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President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

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

Agenda item 123

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

The President: I thank delegations for joining today's debate on Security Council reform.

We live in challenging times. Multiple threats are putting a strain on today's international system, including climate change, the coronavirus disease pandemic, terrorism, cybercrimes, nuclear proliferation and ideological confrontation. In acknowledging those new global realities, increasing numbers are calling for the reform of the Security Council — the principal organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Is there merit in those calls? Seventy-six years after it was established, is Security Council reform now needed? To put it simply: yes, it is. Not only will reform make the Council more fit for purpose in addressing today's novel and complex challenges, but it will also revitalize the United Nations as a whole by increasing its effectiveness. Revitalizing the United Nations is one of my top priorities and the fifth ray of hope under my presidency. Security Council reform is aligned with my conviction that a stronger United Nations is necessary to build a more resilient world.

A more representative and inclusive Security Council has become an imperative of our time. Since I took office two months ago, I have convened informal meetings with regional groups and Member

States to exchange views on taking the reform process forward. I am heartened that the commitment of the United Nations membership to the intergovernmental negotiations process remains strong. Members can rest assured that I am committed to supporting their efforts in an impartial, objective and transparent manner. Security Council reform will be challenging, but not impossible. I am from the Maldives, which was one of the ten Member States that initially introduced the item we are discussing today — the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council — on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1979. Back home we have always believed in both the necessity and feasibility of the reform of the Security Council. I am hopeful both as President of the General Assembly and as a Maldivian that progress can be made during this session.

I wish to thank the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-fifth session, Her Excellency Ms. Joanna Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland, and Her Excellency Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, for their important contributions to the process. Earlier today I took the decision to appoint Her Excellency Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, and His Excellency Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for the current session. I thank Ambassadors Al-Thani and Hermann for having graciously accepted the challenge to move the process forward. I trust that Member States

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will once again actively engage in the current session to help advance the intergovernmental negotiations.

As outlined in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, I support the proposal of Member States to “instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council” (*resolution 75/1, para. 14*). The success of the process ultimately depends on Member States conducting constructive negotiations in good faith and a cooperative spirit. I hope that we will be able to make meaningful progress on this issue during the seventy-sixth session through greater political will and active participation.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I am grateful to you, Mr. President, for having convened this debate. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Four (G-4) countries — Brazil, Germany, India and my own country, Japan.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on the appointment of Her Excellency Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, and His Excellency Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. The G-4 looks to your strong leadership, Mr. President, in seeking to achieve tangible outcomes during the current session. Please rest assured, Sir, that you and the co-Chairs will have the full support of the G-4 throughout the session.

First of all, I would like to talk very briefly about the G-4's position on the substance of Security Council reform. In the 75 years since the establishment of the United Nations, we have witnessed the emergence of a number of Member States on all continents with the capacity and willingness to substantially and continuously contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security other than the Council's current permanent members. It is in the interest of world peace and stability that those countries be enabled to make constant contributions to the Security Council by becoming new permanent members of it. Of course, those new permanent members would have to be elected by the members of the General Assembly by a vote of two thirds in a secret ballot, pursuant to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. That is the basis of the G-4 position.

When the discussion on Security Council reform first gained momentum in 1993, some States argued

that such reform should proceed when the time is ripe or that we should proceed cautiously and without haste. It is strange that 30 years later those countries continue to repeat the same argument in the intergovernmental negotiations that there should be no artificial deadline, which is in complete disregard of the agreement of all Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit to support the early reform of the Council and their commitment in 2020 to instil new life in the discussions on Council reform. The G-4 hopes that those remarks are not intended to impose artificial delays or indefinite postponement. We cannot let those decades-old narratives sabotage the consensus of all Heads of State and Government.

Let us be forward-looking. Let us be action-oriented. How can we instil new life in our discussions and achieve the early reform of the Council? All of us here know well how to do so. We ultimately need to adopt a General Assembly resolution on the characteristics of a reformed Security Council. The real question is whether or not the current intergovernmental negotiations process is enabling us to move towards that outcome.

In 2015 the intergovernmental negotiations produced the framework document and its annex, which serves as an encyclopedia that compiles the detailed positions of Members States and groups of States, including those that submitted their positions as annexes but did not wish for them to be included in the body of the framework document. An encyclopedia is a useful reference but cannot yield reform by itself. The intergovernmental negotiations also produced the co-Chairs' elements paper during the previous session, as a provisional working document to guide our discussions. We believe the intergovernmental negotiations process should proceed with its deliberations based on the latest version of the co-Chairs' elements paper. It should then add and clarify the attribution of different positions contained in it. Such an exercise would lead us to where we are bound to go, specifically, text-based negotiations.

A few Member States continue to argue that we should first agree on the basic principles of substance before starting text-based negotiations. But let me ask you, Mr. President, and my colleagues in the Assembly: after 30 years of repeated statements of the same positions, will further statements of positions in this Hall close the gaps? Let us not re-enact the movie *Groundhog Day* at the United Nations. The first step towards bridging the divergences is to spell out the positions of all actors within a single text. The exact

position of each country is already contained in the framework document and its annex. Writing down those positions in a more workable single consolidated text is the only way forward. That is how we negotiate at the United Nations.

We would like to stress that the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations have the authority to present a text to Member States, and that authority is mandated by you, Mr. President. Some argue that the co-Chairs do not have that authority. That argument, in our view, is faulty and does justice neither to your authority, Sir, nor to the diligent and substantive work carried out by the co-Chairs. Such an argument also runs contrary to the wishes of the vast majority of the United Nations membership.

Let me remind the Assembly that according to the letter dated 2 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, as contained in document A/72/510/Rev.1, as many as 164 Member States have called for a text to serve as the basis for negotiations. The co-Chairs already have all our positions at their disposal in the framework document and its annex. By presenting a text, they could facilitate Member State-driven negotiations.

During the high-level general debate this year, G-4 Ministers confirmed their clear support for the Common African Position. The G-4 supports the Common African Position as a whole and especially concurs that it is indispensable to expand the Security Council in both categories of membership so as to enable it to better deal with the increasingly complex and evolving challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security. The G-4 expects that the elements paper will be further developed so that it contains a full and accurate reference to the Common African Position, as enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

In conclusion, the G-4 would like to ask you, Mr. President, and the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations to clarify the expected outcome of the negotiations at the current session. The G-4 would like to see, by the end of this session, a single consolidated paper submitted by the co-Chairs that contains the attributed positions of all Member States, to be updated at the end of each meeting and which can serve as the basis for submitting a draft resolution to the General Assembly.

The time is ripe to move to the next stage. You are the “President of hope”, Sir, for the majority of Member States that are frustrated by the years of stagnation and that aspire to see a breakthrough in the intergovernmental negotiations. We count on you, Mr. President, and the co-Chairs to fulfil our hopes by bringing about tangible progress.

Mr. Massari (Italy): On behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. We appreciate your commitment and guidance, Sir, in advancing the Security Council reform process. The UFC group stands ready to support your actions and to work actively and constructively within the current session of intergovernmental negotiations in order to achieve significant progress. Let me also thank you, Sir, for the early appointment of the two experienced co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations — Ambassador Al-Thani and Ambassador Hermann. We appreciate your appointing two Permanent Representatives to the role, as in previous years, which will hopefully grant the necessary balance to the negotiations process. Given the strategic interests at stake and the delicacy of the issue at hand, we trust that they will ensure the neutral management of the intergovernmental negotiations process. We need them to be referees, not players. We will scrutinize very closely the forthcoming moves of the co-Chairs. The game must be played by Member States.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has clearly exposed the need for strengthened international cooperation in order to address old and new challenges. We need an enhanced multilateralism that is more inclusive, flexible and solutions-oriented. Against that backdrop, the discussion on Security Council reform is more relevant than ever. The trying times we are currently navigating should impel us all to provide the widest possible support for the credible and effective reform of the Council. That is the only way to increase public trust and at the same time strengthen multilateralism. The Council must become more efficient and more capable of responding promptly to the changing nature of conflicts and to the emerging threats and challenges. It should be far more representative, inclusive and transparent. Crucial decisions for the sake of international peace cannot be made or blocked by a few without everybody being granted, at the very least, the possibility of having a seat at the table.

The UFC group has long been an advocate of the sound reform of the Security Council. Today as we take stock of the recurring stalemates that have affected the performance of the Security Council, we are even more convinced that the only way forward is a reform for all. That means reaching a solution that meets the collective interests of all 193 States Members of the United Nations — a solution that truly transforms the Security Council into one that is more representative, transparent, efficient, accountable and above all more democratic than the one established in 1945.

The UFC group has constantly engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations process through a proactive approach that is corroborated by an open and inclusive dialogue with all negotiating actors. While we feel strongly about the need for progress to be made in the negotiations, we call on all Member States to reflect on whether we are close to reaching a solution that can garner consensus or at least the specific majority prescribed for this item. Our group's opinion is that we are still regrettably very far from that scenario. The adoption of the rollover decision in June was not a positive sign — a hasty and divisive initiative could have seriously endangered the prospects for future discussions towards achieving genuine reform. However, that very tense discussion clearly showed that arbitrary approaches would only exacerbate divisions within the membership. Nevertheless, that experience also showed that the majority of Member States are conscious of the need to foster dialogue in order to reach a solution that galvanizes the widest possible agreement.

We believe that the intergovernmental negotiations-centric reform process is the most sustainable and only viable mechanism to promote a fair and equitable compromise solution in the interests of all Member States — a solution that enjoys the widest possible political acceptance. Our goal for the upcoming session of intergovernmental negotiations should be to further reduce the gaps that separate the positions of the negotiating groups. We call on all Member States to approach the Security Council reform process in good faith and to show more flexibility, inspired by a spirit of compromise. The UFC group stands ready to continue to work in that direction. We are of the opinion that the discussions within the intergovernmental negotiations should focus on the substantive issues that are still pending. There is no alternative setting or procedure that could help to overcome those challenges.

Let me be very clear: some delegations are calling for procedural changes to be made to the intergovernmental negotiations, but they should not forget that the informal negotiations process was the result of the failure of a formal process, specifically, 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, to which the oft-invoked rules of procedure of the General Assembly applied. Would the resumption of some sort of open-ended working group instil new life in the process? Frankly, I strongly doubt so.

Having said all of that, we do agree that a revitalization of the Security Council reform process is needed. How can we do that? Perhaps we should start by dedicating enough time to discussing the two main issues that are keeping us apart. It is certainly no secret that we have been unable to reach an agreement on the categories of membership and on the so-called veto. It is also evident that if individual Member States could forego their insisting on the creation of new singular situations of privilege — that is, new permanent seats — then we could probably take forward an expansion in the number of elected members in a short time, thereby improving the existing dynamics within the Council.

Special focus should also be placed on the Council's working methods, which is a key issue if we want a reformed Council that is truly fit for purpose. Elected members should take on a more active role in the drafting and consultation process. At the same time, a fair burden-sharing and equal distribution of penholderships and chairmanships of subsidiary bodies among permanent members and elected members should be implemented. We also suggest dedicating at least one intergovernmental negotiations meeting to the presentation of the reform proposals on the table, including an informal exchange on the ways in which the interests of all groups and countries could be accommodated in order to ensure equitable regional representation. That would be extremely helpful in leading us to better understand each other's positions and the logic inspiring each proposal so as to clarify doubts and bring different perspectives closer together. The Assembly can count on the readiness of the UFC group to take active part in that exercise.

An ever-important step towards ensuring successful intergovernmental negotiations requires that the co-Chairs set a clear work agenda so that once the

intergovernmental negotiations start the entire focus is centred on substantive issues and not procedural ones. That means that we should agree in advance on a calendar of intergovernmental negotiations, with a predefined number of meetings to be concluded before the summer and with specific topics to be discussed at each meeting.

A reformed Security Council would help foster the long-standing values of multilateralism. As we have stated several times in the past, a reformed Council that fulfils that aspiration should be more transparent, representative, accountable, democratic and effective. However, if we are to strengthen the legitimacy and transparency of the Council and if we are concerned about the necessary equality of Member States, then every new member should be elected by the General Assembly and therefore be accountable to the entire membership. That is why we cannot in any way support the calls for new permanent members in a reformed Council.

We have heard some delegations advocating new permanent seats to accommodate the new Powers in the Security Council. We believe that in order for the Council to truly reflect the reality of a changed and ever-changing world, the logic of past modifiers, such as Powers and Superpowers, should be abandoned, as it does not adhere to the logic of democracy and equality among Member States, which is at the core of the calling of the United Nations. It would not even serve the logic of a more efficient Security Council — the opposite would seem to be true.

Today's reality is not set in stone and is obviously bound to evolve. Therefore, the only way to create a Council that constantly reflects the reality of the time is to ensure the rotation of its members. That is why we advocate an expansion in the number of elected members, which would increase the opportunities for all regions to have their voices heard, including those of small, insular and more vulnerable countries.

We reiterate that flexibility and the search for a solution that garners the widest possible political acceptance are the main ingredients to advance the reform process. The UFC group is committed to supporting efforts in that regard.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We should like to begin by expressing our appreciation to Ambassadors Joanna Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of Poland, and Alya Ahmed Saif

Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, for their leadership as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-fifth session. We also welcome the early appointment of the new co-Chairs to lead that important process during the seventy-sixth session. We extend hearty congratulations to the Permanent Representative of Qatar, Her Excellency Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, on her reappointment as co-Chair, and we welcome the Permanent Representative of Denmark, His Excellency Martin Bille Hermann, as newly appointed co-Chair. They can be assured of the full support of the L.69 group. We look with hopeful expectation for forward movement and decisive action under their able leadership during the seventy-sixth session.

During the high-level general debate this year, many leaders highlighted the critical importance of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Under your guidance, Mr. President, we now have a responsibility to ensure that real progress is achieved during this seventy-sixth session so as to respond to the expectations of our leaders. We therefore call for the early commencement of the intergovernmental negotiations in order to take full advantage of the General Assembly's calendar and more efficiently utilize the time allotted to us.

The Security Council in its current format is becoming less representative and more divided as the evolution of geopolitics continues. The historical nature of its founding can no longer suffice as an excuse to resist change, as it is increasingly viewed as falling short of its responsibility and foundational mandate. An unresponsive and outdated Council has real cost, as it is increasingly unable to find solutions to the pressing issues of international peace and security. The L.69 group is therefore committed to ensuring that the intergovernmental negotiations process contributes to strengthening the authority, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council.

The upcoming meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations must build on the hard-won gains of the seventy-fifth session and continue the momentum to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council. The updating of the co-Chairs' elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters was a welcome step forward in seeking to

produce an outcome that more substantively reflects the discussions that have taken place.

The L.69 group has consistently advocated a single consolidated text as a basis for substantive engagement on existing positions to finally take place without prejudging the outcome. We believe that we have a good foundation on which to build the work of the coming session, and we encourage the regular updating of the document after each meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations. Using that single text as the basis for our discussions and refining it after each discussion will help to clarify positions, ensure more focused interactions and reduce divergences.

We reiterate the call for necessary improvements to be made in the working methods of the intergovernmental negotiations, in particular with regard to introducing documentation and record-keeping. The introduction of record-keeping and documentation into the intergovernmental negotiations would be a critical step to improve the efficiency and transparency of the process and would help to ensure that small delegations are not hindered in making meaningful contributions as a result of capacity constraints. We continue to underscore the importance of the attribution of positions so that Member States can move from a mere regurgitation of positions to genuine give-and-take negotiations. And we sincerely hope that call will finally be heeded at the current session.

In conclusion, we wish to recall that the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report (A/75/982) underscored the troubling reality that trust in the system has been undermined. However, we know, too, that most people are still convinced that only multilateralism can address the breakdown and restore that trust. As we make plans for adapting the United Nations to a new era, we must be mindful that the reform of the Security Council will necessarily be an important component in determining the future effectiveness of the United Nations. Now is the time to take the next steps on our journey together.

Mr. Turay (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the African Union.

We wish to commend you, Mr. President, for having convened today's debate on agenda item 123, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council". We take note

of your opening remarks, Sir, and wish to reiterate our commitment to achieving progress on that very important issue, despite the existing challenges in reaching consensus.

Let me also utilize this occasion, on behalf of the Group of African States, to once again congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. We look forward to working with you and all Member States in achieving the widest possible consensus on the reform of the Security Council.

We would also like to express our sincere congratulations to Her Excellency Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, on her reappointment as co-Chair, and to His Excellency Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, on his appointment as co-Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We would like to assure them of our full support in building on the gains made so far in the reform process.

We would also like to thank the previous co-Chairs, Her Excellency Ms. Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, and Her Excellency Ms. Joanna Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland, for their stewardship of the intergovernmental negotiations process during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Africa remains convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, which would significantly contribute to upholding the principles, objectives and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations for a fairer world based on universalism, equity and regional balance. To that end, we remain true and faithful to decision 62/557 and other relevant General Assembly decisions for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council on all five clusters, based on their interconnectedness. We will therefore continue to reject any intermediate, transitional or intermediary approaches to comprehensive Council reform.

His Excellency Mr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the reform of the Security Council, reiterated the concerns of Africa during the recently concluded high-level general debate in September (see A/76/PV.6). He underscored the lack of representation in the permanent category and the underrepresentation in the non-permanent category of the Council and

the urgent need to redress that historical injustice perpetrated against Africa.

Today's geopolitical realities call for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Africa remains the only region without representation in the permanent category of the Council, and it is also underrepresented in the non-permanent category. Africa's demand for two permanent seats — with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, including the right of the veto, should it be retained — and two additional non-permanent seats is a matter of common justice. It is also a matter of common justice that Africa be granted an equal say in decision-making on issues of international peace and security, in particular with regard to matters that affect the African region. It is therefore time to demonstrate our renewed commitment to reforming the Security Council and to addressing the long-standing injustice and imbalance, which is perpetuated in its current configuration, without any further delay.

The Common African Position, as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, is widely recognized in the Assembly. However, for purposes of clarity and precision, let me reiterate that Africa demands

“not less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of [the] veto, and five non-permanent seats. While Africa is opposed in principle to the veto, it is of the view that, so long as it exists and as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council”.

It is evident that our call for the immediate redress of the African demand for an equitable representation of Africa on the Security Council continues to garner broad support from the membership of the United Nations. In particular, the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations appropriately indicated in their elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council

“the wide recognition and broad support by Member States for the legitimate aspiration for Africa to play its rightful role on the global stage, including through an increased presence in the Security Council, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus adopted by the African Union”

and also accurately reflected the view that redressing the historical injustice against Africa is viewed as a priority.

That development further reinforces the credibility and viability of the Common African Position on the reform of the Security Council. It builds on the broad support that our position continues to garner from the United Nations membership and signifies that the Common African Position remains unchallenged in its claim to redress the historical injustice of not being represented in the permanent category and being underrepresented in the non-permanent category of the Council. It seeks a reform that recognizes Africa and grants the continent its rightful place in multilateralism and, in particular, at the United Nations.

Notwithstanding the gains made to date, the divergence in the various positions of Member States and interest groups on the possible models of reform and the difference of views on procedural matters continue to challenge the overall progress in building consensus on all five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations. The co-Chairs' elements paper was a welcome step in identifying areas of commonalities around which Member States can unite for consensus-building. However, we wish to convey once again the disappointment of the African Group with respect to the co-Chairs lack of fully referencing the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration in their elements paper, which constitute the fundamental pillars of the Common African Position and decisions adopted by the African Heads of State and Government, thereby representing the voices of the African people, which must be defended in their entirety. We therefore hope that will be corrected during the current session.

Moreover, the General Assembly's adoption by consensus of decision 75/569 on 22 June, which, *inter alia*, called for an immediate continuation of the intergovernmental negotiations in informal plenary of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, was another significant manifestation of the acceptance of the intergovernmental negotiations as the appropriate forum to continue to discuss the reform of the Security Council. We also appreciate that the framework document was rolled over to the current session together with the co-Chairs' elements paper.

In fulfilment of the forthright vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit, we reiterate that we will continue to constructively engage with all Member

States and interest groups in an open, transparent and inclusive membership-driven process with a view to achieving progress that will lead to the ultimate realization of making the Security Council more broadly representative, democratic, effective and transparent in order to enhance the legitimacy of its decisions. We therefore encourage you, Sir, as the guarantor of that process, to once again use your good offices to appeal to Member States to own the process by actively participating in a frank and constructive manner.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Africa will continue to advocate a meaningful reform that will make the Security Council more relevant and responsive to the current and emerging global challenges, as well as to promote the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We remain open to working with all Member States in canvassing support for the Common African Position.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

At the outset, I would like to convey to you, Sir, the support of the Arab Group for your efforts to steer the work of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, especially within the framework of reforming and expanding the Security Council, which is of particular importance to all Member States, including the members of the Arab Group.

I would also like to congratulate Her Excellency Ambassador Alya Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, and His Excellency Ambassador Martin Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, on assuming the co-chairmanship of the intergovernmental negotiations for the current session. I wish them every success. I would also like to thank Ambassador Al-Thani and Her Excellency Ambassador Joanna Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of Poland, for their efforts as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session.

In the light of the difficult global circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as the ongoing national, regional and international efforts to recover from the pandemic and its impact on multiple aspects of life, it is clear that international multilateralism is in need of genuine and comprehensive reform, including that of the three main organs of the United Nations — as mentioned in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary

of the United Nations and the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report (A/75/982) — and in particular of the Security Council, on which we as Member States committed to instil new life in the discussions.

In that context, the issue of Security Council reform and equitable representation in its membership is one of the main pillars of comprehensive United Nations reform, which makes us more determined to bolster our efforts in order to achieve the genuine and comprehensive reform of the Council — the organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We need to make the Council more capable and effective in tackling challenges within a more representative, transparent, impartial and credible framework.

In that regard, the Arab Group reiterates its view that the intergovernmental negotiations within the framework of the General Assembly constitute the only forum for reaching an agreement on the expansion and reform of the Security Council, in accordance with decision 62/557, which the General Assembly adopted by consensus, and which sets out the practical basis for negotiations. The Arab Group also wishes to emphasize the interdependence of all five clusters of issues on Council reform and their common elements, which should be dealt with in a manner that preserves their coherence and achieves the comprehensive reform of the Council.

As we have previously underscored, the position of the States members of the League of Arab States concerning Security Council reform is to demand permanent Arab representation with all the powers of the permanent membership category in any future expansion of the Council. Moreover, fair representation requires proportional Arab representation in the non-permanent category of a future expanded Council.

We face a multitude of challenges pertaining to the question of Council reform, including the issue of the right of the veto. The egregious use of the veto has contributed to undermining the credibility of the decision-making process of the Security Council and has at times led to its paralysis, thereby preventing it from shouldering its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. We regret that most instances of the use of the veto, in particular over the past three decades, have been on issues relating to the Arab region.

The principal and overarching objective of the reform and expansion of the Security Council is to ensure that all geographic and regional groups are equitably and proportionally represented in the membership of an expanded Council. In that context, I would like to stress that, given its political, cultural and heritage characteristics, the Arab Group deserves to be represented as an independent group in an expanded Council.

The Arab Group represents more than 400 million people and comprises 22 States members, which is around 12 per cent of the entire United Nations membership. In addition, a large part of the Council's work and issues on its agenda are related to the Arab region. That calls for fair and proportionate Arab representation in an expanded Security Council so as to ensure that the Arab perspective is given due consideration in its work and to preserve the credibility of its actions and the legitimacy of its decisions.

With regard to improving and developing the Security Council's working methods and procedures, we believe it necessary to ensure greater efficiency and transparency in its work, including by agreeing on permanent rules of procedure to replace the provisional rules that have been in place for decades. Due consideration should also be given to ensuring that States concerned with the issues being discussed in the Council are able to participate in its meetings, in accordance with Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter of the United Nations. The number of closed meetings and informal consultations should be reduced to a minimum so that convening them becomes the exception rather than the rule. We should also make sure that the resolutions and statements considered by the Security Council are made available to the States concerned and that they are consulted on matters that affect them.

The Arab Group calls on the subsidiary organs and committees of the Security Council to provide adequate information regarding their activities to the entire membership of the United Nations. We also stress the need for the Council to strictly adhere to its mandate as stipulated in the Charter.

The Arab Group reaffirms its support for maintaining the unity of the general membership and its opposition to undermining the credibility of the intergovernmental negotiations by imposing any steps that do not enjoy the consensus of Member States. We should refrain from hastily setting deadlines that could

impede the achievement of comprehensive and genuine solutions as part of the reform process. In that context, I should like to emphasize that any documents issued within the framework of the negotiations process must accurately reflect the positions of all countries and groups of countries, including those of the Arab Group, in order to ensure that the positions and proposals of Member States are the basis for negotiations, pursuant to decision 62/557, and to preserve the principle of Member States' ownership of the intergovernmental negotiations process.

The Arab Group welcomes the progress made during previous sessions in identifying the common elements among the positions and proposals of States, as well as the areas of divergence that require further discussion. Those efforts are reflected in the fact that there are several elements of convergence among the positions of States and groups of States on the five key clusters. Making further progress requires that we continue our discussions in a positive atmosphere with the aim of achieving an even greater convergence of views and finding common ground in order to reach consensus on a solution that enjoys the widest possible political acceptance and achieves the comprehensive reform of the Security Council that we so desire.

In conclusion, the Arab Group reaffirms its determination to continue to participate actively and positively in the coming round of intergovernmental negotiations and expresses its openness to consulting with all other negotiating groups with a view to achieving the genuine and comprehensive reform of the Security Council in a transparent and constructive spirit.

Mr. Salovaara (Finland): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland.

Allow me to start by expressing our gratitude to Ambassador Wronecka of Poland and Ambassador Al-Thani of the State of Qatar for having led the previous session of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform under difficult circumstances. We ended the session by reiterating the commitment made by our Heads of State and Government in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1) to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council. We look forward to resuming

the intergovernmental negotiations during the current session and to honouring that commitment. We welcome the new co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations process — the Ambassadors of Qatar and Denmark, respectively.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his *Our Common Agenda* report (A/75/982), we are at an inflection point in history. We face a multitude of complex and cross-cutting global challenges that can be met only with an effective and strengthened United Nations. That requires a reformed Security Council that can adequately respond to today's security challenges. The Nordic countries seek a more transparent, effective, accountable and representative Council that can support a coherent United Nations response to the complex and cross-cutting issues we face — one that reflects the global realities of today and tomorrow in its composition and working methods. The world has changed since the previous expansion of the Council in 1965.

The Nordic countries support a balanced expansion of the Security Council for all regions and with adequate representation for Africa, Latin America and Asia. We would also like to see increased representation for developing countries and improved opportunities for small States to serve as elected members. In order to ensure a representative Council and to redress the historical injustice committed against Africa, it is vital to ensure that the continent take its rightful place on the Council through an expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats.

We must also carefully consider the impacts of the use of the veto in our deliberations on Security Council reform. Permanent members' veto power has constrained the Council's ability to act on critical issues. The use of the veto power should be restrained and come with greater accountability and transparency. In particular, the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocities is not in line with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. The Nordic countries urge all Member States to join the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as the political declaration on the suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity, which was launched by France and Mexico.

After decades of debate, it is high time that we act collectively and urgently so as to advance our reform efforts. In that regard, it is vital that we build on the progress and results of the previous session. We continue to reiterate our call to advance towards more substantive discussions, which we believe would be best achieved through text-based negotiations. The Nordic countries see that as essential to securing progress.

The Nordic countries stand ready to engage in constructive dialogue and to support the co-Chairs on our common path towards ensuring continuing progress on Security Council reform. We will continue to raise our voice in support of a reformed Council that is better able to shoulder its responsibility and is more representative of the world it serves — one that is rooted in delivering for “we the peoples”, as reflected in the United Nations Charter, now and in the future.

Mr. Wallace (Jamaica): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM welcomes the convening of this important annual debate, as well as the opportunity it provides to continue our engagement on the long-pending issue of Security Council reform and to outline our expectations for the current session. We also wish to use this opportunity to commend Ambassadors Al-Thani and Wronecka for their stewardship of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. We pledge our continuing support to Ambassador Al-Thani and Ambassador Hermann as the co-facilitators for the current session, and we look forward to advancing the work of the intergovernmental negotiations.

CARICOM welcomes the progress achieved during the previous round of intergovernmental negotiations and the issuance of the co-Chairs' elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, which provides an additional resource for analysing the main areas of convergence and divergence in the positions on Security Council reform. We were pleased to see that the restrictions imposed owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic did not prevent us from making some progress in the intergovernmental negotiations.

Although we are still far from achieving our main objective of a reformed Council, we do hope that the work done during the previous session will serve to move the process forward. We applaud the spirit of constructive engagement that has taken us this far and hope that sense of common purpose will continue to guide our deliberations in the coming months. At this juncture, CARICOM considers it important to preserve continuity in the intergovernmental negotiations and invites delegations to recommit to delivering on the call made by our leaders in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1) to instil new life in the discussions on Security Council reform. We urge all involved to concentrate on bridging the divide and delivering more concrete and actionable outcomes during the seventy-sixth session.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility that requires the participation of all States Members of the United Nations. CARICOM maintains that the current membership of the United Nations is not equitably represented on the Security Council, given its current size and configuration, and reiterates its call for the early reform of the Security Council. We believe that should be achieved on the basis of an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership and continue to advocate a guaranteed presence on the Council for small island developing States.

In the words of the Secretary-General, the COVID-19 pandemic has given us a real opportunity to do things right for the future. We cannot have the future we want without working together, and we cannot build back better if we refuse to change for the better. We as Member States have the duty and responsibility to ensure that the United Nations is fit for purpose. The urgency of the challenges facing our global community and the emergence of new and unconventional threats to peace and security demand that we find the courage and determination to move beyond rigid thinking, which undermines consensus, and instead dedicate our energies to bridging the divide.

CARICOM is prepared to work with all Member States to instil new life in the reform process. As you rightly said in your opening remarks, Sir, at the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, there is nothing in our path to stop us but ourselves (see A/76/PV.3). We have the tools to build

the future we want. Let us therefore be steadfast in our efforts to ensure that we have a Security Council that is more representative, effective, accountable and better equipped to manage the emerging priorities in global peace and security.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's plenary meeting on the critical subject of Security Council reform. We welcome the vision that you outlined in your opening statement and look to your presidency of hope to finally deliver concrete progress as we enter the fourteenth year of intergovernmental negotiations.

We also welcome your early appointment, Sir, of the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. We extend our felicitations to the Permanent Representative of Qatar, Her Excellency Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, on her reappointment as co-Chair, and welcome the Permanent Representative of Denmark, His Excellency Martin Bille Hermann, as newly appointed co-Chair. They can be assured of India's full support for this important process under their leadership.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the Permanent Representatives of Japan, on behalf of the Group of Four, and Saint Vincent and Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group. We also extend our support to the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States and the Caribbean Community, respectively.

At the general debate of the General Assembly earlier this year, we heard our leaders highlight the urgency and importance of reforming global governance structures in order to make them fit for purpose for the needs of the twenty-first century. Yet in the more than four decades that have passed since the inscription of the item under consideration on the agenda of the General Assembly, and even as the geopolitical landscape around us has transformed, the objections of the naysayers of reform remain frozen in time. Inaction on our part is not without cost. The Security Council is being called upon to address the increasingly complex issues of international peace and security, yet it finds itself unable to act effectively as it is lacking the inclusivity of those that should be represented on it and is therefore lacking legitimacy and credibility.

India's substantive position on the question of Security Council reform is well known. India is in favour of the expansion of Security Council membership

in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. That is a position that is clearly supported, on record, by the majority of Member States. A larger permanent membership would ensure enhanced representation and a greater say in decision-making for the regions and members that are currently not represented or underrepresented on the Council, as compared to their role and input to date. That would increase the legitimacy, effectiveness and responsiveness of the Council by ensuring its decisions reflect the interests of the broader membership and will thus be better implemented. India also fully supports the Common African Position, as enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Turning to the way forward in the intergovernmental negotiations process, our simple appeal to you, Mr President, is to empower the co-Chairs so as to finally enable a normal United Nations process. The intergovernmental negotiations to date have been restricted to making repeated statements of known positions, without any effort to narrow the differences. It is the only process of its kind in the United Nations in which negotiations have been conducted in a multilateral setting without any text. While that may suit those who wish block progress, it goes against the basic tenets of multilateral diplomacy.

We are open to suggestions as to what could serve as the basis for our discussions. In our view, the updated elements paper that was produced at the end of our discussions in the previous session of intergovernmental negotiations could be a suitable starting point. Of course, it is by no means a perfect document. It requires further streamlining and the addition of attributed positions from various groups and Member States. It must also include a full reference to the Common African Position, including the Sirte Declaration, which is currently missing from the text.

We seek a discussion format that breaks free from the cycle of cluster-based statements and allows every stakeholder to contribute their positions and proposals to the text, which would be updated to reflect said positions and proposals after each round of discussions. It is by no means our contention that simply having a single negotiating document will resolve the differences in substantive positions. But it is also true that without such a text on the screen on which to focus our discussions, it is impossible for any of us to demonstrate flexibility in reaching an outcome.

Moreover, the process must be a truly inclusive one. India has been consistent in calling for improvements to be made to the working methods of the intergovernmental negotiations by introducing official documentation and records. That is particularly important in enabling smaller delegations to effectively engage in the process.

In conclusion, the initiative and personal commitment we have seen from you, Mr. President, is most appreciated and gives us hope. Our collective endeavour lies in your success, Sir. India stands ready to play a constructive role in promoting the common objective of a comprehensive and structured reform process.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I would like to begin by thanking the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process at the seventy-fifth session. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani of Qatar on her reappointment and Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann of Denmark on his appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-sixth session. I wish them every success in that very important process.

As a small State, Singapore has consistently supported the need for a strong and effective rules-based multilateral system founded on international law, with the United Nations at the centre of international cooperation. In such a system, the Security Council has a critical role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. In fact, we have very high expectations of the Security Council, because its effectiveness in discharging its special responsibilities has a direct impact on the relevance and credibility of the United Nations and the wider United Nations system. In that context, the reform of the Council is also necessary for the strength and credibility of the United Nations system as a whole.

There is no doubt that Security Council reform is a work in progress. However, there is also no doubt that the reform process has been slow, like a vehicle stuck in the snow — the wheels are spinning fast, but the car itself has not moved an inch in the past 25 years. Last year the United Nations celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary and its many achievements. The international community needs a reformed and reinvigorated United Nations system that is effective, efficient and responsive to the challenges of the times.

We need a Security Council that is able to act swiftly and decisively in times of global crises. That is critical if the Council is to remain credible and if its decisions are to continue to enjoy legitimacy. In the light of the lack of progress on Security Council reform, I come back to the same question that I have raised previously from this rostrum — is the intergovernmental negotiations process a vehicle for reform or a vehicle to maintain the status quo? That is a question on which I think we all need to carefully reflect.

If the intergovernmental negotiations process is to be taken seriously, then it is important for the process to deliver some progress. Naturally if the intergovernmental negotiations process is not able to show progress, then the reality is that it will lose credibility and legitimacy. That leads me to ask a related question — is it better to show some progress and keep the current format of the intergovernmental negotiations process, or is it better to consider other options and formats? The response to that question ultimately depends on Member States. My delegation's own view is that we should make a serious and concerted effort within the intergovernmental negotiations process to show some meaningful results, including by engaging in text-based negotiations.

I would like to focus my statement today on a few key points. First, the composition of a reformed Council must reflect the current realities and the diversity of the United Nations membership. There must be greater geographical representation and inclusivity, in particular for underrepresented regions, such as Africa, as well as underrepresented groups, such as small States. There must be an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of Council membership. However, any reform exercise must also enhance the opportunities for all Member States and, in particular, should not disadvantage or further marginalize small States.

Secondly, permanent membership is a privilege that comes with special responsibilities. By virtue of their privileged position, the permanent members have a special responsibility to provide leadership at the United Nations. Permanent members, including any potential new permanent members, have the moral and political duty to discharge their special responsibilities fully and responsibly in support of international peace and security and to strengthen the multilateral system. To put it differently, we have high expectations of permanent members and potential permanent members in terms of the role they play in addressing not only global issues

of peace and security but also issues relating to global governance and the management of global commons, such as climate change. The permanent members must not only demonstrate leadership in addressing global issues but also be a catalyst for strengthening global cooperation and building global consensus, including here at the United Nations.

Thirdly, we must intensify efforts to improve the Security Council's working methods, especially in the areas of transparency, efficiency and engagement with non-members. For many countries, especially small States, the working methods of the Council is an important and urgent issue, which is fundamentally a question of transparency and accountability. In that regard, Singapore welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Council to improve its working methods and commends the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which is currently being led very ably by the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We look forward to the full implementation of presidential note 507 (S/2017/507) and to further improvements in the Council's working methods that will, among other things, provide the elected members with greater opportunities to play a more active role within the Council.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Singapore's continuing commitment to the issue of Security Council reform. Singapore wishes to assure the newly appointed co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process of our full support and cooperation. We look forward to working constructively with all delegations to make progress in the intergovernmental negotiations process during the current session.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to thank the previous co-Chairs for their work during the previous session. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann on his appointment and Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani on her reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-sixth session.

Allow me to recall the following commitments made by our leaders: first, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), in which we expressed support for an early reform of the Security Council; and secondly, in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1) last year, in which

we committed to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council.

Regrettably, we are nowhere near agreeing on a substantial reform of the Security Council. It is further disconcerting that we have been repeating similar positions for the past several years without meaningful progress having been made. In that connection, Malaysia continues to call for a text-based negotiation, as we believe that constitutes the ideal step forward to instil new life in the reform process. At the same time, we are open to exploring possible alternative formats that would facilitate the advancement of the reform process.

The position of Malaysia on the issue under consideration has been consistent. We need a Council that is more legitimate, representative, democratic, accountable and transparent. We support its comprehensive reform both in terms of its working methods and an expansion of its membership. We also support equitable and fair regional representation in a reformed Council that reflects the current geopolitical realities. With regard to the veto, while my delegation continues to advocate abolishing the veto system, the current veto system should not be used in cases of international crimes of the most serious nature, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. At the same time, we reiterate our proposal that the veto should not be valid if exercised by just one permanent member. Instead, it should be valid only if applied by at least two permanent members and supported by three non-permanent members of the Council. The General Assembly should then back the decision with a simple majority.

Malaysia's approach to the reform process has always been pragmatic and objective, and we have been consistent in advocating an inclusive and transparent reform process — one that is guided by consultation and dialogue among Member States. We remain convinced that a reformed Council should enjoy the widest possible acceptance among Member States. We urge all Member States to demonstrate openness, flexibility and political will to work towards a mutually acceptable conclusion in the interest of international peace, security and prosperity.

Let me conclude by assuring the Assembly of Malaysia's commitment to moving that process forward.

Mrs. Hanlomyuang (Thailand): In these trying times, international cooperation remains the only

sustainable and effective way to address the challenges to our interconnected world. Multilateralism has proven itself to be an indispensable tool for achieving our shared goal of peace and prosperity. The universal call for all of us to adapt and rise to new security trends essentially comes down to the organ at its core — the Security Council. Reforming the Council has never been an easy task, but it is a reform that is urgently needed. The failure to do so would put the Council at risk of becoming irrelevant and would subsequently lead to a loss of trust in multilateralism.

Thailand remains an advocate of reform for greater efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency and therefore wishes to highlight the following three aspects.

First, the broader responsibilities that the Council has today require a broader and more balanced regional and geographical representation. We call for a reform that reflects the plurality and evolving reality of the United Nations membership. Based on its belief that countries in each region know best when it comes to resolving situations in their own contexts, Thailand continues to strongly support greater regional representation, as well as greater representation of developing countries, in the Council's membership. We have also heeded the calls of some Member States for regions or subregions to consider their own representation in the non-permanent seats and trust that said proposal is worth exploring.

Secondly, we must accelerate efforts to improve the Council's working methods together with the ongoing discussions on structural reform. In our view, such efforts include, *inter alia*, strengthening the partnership and dialogue with non-members of the Council and enhancing the role of developing countries and non-permanent members within the Council's structure, which would serve to increase the sense of co-ownership and transparency in the Council. We also see merit in providing a substantive assessment in the annual report to the General Assembly, which should by no means be achieved at the expense of the unity and solidarity of the Council.

Thirdly and finally, Thailand is of view that the use of the veto should be limited and that the reasons for its use should in each case be explainable to the wider membership of the United Nations in order to make the Council more relevant and responsive to the evolving challenges. Thailand further reiterates its support for the French-Mexican proposal as well as the

Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's initiative aimed at minimizing the use of veto rights in cases of mass atrocities.

Thailand will continue to work constructively with all parties to galvanize momentum for Security Council reform. We believe that the commitment we have collectively made to the United Nations in previous years demonstrates the sense of determination that is needed to accelerate concrete actions in this long-overdue process. Thailand joins the international efforts to build a more secure future, which begins with a Security Council that is effective, equitable and accountable.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Kuwait, on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Ambassador Joanna Wronecka for their efforts in steering the work of the intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session. I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Qatar and the Permanent Representative of Denmark on their appointment to the co-chairmanship of the intergovernmental negotiations at the current session. I am confident that the co-Chairs will adhere to the principle of impartiality and work in the interests of the entire membership, irrespective of their national positions.

I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

First, we are all aware of the urgent need to reform the multilateral system in order to confront the new and existing challenges after more than 75 years since the establishment of the United Nations, as highlighted by the fact that the Secretary-General underscored the weaknesses in our multilateral system in his *Our Common Agenda* report (A/75/982). In that connection, Egypt wishes to reaffirm that the reform of the Security Council lies at the heart of the development of the international system. Without genuine Council reform, international governance will remain inadequate and limited in its impact, whereas an improved basis for joint ownership among an expanded membership would ensure a greater degree of unity and understanding, which would in turn create greater responsiveness and engagement.

Secondly, Egypt believes that effective reform can be achieved only through consensus. Given the near-insurmountable procedural difficulties in amending the Charter of the United Nations via a vote, achieving consensus among the United Nations membership remains the main guarantor of an expanded Council that represents the views of, and is widely accepted by, Member States. We therefore wish to underscore the primacy of decision 62/557 and the commitment to the five clusters of reform stipulated in decision 75/569. It is imperative that we work towards a solution that enjoys the widest possible political acceptance.

Thirdly, the veto remains the cornerstone of the Security Council reform process. Although the Charter of the United Nations establishes the principle of equality among Member States, five countries monopolize the right to veto. We cannot hope to achieve any effective reform of the Council without first addressing that structural imbalance in its work. That is the basis of the Common African Position, as stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which seeks, among other things, two permanent seats for Africa with all of the powers and privileges of the current permanent members, including the right to veto. The African Heads of State and Government believe that fulfilling that requirement is the only way to redress the historical injustice committed against our continent.

Fourthly, we continue to follow with concern the recent developments and increasing polarization in the intergovernmental negotiations process, which reached unprecedented levels during the previous session. We note with regret that the intergovernmental negotiations process has moved from being a joint effort for an effective Council to a race for membership, in complete disregard of the ultimate goal of the reform process.

Our understanding of the commitment to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council, as contained in decision 75/569, is that the process should put polarization and rivalry aside and that we should work together in a spirit of understanding and consensus and focus our discussions on the five clusters of reform in order to reach a solution that enjoys the widest possible political acceptance. In that regard, we are committed to the interconnectedness of the various elements of the Ezulwini Consensus.

We would expect all those that support the Common African Position to support all of its elements,

including with respect to the veto. In that context, we reject the move to introduce text-based negotiations, which may lead to the erosion of unity in the Common African Position before guarantees and a clear vision have been established on how best to achieve consensus on all elements of reform. I wish to stress that the African summit has not yet directed us to engage in text-based negotiations.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Egypt's commitment to working with all Member States in order to reach a comprehensive reform that leads to a more transparent, credible and equitable Security Council — one that is more capable of effectively fulfilling its role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin my statement by thanking Ambassador Joanna Wronecka of Poland and Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, for their leadership as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform at the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. I should also like to take this opportunity to commend the representatives of Qatar and Denmark for their commitment to continuing to facilitate that very important negotiations process.

At the end of the previous session's intergovernmental negotiations in June, I encouraged all delegations to continue discussions of substance in a constructive manner at the next session (see A/75/PV.84) — that is, the current session — which would thus require that we avoid measures that exacerbate the differences among delegations. We must continue to support the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations and its implementation. If the proposed amendment to the draft oral decision of the President of the General Assembly had been put to a vote, we would have divided the Assembly on a matter on which we had in fact reached consensus, specifically, the commitment to breathe new life into the Council reform process.

I wish to underscore once again that reform is urgently needed, but it cannot be just any reform. Hence the proposals made cannot just be any proposal on the aspirations or interests of certain delegations. Instead, they must be realistic proposals that are commensurate with what we can feasibly achieve. The reform we are to achieve should not increase the

existing inequalities among States but rather reduce and ideally eradicate them. In that regard, Ecuador will continue to advocate the urgently needed reform of the Security Council in order to achieve a more democratic, broad, representative, participatory, transparent and effective Council — one that is in keeping with the realities of today's world and the membership of the Organization. To achieve that, we advocate realistic and sensible proposals.

Ecuador will continue to advocate that the reform of the Council put an end to the underrepresentation of developing countries and certain regions, such as Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The reform should comprise fair representation for the various transregional groups of developing countries, such as small island States. The reform should also include robust mechanisms for coordination, feedback and information for States Members of the Organization. In order to achieve a more transparent Council, we must devote special attention to promoting a genuine modernization of its working methods. We must prioritize the public meetings of the Council. The reform we seek must put an end to the hierarchical nature of its membership, in which the power of the veto plays a negative role. Security Council privileges resulted from certain realities but also from imaginary scenarios that no longer reflect any reality.

In our informal meeting on 16 February, I explained that of the 33 countries that make up the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) there were already candidates to fill non-permanent seats for the next 27 years, that is, until 2048. Now, just nine months later, there are candidates to fill non-permanent seats until 2054, that is, nine years after the centenary of the founding of the United Nations. At least five countries in my region have submitted their candidacy for two separate terms. Fourteen of those applications were submitted in the past three years. That tells us two things: first, it demonstrates the growing desire of all countries in my region to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations in matters relating to peace and security; and secondly, that the delay in reforming the Security Council is precluding greater participation in the Council's work by all States Members of the Organization.

By merely expanding the number of non-permanent members of the Council in my region from the current two seats to four seats, nine years would be sufficient for all GRULAC candidates to serve a two-year term on

the Council and for at least three countries to serve up to two two-year terms in that same period. We would not have to wait for the Organization to become a century old before returning to sit on the Council. Ecuador therefore stresses the need to prioritize an expansion of the non-permanent seats in the Security Council. If the current dynamic had played out 55 years ago, with wide-ranging aspirations, many of them divergent with one another, the Security Council would still comprise just six non-permanent members today and nothing would have changed in 1966.

In order for any such reform to be substantive and lasting, it must be the result of broad and meaningful input from the membership. Whatever its outcome, it will impact the United Nations system and consequently multilateralism itself. To that end, we must pursue the reform process in a spirit of flexibility and mutual respect while avoiding any stand-offs and confrontational rhetoric so as to facilitate the greatest possible convergence of support. Achieving results requires flexibility on the part of all delegations and not just certain groups or particular countries.

Achieving results also requires time. Ecuador therefore believes that a sufficient number of meetings should be earmarked for the intergovernmental negotiations process, which should get underway as early as possible at this session and should not be brought to an end as a result of merely artificial deadlines before discussions have been exhausted on all substantive matters. I offer the commitment and steadfast support of my delegation to advance that process.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica wishes to congratulate Ambassador Martin Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, and Ambassador Alya Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, on their appointment as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

Costa Rica associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group.

While regionalism is a key facet of multilateralism, it may come as a surprise to the Assembly to learn that prior to 1990 there were no references to regional organizations in Security Council resolutions and that the first resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations for the maintenance of international peace and security,

namely, resolution 1631 (2005), was adopted on 17 October 2005. It took 60 of the more than 75 years since the founding of the Organization for the Security Council to adopt the first resolution on that matter. After carrying out a detailed review of the relevant Security Council meetings on that issue, starting from the first high-level meeting convened by Mexico during its presidency of the Council on 11 April 2003, the leadership assumed by elected members in seeking to strengthen the partnerships between the Security Council and regional organizations is irrefutable.

We are grateful to Mexico, Romania, Greece, South Africa, Indonesia, Lebanon, Brazil, Argentina, Azerbaijan and Lithuania, to name a few, for having fostered complementary and coordinated relationships that capitalize on the comparative advantages of each organization and avoid the duplication of actions and efforts, thereby establishing agile, effective and mutually respectful relationships. Elected members have stressed that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is not an option but a necessity. Their voices and those of several others have called on the Security Council to move from a reactive mindset to one of preventive action, to be more vigilant, strategic and proactive and to take actions that will help it become more democratic, inclusive, transparent and accountable both to its constituents and to all States Members of the United Nations.

During its 1999-2000 term on the Council, Canada proposed establishing the protection of civilians as a new item on the Council's agenda. By making the protection of civilians a regular topic of discussion in the Council, Canada helped the United Nations incorporate the protection of civilians into its humanitarian and peacekeeping missions and required that combatants uphold international humanitarian law. It is thanks to those efforts that the protection of civilians now frequently appears on the Council's agenda. In the same vein, the landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security would not have been possible without the efforts of elected members. That topic was first introduced by the delegation of Namibia during its presidency of the Council in 2000, which, together with the delegations of Bangladesh, Jamaica and Canada, played a key role in ensuring the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

During its 2010-2011 term on the Council, Brazil introduced the concept of "responsibility while protecting", which sought to improve the

decision-making process with regard to the possible application of coercive measures in pursuit of the responsibility to protect. Although the notion of responsibility while protecting did not lead to a formal change in decision-making processes, it did prompt a debate on the need for the Council to reassure Member States that no collective security mechanisms would be abused in implementing the responsibility to protect.

Elected members have also played a key role in improving the working methods of the Security Council. One particularly influential measure in that regard is presidential note 507 (S/2017/507), which was adopted in 2006 and constitutes the main instrument of the Council's working methods. Note 507 has been updated multiple times, most recently under the leadership of Japan during its 2017 chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Elected members will undoubtedly continue to advocate and propose further improvements to the Council's working methods.

The work of the elected members of the Security Council has been remarkable. Their voices have proven to be innovative, inquisitive, proactive and independent. They have also shown that the category of elected members does not preclude its impact on the Council's work and its fight against the multiple threats to international peace and security. The elected-member category has never been a hindrance but rather an opportunity for Member States to find common ground on important negotiations and resolutions, as well as to ensure that the Council maintain a strong connection with the entire United Nations membership that it represents.

Time and again we have seen the Security Council benefit from the innovative initiatives and substantial achievements of elected members — many of which are considered Lilliputians, including my own country, Costa Rica — in providing both political momentum and energy during their Council mandates. Increasing the number of elected members would benefit the Council and create positive momentum on several issues, especially for the people affected by them. That is why Costa Rica has long advocated a reform that strengthens the Council, which is in urgent need of greater dynamism and effectiveness.

It is a fact that the current composition of the Council is neither fair nor equitable and does not correspond to the current composition of the United

Nations. However, we must recognize that expanding the number of non-elected members will not solve our problems and is even likely to increase them. It is the elected members that demand that action be taken in advance of global crises and recognize that by responding and reacting rather than preventing, the Security Council will never be able to anticipate events and intervene with sufficient time to produce a preventive effect and thus save lives. Council reform in the elected membership category is our way forward.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. We greatly appreciate the commitment of the General Assembly to the Security Council reform process. I would like to thank the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the previous session of the General Assembly, the former Permanent Representative of Poland, Ambassador Joanna Wronecka, and the Permanent Representative of Qatar, Ambassador Alya Al-Thani. I also wish to underscore that we have full confidence in the reappointment of Ambassador Al-Thani and the appointment of the Permanent Representative of Denmark, Ambassador Martin Hermann, to steer the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. They will have our full support and cooperation in discharging their important roles as co-Chairs.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group. I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Recent challenges have underlined the importance of international cooperation. There is a clear need to reinforce global solidarity and cooperation. Turkey believes in the inherent value of global cooperation through an inclusive and effective multilateralism. Our efforts should of course start here at the United Nations — the very embodiment and soul of multilateralism. We are now starting a new round of negotiations on one of the most critical matters on the agenda of our Organization. Almost all of us agree that reform is necessary and that time is of the essence. We need to fix the structural shortcomings of the current system, which are a disturbing reality that reminds us of our moral obligation to champion equality and accountability throughout our work. It is impossible to deny that there has been a growing gap between the Council's responsibilities and performance. The

legitimacy of the Council is determined by the people we serve, and we simply cannot afford to lose public trust.

I must underscore once again that reform should be forward-looking and aimed at making changes for improvement. Reform must address the shortcomings rather than consolidate the pre-existing problems. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past and expect a different result. Having listened to my colleagues here today, I believe that the majority of delegations are of the opinion that permanent membership of the Council and the question of the veto lie at the heart of the problem. We have still not been provided with a logical explanation for increasing the number of elements in an already defective system. We wonder, what is the added value in that? Turkey's principled approach is based on the need for meaningful reform that would bring about a more representative, effective, transparent and accountable Council.

We support an increase in the number of elected seats and the chance for all Member States to be represented on the Council. Member States, no matter how big or small, developed or less developed, deserve a better chance to serve on the Council. The veto — a relic from the end of the Second World War — should ideally be abolished. In that respect, we welcome initiatives that would limit the use of negative votes in the Council. I would also like to underline the fact that introducing more of the same power into the Council would not serve the common good. On the contrary, that is a recipe for even greater dysfunction and diminished accountability. We believe in a more equitable representation of regional groups, including enhanced opportunities for some more vulnerable groups. Of course, updating the Council's working methods and promoting its relationship with the General Assembly are equally important, as they shape the daily dynamics of the multilateral system.

The reform of the Security Council is an issue with broad implications for the national interests of Member States and the work of the United Nations. Our approach must therefore be comprehensive and inclusive and geared towards reaching consensus. The General Assembly is based on the notion of equality — equality of voices and votes. Therefore, a reform that serves only a minority cannot be imposed on the entire membership. We need to focus on the common good rather than forcing the membership to accommodate narrowly defined national interests. Let us be honest: the insistence on increasing the number of

permanent members of the Council is the main reason for the lack of progress in the reform process.

Turkey firmly believes in the virtue of the membership-driven nature of the reform process within the intergovernmental negotiations. We strongly believe in the power of dialogue and oppose any procedural shortcuts and non-consensual approaches. We call on all Member States to work together in a constructive manner towards the common good. An issue that has a direct impact on the lives of the people we serve today, as well as future generations, requires us to work together in the spirit of compromise and through a consensual process.

Ms. Shareef (Maldives): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on the pressing issue of Security Council reform. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, who will continue as co-Chair, and newly appointed co-Chair Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark. I assure them of our full support as they work to guide us towards our shared and necessary goal of the comprehensive reform of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Ambassador Joanna Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland, who, along with Ambassador Al-Thani, steered our work in the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-fifth session.

It is crucial that the diversity of the United Nations membership is reflected in the make-up of the Security Council — a main organ of the United Nations that bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. At the time when the current composition of the Council was decided, many of today's Member States were not yet independent countries. Today's security challenges are also much more complex and varied than the challenges of that time. The current challenges are simultaneously broader in scope and require the greater cooperation and participation of multiple stakeholders to resolve them, which therefore demands that the Council reflect a range of views to ensure its responsiveness and effectiveness in tackling the most pressing challenges of our time.

During the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, the President of the Maldives, Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, emphasized your theme, Sir, of a “presidency of hope” during your tenure at the helm of the General Assembly and conveyed that the United Nations offers the best hope of resolving the various problems that afflict our global community (see A/76/PV.3). We must strive to instil new life in the negotiations and make concrete progress on the issue of Council reform as soon as possible in order to ensure that the United Nations lives up to that hope.

The Maldives believes that the Security Council should reflect the realities of today’s world. We believe in a Council composition that reflects equitable geographical distribution; a Council whose decisions and decision-making processes are more democratic and consider the views of all States Members of the United Nations. To achieve equitable geographical distribution, as required by Article 23 of the Charter of the United Nations, we support the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council.

Any expansion of the Security Council should include membership for small and developing States, which are facing unique and pressing security challenges. When elected, those States that are regularly underrepresented in the Council bring a fresh perspective to its work. Since the establishment of the Council, very few small island developing States have managed to secure a seat. Past elections have clearly demonstrated that small States with fewer resources are at an unjust disadvantage when competing for a seat. That is why merely increasing representation alone is not enough. The process requires that further improvements are made to the working methods of the Council, including a more democratic and transparent election process.

Reform is necessary to ensure that the Security Council can proficiently address the emerging and non-traditional security threats, such as climate change and rising sea levels. Those non-traditional challenges threaten the very existence of several States, which deserve to have their security priorities considered by the Council and should rightfully be a part of the efforts to address them. The Council must also have effective institutional working arrangements with the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies so as to ensure that the decision-making process is inclusive and that the Council can effectively address those and other emerging security challenges.

Over the past seven decades, other major international institutions have taken steps to change and adapt. That is a necessity to ensure relevance in an ever-changing world. There is simply no reason to leave the Security Council out of that process, especially given that it is the most empowered institution in the United Nations system. It is high time to bring the Council in line with its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations to act on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations.

Let us redouble our efforts to make the Security Council fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. Let us move from rhetoric to concrete actions in order to make it a truly representative, accountable, democratic, transparent and effective institution.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): At the outset, allow me to join others in congratulating Ambassador Al-Thani and Ambassador Hermann on their appointment as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We are grateful to them for having taken up that important responsibility and look forward to working with them in supporting and reinvigorating the process.

Today I wish to reaffirm the United Kingdom’s strong commitment to the reform of the Security Council. The world has changed immeasurably since the Council’s establishment in 1946 and its most recent expansion in 1965. The Council must change, too, in order to better reflect the world as it is today in the twenty-first century and better respond to the threats to international peace and security that confront us. Our position is well known and unchanged. The United Kingdom supports the modest expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We support the creation of new permanent seats for India, Germany, Japan and Brazil, as well as permanent African representation on the Council. We also support a modest expansion of the non-permanent category of membership, taking the Council’s total membership to somewhere in the mid-twenties. We believe that those changes would make for a more representative Security Council that is better able to address the challenges to international peace and security by drawing on the perspectives and expertise of a wider range of the United Nations membership. And, vitally, it is a model for reform that would preserve the Council’s ability to respond nimbly and decisively to threats around the globe.

On the question of the veto, the United Kingdom has long maintained that disagreement in that area should not prevent progress in other areas where reform is possible. For its part, the United Kingdom has not exercised its right to use the veto since 1989. As supporters of the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, we remain committed to never vetoing a credible draft resolution on timely and decisive action to prevent or end a mass atrocity. We encourage all States, including other permanent members of the Council, to join us in that regard.

Before concluding, I will turn briefly to the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations at the current session. We remain fully committed to the intergovernmental negotiations process as a valuable mechanism for Member States to take forward the discussion on Security Council reform. We will be fully engaging in the forthcoming discussions. Nevertheless, as we have set out a number of times over the years, we continue to sympathize with Member States that have expressed concern and frustration over the lack of progress towards a substantive outcome. We call for the initiation of text-based negotiations with the aim of achieving concrete outcomes within a fixed time frame. And we remain open to all ideas for moving the process forward at an accelerated rate, including by formalizing and recording the intergovernmental negotiations.

We look forward to working this year towards fulfilling our collective commitment to instil new life in the Security Council reform process.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico endorses the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group and would like to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

Today's debate touches on one of the most important issues on the United Nations agenda, especially in the light of the commitments we undertook in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1). Mexico's position on this issue derives from the normative principles of its foreign policy, as contained in its Constitution, the most important of which is the legal equality of States in guiding the following perspectives.

First, in 1945 the 51 founding States Members of the United Nations were forced to accept that, in

an Organization underpinned by the principle of the legal equality of States, a status with special rights and prerogatives would be conferred on five Member States owing to the political circumstances under which the United Nations was conceived. But that is by no means a precept for the future. Incidentally, the only reform of the Security Council, which took place in 1963, led to an increase in the number of elected members from six to ten based on the need to ensure the improved representativeness of the Council as a result of decolonization and new members joining our Organization.

Secondly, we cannot change the past, but we can create a better future for all. Any reform should logically bring about an improved Council and not one that is similar to the one we have today but with more members. That is not the crux of the issue. A reform that is meaningful for all would be one that seeks to ensure that the only supranational organ of the United Nations — the decisions of which are binding on, and which acts on behalf of, all States Members of the United Nations — act with greater efficiency, transparency and accountability.

Thirdly, any such reform must necessarily include an improvement in the working methods of the Security Council. That depends to a large extent on the decisions of the Council enjoying the support of the General Assembly and therefore having the legitimacy that their implementation requires. For example, the debates held under the so-called Arria Formula to address matters that are not included on the Council's agenda are the result of an initiative put forward by Venezuela and have proven their usefulness. In short, the Council's working methods are so important that since 2006 the elected members of the Council have promoted the development of best practices and their codification into a compilation of agreements, adopted in the form of presidential statements of the Security Council, also known as Note 507 or the Green Book, the most recent edition of which was published in January this year, as accurately recalled by the representative of Costa Rica.

Fourthly, the issue of the Council's working methods is of such importance that it is precisely along those lines that Mexico is promoting an initiative, together with France, aimed at ensuring that the permanent members of the Security Council refrain from exercising the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocities so as not to impede the Council's action in such instances. One hundred and six States have joined that initiative,

which does not necessitate any reform of the Charter of the United Nations but could serve to ensure that the Council fully comply with the primary responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter. In other words, we are promoting that the permanent members be transformed from absolute monarchs to constitutional monarchs.

Fifthly, another key aspect of any Council reform is enhancing accountability in order to bring about greater effectiveness and legitimacy in its actions. Mexico maintains the view that such reform should not focus exclusively on the issue of increasing the number of its members. Important as that may be, it would effectively conceal the genuine challenges and dilemmas facing the Organization. No institution improves its performance and fully shoulders its mandate simply by increasing the number of its members. If that were the case, the Conference on Disarmament, the membership of which increased from 38 to 65 States in just a few years, would logically be more capable of fulfilling its mandate. Nothing could be further from the truth. The arguments surrounding the lack of representativeness that the Council suffers in its current composition have monopolized the attention of States for more than three decades, which has led to the belief that increasing the number of permanent members of the Council would automatically strengthen the collective security system. Mexico believes that to be a baseless notion now more than ever. Accountability derives from something much simpler, namely, the obligation to be subject to scrutiny and to submit to the vote of the majority, as is the case in any democracy.

Sixthly, Mexico is willing to support proposals that seek only to increase the number of non-permanent seats but with the possibility of enjoying longer mandates and the opportunity for immediate re-election and on the condition that regional groups retain their central role in order to ensure the equitable representation of each region. Let us not forget that the four States aspiring to permanent membership of the Council ultimately tend to be frequently elected as non-permanent members, so they cannot argue that they have been deprived of the chance to contribute to its work — the opposite is true.

Seventh, Mexico believes that any increase in the number of elected members of the Council should be carried out by applying general criteria that must be fulfilled by any prospective candidate to be able to serve as an elected member of it. Such criteria could include the acceptance of the mandatory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, being a State party to

disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and being a State party to treaties on human rights and international humanitarian law, *inter alia*. Given that candidates must submit a set of pledges and contributions in order to become members of the Human Rights Council, why should it be any different when aspiring to sit on the Security Council, especially for longer periods and with the possibility of immediate re-election? Being an elected member of the Security Council entails great responsibility and, *inter alia*, investing enormous political, financial and human resources. Nevertheless, it is first and foremost a service to the international community as a whole and much more than a quest for a position of privilege. All countries, irrespective of their size, should be able to aspire to that.

Eighth, Mexico's experience of its participation in the Security Council, including its current mandate, leaves no room for doubt: all elected members fulfil their role with a genuine vocation to serve and, without exception, make significant contributions to the Council's work. And here I must disagree with my esteemed colleague from Costa Rica: there are no Lilliputian States; all countries count and should be able to contribute to the maintenance of peace.

Ninth, the addition of permanent members would ultimately engender greater divisions within our common house, as it would inevitably give rise to competition of incalculable consequence within regions. Do the aspirants to permanent membership truly believe that they would be the only candidates in the event that an expanded category of permanent membership were approved? That would also produce another perverse effect: many States that have never served as elected members of the Security Council — more than a quarter of the Organization's membership — would be further marginalized and suffer diminished opportunities to one day achieve that aspiration.

Tenth, in short, we want a reform that enables the Security Council to adapt to the changes that will continue to emerge in a world that is dynamic by definition. Why should we insist on cementing a reality that will inevitably change as peoples and individuals progress? Even the five permanent members of the Council are no longer the same countries today as they were in 1945. They have all undergone profound transformation. Hence a candidate for permanent membership today may not have the credentials for such status tomorrow.

Mexico is in favour of instilling new life in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. Let us therefore seek progress on the issues that unite the membership of the United Nations and steer it towards the future, not the past. We want a reform for all, not just for a few; a reform that results in an inclusive rather than an exclusive collective security system; a reform that does not generate further division and animosity; a reform that ultimately creates greater fraternity among all peoples.

We welcome the appointment of the new co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark. We trust that they will skilfully guide our work in reducing the gaps between our respective positions. They can count on the full support of my delegation.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): I wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting on a long-standing issue of critical importance to the work and long-term relevance of the Organization — the question of Security Council reform. At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. Ireland is committed to supporting and working with them throughout the current session.

The essence of the United Nations and multilateralism is laws and structures that provide equal protection, respect and guarantees to large and small countries alike. The system must work to promote mutual benefits in addressing common challenges within shared frameworks. For the past 11 months, Ireland has had the responsibility and privilege of serving as an elected member of the Security Council and has sought to represent the wider views of the General Assembly and its diverse membership. That experience has shown us the particular progress that can be made by elected members, which can be enhanced only by ensuring further Security Council reform.

For Ireland, like so many others in this Hall today, the fundamental problem is clear: the Security Council no longer adequately reflects the make-up of the United Nations and the realities of the world around us. The longer that unacceptable situation persists, the greater the threat to the legitimacy and authority of the Council and its unique and vital role in maintaining international peace and security.

I would like to make three points on which I hope we can make particular progress during the seventy-sixth session.

First, I would like to emphasize that the unjust historical underrepresentation of countries from Africa is particularly egregious. We need to act now to bring about a fair and equitable African say in Council decisions. African countries rightly point to their lack of a permanent seat as evidence of an unfair and unjust dispensation. We also need to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard. That means that small island developing States, for example, must be able to play a role on the Council that reflects the seriousness and urgency of the situations they face.

Secondly, we must focus on instilling new life in the intergovernmental negotiations process in order to bring forward the long-overdue reform. In our view, such progress will occur only when we begin to engage in substantive text-based negotiations. That is a tried and tested method. With goodwill and flexibility, we can achieve that necessary and overdue reform and one that commands the widest possible support. It is for us, the States Members of the United Nations, to determine what that reform will look like. Sticking rigidly to positions for 20 years or more has not achieved success. We therefore appeal to all countries that support reform to consider how such change can be achieved. For our part, we are willing to support any model of reform that is capable of commanding sufficient consensus.

Thirdly, we must focus on the areas on which immediate progress can be made and take note of the particular avenues available so as to enhance the accountability and transparency of the Council, in particular with regard to its working methods and how to link up with the wider United Nations system in a more effective way. As we continue to serve on the Council, Ireland will do all it can to advance that particular dimension of reform.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): A Security Council that is more representative, democratic, transparent, effective and accountable is indispensable to address the multiple challenges that the world confronts today. Pakistan welcomes the resumed consideration by the General Assembly of the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group.

We thank the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session, Ambassador Wronecka of Poland and Ambassador Alya Saif Al-Thani of Qatar, as well as your predecessor, Sir, His Excellency Volkan Bozkır, for the important progress made in the intergovernmental negotiations process during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. We welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Alya Al-Thani of Qatar and the appointment of Ambassador Martin Hermann of Denmark as the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for the current session. We reiterate our expectation that the co-Chairs display complete impartiality in their management of the intergovernmental negotiations process, irrespective of their national positions.

The progress made last year in enlarging the areas of convergence and reducing the areas of divergence is reflected in the elements paper submitted by the previous session's co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. There was evidence of new convergence, especially on the need to expand the elected non-permanent membership of the Security Council, in particular for countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America. There was also a call for greater transparency and inclusiveness in the work of the Security Council and to enhance the Council's relationship with the General Assembly. As acknowledged in the elements paper, the intergovernmental negotiations process is the "legitimate and most appropriate platform to pursue Security Council reform" and a comprehensive reform can be achieved only by ensuring a Council that is representative of the interests of all Member States, be they small, medium or large. As repeatedly affirmed by the Assembly, any reform of the Council must therefore be based on the widest possible agreement of the entire membership of the General Assembly.

However, despite the encouraging progress made in the intergovernmental negotiations last year, wide divergences remain among Member States on several key issues. With regard to the categories of membership, it is essential to recall that the discussions involved various kinds of categories, including two-year non-permanent seats, longer-term non-permanent seats, re-electable non-permanent membership, permanent seats representing regions or individual States and permanent membership with the veto, without the veto and with a deferred veto. There is no clear division between the permanent and non-permanent categories of future Security Council membership. There are also

various proposals on the veto, including the prohibition of the veto, its restriction, its suspension and its extending to new permanent members. There are also different approaches to equitable representation, such as ensuring equity through recourse to regional representation, as proposed by Africa and the Uniting for Consensus group, or the enhanced representation of individual States, as proposed by the Group of Four.

We hope that the intergovernmental negotiations process will make renewed efforts this year to enlarge the areas of convergence. One area on which convergence can be readily broadened is the working methods of the Council. We also need to reduce the divergence in positions on some of the key issues I have just mentioned. The negotiating process will be in a position to move towards considering a text only when such key divergences are reconciled and there is broad convergence on the main elements — the five clusters — of a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Any precipitous move to artificially accelerate the negotiating process, such as by submitting a negotiating text, could derail the entire negotiating process. We know that based on two past experiences of processes having been derailed by similar precipitous moves.

As in previous years, the intergovernmental negotiations should hold separate meetings devoted to the consideration of each of the five clusters and continue to broaden the areas of convergence and reduce divergences. Procedural changes in the intergovernmental negotiations process will have to be adopted through the widest possible agreement of all Member States, as provided for in the decisions of the General Assembly. However, we are not in favour of transforming the intergovernmental negotiations process into a public exercise. The compromises that will be needed to achieve the widest possible agreement on Security Council reform cannot be negotiated in a public format. The past experience 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 would confirm that reasoning.

The UFC group continues to believe that its proposal for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council offers the best basis for compromise and consensus — a reform for all. Our proposal envisages expanding Security Council membership to 26, with the addition of 11 new non-permanent members. The

fundamental reason for the Security Council's frequent failure to respond effectively to conflicts and threats to peace and security is the inability of its permanent members to agree on decisive action. As we have said before, the problem cannot be the solution. Adding new permanent members will increase the prospect of paralysis in the Council. On the other hand, the addition of 11 non-permanent members would enhance the prospect of equitable representation for all Member States, which is the key objective of Security Council reform. Nevertheless, if, as proposed by some, six additional permanent members were included in a Council of 26 members, it would reduce the prospect of representation for the remaining 182 States Members of the United Nations. In terms of equitable representation, a Council composed of 11 permanent members and 15 non-permanent members would be a proportion of almost one permanent member to one non-permanent member, which would be worse than the current proportion of one permanent member to two non-permanent members. Six additional States would have a permanent presence on the Council, while the remaining 182 States would have to fight for the five new non-permanent seats that would be created. Such a reform would be completely incompatible with the General Assembly's mandate to promote equitable representation on and an increase in the Council's membership.

The UFC's proposal to add only non-permanent members, which would be elected periodically by the General Assembly, is also more democratic and consistent with the prescription of the Charter of the United Nations that the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the General Assembly.

We are sensitive to, and supportive of, Africa's legitimate quest to rectify the historical injustice committed against it, as reflected in the Common African Position. We are also sensitive to the similar injustices suffered by the Group of Arab States, small island developing States, Latin America and, in particular, the Islamic countries. The 57 States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is the second-largest organization after the United Nations, have declared at the summit level that they would have to be equitably represented in any expanded category of Security Council membership. We must be sensitive to the concerns and interests of all those groups.

We believe that the UFC's proposal regarding regional representation can be configured to redress those historical injustices, perhaps by reducing the

number of permanent members from the region that already enjoys three permanent members in the Council's current composition, rather than adding another permanent member to that group. We therefore need to consider how to reconfigure regional representation in ways that are equitable and will not prevent the adoption of an amendment to the Charter of the United Nations, as required for any reform of the Security Council.

The UFC group remains staunchly opposed to the proposals for permanent membership for individual Member States. There is no justification for the creation of new centres of privilege within the United Nations, which would run contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States Members of the United Nations. There are no States that can justifiably claim such unequal and elevated status on a permanent basis. Any country seeking more frequent presence on the Security Council should do so by subjecting itself to the democratic process of periodic election by the General Assembly.

The Uniting for Consensus group remains open to engaging in a frank and detailed discussion on ways and means of accommodating the aspirations of all Member States, including from the African, Asian and Latin American groups, as well as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab Group, small island developing States and others, in an equitable and comprehensive reform of the Council. We are convinced that the UFC's proposal can serve as a framework for an inclusive and equitable reform of the Council. We are committed to achieving that through consensus, which is the only way in which a reform of the Security Council can be realized.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting.

The United Nations is a symbol of multilateralism and shoulders the ardent expectation and unremitting pursuit of the peoples of the world for peace and development in the aftermath of two World Wars. In the face of century-old changes and a global pandemic, we need a strong United Nations to respond effectively to global challenges, improve global governance, practise genuine multilateralism and make greater efforts to promote democratization and the rule of law in international relations.

As the core of the collective security mechanism, the Security Council needs comprehensive reform in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in better fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. An efficient, representative, democratic and equitable Council is the common expectation of all Member States. At the same time, the reform of the Council is of great significance given its implications for war and peace and the future of the collective security mechanism. We need to learn from our experience of past negotiations on Council reform and work in the common interest of all Member States to ensure that the reform process moves in the right direction to the benefit of all countries and to ensure fairness and justice.

Last year, under the able leadership of His Excellency Mr. Volkan Bozkır, President of General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, and guided by the previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, and Ambassador Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of Poland, Member States engaged in frank and in-depth discussions on Council reform, which allowed us to garner a better understanding of delegations' positions and major concerns and enabled positive progress to be made in the negotiations. The discussions also facilitated a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the divergences in the positions held by Member States on the five key clusters of Council reform. China is grateful to the Permanent Representative of Qatar and the former Permanent Representative of Poland for their efforts and highly commends their contributions in guiding Member States to listen to the individual concerns of each country, enhance mutual trust through dialogue and consultation and keep the intergovernmental negotiations on the right track.

China hopes that the current session of the General Assembly will build on the gains of the previous session and that delegations will continue to engage in frank dialogue and in-depth exchanges. The President of the General Assembly has expeditiously appointed Ambassador Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, and Ambassador Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for the current session. We should maintain close communication and strengthen cooperation with the co-Chairs. We hope that they will be fair and impartial in discharging their

mandates and conduct their work in accordance with General Assembly decision 62/557 so as to ensure that the intergovernmental negotiations move in the right direction.

I should like to emphasize the following points. First, we must ensure that all countries share the fruits of Security Council reform. The United Nations belongs to its 193 States Members. All countries, be they big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, should reap the benefits of Council reform. Any such reform should not merely satisfy the self-interests of a few countries. The current composition of the Council reflects a North-South imbalance. The reform of the Council should therefore correct the overrepresentation of developed countries, increase the representation of developing countries, redress the historical injustices suffered by Africa and bring about improved representation for Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Arab region, small island States and small and medium-sized countries by granting them greater opportunities to serve on the Council and play an important role.

Secondly, we must enhance unity and trust among Member States. The reform of the Council involves the major concerns of all countries. Efforts need to be made to engage in dialogue while fully respecting the views and concerns of all parties. No reform process can be realized at the expense of the solidarity of Member States. A handful of States are attempting to force through a reform plan on which there are still deep divisions, which will serve only to exacerbate the differences of opinion and lead to antagonism and confrontation, thereby undermining the climate of mutual trust, solidarity and cooperation among Member States and making it difficult to build on the momentum and achievements made to date.

Thirdly, we should make every effort to seek consensus through dialogue and consultation. The five clusters of issues on Council reform are closely interrelated. We must achieve consensus-based solutions that take into account the interests and concerns of all parties. We wish to underscore that there are no good or bad ideas for reform and that efforts should be made to ensure that any proposal is inclusive and seeks the broadest possible consensus through dialogue and negotiation. The pursuit of one-sided self-interests, let alone the use of coercive measures, will be determinedly opposed by Member States.

Turning to the new round of intergovernmental negotiations, China would like to make three points. First, we must uphold the status of the intergovernmental negotiations as the main channel for achieving Council reform. The intergovernmental negotiations process constitutes the only legitimate platform for Member States to discuss Council reform and enjoys wide support from Member States. We support that the negotiations focus on the substance of any such reform in order to enhance mutual trust through dialogue and consultation. Any attempts to reinvent the wheel outside of the intergovernmental negotiations will fail to produce the outcome we all desire.

Secondly, we must adhere to the principle of a Member States-driven process. The objective of the intergovernmental negotiations is to broaden consensus on the overall direction and basic principles of Council reform. The arrangements for the negotiations should therefore adhere to the principle of a Member States-driven process and be determined by accumulating views and opinions based on extensive consultations with all parties. The number of meetings should help increase the effectiveness of our discussions and their format should be conducive to engaging in frank dialogue and in-depth exchanges and interactions among all parties.

Thirdly, we must ensure patient and democratic consultations. There is still a lack of consensus and major divergence among all parties on the overall direction and basic principles of Council reform. China opposes the hasty and premature launching of text-based negotiations, which will serve only to exacerbate the divisions and lead to increased confrontation among Member States and undermine the momentum gained so far. Requests that the General Assembly's rules of procedure be applied in the intergovernmental negotiations process, with official meeting records and live broadcasts of meetings via the Internet, are inconsistent with the nature of the informal meetings of the General Assembly and run contrary to decision 62/557. Such measures would also limit the space for parties to show flexibility in the discussions.

Council reform is a gradual process of building consensus. China stands ready to work with all parties by actively and constructively participating in the intergovernmental negotiations and to seek fair and rational ideas for reform through dialogue and consultation in order to ensure the effective functioning of the Council. The proposals for reform that enjoy the

broadest support are those that are oriented towards the common interests of Member States and the long-term development of the United Nations.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation takes note of the work of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council and would like to express its views on the agenda item under consideration.

First, the Security Council should bring to an end its double-dealing practices and become a credible and responsible organ that is truly conducive to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council — the primary responsibility of which is the maintenance of international peace and security — needs to adhere to the principle of impartiality and objectivity more strictly than any other United Nations organ. However, it has become a place of rampant double-dealing practices. This year the Council made an issue of our just and legitimate self-defensive measures while turning a blind eye to the reckless arms build-up and nuclear proliferation of the United States and its followers. That in itself vividly testifies to the fact that the Council does not represent the interests of the entire international community and has been reduced to a political tool that serves the interests of a few privileged countries. The international community should categorically reject the high-handedness of those countries that are trying to misuse the Security Council for their political and military interests, in violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and no longer allow the double-dealing practices.

Secondly, Council reform should be carried out based on the principle of ensuring the full representation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other developing countries. Developing countries today comprise the absolute majority of the States Members of the United Nations, yet they are not fully represented on the Security Council. We hold the view that developing countries should hold more seats on the Council in order to equitably represent the international community. Since it is difficult to agree on the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council owing to the widely divergent views of Member States, the most reasonable option at this stage would be to increase the non-permanent membership category, on which it should be easy to agree.

Thirdly, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to reiterate that Japan — a supreme war-criminal State — should not be allowed to hold a permanent seat on the Council. Japan is a war-criminal State that inflicted grave misfortunes and sufferings upon humankind by invading several Asian countries, including Korea, and provoking the Pacific war in the previous century. In Korea alone, Japan committed enormous crimes against humanity on a scale unprecedented in human history, including the forcible drafting and abduction of 8.4 million people, the massacre of 1 million and the sexual slavery of 200,000 for the Japanese imperial army. However, Japan has never thought to sincerely apologize or compensate for its past crimes. Instead it beautifies its history of aggression while openly expressing ambitions to revive its militarism and trigger another war by paying visits to Yasukuni Shrine. It is a mockery of, and an insult to, the United Nations that a country like Japan is seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council, the main responsibility of which is to maintain international peace and security.

Fourthly, Council reform needs to proceed under the principle of consensus by holding as many negotiations as necessary, given that such reform would affect the interests of every Member State. In selfish pursuit of their own self-interests, some countries are trying to hastily strike a deal on the matter of Council reform, which would result in fuelling mistrust and discord among Member States and undermine the credibility of the negotiations. All Member States should engage in the intergovernmental negotiations in good faith and with patience so as to realize international justice and bring about a reform of the Security Council that transforms it into a responsible organ that conforms to the requirements of our times.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express its expectation that the discussions on this agenda item provide an important opportunity to lay the foundations to bring about tangible results in future negotiations processes.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Let me begin by welcoming the appointment of the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council — Ambassadors Alya Al-Thani of Qatar and Martin Hermann of Denmark. We have full confidence in their skills and pledge to

contribute to ensuring that their work is fruitful. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for convening this session, which will allow us to take stock of our recent work and discuss how to move forward in the negotiations on Security Council reform.

Brazil aligns itself with statements delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Japan, on behalf of the Group of Four, and by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group. I would like to add a few considerations in my national capacity.

We have been discussing the issue of equitable representation on the Security Council for more than 40 years in the General Assembly. Despite the overwhelming support of the United Nations membership for the reform process, we continue to be trapped in an enclosure, the fences of which we have built ourselves. As is to be expected in any negotiating process, there is a difference of views on what the outcome of such a reform should look like. What is incomprehensible, however, is that a process has been devised that makes bridging those differences virtually impossible. To make matters worse, the passing of time is aggravating the gaps in the Council's representativeness, with detrimental consequences for its legitimacy and effectiveness. Failing to address the reform of the Council in a timely manner could have far-reaching consequences that may put the collective security system of the United Nations in check, along with multilateralism and international law.

In that respect, the Permanent Representative of Italy underlined in his statement earlier this morning that Council reform must be one that “meets the collective interest of all members”. I do not frequently agree with our colleagues from the Uniting for Consensus group, but in that case I subscribe fully to the sentiment. However, I submit that there is only one yardstick for measuring a reform that complies with that objective. Such a reform must yield a Council that effectively delivers on its mandate to maintain international peace and security. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations specifies that the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership. That delegation of power to the Council by the membership must meet two criteria: first, the wider membership must feel that it is represented among both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council; and secondly, both categories of members must reflect the views and interests of the wider membership. Anything less will

lead to failure in meeting the collective interests of all members.

During the previous session of the General Assembly, which marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we witnessed some positive developments on Security Council reform. The commitment adopted by all Heads of State and Government to instil new life in the discussions on the reform of the Council should provide us with the political energy to revamp the intergovernmental negotiations, especially with regard to the Council's working methods. Irrespective of the contrasting substantive perspectives of Member States, we all know that the discussions have been negatively affected by the flaws in the process itself, which is not tailored to result in effective negotiations. Thirteen years after its creation, it is safe to say that the intergovernmental negotiations process has proven ineffective as a platform for negotiations. Real negotiations are yet to start, and our discussions have become a Sisyphean task that invites the repetition of well-known positions year after year.

Something curious happened this morning when I was entering United Nations Headquarters. Protesters were blocking the vehicle entrance and chanting, "no more blah, blah, blah". I was confused as to whether they were referring to the outcome of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference or to the intergovernmental negotiations.

As a necessary step to instil new life in the discussions on Council reform, we need to consider possible means to give the intergovernmental negotiations process some hope of delivering on its mandate. As is general practice in any multilateral negotiation, it is past time for the intergovernmental negotiations to start text-

based discussions. A single consolidated text with attribution is key to encourage engagement and would represent a give-and-take exercise that may ultimately result in agreed language. Moreover, we see no reason to deprive the intergovernmental negotiations of the tools that the Organization provides to facilitate negotiations, such as record-keeping, the application of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and webcasting. Bridging different views and perspectives is the *raison d'être* of the United Nations. We believe there is nothing unique to the intergovernmental negotiations that should prevent us from having a regular United Nations process to discuss the subject of Council reform in accordance with General Assembly standards.

Brazil is confident that the co-Chairs will guide Member States so that the intergovernmental negotiations process may finally live up to its original mandate. We must at all costs avoid further harming the legitimacy of the intergovernmental negotiations process, which would be caused by the mere rollover of its work to the subsequent session of the General Assembly without properly reflecting on the progress made. For our part, we stand ready to turn routine discussions into lively debates and to challenge the myth of consensus if necessary. We hope that under your leadership, Sir, we will be able to end the cycle of repetition. Rest assured that we stand ready to lend our full support to you and the co-Chairs in that endeavour.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall, after the consideration of sub-items (a) to (e) of agenda item 117.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.