



# General Assembly

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*President:* Mr. Kőrösi ..... (Hungary)

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

## Agenda item 60

### Use of the veto

**The President:** “Only he deserves power who every day justifies it”. Those are the words of our second Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, which get right to the heart of our reason for meeting today. One year ago, we came together and adopted the so-called veto initiative. That move was in itself a breakthrough — a game changer. The new agenda item opened the door to a new form of collaboration and accountability. It plays a pivotal role in bringing two key organs of our institution — the General Assembly and the Security Council — closer together. Those organs were designed to be complementary.

I commend the membership for taking a step further in that direction with today’s first-ever formal debate on the use of the veto. This is a unique opportunity to seek unity rather than sow division. The General Assembly and the Security Council have separate mandates, but we must share the same goal — of a future free from the scourge of war in a world nurtured by genuinely united nations. To the outside world, we are one United Nations, which must deliver on the promise to ensure global peace and security. Today’s debate is an unprecedented opportunity to discuss how our new tool can make that ideal into a reality for all.

We do not meet to discuss Security Council reform or to pit United Nations bodies against each other. We are here to figure out the best ways to exploit the new

instrument in our big United Nations toolbox. Do we want it just to replicate divisions within the Security Council? Or do we want a General Assembly that complements the work of the Council, being more active on specific issues and situations, as it has done in the past? Do we want the General Assembly to take decisions, consider concrete recommendations and send them back to the Council? In which direction do we think we should go? There is no wrong answer, there are only new ideas. But I genuinely encourage everyone to use this debate creatively and constructively, ask tough questions, seek game-changing solutions, dare to be bold and dare to bring about change for a more efficient and impact-oriented United Nations.

The issue of the use of the veto affects the whole United Nations, and the decisions taken here — or the lack thereof — reverberate worldwide. The use of the veto should always remain the very last resort. It is my hope that Council members can come together and work for viable solutions, go beyond their immediate interests and act responsibly for the sake of peace across the world. That way, we will never have to fall back on the veto resolution, because in my view it is like an oxygen mask in an aeroplane — good to have, but best never to be used.

Just as the Security Council sends its special report to the Assembly when a veto is cast, I intend to send the verbatim record of today’s debate, as well as all future debates on this item, to the President of the Council. With that in mind, I ask everyone to be as solutions-oriented and concrete as possible. Today’s exchange of views cannot be just a pro forma event or a mere

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administrative procedure. This is an opportunity to chart new avenues for multilateralism and cooperation, an opportunity to rebuild trust, both within our institution and in it, and an opportunity to do better for the 8 billion people who count on us.

Let me conclude my statement with wise words of the same man, Dag Hammarskjöld: “It is when we all play safe that we create a world of utmost insecurity.” And we are here to create a world in which people can thrive in peace and security. I wish all members a very fruitful discussion today.

**Mr. Paulauskas** (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic countries — Estonia, Latvia and my own country, Lithuania.

Resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”, led by our Liechtenstein colleagues and adopted one year ago, was a remarkable step towards accountability, legitimacy and transparency in the use of the veto power. Since its adoption, it has served its purpose and ensured a significant opportunity for collaboration between the principal organs of the Organization.

During the past year, there were three occasions on which the General Assembly was obliged to step up after Security Council decisions were impeded by members that exercised their veto power, including with respect to the draft resolutions of the Council concerning the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Syria and Russia’s unlawful actions regarding the illegal so-called referendums in regions within Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders. The meetings of the General Assembly held after the casting of a veto in the Security Council, which featured numerous speakers representing a range of countries, demonstrated that the veto initiative fulfils the primary goal of promoting greater accountability for the Council’s work. It provided the General Assembly with the opportunity to not only receive a vote explanation but also openly discuss the matter in question and utilize its authority to the fullest extent.

The Security Council was given the primary mandate to maintain international peace and security by the Charter of the United Nations. However, the unprovoked and brutal war against Ukraine waged by Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, clearly exposed the structural and procedural weaknesses of that organ. The increased abuse of the

veto power further illustrates how Russia continues to hold the Security Council hostage. Subsequently, a reform of the Security Council is inevitable, including through enlarged representation. Security Council members, especially permanent members, have a special responsibility. Any permanent member that exercises the veto to defend its own acts of aggression against another Member State very seriously undermines the credibility of the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations itself and the whole multilateral rules-based international system, and it should therefore be held fully accountable.

The abusive use of a veto by a permanent member of the Council is also the reason that we cannot assure full accountability in the Security Council for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The Baltic States highlight that the veto power is constrained under Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter, which obliges a party to a dispute to abstain from voting. We also believe that Security Council members should refrain from using the veto in cases of mass atrocities, including the crime of aggression. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles outlined in the United Nations Charter and express our support for enhancing the role of the General Assembly. We stand ready to continue collaborating towards ensuring greater accountability, legitimacy and transparency in the use of the veto power.

**Mr. Zellenrath** (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Benelux countries — Belgium, Luxembourg and my own country, the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Benelux countries were proud sponsors of resolution 76/262, which was adopted by consensus one year ago today and is commonly known as the veto initiative. We reiterate our thanks to Liechtenstein for its leadership on that landmark resolution. In the face of the further erosion of the public’s trust in the ability of the Security Council to maintain peace and security following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the adoption of that resolution was a significant step towards increasing the accountability and transparency of the Security Council, while at the same time strengthening the role of the General Assembly by giving the representatives of all Member States an opportunity to speak on the issue on which a veto was cast. Allow me to highlight three brief points on the anniversary of the veto initiative resolution.

First, resolution 76/262 is there to remind everyone that the power of the veto is not a privilege but a responsibility — a responsibility that must be taken seriously by all permanent members of the Security Council. A permanent seat in the Council comes with the great responsibility to work tirelessly to achieve the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. That is not just a moral obligation. Under Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States in carrying out its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. The veto initiative is therefore a powerful tool to remind every permanent member of the Security Council that is considering casting a veto that it will have to face the full membership and hear whether or not the membership agrees that the use of the veto has in fact benefited peace and security and has not hindered it.

Secondly, the veto initiative is critical because the veto has not always been used as it was intended, which is especially damaging when the use of the veto prevents the Council from taking decisive steps to address mass atrocities and international crimes. The 17 Russian vetoes on the situation in Syria come to mind. That is why the Benelux countries strongly support initiatives such as those by France and Mexico and by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group that aim to limit the use of veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. In addition, we believe that all member States of the Security Council must act in the spirit of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter, which stipulates that a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.

That brings me to my third and final point — the role and responsibility of the General Assembly in matters pertaining to peace and security. While the Security Council remains the principal organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly must be mutually reinforcing and complementary. We believe the General Assembly has a political responsibility to address situations in which the use of the veto leads to paralysis in the Security Council, as it did by convening an emergency special session after the invasion of Ukraine. Members of the General Assembly must make full use of the Assembly's powers within the United Nations Charter, including by making policy recommendations on current and future crises. The

General Assembly should — and can — be much more than a mere forum for statements of principle. It can, as it has done on multiple occasions in the past, drive policy and take on operational tasks, especially when the Security Council fails to fulfil its mandate because it lacks consensus, or when a veto is cast to prevent it from protecting the United Nations Charter and the interests of the United Nations membership as a whole.

In conclusion, the adoption of resolution 76/262 was a remarkable moment in United Nations history. Let us hope that the mechanism will not be needed often, with the Council carrying out its mandate as it should. However, when that is not the case, the General Assembly must act with unity, purpose and vision.

**Mr. Hermann** (Denmark): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

Today we mark the first anniversary of the adoption of resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative. As sponsors and whole-hearted supporters of the initiative, the Nordic countries would like to start by commending our colleagues from Liechtenstein for its important work on what we consider to be a landmark resolution. One year on, that resolution has had real and tangible consequences for the use of the veto. Today is a moment for evaluation and reflection on the use of the veto in general and the effects of the initiative. In a nutshell, we have not been disappointed.

First, it has given the General Assembly a concrete tool of accountability and has already had real political effects on our *modus operandi*. In one year, three General Assembly debates were held following the use of the veto, in which the veto-wielding Council member participated. In addition, special reports (see A/76/853, A/76/905 and A/77/551) were produced by the Council following the use of each veto. That is a welcome step forward, and we expect that they will also be appropriately reflected in the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. The veto initiative has received significant attention across Member States and the wider public. It has also found its way into the reasoned report of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism. As such, the initiative has not only underlined the accountability of the permanent members of the Security Council to the General Assembly, but it has also raised the stakes for using the veto. It has given the broader membership a platform to

act, and the public a window through which to look into our deliberations.

Secondly, it has worked to recalibrate the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. That deeper, structural shift has been a welcome reassertion of the power of the General Assembly, including on matters of international peace and security. It has ensured a more accountable and transparent relationship between the General Assembly and the Council. Let us not forget that the Council does its work on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations. Its decisions — or lack thereof — affect us all, and it should be held accountable by us all.

Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate that the Nordic countries believe that further reform is urgently needed to ensure that a veto is always used in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and does not paralyse Council action on critical matters of international peace and security. We once again urge those Member States that have not yet done so to join the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct and the Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocity, launched by France and Mexico. We encourage all delegations to share their views on additional relevant reforms to further limit the scope and use of the veto.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries note the importance of fully implementing Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which essentially entails that a State should not be allowed to be party, judge and jury at the same time. We must consider with some urgency how to ensure that provision is better adhered to in practice.

The Nordic countries share with many Member States a sincere and determined commitment to reform the Security Council. The steps we are taking now, such as the veto initiative, are absolutely essential for the credibility, legitimacy and accountability of the United Nations and for the international peace and security architecture as a whole. Today we must commend and acknowledge the importance and power in initiatives such as this one, which demonstrate the potential of incremental reform. Through relatively simple means, such initiatives can deliver tangible progress and do not require Charter amendments. Sometimes, big advancements can be made with seemingly small changes. But our work is not done. The Nordic countries will not give up our staunch belief in the necessity for a comprehensive reform of the Council. We will continue

to work with others towards an accountable, legitimate and regionally representative Council.

In conclusion, let me underline that an effective Security Council is absolutely vital to deliver on the promise of multilateralism by providing solutions to global challenges through effective, representative and legitimate institutions. When the veto power is invoked, it most often waters down the credibility of the Council and does little to secure international peace and security, with consequences for both people and planet. Being invited to the General Assembly to explain their positions introduces a measure of accountability and provides an opportunity for all Member States to have a voice in our common endeavour: working towards peace and security across the globe, across all continents and with the involvement of all voices and States in the process.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): I want to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to discuss the veto initiative and for your leadership this morning in offering the members of the General Assembly an opportunity to speak on 26 April — one year to the day since the adoption of resolution 76/262.

We continue to be proud to have led that process and thank those who have expressed their gratitude this morning. We are gratified by the strong and immediate political relevance of the veto initiative, as well as the support it has received from Member States, the Secretary-General and many other commentators. The standing mandate for the Assembly to meet whenever a veto has been cast has increased the reputational cost for the vetoing State. We appreciate that the relevant Council members have answered the call to explain their veto at every opportunity to date. We appreciate even more the decisions of the relevant Council members against exercising their veto since the adoption of the veto initiative. The prospect of accountability will certainly not deter every use of the veto, as we heard yesterday from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, but it is certainly showing positive results already. We hope that, in turn, it will increasingly encourage penholders, in particular elected Council members in that role, to propose texts that meet the expectations of the membership as a whole.

Under the terms of the veto initiative, the Security Council is invited to produce a special report on the use of the veto in line with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. We were pleased to



see that the Security Council submitted such a special report (see A/76/853, A/76/905 and A/77/551) each time a veto was cast in the past year — again, following the terms of resolution 76/262. That practice contributes to the accountability of the Council to the Assembly, and we expect that those special reports will be adequately reflected in the Council's annual report.

As others said this morning, the veto initiative also contributes to a resetting of the power balance between the Security Council and the General Assembly. That is an important change that we must develop further. Accountability is one dimension of the veto initiative, while enhancing the role of the Assembly on matters of peace and security is the other. We are grateful to see that the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism built upon that theme in its report entitled *A Breakthrough for People and Planet: Effective and Inclusive Global Governance for Today and the Future*, by proposing that

“If the Security Council cannot or will not act in the face of threats to international security, then the matter should immediately be placed before the General Assembly for action.”

Unfortunately, it is not realistic to expect greater Council unity in the imminent future. A General Assembly that is active in the area of peace and security is therefore key for ensuring the thriving multilateralism envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations. The veto initiative has facilitated the possibility for action taken by the General Assembly as the result of a veto. In the light of the merits and needs of the situation, such products can contribute to effective multilateralism and to a dynamic complementary role of the Assembly to that of the Security Council. That is the avenue we must explore and focus on in moving forward.

The Assembly has proven its ability to step in with the passing of resolutions when the Security Council was deadlocked in the case of the creation of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism in Syria and in condemning the military coup in Myanmar, and of course, it has played a strong and assertive role since the illegal invasion of Ukraine, since the Security Council delegated its authority under the “Uniting for peace” formula. Thanks to the ability of the Assembly to live up to the challenge, in combination with other tracks, such as initiatives by the Secretary-General, in particular on the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the United Nations has proven far more effective in response to

the aggression against Ukraine than many feared a year ago.

If the veto initiative is one essential element in addressing the pervasive effect of the veto on the United Nations system, it must not be the only one. We are committed — and we are grateful that others have mentioned it this morning — in particular to consider the application of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, which is meant to ensure that “a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting” in Council decisions taken under Chapter VI. The proper application of that provision would be of direct relevance to the question of the use of the veto. And, as our colleague from Denmark just said, the State whose behaviour is meant to be governed by the law should not be in a position to decide how the law is applied. We look forward to further conversations in that regard. Key provisions of the Charter, such as that, are to be applied in line with the overall objective and purpose of the treaty.

The veto is the most controversial and the most debated provision of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, it is of course also a fact of life and very likely here to stay. We can collectively mitigate its use by taking the veto to a very different place in the practice of the Security Council, and in fact throughout the United Nations system, than the one it has been occupying for many long years. The veto must no longer be a permanent threat and possible impediment to the effectiveness of our Organization, but slowly fade away into obsolescence through a range of measures. The veto initiative certainly is an essential step on that path.

**Ms. Chan Valverde** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): One year ago today, we gathered in this Hall, in the most democratic forum in the world, where the size and status of States is irrelevant — to adopt resolution 76/262, which strengthens the growing relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, in order to ensure that our Organization can effectively maintain international peace and security at all times.

Costa Rica has supported the veto initiative since its inception. And, despite the fact that the initiative has been in place for only one year, we can already identify three significant contributions.

First, the United Nations critical work on international peace and security can now continue despite the paralysis of the Security Council. When

parts of the United Nations system are unable to fulfil their mandate, the veto initiative gives this Hall the opportunity to step in, to rise above the political theatre and unite for peace and the protection of the Charter of the United Nations.

Before the initiative, a veto could paralyse the United Nations as a whole. Instead of acting, a veto forced the United Nations to watch from the sidelines as multiple crises emerged. The impact of those political crises is devastating, and civilians around the world pay the cost.

The Security Council goes on recess, but crises do not, nor do those directly affected by them. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee estimates that forced displacement worldwide now exceeds 100 million people, many of them fleeing conflict. Those failures have eroded confidence and led many to question the viability and legitimacy of the Security Council, but also the legitimacy of the United Nations system itself. We all remember the galvanizing force of President Zelenskyy's speech to the Security Council just over a year ago (see S/PV.9011), in which he questioned its fundamental purpose and called on the Council to dissolve itself all together if it did not take action to help Ukraine.

We cannot afford to let confidence in multilateralism fade. It is up to the General Assembly — where all Member States are permanent members — to ensure that the ineptitude of the Security Council does not bring the entire system down with it. We can do that by ensuring that this Hall maintains a culture of integrity, vigilance and duty of care that is commensurate with the gravity of the Organization's mandate.

Change is not easy for anyone, but, in the United Nations context, the veto initiative demonstrates that we can and must do more to prepare this system for change. And that is the second contribution of the veto initiative: it reorients the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. It reinforces the role of the Chamber in supporting international peace and security and should be taken up by all Council members as a commitment to adhere more strictly to the laws and principles to which it holds — or at least seeks to hold — other member States accountable.

However, we cannot allow millions of people to die waiting for the Security Council to adopt the changes that will help restore global confidence in its decisions.

Here, in the General Assembly, we must remain active and creative in preparing to further expand our role in issues of peace and security. We must organize ourselves to grow this new organization and ensure that we can succeed where the Security Council has failed.

We should also not see this initiative as a silver bullet that will resolve all Security Council and General Assembly dynamics. Senior appointments are another area that warrants realignment. The permanent members of the Security Council still dominate the selection process of the Secretary-General and continue to limit senior appointments to their nationals.

The third and most important contribution of the veto initiative is the fact that States can be both small and significant, powerful and empowering. Small States are the true guardians of the international order and a corrective to a still shocking might-makes-right mentality. We are here to fight isolationism and unilateralism. We are here to restore legitimacy to the institutions that we know we need and that are being undermined, day after day, by one or more of their former guarantors.

As small States, we are willing to take more ownership of peace and security issues, including greater accountability for the failures in that area that continue to damage global respect for the multilateral system. With regard to security, all Member States must collectively renounce the tendency to beg the Security Council for permission and do more to take control.

Unlocking the courage and wisdom of small States is key to preserving the credibility of an Organization that continues to groan under the weight of threats from States that use its mechanisms in part as an underhanded way to pursue narrow national interests, including those at odds with the values and priorities of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is the small and determined, the thoughtful and passionate that can create the conditions for the restoration of a global system now teetering on the brink of its own invalidity. The veto initiative is an important step — an important piece in this puzzle — and marks the beginning of the journey, not its destination.

**Mr. Da Fonseca Fernandes Ramos** (Portugal): Mr. President, Portugal would like to thank you for convening today's important debate, precisely one year after the adoption of the landmark resolution 76/262.

Portugal proudly co-sponsored resolution 76/262, which we deem a General Assembly initiative of great significance and consequence. Its adoption showed there is consensus among Member States on the need to increase scrutiny of the use of the veto. It also clearly increased the accountability of the Security Council, and particularly the veto holders, to the General Assembly, and, by extension, to the international community as a whole.

Resolution 76/262 has already led to three meetings of the General Assembly following the use of the veto in the Security Council. Those meetings were important debates, with wide participation. This shows the relevance of the initiative, and how clear it is to the General Assembly that, as stated in the United Nations Charter, the Council works on behalf of the Assembly and must therefore be accountable to Member States both when it acts and when it fails to act.

One year after the adoption of resolution 76/262, we should consider ways to improve its framework and application, for instance by taking up the recommendation by the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, as the representative of Liechtenstein just said, to immediately place before the General Assembly, for action, matters on which the Security Council fails to act.

Since any amendment to the United Nations Charter requires the ratification by all permanent members of the Security Council, the veto will cease to exist only when all those members agree to relinquish that right. Until then, and as recommended by the High-Level Advisory Board, the use of the veto should be as restricted as possible, and the permanent members of the Security Council should exercise the veto sparingly and in full compliance with the United Nations Charter.

That is why Portugal supports both the Franco-Mexican declaration and the Code of Conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group (ACT) on the use of the veto. We encourage all States Members of the United Nations to join both initiatives, including all permanent members of the Council. The ACT Code of Conduct, in particular, is close to garnering the support of two thirds of the General Assembly. If that threshold is met, proper consideration should be given to turning it into an official United Nations instrument.

**Mr. Fifield** (Australia): In a world facing multiple complex challenges, it really is especially important

for all countries to work together to strengthen and enhance the multilateral system and to stand up for the rules, standards and norms that allow each country to pursue its own aspirations and its own prosperity.

Australia has a long history of opposing the use of the veto in the Security Council. In fact, it was a former Australian Minister for External Affairs and President of the General Assembly, Mr. Herbert Evatt, who at the inception of the United Nations was among the first to question the veto's equity and effectiveness. And it is why on this date a year ago, Australia was pleased to join more than 80 other States Members of the United Nations in co-sponsoring and supporting the consensus adoption of resolution 76/262, also known as the veto initiative. By mandating a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council, this initiative not only delivers much needed transparency and accountability, it also reinforces the complementary relationship between two of the principal organs of the United Nations — the Security Council and General Assembly.

The United Nations Charter is really clear. While the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Charter does not preclude the General Assembly from debate and deliberation when the Council is unable to act on behalf of the wider membership. Since adopting resolution 76/262, we, the members of the General Assembly, have thrice called to the floor those permanent members that have exercised the veto.

There is power in requesting veto users to justify and explain what their positions are under the full scrutiny of the General Assembly. As the most representative United Nations organ, the views of this Assembly should carry weight. All Member States must have confidence that the Council can respond effectively to threats to, and breaches of, international peace and security.

However, too often we see the veto used to enable the unchecked abuse of the Charter, including by the very countries that were given the veto. Exhibit A is Russia's use of the veto in relation to its illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine, which is flagrantly disrespectful of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which states that a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.

While today is a chance to reflect on our progress, Australia will continue to look for opportunities to build on this important initiative, further enhance the role of

the General Assembly in line with its mandate under the United Nations Charter, as well as the purposes and principles therein, and call for better standards governing the use of the veto, such as the Conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and the French-Mexican initiative on the suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocities.

Australia welcomes the special reports produced for the General Assembly following the triggering of the veto, and we encourage further discussion of ways to embed and institutionalize this practice.

**Mr. Muhamad** (Malaysia): Today marks the first anniversary of the adoption of resolution 76/262. When it was adopted back in 2022, States Members of the United Nations were hopeful for a renewed and more effective multilateralism. Against the backdrop of growing criticism on the ineffectiveness of the Security Council, which has been constantly hindered by deadlocks and deep divisions, resolution 76/262 provided hope that there would be more accountability among the permanent members of the Council in exercising the veto.

Yet until today, we have continued to witness how the immunity provided by the veto emboldens certain countries to commit some of the most serious violations of the United Nations Charter and international law. The use of the veto has further divided the already polarized Security Council and paralysed it. We have seen inaction on the part of the Council in dealing with conflicts in Myanmar, Palestine, Syria and Ukraine, among many others.

The veto power accorded to some major Powers in 1945 has been routinely abused to cater to the interests of the major Powers and their allies, at the expense of the collective interests of the international community. Malaysia holds the position that the exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council should be regulated in order to prohibit it from being used unjustifiably or abused by the permanent members, against the wishes of the majority. It should not be used in situations involving mass atrocity crimes, such as genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Malaysia is also of the view that, to be more effective, the veto power must be exercised by at least two permanent members and supported by at least three non-permanent members of the Security Council. The General Assembly should then back the decision with a simple majority. Nonetheless, in the long run,

we believe that the veto has no role in the modern democratic multilateral architecture. Malaysia wishes to reiterate its call for the abolishment of the veto.

The world is looking at us. The Council's legitimacy and credibility continues to be scrutinized and criticized. The Security Council, intended to be the guardian of international peace and security, should not allow the pejorative will of the major Powers to overrule the wishes of the majority with a single vote. The undemocratic principle of the veto, at the core, runs against the very principle that the United Nations was built upon — equality among all peoples and nations. Malaysia will continue to work together with other members to that end through the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, towards reforming the United Nations in order to make it more efficient, open, transparent and inclusive.

**Mr. Prabowo** (Indonesia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting.

Last year, we adopted resolution 76/262 on the use of the veto. Since its adoption, two meetings have been held under this agenda item. That means that, in the course of one year, two draft resolutions were vetoed. It also means that the Security Council was not able to exercise its unity in resolving international security issues. Nonetheless, this resolution should not be used only to measure how many times the veto is exercised. Instead, we must utilize this resolution to go beyond numbers.

First, the veto initiative should push forward progress in resolving security-related issues. However, from the veto exercised under this agenda item, namely, on Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Syria, we unfortunately have yet to see progress in the Council. From this experience, it is important to remember our main task — to effectively resolve the core issue at hand rather than result only in the proliferation of meetings.

Secondly, the resolution should serve as a tool to build a more transparent and effective Security Council. It is the responsibility of all States Members of the United Nations to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. Such a responsibility is even greater for members of the Security Council, in particular those with veto power. While the explanation by those who exercised the veto is important, ultimately, our goal is to strengthen all work of the United Nations that will further promote multilateralism.



Thirdly, it should improve interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly. That interaction will contribute to greater accountability and legitimacy of the Council and reflect the complementarity of work between the Council and the General Assembly.

The United Nations Charter is clear on the role, mandate and competence of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. All deliberations under this agenda item must therefore not be a substitute for the work and responsibility of the Security Council. In that context, while we have the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations process, we need to make use of the discussion on the Summit of the Future in order to shape multilateral security architecture that is fit for purpose.

In conclusion, I pledge our delegation's commitment to concerted efforts to strengthen the United Nations and multilateralism.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): We live in difficult times. The principles and structures built 78 years ago in order to promote international peace and security are under grave threat. Once again, the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has been paralysed by the strategic rivalries of its permanent members and the exercise of the veto.

My country is very familiar with the veto. It was the exercise of the veto that prevented action by the Security Council to resolve the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir and to enforce a plebiscite, as decided by the Council. It is the threat of the veto that now prevents the Security Council from enforcing its decisions on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and other issues, such as Palestine.

Pakistan has therefore supported all efforts over several years to restrict the abuse of the veto by any of its permanent members. In the aftermath of the events of last year, Pakistan joined in supporting resolution 76/262, calling on the President of the Assembly to convene the Assembly within 10 working days after the exercise of a veto by one or more permanent members of the Council and asking for a report on the rationale for such a veto.

We welcome the adoption of this resolution and believe that it has had a positive impact on the situations that the Council is facing. Past and recent experience has confirmed that the abolition or restraint

on the misuse of veto rights of the five permanent members will have to be an integral part of the reform of the Security Council. And it is because of that experience that Pakistan, together with the Uniting for Consensus group, remains opposed to the creation of new permanent members on an expanded Security Council. More permanent members and more vetoes will multiply the likelihood of paralysis and inaction by the Security Council.

While Pakistan voted for resolution 76/262, under this item last year, we wish to once again clarify our position.

First, the final resolution of the issue of the veto will have to be found as an integral part of the reform of the Security Council. The question of the veto has been identified as one of the five interrelated clusters for Security Council reform. And the decisions on all five clusters will need to be adopted together in a comprehensive reform. Pakistan therefore welcomed the insertion of the eighth preambular paragraph in resolution 76/262, which notes that the resolution and its provisions are without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

Secondly, we have agreed to the processes of the General Assembly to review the exercise of an abuse of the veto as a means of reinforcing the Assembly's oversight role under Article 10 and other provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. That does not impinge on the distribution of the responsibilities of the Security Council and the General Assembly under the various provisions of the Charter, in particular Articles 10 to 14.

Thirdly, any measure adopted to restrict or restrain the abuse of the veto will have to be consistent with all the provisions of the Charter.

We understand the motivation of those who wish to find ways to moderate the use of the veto. We are reassured that their proposals are designed to reinvigorate the Charter functions of the General Assembly and are not related to or do not impinge on the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. The discussion of the veto, which preoccupies so many of us these days, has revealed certain realities, and the central issue involved is the negative power of the veto. Pakistan believes that can be balanced by, on the one hand, placing restrictions on the use of the veto and, on the other, enhancing the role of the non-permanent members of the Council through larger

and perhaps longer representation and changing the threshold of approval of the decisions of the Council.

My delegation remains convinced that the intergovernmental negotiations process offers the best avenue to reach an agreed outcome on the reform of the Security Council. It is only through patient exchanges, mutual accommodation and compromises that we can broaden the areas of convergence and reduce the points of divergence and thereby evolve a model for reform that can be accepted by the widest possible majority of Member States, as stipulated in decision 62/557.

**Mr. Önal (Türkiye):** I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the first anniversary of the consensus adoption of the historic resolution 76/262, which established a standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council.

Exactly one year ago, Member States took an important step to enhance the role of the General Assembly in line with the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. It was also an equally important step to make the Security Council more accountable. The General Assembly is in fact the most representative organ of the United Nations. It has priority and power over all other organs of the Organization, including the Security Council. According to Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Member States. The Council therefore draws its legitimacy from the wider membership and must fulfil its responsibilities on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations. The Security Council is there to maintain international peace and security, defend the Charter and support compliance with international law. Regrettably, on many occasions we have seen the Council fail to fulfil its responsibility and carry out its mandate. The veto lies at the heart of the problem. The use or threat of use of the veto has frequently caused paralysis and halted action when it was desperately needed. Consequently, on many occasions the veto has given rise to the perpetuation of crises and exacerbated their humanitarian costs.

Türkiye was a member of the core group that led what is known as the veto initiative, which culminated in the adoption of resolution 76/262 one year ago. Thanks to that resolution, the General Assembly now has a crucial tool at its disposal when it comes to issues pertaining to international peace and security, which helps to preserve the relevance of the United

Nations. Over the past year, we have witnessed how the resolution serves its purpose. The General Assembly debates organized in accordance with the resolution enjoyed the broad participation of Member States, and the special reports prepared in line with its provisions (see A/76/853, A/76/905 and A/77/551) enabled transparent and informed discussions. Overall, the veto initiative has also made a substantial contribution to the efforts to improve the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Türkiye will continue to fully support that important mandate.

**Mr. Gafoor (Singapore):** We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate under agenda item 60, which gives members an opportunity to review the implementation of resolution 76/262, on a standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council.

Today's debate is also an opportunity to discuss how we can collectively strengthen the role of the General Assembly and create a more effective multilateral system. The adoption of the veto resolution exactly one year ago was a historic moment for the General Assembly and the United Nations. Singapore was honoured to have been a member of the core group and a co-sponsor of the resolution. The veto initiative is a game-changer in many ways, and we commend the delegation of Liechtenstein for its initiative and leadership. The veto initiative has strengthened the role of the General Assembly without weakening the role of the Security Council, and it has the potential to discourage the use of the veto in the Council.

More important, we hope that the veto resolution will encourage and motivate new habits of dialogue and cooperation in the Security Council and lead to greater restraint in the use of the veto. We also hope that the permanent members will think carefully, think twice, and think again and again before they use the veto.

The veto is not a free pass to be used and abused, and its use has to be explained and justified here in the General Assembly. This very debate is a reminder to the permanent members that their performance in the Council is being scrutinized and their voting positions are being watched. The veto resolution is therefore fundamentally about strengthening accountability, transparency and inclusive participation. We co-sponsored the resolution because we believe that it is important for the Security Council to be held accountable by the General Assembly. Article 24,

paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations makes it clear that,

“Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.”

That is what the Charter says, as acknowledged in the fourth preambular paragraph of resolution 76/262. To put it simply, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations, and therefore the Security Council has the political and constitutional responsibility to report back to members of the General Assembly on a regular basis.

In that context, Article 24, paragraph 3, becomes very pertinent. It requires the Security Council to submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration, not for information. Let me take this opportunity to say that we look forward to receiving the annual report of the Security Council in a timely manner. The annual debate in the General Assembly on the report of the Security Council is another important exercise in accountability, transparency and legitimacy. Singapore has taken the consistent position that greater transparency and accountability in the work of the Security Council will improve the credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council’s decisions and — I should add — the legitimacy and credibility of its permanent members. The veto initiative strengthens accountability by requiring a special report to be submitted by the Security Council whenever the right of the veto is exercised. And debates like this one in the General Assembly strengthen transparency and encourage inclusive participation in the work of the United Nations. In that regard, let me make three specific points.

First, the General Assembly is the cornerstone of an effective multilateral system. The universal character of the General Assembly gives this organ unique legitimacy and credibility, which is possessed by no other organ of the United Nations system. The General Assembly has proven in the past year that it can respond to crises by taking decisions, particularly when the Security Council is unable or unwilling to act on matters of international peace and security. In just one year, the veto resolution has been activated three times. The veto initiative is therefore a clear reminder to the permanent members that their credibility and

legitimacy depend on their accountability to the wider membership. At the same time, it has given the wider membership in the General Assembly, especially small States, an opportunity to give their views on the use of the veto. In the General Assembly there is no right of veto. The voice of the General Assembly cannot be vetoed, and the voice of the small States that constitute the majority of United Nations membership cannot be silenced or vetoed.

The second point I wanted to make is that, even as we push to enhance transparency and accountability, it is equally important to encourage greater restraint in the use of the veto. In that regard, I urge Member States to support other efforts to create more accountability with regard to the use of veto, including the French-Mexican initiative and the code of conduct proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group with regard to Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We also call on all members of the Security Council — both the permanent members and the elected members — to affirm their commitment to Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which many other delegations have echoed. It states that “a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting” in the Security Council. It is our hope that the General Assembly will have an occasion in the future to have a more focused discussion on that particular Article of the Charter.

The third point I want to make is that the veto resolution represents just one step. It is an important step, but it is still only one step in the important process towards the revitalization of the General Assembly and strengthening the multilateral system in order to make it more effective. It is our hope that the veto initiative will lead to other initiatives and other ideas to strengthen the role of the General Assembly. In that regard, we welcome the recently published report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, which offers many actionable, practical and innovative ideas on how we can move towards a United Nations 2.0 and achieve a more networked, inclusive and effective multilateralism that will benefit our people and the planet. I urge all Member States to look at the report of the High-Level Advisory Board seriously to see how we can make progress on some of the concrete ideas put forward.

Let me conclude by reiterating that Singapore has always been a strong supporter of and advocate for efforts to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of

the United Nations, including through reforms to make the Security Council more accountable and transparent. We will continue to play our part to strengthen the United Nations and the multilateral system to make them fit for purpose and future-ready.

**Mr. Mohammad** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the use of the veto one year after the adoption of resolution 76/262, also known as the veto initiative.

Exactly one year ago, the General Assembly adopted a unique resolution in deciding to hold a debate in the General Assembly 10 working days after the use of the veto by a permanent member of the Security Council. Kuwait was one of the States that from the very beginning supported the idea of the initiative, which was spearheaded by Liechtenstein. We are part of the core group of States that sponsored the resolution, and we believe that it represents an important addition to the work of the General Assembly.

As a State that belongs to the Arab region, whose issues included on the Security Council agenda have suffered greatly for decades due to the use of the veto, we are very well aware of the impact, repercussions and dimensions of its use. One year after its adoption, we firmly believe that the historic resolution 76/262 has contributed to enabling the General Assembly and strengthening its role. It has also increased transparency and accountability with respect to the relationship between the two principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly and the Security Council. When one of the five permanent members of the Security Council exercises its right to cast a veto, that State must be able to explain and justify its veto to the entire General Assembly. The resolution also allows Member States to make comments and explain their position with regard to the use of the veto by a permanent member of the Security Council.

Of course, opinions may differ about the exercise of any veto. The resolution allows for a transparent and constructive debate and an exchange of views, so that all opinions may be heard. In many cases, the arbitrary use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council has contributed to reducing the credibility of the decision-making process of the Security Council. In some cases, it has led to paralysis within the Council and to it being unable to carry out its responsibilities as outlined in the Charter of the

United Nations. In addition, there has been a feeling of frustration on the part of the peoples of the world when the Security Council is unable to take the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security. We believe that the unique advantage enjoyed by five members of the Security Council since the creation of the United Nations in 1945 is essentially and above all a responsibility.

Lastly, the State of Kuwait firmly believes that the use of the veto must be reduced and calls for it not to be used arbitrarily. Based on that conviction, we joined the veto initiative and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group's call for convening meetings within 10 working days after the use of the veto by one or more members of the Security Council. In addition, Kuwait also joined several new innovative initiatives to reduce the use of the veto. We signed the ACT group's code of conduct with regard to Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which states that members of the Security Council should pledge not to not oppose any draft resolution concerning crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. Kuwait also supports the France-Mexico initiative, which calls for a voluntary suspension of the use of the veto in cases of crimes against humanity.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting on the key issue of the veto on the first anniversary of the adoption of resolution 76/262, known as the veto initiative.

With that initiative, the General Assembly established a standing mandate for a debate to be held each time a veto is cast in the Security Council. Today's debate is certainly not a perfunctory or ceremonial one. We are talking about not only an indispensable tool for deterrence but also something much more important. We are talking about the central pillar of multilateralism — the role and authority of the General Assembly, in its dual capacities as both the Organization's principal organ and its most democratic, inclusive and deliberative organ. Today I will speak about those two essential capacities.

With regard to the veto, first, I would like to acknowledge the effective implementation of resolution 76/262, in particular the holding of the required debates and the Security Council's submission of its special reports (see A/76/853, A/76/905 and A/77/551), as



stipulated by the mandate. I would like to emphasize that special reports are required regardless of whether or not a special meeting of the General Assembly is held on the issue in question. The history of the Organization has also shown us that the use of the veto has not made the world safer, but instead less so. That is why, in the process of reforming the Security Council, Ecuador does not support, but instead opposes, the expansion of the use of the veto, and insists that the focus should be on limiting its use. At the end of our deliberations, if the reform outcome contains more perpetual privileges and not fewer, then we will have failed to modernize the Council and instead will cause it to lose ground.

Ecuador, like the majority of delegations, maintains that the Security Council must reflect the reality of the contemporary world. Therefore, we do not advocate that perpetual privileges should be expanded in accordance with the balance of power in today's world. Instead, what Ecuador sees when we speak of the contemporary world is the concept and ethical model of our times, such as democracy, based on the principles of the rotation of powers and accountability. In that regard, I underscore the right of the members of the General Assembly to elect members of the Security Council on a regular basis and based on merit, as envisaged in Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with due regard being paid to their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter is not the only one that provides for a veto without mentioning it. Article 108 does the same, according to which any reform requires the ratification of all permanent members of the Security Council, as does Article 109. But those are not the only existing veto mechanisms. We often forget the veto that is available to the permanent members of the Council in the process of selecting the Secretary-General. Permanent members of the Council can also block, and therefore veto, the distribution of the chairmanships of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies. The truth is that elected members of the Council can do the same, but the dynamics mean that does not usually occur. We must also start considering vetoes by the 15 members of the Council to block, for example, a presidential statement, a press statement or any other product of the Council. With regard to the second provision of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, whereby the party to a dispute must

abstain from voting, there is no need to reform that rule — it must simply be implemented.

Today I invite members to reflect on the mechanisms at our disposal to limit the use of the veto and expand those mechanisms through creative diplomacy. We support the Franco-Mexican initiative to limit the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocity. We also support the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct with regard to Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Resolution 377 (V), which established the "Uniting for peace" mechanism, has overcome the challenge of the veto in some cases. We should encourage other tools, as appropriate, such as the snapback contained in Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), which to some extent tackles the spectre of the veto.

It is time to encourage other approaches to limiting the use of the veto in substantive cases that do not concern a specific nation but the whole of humankind — for example, by stipulating that a draft resolution sponsored by a majority of Assembly members should not be vetoed. We have also raised the possibility of exploring mechanisms that would enable a large majority of members of the Assembly — for example, 90 per cent, or 175 Member States — to overrule a veto. We must also begin to consider the veto that some States use in the Assembly itself. Indeed, there is another veto that we rarely talk about and that is available to all 193 Member States. I refer to cases in which one delegation — or sometimes two or three — block a major consensus. We will soon begin negotiations on the process of revitalizing the work of the Assembly. The spectre of the veto, which threatens the achievement of total unanimity, is emerging as an element of that very process.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that resolution 75/325 addresses various elements of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, including in its paragraphs 12, 22, 23, 55, 56, 57 and 69. Security Council presidential note S/2017/507 also addresses the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. Ecuador, together with Portugal and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, invites all members to a discussion workshop on 12 May to examine that relationship.

**Mr. Feruță** (Romania): The first point I wish to make concerns the credibility and legitimacy of the

United Nations, which rests on the ability of its organs to deliver on their mandates. In a world torn apart by conflict, no duty is more meaningful than the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security entrusted by the Charter of the United Nations to the Security Council. As a corollary, no failure is more visible and damaging to effective multilateralism than a deadlock in the Council as the result of the use of the veto. In the turbulent year of 2022, four vetoes were cast, leading to the increased suffering of the civilians in Ukraine, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. There is room to address more openly the responsibility that comes with the veto and the process leading to its use, as well as to place accountability at the core of those discussions.

My second point is that, one year ago, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution commonly known as the veto initiative (resolution 76/262), which calls for the General Assembly to meet whenever a veto is cast in the Security Council. Its consensual adoption and large number of co-sponsors are an indication of the value and relevance of that resolution for the entire United Nations membership. Romania was one of its co-sponsors. Notably, the fact that three permanent members of the Council sponsored the veto initiative reflects a concrete commitment towards upholding multilateralism and the necessity of reforming United Nations institutions in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

That initiative has been the start of a paradigm shift that should continue. The veto initiative creates a bridge between the activities of the Security Council and the General Assembly and fosters a sense of accountability among the permanent members of the Council. It broke the ice on a long-needed reform discussion and showed the strength and potential of the General Assembly to act by providing a forum for the public explanation of votes in the Council Chamber. We hope that, in the long run, it will serve to reinforce the voice of the General Assembly and, above all, that it will act as a moral compass, leading to a more careful and responsible use of the veto.

Thirdly, we would be remiss if we did not mention that the veto initiative complements previous efforts, such as the Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocity, initiated by France and Mexico — which aims to have the permanent members pledge voluntarily not to use the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes

on a large scale — and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct. Romania supports both initiatives.

Fourthly and lastly, Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which states that “a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting”, is an expression of the consensus that the five permanent members of the Council once reached. However, it is underutilized. Refraining from using the veto in such situations would avoid a hostage-like crisis of the Security Council, such as the one we experienced after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. That which has been designed to be used in exceptional cases should not be a shield for abusive behaviour. We commend those countries that have not cast a veto in a very long time.

There is no doubt that vetoes affect the Council's ability to address some of the most serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The veto initiative provided a much-needed innovation and a stepping stone towards the increased accountability of the Council to the entire international community. We believe that we can make further use of it to pave the way towards a meaningful reform.

**Mr. Almoslechner (Austria):** Exactly one year ago, we gathered here to demonstrate that inaction or the deliberate prevention of action in times of crisis and emerging threats to international peace and security is unacceptable to the wider membership of the United Nations. By adopting without a vote resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”, the General Assembly further pursued the aim of improving the accountability and transparency of the Security Council vis-à-vis the wider membership. That is of particular importance, since Article 24 of the Charter mandates the Security Council to act on behalf of all of us. Austria commends Liechtenstein for its efforts in that regard. We supported the initiative from the beginning and co-sponsored resolution 76/262.

We have always understood resolution 76/262 as a contribution to strengthening the effectiveness of the Security Council, while enhancing the role of the General Assembly. It is clear that the veto initiative has proven necessary and useful over the past year and will continue to do so.

The veto will continue to present our multilateral system with challenges, especially in times of disagreement and overwhelming national interests.

The misuse of the veto remains a grave concern. We acknowledge initiatives by some Permanent Members to voluntarily limit the use of the veto, such as the French-Mexican initiative on the suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocities, and fully support the Accountability, Coherency and Transparency group Code of Conduct and encourage all delegations to do the same.

We also call on Council members to consistently implement and observe the provisions of Article 27 of the United Nations Charter regarding the participation of Council members when they are parties to a dispute.

For that reason, let me reiterate that the wider membership expects — especially in the light of Article 24 — that the Members of the Security Council act in concert towards peace and cooperation. There is no place for national interests. They should demand compliance with the purposes, principles and norms of the United Nations Charter and international law, speak out against violations, condemn wrongdoing and take a leading role. It is their duty to ensure an effective Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and not to veto actions against clear breaches of international law and the United Nations Charter to protect national interests.

Since the adoption of resolution 76/262, the mechanism envisaged in it has already been triggered three times. Each time, there was no doubt that the vast majority of this Assembly disagreed with the Permanent Member that cast the veto. That is exactly the reason why, sometimes, when the Security Council is unable to act, the Assembly has to put itself in the driver seat and take over responsibility in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter.

To that end, the passing and implementation of the veto initiative can be regarded as a milestone. Austria underlines once more the importance of submitting a special report on the use of the veto in question to the General Assembly. It is crucial for the successful work of this Assembly and is a core element for improving the accountability of the Security Council vis-à-vis the General Assembly.

But what now — what is the next step? In our opinion, we have to ensure the full implementation of this resolution and leverage the momentum, especially in areas where we see the Security Council paralysed. It is crucial that we come to a mutual agreement in the Assembly that we do not limit ourselves to mere

condemnations and finger-pointing as soon as a crisis emerges. As we have seen in Ukraine, there will be times when the Security Council is unable to fulfil its duties. In such cases, we as the wider membership have to take an operational role in crisis management, and we have the tools to do so.

A quick look to the past can help us to better tackle challenges of the future. Our toolbox is well-equipped, including the possibility to send mediators or political missions to areas of conflict. Let me remind the Assembly of resolution 48/267, where the General Assembly decided to send a peace verification mission to Guatemala, or resolution 66/253, where we requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy for Syria, in consultation with the League of Arab States.

It is therefore not a question of how we could act, but if we act. In order to refresh the institutional knowledge to be better prepared for potential action in future, it would be useful to map precedents for the General Assembly authorizing, requesting and recommending specific conflict prevention and management tools; to map the relevant language from past resolutions that could be adapted to address current challenges; and possible monitoring mechanisms for implemented decisions.

In conclusion, the veto initiative, the Franco-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in case of mass atrocities, as well as the Accountability, Coherency and Transparency group Code of Conduct are fundamental steps towards a responsible use of the veto and accountability within the United Nations system. In addition, Article 27 sets a clear normative boundary to the use of the veto in certain cases. Nevertheless, we have to avoid the abuse of the veto to protect national interests or mitigate the effects of such abuses. That is why the General Assembly has to step up by using its own broad mandate and demonstrate responsibility in times of urgent crisis.

Let us use this occasion today to remind ourselves that we do not have to accept inaction. In the challenging times we live in, we need a United Nations that is effective. We should remind ourselves that the General Assembly has the tools to act. We have demonstrated that in the past, and we will do so in future.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): A year ago, we adopted, without a vote, resolution 76/262, which opened a new chapter in the Security Council's indispensable accountability to the

General Assembly and allows for renewed cooperation between the two organs. During this time, draft resolutions have been vetoed in the Council on three occasions, proving the relevance and potential of this new mechanism.

Moreover, each time the mechanism established in resolution 76/262 has been activated, the level of participation of the membership has been very high, which also proves the enormous interest of all Member States in the peace agenda of the Security Council, which — we must not forget — acts or fails to act on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations.

This mechanism has also allowed the Council, for the first time, to issue special reports to the General Assembly. That has served to record the circumstances in which vetoes occurred, something that is very rare in the Council's increasingly less substantive routine reports of work to the General Assembly. This is a central aspect of the revision of the working methods in any reform of the Security Council, as Mexico stated in its recent proposal on the matter, contained in document A/77/717.

Undoubtedly, resolution 76/262, adopted last year, represents an improvement in the process of strengthening our Organization. Notwithstanding that undeniable progress, this occasion allows us to reflect on other areas or actions that will allow us to go further in this area.

First, we must always remember that the veto is not a right, but the exercise of a very great responsibility. It is unacceptable to use it to truncate multilateral action when a majority of Security Council members have spoken in one direction. In situations where mass atrocities are being committed, preventing Council action by means of a veto is not only an abuse and failure of the collective security system created under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, but also a serious contravention of its purposes and principles and is a violation of international law, the immediate consequence of which is to leave entire populations utterly defenceless.

Unfortunately, we continue to witness such cases, which is why the Franco-Mexican initiative to restrict the use of the veto, which has 106 signatories, remains as relevant today as when we raised it. We again invite those that have not yet done so to join this important policy statement. As others have said, this statement supplements other efforts to that end, such as the

Accountability, Coherency and Transparency group Code of Conduct.

We also welcome the six principles of responsible behaviour for the Permanent Members of the Security Council, to which the United States has committed. Just as the United States has urged compliance, the membership should henceforth demand compliance with said principles. We therefore hope that the United States and other States will join the Franco-Mexican initiative, which is fully compatible with its third principle on restricting the use of the veto.

Beyond these voluntary gestures, Mexico believes that other actions that could be taken by the General Assembly on vetoes in situations of mass atrocities could be explored in order to give renewed impetus to initiatives — such as the Franco-Mexican initiative, the Accountability, Coherency and Transparency group Code of Conduct and, now, the United States principles — and serve to further pave the path that resolution 76/262 has already embarked upon.

In that regard, one aspect to reflect on — and it was already mentioned this morning — is how to give full effect to the provisions of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with regard to the wording that “in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting”.

*Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Despite being part of the Charter, this provision is consistently violated when we allow States that are parties to various disputes to participate in the decision-making process in the Council. It is a fact that in virtually every situation of which the Security Council is seized, there is at some time at least some form of call for recourse to Chapter VI means of pacific settlement of disputes. Council members, whether permanent or elected, that are parties to the dispute in question should be prevented ab initio and ipso facto from taking decisions on that issue. Bearing in mind that the Council acts or fails to act on behalf of all of us, it is undeniable that the Assembly can and should have a greater say in the observance of rules, such as Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

The peace and security challenges facing the international community today are profound and not easily solved. It requires a genuine collective



commitment to uphold and respect the rule of law. To do so, we must begin by upholding adherence to, and the integrity of, the United Nations Charter. The full realization of its purposes and principles depends on it. And the General Assembly, as the highest guarantor of the collective will, has — and should have, in the years to come — a central role to play in this task.

**Mr. Kim** (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by thanking you the President for convening today's debate on the first anniversary of the adoption of landmark resolution 76/262, on the use of the veto, which the Republic of Korea proudly co-sponsored. As enshrined in Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolution serves as a timely reminder that the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security was conferred upon it by the wider United Nations membership to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations.

Thanks to the resolution, the States Members of the United Nations were provided with a warranted and overdue apparatus with which to engage and seek clarification on situations where the Council fails to act due to a veto. And yet, that is just a start and represents the bare minimum of procedural improvement needed to be made regarding the use of the veto. Over the past year, we witnessed three more incidents of vetoes blocking the Council's action. The cases dealt with serious threats to international peace and security such as, respectively, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, humanitarian crises and unlawful annexation attempts. Given their long-lasting consequences on the ground and the degree to which they have further undermined the Council's legitimacy and credibility, perhaps these cases cannot be referred to as mere incidents.

For instance, the vetoes exercised in May against a new draft resolution on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9048) showed that veto power can structurally undermine the very integrity of the Council. Those vetoes were self-contradictory and even self-destructive from an institutional perspective in that some permanent members refused to respond in the face of manifest violations of multiple Security Council resolutions that they themselves had negotiated and voted in favour of. Among those, the latest, resolution 2397 (2017), even contained the Council's decision to take action in the event of a further launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The vetoes prevented the Council from implementing that resolution, thus virtually nullifying it.

At the first General Assembly meeting held pursuant to resolution 76/262 (see A/76/PV.82), we were provided with explanations that those vetoes were supposed to help maintain stability on the Korean peninsula and mitigate the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But instead, the country took advantage of the weakened implementation of Security Council sanctions and the Council's silence. As a result, we have seen five more ICBM launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since May's vetoes, at the direct cost of the ongoing suffering of its people.

In 1945, the Permanent Five subscribed to a statement on voting procedures in the Security Council, justifying the veto as follows:

“they could not be expected, in the present condition of the world, to assume the obligation to act in so serious a matter as the maintenance of international peace and security in consequence of a decision in which they had not concurred.”

The conditions of the world today have clearly changed, and selectively assuming an obligation to act on the maintenance of international peace and security is unjustifiable.

The requests to limit the use of the veto and to reform the Security Council, coming from both within and outside the United Nations, have never been more vocal. Indeed, the recent report by the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism also stressed that the Council's decisions should not be controlled by a single veto-wielding State, and that ways must be found to democratize its actions.

While all of us are aware that putting substantive limits on the use of the veto would be extremely difficult without the consent of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the aspirations of Member States to prevent the abuse of the veto are developing in innovative forms, such as the France-Mexico initiative and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group's code of conduct. While reaffirming support for those initiatives, my delegation calls for the permanent members of the Council to pay greater attention to those voices and recognize that the arbitrary exercise of veto power does not come without a cost. The Republic

of Korea will stay committed to collective efforts to improve the effectiveness, legitimacy and relevance of the United Nations peace and security architecture.

**Mrs. Frazier (Malta):** One year ago, Malta proudly co-sponsored resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”. As a member of the core group on that initiative, which was led by Liechtenstein, Malta fully subscribes to the Security Council’s continued primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The use of the veto has left us with a Security Council that is unable to act in the face of some of the most pressing challenges of our time. It has also undermined the spirit of multilateralism, which is the backbone of the Charter of the United Nations. It is therefore in the true spirit of effective multilateralism that the resolution strengthens the principles of the United Nations Charter, providing a voice for all States Members of the United Nations and requiring an explanation for their actions to be provided by those Council members that hold the right of the veto.

The immediate application of the resolution’s purpose showcases the importance of the matter, as did the significant cross-regional group of co-sponsors ahead of its adoption. As the General Assembly was called to debate the outcomes of the use of the veto on two occasions last year, the resolution fulfilled its objective by granting the opportunity for the General Assembly to share its point of view on issues pertaining to international peace and security. The resolution ties into the complementary approach that both bodies should have, namely in ensuring more transparency and accountability on the use of the veto. It also reminds us that the veto comes with responsibility. The Security Council is accountable to the United Nations membership in at least two ways. For its elected members, accountability is reflected through their election by the General Assembly. For its permanent members, accountability was introduced through that standing mandate, which reminds them that their use of the veto does not equate to full autonomy and disregard for the primary purpose of the Council in fulfilling its collective mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Let us be clear — calling a debate by the General Assembly to discuss the use of the veto is not calling for a change in the use of the veto. That discussion remains in the hands of the intergovernmental negotiations on

Security Council reform, which remains crucial to our overall pleas for reform and revitalization of the United Nations as a whole. In addition, we reiterate our call for respect for Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter, which provides that a party to a dispute should abstain from voting on decisions related to the pacific settlement of disputes.

Let me also reiterate Malta’s support for two other relevant initiatives — the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in the case of mass atrocities and the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group not to vote against any resolution intended to end mass atrocities. The uniting for peace resolution (resolution 377 (V)) is also relevant to our discussions.

In conclusion, the United Nations Charter is clear. The Security Council is there to work on behalf of the membership. The United Nations cannot remain inactive when the Security Council does not fulfil its primary task of upholding international peace and security, and for that reason we will ensure that resolution 76/262 continues to be given its full effect.

**Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines):** The Philippines reiterates its view that the veto power has no place in a twenty-first century Security Council. No Member State should be granted the special privilege to exercise the veto power, as that is in direct contravention of the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We could attempt to predict that the exercise of veto power would still be part of a reformed Security Council’s working methods. It would indeed be a challenge to remove the veto privileges of the permanent members. However, we should pursue every effort to curtail the exercise or use of the veto. With the exercise of veto power not being curtailed, the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council would always be under threat, especially at times of great geopolitical rivalries.

One path that we find useful is the code of conduct proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, as well as the French-Mexican initiative, which spells out exceptions to the use of the veto power. Another path is in the context of the General Assembly. Last year’s landmark resolution 76/262, on the question of the veto, would contribute somewhat to addressing the issue and would in the process enhance the accountability of the Security Council. In a mutually reinforcing manner, the

resolution could strengthen the General Assembly and allow Member States to be represented and to articulate their views. In that manner, Security Council reform is being undertaken in conjunction with ongoing efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, especially with respect to enhancing the role of Member States on matters affecting international peace and security.

We wish to point out, however, that the said landmark resolution renders the convening process automatic and mandates the President of the General Assembly to convene a formal meeting within 10 working days after a veto has been cast. That automaticity and the placing of the responsibility for convening such a meeting with the President of the General Assembly and not the membership itself have the tendency to reduce the power of Member States. In any case, we believe that we should seriously find ways for that exercise in the General Assembly to produce concrete outcomes that can have a positive impact on the ground and enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations in the long run.

I conclude by emphasizing that the exercise of the right of the veto is an exceptional responsibility and should not be used without accountability. It must be judiciously used and should not unduly constrain the Security Council from fulfilling its primary mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

**Ms. Tickner** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia welcomes the convening of today's debate on an issue that is inextricably tied to the effective functioning of the multilateral system: the use of the veto power in the Security Council. I would like to begin by pointing out that, as a founding Member of the United Nations, my country has based its international behaviour on the defence of and compliance with the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, one of them being the sovereign equality of States. Colombia has served on the Security Council as a non-permanent member on seven occasions and has contributed to relevant decision-making on issues critical to the maintenance of global security. To cite a few examples, we supported resolutions on issues such as peacebuilding and the rule of law, the fight against terrorism, the fight against illicit drugs and addressing the climate crisis.

We view the Council as the epicentre for decision-making and for identifying actions aimed at fulfilling our Organization's mandate. All States

Members should therefore be given an opportunity to participate in that organ on an equal footing. However, after 77 years of the existence of the United Nations, the threats to international peace and security have not decreased; rather, they have multiplied and diversified, calling into question the legitimacy of the multilateral system. That situation demonstrates that the Council is in urgent need of reform in order for it to be enabled to manage timely, responsible and effective decision-making and action. From that perspective, Colombia urges the need to abolish the veto, since it is an undemocratic mechanism in the current context of the United Nations. In recent times, the veto has been the main cause of the gaps in multilateral attention to situations of genocide or aggression against the territorial integrity of some States, which is unacceptable to us. For that same reason, we will not accept a Security Council reform process that extends the right of the veto to new permanent members.

We also want to echo others in recognizing the value of the instruments that have sought to restrict the use of the veto, and we urge that those instruments be strengthened, given that they enjoy the support of the vast majority of Member States, including some of the five permanent members of the Council. They include first, the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in situations of crimes against humanity and mass atrocities; secondly, the code of conduct drafted by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, which urges Council members not to oppose any resolution that seeks to prevent or curb such crimes; and thirdly — the topic of today's debate — the veto initiative, which was adopted by consensus and through which the General Assembly sent the clear message that the veto must be limited and subject to the highest standards of transparency and accountability when it is invoked. Despite the fact that those instruments have existed for several years, they have yet to be standardized.

In our efforts to ensure transparency and accountability, we should also reflect on the rules of procedure of the Security Council, in particular rule 20, according to which, during the consideration of a particular question with which a State holding the presidency is directly connected, the President of the Security Council should cede that function to another member. That should apply not only to the exercise of the presidency of the Council but also as a general practice when any other member is involved in a situation of

hostility or serious human rights violations, to mention only a few situations. The crucial task of reforming the Security Council requires a proactive — not a defensive — approach, which prioritizes respect for human rights, the principles of international law and the collaborative approach set out in Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, which provides that Council members act on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization and not in their individual capacity.

**Mr. Lagardien** (South Africa): South Africa appreciates the convening of today's General Assembly debate marking one year since the adoption of resolution 76/262, which established a standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council. While the adoption of that significant resolution continues to bring attention to the invocation of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, which requires all decisions of the Council on substantive matters to include the concurring vote of the permanent members, it should not be seen as an interim or ad hoc solution to the need for urgent Council reform, which will address the structural challenges within the Council itself. We must continue our efforts for urgent Council reform and the revitalization of the Assembly.

South Africa continues to reaffirm the central role and authority of the General Assembly as the most inclusive, representative and democratic organ of the United Nations. We would also like to highlight that, in accordance with the Charter, the General Assembly has the right under Article 10 to discuss any matter, notwithstanding Article 12, paragraph 1, of the Charter concerning matters that are at the same time being considered by the Security Council. The debates foreseen in resolution 76/262 can therefore be seen as using the convening authority of the Assembly for the broader United Nations membership to exercise a form of moral suasion for issues on which the Council cannot agree.

The General Assembly therefore needs to be able to hold the Security Council accountable, while at the same time allowing it to execute its mandate. When the Council is deadlocked, bringing the matter to the Assembly must be aimed at breaking the deadlock in the Council and not at perpetuating the divisions. We should also recognize that more frequent use of the veto may signal an increasing lack of unity in the Council. The Charter makes clear that the Council acts on behalf of the broader membership of the United Nations. If the Council displays failures in that regard, the Assembly

must not reinforce those failures but instead lead the international community onto a path of resolution.

In that regard, it is important to bear in mind that the General Assembly cannot make any recommendations with regard to a dispute or situation being considered by the Security Council during any regular session. We must therefore consider practical ways for the Assembly to make a meaningful contribution. Consideration could be given to having summaries of the debates issued by the President of the General Assembly for making recommendations on matters of which the Council is seized. Summaries of the debates issued by the President showing the solutions suggested by Member States could go a long way towards responding to those affected by the conflicts on which the vetoes are cast.

Ultimately, we should focus on giving greater momentum to the reform of the Security Council itself. My delegation will continue to work constructively and participate actively in both the process of revitalizing the General Assembly and the process of reforming the Council, so that we do not have to resort to piecemeal approaches to making the United Nations and its organs more efficient, effective, inclusive, transparent and fit for purpose.

**Mr. Szczerski** (Poland): Poland is honoured to be taking part in the today's debate, as we strongly support all efforts leading to the reinforcement of multilateralism and the United Nations system.

Adopted exactly one year ago, resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative, aimed at remedying what the recent report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism calls the highest profile example of failure in the multilateral system, namely, the inability of the Security Council to effectively respond to some of the major threats to international peace and security. That is due to the persisting deadlock inside that geopolitically polarized organ, which has been incapacitated by the constant threat of the use of the veto by some of its permanent members. Working in the core group, Poland was among the main sponsors of the veto initiative resolution, which we consider to be a positive first step on the way to restoring things to the right track, which is that of all Member States' ownership of the United Nations.

It is crucial because the major threats to peace now know no boundaries, and they can affect all of us on many levels. Therefore, we strongly support the concept of the democratization of the debate on peace and



security proposed by the resolution, which enhances the trust, equity and legitimacy of the Organization. For us, the United Nations is its Member States in their collectiveness. The universality of the Organization remains its major asset. We, the 193 individual United Nations States Members, cannot be restrained by the Security Council being dismantled by one or more of its permanent members acting as the judge in its own case. We need to act on the major threats to global peace, as a community of nations, and the General Assembly is the exactly right forum to do that. It needs to become the true centre stage for a comprehensive debate on central issues.

Empowering all Member States to act on issues related to peace and security is especially crucial in the sombre times of rogue permanent members of the Security Council running roughshod. Russia's continued aggression against Ukraine is in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Despite numerous General Assembly resolutions calling for its cessation, it increasingly undermines the authority of the Council. Paralysed by the threat of Russia's use of the veto on any constructive peace measures, the Council has been forced to abdicate its principal responsibility for maintaining international peace and security with regard to the conflict. It is also worth pointing out that, in the other regrettable instances of the veto initiative mechanism being triggered over the past year on issues unrelated to its ongoing aggression against Ukraine — namely, with respect to Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — Russia also played the notorious role of a veto-caster.

The resolution on the veto initiative has contributed to strengthening the role of the General Assembly and multilateralism, increasing the transparency of the decision-making process within the Security Council, and thereby making the entire United Nations system more democratic and credible. Still, we need additional actions and initiatives aimed at improving the functioning of the Council itself. In order to act efficiently, the Council needs to reflect the changed nature of the security environment, in terms of not only its representation but also its working methods. In that vein, we confirm our openness to discussion on the number, character and distribution of seats in a future enlarged Council. We fully agree that a reformed Security Council should become more representative in order to better reflect current geopolitical realities and better respond to both old and new security threats.

**Mr. Massari (Italy):** Italy welcomes the opportunity to discuss resolution 76/262 and its implementation one year after its adoption under the new agenda item “Use of the veto”.

This discussion is particularly timely given the continuing attacks against the United Nations multilateral system through military action, unilateralism, manipulation and the spread of disinformation, including here in New York in this very Hall. In that context, the veto power in the Security Council is a central part of the problem, as it is often abused to cover up serious breaches of the Charter of the United Nations. Italy was one of the sponsors of resolution 76/262. We are of the view that the new mechanism established by the resolution contributes to strengthening the United Nations system and is a good example of effective multilateralism. Convening the General Assembly automatically every time a veto is cast is a mechanism that increases transparency and accountability. Its activation twice in the past 12 months with regard to the vetoes cast in relation to two of the situations that most endanger international peace and security confirms its importance. We also welcome its subsidiary nature with respect to the “Uniting for peace” resolution (resolution 377 (V)) mechanism, which has proved to be a valuable instrument in responding politically to the vetoes of the Russian Federation with regard to its illegal aggression against Ukraine.

The veto power is anachronistic. While understandable in the specific historical context of 1945, today it blatantly contradicts one of the fundamental principles of the Charter — the principle of the sovereign equality of States, which needs to be the basis of any future reform of the Security Council. On too many occasions, the right of the veto prevented the Security Council from discharging its vital responsibilities with regard to situations that endangered international peace and security, in which the United Nations could have made a real difference on the ground. While we do not expect the five permanent members of the Council to renounce that privilege under the Charter — and their position in that regard is fully guaranteed by the amendment procedure under Article 108 — we ask and expect them to act responsibly and provide a full explanation to the entire membership represented in the General Assembly when they cast a veto. That expectation is largely shared by the United Nations membership, judging by the consensual adoption of

the resolution and the large participation in the two meetings convened to date based on its provisions.

The global challenges ahead of us, whether in the area of peace and security, sustainable development, climate action, human rights or the rule of law, need a strong multilateral response based on the rules-based international order, which all too often is misinterpreted and disrespected. Let us take the opportunity today to reaffirm our commitment to an effective, democratic and inclusive multilateral system in which effective decision-making is not undermined by the narrow national political agendas of a few.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this first meeting dedicated to the use of the veto.

Switzerland has long been committed to restricting the use of the veto in the Security Council. Exactly one year ago, the General Assembly took a decisive step in that direction by adopting resolution 76/262, which Switzerland supported in the hope that its provisions would rarely have to be implemented. However, we were disappointed in that hope. The use of the veto has in fact prevented the Security Council from fulfilling its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security on several occasions, in particular in the context of Russian military aggression against Ukraine, cross-border humanitarian aid for Syria and nuclear non-proliferation on the Korean peninsula. At the same time, over the past year we have witnessed the effects of the implementation of resolution 76/262 in three respects in particular.

First, it has increased transparency over the use of the veto. Through the special reports provided for in the resolution, not only is the Assembly informed but also the Security Council itself must communicate, albeit in disunity on the substance. We welcome the fact that those special reports (see A/76/853, A/76/905 and A/77/551) were prepared in advance not only of debates convened under resolution 76/262, but also in the case of special emergency meetings. In the Council, Switzerland is committed to strengthening and sustaining such transparency.

Secondly, resolution 76/262 can promote the quest for unity in the Council. Of course, it is important not to instrumentalize the resolution, which was adopted by consensus, but the consequence of a review and debate by the General Assembly rightly underlines the gravity

of vetoing a resolution supported by a large majority of the Council.

Thirdly, resolution 76/262 reminds us of the important role that all Member States can play in the decisions of the Security Council. The veto does not make us powerless. All Member States, whether they have a seat on the Council or are potential members, can choose to act by adhering to the code of conduct on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, the code of conduct is addressed to all Member States. We congratulate the vast majority of General Assembly members that have already signed it, including permanent members of the Council. All those countries have pledged not to vote against any draft decision that provides for action to stop atrocity crimes. We encourage all those who have not yet signed the code of conduct to join us in that commitment.

Together, let us send a clear signal for transparent, accountable and effective multilateralism. The Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt said that we must never stop “imagining the world in its most reasonable form”. We must continue to imagine that world and make it a reality through our actions. That is one of the lessons we must learn, one year after the adoption of the veto initiative, and one we are determined to implement alongside all Member States.

**Mr. Gallagher** (Ireland): We live today in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. From protracted and emerging conflicts and increasing instability to climate change and global food insecurity, today's challenges demand a Security Council that is fit for purpose and ready to do its job. However, it is plain for all the world to see that the use of the veto, an instrument designed to respond to the geopolitics of a different time, undermines the Council's ability to deliver on its responsibilities today. This debate could therefore not be more urgent or timely.

Ireland is committed to working with all Member States towards a more responsive, inclusive and effective Security Council. As a small State, Ireland has always recognized the importance of multilateralism, and we continue to believe strongly in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the potential of the Organization. But we need to be frank: the continued use of the veto by some permanent members undermines the Council's credibility and

legitimacy from within. While we endlessly debate Security Council reform in this Hall, those outside have increasingly come to the conclusion that the Security Council is not fit for purpose.

The existence of the veto is a major contributor to that view. Far too often, its use — or even the threat of its use — has resulted in shameful inaction and paralysis in the face of crises, which can impede the Council's ability to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In the past year, the veto was used four times to block Council action on issues such as the authorization of life-saving cross-border assistance to Syria and the continued proliferation of illegal and provocative missile-related activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Moreover, since launching its illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, the Russian Federation has twice used its veto in a shameful attempt to evade accountability for its own military aggression against a fellow State Member of our United Nations.

Sadly, those are just the cases in which the veto was used. During Ireland's recent term on the Security Council, we also saw the pervasive and chilling effect of the threat of the veto, which prevented the Security Council from taking action on a number of situations, including the Middle East and the Palestinian question, Myanmar and Afghanistan. Rarely has the case for abolishing the veto — or at the very least for limiting its use — been as compelling as it is today. Indeed, it was in that spirit that Member States decided to adopt resolution 76/262, which calls for the General Assembly to meet whenever a veto is cast in the Security Council.

It is no accident that today's meeting falls on the one-year anniversary of the adoption of that resolution, and I want to pay tribute once again to Liechtenstein for its leadership. Ireland was proud to be part of the core group of States that drove the initiative forward. It has already had a significant impact, by improving the Council's transparency and accountability to the wider United Nations membership. It is a reminder that many improvements can be made within current structures.

In that context, Ireland also endorses the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct and the Franco-Mexican initiative on restricting the use of the veto in cases of atrocity crimes. We would also like to highlight the value of the special reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly prepared in response to a veto (see A/76/853, A/76/905

and A/77/551), or potentially otherwise. Those are contemplated by the Charter and have an important role to play on questions of peace and security. Our Charter also makes it clear that parties to a dispute shall abstain from voting in decisions taken under Chapter VI — a clause of which we should all remain seized. But we need to go further. As Ireland and others have stated many times, the reform of the veto power is overdue. The longer it is postponed, the more we risk further undermining the credibility of the Security Council as the guarantor of international peace and security.

**Mr. Simonoff** (United States of America): The Security Council needs to better reflect the United Nations today — particularly by including geographically diverse perspectives — so that it can better respond to twenty-first century challenges, which is imperative for the Council's continued relevance and credibility. The United States continues to believe that the standing mandate to convene a General Assembly debate whenever a veto is cast is a significant step towards the accountability, transparency and responsibility of all permanent members of the Security Council, who wield its power.

The United States has been pleased to see the full implementation of resolution 76/262, which was sponsored by more than 80 delegations, including ours. The United States played a constructive role in the preparation of the first special report of the Security Council last year, which was drafted during the United States presidency of the Security Council in May 2022. Although we were very disappointed by the vetoes that were cast last year, we welcome the fact that the Security Council prepared a special report each time a veto was cast (see A/76/853, A/76/905 and A/77/551) and that the General Assembly convened to discuss those vetoes.

We have expressed outrage over Russia's veto of two Security Council draft resolutions last year in response to Russia's unlawful actions in Ukraine.

Through the meetings of the eleventh emergency special session beginning last year, the General Assembly has overwhelmingly condemned, in the strongest terms possible, Russia's further aggression and violation of Ukraine's sovereignty via separate resolutions, in March (resolution ES-11/1), October (resolution ES-11/4) and again most recently in February (resolution ES-11/6) of this year. Through those resolutions, the Assembly has reaffirmed the sovereignty, independence, unity

and territorial integrity of Ukraine and has called for the Russian Federation to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Ukraine.

The permanent five members of the Security Council must exercise their veto authority responsibly. Any permanent member that exercises the veto to defend its own acts of aggression against another United Nations Member State should be held accountable.

The United States takes seriously its privilege of veto power; it is a sober and solemn responsibility that must be respected by those permanent members to whom it has been entrusted. The United States reiterates that it will refrain from the use of the veto except in rare, extraordinary situations.

**Mr. Kulháněk** (Czechia): Czechia is proud to have been one of the main sponsors of resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative, which was supported by Member States from all regional groups. We would like to thank Liechtenstein again for its leadership in negotiating that important document, which created a standing mandate for the Assembly to be convened automatically within 10 working days of the casting of a veto in the Security Council. That has already happened twice since its adoption.

When permanent members of the Council use their veto to block Council action, it is indeed quite appropriate that they be invited to the General Assembly to explain their positions, and it is even more appropriate for all United Nations Member States to have an opportunity to discuss the matter.

The use of the veto has increased significantly over the past years, preventing the Security Council from discharging its mandate effectively and maintaining international peace and security. Its frequent use is one of the reasons why the Security Council is increasingly unable to carry out its responsibilities. In that context, we extend our support to other initiatives, such as the French-Mexican one on veto restraint in cases of mass atrocities.

On this first anniversary of the adoption of the resolution, Russia continues its aggression against Ukraine, killing and injuring many civilians; deliberately targeting critical infrastructure, industrial sites, hospitals, medical facilities and schools. Czechia continues to condemn in the strongest terms possible Russia's unprovoked aggression. And we urge Russia to reverse that unlawful act and to immediately,

completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. We remain unwavering in our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We welcome the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Karim Khan to issue the arrest warrants against President Vladimir Putin and Ms. Maria Lvova-Belova.

The blatant disregard for the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent Security Council member only further underlines the urgent need for a multilayered system that would ensure accountability for the most serious crimes that are of concern to the international community as a whole.

Let me emphasize that the unique responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security goes hand in hand with its relationship with the International Criminal Court as defined by the Rome Statute. We have witnessed in the past the lack of political will of some members of the Security Council to refer a situation, where crimes appeared to have been committed, to the ICC Prosecutor. The referral should be considered an opportunity for an independent and impartial judicial investigation. The casting of a veto denies justice for victims and aids and abets impunity.

The provisions of the resolution on the veto initiative were not only a significant step towards greater accountability and transparency in the use of the veto power, but they also bear witness to our commitment to effective multilateralism. That was, after all, the topic of the Security Council open debate two days ago, chaired, ironically, by the Russian Federation.

We strongly support a more effective and more inclusive multilateralism. We welcome all the initiatives of the Secretary-General in that regard, including his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and the upcoming summit of the future. And we wholeheartedly endorse all the reforms that would bring the United Nations closer to fulfilling its core mandate as set out by our predecessors in the Charter of the United Nations. We have to echo time and again their conviction that the unspeakable atrocities of the two terrible world wars must not be repeated.

**Mr. Malovrh** (Slovenia): I thank the President for convening this timely debate on the use of the veto.



Exactly one year has passed since the adoption of the landmark resolution 76/262 on the standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council, which Slovenia strongly supported and co-sponsored.

This debate is an important opportunity to reflect on the veto initiative in its first year and beyond and also on the use of the veto in general.

At the time of its adoption, our hope was that this mechanism would not need to be used very often and that it would contribute to limiting the number of times the veto power was used.

Since April last year, the veto has been used four times. The General Assembly has in turn convened — twice in the General Assembly's regular plenary session and once in the eleventh emergency special session — to discuss the situations that led the use of the veto in the Security Council.

The veto initiative gave the wider membership in the General Assembly a greater voice on matters on the agenda of the Security Council when the Council is prevented from taking action by one of its permanent members. And the United Nations Member States, including Slovenia, took that opportunity with a great sense of responsibility. The number of speakers in today's debate confirms that.

We believe that the veto initiative contributed, as intended, to greater accountability for the decisions taken or not taken in the Security Council, while not hindering in any way its work and functioning, as well as its key role within the United Nations system for the maintenance of international peace and security. As such, the initiative undeniably contributed to strengthening effective multilateralism and is a good example of how to bring about positive institutional change within the United Nations in the field of peace and security.

We strongly believe that the right of the veto should not be understood as a right or a privilege, but as a power that carries a great responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and should be used as such — responsibly, transparently and with a sense of accountability. The veto should never be abused or used to block urgently needed action to maintain peace. Therefore, Slovenia supports the efforts to limit the use of the veto.

As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, we strongly support and advocate the Code of Conduct regarding the use of the veto on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Slovenia also supports the political declaration on the suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity launched by France and Mexico. And we encourage those Member States that have not yet done so to join those important initiatives.

**Mrs. Shino (Japan):** As a sponsor of resolution 76/262, adopted by the General Assembly on this date one year ago, Japan would like to reiterate the significance of the so-called veto initiative. Based on that resolution, vetoes must now be explained to the entire United Nations membership at the General Assembly. The permanent members of the Security Council now assume a higher level of accountability commensurate with their heavier responsibilities.

The veto is such a powerful prerogative that a permanent Council member must exercise it with the sole purpose of maintaining international peace and security. The difficulty the Council has had in making decisions due to the excessive use or threat of use of the veto on issues of paramount importance for the world defies the high expectations of the entire United Nations membership and undermines the legitimacy of the Council itself.

In that regard, we welcome the commitment of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to voluntarily refrain from the use of the veto in the Council except in rare and extraordinary circumstances, and we hope that the remaining permanent members will join them. We recall in this context the Code of Conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group and the French-Mexican initiative on the suspension of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. Member States can work together to explore further ideas for increasing the credibility of this Organization.

As we mark one year since this historic day, Japan believes we must go even further to make the United Nations more effective. We need to advance negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. Real reform of the Council requires an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories and new permanent members should have the same responsibilities and obligations that the current permanent members do. We are committed to working with all United Nations

Member States to strengthen the United Nations in a constructive manner.

**Mr. Vidal (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): In the view of our delegation, resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”, adopted a year ago, is the right approach to strengthening our Organization because it seeks greater legitimacy and transparency. We believe that the decision adopted a year ago has contributed positively to having mechanisms that improve working methods and, above all, accountability in the Security Council.

The members of the General Assembly have had the opportunity to know the reasons for the use of the veto on two occasions since the adoption of that resolution. That helps us to better understand the international circumstances and the motives for vetoes cast by members of the Security Council, who we know will always be Council members.

We emphasize that the veto is not a privilege but a prerogative and, therefore, it should be used responsibly, with discretion, sound judgment and bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, last year there was an increase in the use of the veto. Therefore, as we seek ways to move forward, we call on the countries that enjoy that right to show greater political will and refrain from using it.

We also note that the resolution is an opportunity to improve communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

We reiterate that the aforementioned resolution is not part of the Security Council reform process and is an ad hoc measure, which is not part of the work being carried out in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

Undoubtedly, the use of the veto must be seen as part of a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system to ensure greater accessibility, democracy, representation, equality among members and effectiveness and to better reflect the current geopolitical reality.

We take this opportunity to reiterate that Chile, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, endorses the Code of Conduct on Security Council action in cases of genocide, crimes

against humanity or war crimes. We urge the permanent members of the Security Council not to use the veto in the face of such atrocities. Moreover, Chile supports the French-Mexican initiative to limit the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities, serious violations of human rights and international law. We see that proposal as complementary to the Code of Conduct.

**Mr. Mainero (Argentina)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council was designed to ensure that all important decisions would require the support, or at least the acquiescence, of the five permanent members. Since the establishment of the United Nations, the veto has become a privilege for the five permanent members, resulting not only in marked inequality among the Council members, but also in inefficiency in dealing with situations in which international peace and security are at stake.

Since the negotiations at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, Argentina has taken a very firm position against the veto, on the grounds that such a privilege violates the principle of sovereign equality among States and in fact implies that the State holding the privilege has the right to override the will of the other members of the Organization.

The veto is an inefficient tool in the Security Council’s work. The Security Council is meant to maintain international peace and security, which it cannot do when the conflicts that involve any of the five permanent members frequently lead to the casting of vetoes. In the short term, that has sometimes meant that the United Nations has not maintained international peace and security. In the long term, that damages the image, predictability and mandate of the Security Council and the collective security system enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The veto is a measure of last resort, and when it is used, the permanent members of the Council are expected to provide exhaustive clarifications as to why it was used. Providing such an explanation to the General Assembly does not mean undermining the authority of the Security Council; on the contrary, it reinforces the complementary relationship that both organs should have. In that spirit, Argentina supported the adoption of resolution 76/262 and considers it an important step forward in strengthening the functioning of the United Nations.

The main objective of the resolution is to ensure greater accountability in the conduct of the permanent

members of the Security Council. The use of the veto affects the work of the Security Council, as well as that of the Organization as a whole. In accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership. It therefore has a legal, political and moral responsibility to act appropriately and responsibly, and its members must make decisions based on the common interests of the entire membership of the United Nations.

Notwithstanding our support for the mechanism established in resolution 76/262, we see it as being without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. The veto issue is one of the five clusters that are part of the reform package and cannot be dealt with separately. Credible and viable Security Council reform requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that addresses all five clusters, as set out in decision 62/557. Any piecemeal approach that does not take due account of the linkages between the different clusters would be incomplete and probably would not be successful.

Throughout the Security Council reform process, we have seen that some have sought to pursue a reform that, instead of addressing the problems in the Security Council's work, simply broadens and deepens them. Argentina cannot accept formulas that would extend the veto to new members. It goes without saying that a Security Council with more veto possibilities will be a more inefficient Council. One of the main problems of the Security Council is precisely its inaction in the face of certain crises, as a consequence of the use of the veto. Therefore, we do not understand those who call for a more efficient Council, but at the same time demand a permanent seat and the right to the veto. Efficiency and the veto are mutually exclusive.

We believe that the Security Council should be reformed in order to maximize its transparency, as well as its legitimacy and proper functioning, vis-à-vis the entire membership of the Organization. We are convinced that the best way to achieve the desired

reformed Security Council is to avoid fuelling the shortcomings from which it suffers today.

For that reason, Argentina would like to underscore that the proposal for Security Council reform being promoted by the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group in the context of the intergovernmental negotiations seeks to increase the number of non-permanent members, and at the same time it suggests, at the very least, limiting the use of the veto. The UFC has put forward the most rational and fair reform proposal, which is capable of avoiding the lack of functioning of the Security Council and of bringing it up to date with what the international community needs to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

We have no doubt that the veto must be abolished if we want a Security Council that can respond to the multiple crises facing the world. But we are also realistic that such an aspiration is not plausible in the short term. We must therefore strive to find ways to limit its use, especially in circumstances such as situations involving the most serious crimes of international concern. In that regard, the French-Mexican initiative and the code of conduct presented by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group merit consideration.

At a time when doubts are being raised about the Council's ability to fulfil its mandate in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and multilateralism is under considerable pressure, we must adopt appropriate reforms, and the veto is one of the issues that must be urgently reviewed.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in this debate for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall, after the consideration of the other items announced in *The Journal of the United Nations*.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 126.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*