



# General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

**69**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
Tuesday, 26 April 2022, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Shahid . . . . . (Maldives)

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

## Agenda item 7 (continued)

### Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

**The President:** I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft decision A/76/L.51, circulated under agenda item 71, entitled “Rights of indigenous peoples”.

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 71 at its 53rd plenary meeting, on 16 December 2021. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft decision, it will be necessary to reopen its consideration of agenda item 71. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 71?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 71 to the Third Committee. In order to enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft decision, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 71 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

*It was so decided.*

## Agenda item 71 (continued)

### Rights of indigenous peoples

#### Draft decision (A/76/L.51)

**The President:** The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/76/L.51, entitled “Informal interactive hearing with indigenous peoples”. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt the draft decision?

*Draft decision A/76/L.51 was adopted (decision 76/560).*

**The President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 71?

*It was so decided.*

## Agenda item 7 (continued)

### Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

**The President:** I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft decision A/76/L.50, which was circulated under sub-item (d) of agenda item 98, entitled “Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours”.

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 98 at its 54th plenary meeting, on 24 December 2021. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft decision, it will be necessary to reopen its

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consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 98. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 98?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Members will also recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (d) of agenda item 98 to the First Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft decision, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (d) of agenda item 98 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 98 (continued)**

#### **Prevention of an arms race in outer space**

#### **(d) Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours**

#### **Draft decision (A/76/L.50)**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Chile to introduce draft decision A/76/L.50.

**Mr. Ruidíaz Pérez (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor to explain the purpose and background of draft decision A/76/L.50, submitted by the Permanent Mission of Chile. I wish to recall that, in the election held in Geneva on 7 February, a representative of Chile was elected to chair the open-ended working group on the reduction of threats in space through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours.

In that connection, I wish to recall that, in accordance with resolution 76/231, of 24 December 2021, it was decided that in 2022 an open-ended working group with a mandate to consider existing and potential threats and risks to space systems would be convened to make recommendations on possible norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours in that regard and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

It was also decided that the open-ended working group would work on the basis of consensus and would hold a two-day organizational session in Geneva, as well as two five-day sessions in Geneva in 2022 and two five-day sessions in Geneva in 2023.

At the organizational session held in Geneva on 7 and 9 February, the working group decided to hold its first session from 9 to 13 May. Those dates were originally scheduled for its second session, which is why that modification had implications for the calendar. That postponement and the task of finding rooms available in Geneva meant that the Chair and the Secretary had to seek the best dates available for the four sessions.

As a result of that assessment, the Chair decided to present a consolidated draft calendar for the four sessions. That was no easy task, since many meetings and conferences are being held in Geneva this year, as well as at other duty stations. Therefore, there are no perfect dates that avoid any clashes with other multilateral meetings. But the proposal was made with the intention of minimizing any possible overlaps and to leave enough time between sessions to allow delegations to prepare ahead of meetings.

With those considerations in mind, Chile submitted draft decision A/76/L.50 for consideration by the General Assembly this morning. We would therefore like to call on all delegations that have expressed their support for the process to help us to adopt the draft decision by consensus, as it constitutes a very important step towards launching meaningful debate at the first session, scheduled to be held in Geneva from 9 to 13 May, and thereby fulfilling the mandate that was entrusted to us.

This is a purely procedural, non-controversial draft decision that captures the concerns of delegations expressed at the organizational session in February and during consultations held by the working group's Chair. We trust that the common purpose that brings us together — to improve the safety, security and sustainability of space systems in the interests of peace and the well-being for all — will be reflected in the adoption of the draft decision today.

**The President:** The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/76/L.50, entitled “Open-ended working group on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours”. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt the draft decision?

*Draft decision A/76/L.50 was adopted (decision 76/506B).*

**The President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 98?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 124 (continued)**

#### **Strengthening of the United Nations system**

##### **Draft resolution (A/76/L.52)**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.52.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of its co-sponsors, draft resolution A/76/L.52, entitled "Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council". I am happy to inform the Assembly that the initiative is currently supported by 76 co-sponsors from all regional groups.

The draft resolution before the Assembly today creates a standing mandate for the Assembly to be convened automatically within 10 working days of the casting of a veto in the Security Council. The draft resolution, which will take immediate effect, also accords precedence in the list of speakers of the subsequent General Assembly debate to the delegation or delegations that cast the veto, on an exceptional basis.

The mandate, which is without prejudice to ongoing discussions in the intergovernmental negotiations pursuant to decision 62/557, is not prescriptive with respect to a possible outcome. While States can, of course, propose action by the General Assembly in accordance with established procedures of the Assembly, that will not necessarily be so.

Liechtenstein began work on the initiative together with a core group of States more than two years ago due to growing concern that the Security Council has found it increasingly difficult to carry out its work in accordance with its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations, the increase in the use of the veto being the most obvious expression of that difficulty. All States Members of the Organization have conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, agreeing that the Council acts on their behalf.

We are therefore of the view that the membership as a whole should be given a voice when the Security

Council is unable to act in accordance with the Assembly's functions and powers as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular its Article 10. The veto power comes with the responsibility to work for the achievement of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at all times.

We have put forward this text as an expression of our commitment to multilateralism, with the Organization and its principal organs at the forefront. There has never been a greater need for effective multilateralism than there is today, or a greater need for innovation in order to secure the central role and voice of the United Nations in that respect.

We conducted extensive outreach and consultations, both individually and collectively, with our core group and co-sponsors, in bilateral and various group settings. Our text was first circulated to the United Nations membership as a whole on 3 March, first made available to a wider public on 12 April and discussed in an open format with all interested States on 19 April.

We are grateful for the strong interest of members of the Assembly and the numerous comments we have received from many delegations over the course of the lengthy process. They have helped us to refine and improve our text, resulting in the straightforward, legally sound and politically meaningful proposal we submit to the Assembly today. We are very thankful for the very strong support our initiative has received from members and we look forward to adopting it with them this morning.

**The President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.52.

Before giving the floor for explanations of position before action is taken on the draft resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): We are meeting today to consider the prospects for reaching an agreement on a better use of the veto power bestowed upon the permanent members of the Security Council since the end of the Second World War. That was a long time ago, when the problems and aspirations of humankind were very different from what they are today.

If we are here today on the verge of the unacceptable for most of the peoples of the world, it is because

the veto power is highly questionable in terms of its effectiveness and its representativeness. It is clear that it constitutes an impediment to the Security Council's decision-making abilities, as the Council cannot act when faced with the use of the veto by one of its permanent members, regardless of the extent of the threat or the danger posed to international peace and security.

That exorbitant prerogative, used a total of 295 times since 1946 by each of the permanent members of the Security Council at one time or another, has frequently paralysed the Organization, which is supposed to promote international peace and security, and has resulted in its powerlessness to act precisely when its collective action is most indispensable. The veto power has transformed the Security Council into a tool for domination by some who believe that their individual interests should prevail over the collective interests of the entire international community.

Despite those obvious issues, some claim that the Security Council has not been destroyed by the veto but rather saved by it. According to them, the veto should be considered and accepted as a necessary evil. Whatever the case, beyond our own perceptions, as well as the unceasing calls for Security Council reform and the aspirations of the great majority of the peoples of the world for a fairer, more democratic international order that corresponds to the realities of today, another unavoidable reality confronts us.

That reality is one in which the veto power, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, can be questioned only if two thirds of the members of the General Assembly formally agree to do so and, in addition to that, only if the five permanent members of the Security Council unanimously accept to renounce that privilege. That hypothetical situation will, of course, never materialize, no matter how the stars align.

It is therefore clear that we need a true paradigm shift if we want to give the Security Council a more human face commensurate with its mandate. Its membership needs to be reconfigured, as do its powers and working methods, whether by increasing the number of its permanent and non-permanent members — which brings with it the risk of amplifying potential abuses of the veto power — or by simply abolishing the veto power altogether.

Naturally, in either of those scenarios, Africa, the continent home to the greatest number of peacekeeping

missions, must take its rightful place in keeping with the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Furthermore, allow me to recall that those reasonable prospects for the reconfiguration of international governance can be realized only if they are validated by each of the permanent members of the Security Council, according to the current provisions of the Charter of the United Nations — assuming that those States would be willing to share or be stripped of their strategic advantages.

Let us be realistic and pragmatic: it is undeniable that the decisions made by the Organization are a reflection of the current state of international consensus, or rather the absence of such a consensus on the most basic and fundamental issues. When it comes to the threats we face, such as terrorism for example, we can barely agree on a definition. Each nation remains focused only on its own concerns and how it can use the international agenda for its own purposes.

Against that backdrop, international solidarity remains an empty slogan, and the rules-based international order is paralysed by the spread of a “might is right” ideology, in keeping with what is at stake at the geostrategic, geopolitical and socioeconomic levels.

By choosing to decide today on the difficult issue of the veto power by the permanent members of the Security Council, if we use only rhetorical arguments then we are saying that it is impossible for us to reform that important organ of the United Nations in any rational or meaningful way and we are postponing indefinitely the prospects of the intergovernmental negotiations process that was initiated to discuss this very issue.

In the light of all of that, it is our conviction that voting on draft resolution A/76/L. 52, on the use of the veto power, will not change the scope, substance or impact of the veto power. What we are doing today is a reflection of our societies' attempts to shrink a malignant tumour in order to live and grow together and not resign ourselves to the current situation. We all know that, given the Charter and the way things currently stand, a General Assembly resolution will not serve in any way to deter those who hold the veto power. It will therefore not be able to stop any war or resolve any crisis on which the veto power can be used.

On the other hand, we fear that the only outcome of today's vote could be to lead, yet again, to the awful spectacle of an international community divided and

disagreeing at a critical moment, when the people of the world are hoping for a display of unity and a glimmer of hope commensurate with their distress.

Several minutes from now, depending on whether a vote is taken in favour or against, we will automatically end up in one camp, in opposition to the other. Given such a narrow path of options, we wish to recall the wise words of a former Prime Minister of Barbados, His Excellency Mr. Errol Barrow, who said that we should be friends of all and satellites of none. That is certainly the kind of the United Nations that the peoples of the world desire: an Organization in which each nation is a friend of all nations.

The refusal to align ourselves with spheres of influence, which gave rise to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is once again highly pertinent, at the risk of exhuming the remnants of another world of antagonistic blocs and walls of separation, when in fact we need a world order founded on the building of bridges between the peoples of the world. Given that we do not accept the logic of camps, invective and fragmentation — which are a world away from the world we want — my country will abstain in any voting on draft resolution A/76/L.52.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): My delegation takes the floor in support of draft resolution A/76/L.52, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”. Guyana is extremely pleased to be among those supporting the progressive step that we are taking today as States Members of the United Nations and commends the delegation of Liechtenstein for its leadership in submitting the draft resolution.

While acknowledging that the draft resolution is without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on reform of the Security Council, I must acknowledge that the question of the veto continues to be the subject of much deliberation, principally in the intergovernmental negotiations. It continues to occupy our attention, primarily because of what its use often means for the maintenance of international peace and security — a responsibility that has been conferred primarily on the Security Council by the States Members of the United Nations, on whose behalf the Council acts.

On that latter note, and underscoring the constructive approach required on any issue included on the Council’s agenda, my delegation is of the firm conviction that the draft resolution aims to add a critical

element to the work that we do as an Organization for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Guyana has long been among those advocating for the abolition of the veto. Our position is premised, *inter alia*, on the view that the veto does not contribute to accountability by those Council members who may exercise its use and sometimes enables situations in which they can prevent the Council from taking action in situations that require strong responses from the United Nations.

Such situations include humanitarian crises fuelled by violent conflict, including war. They also include violations of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, such as the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of another State. Furthermore, they include violations of international disarmament obligations, such as the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons.

In that context, and to build a culture of accountability and transparency around the use of the veto, the proposal to organize a debate in the most representative organ of the United Nations — the General Assembly — is both appropriate and necessary. In that way, formal scope is provided for deliberations among the entire United Nations membership, including the Council member casting the veto, in situations in which the latter has chosen to prevent Council action on a matter deemed important for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Guyana believes that, by broadening the deliberations on such issues outside the Council, all Member States will be provided the opportunity to contribute to the search for solutions. In our assessment, that will also serve to strengthen the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, bearing in mind that the General Assembly also plays a role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Allow me to conclude by underscoring that the use of the veto should be viewed not as a right but as a prerogative that can be exercised by some Council members. Considering the mandate of the Security Council, the prerogative to use the vehicle is a heavy responsibility that should not be taken lightly. Its use can mean the difference between war and peace, life and death and development and poverty.

My delegation hopes that what is achieved by draft resolution A/76/L. 52 today, once adopted, will be a critical step towards a rethink of the use of the veto. I therefore urge all Member States to support its consensus adoption as an expression of our common responsibility to build a peaceful world.

**Mr. Penaranda** (Philippines): The Philippines finds merit in draft resolution A/76/L.52 in its intention to make a meaningful contribution to strengthening the role of the General Assembly and enhancing the accountability of the Security Council to the general membership, as provided for under the Charter of the United Nations. This view on strengthening the General Assembly by enhancing its ability to act on matters affecting international peace and security in the event that the Security Council is unable to do so, for whatever reason, has long been espoused by the Philippines.

The thrust of the draft resolution is in line with my country's position on the question of the veto, and in strengthening the General Assembly, we are exercising its role and authority — as stated in the Charter — on questions related to international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 10 to 14 and 35. However, the Philippines will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/76/L.52 in view of the following three key points.

First, paragraph 1 renders the convening process automatic, as it mandates the President of the General Assembly to convene a formal meeting of the Assembly within 10 working days of the casting of a veto. One existing mechanism, the emergency special session — under resolution 377 (V), entitled “Uniting for peace” — respects the power of the General Assembly to decide whether or not to convene and make recommendations to the United Nations, the Security Council or both on any such questions or matters, except as provided under Article 12. We note that Article 12 empowers the Secretary-General, with the consent of the Security Council, to notify the General Assembly of any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security — in which case the Security Council would immediately cease to deal with such matters.

Secondly, we wish to emphasize that it should be the Member States of the General Assembly that decide whether to hold a debate and initiate proceedings — not the President of the General Assembly. Such a decision should be arrived at after the President undertakes consultations with the broader membership. Paragraph

1 places the responsibility on the President, rather than the General Assembly or its members. In effect, it reduces the power of the Member States.

Thirdly, the automaticity of convening a General Assembly debate every single time the veto is exercised in the Security Council may prove impractical and inefficient. The current system is not infirm and has worked quite well over the years. Since 1946, a total of 293 vetoes have been cast in the Security Council, covering a number of issues. Not all draft resolutions vetoed in the Council required Assembly action. The context within which the veto was exercised should be a major consideration in deciding whether a General Assembly debate should be conducted. The holding of a formal General Assembly debate should be decided on a case-by-case basis after the Member States have given the matter careful consideration.

We have seen cases, including recently, where the proponents of Security Council draft resolutions that failed to be adopted because of the veto brought the same draft resolutions to the General Assembly for consideration. Decisions to hold a General Assembly meeting or an emergency special session have been made following the General Assembly rules of procedure and practice.

The Philippines has consistently supported the view that the General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and most representative organ of the United Nations. However, while we aim to strengthen the role of the General Assembly and enhance the accountability of the Security Council on matters concerning international peace and security, it is important that the collective and inclusive authority of the Member States be upheld at all times.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho** (Brazil): Although my delegation sees merit in the general idea that the permanent members of the Security Council should clarify to the wider membership their position on peace and security matters, Brazil is going to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/76/L.52.

We believe that the draft resolution was not properly discussed. We regret that the proponents did not engage in negotiations or organize informal consultations to give Member States the opportunity to make contributions to the text. Had such a debate taken place, we would have proposed, for example, that a similar mechanism be considered whenever a mandate for the use of force is determined by the Security

Council. That would promote greater transparency and accountability.

More important, the draft resolution before us changes the delicate balance between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Creating a standing mandate for the General Assembly to debate an item every time a veto is cast puts in question the Council's authority and legitimacy. It would also discourage efforts by Council members to find common ground when divisive situations arise.

We must also recall that a veto, in itself, is not a failure to maintain peace and security. It has been embedded in the Charter of the United Nations as a means to contain excess of power and safeguard the international system against decisions taken by one country or group of countries to use force. We have seen that happen — even without this draft resolution. We should therefore avoid weakening the system further.

The “Uniting for peace” mechanism was adopted exceptionally to respond to situations in which the Security Council fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It was officially enacted only 11 times in more than 70 years. That is not without reason. It means that the General Assembly has been urged to act only in extreme or exceptional circumstances. It should remain so.

Although the text genuinely tries to find alternatives to the Security Council paralysis, it is not the appropriate answer to the challenge and has not been discussed as it should be. The authority and effectiveness of the Council will be regained only when the General Assembly decides to move forward in the protracted discussions on the reform. A representative Council that reflects the current international system is central to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the future of the Organization.

As a founding Member of the Organization and as a current member of the Security Council, Brazil renews its commitment to continue working for negotiated solutions to threats to peace and security and for an effective United Nations.

**Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the face of all the manoeuvres of the United States and Western countries aimed at the disintegration of the United Nations, Nicaragua has an important message to deliver.

My country condemns the manoeuvres and violations of the purposes and principles that should govern the United Nations and urges, now more than ever, the reform of the Organization, as former President of the General Assembly Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann earnestly proposed on behalf of Nicaragua.

Our only proposal is to immediately begin the process of reforming the United Nations. These manoeuvres of imperialist North America and Western countries is an attempt to impose total hegemony. Nicaragua insists that the sovereign resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly be implemented. A good example is the case of the embargo on Cuba and the numerous times the Assembly has voted to end the embargo. The decisions of this sovereign General Assembly are not being respected.

Nicaragua also denounces the United States for ignoring the rulings of the International Court of Justice to compensate Nicaragua, thereby undermining the United Nations and the highest international court.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

Before proceeding to take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.52, I wish to address the question concerning the majority required for the adoption of the draft resolution. In the light of paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations, may I take it that the Assembly decides to take action on draft resolution A/76/L.52 by a simple majority of the members present and voting?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.52, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. De Miranda** (Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following have also become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/76/L.52: Andorra, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Cyprus, Djibouti, France, the Gambia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Libya, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, the

Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Panama, San Marino, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tonga, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay.

**The President:** In the absence of a request for a recorded vote, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.52?

*Draft resolution A/76/L.52 was adopted (resolution 76/262).*

**The President:** Before giving the floor to those who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Jiang Hua** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Currently, the world is confronted with unprecedented risks and challenges. Countries need to uphold true multilateralism, strengthen solidarity and cooperation under the banner of the United Nations and make the Organization the central platform for maintaining common security and pursuing shared development.

Like other Member States, China believes that the General Assembly is the most universal and representative deliberative, policymaking and decision-making organ within the United Nations system. We support the General Assembly in carrying out its responsibilities and playing an active and important role, in accordance with its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations.

Liechtenstein and other countries submitted resolution 76/262 under agenda item “Strengthening of the United Nations system”, which aims to empower the General Assembly, in line with its Charter mandate, with respect to matters related to international peace and security. The Assembly is thus empowered to make a meaningful contribution to effective multilateralism.

Based on our consistent position on the role of the General Assembly, we understand and concur with the purpose of the resolution. The United Nations Charter confers on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. China has always participated in the Council’s work in a constructive and responsible manner. We advocate that the Council should be committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes and the settlement of differences through dialogue and consultation. It should strengthen coordination with

the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as other relevant organizations. We have been actively promoting the improvement of the Council’s working methods, greater transparency and broader participation by Council members, especially small and medium-sized countries.

In today’s world, full of uncertainty and instability, the international community expects the permanent members of the Security Council to lead by example by upholding multilateralism, adhering to the international rule of law, fulfilling their international obligations and promoting global cooperation. Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter defines the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Council, which must respect each other, respond to the common security needs of the international community and, more important, insist on the equality of all countries, regardless of their size.

China actively advocates a common, comprehensive, cooperation and sustainable concept of security and has always fulfilled its international responsibilities and obligations through concrete actions. We have always defined our position in the Security Council in a manner that is responsible to the United Nations Charter and to history.

In circumstances where the Council is unable to act on major issues of peace and security due to the lack of consensus among its permanent members, we are in favour of discussions among Member States through the platform of the General Assembly. Under the “Uniting for peace” mechanism, the General Assembly can convene emergency special sessions in those circumstances. Practice over the years has shown that this arrangement allows Member States to play a role on major issues of international peace and security.

At the same time, in the actual work of the Council, there are a variety of specific situations in which the Council is unable to act. The resolution adopted in today’s meeting gives the General Assembly a new mandate — to create a mechanism that automatically triggers the General Assembly to convene meetings, which, in practice, is likely to cause procedural confusion and inconsistency. It is difficult to determine at this time whether such an arrangement would serve the intended purpose of the resolution.

Promoting the General Assembly’s and Security Council’s faithful fulfilment of their responsibilities

under the Charter of the United Nations is conducive to strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations system and implementing the purposes and principles of the Charter, which serves the common interests of the international community. China is ready to work steadfastly with other Member States to that end.

**Mr. Raguttahalli** (India): Represented by a delegation that has piloted the need for reformed multilateralism, India fully supports any initiative that genuinely furthers the objective of achieving meaningful and comprehensive reform of the key elements of the global multilateral architecture.

In the context of the United Nations, that has implied, *inter alia*, bringing the structure and composition of the Security Council into line with contemporary geopolitical realities, through its comprehensive reform across the five clusters of categories of membership: the question of the veto, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Security Council and improving its working methods, and improving the Council's relationship with the General Assembly.

Our leaders have repeatedly tasked us with delivering early and comprehensive reform of the Security Council — a task that after years of textless, fruitless deliberations in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, remains not only unfulfilled but also blocked by those perpetuating the outdated status quo. In effect, a vocal minority of naysayers have held the entire process of Security Council reform hostage over the past four decades.

The only way to begin to remedy what ails the Security Council is to make it more representative, credible and legitimate by including more underrepresented voices, including from developing countries and from Africa.

My delegation has the following five issues of concern with regard to the present initiative.

First, the General Assembly unanimously agreed in decision 62/557, adopted in 2008, that all five aspects of Security Council reform, including the question of the veto, would be decided in a comprehensive manner, and therefore no single cluster could be addressed in isolation. When a group of pro-reform Member States, including India, put forward a similar such initiative nearly a decade ago, which also called for an improvement in the working methods of the Council,

we were accused of promoting a piecemeal approach to Security Council reform.

It is therefore ironic that the same set of Member States that argue vociferously against piecemeal reform in the intergovernmental negotiations are today themselves supporting a piecemeal initiative that ignores the root cause of the problem. We therefore hope that other piecemeal efforts focusing on aspects of the category of membership and the working methods of the Council would be treated without any double standards and with a similar yardstick in the future.

Secondly, all five permanent members have used the veto over the past 75 years to achieve their respective political ends. In that regard, let me flag what our African brothers and sisters have repeatedly stated in the intergovernmental negotiations:

“The veto as a matter of principle should be abolished. However, as a matter of common justice, it should be extended to new permanent members so long as it continues to exist.”

The privilege of using the veto has been vested in only five Member States. The General Assembly can do very little about it as, effectively, the permanent five have a veto over the veto. As rightly called out by our African brothers and sisters, it goes against the concept of the sovereign equality of States and only perpetuates the mindset of the Second World War — to the victor belongs the spoils. Either all nations are treated equally in the context of voting rights or else the new permanent members must also be given the veto.

Bringing the veto to the General Assembly as a stand-alone issue on which the remaining membership has no *de facto* say and implying that that issue needs to be addressed first, above all other substantive issues of Security Council reform, is giving disproportionate importance to one issue over all the others. That flawed approach is therefore an aberration.

Thirdly, the provisions of resolution 76/262 also tend to relitigate the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, as they entail structural changes in the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council that will impact the internal decision-making dynamics of the Council.

Fourthly, the proponents of the resolution claim that the automaticity of the standing mandate is meant to empower the General Assembly. We fail to understand how removing the discretion and decision-making

ability of the President of the General Assembly and the membership can empower the General Assembly. There are already mechanisms in place that enable the membership of the General Assembly to decide on an emergency basis to convene discussions, or even take action on issues that have reached a stalemate in the Security Council. We need not add an automatic invocation of another mechanism by rewriting the existing rules.

The wider implications of today's decision bring us to our fifth and final issue. A substantive and important resolution such as this, with profound long-term ramifications on the relationship between two major organs of the United Nations, their mandates and internal working dynamics, demands much more serious, in-depth and inclusive deliberation than was allowed by the movers of the text of resolution 76/262. We regret the lack of inclusivity in the way in which it was proposed. We have serious concerns about such take-it-or-leave-it initiatives, which do not make a genuine effort to take into account the perspectives and concerns of the wider membership.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): I thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor to explain our position on resolution 76/262. We support all efforts to improve transparency in the work of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole. It was in that spirit that Indonesia joined the consensus on the resolution.

Hence, it is regrettable that our endeavour to improve the transparency of the Security Council was conducted through a non-inclusive and non-transparent process. Indonesia regrets the take-it-or-leave-it approach forced upon the wider Member States in the drafting process of this resolution, which was conducted under a non-negotiation process with the wider Member States.

Outreach after the resolution has been submitted to the General Assembly is not a negotiation process. Only through a negotiation process could we improve the draft, which carries the collective views of the wider Member States, a key principle of the General Assembly.

Moreover, we once again emphasize our call to end double standards or the pick-and-choose approach in our work in the United Nations. We should all be able to listen to the rationale behind the use of all vetoes without exception, with or without the issue being the agenda of the General Assembly.

*Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Mr. Pilipenko** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus, a country that survived the horrors of Nazi occupation and defeated the plague of fascism, is a founding Member of the United Nations and has always been very careful and responsible with regard to the United Nations carrying out its primary role, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are very disturbed by the fact that in the Security Council there are considerable differences and disagreements among the permanent members. That is a very dangerous situation. However, what is even more dangerous is to ignore such disagreements and try to find simple ways around them.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what we are called on to do in resolution 76/262, which the General Assembly adopted today. Instead of trying to identify the root causes of the disagreements in the Council and determine why it is impossible to reach consensus in the Council, along with the reasons behind the unwillingness of the permanent members on the Council to reach compromise, the sponsors are relying on brute force, namely, their ability to form a majority in the General Assembly by using all kinds of tricks. By the way, they are openly stating as much.

The Republic of Belarus carefully studied the text of the resolution and has decided not to break the consensus, but we dissociate ourselves from it. We would like to explain the reasons for our decision.

First of all, we would like to state that the manner in which the document was drafted was unacceptable. The work on the draft text was carried out behind closed doors. We are not aware of any comprehensive round of open, inclusive and transparent discussions on the document. Such an approach in itself raises doubts about the integrity and right-mindedness of the authors.

Secondly, the only exchange of views, on 19 April, following the issuance of the draft text was clearly a formal exercise. Not only did the authors fail to clarify most of the questions posed by delegations, but they also did not take into account the comments made, making only minimal minor adjustments.

After several days, the resolution was put before the General Assembly for its consideration in a rather hurried manner. What was the reason for such haste,

especially since, as the authors maintain, the General Assembly already has the authority to do all that the resolution proposes? It should be recalled that resolution 377 (V), "Uniting for peace", of 3 November 1950, gives the Assembly broad powers to act if the Security Council fails to discharge its primary responsibility.

The content of the document is also problematic. The resolution has an overtly political and country-specific focus. Even the sponsors themselves do not deny that fact. The document blatantly violates the streamlined structure of the United Nations work as stipulated in the Charter and contradicts the key principle of the division of labour among its main organs. The resolution does not add the transparency mentioned by the sponsors to the Security Council's work. The words transparency, openness and accountability are not even used in the text.

The resolution should have been considered as one possible element of Security Council reform. We believe that singling out individual elements from the set of Council reform issues only distances the international community from adopting the resolution that we all need. The work on Security Council reform is in fact devalued when resolutions are adopted in the interests of only one group of countries, while issues of concern to other groups remain unaddressed.

Finally, on the revitalization of the United Nations system and the General Assembly, in recent years Member States and the Secretariat have noted that the agenda and schedules are overburdened, which has had a negative impact on the practical outcomes of the entire United Nations system.

The introduction of an automatic meeting mechanism for the General Assembly would inevitably lead to procedural conflict in its work. That would only compound the accumulation of issues and would in no way serve the purpose of revitalizing and strengthening the United Nations system, which underpins the General Assembly agenda item of the same name, under which, ironically, the resolution was introduced.

**Mr. Larbaoui** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Algerian delegation joined in the adoption of resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for the General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council", as a procedural mechanism to strengthen the role, powers and functions of the General Assembly in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as the principal representative

organ for deliberation and policymaking. It is therefore important to view this initiative in the broader context of strengthening multilateralism and responding to the call of the United Nations membership for greater transparency and accountability, without selectivity.

Undoubtedly, this resolution is a useful and timely institutional step forward, but it remains modest in relation to the need for the harmonious integration of the main organs so that each of them can realize and exploit its full potential.

It should be noted that the mere reported instances of abuse of the use of the veto supports the explicit democratization of the work of all organs, particularly the Security Council, but structurally rather than circumstantially.

The immense challenges currently facing the world and all humankind require us now more than ever to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity in order to more effectively activate the mechanisms of multilateral action and establish rules of a new world order that ensure the equal participation of all countries without any discrimination.

To that end, we must work together to advance the process of a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system in order to improve its performance and promote its effectiveness in discharging the responsibilities entrusted to it under the Charter of the United Nations. We need to focus on revitalizing the central role of the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council in order to achieve greater transparency and equitable geographical representation and put an end to the historical injustice imposed on the African continent.

The Algerian delegation reiterates the importance of committing to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, which are the only framework for Council reform, in accordance with resolution 62/557, of 15 December 2008.

In that regard, we also stress the need for an integrated approach, calling for genuine and comprehensive Security Council reform that includes the five main issues contained in the resolution, in line with the African common position, as stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

In general, the approach adopted by Algeria with regard to the United Nations system is in line with all the initiatives to strengthen the complementary and interactive relationship between the General Assembly

and the Security Council. That allows all countries to express their positions and set out their views and expectations on many issues that fall within the purview of the Security Council, and should remain at the top of the United Nations agenda.

In conclusion, it should be recalled that strengthening multilateral action remains the only possible way to overcome the challenges of the current critical juncture. Our main objective is to contribute collectively to supporting the purposes and principles of the United Nations so that our Organization can more effectively fulfil its mandate to ensure the human right to a decent life in freedom, peace and dignity.

**Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand): Thailand supports the ongoing efforts to enhance transparency in the United Nations, whether in the General Assembly or the Security Council. In our view, resolution 76/262, which we just adopted, reflects a well-intentioned effort that seeks to promote greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, particularly on the use of the veto. The stated aspirations behind, and the principle underlying, such efforts are important and commendable.

At the same time, what is equally important is for a resolution of such significance — one with wider and longer-term institutional implications, especially on the interrelationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly — to benefit from more wide-ranging and comprehensive consultations with the United Nations membership. While we recognize that the resolution's genesis came about some time ago and that the pandemic unfortunately suspended work on it, we also note that efforts to take forward the draft picked up dramatically in the past few weeks. This accelerated process has, in our view, placed some limitations on comprehensive consultations that would have been beneficial to all.

On the substance of resolution 76/262, the issue of automaticity, in which the President would automatically convene a formal meeting of the General Assembly after a veto or vetoes have been cast in the Security Council, merits serious reflection. In our view, the General Assembly process should be as Member-State-driven as possible and with good reason. Automaticity, however well meaning, takes “we, the Member States” out of the decision-making loop and in so doing reduces flexibility and limits options — two key assets of diplomacy.

Going forward, we hope that the resolution that has now been adopted is implemented in a consistent manner across the board in order to reinforce resilience of and people's faith in our multilateral system in general and the General Assembly in particular.

**Mr. Sarufa** (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of my delegation, let me acknowledge the leadership and the efforts of the core group of countries on the establishment of the General Assembly standing mandate to deal with the use of the veto in the Security Council subsequent to a meeting in which a veto is cast.

The veto debate is not only politically sensitive but also emotionally charged, with its positive and negative implications. Veto custodians in the Security Council have a duty of responsibility, rather than a right, and its application must be in the letter and spirit of engendering international peace and security, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations. For Papua New Guinea, as a developing small country, the rule of law and the respect for and upholding of international law commitments and obligations, including the United Nations Charter, is a safety valve that affords and assures security and protection of States such as mine. Papua New Guinea joined the consensus in adopting resolution 76/262, as its intent is one we share.

We note that this resolution is said to be of a procedural nature. However, it has potential wider substantive implications, as it relates to the international peace and security agenda and to the mandates of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. That is why we raised several issues of importance to us during the sole informal consultation with the wider United Nations membership last held week. One of the particular concerns to my delegation was the inclusiveness and transparency of the process in the context of meaningful multilateralism.

Having closed meetings in small configurations with limited wider consultations to prepare important General Assembly initiatives, including draft resolutions, whether they be procedural or substantive in nature, is not a substitute for an inclusive and transparent process in this body. It is also not in the spirit of our collective efforts for dialogue. However, we welcome the outreach for dialogue and appreciate the flexibility of the core group and sponsors of resolution 76/262, in facilitating the inclusion of new elements suggested by my delegation and others, particularly relating to Article 27 of the United Nations Charter.

As we meet in this Hall today to establish a General Assembly standing mandate to deal with the aftermath of the use of the veto in the Security Council, we are yet again reminded of the needless suffering and pain the people and the Government of Ukraine are currently subjected to as a dire consequence of the veto cast by a permanent member of the Security Council in breach of the mandate and trust bestowed upon members of the Council under the United Nations Charter to prevent the scourge of war. It is incumbent upon all of us to be better collective guardians of our international peace and security and not just leave it to the Security Council in its current outdated format. We can no longer afford to have a Security Council that is not fit for purpose, has questionable accountability and an opaque personality, and does not represent today's realities.

*Mr. Turay (Sierra Leone), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

We need a Council that is truly an organ that better serves, "we, the peoples of the United Nations" rather than the self-serving interests of a few. It is once again this that brings to the fore the pressing importance of the reform of the Security Council. It is on this basis and from this lens that my delegation saw the necessity for us to join the consensus and support resolution 76/262, just adopted.

**Mr. Gertze** (Namibia): In Namibia's capacity as a member of the African Union Committee of 10 on the Reform of the United Nations Security Council, I have the honour to deliver this explanation of vote after the voting on behalf of the States members of the African Union, following the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 76/262, under agenda item 124, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", otherwise known as the veto initiative.

The States members of the African Union thank the delegation of Liechtenstein and the other sponsors of the resolution for the initiative and for the engagements over time with States Members of the United Nations, explaining the rationale, nature and scope of the veto initiative. We have been engaged in the process leading to the adoption of resolution 76/262 and have acted on the basis of each State member of the African Union, expressing their sovereign will on this resolution, which is, in our view, purely procedural. This explanation of vote after the voting is focused on putting on record the position of the States members of the African Union on the issue of the reform of the Security Council, in

particular, on the cluster of the question of the veto under the agenda item on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

Africa remains convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system that will significantly contribute to upholding the principles, objectives and ideals of the United Nations Charter for a fairer world, based on universalism, equity and regional balance. In particular, Africa attaches great importance to the reform of the United Nations Security Council. We are of the firm view that reform is needed to improve the Council and make it an accessible, accountable, transparent, democratic, representative and more effective organ of the United Nations and thereby give legitimacy to its decisions and better reflect current geopolitical realities.

Africa has a clear position on the five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council, including on the question of the veto and the agreed decision for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, as outlined in decision 62/557. We would therefore like to underline our firm position that resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative, is distinct from the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council and has no bearing or impact on decision 62/557 and the Common African Position as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Africa remains true and faithful to decision 62/557 and other relevant General Assembly decisions for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council on all the five clusters, taking into account their interconnectedness. We therefore welcome the eighth preambular paragraph of resolution 76/262, which states,

"Bearing in mind its decision 62/557 [...] the present resolution and its provisions are without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform".

In conclusion, we reiterate the call for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system to ensure that the Organization is fit for purpose and can lead in addressing persistent challenges and fragile situations, as we have been urged by our Heads of State and Governments in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations to instil new life in the reform process.

**Mr. Khan** (Pakistan): Pakistan supported the adoption of resolution 76/262 under agenda item 124, entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations system”. Pakistan agrees with the overall objective of the resolution, which is to bring greater responsibility to the conduct of the permanent members of the Security Council.

Pakistan appreciates that the sponsors added the eighth preambular paragraph, which recalls decision 62/557 and notes that the resolution and its provisions are without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We also welcome the inclusion in the text of the third and fifth preambular paragraphs, which recall Articles 12 and 17, respectively, of the Charter of the United Nations.

Under those provisions, it is clear that the trigger for holding a General Assembly meeting in the wake of the use of the veto by a permanent member is a situation in which the Council is prevented from acting on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. We also believe that slight modifications to the language in paragraph 1 could have expressed that qualification with clarity.

**Mr. Mainero** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): As a founding Member of the United Nations, Argentina is firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations dating back to the negotiations of the 1945 San Francisco Conference, especially the meeting of the General Assembly at the second part of its first session held in October 1946 (see A/PV.37), at which Argentina took a firm position against the right of veto.

Argentina has reiterated its position against the right of veto and in favour of the reform of the Security Council with the consensus of States Members every time the issue has been raised, especially since the process of intergovernmental negotiations began. The Security Council must be more democratic, transparent, efficient, representative and accountable vis-à-vis the international community.

Argentina joined the consensus on resolution 76/262 in keeping with its historical position on the right of veto, as a privilege that violates the principle of the sovereign equality among States and must be abolished. In taking into account the ongoing intergovernmental negotiation to reform the Security Council, my delegation would like to stress that its support for the adoption of resolution 76/262 was

predicated on its eighth preambular paragraph, which recalls decision 62/557 and affirms that it is without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

**Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation joined the consensus on resolution 76/262. However, we would like to state the following.

As a founding Member of the United Nations, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a staunch supporter of a strengthened role for the United Nations as the cornerstone of multilateralism in maintaining international peace and security. Iran has also called on the Security Council to act in a more efficient, transparent, effective and accountable manner.

In that context, ending the Security Council’s wrong and unlawful practices, as well as its application of double standards, which are harmful to international peace and security and incompatible with United Nations purposes and principles, should remain at the forefront of any effort to strengthen the United Nations system.

According to Article 24, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council, in carrying out its responsibilities, shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. That means that the Council’s powers and authority are limited, it is not above the law, and it cannot act arbitrarily or without regard for international law.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 1, the Security Council has been given the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by Member States. That means that the Council has a legal, political and moral responsibility to act properly and responsibly and that members of the Council must make decisions based on the common interests of the Organization’s entire membership, rather than on their own national interests or those of the geopolitical or geographical groups to which they belong.

The Council is responsible to the Member States, on behalf of which it acts, and must therefore remain accountable to them. That indeed is the *raison d’être* of Article 24, paragraph 3, which requires the Council to submit annual or special reports to the General Assembly, in which all Member States are represented. United Nations organs should refrain from interfering

in one another's competencies and responsibilities. The Charter serves as a yardstick in that regard.

All United Nations organs, including the Security Council, must adhere to the principles of impartiality, effectiveness and professionalism and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of States and the pursuance of certain political interests running contrary to their independence.

The right of veto is foreseen in the Charter. However, due to the fact that it has been used arbitrarily since the inception of the United Nations, its use must be regulated. The use of the veto must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter as well as other principles of international law enshrined in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, particularly the sovereign equality of States, the non-use of force and non-intervention in the internal and international affairs of States.

As stated in the eighth preambular paragraph, resolution 76/262 and its provisions are without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. In that regard, we reiterate our commitment to the reform of the Security Council within the existing formats and emphasize that transforming the Council into a truly rules-based and accountable body must remain a top priority.

**Mr. Kuzmin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me say a few words about resolution 76/262, which was just adopted. Quite frankly, we had no desire to join the consensus. I shall explain why.

The right of veto of the permanent members of the Security Council is a cornerstone of the United Nations architecture. Without it, the Security Council would become a body merely rubber-stamping questionable decisions imposed by the nominal majority whose implementation would be unlikely. As we know, history has borne witness to several multilateral mechanisms in which attempts were made to forgo a veto. However, as we all know, no good came out of them.

In that regard, we are convinced that what needs to be criticized is not the veto but rather the lack of willingness of some members of Security Council to listen to and take into account the opinion of others, as well as their inability to find compromise and take

balanced decisions. That is exactly what often compels us to use the veto.

Of course, the veto is a measure of last resort and is used when other options have been exhausted. That is why, when using this instrument, the permanent members of the Security Council provide the most exhaustive clarifications as to why the veto was cast. All such statements are publicly available. The permanent members of the Security Council could also easily provide the same explanations to all Member States of the General Assembly. However, quite frankly, we do not see that any value would be added by such an exercise.

The decision that was made today, while it comes in very pretty packaging, is without doubt an attempt to create an instrument that exerts pressure on the permanent members of the Security Council. That is an approach that we categorically reject.

The division of powers between the Security Council and the General Assembly is what has allowed our global Organization to function effectively for more than 75 years now. None of those who advocated broadening the authority of the General Assembly at the expense of the Security Council or who brought to the Security Council issues that should be considered by the General Assembly have ever enjoyed our support. That is our principled position.

Therefore, we will continue as before to be guided by the provisions of Article 12 of the Charter of the United Nations, according to which the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to an issue that is under consideration by the Security Council. It is obvious to us that the initiative on which resolution 76/262 is based cannot resolve either major or minor issues that the Member States or our global Organization must address. At the same time, it risks introducing additional irritants into situations where the veto has been used.

It is difficult for us at this stage to assess all of the potential ramifications of that decision. Therefore, for us, today's adoption of resolution 76/262 does not give rise to positive emotions of any kind.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba has always supported the fact that the General Assembly should fully assume the role entrusted to it by the United Nations with regard to international peace and security. The mandate of the Assembly on

those issues has been severely undermined because of the growing trend in the Security Council to usurp its functions.

The Council is increasingly expanding the definition of international peace and security to the detriment of the important functions and responsibilities of the General Assembly, which is the most democratic and representative organ in the United Nations.

We also support an urgent and broad reform of the Security Council to make it a representative, democratic and transparent organ. The delegation of Cuba was not opposed to resolution 76/262, which was adopted without a vote. At the same time, we would like to place on record several concerns and considerations with respect to the text adopted.

First of all, we understand that resolution 76/262 does not replace the provisions of rules 8 (b) and 9 (b) of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on the convening of emergency special sessions. For that reason, it is our view that we should explicitly exclude the possibility of the President of the General Assembly convening a debate on paragraph 1 of resolution 76/262, adopted today, given the prior voting by the General Assembly on resolution 377 A (V), entitled "Uniting for peace", in which the majority of its Member States were opposed to convening the General Assembly to discuss that same issue.

Secondly, we believe that it is not enough to limit the submission of the special reports of the Security Council to those cases in which the veto was used. That would clearly be a restrictive and selective approach with respect to the stipulations of Article 15, paragraph 1, and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations.

We reiterate the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, supported by Cuba, that the Security Council is compelled to submit special reports for the consideration of the General Assembly whenever necessary and not only for veto-related issues.

Thirdly, the question of the veto should not be considered separately from the other issues that are under the mandate of the intergovernmental negotiating framework on reform of the Security Council, established pursuant to decision 62/557. The five key issues identified for reforming that organ, including the question of the veto, are closely linked and form an

entire package. Similarly, we will be unable to conduct a comprehensive review of the Council, which we need.

With regard to paragraph 4 of resolution 76/262, on the inclusion of the use of the veto as a standing item on the General Assembly's agenda, as of the seventy-seventh regular session of the Assembly, cannot in any way be interpreted as being to the detriment of the inextricable links among the five issues under consideration in the intergovernmental negotiations process on reform of the Council, pursuant to decision 62/557.

**Mr. Gutiérrez Plata** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to make the following points on resolution 76/262, which was just adopted.

As a founding Member of the United Nations, Colombia adopts the traditional position of challenging the veto and advocating its elimination. We believe that the role played by the Security Council as part of the mechanism set out in the Charter of the United Nations is important and should not be overlooked.

Colombia is of the view that the system already has a valuable instrument with which to address situations in which the Security Council is paralysed because of the use of the veto. Resolution 377 A (V), of 3 November 1950, entitled "Uniting for peace", has proven its value and effectiveness and includes a procedure and mechanism that would enable the General Assembly to consider a situation related to the maintenance of international peace and security whenever the Council is inoperable because of the use of the veto. It also has the requisite procedural safeguards to prevent the abuse of the mechanism and ensure respect for the distribution of functions set out in the Charter of the Organization.

Of particular relevance is the fact that, in exceptional circumstances, the Council itself may convene special sessions of the General Assembly, thereby ensuring respect for Article 12 of the Charter. Under such conditions, we believe that a new mechanism, as set out in resolution 76/262, is not necessary, transforms the system that works to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, as outlined in the Charter, and undermines the functions of the Council, thereby disregarding that organ in those cases in which a permanent member has exercised the use of the veto.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of the resolution.

We will now hear statements after adoption.

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

We would like to thank Liechtenstein for this important initiative. The Nordic countries wholeheartedly welcome the adoption of resolution 76/262.

The fulfilment of the principal task of the United Nations — the maintenance of international peace and security — depends on a Security Council that delivers in accordance with its mandate. The Charter of the United Nations entrusts the Security Council with the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The use of the veto to prevent the Council from discharging its Charter-based duties is a matter of great concern. During the past five years, for instance, the veto has been used to block the action of the Council no fewer than 17 times.

As the most recent instance of the use of the veto — by Russia — further highlights, there is an urgent need for veto restraint and for more transparency and accountability when the veto power is used.

The Nordic countries have been consistent supporters of initiatives that seek to make sure that the Council is not prevented by the use of the veto from taking action with the aim of preventing or bringing an end to situations involving commissions of mass atrocities. The resolution adopted today will supplement those efforts. It is a significant step towards accountability and transparency in the use of the veto power. That is also why we have supported the initiative since its inception two years ago.

The Security Council is entrusted with the responsibility to maintain peace and security on behalf of us, the Member States represented in the Assembly. Therefore, it is natural that when permanent members of the Council use their veto to block Council action, they are invited to the General Assembly to explain their positions, and that all Member States have an opportunity to discuss the matter.

The resolution adopted today in no way encroaches on the veto power, but it seeks to increase transparency and accountability in its use. We hope that the new mandate will contribute to the effectiveness of the Security Council and to its ability to discharge its duty.

**Mr. Paulauskas** (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States, that is,

Estonia, Latvia and my own country, Lithuania.

We applaud the adoption of resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”. We are proud to have presented the resolution together with a cross-regional group of States and to have provided consistent support throughout the negotiation and preparation process, which was skilfully steered by the Ambassador of Liechtenstein and his team. We are grateful to all the States Members of the United Nations for their support to the resolution to render the use of the veto more transparent. We are inspired by the strong support of the membership for the initiative.

This momentous adoption reaffirms our strong commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and provides an opportunity to renew our dedication to it. The Baltic States welcome the strong determination of the international community to reflect on the significance of the Charter to international peace and security and its fundamental importance to effectively functioning multilateralism. Today’s adoption is a strong result of the consistently increasing advocacy for a more resilient role for the General Assembly in matters of international peace and security, as mandated by the Charter. We believe it is necessary to make the United Nations more capable and restore its reputation. This resolution is a very meaningful step in that direction.

We also note that this adoption took place at a particularly timely juncture, as the discussion within the international community regained new traction following Russia’s large-scale, unprovoked, unlawful and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. Besides shedding new light on Russia’s continuous misuse of its perch on the Security Council to misrepresent international norms, sow discord and spread disinformation in the pursuit of national interests, it is also a stark reminder of the dire implications of the reduced ability of the Council to take effective action against threats to international peace and security.

That again points to a pressing need to reaffirm our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and strengthen the role of the General Assembly. It is a joint responsibility of us, the States Members of the United Nations, to act in earnest — not only to talk — and to abide by the principles of the Charter, not merely profess

our support for them. It demands time, motivation and commitment, but it is a fundamental effort.

As the principal international Organization with the aim of maintaining peace and security, the United Nations has a unique responsibility to re-evaluate and reinvent itself in order to seek productive ways to deliver on the promise of peace.

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

The Benelux countries are proud to have co-sponsored resolution 76/262, which was just adopted by consensus and which establishes a standing mandate for the General Assembly to hold a debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council.

We thank Liechtenstein for its leadership on this important resolution. Today's adoption comes after more than two years of preparation and very broad consultations among Member States. We welcome the fact that, as a result, the resolution enjoys very broad cross-regional support.

The resolution we have adopted makes clear that its provisions are without prejudice to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. The aim is not to reform the Security Council, but to strengthen the role of the General Assembly by establishing a mechanism for the Assembly to convene within 10 working days of the casting of a veto by one or more permanent members of the Security Council and to hold a debate on the situation as to which the veto was cast, provided that the Assembly does not meet in an emergency special session on the same situation.

At this critical juncture for the United Nations, the resolution sends an important signal in support for multilateralism. 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. Recent examples include the veto cast at the end of last year, on 13 December 2021, which prevented the adoption by the Security Council of a draft resolution (S/2021/990) addressing the crucial link between climate and security, which was supported by a broad majority of Member States. That increased use of the veto has far-reaching consequences for the work and the effectiveness of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole.

The Charter of the United Nations is very clear. Let me quote Article 24, paragraph 1:

“In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its 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.”

The Security Council acts on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations. In that spirit, it makes perfect sense for us, the Member States, to hold a debate in the General Assembly whenever the use of the veto by one or more permanent members of the Security Council has made prompt and effective action by the United Nations impossible.

The use of the veto is not a privilege, but a heavy responsibility. The resolution we have just adopted is a crucial step to strengthen multilateralism by making the permanent members of the Security Council more accountable to the general membership when they use the veto to block the adoption of a Security Council draft resolution. It is a crucial step forward for accountability and transparency, and we are glad that we have been able to make this step today with the support of so many Member States.

**Mr. Stastoli** (Albania): Albania has supported this initiative from the very beginning and is a proud co-sponsor of resolution 76/262, which was adopted today without a vote. The reasons for doing so are very simple and straightforward, and we have said them before.

We find ourselves at the cusp of a major global reordering that is putting into question the basic rules and institutions that came out of the most calamitous war in history, namely, to maintain peace and security.

This organ, the General Assembly, has conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility to maintain peace and security. That responsibility has not been discharged in accordance with the aspirations with which it was envisaged, at least not always. Far too often, it has shown a dereliction of its duties.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine has made that painfully visible for everyone to see. The Russian veto has turned the Council into a bulwark in the service of Russian lies and manipulation, a threat to peace and

security. That is not good for the Council, not good for the United Nations and not good for the world.

We respect the Council. We think it has a vital role to play in questions that make a difference between life and death. Indeed, that is the reason we asked for Member States' support to serve in that esteemed organ. But we see up close how that organ can be used for the short-sighted interests of specific countries, against the common interests of humankind, of the billions of people who want to live in peace and dignity.

The abuse of the veto undermines the legitimacy of not only the Council but also of the entire United Nations. That opens the gates to the fragmentation, disintegration and decay of the rules-based international order. We cannot let that happen. And we are glad that we were able to speak with one voice against such an anomaly.

Seventy-six years ago, the Charter of the United Nations included the veto as a guarantee that great Powers would never disagree to the point of returning to war. They would resort to the veto, that special privilege, with responsibility when their crucial national interests were involved. But as we have seen over the years, the veto has been used and abused and many times without any clear reason or justification. Therefore, we need to make sure, to the best of our abilities, that the veto is used not as an exclusive privilege but rather as a heavy responsibility. The use of the veto as an exclusive privilege without responsibility is a violation of the spirit of the historic compromise that created the veto. It betrays the aspirations of the world to attain peace and security.

And this resolution is doing exactly that, bringing a sense of responsibility to the use of the veto. The resolution sends a clear message to the world that the wider membership of the United Nations retains its jurisgenerative capacity to make law and strengthen multilateralism by closing the gap between two major organs of the United Nations: the Security Council and the General Assembly.

**Mr. Murillo Quesada** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein for its leadership on this initiative, of which we are co-sponsors and a member of the core group. We joined the effort because the veto has failed as a tool of international law. The veto is not a right. It is a privilege that is too powerful to exist. It is an anachronistic privilege that creates odious

differences both within the Council and among the membership — differences to which we should not contribute to increasing but, on the contrary, work together to limit and eliminate.

Frequently, a so-called hidden veto is used to block or dilute to the lowest common denominator draft resolutions intended to save lives. Every time it is used, a veto can easily become a death sentence for millions of people. Its mere existence hinders and paralyzes the United Nations in its role as a guarantor of peace and security. Instead of acting, the veto forces the United Nations to watch from the sidelines, and that discredits the Organization incredibly.

Unable to intervene to prevent and resolve conflicts, the Security Council is transformed into a council of global insecurity, leading to serious and costly consequences in the form of protracted conflicts and loss of life. Its use has undermined the legitimacy and credibility of the Council, as well as of the Organization itself.

The veto is not the cornerstone of the United Nations, but its tombstone. It is but an old ghost of a world that ceased its existence long ago. It is an immoral practice in its nature, which has confirmed Costa Rica's belief that it is necessary to place limits on its unrestricted use.

With resolution 76/262, which we just adopted today, a mechanism is established that provides for a debate to be held before the General Assembly each time a veto is cast in the Security Council. This mechanism also requests the Security Council to submit a special report on the veto prior to the debate in question, and provides for the inclusion of the item "Use of the veto" in the agenda of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

This resolution is a historic step towards accountability and, above all, transparency. It embodies the legitimate demand of Member States that the Security Council be accountable to those on whose behalf it acts, all of us Members of the Organization. It also honours principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, such as accountability, the clarification of responsibilities, transparent information and functional balance.

With regard to the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, like many other countries that have also mentioned this here in Hall,

we are aware that much remains to be done. This is a complementary, two-way relationship in which, on the one hand, the Council acts on behalf of the Member States and, on the other, the Member States provide recommendations on the issues the Council deals with and the methods it applies in the decision-making process. Until now, that relationship has been an exclusive monologue, never a dialogue. From now on, things will be different.

**Mr. Sinirlioğlu** (Turkey): The General Assembly is the only fully universal and therefore most representative organ of the United Nations. As the very embodiment and soul of multilateralism, the Assembly has priority and power over all other organs of the United Nations. Indeed, under Article 15 of the Charter of the United Nations, all organs of the United Nations system are mandated to submit reports to the General Assembly for its consideration, and, according to Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the Member States which together comprise the General Assembly.

The Member States confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, on many occasions, unfortunately, we have seen the Security Council fail to carry out its mandate. By not providing timely and adequate responses to crises, it could not maintain international peace and security.

As we all know, the veto power is the very reason for the frequent paralysis we have witnessed in the Security Council. It is not uncommon to see the permanent members exercise the veto to pursue their own self-interests. And most of the time, the use of the veto has far-reaching consequences that can lead to or deepen humanitarian crises and give rise to risks to the security and safety of all humankind.

Today, we, the States Members of the United Nations, have adopted a historic resolution (resolution 76/262). As of this day, the General Assembly has one more tool to address matters pertaining to international peace and security. This is an important step in enhancing the role of this vital organ in accordance with its mandate under the United Nations Charter. Likewise, it is an important step towards making the Security Council more accountable and efficient.

Turkey is proud to have been in the core group of this initiative since its inception two years ago. We will

continue to work with other Member States to realize the promise of the United Nations Charter.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution of unquestionable significance (resolution 76/262). Although it may appear to be a modest initiative, it is in fact an important step forward in strengthening the United Nations.

We have suffered from the absence of an effective system of accountability, justified by the argument that the principal organs of the United Nations are equal and therefore not subordinate to one another. The importance of the responsibility vested in an organ of limited membership, such as the Security Council, should be more than sufficient reason for an effective system of accountability.

In any case, the thesis of equality among the principal organs of the Organization is belied by the practice, albeit recent, of the General Assembly debating and commenting on the reports of the International Court of Justice and the Security Council, each of which is a principal organ. This practice has resulted in the Court, in contrast to the Council, submitting increasingly substantive reports. Both the General Assembly and the Court agree that this practice does not jeopardize the judicial independence of the latter and that, on the contrary, it supports the latter's work. In this way, we have fostered greater collaboration and dialogue between two principal organs of the United Nations.

Improving this interaction has also been a priority for Mexico in its current participation as an elected member of the Security Council, which resulted in the adoption last November of presidential statement S/PRST/2021/23, in which the Security Council expresses its ongoing commitment to fostering interaction on a regular basis among all principal organs, including the General Assembly. Today's resolution therefore serves to pave the way for greater and better collaboration between these two principal organs, and even more so when it comes to an issue that is of interest to the international community as a whole, namely, the exercise of the veto. In this context, we have also strengthened today the mandate derived from Article 24, paragraph 1 of the United Nations Charter, a mandate which, by providing that the Security Council acts on behalf of all the Member States of the Organization, ascribes to it thereby a responsibility on behalf of us all. And if this is so, how can it be

justified that the permanent member or members that have decided to resort to the veto do not explain to the rest of the Member States the reasons that led them to prevent the Security Council from carrying out the primary responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations?

Beyond the explanations of vote offered within the Security Council, from now on there is a mechanism that recognizes and enforces the right of each and every Member of the Organization, as well as the obligation of the permanent members, to receive and provide, respectively, an explanation of the reasons that led them to veto a draft resolution on any issue. For, when the veto is exercised, it is not only the action of the Security Council that is truncated or halted; it is, in fact, the entire membership, having delegated responsibility to the Council, that falls victim to the decision of one or more permanent members.

As we all know, the veto stops action, the veto does not promote the unity of the Security Council, and the veto does not promote the search for collective understanding. The veto has become the most outrageous face of the power of the user: the exercise of the veto always reveals the weak position of the one who failed to persuade others through reason. Blocking the will of others is the last resort when arguments fail.

Whoever wields the veto, therefore, does not offer solutions, but simply obstructs action. In other words, those who resort to the veto prefer to prevent any movement, instead of confronting a problem with a view to solving it. Those who use the veto take refuge in the interposition of an insurmountable obstacle when the course of action being vetoed is contrary to their interests, and not to the interests of the international community as a whole.

All of the foregoing should lead us to endorse a principle that has been recognized since 1945 and which we have often forgotten. That principle has been repeated many times this morning: the veto is not a privilege, but a responsibility — a grave responsibility. That principle was inscribed in a joint declaration issued by the five future permanent members of the Council and read by the representative of France on 7 June 1945, at the San Francisco Conference, which states:

“It is not to be assumed, however, that the permanent members, any more than the non-permanent members, would use their ‘veto’ power wilfully

to obstruct the operation of the Council” (S/Procedure/79).

It is common knowledge that Mexico, as a founding member of the United Nations, opposed this prerogative at the San Francisco Conference. But it is equally well known that the historical context of the time gave no option for avoiding the incorporation of the veto into the Charter.

However, our decision to accept the veto was and is based on the principle of responsible use of the veto. An example of this is the initiative that we, jointly with France, have been promoting for several years, with regard to the voluntary restriction of the veto when the Security Council is faced with situations of mass atrocities. This initiative now has 105 States signatories, and we would like to take advantage of this opportunity today to invite all States that have not yet done so and that supported the resolution we have just adopted to also support the Franco-Mexican initiative, on the understanding that the two are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

For all the foregoing reasons, Mexico was also part of the core group from which the initiative that brings us to this Hall today arose and was, with deep conviction, a sponsor of resolution 76/262. In short, we have ensured that the veto does not have the last word. The last word once again belongs to the General Assembly, which is the expression par excellence of the universal conscience.

**Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria):** I would like to start by congratulating us all on the adoption of resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council” and to especially thank Liechtenstein for its outstanding leadership.

With resolution 76/262, we have just contributed to strengthening not only the role of the General Assembly, but also the effectiveness of the United Nations as a whole. Through Article 24, paragraph 1 of the United Nations Charter, the States Members of the United Nations have conferred on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that, in carrying out its duties under this responsibility, the Security Council will act on their behalf, meaning on our behalf.

However, the use of veto has been the cause of the increasing inability of the Security Council to carry out those responsibilities and act on our behalf in instances of serious threats to and breaches of international peace and security. Such instances as Syria, climate and security, and, most recently, the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, have made the need for today's resolution all the more important. When the Security Council fails to act, it is not just a failure of the Security Council; it is perceived as a failure of the United Nations and of us all. The resolution just adopted provides us with the opportunity to hold any Security Council member who has cast a veto more accountable as to the reasons why his or her country has chosen to prevent the Security Council from acting.

Bulgaria is proud to be among the initial sponsors of this resolution, as we are convinced that it empowers us all to be more responsible Members of the United Nations and that it strengthens multilateralism and the international rules-based order. It is my hope that the procedures outlined in resolution 76/262 will never have to be activated and that the Security Council will be able to effectively exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But from now on, should that not be the case, all of us, through the General Assembly, will be able to seek explanation and not just be mere spectators, and that makes for a more accountable and more effective United Nations.

**Mr. Rae (Canada)** (*spoke in French*): As a sponsor of resolution 76/262, just adopted, I would like to thank Liechtenstein and Ambassador Wenaweser of Liechtenstein for his tireless work for over two years on this important initiative. This is a testament to the essential contribution of all members to the effective work of the United Nations.

The General Assembly has spoken today with authority. It was not a vote, but it represents a profound consensus that reflects the expectation that we in the General Assembly have of the Security Council acting on our behalf to maintain international peace and security. We expect more and better, and we have made that clear today.

(*spoke in English*)

I am not sure what I can say about the veto that will be more eloquent than what has been said by my colleague from Mexico, whom I congratulate on his description

of the problem. I also congratulate my colleagues from Costa Rica and Turkey for their statements. But I just want to add this point: that the veto power that is held by the five permanent members of the Security Council is as anachronistic as it is undemocratic. It has prevented the Security Council from doing its job.

I could not disagree more with the representative of Russia when he said that he believed that it was the veto that allows the Security Council to do its job. It does not. It prevents the Security Council from doing its job. The recent deadlock over Ukraine has happened at precisely the moment when the world needs the United Nations — and that includes the Security Council — the most.

The use or threat of the veto in situations where atrocity crimes are being perpetrated — in Syria and Myanmar and Mariupol, for example, or in situations where a permanent member of the Security Council has launched a war of aggression against another State Member of the United Nations, as the Russian Federation is now doing in Ukraine — is not only shameful; it is also contrary to obligations under the United Nations Charter and to international law and to our commitment to the responsibility-to-protect principle, which was endorsed, not only by the General Assembly (resolution 63/308), but also by the Security Council (resolution 1674 (2006)). Even veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council are not above the law. None of us is above the law. No one is above the law. The law is above all of us.

It is therefore both right and necessary that the General Assembly will now convene a debate whenever a veto is cast at the Security Council. And may I say that the permanent members of the Security Council have no one to blame but themselves and their own conduct for the fact that the General Assembly now feels obliged to do this. The General Assembly itself has a say in the maintenance of international peace and security. Together with the rest of the United Nations Organization, we have an obligation, as a General Assembly, to step up when the Security Council has actually sidelined itself. As the International Court of Justice has ruled, the Security Council's "primary role" does not mean that it has an "exclusive role", and that is precisely why resolution 76/262, adopted today, can help us achieve something that is very important, namely, a United Nations that is actually less exclusive, a place where the voices of all 193 members of the

General Assembly will now be heard when a veto is cast at the Security Council.

This is an important moment — a necessary moment — for transparency, for fairness and for equality at the United Nations. We have now learned, sadly, because we can see it happening in real time — we all watched it happen in the most recent example of its use over the unprovoked aggression against a member of this Assembly, Ukraine, by the Russian Federation. We know that the use of the veto can in fact end up sidelining the Security Council, but it cannot sideline or deadlock the entire United Nations.

We have to show an ability to be nimble, to innovate and to change. When something is broken and refuses to fix itself, we need to show that we have a capacity for collective action. No Member State has the right to inflict chaos or paralysis on the entire world, or on the United Nations or the General Assembly.

We all know that there is at the heart of the United Nations a Charter that has an inherent imbalance. As George Orwell might have put it, and I would recommend to all members, if they have not been reading Orwell lately, that they read him now, because he has a lot to teach us and a lot to tell us. He might have put it this way if he was watching us. He would say, well, I guess all Member States are equal, but some Members are more equal than others. That is the dilemma of the Charter: what Article 2 giveth, Article 27 taketh away. That is the problem and the dilemma that we have been dealing with since 1945.

We may not be able to get rid of that imbalance entirely, because, as we all know, the permanent members themselves have a veto over reform of the Charter. But we should nevertheless still try to achieve the abolition of the veto. It should be our objective. But until that happens, we have to continue to take steps, as we have today, of further circumscribing, defining and limiting the use of the veto, or at least raising the cost of its use, especially in those situations where global peace and security are at stake or where mass atrocity crimes may be threatened or are being committed.

We are having this debate and discussion at the same time, in real time, as we are watching on television or on our iPhones, or however we get our information, the destruction of cities. We are watching the killing of women and children. We are seeing the destruction of the entire infrastructure of a country, and we are seeing a country fight back.

The Security Council may not be able to act. That does not prevent us from having an ability to act. The world is watching, and the world is expecting us to act, and so act we must.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): Japan welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 76/262, which we consider to be a step forward in enhancing the role of the General Assembly and thereby strengthening the United Nations.

The recent veto by Russia made the United Nations look as if it were irrelevant, but it is not. The Security Council, like the United Nations as a whole, is far from flawless. However, pending reform of the Security Council, we have to make use of it, and this resolution can be a useful tool to that end.

Japan commends Liechtenstein for its tireless work and is honoured to have co-sponsored the resolution. From now on, vetoes cannot be cast without providing an explanation to the entire United Nations membership in General Assembly meetings to be convened either under this resolution or under resolution 377 (V), entitled “Uniting for Peace”. The permanent members of the Security Council could also embrace that resolution and recognize that they must face a higher level of accountability commensurate with their heavier responsibilities.

Japan also supports several other important veto-related initiatives such as the French-Mexican political declaration on the suspension of veto powers in case of mass atrocities, as well as the Code of Conduct proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. Japan believes that we must go even farther to make the United Nations more effective. We should advance discussions on the reform of the Security Council in the intergovernmental negotiations.

Indeed, Japan is happy to engage with Member States on any ideas on how to strengthen the United Nations.

**Mr. Mills** (United States of America): The United States knows that the veto is controversial. It was controversial from the very beginning, with heated debates on that issue when the Charter of the United Nations was negotiated, in San Francisco in 1945. The veto has continued to be controversial to this day, which is the reason why the topic remains front and centre at the United Nations, as we are hearing in this debate and in the broader public debate.

The United States takes its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council very seriously. In Article 24 of the Charter, the States Members of the United Nations conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. By granting to each of the permanent members of the Council the ability to prevent the adoption of a resolution, the Charter entrusted them with a sombre and a solemn duty. There are times when a Permanent Five member will conclude that a particular resolution will not advance international peace and security, and it is within the authority granted by the Charter for that member to veto that resolution.

I agree, however, with my Mexican colleague that such authority comes with enormous responsibility, and it must be used wisely, judiciously, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and with full consideration for the advancement of international peace and security. At the very least, when a Permanent Five member casts a veto, that member should be prepared to explain why the resolution at issue would not have furthered the maintenance of international peace and security.

Therefore, the United States sees the virtue of automatically convening a General Assembly meeting when a veto is cast. We agree that the matter should be formally debated in the General Assembly, and we believe that the Permanent Five member that casts a veto should be given the opportunity to explain its decision to the full General Assembly membership in this very Hall.

We note the provision in resolution 76/262, which was adopted today, that there would be no General Assembly meeting convened on the casting of a veto if the Assembly had already met on the same situation at a meeting of an emergency special session. Whether the General Assembly convenes an emergency special session or another meeting, we support this forum discussing the matter and would be willing to participate if it is the United States casting a veto.

We also note that it is clear that not every “no” vote cast by a Permanent Five member is a veto. Rather, a veto is a “no” vote that prevents the adoption of a draft resolution that would otherwise have been adopted due to it having received nine or more votes in favour.

As we have heard from many others in this Hall, we are deeply concerned about the abuse of the right

to veto conferred on the Permanent Five members. In particular, we are extraordinarily troubled by Russia’s pattern of abusing its veto right over the past decade. It is a long and shameful list. The Russian Federation has vetoed draft resolutions seeking accountability in Syria, including draft resolutions that would have continued the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism on chemical weapons. Russia has vetoed a draft resolution referring the Syria situation to the International Criminal Court. It has vetoed a draft resolution that would have established a criminal tribunal on the downing of Flight MH-17 over Ukraine. And it vetoed a draft resolution when Russia attempted to illegally annex Crimea. Recently, and most outrageously, the Russian Federation vetoed a Security Council resolution deploring its aggression against Ukraine, deciding that the use of force should end and deciding on the withdrawal of all Russian forces from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

In short, Russia egregiously violated the Charter of the United Nations and then blocked the effort by the Security Council to address the situation. We agree that the veto was not intended as a *carte blanche* for impunity for the Permanent Five. It was not meant to confer automatic protection from accountability in perpetuity. By abusing the veto and by preventing the international community from holding Russia to account, Russia has diminished the role and the reputation of the Security Council; it has undermined the Charter of the United Nations; and it has tarnished the United Nations as a whole.

We welcome this resolution as a step towards placing greater attention on the appropriate use of the veto, the solemn responsibilities of the Permanent Five members and the primary role of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. For all the aforementioned reasons, the United States was pleased to co-sponsor resolution 76/262.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the State of Qatar welcomes the adoption of resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”.

We were pleased to have participated in the core group of sponsors of the resolution since the initiative was introduced two years ago. We believe that it is high time for the General Assembly to take this important step to promote the role entrusted to it pursuant to the

Charter of the United Nations. It is a step widely accepted by the Member States, as reflected in the large number of delegations that supported the draft resolution.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Liechtenstein and other partners that introduced this initiative. We have been keen to hold intensive consultations with all Member States. We wanted the process to be transparent and inclusive given the importance of the resolution and its inclusive nature.

The State of Qatar's rationale for supporting this initiative was its commitment to the principle of multilateralism as well as the importance and centrality of the role of the General Assembly as the most inclusive, representative organ of the United Nations. We believe that the resolution that was adopted by consensus today will promote the role of the General Assembly in accordance with its mandate under the Charter, which gives the Assembly authority in matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security. As clearly stated in its preambular part, the resolution is based on the purposes and principles of the Charter as well as its Articles 10, 12, 24 and 27. The resolution also does not infringe on the intergovernmental negotiation process pertaining to the Security Council reform and the veto power. It does not prejudice the outcome of the process concerning the right to veto.

In conclusion, we hope that this historic resolution will be an important step towards strengthening the main purpose of establishing this international Organization, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in cases where the United Nations cannot stand idly by but must respond effectively.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes the adoption of resolution 76/262, which it co-sponsored together with more than 80 Member States. We thank Liechtenstein for its leadership and its valuable hard work over the past two years.

Current events show that it is vital for the main organs of the United Nations to work together in a complementary manner to ensure efficient and effective multilateralism. If one cannot act, the other can and must step in. The resolution underscores the role of the Assembly as a representative and inclusive organ of the United Nations, including in matters of international peace and security. It faithfully reflects the responsibilities and competencies of the principal

organs of the United Nations as defined by the Charter of the United Nations.

We therefore support the standing mandate created by the resolution for a debate in the General Assembly when a veto is cast in the Security Council. However, we hope to see this happening as little as possible. Together with our partners, we have been advocating for a more transparent and effective Security Council for nearly two decades. Advocacy for a more responsible and restrictive use of the veto is a key element of that work, including through the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, which is coordinated by Switzerland.

Within the framework of the Code of Conduct promoted by the group, we support efforts to encourage permanent members to renounce the use of their right to the veto, particularly in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We see this resolution as a further call to restrict the use of the veto, as it enhances accountability and transparency when a permanent member of the Council exercises its right thereto. The mechanism introduced by the resolution does not alter the obligation to seek convergence of positions, address divergent views and work in good faith towards consensus in the Security Council.

A strong and united message from the Security Council is crucial to maintaining international peace and security when it comes to calling on all parties to respect international law, protect civilians and ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors.

The Security Council must also insist with one voice on the peaceful settlement of disputes and on dialogue. As a candidate for membership in the Security Council, Switzerland will remain fully committed to dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Switzerland's commitment to the United Nations is guided by the firm conviction that multilateralism offers us the best path to a safer future and a more sustainable planet. We the Member States are constantly called upon to strengthen, improve and revitalize the structures that allow us to tackle together the pressing problems of our times. There is a sense that multilateralism is at stake, and we must do better to strengthen it. Today we have seized an opportunity to take a step forward.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): The founding Members of the United Nations vowed to save generations that followed them from the scourge

of war. They conferred the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on the Security Council.

The Charter of the United Nations, in giving that solemn duty, gives the permanent members the power of veto. That is a heavy responsibility, to be used in the interests of securing the peace and security that people around the world seek and the United Nations was established to provide. It is not to be used lightly and should not, we believe, be used without accountability. It should not prevent the Council from fulfilling its mandate, which is why we voted in favour of resolution 76/262 today.

Russia has used its veto 17 times since 2011 to block the Council's efforts to protect the Syrian people. Russia used its veto to prevent the Council from taking action in response to its illegal and unprovoked war in Ukraine. Russia has done that in isolation from other Council members, reflecting the lack of international support.

The United Kingdom therefore welcomes the call for Member States that hold a permanent seat on the Security Council to explain their use of veto to the General Assembly.

For our part, the United Kingdom has not exercised our veto since 1989. We listen carefully and negotiate in the Security Council to try and find agreement.

We prefer to win votes rather than use our veto to block Council action. The United Kingdom is a signatory to the Accountability, Coherency and Transparency group Code of Conduct, where we have pledged not to vote against any credible draft resolution intended to prevent or halt mass atrocities.

By adopting this resolution today, we take a step in pursuit of upholding international peace and security, which is what the United Nations is here to do.

**Mr. Szczerki** (Poland): Poland is proud to be among the main sponsors of resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative, and welcomes its adoption today, which will be considered an important step towards stopping the abuse of the veto power and strengthening the entire United Nations system by doing so.

The resolution on the veto initiative will contribute to enhancing the role of the General Assembly and multilateralism, increasing the transparency of the decision-making process within the Security Council and, thus, making the entire United Nations system

more democratic and credible. It empowers us all as united nations.

This resolution is an attempt to respond to the excessive use of the veto power, which is negatively perceived in the eyes of international public opinion. The members of the Security Council were entrusted by the States Members of the United Nations with the power of the veto in order for them to assume greater responsibilities as guardians of the Charter of the United Nations. This resolution underlines that the veto power must be regarded as a responsibility — not a privilege — by all permanent members of the Security Council.

The initiative that led to the adoption of today's resolution started several years ago and was not meant as a reply to the current setting. But given the current peace and security situation in Eastern Europe, the reaction of the international community proved timely and pertinent. The Russian aggression against Ukraine illustrates how the capabilities of the Security Council can be thwarted in cases where swift and decisive action is needed.

A situation where a permanent member of the Security Council that is responsible for disrupting international peace uses its veto power to evade responsibility for its wrongdoings and to continue to enjoy impunity is simply unacceptable to the societies that we represent.

In the light of that, today is a very important day for the United Nations membership, as it constitutes another significant step towards democratizing our Organization, strengthening multilateralism and contributing to international peace and stability.

**Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala did not hesitate to become a co-sponsor of resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council", considering that the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the Security Council and that any decision or inaction by the Security Council has global consequences and impacts.

We have seen on several occasions how the use of the veto has prevented the Security Council from addressing real situations related to threats to international peace and security. The States Members of the United Nations have conferred upon the Security

Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, recognizing that the Council acts on behalf of the entire membership, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, the decisions and resolutions adopted — and even rejected initiatives — as well as the representation and performance in such a high-level organ, are intrinsically related to the high degree of responsibility that comes with being a member of the Security Council, which represents the entire membership.

We believe that the resolution adopted is a transparency mechanism that will give the General Assembly opportunities to address issues that the Security Council has not considered in a comprehensive manner in the course of discharging its responsibilities when the veto has been used. We thank the delegation of the Principality of Liechtenstein for leading the efforts to adopt this resolution.

**Ms. Kinyungu** (Kenya): The United Nations was created with the primary purpose of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and protecting the dignity and worth of the human person, as well as their fundamental human rights.

Under Articles 24 and 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, Member States conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and further agreed to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter.

In similar fashion, the International Court of Justice has determined that the powers and functions of the General Assembly include the general competence of the Assembly to consider questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation is of the considered view that in all situations where a threat to, or breach of, international peace and security arises, members of the Security Council, including the permanent members, must act responsibly to stop or prevent that threat or breach from occurring or continuing. That responsibility is especially important when an armed conflict or an act of aggression involves mass atrocity crimes.

At the 2005 World Summit for Social Development, the States Members of the United Nations further expressed their readiness to take collective action in a timely and decisive manner through the Security

Council, in accordance with the Charter, whenever there was a need to protect populations from mass atrocities.

Kenya is also of the considered view that the Security Council should not be prevented from acting responsibly following the exercise of the veto power when effective measures are needed for the maintenance of international peace and security. We furthermore believe that adherence to this initiative would enhance the ability of the United Nations to live up to its primary purpose — to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

For those reasons, Kenya supports this initiative and voted in favour of resolution 76/262.

**Ms. Schwalger** (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes the adoption of resolution 76/262, entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council”.

New Zealand actively supported this initiative from its inception, and we are a proud member of the core group. We did so steadfast in our belief that the General Assembly has a legitimate interest in situations where the use of the veto has resulted in paralysis in the Security Council’s decision-making responsibilities and has a political responsibility to address them.

As has already been noted by so many others this morning, the use of the veto is a privilege that comes with profound responsibility. Its arbitrary use in the pursuit of national interests, rather than in the advancement of international peace and security, contributes to poor decision-making. The casting of the veto by a single member, or small number of members, stymies the majority of the Council from carrying out its functions on behalf of the wider United Nations membership. As a result of Security Council inaction, responsible States — often the neighbouring States — have frequently been left a heavy burden that should have been shared more evenly by the wider international community.

The veto is the most undemocratic element of the United Nations. It is arguably the single-greatest source of criticism of the United Nations by the communities we serve. New Zealand has been a vocal opponent of the use of the veto since the Organization’s inception in 1945. That remains unchanged.

We have witnessed amazing support from across the United Nations membership this morning. That demonstrates the timeliness and necessity of this

initiative. We too commend Liechtenstein and the core group for their thought leadership and active outreach on this initiative.

The resolution adopted this morning provides a mechanism to ensure accountability among the organs of the Organization, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Ultimately it is about strengthening inclusive multilateralism and the effectiveness of the United Nations.

If in future — and, as others have said, we hope it is only if — this resolution is activated, it will be important that we, the members of the General Assembly, take advantage of the opportunity afforded by this resolution to exercise our collective political responsibility under the United Nations Charter to address matters of international peace and security.

**Mr. Fifield** (Australia): At the outset, let me say that, as Russia's unprovoked, unjust and illegal invasion of Ukraine has painfully illustrated, the international rules-based order underpinning global stability, security and prosperity is under significant strain. Together, we must find ways to ensure that the United Nations acts effectively and expeditiously to address complex challenges to our collective peace and security.

As a core group member, Australia was very pleased to join more than 80 States in sponsoring this important resolution 76/262, establishing a standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council.

Every year since the Organization's founding, the equity and effectiveness of the veto has been the subject of intense debate, and rightly so. Too often we see the veto considered by some permanent members to be an unimpeachable right, rather than a solemn responsibility. Too often we are told that the General Assembly, despite being the most representative United Nations organ, has no responsibility for international peace and security — that the views of this organ, regardless of the number of countries represented, do not carry weight.

In fact, the Charter of the United Nations is clear. While the membership has conferred upon the Security Council 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.

It is that responsibility that brings us here today. Australia led opposition to the establishment of the veto at the San Francisco Conference. Since that time, we have consistently called for better standards governing its use, specifically that the use of the veto be both limited and transparent.

To that end, we remain steadfast supporters of efforts to limit the use of the veto, particularly in situations of mass atrocity crimes, and encourage all delegations to commit to the Accountability Coherence and Transparency code of conduct and the French-Mexican initiative.

We consider today's resolution distinct from, but complementary to, those efforts. Resolution 76/262 does not seek to directly limit or curb the use of the veto. Rather, it is an important and long-overdue step towards bringing greater transparency and accountability to its use. By providing an open and transparent forum for the veto user to explain its veto and a platform for all Member States to express their views, we believe it will help strengthen Council deliberations and decisions over the long-term.

In conclusion, we very much welcome the overwhelming support for this resolution and express our sincere thanks to the Permanent Representative and the Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein for their leadership on this important initiative over the course of more than two years.

We can say that today was a very good day at the office.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): Singapore co-sponsored and actively supported resolution 76/262, which aims to create a standing mandate for the General Assembly to hold a debate whenever a veto is cast in the Security Council. We are pleased to note that more than 80 countries joined as co-sponsors, and we welcome its adoption by consensus.

Singapore has always taken a clear and consistent position that greater transparency and accountability in the work of the Security Council will improve the Council's credibility and the legitimacy of its decisions. That, in turn, will strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations as a whole, as well as that of the multilateral system. We supported the resolution because it establishes a mechanism to ensure

greater transparency and accountability every time a veto is cast by any permanent member.

Singapore recognizes the right of permanent members to use their veto power granted by the Charter of the United Nations. This resolution does not question or limit that right. However, casting a veto is a decision with major implications. Once taken, we believe that it is the responsibility of a permanent member to explain its decision to the General Assembly. We also believe that it is important for the permanent member that has cast the veto to hear the views of the members of the General Assembly, including the views of small States, which often do not have a voice on such matters. This resolution will therefore strengthen the General Assembly and enhance its cooperation with the Security Council.

This resolution will also provide a direct mechanism for the General Assembly to take a stand on critical issues of international peace and security when the Security Council is unable to act because of a lack of agreement among its permanent members. That will enhance the credibility of the United Nations. The adoption today of this resolution without a vote is an indication that there is overwhelming support for greater transparency and accountability on the use of the veto. The resolution is not only timely, but also a substantive and meaningful contribution to the work of the United Nations.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): Ireland is very proud to have been a member, from the outset, of the core group of States led by Liechtenstein, which today proposed this historic resolution — resolution 76/262.

For too long, the veto has left us with a Security Council that is unable to take action in the face of some of the most pressing challenges facing our world today — from the impact of climate change on conflict and security to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. We have all seen, and Ireland has witnessed first-hand as an elected member, how the abuse of the veto has undermined the spirit of cooperation intended by the Charter of the United Nations, with any one permanent member State being in a position to override the will of the majority of Council members.

The adoption by consensus of this resolution this morning, supported by such a significant cross-regional group of co-sponsors, shows the importance of this matter to the United Nations membership as a whole. The success of today's resolution means that the General

Assembly and the wider United Nations membership have been given a voice when the Security Council is silenced. It recognizes that the use of the veto is not just a matter of concern to those sitting in the Council Chamber but to all Members of the United Nations.

Ireland has long viewed the veto as an outdated instrument designed for an outdated version of the world. We have consistently called for its abolition. Although this resolution does not prevent the use of the veto, it will mean that States wielding the veto will now need to defend their actions to the wider membership. Those that block the Security Council's essential work will be held to account here in the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I want to thank Liechtenstein for its tireless work, and a big thanks goes to all States that supported this vital historic initiative in the lead-up to today.

**Mr. Almunayekh** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening this important meeting of the General Assembly on an innovative initiative that we have been following for almost three years and which today resulted in resolution 76/262. We welcome the adoption of this unique resolution, which mandates a General Assembly debate 10 days after the casting of a veto. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein, Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, and his team for the way they managed this initiative, which resulted in today's formal adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly.

The State of Kuwait is among the States that has supported this initiative since its inception, and we were part of the core group. We are convinced that this resolution adds greatly to the work of the General Assembly. As a State of the Arab region — where related items on the Security Council's agenda have significantly suffered for decades from the use of the veto — and as a State that was a member of the Council in 2018 and 2019, a period during which we witnessed the veto used nine times by three permanent members against six draft resolutions, we are well aware of the consequences of the use of the veto. We are convinced that today's resolution will strengthen the role of the General Assembly and help to enhance transparency and accountability in the relationship between two major organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly and the Security Council.

When the right to veto is used by the five permanent members of the Council, they should be in a position to explain and justify their casting of the veto before the entire General Assembly. That will also allow Member States to comment on the use of the veto and explain their viewpoint with regard to using it. It is natural that there will always be some in favour and others against the veto. This resolution will ensure that there will be a transparent and constructive debate in that regard, and will enable us to exchange views and listen to various opinions.

The arbitrary use of the right of the veto by some of the five permanent members has in many cases contributed to undermining the credibility of the decision-making process in the Security Council and, at times, has rendered the Security Council incapable of shouldering its responsibilities and led to frustration among peoples of the world given the Security Council's inability to take the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

We believe that the right to the veto is an exceptional and unusual privilege, which only five States in the world have enjoyed since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and which is first and foremost a responsibility.

In conclusion, since our meeting today coincides with the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, I reiterate the complete faith of the State of Kuwait in the multilateral system and our support for any and all measures that seek to strengthen and consolidate it. The State of Kuwait is of the view that the resolution that we adopted today will help to preserve and strengthen multilateralism and the effectiveness of our Organization, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): Malta proudly joins today's vote as a member of the core group promoting resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for the General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council". Malta is honoured to have formed part of the core group, led by Liechtenstein, since the origin of this initiative two years ago and is pleased to see it adopted by acclamation today. Malta is pleased to see that the voice of the international community stands with reason, with rationality and with relevance to today's current global realities. Today the international community has spoken. We will now have a General

Assembly that is stronger and whose role is further enhanced vis-à-vis the Security Council.

We now have a resolution that will seek to request a debate of the General Assembly within 10 working days of the casting of a veto in the Security Council. Those debates will be called in a manner that will see the wider United Nations membership express its position on the use of such a veto — a mechanism that is not just a privilege but a conscientious responsibility for those that hold it.

The initiative, which now has 83 co-sponsors, is a mechanism that will solidify our cause for further harmonization between two major organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly and the Security Council — as well as more transparency, accountability and relevance on veto use to the wider United Nations membership.

In that manner, the view of the majority will be heard. That is exactly what we are doing today with a large number of delegations in favour, and therefore in favour of multilateralism. Calling a debate of, and by, the General Assembly to discuss veto use is not calling for a change to the use of the veto. That discussion is not in the purview of this resolution. Instead, it remains in the hands of another important process, known as a reform of the Security Council, and therefore fundamentally crucial to our overall pleas for the reform and revitalization of the United Nations as a whole.

On the other hand, this initiative is driven by our passion for the democratic principles of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly. Formed organically by the belief and inspiration of multilateralism, the core group that initiated this resolution is as cross-regional as one can get — a mix of Latin American, European, Arab and small island developing States. Our group is a reflection of how strong the initiative is, going beyond borders and national interests. The voice of all of us has multiplied twofold with this initiative because, by addressing in the General Assembly the use of a recent veto in the Security Council, one is also addressing matters that pertain to members and regions that are traditionally underrepresented on the Council.

In conclusion, we look forward to the resolution's next steps. By joining today's votes, the international community has joined a noble, meaningful cause of taking effective stances and action against threats to

international peace and security. The Charter of the United Nations is clear. The Security Council is there to work on behalf of the membership and, when it is prevented from doing so, the international community should be given the tools to discuss this. That can now be done thanks to this resolution.

**Mr. Marschik** (Austria): We have heard many wise words today regarding the right of the veto in the Security Council, notably from the representatives of Mexico, Canada, Singapore and, just now, Malta, as well as many more. That permits me to be brief.

Indeed, the veto is an anachronism from a time long past that creates undemocratic inequality in the United Nations. The veto is part of the system of the Charter of the United Nations, to which we signed up and that we respect. But, to warrant our respect, the right of the veto must be used with responsibility and with the intent to further peace. The practice in the Security Council has not always lived up to that standard, and, recently, we were disappointed by Russia's use of veto on the situation in Ukraine.

Austria therefore welcomes this initiative, under the leadership of Liechtenstein, and co-sponsored resolution 76/262 as a contribution to strengthening the effectiveness of the Security Council and enhancing the role of the General Assembly when it comes to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We also support other proposals, such as the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in the case of mass atrocities, as well as the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group not to vote against any draft resolution intended to end mass atrocities.

Today's resolution strengthens the role of the General Assembly, and therefore of the whole United Nations membership, in the area of peace and security. In no way does it restrict the permanent members' veto right or the competence of the Security Council with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. The additional references in the resolution, which were included in response to the feedback provided by Member States in last week's consultations, reflect that intention and stress the compatibility with the division of competencies foreseen in the United Nations Charter.

All Member States have an obligation to uphold United Nations principles. Therefore, and in line with

the United Nations Charter, we support the fact that the General Assembly will automatically be convened to hold a debate on the situation when a veto is cast in the Security Council. The United Nations cannot remain inactive when the Security Council does not fulfil its task of upholding international peace. Austria therefore commends this resolution as a positive advancement of the United Nations system and thanks Liechtenstein for all the efforts in that respect.

**Mr. Dvornyk** (Ukraine): Ukraine is proud to be among the main co-sponsors of resolution 76/262, adopted today.

This resolution is of particular relevance and importance to Ukraine and other Member States that uphold the Charter of the United Nations and its principles. The mechanism adopted today is clear and transparent. It is not politicized or selective. It will be invoked automatically each time when the Security Council is paralysed by a veto. The permanent members of the Security Council have an extraordinary power granted to them under the United Nations Charter. It is not a privilege, but a responsibility.

In recent years, the veto was used while ongoing aggression or atrocity crimes were being committed. Such vetoes prevented the condemnation of those crimes, investigation and prosecution, as well as other required measures. There is no indication in the drafting history of the United Nations Charter that the veto power was supposed to be used in that way.

Let me recall that almost every Security Council draft resolution on the Russian aggression against Ukraine was blocked. It happened due to the abuse of the veto by the country that occupies the Soviet seat in the Security Council — the Russian Federation. The most recent case happened two months ago, when Russia alone vetoed a draft resolution (S/2022/155) in response to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine (see S/PV.8979).

Can we consider the use of the veto in such cases as a demonstration of responsibility? That is rather a rhetorical question.

That is why Ukraine supported this resolution and continues to support other existing initiatives aimed at limiting the use of the veto and strengthening the responsibility for its casting.

Let me reiterate that permanent members of the Council that are responsibly carrying out their duty of

maintaining international peace and security should have no problem with committing themselves to this and other respective initiatives. Moreover, the United Nations Charter imposes obligations on the Security Council to act in accordance with the purposes and principles.

Unfortunately, too often in recent history, the abuse of the veto right has undermined the Council's ability to respond to challenges to international peace and security, proving the need to address the current mechanism in order to make it more efficient and credible.

Every veto with respect to crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide is a manifestation of the utmost disregard for those who have been killed or injured, as well as those who could be killed, in

particular because Russia considers the veto as a green light for such crimes.

We are also convinced that the use of the veto should be restricted when a permanent member is directly involved in a conflict under the consideration of the Council.

Today's adoption reconfirms that the wider United Nations membership is not going to further tolerate the abuse of the veto and seeks the strengthening of accountability.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this morning. We shall hear the remaining speakers this afternoon in this Hall at 3 p.m.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*