningful dialogue among members of the Council and those countries contributing to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The Security Council is reaching out even to civil society, as shown by the Arria-formula meetings held at the request of non-governmental organizations and of representatives of groups concerned by the conflicts of which the Council is seized. These informal meetings have been particularly useful inasmuch as they provide additional information to the members of the Council on key issues.

This increased openness should also be reflected in the composition of the Security Council itself. As the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dominique de Villepin, recalled in his statement here on 12 September, France would like to see the Council become more representative through an expansion of its composition in both categories —

permanent and non-permanent. France particularly supports the aspirations of Germany, Japan and India to become permanent members.

This desirable expansion of the Security Council should benefit the developed countries and make possible better representation of developing countries. We should, however, bear in mind the emergence of new Powers and also enable the Security Council to continue to discharge its mandate under the Charter.

Thirdly, the record of the Council's work in 2001-2002 seems to us positive overall. Members of the Assembly will welcome the progress made in many areas, including, first and foremost, in the combat against terrorism since the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001), as well as in Afghanistan, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Nor can we fail to mention Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Timor-Leste, which became a Member of our Organization following its independence. In all these successes, the Security Council fully discharged its responsibilities.

Of course, progress has been slower in other areas. I should like to stress the need to continue to make progress on the question of sanctions. The Security Council has learned to make better use of this instrument. The sanctions imposed by the Council are today more carefully targeted; the idea of their limited duration has been introduced; and their humanitarian consequences are better taken into account. Better follow-up to sanctions has made it possible to lift the most recent sanctions imposed on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as well as those on the Sudan, in September 2001.

However, we must continue to refine this means of action to make it more efficient and less harmful to the people of the countries concerned.

I should like to conclude by stressing the usefulness of Security Council missions to regions affected by conflict with which it is dealing. As was stressed by Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou in his introduction of the annual report, Africa continues to represent a major part of the work of the Security Council. Having had the honour in May this year of leading the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, I was able to see for myself once again how useful it is for the members of the Council to have direct contact with all the parties concerned. It must be recognized that the situation in the Great Lakes region has also seen considerable progress recently, a fact that is worth noting.

The Council must take every opportunity offered to hear the parties and also to transmit to them tirelessly its own messages, because ultimately they do have an effect. Indeed, since the drafting of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, a number of the Council's requests have been heeded: direct contacts with heads of State; beginning of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the beginning of the process of disarmament of armed groups; and internal dialogue, which right now is making progress. In a word, it is the continued commitment of the international community, in particular of the Security Council in New York and in the field, that is ultimately bearing fruit. France, as Ambassador Greenstock has said, will continue, in close cooperation with Great Britain, to work with all the members of the Security Council to ensure that Africa remains the focus of its attention.

Mr. Saleh (Bahrain) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I should like at the outset to express my appreciation to the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the tireless efforts he made during his presidency of the General Assembly during the last session and during his chairmanship of the Working Group on Security Council reform. We also wish the new President of the General Assembly every success. We are confident that he will carry out the Assembly's work successfully.

The General Assembly has devoted a great deal of attention to the question of equitable representation in the Security Council, which has been on the agenda of the General Assembly since 1979. Thus, the debates eventually led to the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. In 1993, the Working Group took the first step towards reforming the Security Council, the main United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The reform of the Security Council is an extremely important and urgent matter. It is therefore necessary that we redouble our efforts to achieve that goal. When the United Nations was created, it had only 51 members; there are now 191. The Security Council

is therefore no longer representative of the full membership of the Organization. It is also true that the number of items on the Council's agenda since the end of the cold war has continuously increased. The Council has thus become more active and seized of ever more questions.

From 1978 to 1989 the Security Council adopted about 18 resolutions every year, while from 1990 to 2001 it adopted about 61 every year. This demonstrates the greater number and variety of matters before the Council, including HIV/AIDS, women and peace, the protection of civilians in armed conflict and, since 11 September 2001, terrorism. Moreover, we have seen the establishment of a record number of bodies under Article 29 of the United Nations Charter.

All these and other changes require us to focus our efforts on and pay greater attention to debates in the General Assembly to achieve the Security Council reform that we all ardently desire. While such deliberations have been going on for 23 years, the Open-ended Working Group has spent nine years on this question. This has been very costly to the United Nations and the international community. We all seek a Security Council that is more representative, democratic, transparent and effective. The reform we all desire is limited neither to increasing the Council's membership in both categories, nor to improving its working methods; we must also try to make the Council more effective in objectively and professionally addressing world concerns and affairs.

The Council must no longer be prey to double standards, as has been pointed out more than once. In this respect, the permanent members must make every effort to stop the use of the veto. The fact that the General Assembly is holding an increasing number of special sessions under the Uniting For Peace resolution of 1950 demonstrates the Security Council's powerlessness, due to an increasing use of the veto that is obstructing its work. The Security Council must be more representative of the international community and should strive to work on behalf of the most noble objective of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security.

The reform of the Security Council is not discussed in the United Nations alone; it is also a subject of concern to other entities and agencies and to non-governmental, research and scientific organizations. All of these have worked assiduously to address this issue and to present their views on the best way to reform the Security Council and to strengthen its role as the primary United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security in a world bristling with threats and rife with armed conflicts.

In debating Security Council reform, we must not forget events that have occurred over the past five years, in particular the changes to which we have referred. More open and public meetings of the Security Council have been held since 1998, enhancing its transparency. This is the kind of change that should be encouraged and welcomed; it can only help the Working Group in its debates on questions relating to the Council's working methods.

We are approaching the end of the year and the Working Group will soon be celebrating its tenth anniversary. The Security Council must therefore intensify its efforts, together with the President of the General Assembly and all States Members of the United Nations, to ensure that the Working Group's debates will ultimately bear fruit. We should also try to ensure that the General Assembly and the Working Group convene high-level meetings in order to complete the process of reform. Tens and even hundreds of proposals have been made and considered. Such proposals have been the subject of lengthy but inconclusive debate. No results will be achieved until the question of Security Council reform is made a priority of the General Assembly's agenda. When that occurs, the matter will be taken up at the highest levels.

I wish to touch briefly on the Security Council's report to the General Assembly. We welcome the improvements that have been made to the report. Its analytical introduction is a laudable change. It is possible to make it even more analytical without increasing the length of the report. That is just what we all seek. We all want the report to be less redundant and more analytical. We note that the report is more succinct this year. That, too, is what we have always called for. The contents of the report, however, must be improved. It must be made more useful to delegations; if it is, we will save time, effort and money.

We are well aware that there are many areas of contention in the Council with regard to the items on its agenda, but that is no reason why those matters cannot be considered more effectively. What we want is for the concerns of all delegations to be reflected in

the Security Council's reports. That could only help all Member States — especially those that are not members of the Security Council — to keep abreast of the information and objective analyses contained in the Council's reports.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada): First of all I offer my condolences to the people of Indonesia, Australia and all the other countries that lost citizens and whose citizens suffered so many injuries in the terrible attacks in Bali, Canada included.

(*spoke in French*)

We appreciate the efforts of the Council, and particularly the efforts of the delegation of Singapore, to improve the presentation of the Council's report to the General Assembly. At half the length of previous years, it is more readable, and its introduction, containing an analytical summary, is an innovation worth preserving.

Canada made a number of suggestions on improving the report at the last General Assembly, with a view to reducing duplication, size and cost, and we are happy to note that a number of those proposals have been taken into account. We believe that the analytical overview would be more useful if it were more candid on the plus and minus sides of the equation. The report remains too lengthy. It is a useful summary for researchers but of less immediate use to Member States.

Last year, I made a number of critical comments on the working methods of the Council with respect to its continuing preference for conducting business behind closed doors, the private Secretariat briefings to the Council, whose contents could easily have been communicated to other Member States, and the absence of any meaningful interactive debate. I fear we still have progress to make in all three areas.

(*spoke in English*)

At the same time, I do wish to go on record that the Council deserves credit for its work on a number of fronts — for example, its increased attention to the problems of Africa, including the establishment of the Sierra Leone Court, its sustained interest in the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and the continued excellent work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. At the same time, I must also register our disappointment that we have yet to see the long-awaited report of the sanctions Working Group, work that we initiated when Canada was on the Council two years ago.

We recognize that on some issues, the Council sometimes needs to meet privately. We do not think that closed-door decision-making should be the norm. We acknowledge that in some respects the Council has, to its credit, improved transparency. We have seen an increase in the number of public meetings, in private meetings open to all Members, greater openness in the work of the Council's subsidiary organs, particularly the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and an increase in Arria-formula meetings. But there is still a need for greater responsiveness.

It is important that Council members meet with non-member States before making its decisions and even more so that it pay serious attention to what the membership has to say when those meetings do occur. We recall that it was only under considerable pressure from non-members earlier this year, that the Council agreed to an open debate on the International Criminal Court before taking its decision. Unfortunate as we regard that decision, it would have been still more so in the absence of an open debate. When issues of great principle or political impact are decided in the Council, consulting the broader membership in advance of making the decision should be automatic and not elective.

On a related point, the jury remains out on the effectiveness of new arrangements for consultations with troop-contributing countries. In the view of my Government, more needs to be done in this respect, but we recognize that a useful start has been made.

The Security Council's working methods and procedures should move ahead in tandem with the Secretary-General's efforts at broader United Nations reform. We are attracted by his suggestion, in his recently issued report on strengthening the Organization, that the Council should codify its current practices.

In one crucial area, the Council is actually regressing. The unelected five permanent members are arrogating to themselves privileges that are found nowhere in the Charter. The elected, non-permanent ten — elected, non-permanent ten — are being treated systematically as second-class citizens. The five permanent members are meeting among themselves openly, even brazenly, and deliberately excluding the non-permanent members. Senior Secretariat officials,

by their participation in such privileged gatherings, are lending themselves to this practice. Certain of the draft resolutions on Iraq were given to the media before they were given to the elected members of the Council. One such resolution would even sanctify a privileged role for the five permanent members, both as an entity and as individual members. This arrogation of privileges undermines the representativeness of the Council, to the ultimate detriment of the permanent members themselves, as well as to the rest of us. We call on the five permanent members to respect the Charter and its principles which have worked well for the past 50 years. Power has its privileges; there is no need also to legislate them.

Finally, on the issue of procedures, specifically vetoes, the need for the five permanent members to restrain their recourse to the veto or to the threat of the veto is well known to everyone present. On the issue of Council membership, we also believe that while there is merit in a limited expansion in the non-permanent membership category of the Security Council, and in amending the rules of self-succession, we continue to doubt the wisdom of expansion in the permanent membership category. There are better ways forward to a more responsive Council, which can attract the support of the totality of Members. There are ways of making the Council more representative without endorsing new privileges in perpetuity. We should use them.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, I wish to associate myself with other delegations in expressing my appreciation to Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Permanent Representative of Cameroon and current President of the Security Council, for his lucid introduction of the annual report of the Council for the period 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002.

I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, Mr. Han Seung-soo, and Ambassadors Thorsteinn Ingólfsson of Iceland and Patricia Durrant of Jamaica for the concise report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform.

I would like to recall that last year, my delegation joined the clarion call of most Member States for improvement in the report and in the procedures and working methods of the Security Council. In this connection, permit me to congratulate the members of the Council and especially the delegation of Singapore, which, we are informed, was instrumental in the adoption of the new format of the report. Although the Council had a very busy year, this report is not only compact and more reader-friendly, as compared to previous ones, but also less costly.

We are particularly appreciative of the effort that has been made to accommodate the views of Member States in the introduction of the report, which attempts to provide an analytical summary of the work of the Council for the period under review. While recognizing this as a step in the right direction towards transparency, we urge the Council to work assiduously to improve upon the analytical framework since, as presently constituted, the report lacks the requisite information needed to evaluate the Council's work.

In this regard, my delegation would have appreciated a frank assessment by members of the Council of their work, especially since, for the first time, they took the welcome step of discussing the report before adopting it for submission to the General Assembly. For example, the section on the Middle East could have been more informative on problems the Council encountered in implementing its resolutions. Similarly, the portion on the all-important issue of sanctions was given scant treatment.

It is our considered view that underpinning Article 24, paragraph 3, and Article 15, paragraph 1. of the Charter of the United Nations are the hallowed principles of responsibility, accountability and transparency, and much more should be done to ensure that those principles are observed by the Security Council in its relations with the General Assembly.

Another praiseworthy initiative is the Council's decision to interact with non-State and non-governmental entities as a way of bridging the gap between Council members and the outside world at a time when the Security Council is dealing with many cross-sectoral issues. Yet the report is virtually silent on this partnership, which is important, especially in a globalizing world.

One of the most innovative ways for the Council to acquire first-hand information on conflict areas is through its missions to afflicted countries. My delegation would therefore, in future, like to see more information provided in the report on such trips if the Council is going to continue to rely on this system, as we think it should.

We are also encouraged by the number of open meetings and the monthly briefings given by Presidents of the Council, as well as by the periodic wrap-up sessions to which non-member States were invited.

Elsewhere, we wish to commend the Council for playing a pivotal role in the global campaign against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Counter-Terrorism Committee has been a shinning example of transparency, and we congratulate its Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, for the yeoman's job he has done. It is our fervent hope that this effort, worthy of emulation, will be followed by the Council in its dealings with Member States in other areas.

At this juncture, let me express my Government's heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the Governments and peoples of Indonesia and Australia, as well as to the families of the victims of the recent horrific terrorist attack in Bali.

We also applaud the establishment of a mechanism to further improve cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries, especially the growing regularity and frequency of the meetings. My delegation believes that this consultative mechanism can be beneficial to all the parties involved in peacekeeping. We urge the Council to continue its peacekeeping activities and its comprehensive approach to dealing with conflict prevention, resolution and management, especially in Africa, if this least developed region is ever to achieve peace and security, which are indispensable ingredients in any serious attempt to promote sustainable development.

Equally important in our view is the partnership between the Security Council and regional organizations, since the regional dimension can sometimes be useful in dealing with conflicts. Since the Council spends 60 to 75 per cent of its time on Africa, we welcome the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of Mauritius. There have been positive developments in Sierra Leone and Angola, but Africa is not yet out of the woods, and the Council will have to redouble its efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Burundi.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The consideration of the report of the Security Council is taking place at a momentous time in history when, because of the Iraqi problem, the eyes of the international community are focused on the role of the United Nations as the body with collective responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Naturally, under the circumstances, the role of the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has come to the fore.

If the collective responsibility which lies at the foundation of the United Nations requires and demands the cooperation of all Member States, the Security Council, on which the Charter imposes the primary obligation to maintain peace and security, cannot discharge this onerous responsibility unless its membership is truly representative and reflects the composition of this lofty Organization which currently stands at 191 members.

Moreover, one of the major items before the current session of the General Assembly is the reform of the United Nations. The Security Council, as one of the main organs of the United Nations, which since the end of the cold war has assumed more functions and has in the process become more powerful, should be a critical plank in the United Nations reform agenda.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate the need to enhance the credibility of the Council through substantive reform guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation. A reformed Security Council should be transparent in its activities and more responsive to the interests of the general membership in matters deriving from its mandate under the Charter. Advocacy for democratic governance and transparency should be applicable at both the national and international levels. This is more so as all Member States of the United Nations are called upon and obliged to share the burden of the maintenance of international peace and security through, inter alia, assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget, the provision of troops for United Nations peacekeeping missions and implementation of resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Against that background, Ghana continues to subscribe to the Non-Aligned Movement's position on all aspects of the question of the increase in the membership of the Security Council, complemented by the African position as expressed in the Harare

Declaration of June 1997. Africa — the largest regional group in the Organization — which has called for the allocation of two permanent rotating seats and two additional non-permanent seats, is, paradoxically, the only region excluded from the category of permanent members.

A periodic review of an enlarged Security Council must be an integral part of the whole reform package. It is our view that a review of the Council every 10 years will ensure continuity and flexibility to enable it to adapt to changing international realities.

It would be remiss on my part if I did not touch on the veto power granted to the five permanent members. While acknowledging the view of the five permanent members that the veto is an important tool in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities, we believe that it also stifles discussions and consensus, and we call for its restricted use and the eventual abolition of that undemocratic and anachronistic mechanism.

My delegation is committed to the reform process in the Security Council and elsewhere in the United Nations system, and we are ready to join others in that undertaking.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election to the Security Council. We entreat them to bear in mind the need to respect the wishes of our leaders by translating into reality their resolve, expressed at the Millennium Summit, inter alia, to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. I am confident that the new members will work in concert with the other members for a more transparent, accountable, efficient and representative Security Council, in line with the general reform of the United Nations, in order to make the Organization more effective in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Ms. Ognjanovac (Croatia): The new format in the report of the Security Council and the changes made therein are valuable. The report has been transformed into a genuine working instrument. It is more reader-friendly and more organized. We especially welcome the analytical introduction, which we consider a good start. We commend the efforts put into the work on the new format of the report by the members of the Security Council and encourage them to further develop new improvements in the next report.

The year covered by the report was full of events that needed the swift and efficient reaction of the Security Council. The Council's response to the threat of terrorism after 11 September demonstrated the real value of the Council. The most important highlight of that response was the transparent manner in which it was made. That enabled all States Members of the United Nations to be fully involved in the process and to unite their forces in the struggle against terrorism, which thus became global. We hope that the lesson learned from that process will be taken into account in the Council's future discussions and decision-making.

Similarly, the Council's timely response to the situation in Afghanistan, with the full involvement of Council non-member States that participated in the public meetings on that subject, have put a once-grave situation that threatened world peace and security in the category of success stories in the Council's report. We commend the strengthened cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, which we believe could enhance the quality of post-conflict management. In order to encourage similar positive developments, the Council must ensure the full implementation of its resolutions. Innovative and successful mechanisms such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee may indicate possible avenues in that regard.

It is unfortunate that we may soon mark the tenth anniversary of the establishment of Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of increasing the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. Not much progress has been made this year. Although many of us are ready to undertake steps to begin serious reform of the Council's composition and of its work, some remain reluctant. We are all aware of the fundamental changes that have taken place in international relations since the founding of the United Nations as well as of the new challenges that we face today. Dealing with those challenges requires an innovative approach and an effective global response. That is why we believe that new resolve and energy are needed to move forward the negotiations in the Open-ended Working Group.

It is encouraging that there have been some positive developments in the Council's working

methods, especially with regard to the new relations with the troop-contributing countries. The Council's work shows greater transparency as well. However, we would prefer to see good examples at the beginning of the process rather than as its end results.

During the Millennium Summit, we all agreed that we wanted a strong United Nations. We agreed that, in order to achieve that goal, we must undertake necessary reforms, including the reform of the Security Council. We have the forum in which to discuss that objective; now it is time to demonstrate the necessary political will.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Let me begin by joining previous speakers in expressing our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government of Indonesia and to the families of the victims of the tragic events that occurred in Bali.

The report of the Security Council that we are considering (A/57/2 and Corr.1) provides Member States with a singular opportunity to examine and to contribute to the fulfilment of its mandate. I welcome that fact, and I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Council for its report and Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou for his eloquent presentation.

As noted in the report, this has been a busy year for the Security Council. In addition to outstanding threats to international peace and security, the events of 11 September 2001 reminded us all of the dynamic nature of threats and accentuated their global nature. The past year has made it abundantly clear that no Member State is immune from unilateral action by States or by non-State actors when it comes to threatening international peace and security.

For their enriching contribution to the fulfilment of the Security Council's mandate, my delegation would like to recognize the efforts of the delegations of Mauritius, Singapore, Ireland, Norway and Colombia, whose mandate as non-permanent members of the Security Council expires in December 2002. Much of what has been achieved towards improving the Council's working methods and towards increasing the contribution of non-members was due to their commitment. They have set a good standard for those just elected, such as my country. I thank them all for that.

This report is the first to have been prepared in accordance with a note of the President of the Security Council (S/2002/199) aimed at enhancing its quality. Moreover, it is the first to have been adopted in an open debate. That constitutes a milestone in the procedures of the Organization, reflecting our willingness to improve our modus operandi.

Compared with last year's report, the current one is more reader-friendly, better organized and, despite increased Security Council activity, less bulky. It provides us with an improved overview of the Council's activities during the past year. Those improvements are the result not only of the efforts of Council members, but also of the great contribution of all United Nations members to the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform and to the work on the revitalization of the Organization. However, there is room for further improvement in the presentation of the report itself and in the Council's working methods and procedures, in order to enhance transparency, cooperation with other United Nations bodies and participation by non-Council members, particularly by States concerned with the matters under discussion.

Angola is convinced that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is an appropriate instrument for greater reform efforts within the Security Council, especially if all Member States participate fully in its deliberations. While it is important to respect current working methods, practices and procedures, it is equally important to achieve more openness and transparency in the Council's provisional rules of procedure. We must go further, especially with regard to making the Security Council more democratic and more transparent.

Angola supports the Harare Declaration of 1997, adopted by the heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity — particularly Africa's position concerning the composition of the Security Council, expanding Council membership and increasing the allocation of non-permanent seats to Africa. In short, we need to strengthen the Council's transparency and to improve its working methods and its decision-making process.

The current international situation calls upon members of the Security Council to renew their unequivocal commitment to the Charter of the United Nations in order to deal effectively with threats to international peace and security. Concerted and collective action by the international community

resulted in the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), clearly demonstrating that a multilateral agenda can be successfully pursued to deal with international terrorism. The United Nations, especially through the Security Council, remains our best mechanism to deal with threats to international peace and security. It is important, however, that the resolutions adopted be implemented by all Members.

The Secretary-General's statement before the General Assembly on 12 September 2002 (see A/57/PV.2) was a valuable contribution with respect to how States must deal with principles such as multilateralism, collectivity, responsibility and the rule of law. We in the United Nations must preserve those values in order to uphold international law and maintain international order.

In accordance with the Charter, the Security Council is a guarantor of international peace and security. This year was one of the busiest in the history of the Council. During the period under review, many issues have figured on the Council's agenda, such as international terrorism, the Middle East crisis, Afghanistan, the Great Lakes region crisis, the peace process in Angola, Western Sahara, Sierra Leone, East Timor and, of course, more recently, Iraq, which has kept the Council very busy.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a great concern to my country. Angola is deeply committed to the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. As a result of that commitment, my country is an active participant in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement. My country is conscious of the need to give impetus to the stalled implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the recent Pretoria agreement, as well as the need to normalize relations, build confidence and bring about good neighbourliness in order to contribute to the speedy pacification of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region and to put an end to insecurity and instability.

In the Middle East, a resurgent wave of violence may challenge the efforts being made toward a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem as well as the Israeli-Arab crisis. We would welcome efforts by the Security Council towards facilitating a return to the negotiating table to seek a political formula that will satisfy the political and security interests of all inhabitants of the region.

Finally, Angola recognizes the positive work of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General, regarding the achievement of East Timor's independence. That is another clear and good example of how the Security Council can bring about peace under difficult circumstances, provided we use it wisely and stand ready to abide by our collectively arrived decisions. Angola is set to become another Security Council success story, and we are determined to work with the international community and the United Nations to keep enlarging the list of success stories in Africa and in the world.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I would like to express Austria's gratitude to Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, President of the Security Council, for his eloquent introduction of the report of the Security Council (A/57/2). At the same time, my delegation commends the excellent work of the Secretariat in compiling that invaluable source of reference. This presentation is a welcome continuation of the Security Council's dialogue with the General Assembly on the discharge of its duties pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter. That practice adds to the enhancement of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Council, bearing in mind the responsibility of the latter to act on behalf of the whole membership.

I would also like to thank the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, as well as Ambassador Ingólfsson and Ambassador Durrant of Jamaica, for preparing a concise report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election to the Security Council for the period 2003 and 2004.

An adequate flow of information towards non-members is a necessary prerequisite to understand and assess how the Council is dealing with political issues, and that should therefore be facilitated as much as possible. In our view, the President of the Security Council plays a crucial role in keeping the general membership fully informed about the deliberations of the Council. In that regard, the monthly forecast of the work of the Council constitutes a very useful tool for the daily work of delegations. The briefings of the respective presidencies and the information they make

available via their homepages have further improved over the past year. In addition, the increase in public meetings underlines the willingness of the Council to take into account the views of Member States and to use them as a basis for the Council's decision-making process.

The inclusion of a brief analytical assessment of the work of the Security Council in the introduction of the report is a very positive development. The relevance and the usefulness of that assessment could be further increased if it would cover and analyse more extensively the decision-making process in the Council, instead of focusing merely on factual events.

My delegation welcomes the efforts in streamlining the report. Substantially reducing the number of page of this year's report renders it not only more readable, but also more cost effective. It is of the utmost importance to explore further possibilities to increase the efficiency of the work of the Security Council. In that respect, let me pay tribute to the efforts of Ambassador Mahbubani and the delegation of Singapore.

The experience of peacekeeping operations has clearly underlined that the Council can only act successfully if it is engaged in a substantial dialogue with the Member States. In that regard, my delegation, as a traditional provider of peacekeeping troops, particularly welcomes the efforts of the Council to increase the number of meetings with troop-contributing countries and thus to improve the cooperation and coordination between the Council and the troop-contributing countries at an early stage in the consideration of mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is undoubtedly a central issue of the ongoing debate on reform. Especially in the field of terrorism prevention, close cooperation and coordination between the Council and the General Assembly is necessary. In that context, my delegation would like to commend the highly valuable work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, under the very able leadership of Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock.

The maintenance of efficiency, as well as the highest degree of transparency and legitimacy, are equally important goals that should guide the reform efforts of the Security Council. The High-Level Working Group on Security Council reform can come up with concrete proposals, however, only if the underlying political impasse is overcome by a reconsideration of positions in the major capitals of the world.

I would like to express my delegation's continued support for all reform efforts directed at increased transparency, efficiency and legitimacy so that the Security Council can properly fulfil its mandate under the Charter.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I join other delegations in extending condolences to the Government of Indonesia and to the families of the victims of the bomb attack in Bali, Indonesia, on 12 October, which we strongly condemn.

The work of the Security Council is of great importance to the functioning of the multilateral system. In the Charter's scheme for collective security, it exercises an important mandate and we must therefore give great attention to its report to the General Assembly, which is submitted in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter. We have examined the report and commend its presentation in a format which is concise and informative.

Jamaica completed its term on the Council at the end of 2001 and therefore had the opportunity of being a participant in the activities of that body during the period covered by the report. Over that year the Council had a very heavy workload and had to face many difficult and complex issues. Within the range of issues covered, the Council gave significant attention to African questions on its agenda. We agree with the overall assessment of the improvement in most areas of conflict in Africa and we believe that the work of the Secretary-General's special representatives and the Security Council missions to various regions, as well as the deployment of peacekeeping operations, all played an important part in the process of improvement.

Jamaica believes that it is also of great importance for the Council to continue to be engaged in the post-conflict period so as to consolidate the gains that have been made and to assist in the process of reconciliation and rebuilding. This is important if we are to maintain the current momentum and ensure the achievement of durable peace and stability. These are important preconditions for the promotion of economic and social development, which is an urgent task facing the national and regional communities in Africa.

We also take note of the important role of the Council in developing a framework for combating terrorism, with the adoption of resolution 1373 (2002), and in the post-war rebuilding of Afghanistan, which will need the continuing support of the international community.

The record also shows significant work done in the monitoring of peacekeeping operations to promote peace and harmony in war-torn areas. This activity has been reasonably successful and should remain an important priority of the Council.

We are less satisfied with the Council's efforts and progress in relation to the situation in the Middle East — an arena where renewed violence presented issues which require specific and urgent attention. We believe that the Council's approach could be more proactive in containing the conflict and in advancing negotiations for a peaceful and durable settlement of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

We recognize that there are complex issues involved, but Jamaica believes that there are sufficient areas of consensus that would provide a basis for a negotiated settlement and justify the early convening of a peace conference. Bilateral and group initiatives are useful, but it would be desirable to seek the promotion of a settlement through a multilateral framework which would give global endorsement and legitimacy to the result of any such process.

It is important to emphasize that, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council exercises its responsibilities on behalf of the international community acting in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It is therefore important that the Council's decisions should serve to further the broad interests of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security, not specific national interests. This is in accordance with the principle of accountability, which is established under the Charter and is an important element in good governance.

The other principle of good governance is that of democracy, which should guide the process of decision-making within the Council. It should take into account the views and opinions of the broader membership and in its own deliberations give due weight to the views of all members of the Council. Regrettably, in relation to a number of matters, and especially in connection with issues of the moment, there are tendencies within the decision-making process which do not accord with these expectations. Certain practices have developed which indicate a differentiation of roles between permanent and non-permanent members on the basis of the pre-eminence of the veto power. Whatever the realities, it is our view that all members should participate fully in the decision-making process in the context of more democratic procedures consistent with the Charter principle of the sovereign equality of States.

On the question of Security Council reform, we regret that after almost 10 years, the reform process has been stalled as a result of deadlock within the Open-ended Working Group. This does not mean that there has not been any progress. Consensus has been reached on most cluster II issues dealing with working methods of the Council, as well as in relation to the expansion of the membership in the non-permanent category. It is therefore important that we do not abandon the process and that we reactivate the Working Group and consider approaches which might lead to some reform. It is clear that we need to make adjustments to meet the needs of the United Nations membership and the demands of the changing international environment. All of us have a stake in ensuring that the United Nations system has the capacity to meet current and future challenges. None is more important than those relating to war and peace, in which the Security Council plays a central role. It is of great importance that we give support to the United Nations at this time and reaffirm our commitment to the system of collective security based on the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for international law. A strong and vibrant United Nations is indispensable in the new world order.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I cannot begin today without expressing my appreciation and that of my Government for the many statements of support in a week that has been a very difficult one for all Australians. For us, it has been a reminder that in this House we are one family.

For the first time in many years, it is possible to speak on the report of the Security Council without bemoaning its excessive length and lack of useful information. The new format of the report is very much the result of Singapore's efforts, and for this I think that our friend and colleague Ambassador Mahbubani should be sincerely congratulated.

A welcome feature of the report is the new descriptive introduction which assesses the work of the Council. We understand that any such assessment must necessarily be cautious, but even in its current form it adds substantial value. We would hope that in future reports such assessments will continue and will be increasingly candid. This would allow for a deeper and more useful interchange between the wider United Nations membership and the Security Council.

Turning to the substance of the Council's output over the period covered by the report, one cannot but be struck by how busy the Council has been and by the historic importance of what has been achieved. Of the many agenda items, I want to highlight three.

East Timor's achievement of independence on 20 May was a most significant and welcome event. The efforts of the United Nations prior to 20 May and its ongoing presence and programmes in many ways showed the United Nations at its best. The Council's work in Afghanistan also deserves praise. The distance that has been travelled there in a short space of time has been enormous.

Valuable lessons can be learned from both the East Timor and Afghanistan experiences which can help guide the Council in future. Three lessons are particularly pertinent.

First, the quality of leadership is crucial. Lakhdar Brahimi's contribution to bringing together the Bonn Agreement and taking forward its implementation, in particular through the holding of the Loya Jirga, has made an enormous difference to Afghanistan. Likewise, East Timor has been very well served by the excellent leadership provided by my friend Sergio Vieira de Mello.

Secondly, a creative and flexible division of labour is necessary to deal with complex emergencies. In Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the coalition forces and the United Nations have worked together in a very effective way, doing together what none could have done alone. Similarly, in East Timor, in the initial phase of the crisis, regional countries had to shoulder responsibilities that the United Nations could not immediately meet.

Thirdly, complex emergencies do not end with the holding of elections or other symbolic events. The international community and the Security Council need to remain engaged, judging astutely how best to hand over responsibilities to new polities and how best to ensure that investments do not vanish in a precipitous rush to find an exit.

The Security Council's response to terrorism also needs to be highlighted — particularly so in the light of the heinous terrorist attack that took place in Bali over the weekend. The Government and the people of Australia extend their heartfelt condolences and sympathy to all the victims from all countries and to their families. As I said earlier, we are deeply gratified at the many expressions of sympathy, including as formally expressed in resolution 1438 (2002). We stand ready to work with the Indonesian authorities and others to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the attack. My Minister is in Indonesia this week in deep negotiations with our Indonesian friends to that end.

Resolutions 1368 (2001), 1373 (2001) and 1438 (2002), which, as members know, was adopted only last night, demonstrate that a united Council can react quickly, decisively and creatively to threats to international peace and security. Resolution 1373 (2001) and the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) also showed the potential of collective global action to address global threats.

The Bali attack again underscores the chilling fact that the fight against terrorism is by no means won. The international community has to redouble its efforts to combat the threat. The work of the CTC is central to that effort. Its success owes much to the transparent and consultative working methods, which have elicited a high level of cooperation. The briefings provided by the CTC Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, have set a standard that other Council Committees should emulate. The principles of transparency and consultation are, happily, being seen increasingly in the Council's working methods. We are pleased with the evolution of the Council's consultations with troop-contributing countries and with the trend towards open meetings.

Despite the will generated at the Millennium Summit to accelerate progress towards comprehensive Security Council reform, little has been achieved outside the area of Council working methods. The Open-ended Working Group made no progress last year, but this does not mean that progress cannot be made. New energy and creativity is needed to achieve a

Council whose composition reflects current realities rather than those of the 1940s.

Let me conclude by again expressing appreciation for the support we have had this week from the world family, sharing our grief at this difficult time.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to convey our sympathy and feelings of solidarity to the people of Indonesia and to the families affected by the senseless attacks a few days ago in Bali that claimed the lives of 200 innocent people. My delegation joins all those that have condemned this barbaric act against innocent civilians. Terrorism affects all of us. Ecuador regrets the death of compatriots in this attack, which can only be rejected. We must pledge to make every effort to combat terrorism.

In this struggle, Ecuador supports the effective implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1390 (2002) and has been carrying out a broad-based internal strategy, including legislative, administrative, police and other measures. In terms of our foreign policy, we believe that in the struggle against terrorism we must focus on its prevention and on its suppression, on the understanding that this process must be based on a broader and more comprehensive multilateral strategy that is not limited to military or police action but that has as an objective the harmonious development of all peoples.

The Security Council in 2001 had one of its most active periods of work, as reflected in the report that is before the General Assembly. However, we are concerned that a report that should be a basic reference document of great importance to international relations is limited to a brief summary of what was done. It provides us with a list of meetings and resolutions that is quite lengthy but of little use. We had hoped to see a report whose emphasis was on substance rather than on form — an analytical rather than a descriptive one. We recognize that the comments contained in the introduction are a step in the right direction, but we think that a report of the Security Council must contain more substance.

In any case, it is very satisfying to note that the Security Council has made consensus its way of resolving matters under its purview. All countries would hope that the occasional breaking of this rule — motivated by the unfortunate existence of the right of veto of some of its members — will not undermine its democratic and equitable working methods. The democratization of international bodies has been a principle of Ecuador's foreign policy. This is a matter not of mere form, but of transparent and open procedures in universal debate.

The Security Council has had to deal with an increase in outbreaks of violence in all its forms, including terrorist threats and the imposition of force over the peaceful settlement of disputes, that represent an ongoing threat to international peace and security. However, these efforts have achieved laudable results, such as the conclusion of the establishment of the State of Timor-Leste, which is a credit to the United Nations as a whole and represents the triumph of reason and the principles of democracy and peace in the self-determination of that nation.

Likewise, it is encouraging that the Council's management has led to progress in the peace process in the Great Lakes region of Africa; in the improved internal situation in Angola; and in negotiations between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in Abkhazia, Georgia. It is also gratifying to note the Council's efforts to consolidate peace in the Balkans.

The Security Council must intensify its efforts to create negotiating machinery to consolidate the peace processes in Somalia, West Africa, Cyprus and Prevlaka. The juridical and humanitarian situation in Western Sahara has yet to be resolved.

The Security Council must make a major effort to secure a settlement in the Middle East, where violence takes an almost daily toll on our consciences. Events there have evoked our horror and repudiation. Ecuador, its people and Government hope that the peoples of Israel and Palestine will soon be able to live in peace.

With respect to Iraq, my delegation believes that it is preferable to resort to the machinery of the peaceful settlement of disputes, a principle that my delegation has always supported.

With regard to the report of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, Ecuador believes that the eight years of debate on this issue should be sufficient to reach an understanding on the positions currently on the table. Machinery must now be agreed on to break the deadlock on this issue as soon as possible. The increasing and sporadic use of the right of veto is a symptom of the urgent need to eliminate it. Only thus can the Security Council

become a centre for debate and democratic cooperation on international peace and security, without any differentiation between or categorization of States. An increase in the number of non-permanent members of the Council is also of fundamental importance and should reflect the changes that have taken place in international relations.

The world looks to the United Nations in the hope of a better tomorrow and in the face of the paralysis and critical stagnation of political will to find solutions. When the Security Council is incapable for any reason of preventing war and bloodshed, civil society throughout the world condemns it. If we wish to see a world in which all peoples can live in peace and dignity, we must implement changes in procedures that do not respond to the challenges of modern history. Many of these procedures were put into effect more than 50 years ago. It is now time to review them to the benefit of all peoples belonging to the United Nations.

The world is in a highly sensitive and volatile situation. In these circumstances, an effective, transparent and democratic Security Council is required without delay if its resolutions are to be meaningful and to embody the legitimacy and equity to which all States committed to the principles of democracy, justice and fairness aspire.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we join in the condemnation of the brutal attack this weekend in Bali and offer our condolences and solidarity to the Government and people of Indonesia and to the other countries that lost nationals in that event. In this respect, we welcome the adoption last night of Security Council resolution 1438 (2002). It is precisely that type of unanimous, speedy and effective response that the Member States expect of the Security Council.

It has been decided this year to consider jointly two priority items on our agenda — items 11 and 40. While they are closely related to one another, we believe that they have a single objective in common: a more democratic, representative, transparent and efficient Security Council to face the new challenges of today's world. Nevertheless, by the end of this debate we will have to determine the usefulness of keeping this format.

The report of the Security Council to the General Assembly undoubtedly marks considerable progress, in comparison to previous reports, with respect to format and content. The significant reduction in its size and the inclusion of an analytical summary in its introduction are positive steps that help us better to read and understand it. In preparing it, the Security Council responded to the demands of the great majority of Members of this Organization. These efforts of the Council to improve its report should be pursued and encouraged so that it may ultimately become the substantive and useful document that all Members desire and need. In this respect, we highlight the work of the non-permanent members of the Council, in particular the Permanent Representatives of Colombia and Singapore. We call on the newly elected members to continue working to that end.

We recognize that progress has been made towards transparency in the work of the Security Council. Greater effort has been made to hold more public meetings open to the participation of non-member States. Furthermore, more wrap-up sessions have been held at the end of each month. However, as the report itself reveals, most substantive deliberations are held in informal consultations behind closed doors.

This lack of transparency not only affects the other Member States, but is also felt within the Security Council itself. We are currently witnessing the clearest example of this, as deliberations on items of such vital importance as international peace and security are being discussed far from the Council Chamber and exclusively by the permanent members, sidetracking the other members of that body and all the States Members of the United Nations. This attitude is not in keeping with the spirit of the times or the principles and purposes of the Charter. The Security Council acts under the Charter on behalf of the United Nations and the United Nations is all of its Member States. We must not allow the Security Council to become an instrument used by a group of States or to be driven by unilateral action. Under the Charter of this Organization, we are pledged to unrestricted commitment to multilateral action. The events of the day mean that we must act together. Paraguay firmly believes in multilateralism and the legal mechanisms established for the maintenance of peace and security.

The adoption last year of resolution 1373 (2001) demonstrated that the Security Council can meet new challenges and act in a transparent manner. The committee established under this resolution, chaired by Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, has been a model of openness and transparency vis-à-vis all Member States

of the Organization. It has shown that for the effective implementation of the resolution, we need the goodwill and cooperation of all Member States.

My delegation believes that in order to make the Council's work and performance more effective and to avoid any questioning of the legitimacy of its decisions, its reform is something we cannot defer. This is the goal sought — to increase the Council's efficiency and effectiveness and to improve its working methods.

As we pointed out at the beginning, the Security Council must be more democratic, representative, equitable, transparent and in keeping with the realities of the day. Its working methods must provide for and reflect greater transparency and participation; its composition should reflect the political realities of the day. The position of Paraguay on this has been set forth repeatedly.

In summary, Security Council reforms should be total and both categories of its membership — permanent and non-permanent — should be expanded. Both developed and developing countries should be included in this expansion, with special account taken of the latter as they are currently underrepresented.

Similarly, a fundamental aspect of these reforms is the question of veto. What we should seek primarily is its gradual elimination, until it disappears entirely. This would bring about a Security Council that is truly equitable and democratic. As a first step, there should be strict limitation of its use to questions provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter.

Another aspect that we think is important to highlight is the improvement of communication and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, and indeed other bodies of this Organization. In this regard, we believe that it is vital for the Council President to report to the General Assembly on priority items of current interest, or specific situations which are the focus of attention of all Member States.

I would like to conclude by repeating that no reforms of the United Nations will have the effect that we want if the long-sought reform of the Security Council — the organ charged by the Charter with the maintenance of international peace and security — does not happen. Until it happens, we cannot talk about an Organization in keeping with the times in which we live, nor can it respond to the interests and aspirations of the international community.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): Before elaborating our views on the two subjects before us, I wish to express our delegation's sincere sentiments of deep sorrow over the tragic loss of life which occurred as a result of the recent terrorist attacks in Bali. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and their Governments. We add our voice to the Security Council's condemnation of the bomb attacks, which was adopted as resolution 1438 (2002) on 14 October.

Allow me to congratulate the President and the other authors of the idea of clustering these two highly important agenda items into a joint debate in the General Assembly. Indeed, the reform of the Security Council is not limited only to the expansion of its membership. It also includes the review of the Council's method of work and its activities in general. Needless to say, the Council's annual report to the General Assembly sheds ample light on the work of this important organ of the United Nations.

This year, we have noted with pleasure a couple of positive developments with regard to the annual report before us. First of all, it is considerably shorter than previous versions; the financial and other implications of this effort are obvious. Secondly, for the first time ever, the report contains an introductory section briefly outlining the work of the Council within a given period. Thirdly, due to the curtailment of duplications, the report this year stands as a better-streamlined document. These are welcome developments, and we believe the momentum for the further improvement of the annual report, both in terms of format and content, should not only be maintained, but must also be stepped up.

On the other hand, we are also aware of the fact that the report itself, however detailed it could be, cannot paint a perfect picture of the intricacies of the Council's activities. Within this context, we are of the opinion that the assessments provided by the Council members themselves are complementary in nature and carry particular importance. Hence, we warmly welcome the Council's public debate on 26 September 2002, just before the adoption of its annual report, as reflected in the provisional verbatim record (S/PV.4616). Moreover, the annual debate in the General Assembly on the report of the Council provides an excellent opportunity for the wider

membership of the United Nations to bring forth their views and suggestions on the Council's work. We are happy to see that some of the recommendations made by Member States during last year's Assembly debate were adopted by the Council.

Finally, my delegation has also noted with satisfaction that the Security Council has already placed on its programme of work an interactive debate on the results of the Assembly's current consideration of its report. We sincerely hope that the annual report will continue to improve, with a view to making it a more informative document on the contribution of the Council to the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

As to the Council's working methods, my delegation wishes to put on record its satisfaction at the progress made during the period under review. The number of open meetings has indeed increased. Member States of the United Nations are now in a better position to channel their views to the Council on divers occasions and on a variety of issues. The mechanism introduced for convening joint meetings between the members of the Council and the troop-contributing countries is a welcome step forward. The Council's wrap-up sessions provide an opportunity to assess its work. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. Instituting a better mechanism for the interaction of the Council with the other States and actors, particularly with those who are directly interested in or affected by the subject in question, should be further considered.

On the other hand, we hope that the members would reflect upon the idea of codifying the recent changes in the Council's own practice, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). My delegation recognizes the need of the Council members to work sometimes in a non-rigid environment. Nevertheless, the fact remains as an anomaly of the system, that the Council's rules of procedure are still provisional after 57 years.

Let me turn briefly to the question of ensuring equitable representation in the Security Council by increasing its membership. Since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group, Turkey, like many others, has been an advocate of comprehensive reform that would provide the international community with a more effective and more representative Council. However, the lack of tangible progress after many years is indeed frustrating. The year 2003 will mark the tenth anniversary of the beginning of the Group's work. Therefore, we call upon all members to recommit themselves to this issue with renewed dedication and political will. Following the changes on the global scene more than a decade ago, many international organizations adapted themselves to the new realities. The United Nations, as the only world body, cannot fail in the task of reforming itself.

Let me conclude by congratulating the newly elected members of the Security Council: Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain. We look forward to working closely with them and with the other members of the Council.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Let me join previous speakers in expressing our sympathies to the families of the victims — of all nationalities — of the terrorist attack that occurred in Bali over the weekend. We condemn that attack, along with all of the other recent terrorist attacks.

Norway generally views the Security Council as a well-functioning and effective international body. Over the past several years, the Council has increasingly demonstrated unity and efficiency, not least when faced with new challenges such as last year's terrorist attacks. But if it is to maintain its role and authority in the future, it must reflect the world of today.

First of all, Norway would like to see a more representative Security Council. Enlargement is on our agenda because we consider it necessary to ensure better geographical distribution and more equitable representation on the Council. The time has come to strengthen the influence of the developing countries.

Secondly, Norway is of the view that the work of the Council should be more transparent. Progress has been made in that respect. There are now more open meetings, and mechanisms for consultation with non-members have been improved. However, work to further those developments should continue.

Our common objective is to make the United Nations a more effective multilateral instrument for pursuing the priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration. Moreover, in that Declaration we all undertook to intensify our efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Nevertheless, it has proved difficult to reach

consensus among Member States on how to move forward on the question of enlargement and reform of the Council. We are concerned that the Open-ended Working Group has not reached a broad consensus. A stronger dose of political will is needed in order to break the current impasse.

We must reinforce our efforts to advance the Security Council reform agenda. At the end of the day, we are faced with an issue that has a bearing on the relevance and the credibility of the Security Council as an effective global decision-making instrument. We hope that, under the President's able guidance, the work of the Open-ended Working Group can regain momentum and can reach a successful conclusion. In order to move in the right direction, we must focus on ways of safeguarding the Security Council's unique contribution to world affairs.

Political will and determination will be needed to achieve wider and more equitable representation in the Security Council, in particular to ensure adequate representation of the developing countries. Norway supports an enlargement of both categories of membership — non-permanent and permanent. Non-permanent members are a crucial element in that they ensure fairer representation and accountability. They can be expected, as a matter of self-interest, to give priority to openness and to broad consultations with non-Council members. In addition, elected members should constitute a majority in the Council in the future. The combination of non-permanent and permanent members ensures broader representation, as well as continuity, in the work of the Council. Therefore, Norway also favours an increase in the number of permanent Council members.

Our long-term goal is to make sure that the United Nations remains a vigorous, relevant and credible multilateral Organization. As a global decision-making forum, it should now muster the inner strength to face up to the task of reforming the Security Council and thereby renewing itself.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): On behalf of the Government of Armenia, I want to express our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia, as well as to other countries whose nationals perished in the deadly terrorist bombings last Saturday in Bali.

Armenia attaches great importance to reform of the Security Council and supports the ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening the Council and enabling it to react promptly and effectively to current challenges and threats. We welcome the notable progress that has been made over the years in improving the Council's working methods. We are particularly pleased to see the growing number of public debates, which give non-members an opportunity to participate in the deliberations of that important body.

While welcoming the increase in public meetings, we should like to emphasize the need for more transparency in the Security Council's internal decision-making procedures. We note with satisfaction the significant improvement in the Council's annual report, which, with its informative and streamlined format, gives the Assembly a valuable opportunity to reflect both on the activities and on the future of the Council.

The vast majority of Member States have articulated their positions vis-à-vis reform of the Security Council. The debates of the Millennium Assembly made it clear that most members favour an increase in both permanent and non-permanent membership. We also believe that real reform should include an expansion of both categories, in conformity with the principle of equality among Member States, as well as with that of equitable geographic representation. If the Council is to discharge more effectively its responsibilities in the maintenance of peace and security in the new century, its capacity must be strengthened through a series of reforms to improve its effectiveness and authority. Therefore, its membership should evolve accordingly.

With regard to permanent membership, we are convinced in particular that new permanent members should be ready and able to make a major contribution, both financial and political. In that regard, we believe that two seats should be allocated to developed countries in an enlarged Security Council. We also support the proposals to increase the regional representation of the permanent membership in the Council — especially with regard to the regions that are currently underrepresented, such as Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. It is our strong belief that any increase in the non-permanent membership should ensure an enhanced presence of the Eastern European States through the allocation of one additional seat to that group, whose membership has more than doubled in recent years.

In its responses to various conflicts, a reformed Security Council should make every possible effort to take into account, along with political considerations, the legal and historical aspects of those conflicts. That could further enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions.

As for the right of veto, we believe that the resolution of that issue will require the political judgement of all nations, first and foremost those currently enjoying that right. We think that reform is needed to make the veto more accountable and its application more limited. Equally, such reform should not diminish the effectiveness and political vitality of the Council. The present permanent members should come up with constructive proposals so as to harmonize the stance of the majority of States on this issue.

As the Secretary-General has highlighted in his recent report on the strengthening of the United Nations, which is subtitled "An agenda for further change", it is essential to reach a broad agreement with respect to the reform of the Security Council in order to succeed with the reform of the United Nations as a whole. The United Nations has never lacked proposals for reform. The reason and need for reform of the Security Council has already been laid before us for almost 10 years. What we need now is strong political will. Reform of the Council is not an easy process. A Council capable of effectively carrying out its responsibilities is of paramount importance to all of us. However, it is only through comprehensive reform that the Council will win consensus in its necessary role as custodian of peace and security in the world.

In conclusion, I would also like to join other delegations in congratulating Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on their election to non-permanent seats in the Security Council, and to express my confidence that those delegations will make positive contribution to the Council's work.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to join others in condemning the terrorist attack that took place in Bali a few days ago. I extend our condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia and to the families of the victims.

I wish to say that the Security Council has in fact made some progress in assuming its responsibilities with regard to the events in occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and with regard to the Middle East in general. The Council has held many open meetings to discuss the dangerous deteriorating situation. It has also adopted four resolutions, including the important resolution 1397 (2002), which for the first time confirmed the Council's vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living in peace side-by-side within secure and recognized borders. In addition, the Council adopted resolution 1435 (2002), which falls outside the period covered by the Council's report to the General Assembly. Those resolutions were the result of ongoing concrete efforts by a large number of members of the Council, for which we are grateful.

Nevertheless, there were also many serious negative elements and developments. First of all, on 15 December 2001, the United States of America cast its twenty-fifth veto in connection with a resolution concerning the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. That same permanent member of the Council also resisted the notion of even considering any further draft resolution on the subject, regardless of the text of such a draft resolution or of the realities of the situation in the field. I would like to point out that the Council was also unable to deal with two proposals specifically introduced by South Africa, in its capacity as the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement. Those proposals would have invited the leaders of both sides to attend a meeting of the Council and would have deployed a Security Council mission to the region.

There was also what we referred to as the great scandal, when the Council was unable to stand up to Israel, the occupying Power, in getting it to cooperate with the Secretary-General and to implement resolution 1405 (2002), regarding deploying a fact-finding team to investigate the events in the Jenin refugee camp. In addition to its rejection of all resolutions, it was also unbelievable to see an occupying Power commit war crimes in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and then to refuse to allow a fact-finding team of eminent persons designated by the Secretary-General to investigate those acts. What Israel did was not in itself unbelievable, as it has behaved in the same manner time and again. What was truly incredible was the fact that the Council was unable to make any serious effort to counter that challenge to its mandate and to international law. Moreover, Israel has also failed to implement resolution 1403 (2002), which calls for the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) without delay.

Despite the progress made, one major problem remains. The Council has not been able to follow-up on or enforce its resolutions when it comes to Israel. Since the beginning of Israeli occupation, in 1967, the Council has adopted 37 resolutions concerning the situation in the occupied territories and the practices of Israel, the occupying Power. Twenty-seven of those resolutions affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the need for the occupying Power to abide by the Convention. Those resolutions have dealt with many subjects, including those of displaced Palestinians, Jerusalem, settlements, deportation and the protection of Palestinian civilians. Committees were established, envoys were sent and reports were requested from the Secretary-General. None of that produced any results whatever. Israel has not abided by any of these resolutions and has, in fact, publicly rejected most of them. To date, Israel has not ceased in its violation of the spirit and letter of those resolutions.

The Council has done nothing whatever in response, thereby making the provisions of the Charter, including Article 25, a tragic farce, and signalling dangerous consequences for the international order. I believe the Council must end all this. It must ensure the implementation of its resolutions in all instances and without exceptions.

Organization of work

The Acting President: Tomorrow, 16 October, the General Assembly will consider in the morning the report of the General Committee on action taken at this morning's meeting as the first item. At tomorrow morning's meeting, the Assembly will also consider as the third item a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/57/468, regarding agenda item 41 (a), entitled "Final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in 1990s", in order to take action on a draft decision recommended in paragraph 18 of that notice. We shall continue the debate on the report of the Security Council tomorrow morning as the fourth item.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.