



# General Assembly

Seventy-second session

**43**<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting  
Wednesday, 8 November 2017, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## Agenda item 122 (continued)

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

**Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters is one of the most important agenda items, which must be considered very carefully in order for the solution ultimately achieved to lend clear legitimacy, effectiveness and transparency to the Security Council's work. We seek reform that enables the Council to deal with challenges to peace and security in a timely way while, at the same time, preventing those changes that could obstruct or slow down its working methods. The recent selection process and appointment of the Secretary-General and the increase in the number of open meetings in the Council's work make it more important than ever to ensure those objectives.

On the question of the categories of membership of the Council, we underscore the need to increase both categories of members — permanent and non-permanent — in order for the Council to become a truly representative body that reflects the new geopolitical realities and responds appropriately to the situations on its agenda. In turn, we acknowledge the progress made since the most recent reform of that body.

However, I reiterate that an increase in the permanent membership does not under any circumstances mean an expansion of the right to the veto. In this regard,

we reaffirm our commitment to the code of conduct on limiting the use of the veto, proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, of which we are a member, and to the French-Mexican declaration, which is supported by the permanent five. We call on those States that have not yet done so to join those initiatives.

The document on elements of convergence resulting from the intergovernmental negotiations in the context of the seventy-first session (decision 71/553), in which Chile participated, provided guidance on how to move forward with text-based negotiations, which will require greater flexibility and openness by Member States.

In that regard, we appreciate the work carried out by the Permanent Representatives of Romania and Tunisia, Ambassadors Ion Jinga and Mohamed Khaled Khiari, respectively, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the previous session. We wish their successors — the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, respectively — success in seeking to bring together positions in pursuit of a negotiating text that includes the jointly agreed elements.

**Ms. French** (United States of America): The United States looks forward to another round of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. I would like to welcome our new co-Chairs, Ambassadors Nusseibeh and Imnadze, to whom we will look for guidance on and oversight of the intergovernmental negotiations process.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

17-37096 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



I would also like to extend our gratitude to Ambassadors Jinga and Khiari for their leadership as co-Chairs of the process last year. Their leadership on the food-for-thought paper on Security Council reform positions captured our joint efforts towards convergence. Endeavouring to identify areas where the viewpoints of delegations may be moving closer together is a logical step towards broad consensus, which is a crucial element in our reform efforts. We also thank our fellow Member States for contributing to the document, which serves as a helpful overview of the status of discussions within the intergovernmental negotiations.

We know that many Member States believe the intergovernmental negotiations process has debated the issue of United Nations reform for far too long and had little to show for it, and that only through text-based negotiations can we achieve substantial progress. We recognize that there are differences of opinion with regard to how we should conduct these negotiations and as to what text should provide the basis for discussion. The United States remains open to all manner of negotiations within the intergovernmental negotiations framework, so long as they help us arrive at the broad consensus necessary to reach agreement on Council reform. Whatever path the intergovernmental negotiations follows, we must ensure that it enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of the Security Council and allows us to more effectively address pressing challenges to international peace and security.

For reform to be successful, our decisions must enjoy the broadest possible consensus. In order to achieve this, the United States will support reasonable proposals for a modest expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Consideration of any new permanent membership must take into account candidates' ability and willingness to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to exercise the heavy responsibilities that come with Security Council membership. We remain opposed to any expansion or alteration of the veto.

The President of the General Assembly and the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations have the support of the United States as we once again work towards a comprehensive solution that can secure the broadest Member State support.

**Mr. Radomski** (Poland): Let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important annual debate.

At the outset, Poland would like to warmly welcome the nomination of Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Kaha Imnadze of Georgia as the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. I also take this opportunity to thank the two previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania and Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia, for their significant work and unflagging determination to bridge the divisions that remain among Member States.

With the imminent commencement of another round of the intergovernmental negotiations in view, allow me to reiterate Poland's strong support for the process and to share with the General Assembly a few remarks on the priorities that we see ahead.

The Security Council is at the heart of the international order. As a newly elected member, Poland sees the growing complexity of the international environment. The proliferation of conflicts and their transnational nature make the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform all the more important.

Proceeding from the areas of convergence identified in the last session's food-for-thought paper, we remain committed to striving towards the enlargement of the Security Council so that it becomes more reflective of the realities of today's world. All regional groups should be given a voice in discussions and decisions of vital importance. In this context, we continue to support the proposal for an additional seat in the Security Council for the Group of Eastern European States — the Group that saw its membership grow the most in recent decades.

We also look forward to continuing discussions on the veto power — the thorniest of issues, but also one that we strongly believe should not be shied away from if further politicization of the veto is to be stopped. The right of veto carries with it enormous responsibility, and its currency is human lives. Any initiative aimed at ensuring its advised application can count on our support.

Last but not least, transparency and greater access to information about the Security Council's decision-making process is seen by Poland as a prerequisite for restoring trust in international law and an indispensable element of promoting the

engagement of international audiences in peaceful conflict resolution.

In conclusion, let me once again state Poland's unwavering support for the intergovernmental negotiations process. We remain convinced that it is vital to continue the dialogue among Member States if we are to attain the goal of ensuring that the Organization can face the ever-greater challenges ahead.

**Mr. Şen** (Turkey): We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/72/PV.41). I wish to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We appreciate your engagement in the process, Mr. President, and warmly welcome Ambassadors Nusseibeh and Imnadze in their new capacities as the co-Chairs. We look forward to closely cooperating with them in the upcoming session of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We also express our gratitude to the former co-Chairs for their efforts in favour of finding areas of convergences in order to reach consensus on this important matter.

Security Council reform is a matter of global importance, which has a direct impact on the lives of current and future generations. We advocate for a meaningful and principled reform that would bring about a more democratic, representative, effective and transparent Council, and one, more importantly, that is more accountable. We believe this can be achieved by increasing only the number of elected members of the Council. The permanent membership and the veto mechanism provide a clear explanation for the Security Council's inaction, which is a situation that needs to be rectified, but not by strengthening the permanent membership or the veto mechanism. Indeed, it is not at all clear to us how adding new permanent members or expanding veto powers will enhance the Council's accountability.

For those aspiring to serve the cause of maintaining international peace and security for longer periods, we, the Uniting for Consensus Group, are proposing longer-terms seats with the possibility of re-election. Ideally, the veto should be abolished. There is no justification for certain members having this right while others do not. In this respect, we support the initiatives to limit the use of negative vote in cases of mass atrocities. A more equitable representation of the regional groups and a fair system of rotation, including enhanced

opportunities for underrepresented groups, is a must in the reformed Council. However, the working methods and the relationship with the General Assembly are no less important, as they define the daily dynamics of the system.

My delegation is looking forward to engaging constructively in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations to achieve progress based on the foregoing principles, which will address the shortcomings of the current system and enhance the legitimacy of the Security Council.

**Mr. Mendoza García** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, for once again convening this annual debate on the representativeness and membership of the Security Council. We endorse the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/72/PV.41). We would like to thank Ambassadors Ion Jinga and Mohamed Khaled Khiari, of Romania and Tunisia, respectively, for their hard work and dedication during the last session.

In the same vein, Mr. President, we take this opportunity to recognize your appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. We wish them success in their work. My country assures them of our unqualified collaboration during the current session of negotiations.

My country considers that the process of reform of the Security Council deserves to be taken seriously and responsibly. We believe that it provides us with the express possibility to transform the United Nations into a more effective and representative Organization, aimed at improving its capacity to respond effectively and diligently to threats to international peace and security. This new session presents us with a renewed opportunity to be ambitious, thereby making us able to achieve a more responsible, transparent and inclusive Council. We are convinced that now is the moment for us to agree on a reform that has the capacity to adjust to the current international geopolitical context and the constant changes that are manifested within that context, highlighting the principles of democracy and representativeness, which have been and which we consider to continue to be cornerstones of the Organization.

It is on that foundation that we build our position, reflected in what was expressed by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/72/PV.41), which proposes an increase in the number of seats in the Security Council, but only in the category of non-permanent members, with the option of long-term seats with the possibility of immediate re-election and greater regional representation. In this way, the African people would have the greatest number of seats. It would also provide greater opportunities for participation for smaller countries and small island States. We believe in the need to create the conditions that would allow all States Members of the United Nations to have an equal opportunity to participate within the Council.

In that same vein, we cannot leave aside the issue of the veto. So far, the use of the veto has undermined the Council's credibility in its decisions and has curtailed the responsibility to protect those most vulnerable, as well as its ability and effectiveness in ensuring global peace and security. Costa Rica has advocated on multiple occasions for prohibiting the use of the veto, especially in situations involving violations of international humanitarian law, crimes against humanity or genocide, in line with the code of conduct proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, which already has 114 signatories and for which we reiterate our unequivocal support. We also support the French-Mexican initiative. For these reasons, Costa Rica believes that the privilege of the veto should not be extended to any new members of the Council, as we believe that it generates inequality, restricts decision-making and causes immobility, thus having a negative impact on the Council's effectiveness.

As a result of the foregoing, we have repeatedly respectfully appealed to countries to move away from positions that focus on increasing the category of permanent members with veto rights, which we consider contrary to the call for democracy, alternation and transparency, which we all want. That is why we invite the Assembly to consider an intermediate position that would allow us to finally address the discussions on the points of convergence that, until now, we have been identifying and on which we are convinced that we can continue to build.

The annual exercise of intergovernmental negotiations should be, as we have said before, an exercise in flexibility, commitment and consensus-building. Costa Rica is ready to continue talking and to

consider intermediate positions where we have as our main motivating factor the achievement of a Security Council that is truly representative and effective in carrying out its key tasks, in favour of international peace, security and stability. We hope to achieve a more efficient Organization that responds adequately to the current global environment and whose fundamental objective is the general welfare of all its members.

**Mr. Musayev** (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on agenda item 122, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council".

We welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations and assure them of our full support. We also commend the contribution made by their predecessors, the Permanent Representatives of Romania and Tunisia.

The interest of the international community in the earliest possible reform of the Security Council is obvious. It arises from the threats and challenges that the world faces nowadays and from the functions of the Security Council, on which Member States conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, asking for it to act on their behalf, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. The general view is that the Security Council needs to be reformed in order to reflect current realities and ensure its transparent, efficient, effective and accountable functioning.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Heads of State and Heads of Government supported early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of the overall effort to reform the United Nations so as to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, thereby further enhancing its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. We note the gradual progress in the intergovernmental negotiations and the active engagement of Member States in the process, despite remaining extensive differences and disagreements on the substance. The process of negotiations should build on the work that has already been done, with a view to increasing convergence and ensuring the widest possible political acceptance and support.



The discussions during the previous session have produced an important outcome, reflected in the latest version of the elements of commonality and issues for further consideration on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We hope that such an outcome will contribute to taking the intergovernmental negotiations forward and achieving the much-needed reform of the Security Council.

Expanding the membership of the Security Council while maintaining the effective and operational functioning of the Council could help enhance its authority and ensure its greater legitimacy, provided that such an expansion is based on fair and equitable geographical distribution, taking into account the equitable representation of developing countries, including small States, as well as of unrepresented and underrepresented regions and groups, in particular the Group of Eastern European States. We support Africa's increased and enhanced membership in the Security Council.

The reform of the Security Council should go hand in hand with the improvement of its working methods and decision-making. We commend the Security Council for adopting the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507) on 30 August. Further efforts in that direction, including through the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, are needed in order to enhance the Council's efficiency and transparency, as well as its interactions and dialogues with non-Council members. We believe that such efforts will also promote the reform of the Security Council itself. Indeed, there is much to do, and the reasons the Council's rules of procedure have remained provisional for decades are self-explanatory.

It is important to give the larger membership of the United Nations more opportunities to be heard. Apart from open debates, informal interactive meetings also provide opportunities for dialogue with non-members of the Council. We take positive note of some developments in that regard. The Security Council should be a more collaborative body, taking into consideration that both permanent and elected members of the Council bear collective responsibility for international peace and security.

Another important issue is the implementation of decisions adopted by the Security Council. Needless

to say, the lack of proper attention by the Council to the apparent disregard and misinterpretation of its resolutions containing binding demands cannot constitute an accepted practice of its working methods. It is intolerable that armed aggressions against sovereign States and the resulting military occupation of their territories continue despite Security Council resolutions. As to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, it is essential that both organs uphold their respective functions to maintain due balance and complementarity, in full accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the reform of the Security Council should be decided by the general membership through inclusive and transparent intergovernmental negotiations and should address the positions and concerns of all Member States. Azerbaijan looks forward to engaging constructively in that process.

**Mr. Duarte Lopes** (Portugal): At the outset, I would like to commend the stewardship provided by the Permanent Representatives of Tunisia and Romania as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-first session and welcome the appointment of this year's co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, to whom I convey my best wishes and support for the challenging work ahead.

With regard to Security Council reform, Portugal believes that the process should be inclusive, transparent and comprehensive, and result from a wider consensus, not just the two thirds of the General Assembly required by the Charter of the United Nations. Among other provisions, Portugal deems important that consideration be given to increasing the numbers of both the permanent and non-permanent members. In our view, and in order to reinforce inclusiveness without affecting efficiency, the expansion of the number of seats for potential new permanent members should not include the right to the veto.

We also believe that the creation of any additional category, other than the existing permanent and non-permanent members, would not contribute to the effectiveness of the decision-making process. The reform of the Security Council should also include continuous improvement of its working methods. Portugal has been an advocate of this objective, in 2012, as a non-permanent member of the Council and

Chair of the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as well as through the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group.

As the United Nations organ with greater responsibilities in the area of international peace and security, the Security Council needs reform that reflects the realities of the world today. As my Prime Minister recalled in this year's general debate (see A/72/PV.8), Portugal believes that the African continent should be adequately represented in both categories, and with regard to other continents, we believe that Brazil and India are two unavoidable examples. In implementing the rotation principle, we also have to ensure opportunities for small and medium-sized countries. We hope that this exercise will constitute an opportunity to narrow our focus on what can unite us, build broader common ground and make further efforts towards a comprehensive consensus.

In conclusion, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for your efforts and for committing your leadership to the intergovernmental process. For our part, rest assured that we are ready to continue to engage actively and constructively in this process.

**Mr. Ntwaagae** (Botswana): Let me at the outset join other delegations that have preceded me in sincerely congratulating you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on Security Council reform. Sir, my delegation welcomes your appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We assure them of the full support of the Botswana delegation.

Mr. President, convening this meeting at an early stage of your tenure demonstrates your eagerness and commitment to commencing the intergovernmental negotiations. I also applaud the co-Chairs for having accepted that honourable responsibility and pledge the full support of my delegation for and cooperation with their efforts to advance the negotiations on this very important question, which has remained on the agenda of the General Assembly for a very long time.

Botswana also aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/72/PV.41).

Botswana reaffirms its commitment to the Common African Position on the proposed Security Council reforms, as enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and

the Sirte Declaration, which calls, first, for Africa's full participation in all decision-making organs of the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council, which is the principal decision-making organ charged with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

Secondly, it calls for the full representation of Africa in the Security Council, including the allocation of no fewer than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, and the allocation of five non-permanent seats. We strongly believe that the comprehensive reform of the Security Council will make the Council more inclusive, democratic and representative of all regions of the world, thereby correcting the historical injustice emanating from the exclusion of the African continent from the permanent category, as well as its underrepresentation in the non-permanent category.

As previous speakers have indicated, the intergovernmental negotiations have been protracted because of the complexities of the issues relating to the categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Security Council, the working methods of the Council and the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. We are pleased to note that in recent years there has been a convergence of views on some of the positions and proposals made by Member States and regional groups, and the Common African Position continues to enjoy cross-regional support from the entire United Nations membership.

There is broad consensus that the Security Council reform should reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. It is also widely believed that the reforms will enhance the Council's accountability, transparency, legitimacy and effectiveness in the maintenance of international peace and security. The desired outcome is to ensure the fair and equitable representation of small, medium-sized and large States. However, there are divergent views on the size, scope and modalities of the enlargement of the Council and the retention of the veto.

In that regard, we urge the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations to build on the progress achieved thus far in the reform process. To move the intergovernmental negotiations forward, Member States should continue to build on the outcome documents that were produced during the sixty-ninth,

seventieth and seventy-first sessions of the General Assembly. It is also desirable, even imperative, that Member States and regional groups adopt flexible and constructive positions that could assist in advancing the intergovernmental negotiations.

With those few remarks, I would conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to decision 62/557 and other relevant General Assembly decisions that seek to address the question of equitable distribution on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

**Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria): At the outset, I would like to reiterate the appreciation expressed by Ambassador Adikalie Foday Sumah of Sierra Leone, Coordinator of the Committee of Ten, on behalf of the Group of African States, with which we align ourselves, for the interest that you, Mr. President, have shown in the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We appreciate the efforts made by the previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the previous session, Ambassadors Mohamed Khaled Khiari and Ion Jinga of Tunisia and Romania, respectively. We warmly welcome the new co-Chairs, Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, respectively, whom we fully support in the upcoming session of intergovernmental negotiations.

We are convinced of the necessity of achieving a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system that upholds the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in line with decision 62/557, which continues to be the basis of the intergovernmental negotiations. The reform of the Security Council should be comprehensive and address all substantive issues related to questions of membership, regional representation and the Council's agenda, working methods and the decision-making process, including the veto, *inter alia*; such reform should garner the widest possible acceptance by Member States. We also insist upon the critical importance of the interlinkages of the five negotiable clusters.

We wish to reiterate and insist upon the fact that the framework document, which was circulated in July 2015 and which reflects all of the different positions held, should remain the main reference as far as the pursuit of intergovernmental negotiations is concerned. Indeed, my delegation believes that we cannot take up

the issue of the size of an enlarged Security Council without examining the categories of membership because an enlargement of the Council in either or both of the permanent and non-permanent categories will undoubtedly affect its size. In addition, the size of an enlarged Council will also no doubt affect the issue of equitable regional representation. In other words, in order to correct the current imbalance of the Security Council, we must enlarge its size and take into account the prolonged historical injustice brought to bear against the African continent. This explains the need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, as opposed to an intermediate reform thereof.

In the current international context, it is unacceptable that Africa is the sole continent not to be represented in the permanent category. At the same time, it is also underrepresented in the non-permanent category of the Council. We will therefore continue to demand the allocation of no less than two permanent seats to Africa, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, as well as a total of five non-permanent seats. The issue of the selection of such representatives should not be instrumentalized by some stakeholders; it is a sovereign decision for the African Member States to make. I would remind the Assembly that the African Union has its own competent mechanisms mandated to select candidates to serve in multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations.

On the other hand, we insist on the importance of improving the working methods of the Security Council. With regard to the relationship between the General Assembly and the Council, we reiterate that while close cooperation is needed, each body must uphold its respective mandates, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations, in order to maintain balance and efficiency in the actions by the United Nations.

My delegation regrets that the paper on the elements of commonalities and issues for further consideration from the previous session did not fully reflect the Common African Position on Security Council reform. My delegation expected that the co-Chairs would underline that the Common African Position has garnered wide political acceptance during the current intergovernmental negotiations, which is why our continent needed to be allocated seats in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council. We look forward to the continuation of the discussion in the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the

seventy-second session of the General Assembly. We also look forward to the outcome document of this meeting and hope that we will build on the progress made so far.

As part of the African Group and the Group of Arab States, we stand ready to constructively engage with you, Mr. President, the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, and the entire United Nations membership so as to advance the intergovernmental negotiations process towards comprehensive reform, as stipulated in decision 62/557. We aim to achieve an equitable geographical representation and an increase in the membership of the Security Council, with an expansion in both categories, contributing, as a result, to the enhanced legitimacy of its decisions in the eyes of both the general membership and international public opinion.

We believe in a more representative, more democratic and more transparent Security Council, with, ultimately, enhanced authority and effectiveness, so that there is greater transparency and legitimacy in its debate. My delegation is of the view that the intergovernmental negotiations should be webcast, as is now the case for the debate in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomes the decision of the President of the General Assembly to appoint the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. We express our full support to them to contribute to the achievement of credible progress on such an important issue of the United Nations agenda. Likewise, we extend our appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Romania and Tunisia for the work that they carried out within the intergovernmental negotiations during the past session.

The complexity of the challenges posed in the areas of peace and security, economic and social development and human rights requires a renewed and strengthened Organization that allows the United Nations to provide adequate political responses in order to promote effective and timely solutions. Accordingly, comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council, is one of the main pillars of the process to which we must commit in order for our

efforts to lead to success. The Security Council must be more representative, democratic and transparent, and in line with the current situation in the world.

While there may be full agreement among Member States on the need to reform the Security Council, this objective has not been achieved in the more than two decades since the issue was added to the agenda of the General Assembly in 1994. We remain concerned that no real progress has been made towards an agreement on this matter of priority. The fact that negotiations have stalled undermines the credibility of the process and raises doubts about the willingness of some United Nations Members to work towards reforming the Council with a vision based on concrete results. That is why we believe that we need to reflect on what has been done so far and call for greater political resolve. In this context, after 20 years of discussions, Venezuela believes that we are at a sufficiently advanced stage to call for the launching of a substantive process based on a negotiated draft text with a view to achieving tangible results.

On the question of a possible and unavoidable increase in the membership of the Security Council, we believe that the reform process should ensure that countries from the developing world are included, in particular those from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East. A larger Security Council should include different geographical, political and cultural realities, mainly from the developing world, bearing in mind the need to represent the historical aspirations of our regions. Similarly, Venezuela would be interested in a possible amendment to the Charter so that the non-permanent members in the Council could be re-elected for a period no longer than two consecutive years.

Persistent inconsistencies in the Security Council's working methods mean that we cannot postpone decisions that would ensure greater participation by Member States in Council discussions and which would enable Member States' views to be taken into account in the decision-making process. It is quite a contradiction that, while peace is an issue that affects the entire membership of the Organization, there is no open consideration of items on the Council's agenda, owing to the rigid opposition from some permanent members. Open meetings should be the rule and not the exception, which has unfortunately been the case.



Similarly, the absence of a definitive set of rules of procedure and the discretionary nature of this organ's operations in accordance with some permanent members' interests has a negative impact on the working methods of the Council. That is why we call for the adoption of final rules of procedure so that the Council can act with a sense of equity, balance and transparency.

Furthermore, we cannot fail to mention our concern over the abuse of the use of sanctions, which are sometimes resorted to hastily and on political grounds, which is contrary to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, in situations where there is no real threat to international peace and security. It is the case that approximately 70 per cent of the Security Council sanction committees deal with fraternal countries in Africa.

Although we recognize that sanctions work well as a last resort for shifting conflict situations towards peace, we should nevertheless focus primarily on the means of peaceful settlements of disputes. Similarly, we believe that sanctions should have a limited time frame, be periodically reviewed and set forth clear criteria for their being lifted. We believe that a country cannot be indefinitely subjected to sanctions without taking into account how the State concerned is cooperating or without consulting experts.

Throughout its history, decision-making in the Council has been criticized for being contrary to the principle of sovereign equality of States. Although we recognize that some permanent members have used the veto responsibly, we cannot deny that sometimes the veto has become an obstacle to solving long-standing conflicts, such as the case of Palestine, where the United States has used the veto to favour the occupying Power. Unfortunately, this year we are commemorating 70 years of Al-Nakba — the expulsion of the Palestinians from their land — 50 years of the occupation of Palestine and the Golan Heights by Israel, and 10 years since the Israeli blockade of Gaza. This entire tragedy, which stems from the systematic violation of international law, international humanitarian law and its own Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, has occurred and will continue to occur as a result of the systematic use of the veto by the United States and its support for the occupying Power Israel within the Security Council.

The United States are therefore not only abusing their prerogative powers as permanent members, but

they are distorting the very goals and *raison d'être* of the Security Council. Instead of ensuring world peace and contributing to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the Council has become a perpetrator of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and a destabilizer of the Middle East and North Africa. When the United States does not have or cannot obtain the Security Council's support, it acts unilaterally, as it did in the illegal military intervention in Iraq, with the terrible consequences that people in the Middle East are still suffering from today.

Today, the Permanent Representative of the United States used this rostrum to describe the General Assembly as a political farce. The fact that we voted overwhelmingly — 191 votes in favour — to reject the criminal blockade against Cuba (resolution 72/4) and that the same representative then says that this historic General Assembly decision does not matter shows that the United States is trying to use the Security Council to intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela by using all kinds of tricks and manipulations and all types of parallel and informal processes.

The entire United Nations membership, the members of the Security Council and the countries of our region know that Venezuela is not a threat to peace and international security. We Venezuelans, as we have said and shown, will resolve our own issues ourselves in peace, and we demand respect for our sovereignty and independence. There should be no further North American intervention in our affairs. The actions of the United States reveal their true intentions to destabilize our country. Latin America and the Caribbean is a zone of peace, and the United States will not be able to force us into violence and war.

The Security Council cannot be used in a way that differs from the idea behind its conception, namely, to preserve peace and international security. It cannot be used as a tool for a particular permanent member of the Security Council, in this case, the United States, to further its own national interests and to destabilize our country. Unless such practices are ended, reforming the Security Council will serve no purpose.

In conclusion, Venezuela reaffirms its support for the shared goal of reforming the Security Council without distorting its purpose or character, which is an important element in the process of strengthening the Organization. We cannot have a renewed and revitalized Organization unless we have truly reformed the Security Council. We cannot have organs within

the United Nations, such as the Security Council, that act in breach of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting.

Security Council reform is important for the credibility and smooth functioning of the United Nations. Reforming the Security Council is necessary in order to make it more representative, effective and transparent. That is an objective that we hold dear and that I believe is shared by all.

This is not the place to reiterate the position of my country on the specifics of Council reform. Those positions are well known and reflected in the document circulated in 2015 by President Kutesa and in the elements of the convergence paper distributed in 2016 and 2017 by Presidents Lykketoft and Thomson. I would simply like to underline the importance of increasing the representativeness of the Council by enabling African countries in particular to take their rightful place on the Council and ensuring the effective participation of small and medium-sized Member States in the work of an enlarged Council. Given the growing inclusion of regional organizations in the work of the Security Council, we also believe that we should take that aspect into account in our considerations on Council reform.

Progress has been made in recent years. We must continue on that basis. Allow me to reiterate our special thanks to our colleagues from Romania and Tunisia, and Luxembourg before them, for the impartial, effective and transparent manner in which they chaired the intergovernmental negotiations on reform at recent sessions of the Assembly General. We hope that the substantial elements of commonality that were identified at the last session will be useful in future negotiations and a source of inspiration for further reconciling our positions in the future, with a view to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I congratulate our colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, Ambassador Kaha Imnadze and Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, for their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at this session.

We must all contribute if we are to make headway. Belgium is convinced that if Member States engage and negotiate in good faith, the Security Council can be

reformed. I can assure the Assembly that my country will continue to actively engage in the negotiations. The co-Chairs and you, Sir, can count on our full support.

**Mr. Abulhasan** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation for your letter to Member States dated 30 October 2017, highlighting your eagerness to move forward the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

We also welcome the appointment of Mr. Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, as co-Chairs of the negotiations. We will give them our full support as they lead the intergovernmental negotiations at this session, which is as important as previous ones.

Since we began our discussions to reform the Security Council 24 years ago, a number of international and regional initiatives have been launched regarding the five elements of reform, as set out in decision 62/557. That has given us momentum to move forward on proposals made in the intergovernmental negotiations. Nevertheless, obstacles remain. We do not have the political will necessary to unite our viewpoints and achieve our common objective, especially on the part of the five permanent members of the Security Council. There is an increasing number of international challenges, which should prompt us to press on with the negotiations and to promote collective action. All proposals to enlarge and reform the Security Council should therefore enjoy full or, at the very least, the broadest possible consensus.

The position of my country on Security Council reform has not changed for many years. It is based on the following steadfast principles.

First, the question of Security Council reform must be part of a comprehensive vision that will help us to continue the process of reforming all United Nations entities, thereby bringing greater complementarity and balance to the work of the Organization. We must also strengthen the relationship between the Security Council and other United Nations bodies and agencies without encroaching on the prerogatives of organs such as the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. The role of the Security Council must be limited to its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations — maintaining international peace and security.

Secondly, any proposal to reform the Security Council must be based on our common belief that the Council should become more representative of Member States and reflect the international reality, which has changed a great deal since the inception of the United Nations in 1945.

Thirdly, we must also pursue our efforts to improve the working methods of the Security Council by ensuring greater transparency and effectiveness in its work.

Fourthly, any increase in the number of Council seats must allow small countries to be represented on the Council and to contribute to its work. It is therefore important to take into account the Arab and Muslim countries that wish to be represented commensurate with their importance and ability to defend the objectives of the Charter. We therefore fully support the Arab position, which calls for a permanent Arab seat enjoying the same prerogatives as other permanent seats. If the Council were to be enlarged, we would also call for appropriate Arab representation in the non-permanent category.

We are convinced that the intergovernmental negotiations are the one forum where we can achieve an agreement on the enlargement and reform of the Security Council, in accordance with decision 62/557, which laid the framework for those negotiations.

In conclusion, my country insists that any progress in the reform process will require patience and flexibility, and that any measure that does not derive from consensus among Member States will pose an obstacle to the Organization and to the credibility of the negotiations.

**Mr. Imnadze** (Georgia): On behalf of my fellow co-Chair, the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, and myself, allow me to express my profound thanks for entrusting us with the important task of facilitating the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to be given this opportunity to contribute to a process that is so central to strengthening our Organization.

The intergovernmental negotiations have come quite a long way, and it would be naive to

underestimate the complexity of the matter at hand. However, throughout the year, certain elements of convergence have been identified, and we have all agreed that discussions pertaining to reform are of vital importance to a stronger and more efficient Organization today. The reform of the Security Council is first and foremost a Member State-driven process. Therefore, upon Ambassador Nusseibeh's return to New York, we will engage with all Member States and groups in a transparent and inclusive manner to ensure that we have a credible process aimed at bridging the gaps. Throughout this process, we will seek the advice and guidance of Member States. We will all need to be forward-looking, focusing not only on the positions that have already been expressed and are well known but also on how to move ahead in a meaningful way.

Finally, let me thank our predecessors and colleagues, Ambassadors Ion Jinga of Romania and Mohamed Khaled Khiari of Tunisia, as well as the Ambassadors who preceded them, for their important work in advancing the cause of Security Council reform. Once again, allow me to thank everyone for their kind words and shows of support to the co-Chairs, Ambassador Nusseibeh and myself. As the President of the General Assembly said yesterday, we are indeed all in this together (see A/72/PV.41).

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

One delegation has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Aung** (Myanmar): I take the floor to exercise the right of reply to the statement made by the representative of Liechtenstein (see A/72/PV.41).

We gather here to address the important issue of reform of the Security Council. The process of reform has been going on for almost four decades, yet we have not reached an agreement for meaningful and viable reform. This shows that undivided attention and avoiding politicization are essential for successful reform. During the discussion, many delegations highlighted the same point. We are of the view that if we are to achieve serious and successful reform, it is important to change the mindsets of delegations that attempt to exploit this important issue for their political agenda.

Changing their mindset will help the work of Member States for serious reform of the Security Council.

**The President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122.

#### **Programme of work**

**The President:** I would like to inform members that the consideration of agenda item 131, “Sexual exploitation and abuse: implementing a zero-tolerance policy”, which was originally scheduled for Tuesday, 14 November, has been postponed to a later date, to be announced.

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*