



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

33rd plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

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

Agenda items 9 and 13 (continued)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/78/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/78/285)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Note by the Secretary-General (A/78/258)

The President: In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 8 September 2023, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary, on the understanding that the administrative, programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 9 in its entirety in plenary, the relevant parts of chapter I of the report of the Economic and Social Council that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned, for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 13, members will recall that, pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, of 23 June 2003, the Assembly decided to consider, under the item, the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation in its discussions of the President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council for the 2023 session, Her Excellency Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, to introduce the report of the Council on its 2023 session (A/78/3).

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), President of the Economic and Social Council: I have the honour to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council for its 2023 session (A/78/3). The report provides a broad overview of the Council's work, including actions taken on a range of sustainable development issues. The Council continues to play a crucial role in responding to the challenges we face. Countries have been severely affected by multiple interlocking crises that have further amplified pre-existing challenges, including those related to poverty, food insecurity, inflation, debt and energy.

The Council's theme for the 2023 cycle, "Accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels", underscored the case for an inclusive recovery that addresses critical immediate needs. At the same time, the recovery needed to marshal transformative policies

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and resources for the longer-term acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In serving as a preparatory event for the SDG Summit, the 2023 High-Level Political Forum, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, helped build political momentum and bring together important policy priorities. As President, I sought to mobilize the various meetings, segments and forums of the Council to pave the way for a successful SDG Summit. At the High-Level Political Forum, countries restated their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. They also expressed deep concern about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development being severely off-track, with most SDG progress being slow, stalled or reversed.

The 2023 High-Level Political Forum constituted the conclusion of its second four-year review cycle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs. More than 120 high-level representatives of Governments participated in the forum. They were joined by heads of entities of the United Nations system and other organizations and more than 800 representatives of major groups and other stakeholders from all regions.

I would like to commend the 38 countries that presented their voluntary national reviews this year, joined also by the European Union, which presented its first review. With the completion of the second cycle of the High-Level Political Forum, 188 countries have presented at least one voluntary national review. One of the most critical elements that those countries identified was financing. Among other things, the national reviews highlighted the need for more strategic and impactful partnerships for accelerating the implementation of SDGs. Once again, the Permanent Representatives of the Philippines and Morocco, as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends, contributed by finding friends to engage in meaningful exchanges with voluntary national review countries, along with other countries, major groups and other stakeholders. Our deliberations at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council considered ways of strengthening coordination and capacity-building to enable United Nations institutions to become more resilient, foster trust and prepare for the future. We also examined different perspectives and experiences aimed at overcoming short-termism, focusing on integrating long-term, forward-looking approaches to advance sustainable development and secure a better future for all.

The coordination segment in 2023 showcased the remarkable knowledge and expertise of the Economic and Social Council's subsidiary bodies and United Nations entities in the context of recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The segment placed significant emphasis on the 2030 Agenda as the guiding framework for addressing crises and emphasizing the interconnectedness of crisis response and sustainable development. Recommendations from the segment focused on identifying and integrating interlinkages among the SDGs, enhancing resilience through informed policies and leaving no one behind. At the initiative of Ambassador Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir of Indonesia, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, an annex of transformative policies and initiatives by subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and United Nations entities was launched to inspire SDG implementation. With that as the second coordination segment, we consolidated several General Assembly reform provisions aimed at strengthening the Economic and Social Council. The segment highlighted the Council's integral coordination role and demonstrated its key function in advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The Economic and Social Council "Operational activities for development" segment, chaired by Ambassador Albert Chimbindi of Zimbabwe, emphasized the importance of international cooperation and solidarity in addressing today's global challenges and advancing the SDGs. The segment successfully fulfilled its accountability role as a platform for the oversight and guidance of the United Nations development system. Its theme was "Guiding the United Nations development system's support in response to interlinked crises and to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", and it emphasized the vital role of international cooperation and solidarity in rescuing the SDGs. The segment highlighted the United Nations development system's continued role in supporting countries' efforts to strengthen transformative policies and programmes towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, demonstrating the added value of a whole-of-system approach through the Resident Coordinator system. The segment convened high-level Government representatives, senior United Nations officials from the national, regional and global levels and private-sector participants. More than 40 panellists, discussants and moderators participated, including more than 10 executive heads and special

representatives of United Nations development system entities, seven resident coordinators and select members of United Nations country teams.

In its subsequent resolution 23/31, the Council welcomed the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts for repositioning the United Nations development system and acknowledged the progress achieved so far in advancing all the mandates for reform. I am encouraged by the segment and the Council's resolution, and I believe that the Council has effectively complemented the General Assembly in its work on key system-wide strategic policy orientation and operational modalities. The United Nations development system is strengthened by our engagement.

The humanitarian community's crucial activities in these highly challenging times were recognized at the 2023 humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, chaired by Ambassador Maurizio Massari of Italy. As we look for transformative pathways to achieve the SDGs, humanitarian emergencies keep pulling us back. Global humanitarian needs are at unprecedented levels. Currently 339 million people in 69 countries are in need of humanitarian assistance, an increase of 65 million compared to the same time last year. The cost of the United Nations-coordinated humanitarian response targeting the most vulnerable 230 million people is estimated at \$51.5 billion, and the humanitarian work of the United Nations is more important than ever.

The humanitarian affairs segment reminded participants of the severity and scope of the crises facing the world, as humankind reaches its limits. Despite numerous appeals, the financial response is still insufficient. Addressing the underlying causes of the crises is crucial, and the coordination among humanitarian actors must be strengthened. The participants welcomed the work of humanitarian agencies in the field, emphasizing the importance of neutrality, impartiality and independence in their efforts. The inclusion of key elements in the response to food insecurity, including early action, should be considered in future efforts. The segment once again enabled Member States to discuss solutions for confronting the soaring humanitarian needs propelled by climate change, conflict and a disregard for international humanitarian law. A successful outcome was achieved through negotiations, with the humanitarian affairs segment providing a useful soft deadline by which to achieve consensus.

The annual one-day Economic and Social Council meeting on the transition from relief to development highlighted the imperative of harmonizing development and humanitarian assistance. Among other relevant issues, it focused on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and providing access to justice for all in accordance with the mandates of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies. In addition, the meeting considered the existing agenda items of the Economic and Social Council related to the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, South Sudan and the Sahel region.

Peace is inextricably connected with sustainable development. I was therefore pleased that during the 2023 session the Council increased its collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission by organizing two joint meetings to promote coherence and impact for peacebuilding, sustaining peace and sustainable development efforts on the ground. Key takeaways from those meetings were the need for an integrated approach to peace, humanitarian action and development and a greater emphasis on prevention and enhanced coherence at the country level.

I convened several special meetings to bring attention to issues considered relevant to sustainable development and to engage key stakeholders in our deliberations. Through those special meetings, the Council drew attention to the need to enhance governance and curb corruption through the transformative power of SDG 16. In another meeting, the Council addressed social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The Council also focused on the needs of countries in special situations, including advancing support for the Fifth Conference on Least Developed Countries.

In view of the multifaceted crisis that Haiti is dealing with, the Council dedicated substantial efforts to mobilizing action in that regard. Building on the work of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group, the Council dedicated a special meeting to food security in order to mobilize immediate action and resources for a Haiti free of hunger. Four new members — Kenya, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica — joined the Ad Hoc Advisory Group during the session, and the Group's mandate was extended until the conclusion of the 2024 session.

The Council continued to strengthen its engagement with stakeholders throughout its various forums. In January we brought together Governments and a wide

range of stakeholders to exchange new ideas, expectations and priorities at the revitalized Economic and Social Council Partnership Forum, organized in consultation with Member States and stakeholder representatives. Following previous practice, I established an informal multi-stakeholder advisory group to address substantive and organizational aspects of the Forum.

The 2023 Economic and Social Council Youth Forum underscored the vital role of youth in driving progress in the implementation of the SDGs. The Forum's hybrid format allowed for the engagement of 20,000 participants, providing a space for young people to discuss their vision and recommendations for the 2023 High-Level Political Forum and the SDG Summit. They expressed concerns about a weak COVID-19 recovery, the climate crisis, their educational opportunities and job prospects and the state of the world. They see themselves as innovators, leaders and change-makers in the pursuit of accelerated action to implement the SDGs, advocating for active involvement at all stages of policymaking and for their voices to guide decision-making in the present and future. The United Nations must create enhanced spaces for their meaningful engagement and provide the necessary support for their participation.

As President of the Economic and Social Council, I made a special effort to ensure the meaningful inclusion of young people in the Council, particularly by featuring youth voices in every session of the 2023 High-Level Political Forum. The Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, co-chaired by Ambassadors Mathu Joyini of South Africa and Tom Woodroffe of the United Kingdom, again brought together a variety of stakeholders beyond Member States, including the private sector, the scientific community and civil society. The discussions underscored that science, technology and innovation can drive sustainable development and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. However, realizing that potential will require strong political leadership, effective policies and increased investment in science, technology and innovation. Among other things, the discussions in the Forum addressed the policy incentives and financial support required to attract the engagement of young people in science, technology and innovation, especially in developing countries.

In 2023 the global macroeconomic environment remained highly challenging for most developing countries. High levels of public debt, high inflationary

pressure, interest-rate increases and the socioeconomic ramifications of the climate crisis formed a backdrop for the follow-up to the Economic and Social Council's Forum on Financing for Development. In that difficult environment, the outcome document of the 2023 Forum, which was adopted by consensus, represented an important step forward in addressing the multiple intertwined crises affecting developing countries. Crucially, it advanced the political momentum needed at the highest level, providing substantive inputs to the process leading to the Political Declaration adopted at the SDG Summit (resolution 78/1).

There is a critical need to adapt international development cooperation to the new and changing global environment and evolving country needs and priorities. At the eighth Development Cooperation Forum, developing countries and their partners called for a paradigm shift in international development cooperation to enable a better alignment with current challenges and opportunities. There was a convergence of views that development cooperation is currently not fit for purpose and must evolve rapidly if the SDGs are to be rescued.

During the reporting period, we also continued to forge a stronger relationship with the General Assembly. With your predecessor, Mr. President, we convened a joint briefing on the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and we held monthly meetings throughout the session. One of the Council's core responsibilities is providing oversight and guidance to its subsidiary bodies. As part of the Council's engine room, its functional commissions and expert bodies identified new policies to overcome COVID-19 and other crises and to accelerate progress to achieve the SDGs. Their inputs make an enormous contribution to the Council's work.

During the management segment chaired by Ambassador Paula Narváez Ojeda of Chile, the Council considered the reports of its subsidiary and related bodies, including their recommendations, in addition to reports by United Nations entities on economic, social, environmental, health and related matters.

The Economic and Social Council, together with its ecosystem, is indispensable for policy dialogue, forging consensus on development issues and identifying emerging issues. In the words of the Secretary-General, the Council is an integral part of the efforts to turbocharge the SDGs. Its mandates under the Charter

of the United Nations are more important than ever in the face of our pressing and complex economic, social and environmental challenges. Through the work of the Economic and Social Council's system, we have begun to demonstrate what an inclusive and networked multilateralism looks like.

Finally, it has been an honour and a privilege to preside over the Council during its 2023 session, and I thank my fellow Bureau members, their teams, the Member States and all stakeholders for all their support in our collective endeavour. I am certain that the Council will continue to make a difference during its 2024 session under the able leadership of Ambassador Narváez Ojeda.

Mr. Milambo (Zambia): I have the honour to make the following remarks regarding the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa on behalf of the Group of African States.

Decades of work to eradicate poverty and end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa are being reversed as the continent continues to face worsening challenges to its efforts to cope with geopolitical tensions and conflicts, the adverse effects of climate change and the global economic downturn. Industry constitutes an important driver of economic transformation and growth, job creation and human development. The Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development in Africa, as stipulated in the African Union's Agenda 2063, states that

“no country or region in the world has achieved prosperity and a decent socioeconomic life for its citizens without the development of a robust industrial sector”.

It goes without saying that Africa's progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals depends on the degree of success it has in transforming its economic structure. The economic opportunities provided by industry stimulate entrepreneurship and enterprise development, technological dynamism, and increased efficiency in productivity. Overall, manufacturing and industrial activities represent the strongest catalysts for promoting self-propelled economic transformation.

The African Continental Free Trade Area is a flagship initiative of Agenda 2063. It is a game-changer that will create a single market and facilitate the free movement of people, capital, goods and services. Boosting intra-African trade will trigger sustainable economic growth and shift our economies from the

volatility associated with extractive exports towards industrialized goods. Only through industrialization can Africa realize higher economic growth and higher levels of human development. Improved access to affordable and clean energy is key to sustainable, resilient and inclusive industrial development, and tackling that priority requires collective international cooperation and action.

One of the most pressing challenges facing Africa is food insecurity. The countries of Africa are taking significant action to improve agricultural productivity and add value. Boosting international development cooperation is also essential to supporting investment in productive and efficient food value chains and enhancing labour skills and support for high-quality agricultural techniques and infrastructure.

Owing to the complex dynamics of today's economic and trade environments, Africa's structural transformation process is proving very challenging, especially as a result of the crisis in the multilateral trading system, fluctuations of commodity prices and the restructuring of global value chains. In recent years, global value chains have come under immense pressure as a result of unprecedented trade imbalances, economic uncertainty, geopolitical developments and natural disasters, all of which have prompted key industry players to reassess their global value chains. That could create an opportunity for Africa's manufacturing sector to increase its integration into global supply chains.

It is obvious that to better manage shocks, Africa needs to build resilience. That can be done by strengthening the ongoing trade integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area, which will require enhancing trade capacity, reducing tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, strengthening efficiency in customs, leveraging digitalization and closing infrastructure gaps. Deepening domestic financial markets can also broaden sources of financing and lower the volatility associated with relying too much on foreign inflows.

The African Group encourages the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), together with Member States, to develop strategies that align the deliverables of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa with those of the African Continental Free Trade Area and with national industrial priorities that are adapted to the African context.

There is also a need to establish, strengthen and promote regional value chains that can help African producers to add value to commodities and to enter and upgrade in export markets. It is also vital to enhance the role of small and medium-sized enterprises across the continent, in particular in the processing and distribution of agricultural products.

There is also a need to scale up and intensify technical assistance to African countries. In that regard, we welcome the further expansion of UNIDO's Programme for Country Partnership and call for building more effective partnerships with key stakeholders and partners in order to develop new regional industrial parks and special economic zones, in addition to expanding energy security and access.

The Group notes, with appreciation, that during 2022, more than 250 projects, with a total value of \$63.3 million, excluding interregional and global portfolios, were under implementation in Africa, within the framework of the Programme for Country Partnership and country programmes. Those projects cut across several sectors, including agribusiness and agro-industry, trade capacity development, entrepreneurship, skills development, special economic zones and industrial parks, the environment, renewable energy and energy efficiency, technology transfer and industrial policy.

It is also crucial to mobilize financial and non-financial resources and promote joint initiatives for the effective implementation of the African Union (AU) Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa and UNIDO's Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa. Leveraging the AU-UNIDO partnership is crucial for enhancing strategic support in industrial policy, trade capacity, regional agro-value chains, technology transfer and promoting entrepreneurship.

We urge UNIDO to continue its efforts to accelerate Africa's industrialization and to encourage development partners to join hands in translating Africa's industrialization strategies into concrete projects that transform Africa's economies, eradicate poverty and help us achieve the Africa we want.

Ms. Nashwa (Maldives): I extend my appreciation to the President of the Economic and Social Council for the insightful report (A/78/3), and I wish to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Maldives to the Council's crucial work. The agenda of the Economic

and Social Council is more relevant and urgent than ever before in the complex landscape of our global challenges.

Reflecting on the accomplishments and challenges faced throughout this pivotal year for the Economic and Social Council, especially as we find ourselves at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we commend the Committee's dedicated efforts. The pursuit of political momentum through several high-level events, aimed at securing pledges from world leaders for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitments, is commendable, although the recurring message remains a cause for concern — progress towards achieving the SDGs is lagging.

The *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition* starkly illustrates that reality, revealing not only stalled progress, but regression in some targets. Despite those challenges, the Maldives remains unwavering in its commitment to achieving the SDGs, as demonstrated by our second voluntary national review at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July, emphasizing the role of physical and digital connectivity in accelerating the 2030 Agenda.

The Maldivian Government has taken tangible steps, including establishing an integrated national public ferry network to connect our dispersed islands and spearheading a digital revolution through online education, telemedicine and e-payment systems, bringing essential services closer to those in need. Recognizing the pivotal role of financing in realizing the SDGs, our year-long advocacy for the urgent and comprehensive reform of the international financial architecture persists. That reform is especially crucial for small island developing States (SIDS) grappling with exacerbated debt burdens from the impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

To support our domestic developmental efforts, we call upon international financial institutions to broaden their eligibility criteria, emphasizing the early adoption and utilization of the multidimensional vulnerability index to facilitate easier access to affordable financing and debt relief. The index holds the potential to significantly impact the sustainable development of small island developing States, situated at the forefront of both the climate and debt crises. Yet, realizing that potential hinges on our collective commitment to supporting the vulnerable, recognizing that as a community of nations, our strength is magnified when everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

The SDG Summit in September marked a step forward as we collectively renewed our commitments, but it is evident that more concerted efforts are required. The subsequent follow-up process after the SDG Summit is equally crucial in driving momentum for SDG implementation as we approach the 2030 deadline. The upcoming Summit of the Future holds promise, and it is imperative that we capitalize on this opportunity by leveraging recommendations from the Global Digital Compact.

Addressing climate change is of the utmost urgency, with global temperatures already surpassing a critical 1.1°C increase. The upcoming twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change holds significant importance, emphasizing the need for a forward-looking global stock-take rooted in equity and the best available science. We stress the importance of agreeing on modalities for the Loss and Damage Fund, ensuring its operationalization, and we urge the largest emitters to heed the Secretary-General's call to allocate financial resources to support the Loss and Damage Fund.

That Fund is essential for preventing further irreversible losses and damages to our island nations. We also call for urgent actions to bridge the considerable emissions gap and fulfil the international community's commitment to limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, safeguarding our planet, its inhabitants and its biodiversity, and preventing the surpassing of planetary boundaries.

As small island developing States, we acknowledge the uniqueness of our challenges and advocate for innovative approaches to economic, social and environmental transformation. The adoption and full implementation of the next programme of action envisioned by SIDS are paramount for our resilient prosperity. As the co-Chair of the preparatory committee for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, we witnessed a robust foundation laid out during the preparatory meetings for a forward-looking and action-oriented programme of action for SIDS. We seek the support of the international community to translate that vision into a tangible reality.

The Maldives strongly believes in the capacity and responsibility of every member of the international community, regardless of size, to contribute to global

peace, development and prosperity. In line with that commitment, we have submitted our candidacy for the 2027-2029 term to the Economic and Social Council. It is imperative to enhance the representation of small States in decision-making bodies in order to uphold the Organization's ideal of leaving no one behind.

Achieving the SDGs is contingent upon the substantive involvement of women and youth. Recognizing the pivotal role of youth in shaping our collective future, the Maldives places significant importance on enhancing youth engagement within the United Nations system and welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office. While our active participation in the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum underscores our commitment, we acknowledge how important it is to further integrate young people's perspectives. We therefore call for a more inclusive incorporation of youth perspectives in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future.

We applaud the Economic and Social Council's emphasis on advancing the rights of women and girls and acknowledge the substantial global strides it has made through its various initiatives. Gender equality remains a paramount objective for the Maldives, as demonstrated by my country's enactment of a gender equality law and launch of a national gender equality action plan. While the General Assembly has been the setting for several historic moments for gender equality, much remains to be done regarding women's representation and participation. With only seven women elected to the presidency of the Economic and Social Council in its 77 years, we want to see more women taking the lead.

In conclusion, seven years remain until the 2030 Agenda deadline, which means we need immediate action to ensure that no one is left behind in our collective pursuit of achieving the SDGs. The road ahead is steep, but together we can and must overcome it for the people we serve.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make a statement on agenda items 9 and 13.

With regard to agenda item 9, the Russian delegation supports the adoption of the report on the results of the work of the Economic and Social Council for the period 2022–2023 (A/78/3). We underscore the key role played by the Council as the organ mandated by the Charter of the United Nations to coordinate, review and develop

policies, make recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues and implement the outcomes of international conferences and forums with a social and economic focus. We note the Council's overall effective and productive work in the previous session, in addition to the consultations that took place during that time with all Member States, including non-members of the Council. However, we feel compelled to point out that some topics included in the work of the Council do not fall under its mandate. I am referring in particular to the initiation of a discussion and draft decision on conducting a study on genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We were encouraged by the fact that the Council limited itself to one meeting on the topic.

We support the Council's continued efforts to ensure that segments and high-level meetings, as well as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which is convened under the auspices of the Council, are held fully in person. I would also like to draw the attention of the elected Bureau of the Council to the need to adhere to the agenda when working on the programme for the 2023–2024 cycle. It should be strictly guided by the Council's mandate, as agreed in United Nations documents and approved by Member States, to uphold the principle of consensus in decision-making and to ensure transparent interactions and equal consideration of the positions of all Member States.

Turning to agenda item 13, on industrial development in Africa, I would like to preface my remarks by saying that our comments resonate well with the expectations that the representative of Zambia expressed just now on the item.

We are grateful to the Secretariat for preparing the note by the Secretary-General on the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025) (A/78/258). There can be no doubt that today Africa is entering a phase of rapid economic growth. The second Russia-Africa summit, held in Saint Petersburg in July, gave additional impetus to the promotion of our multifaceted cooperation, including in the area of industry. Bilaterally, documents are being discussed for large-scale projects in every sector where interest is shown, and I want to emphasize that is all done in equal and mutual partnership.

Africa and Russia are united in their desire to defend their genuine sovereignty and the right to their own, distinctive paths of development. The

economic basis for sovereignty has always rested on a strong industrial base. Our country has the necessary industrial and technological potential to support the sustainable industrialization of the African continent. Industrial development is impossible without the key component of personnel training. Russia offers unique expertise in areas such as energy, transportation, health care, vaccine manufacture, personnel training and high-technology transfer. The advantages of Russia's educational infrastructure have been well known to our partners since Soviet times.

An equally important factor in industrial development is access to reliable and affordable energy. A number of countries are now actively promoting the green agenda in Africa and providing favourable conditions for financing solar and wind energy projects. We too support the development of those industries, but we know from our own experience that it is difficult to build heavy industry on wind turbines. Serious solutions are needed in that regard, including the construction of nuclear power plants, which, in our view, also produce clean energy. Russia is a market leader in this area. We also have technologies in the field of hydropower and building compact hydroelectric power plants that are easy to install and can be quickly put into operation.

Russia has provided indirect but very important support to the independent development of many African countries by writing off tens of billions of dollars of foreign debt for those countries. In addition to our bilateral cooperation, we will continue to implement technical assistance projects together with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, which the representative of Zambia also mentioned. The programme to increase production and develop production chains in fisheries in Ethiopia is a successful example of that.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that achieving industrial development in Africa is inextricably linked to the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships, and my country is one of Africa's long-standing partners. Russia has demonstrated its solidarity with the peoples of Africa on many occasions, including, most recently, by supplying them with food and fertilizers free of charge. That is one example of our contributions to overcoming the consequences of a structural economic crisis caused by systemic shortcomings in the international financial system and by restrictions and blockades introduced in the context of unfair competition. The clichés contained in the reports of the Secretariat about

the supposed direct consequences of the conflict in Ukraine for Africa's economy and food security have been convincingly refuted not just by international experts but by reality.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): I would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the report on the work of the Economic and Social Council for the 2023 session contained in document A/78/3. I also want to thank the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, in her capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council, for introducing the report and to commend her and her Bureau for their achievements during the session.

The importance of the Economic and Social Council in driving forward the economic and social agendas of the United Nations cannot be emphasized enough. Indeed, as the world seeks to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), regenerate and sustain growth in the post-coronavirus disease phase and prepare for a more sustainable future for all, the role of the Council needs to be reinforced and its contributions synergized with the rest of the United Nations system. I would like to underscore four points about the Economic and Social Council that are reflected in the report.

The first is the importance of effective coordination. Here, the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council is key. Having chaired the inaugural session of the coordination segment last year, I believe that effective coordination across all entities of the Economic and Social Council ecosystem, as well as with other United Nations bodies and other institutions, including multilateral development banks, is critical to the Council's success. We are pleased with the Economic and Social Council's interaction with other entities such as the Peacebuilding Commission, as mentioned in the report. The dialogue and coordination with multilateral development banks, especially the World Bank, need to be strengthened, as do synergies with regional commissions aimed at sustaining the efforts to rescue the SDGs. Regional voices matter, and the commissions are well positioned to synthesize regional needs with global perspectives.

Secondly, we must strengthen the future-oriented approach of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council. We welcome the segment's focus on improving coordination to strengthen the response posture of the Economic and Social Council to the many humanitarian challenges facing the world,

as reflected in the Council's resolution 2022/10 on the matter. In view of the multiple humanitarian crises we are seeing today, it is more important than ever for the United Nations humanitarian assistance architecture to be ready for the future. We therefore need to support the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All 2027 initiative, mainstream disaster risk reduction in humanitarian action and increase capacity-building and support for localized disaster preparedness and response. That should also benefit from the development of strategic foresight capabilities in the United Nations, as the Secretary-General advocates in his *Our Common Agenda* report (A/75/982). A more resilient, responsive and ready humanitarian assistance system under the United Nations should therefore be an important priority at next year's Summit of the Future deliberations. But what is urgent right now is to muster the necessary political will, unlock the underlying compassion and mobilize adequate resources to overcome the pressing humanitarian crises that result from conflict or disasters.

Thirdly, we should focus more on important force multipliers that can catalyse more rapid progress in achieving the economic and social agendas of the United Nations. Technology — including artificial intelligence, smart data, space technologies and low-carbon technologies — is one such force multiplier. The Economic and Social Council, in concert with the International Telecommunication Union, for example, can serve as a platform to coordinate best practices for how best to harness such technologies to rescue the SDGs. Another critical force multiplier for global economic and social advancement — which is also an important end in and of itself — is gender equality, including through the comprehensive empowerment of women. As Vice-President of the UN-Women Executive Board Bureau for 2023, I have seen what a critical difference can be made by legislation and policies that close gender gaps and empower women, with support from UN-Women. In that connection, enhancing women's economic participation in small and medium-sized enterprises, for example, is an important difference-maker. Thailand is proud that a memorandum of understanding between UN-Women and Thailand's Office of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Promotion on the matter was signed recently.

Lastly, we should always work to strengthen crime prevention and the criminal justice system, as highlighted in the report of the Economic and

Social Council. As a long-standing member of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and a candidate for the Commission's 2025–2027 term, Thailand supports efforts to promote equal justice for all. One way to achieve that is to utilize technology to enhance access to the justice system. In that regard, Thailand has developed a mobile phone application, Justice Care, to facilitate requests for help from its national justice fund and legal assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Thailand looks forward to seeing the General Assembly adopt the draft resolutions on crime prevention and criminal justice recommended by the Economic and Social Council, which also underscore the importance of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, known as the Bangkok Rules.

If I may, regarding the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa 2016–2025, I would like to thank the United Nations Industrial Development Organization for its insightful report contained in document A/78/258. It should serve to once again underline the importance of Africa's role and contribution to sustained global economic advancement and of the need for continued effective partnerships and cooperation with Africa to that end. Two aspects of the report merit some supportive observations.

The first is the importance of increased economic integration and enhanced connectivity to Africa's continued economic progress. As I highlighted in my statement earlier this year on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (see A/78/PV.18), the contributions of the African Continental Free Trade Area to Africa's continued economic advancement cannot be overemphasized. Notable achievements include launching its Guided Trade initiative and \$10 billion Adjustment Fund, as mentioned in the report. Other key developments that strengthen regional integration and connectivity include measures to strengthen the institutional capacity of the African Continental Free Trade Area secretariat, as well as the development of value chains connecting countries and subregions in the continent. As a founding member of South-East Asia's only integration and community-building process, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Thailand welcomes such regional integration efforts and looks forward to cross-sharing such integration experiences across various regions around the world.

The second aspect is the continued importance attached to the development of sustainable agriculture, as reflected in agribusiness and rural development, which complements Africa's industrialization. We welcome the report's underscoring of the important point that agricultural development and industrialization complement one another. Thailand supports partnerships and international cooperation for the development of sustainable agriculture, including through improving agricultural production capacity. That includes transferring agricultural technology, providing technical assistance and sharing best practices for farming through South-South and triangular cooperation. For its part, Thailand will continue to build on its sustainable agricultural cooperation with African countries — including Kenya, Lesotho and Senegal, to name a few — and we look forward to expanding our cooperation with other African countries.

Mr. Sithole (South Africa): South Africa aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Zambia on behalf of the Group of African States.

Africa, which is home to around one in every five people in the world, holds vast potential to contribute to the global agenda for sustainable development. However, it is lagging behind in industrialization, which has impeded its economic transformation. Any technical assistance initiatives to enhance industrialization on the continent therefore need to be strongly linked to domestic economies through the creation of innovative partnerships that address the specific needs of Africans. In that regard, South Africa takes note of the report of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (2016–2025) (see A/78/258), which outlines the progress made by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in the implementation of various programmes and projects to scale up its technical assistance to African countries in promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development for the successful implementation of the Third Industrial Development Decade. South Africa commends UNIDO for expanding its flagship Programme for Country Partnerships to 10. We are pleased to note that the programmes have also focused on empowering African youth and women, who contribute significantly to Africa's economic development. Women are mostly employed in informal sectors and work in challenging circumstances. Their economic empowerment will greatly assist in addressing gender equality and poverty eradication.

Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Africa's youth dividend should be harnessed for the continent's benefit. In that regard, we commend the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and UNIDO's joint programme Opportunities for Youth in Africa to accelerate job creation in the agribusiness sector and encourage further initiatives that can help young people enhance their skills and assist African countries in developing regional programmes involving industrial value chains. South Africa commends UNIDO's continued and active participation in the African Union Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification, including collaborative efforts with the African Union Commission to develop an African plan for the implementation of related decisions and efforts undertaken to effectively support the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

Lastly, South Africa takes note of the progress made by the operationalization of the secretariat of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa through the recruitment of a programme officer. We encourage UNIDO to track progress in achieving the objectives set out in the road map and to foster greater synergy between the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the UNIDO Africa Strategy in promoting industrial development on the continent.

Mr. Al-Kandari (Kuwait) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, I commend the efforts of Member States and the United Nations organs in following up on the results of all activities related to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those of the Economic and Social Council. In its annual report (A/78/3) for the period from July 2022 to July 2023, the Council outlines its meaningful contribution to the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development during its annual substantive session and its follow-up on the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

My country underscores the importance of concerted international efforts and cooperation among Member States in building a more sustainable global economy that can enable States to overcome today's global challenges, foremost among them the food crisis and climate change. We also stress the importance of cooperation and joint action in laying a foundation and establishing arrangements that can improve

developing countries' capacity to address the difficult challenges that are undermining their capabilities and putting an unprecedented burden on the poorest and most vulnerable, especially those dealing with extraordinary circumstances as they attempt to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) we have agreed on in order to realize progress and prosperity for their peoples. We note the importance of sharing responsibility for achieving the goals and strengthening international cooperation, especially between developed and developing countries, with a view to achieving innovative development partnerships based on the principle of collective action.

We are also counting on the international community to work tirelessly to ensure that developing countries receive sustainable financing in keeping with the commitments that it has made to those countries. Economic cooperation is an essential part of our concerted efforts. It provides new jobs and helps to achieve the development and prosperity that can eradicate poverty in countries all over the world, strengthening communities and making them more resilient to global crises and challenges.

The State of Kuwait is fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. We have launched a development plan under the banner of A New Kuwait, aimed at focusing every effort to meet the goals of the national development plan and the SDGs on the basis of seven main pillars, designed to transform Kuwait into a leading financial, commercial and cultural regional hub. In that regard, in July we submitted our second voluntary national review, which outlines the country's progress in relation to every individual goal and is a reliable record of our many achievements.

We have faced a number of challenges along that path, including as a result of climate change. The adverse effects of climate change have made recovery difficult for all, especially weak and vulnerable peoples. We need immediate measures if we are to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals, and that requires our firm commitment to the recent Political Declaration adopted in September at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the General Assembly (resolution 78/1). It also requires building resilience, expanding social protection and protecting the vulnerable. At the international level, the State of Kuwait has sought over the years to strengthen economic cooperation and to extend a helping hand to

countries so that they can achieve their economic and development goals, move forward and ensure progress and prosperity for their peoples.

My country established the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in the 1960s as a tool to build bridges of friendship, cooperation and brotherhood between Kuwait and the rest of the world and to help developing countries to expand their economies by providing concessional loans, grants, technical assistance and capital to regional and international development institutions. The loans have helped finance many development projects, including for infrastructure, educational institutions and health centres, in addition to the Fund's pioneering contribution in the areas of food security, renewable energy and other areas that can help us to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis and adapt to it. We in Kuwait are proud of that, and I want to emphasize from this rostrum that the Kuwait Fund will continue to support all developing countries in achieving their development goals. We provide assistance to any community in need at the international level, based on our belief in the importance of helping to achieve global prosperity and provide assistance.

In that regard, we would like to point to the Kuwait Investment Authority, established in 1953, which includes the Kuwait Sovereign Fund, the first of its kind in the world. The Authority contributes to economic development in many countries by investing in various sectors and areas all over the world. It also plays a leading role in assisting progress towards smooth, rapid and sustainable economic transitions through its active participation in international sovereign fund initiatives, particularly the One Planet Initiative, of which the Authority is a founding member, and which is aimed at facilitating smooth transitions to low-emission economies. Furthermore, the Authority cooperates with sovereign funds in other countries to identify sectors that can mitigate the effects of climate change and promote adaptation to its consequences.

Today we are discussing an important agenda item aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable future and addressing global challenges, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, prosperity and the achievement of peace and justice in the world. However, at the same time, war crimes are being committed on a daily basis against the Palestinian people, who have been suffering under occupation for 75 years. Today they are in need of the most basic supplies for their survival after the Israeli

occupying forces have targeted their homes, hospitals, schools, shelters, relief workers and accessible roads serving to provide assistance. That is on top of the fact that the occupying Israeli Government has cut off water, food, electricity and fuel to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, as well as making official statements calling for exterminating the defenceless Palestinian people and forcibly displacing them from their lands. That is a grave violation of international humanitarian law. The occupying entity has targeted civilian objects and has so far claimed the lives of more than 11,000 innocent civilians, most of them women and children, while the Israeli occupation forces have continued to reject the possibility of a ceasefire. That goes against all of the recommendations in section B of chapter II of the report, on social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. And all of it shows that the occupying entity does not respect every State or international body in the international community, in a demonstration of the arrogance of the occupation, which has committed all kinds of violations against international and humanitarian norms.

We appreciate the Economic and Social Council's adoption of its resolutions 2023/34 and 2023/35, the first of which relates to chapter 12 of the report, entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", and the resolutions' condemnation of all the practices of the Israeli occupying forces in the Palestinian Territories and the occupied Golan, which are in clear violation of international humanitarian law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Regrettably, the occupying entity has continued its violations without any accountability or deterrent, while destabilizing international peace and security. And yet the United Nations emerged from the suffering caused by the Second World War vowing to maintain international peace and security.

In conclusion, my country stresses that the Secretary-General's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is doomed to fail if such clear violations of human rights and dignity continue. It will not succeed unless human dignity and human rights and achievements are protected and all perpetrators of war crimes held accountable, particularly the occupying Israeli entity.

The Acting President: The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. I would like to remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Ben Naftaly (Israel): With regard to the comments made in this Hall concerning the situation in Gaza, we would like to put the following on record.

The suffering in Gaza as a result of Hamas's decision to declare war on us on 7 October is heartbreaking. None of us wants to be in this situation. This is not a war that Israel started. It is not a war that we wanted or even expected. It is a war that Hamas declared on us with the 7 October massacre, when with horrifying cruelty it invaded and tortured and mutilated children in front of their parents before executing them, burning whole families alive. Moreover, Hamas is exploiting civilians in Gaza, preventing their temporary evacuation from combat zones, seizing humanitarian aid and firing rockets indiscriminately from dense urban areas. As a strategy, Hamas embeds armaments and terrorist cells within, next to and underneath hospitals, schools, mosques, United Nations facilities and other concentrations of non-combatants. That constitutes a war crime. We are doing everything we can inside Gaza to get civilians out of harm's way. That is why for a month now we have been warning them to leave northern Gaza temporarily for their own safety and facilitating humanitarian corridors so that they can get out of the way until the fighting is over. Then we proceed to destroy the terrorists who perpetrated the 7 October attack.

Hamas is a genocidal jihadist terror organization that has openly vowed to repeat the atrocities of 7 October until it kills every man, woman and child in Israel and annihilates the Jewish people. That threat must and will be removed. Most importantly, all of our 240 hostages — civilians, including women and children — should be immediately released.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/78/3?

It was so decided (decision 78/58).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 13.

Agenda item 119 (continued)

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Agenda item 120 (continued)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its joint debate on agenda items 119 and 120.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): I thank the President for convening this plenary meeting on the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly during the seventy-eighth session.

Slovenia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.32) and the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group (see A/78/PV.32), and I would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

First of all, I would like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly for the previous two sessions, Ambassadors Egriselda González López of El Salvador and Mitchell Fifield of Australia. Their tireless efforts resulted in some concrete advances in the revitalization agenda. I would also like to congratulate Ambassadors Menissa Rambally and Cornel Feruță, the Permanent Representatives of Saint Lucia and Romania, on their appointment as co-Chairs for the seventy-eighth session. They have our full support and trust in this year's debate. We look forward to the discussions focusing on strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly and its working methods, as well as on the efforts to implement resolution 77/335.

I would like to focus today on one particularly important issue, which is gender equality, where progress in implementation has been painfully slow. As others have mentioned, both on Friday in this Hall (see A/78/PV.32) and in other forums, it is regrettable that there has never been a woman Secretary-General in the history of the United Nations. Furthermore, the General Assembly has had 74 male presidents and only four female presidents. Slovenia is fully committed to

gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We have taken significant steps to ensure equality of opportunity in our diplomatic service as well. Today 48 per cent of the leadership positions in our Foreign Ministry are occupied by women. Women also represent 34 per cent of Slovenian ambassadors abroad.

Gender parity in the work of international and regional organizations is therefore very important to us, including in leadership and decision-making positions. As is stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations, we do indeed have no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in the principal and subsidiary organs of the United Nations. However, the data on the actual representation of both genders in leadership positions in the United Nations paint a different picture. We do recognize that some progress has been made in that regard. We welcome the call in resolution 77/335 urging Presidents of the General Assembly to ensure gender balance when appointing co-Chairs, co-facilitators, high-level speakers and panellists in the discussions and processes under their purview, and renewing the call on Member States to nominate female candidates for the position of President. The resolution also rightly notes that we have yet to see a woman Secretary-General and strongly encourages Member States to bear that in mind when nominating candidates. Furthermore, and commendably, the resolution recognizes women's important contribution in diplomacy.

In our efforts to advance or push for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5, on gender equality, we must not forget the United Nations itself and the representation of women when it comes to United Nations leadership positions. As emphasized by my President, Ms. Pirc Musar, in her statement during the general debate of the Assembly in September (see A/78/PV.4), Slovenia is supportive of all initiatives aimed at achieving that objective, including that of the Global Women Leaders Voices for a gender alternation policy for the presidency of the General Assembly. Gender equality should be integrated into the working methods of the Assembly, and that includes its rules of procedure. We very much regret that the discussions on reflecting the work of women in the rules of procedure have not resulted in updates to their language, and we definitely expect the work on that issue to continue and succeed.

We welcome the reference in resolution 77/335 to the urgent need to preserve the primacy and significance of the general debate by limiting the number of side events. Slovenia signed the voluntary pledge on limiting the number of side events during the general debate, and we invite more Member States to join that initiative.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is one of the key components in the overall reform of the United Nations in our efforts to make the Organization ready to stand up to the many challenges we are all facing. Our discussions in the year ahead will be held in parallel with discussions on and preparations for the Summit of the Future, which will be a valuable opportunity to strengthen multilateralism, with a more transparent, inclusive, efficient and effective United Nations at its core. The General Assembly can count on Slovenia's positive and constructive engagement.

Mr. Ferreira Silva Aranda (Portugal): Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the statement by the representative of Estonia on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group (see A/78/PV.32), and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the Assembly's adoption of resolution 77/335 and the leadership of Ambassadors Egriselda González López of El Salvador and Mitch Fifield of Australia during the latest negotiations. We would also like to congratulate Ambassadors Feruță and Rambally, of Romania and Saint Lucia, on their appointment for this session.

Portugal encourages the Security Council to continue the good practice of submitting its annual report to the General Assembly, in line with presidential note 507 on the Council's working methods (S/2017/507, annex), and suggests that the Assembly organize a debate in January 2024 in preparation for the next annual report in order to assess the work of the Council ahead of the drafting of the introduction of the report. The Charter of the United Nations clearly stipulates that the Security Council carries out its duties on behalf of all Member States, which are therefore entitled to hold it to account in the General Assembly. The annual report should be informative, substantive, comprehensive and thorough, because if it is not, the duty of accountability established in the Charter will be neither properly nor satisfactorily fulfilled. We have seen recently that Member States, and the international community in a broader sense, increasingly believe it is necessary to

have a better understanding of the Council's actions or lack of them. The years 2022 and 2023 may prove to be the times when that demand erupted most clearly and urgently.

As per our initiative earlier this year, together with Ecuador and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research we intend to co-organize a second workshop in 2024 on the relationship between the Assembly and the Council. We want to use that event to promote a substantive discussion on that important topic.

Finally, we would also like to recall paragraph 30 of resolution 77/335, in which we request the President of the General Assembly, with the support of the Secretariat and other relevant United Nations entities, to provide a digital handbook on past practices, data and recommendations for the fulfilment of the functions and powers of the Assembly, as outlined in Chapter IV of the Charter. Portugal stands ready to support the President in that regard, including through voluntary contributions.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The collective reflection that the General Assembly has undertaken in reviewing its working methods has shown us that there is a consensus on the need for a more effective and more integrated United Nations system. It is also clear that in the face of growing public frustration with the Organization's performance, we cannot continue to operate in the same way. We must demonstrate that multilateralism is capable of meeting our current challenges.

At the level of the General Assembly Committees, while we have reached valuable agreements on streamlining and simplifying their processes, the progress that has been made is still insufficient. Mexico therefore calls on all Member States to redouble their efforts to focus on the Organization's key mandates. We must avoid at all costs scattered initiatives and the excessive proliferation of processes, because they simply saturate the United Nations system and create expectations that are frequently frustrated, all of which contributes to the public's growing scepticism regarding the work of our Organization.

Mexico believes that a genuine qualitative change in the way the Organization operates will require our national delegations to profoundly redefine their own criteria for their performance in a spirit of self-criticism. In our daily work, we must be guided by what

should by now be a truism, which is that resolutions, reports of the Secretary-General, side events and interactive dialogues are not ends in themselves. Every initiative we promote within the Organization should provide a solution to a specific problem. It should fill a regulatory gap or at least make a concrete contribution to compliance with the principles of the Charter. When the only tangible result of a resolution is the preparation of a report that in its turn will later justify the updating of that resolution, we are engaging in a form of solipsism that harms the Organization by consuming resources that would be better used in carrying out other tasks. We should therefore review with detachment all such processes in order to make radical decisions on which are relevant to maintain and which can be got rid of.

Mexico considers that the voluntary pledge to limit the number of side events during the general debate, which a number of countries have signed, is a step in the right direction. We invite Member States that have not done so to join in that commitment.

Another issue we can improve is the periodicity with which the General Assembly addresses certain issues. While there have been increasing initiatives to make some annual resolutions biennial or triennial, including some promoted by Mexico, we can do more in that area.

In the General Assembly, the principle of the legal equality of States is given concrete expression. Hence its revitalization has a political connotation that we cannot avoid. In the face of the polarization that the current conflicts generate in our deliberative process, we believe that the sensible thing to do is to seek spaces where we can rebuild trust among Member States and build bridges between divergent points of view.

In that regard, my delegation is concerned about the situation that the Committee for Programme and Coordination has been experiencing for some years now, which has not been able to reach agreement on key programmes for the functioning of the Organization.

We have an ethical obligation, as diplomats and multilateralists, to make our discussions, our negotiations and our daily interactions in the Organization conducive to reaching a better understanding between our States and our peoples. We cannot accept for the United Nations to become a mere echo chamber for the conflicts and rivalries that exist in our world.

Mexico pledges to continue working to reach agreements that will enable us to channel the work of the Organization so that it is in keeping with our reality and the times we live in.

Mr. Wavrin (France) (*spoke in French*): Let me thank the President for convening this debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/78/PV.32) and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

France is deeply attached to multilateralism based on international law in all its dimensions, including human rights and humanitarian law. The international system, as we know it, is currently in crisis. Yet the challenges we face call for collective responses. That is equally true when it comes to economic and development issues, health and the fight against climate change.

In order to respond to those challenges, the United Nations must evolve to be more effective and fulfil its mandate while respecting the Charter of the United Nations and the various missions entrusted to it. That reform involves revitalizing the General Assembly. During the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the Heads of State and Government committed to continuing that work and asked the Secretary-General to report back with recommendations for advancing *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

In many ways, improving the working methods of the General Assembly is essential to achieving the overall goal of revitalizing the United Nations as a whole.

Satisfactory progress has been made in recent years, notably in resolution 77/335, the most recent resolution on this topic. In that respect, I would like to commend the excellent work conducted by the co-Chairs — Ms. Egriselda González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, and Mr. Mitchell Fifield, former Permanent Representatives of Australia.

Under the terms of that resolution, the General Assembly, with the support of France, decided to create, at its seventy-eighth and seventy-ninth sessions, an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, open to all States, tasked with finding new ways to strengthen its role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency. My delegation would like to welcome the appointment of His Excellency Mr. Cornel Feruță, Permanent Representative of

Romania to the United Nations and Her Excellency Ms. Menissa Rambally, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations, to head the Ad Hoc Working Group, which is to address the issue of the role and powers of the General Assembly and its working methods.

Among the progress achieved in the text, we should mention the streamlining of the agenda of the General Assembly. We support streamlining the Assembly's agenda in order to eliminate, or at least reduce, obsolete, ineffective and, in some cases, redundant items and resolutions in the six Committees. We are open to discussion on strengthening the resources of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and on promoting female candidates for the posts of President of the General Assembly and Secretary-General.

Cultural and linguistic diversity must also be better taken into account, including within the General Assembly. Multilingualism, I note, is enshrined as a fundamental value of the United Nations, and we wish to emphasize its full significance.

In conclusion, I pledge France's willingness to commit fully and in close coordination with all its European partners to the work of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Molla (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking the President for convening this important debate on the implementation of United Nations resolutions and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/78/PV.32).

We congratulate Ambassador Cornel Feruță, Permanent Representative of Romania, and Ambassador Menissa Rambally, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia, for their appointment as the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We are confident that under their able leadership the Group will achieve significant progress in the coming years. We thank Ambassador Mitchell Fifield of Australia and Ambassador Egriselda González López of El Salvador for their excellent leadership and dedication to the revitalization process during the past two sessions.

Amid multifaceted challenges facing the international order, the role of the United Nations has become more crucial than ever. We believe that the

revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. The General Assembly is a symbol of international solidarity. It is also a symbol and practical manifestation of multilateralism.

Therefore, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the General Assembly is a first step forward towards a more democratic and inclusive United Nations that is capable of carrying out its international functions and obligations in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

We acknowledge the incremental progress in the functioning of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, we emphasize the imperative for a bolder and more decisive approach to render the Assembly more effective and action-oriented. Allow me to make the following points.

First, a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation status of General Assembly resolutions and a clear identification of underlying causes for any shortcomings are vital. That approach is essential to progressively eliminate constraints hindering the General Assembly's revitalization process from reaching its full potential. Genuine political will from all Member States is crucial to achieve greater progress and overcome differences within the Ad Hoc Working Group's four agenda clusters. My delegation looks forward to the discussions during the current session, specifically focusing on the "role and authority of the General Assembly" and its "working methods," as outlined in resolution 77/335.

Secondly, we subscribe to the initiative aimed at the proper implementation of the United Nations Charter with respect to the functional relationship between its main organs, in particular the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It is imperative to enhance synergy, coherence and complementarity among the agendas of the Assembly and its Committees, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies in order to avoid overlap and duplication.

Thirdly, we also emphasize the importance of streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly in order to allocate more time for substantive and interactive dialogues and to review the implementation of adopted resolutions. We support the request for the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper outlining the evolution of the agenda to facilitate deliberations on further biennialization, triennialization, clustering

or elimination of items. That proactive approach aligns with our commitment to enhancing the efficiency of the Assembly.

Fourthly, we want to emphasize the importance of resolution 76/262, which provides a standing mandate for a General Assembly debate within 10 days of the casting of a veto in the Security Council, in order to ensure accountability within the United Nations system. As we underscore the importance of the Assembly's role in matters related to international peace and security, we support an emphasis on fostering interaction between the Assembly and the Council. We call on the Council to present a more thorough, substantive and analytical report of its activities to the Assembly. That should include additional details on the draft resolutions that the Council failed to adopt. We are deeply frustrated by the failure of the Security Council to stop the atrocities in Gaza. As a result of that failure, the General Assembly adopted the landmark resolution ES-10/21 calling for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities. My delegation was a sponsor of the resolution, and we want to see its full implementation as a matter of priority.

Fifthly, Bangladesh strongly advocates for gender parity and geographic balance in intergovernmental processes. Despite the notable strides that have been made in advancing gender equality, there is a pressing need for additional progress, particularly in line with today's realities. We share the view of many other delegations that the Security Council should consider proposing more than one candidate for Secretary-General to the General Assembly. We emphasize the need to actively support the nomination of women candidates for key roles such as the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and other executive positions. We see merit in the proposal for the appointment terms of the Secretary-General to be revised to a single non-renewable term.

Finally, we recognize the vital role of information and communication technologies in the work of the United Nations, and we stress the importance of their proper use so as to ensure the full and equal participation of all Member States. We welcome the proposed briefing on the use of information and communications technologies in the work of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, as outlined in resolution 77/335, with a view to ensuring better preparedness in exceptional circumstances.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm our commitment to actively participating in the revitalization process. We believe that those collective efforts will contribute to a more effective, transparent and responsive Assembly that is better equipped to address the pressing challenges of our time.

Mr. Mathur (India): I thank the President for convening today's meeting on an important issue. I would like to register my delegation's appreciation of the Permanent Representatives of Australia and El Salvador for their leadership as the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. My delegation would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Saint Lucia and Romania on their appointment as the new co-Chairs during the seventy-eighth session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.32), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The primacy and legitimacy of the General Assembly flows from the inclusive nature of its membership and the principle of the sovereign equality of all its constituents. In these turbulent times, the universal character of the Assembly and the moral weight of its decisions and opinions cannot be overemphasized. However, as the President of the General Assembly pointed out when he opened this debate last week:

“It is a time when questions about the relevance of the United Nations itself, and therefore about its very existence, are echoing louder.” (A/78/PV.32, p.1),

There is a growing perception that the General Assembly has gradually lost touch with its foundational responsibilities and has become overwhelmed with processes. Moreover, the attempts to discuss thematic issues in the Security Council have also undermined the role and authority of the Assembly. My delegation would therefore like to reiterate that India has consistently held the view that the Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is respected both in letter and spirit. We must admit that some of the blame lies with the Assembly and its Member States for allowing its relevance to be diluted, despite its status as the collective voice of all nations. The General Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality

of the United Nations in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. That was the role intended for the Assembly by Article X of the Charter of the United Nations, which is that it should discuss any questions or matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter — that is, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat, except when the provisions in Article XII apply.

For a revitalized General Assembly that is in tune with the challenges of our times, we need to draw inspiration from the high standards that the Assembly set for itself right at the beginning of its journey. Over time, there have been several occasions when the Assembly has led from the front while setting a global agenda. The 2015 United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development, followed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the recent high-level meeting on universal health coverage, are just a couple of examples of how the Assembly can set the global agenda and galvanize the global community in solving common problems and challenges. We hope and expect to see a similar outcome with regard to the ongoing deliberations on the Summit of the Future to be held next year.

We also hope the various streams of the process for *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) will be deliberated on in an inclusive manner and that decisions will be taken by consensus in order to ensure its effective implementation. To that end, we call for more effective working methods and better and more inclusive engagement among Member States during the negotiation processes in the General Assembly.

While we have made some progress in revitalizing the Assembly, there is still a long way to go. Taking a leaf out of one of the chapters of the Summit of the Future deliberations, aptly titled “Transforming global governance”, we would be remiss if we did not mention that a key tenet of that transformation must be the revitalization of the Assembly. India believes that multilateralism, rebalancing, fair globalization and reformed multilateralism cannot be kept in abeyance for long. Nevertheless, as we speak, we are seeing the United Nations apparatus, especially the Security Council, crumbling under the weight of twenty-first-century geopolitical realities. As a result, that has turned the tide somewhat towards the Assembly, giving us more face

time and traction, where the voice of the global South is a formidable force, unlike that of the Council. In that context, we also need a new orientation for a reformed multilateralism, which was one of the key priorities during India's presidency of the Council in December 2022. We need an all-encompassing, comprehensive reform process that addresses the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council, the question of the veto, the relationship between the Assembly and the Council and, indeed, an improvement in working methods.

Against the backdrop of the prevailing global scenario, the call for reformed multilateralism enjoys considerable support among Member States, as we heard from global leaders during the recently concluded high-level week. It does so because of the widespread recognition that the current architecture is anachronistic and in fact ineffective. It is also perceived as deeply unfair, denying entire continents and regions a voice in a forum that deliberates on their future.

India will continue to be a constructive and active participant in any process that enables serious negotiations on such critical matters to proceed sincerely. They must not be blocked by procedural tactics. Naysayers cannot be allowed to hold the intergovernmental negotiation process hostage in perpetuity. It is of paramount importance to ensure that the negotiation process that started 14 years ago delivers concrete outcomes through a text-based process within a fixed time frame.

Finally, I want to reassure the President that he can count on my delegation's positive support and participation in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Khayarin (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important and open discussion. I appreciate the efforts of the former Permanent Representative of Australia and the Permanent Representative of El Salvador in chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the two previous sessions, and we welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Romania and Saint Lucia as the Ad Hoc Working Group's new co-Chairs. We are confident that they will be successful in their mission.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of our sister nation of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78 PV.32).

The revitalization of the General Assembly, including regarding the implementation of United Nations resolutions, is an important factor in ensuring the Organization's effectiveness and credibility and making it more responsive to current and future challenges, in addition to promoting global governance efforts and the rule of law, strengthening multilateralism, maintaining international peace and security and realizing the common priorities and expectations of our peoples.

Today's meeting is being held at a time when regional and international conditions are extremely delicate and significant, particularly where international peace and security are concerned. We are seeing worsening international conflicts, in particular the Israeli escalation and attacks in the Gaza Strip, which have led to the worst humanitarian catastrophe in the world, in addition to threatening regional and international peace and security. That situation requires urgent international action. In that regard, the State of Qatar is of the view that the General Assembly should play a leading role in stopping the war and destruction in the Strip on the basis of the powers entrusted to it under the Charter of the United Nations. We emphasize in that context the need to implement the relevant resolutions on the legitimate rights of our brother people of Palestine that call for their protection and for the creation of an independent Palestinian State along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the concept of a two-State solution.

We also stress the need to implement resolution ES-10/21, entitled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session on 27 October, which calls for an immediate and lasting humanitarian truce. The resolution also calls on the parties to protect civilians and civilian objects and ensure the provision of supplies and humanitarian services for civilians. It urges for the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives that can guarantee the delivery of humanitarian aid. The eyes of the world now turn to the General Assembly, which must assume its role in accordance with Article X of the Charter, which gives it broad powers to promote the role of the United Nations and address current international challenges. That is particularly pertinent in the light of the Security Council's inability to fulfil its responsibilities regarding the maintenance of international peace and security.

It will be essential to adopt a more comprehensive approach to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly that must be consistent with the efforts to reform the United Nations generally. In that regard, we stress the need to implement the Assembly's resolutions relevant to its revitalization, in addition to the recommendations in the most recent report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/77/942). In that context, and in view of the pivotal role undertaken by the Office of the President of the General Assembly, Qatar believes we should provide all the material and human resources needed to enable the President and his Office to adequately fulfil their obligations and strengthen the work of the General Assembly. We note in that regard the importance of increasing the financial resources of the Office of the President from the regular budget while providing it with sufficient personnel. In that context, we are committed to supporting the Office of the President of the General Assembly and providing it with all the means necessary for it to implement its mandate. We should ensure the annual provision of financial support to the Office of the President through the Trust Fund created for the purpose, in addition to providing its office with national civil servants. The State of Qatar reiterates its commitment to continue providing such assistance to the Office of the President based on the resolutions of the General Assembly and the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Concerning the revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the United Nations, we once again underscore that the organs of the United Nations should be strengthened and should complement one another in accordance with the Charter. In that regard, it is necessary to continue to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly, which is the world's parliament. It is also essential to promote interaction between the Assembly and the relevant international and regional organizations, as well as with civil society, in order to achieve the objectives and purposes of the Charter. In line with that vision, it is important to implement the Charter's provisions in a balanced manner so as not to marginalize the role of the Assembly or monopolize the powers it is guaranteed under the Charter. It will be important to enhance and revitalize its work in order to maintain international peace and security.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar continues to work to contribute effectively to efforts and initiatives to revitalize the work of the General Assembly and reform the United Nations while fostering multilateral

work aimed at achieving the objectives and purposes of the Charter along with the mission and goals of the United Nations.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina would like to acknowledge the excellent work by Ambassadors Egriselda González López, of El Salvador, and Mitchell Fifield, of Australia, in leading the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. At the same time, we want to congratulate Ambassadors Menissa Rambally and Cornel Feruță, the Permanent Representatives of Saint Lucia and Romania, on their appointment as the new co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Just a few days ago (see A/ES-10/PV.40 and A/ES-10/PV.41), we in the General Assembly addressed matters pertaining to international peace and security in the face of a new deadlock in the Security Council. During the three most recent crises — in Palestine in 2021, in Ukraine since February 2022 and now the situation in the Gaza Strip— the Assembly has been the only organ able to make headway in discussing and adopting resolutions.

Time and again, the facts demonstrate that the General Assembly is not merely the main deliberative body of the system but the heart of the system, in which every country has equal, sovereign and legal representation, producing ever-new outcomes and adapting to ever-changing and growing demands. The Assembly is the sounding board for the world agenda, and the Charter of the United Nations imposes few limitations on it. Since its creation in 1945, we have seen how it has developed and how it has become the perfect forum in which humankind can give voice to its needs, emergencies and challenges. Its agenda represents the world's ambition to overcome problems, conflicts and disputes, and the revitalization process must represent the very same thing — a comprehensive and extremely ambitious project, aimed not only at the General Assembly's revitalization but its empowerment. It cannot be anything less than that because the same action taken over the past decades has paved the way for the reforms and the revitalization that we must carry out.

We therefore strongly support the deliberations that culminated in the adoption of resolution 77/335, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and the increasingly important framework within which we must work to that end. We underscore the commitment

to strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly. If we want a dynamic Assembly, the Office must have the commensurate human and financial resources so that the Assembly can carry out its mandates. We believe it is important that debates should be more substantive and interactive in both the Assembly and its Main Committees. Addressing and resolving that issue can no longer be deferred. We need to ensure that deliberations are more dynamic, and we already have the technological means to make that possible. It is essential to make that effort. Similarly, as the Ad Hoc Working Group has acknowledged, we must make it clear that we promote and support proposals addressing gender issues in the work of the Assembly. However, we also have to reiterate that the United Nations has yet to elect a female Secretary-General and that there have been only four female Presidents of the General Assembly for its 78 sessions. We join other States in calling for nominations of qualified women so that in the next selection and appointment process we can select our first female Secretary-General. At the same time, we hope to see women hold the Office of the President of the General Assembly with greater frequency.

Nobody can say that the failures attributed to the United Nations have their source in the failure of the General Assembly. On the contrary, in this organ the United Nations has seen the realization of some of its most resounding successes. In the General Assembly, all States Members have had the possibility to discuss and see to fruition proposals that have become treaties and international regimes that have defused conflicts, advanced international law, addressed the cause of inequality and striven to meet the global challenges we face on a daily basis. We therefore should not be shy in recommending proposals and tools to the Assembly so that it can be duly revitalized and indeed expand its horizons, which we believe in and which we must broaden. We are convinced that the future of the Organization lies in the success of this body, and we stand ready to work with diligence and persistence to that end, which we know is possible.

Mrs. Gilmutdinova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the convening of today's General Assembly meeting on the implementation of United Nations resolutions and the revitalization of the work of the Assembly. We would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Romania and Saint Lucia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and wish them every success. We

note the professionalism demonstrated by the previous co-Chairs, the Permanent Representative of El Salvador and the former Permanent Representative of Australia, during the Assembly's seventy-seventh session. Despite time constraints, they were able to duly conduct all the planned discussions while bridging divergent positions and bringing the negotiations to a logical conclusion, culminating in the adoption of a comprehensive resolution (resolution 77/335).

At the same time, the negotiations showed once again that in every case we can succeed in revitalizing the General Assembly only when the process is supported by an overall consensus. The results of the forthcoming subsequent rounds will also depend on the willingness of States to hear and listen to one another. The Russian delegation has continued to participate constructively in the discussions on the agenda item of the revitalization of the General Assembly. It has been our consistent view that our efforts should not be politicized and should be aimed primarily at increasing the effectiveness of the Assembly. The key to achieving that goal is to further fine-tune the working methods and streamline the Assembly's still overburdened agenda.

In that regard, we believe it would be expedient to biennialize and triennialize certain items on the Assembly's agenda and eliminate those that are no longer relevant. The process should be carefully thought out. We believe firmly that biennializing the consideration of revitalization resolutions is enabling us to implement their provisions and analyse their effects more effectively. We have consistently supported initiatives to streamline the high-level week within the framework of the general debate. At the same time, we should continue to take into account the interests of all Member States. The revitalization process should not mean reallocating to the Assembly the powers of other United Nations organs established by the Charter of the United Nations, including the Security Council. We therefore continue to urge for the strict implementation of the relevant provisions of the Charter regarding the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The discussion during the seventy-seventh session, and the subsequent negotiations on the topic within the framework of the negotiation of the resolution on the revitalization of the General Assembly, demonstrated some Member States' heightened attention to increasing the transparency and "democratic nature" of the process for the selection and election of the Secretary-General. For our part, we are ready to continue working with our

colleagues to optimize the current process. At the same time, we believe that such ideas require careful study, above all in terms of ensuring their strict compliance with the Charter, according to which the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. We should also not forget that the primary goal is to elect the most deserving candidate to the post of Secretary-General. Attempts to excessively codify the process could have undesirable results.

The issue of the implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly is also extremely important to us. We regret that certain States attempt to use double standards when considering draft resolutions on various issues, and that as soon as the content of a draft resolution does not align with their interests, they seek to block it in every possible way on various pretexts. We believe that most of the decisions taken in this Hall aimed at improving various aspects of people's lives must and will certainly be implemented, because that is in our common interest. At the same time, we should not expect decisions that divide the General Assembly and are designed to obtain short-term, opportunistic benefits to be implemented. Once again, we wish every success to the co-Chairs of the Working Group and stand ready to work closely with them.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): It is said that we need a stronger United Nations in order to build a resilient world. The work of making the Organization efficient, effective and accountable must therefore continue, together with efforts to reform the Security Council, revitalize the General Assembly and strengthen the Economic and Social Council. Regular consultations with Member States, both formal and informal, must continue, as should regular interaction with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General.

It must be appreciated that the revitalization of the General Assembly is a political process, and its principal objective should be to strengthen the role of the General Assembly as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. In addition, my delegation believes that the attempts to undermine the role played by the Assembly through perceived encroachment must be neutralized. The revitalization efforts within the Organization can therefore be focused on several principal areas, and I would like to touch on a few of them.

First, strengthening the role of the General Assembly is vital. Since it is the main deliberative body of the United Nations, revitalization efforts must focus on enhancing its decision-making power, expanding its representation of Member States and promoting transparency and accountability.

Secondly, reform of the Security Council is of course the buzz word around the topic of revitalization, particularly in today's context. As we know, the Council plays a vital role in maintaining international peace and security, and it cannot be seen to abdicate that obligation. We should therefore direct our revitalization efforts towards making it more representative, inclusive and effective in addressing current global challenges.

A third element is enhancing the effectiveness of the Secretariat, which as we know is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day work of the United Nations. Revitalization efforts here can focus on streamlining and improving the Secretariat's functioning, including in recruitment, decision-making processes and budgetary practices.

Fourthly, strengthening the coordination and cooperation among United Nations agencies is equally important. As we know, the United Nations system includes a wide range of specialized agencies, programmes and funds. Revitalization efforts in this area should concentrate on enhancing the coordination and cooperation among those entities in order to maximize their collective impact and avoid duplication of effort.

Fifthly, promoting the engagement of civil society and non-State actors, although not altogether popular, must be given greater consideration, considering the various ongoing world events and the current global security instability. In that regard, revitalization should aim to increase the participation and involvement of civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and other non-State actors in the work of the United Nations, which can be achieved through their greater inclusion in decision-making processes and consultations.

My delegation is of the considered view that when it comes to revitalization, we can also consider strengthening peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping is a critical function of the United Nations, so revitalization efforts should focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, including through the provision of better training and equipment and through coordination and enhanced partnerships with regional organizations.

Addressing the financial sustainability of the United Nations is another important area, and crucial to its operations. Our revitalization efforts in that regard should involve exploring innovative funding mechanisms, improving budget allocations and encouraging the timely and full payment of member contributions. And when discussing matters of finance, we should not forget the vital need to enhance the budgetary provisions for the office of the President of the General Assembly from the regular budget. I would respectfully request that the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions give that aspect earnest consideration as a matter of priority.

Prioritizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is no less important. The SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate change. Revitalization in this area should therefore emphasize their integration into the work of the United Nations. And we must also strengthen the Human Rights Council, which plays a vital role in promoting and protecting human rights globally, so revitalization should concentrate on enhancing its effectiveness. With regard to improving communication and outreach, we should enhance the communication strategies of the United Nations so as to increase public awareness and understanding of its work.

It is important to note that revitalization efforts should be undertaken through inclusive and consultative processes, involving Member States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. While reaffirming resolutions 73/341, of 12 September 2019, and 74/303, of 4 September 2020, and all other previous resolutions adopted by consensus related to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, my delegation would like to remind the Assembly of its role and authority and of the importance of strict respect for the Charter-based prerogatives and division of work among the principal organs of the United Nations. During the seventieth and seventy-first sessions, the Assembly adopted landmark resolutions (resolution 70/305 and resolution 71/323) on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which, among other things, established an oath of office and a code of conduct for the Presidents of the General Assembly and provided for informal interactive dialogues with candidates for the position.

I would like to very briefly touch on the circumstances of smaller jurisdictions. It has been difficult to attend all the high-level and side events organized in parallel with the general debate. As other delegations have said

time and again, we therefore suggest that side events organized in parallel to the general debate of the General Assembly be kept to a minimum. We remain hopeful that this aspect will be prioritized in the future.

Another aspect that I thought we should focus on is the opportunity to make multiple statements prior to voting on or adopting a draft resolution. Members are aware that they are entitled to make a general statement on the draft resolution being discussed, followed by explanations of vote both before and after the voting, and, finally, to speaking twice in right of reply. That takes up large amounts of time, leading to the extension of the time frames allocated to a number of the Main Committees and consequent increased costs and shortages of support services such as interpreters and related back-up staff. We would also like to see greater consultation between the Secretariat and Member States in structuring the programmes of work, particularly those of an informal nature.

Let us remember that the first three words of the Charter of the United Nations are “We the peoples”. We must therefore act decisively to bring the United Nations closer to the peoples of the world, while also recognizing cultural diversity. We must facilitate those interactions and make the United Nations a forum for all. We remain hopeful, and we have reason to believe that the working methods of the Assembly can be made more meaningful under its President’s leadership in times to come through the work of revitalization.

Before I conclude, I would be remiss in my duty if I did not to thank or congratulate Ambassadors Mitch Fifield and Egriselda González López, the former co-Chairs, for their commitment to revitalization, as well as Ambassadors Cornel Feruță of Romania and Menissa Rambally of Saint Lucia, who have succeeded them in that task with great enthusiasm. We assure them of Sri Lanka’s unstinting cooperation in that regard.

Finally, I would like to conclude by highlighting the need to maintain the transparency, democracy and inclusivity of all Member States in this endeavour, which will be vital to realizing the targets envisioned under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Prytula (Ukraine): Ukraine fully shares the vision outlined in the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union on the issues under consideration today (see A/78/PV.32). Ukraine aligns itself with that statement, and in my national capacity I would like to highlight two points that we consider important.

First, with regard to strengthening the authority of the General Assembly, we are convinced that as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the Organization, the Assembly is obliged by the Charter of the United Nations to discuss any questions related to the maintenance of international peace and security. At the beginning of the current session, we observed an unprecedented attempt to undermine the Assembly's special authority and the credibility of the General Committee. That occurred through a vote initiated by the Russian Federation on 6 September challenging the General Assembly's decision to include the item "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on its annual agenda. We deplore the Russian delegation's consistently disrespectful attitude to Member States and the General Assembly. Its actions are aimed at weakening the Assembly's authority in addressing issues crucial to Member States. We are profoundly grateful to all the delegations that supported the positive decision. It is crucial to counter unconstructive, politically motivated actions that could harm the Assembly's authority. Given Russia's ongoing full-scale invasion of Ukraine, retaining that item on the agenda is of paramount importance. It is vital to maintain the Assembly's vigilant attention to the issue of addressing Russia's heinous acts of terror and reprisals against the civilian population in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. This year's debate on the item has garnered substantial interest from Member States, highlighting its significance.

While all criminals seek to conceal their actions—and Russia's actions are no exception—it is our collective duty to thwart such efforts and instead closely monitor and demand accountability for all violations of international law and the Charter. I therefore urge delegations to support the draft resolution entitled "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol," to be considered in the Third Committee tomorrow. The draft resolution serves as a practical tool for the United Nations, its Secretariat and the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine to continue monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Secondly, with regard to the implementation of United Nations resolutions, the scope of the implementation of resolutions remains limited by the degree to which countries are willing to comply with them. That selective approach to implementation undermines the ability of the United Nations to make a real difference in various

situations on the ground. An egregious example of that is Russia's complete disregard for the 18 General Assembly resolutions adopted since 2014 in response to its aggression against Ukraine. In occupying the Soviet Union's seat on the Security Council, Russia has paralysed that key organ, which is primarily responsible for maintaining peace and security, with respect to Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine. An eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly was convened in response to the situation, owing to Russia's misuse of the veto during a vote on a draft resolution condemning its aggression and calling for an end to the use of force in its full-scale invasion of Ukraine (S/2022/155). Since then, the General Assembly has adopted six resolutions by an overwhelming majority of Member States that send a strong and clear message to the aggressor State that the Assembly is ready to defend its core principles and values. We are grateful to all the delegations that supported those vital resolutions. Nevertheless, the world continues to witness brutal violations of the purposes and principles of the Charter, and the foreign military aggression against Ukraine and the temporary occupation of parts of its territory persist.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that our joint work aimed at the revitalization of the General Assembly has already brought tangible results. However, there is ample room for improvement in order to make the Assembly and its decisions effective and thereby enhance the legacy of the Organization.

Mr. Adelman (United States of America): The United States joins others in congratulating the Permanent Representatives of Saint Lucia and Romania on their appointment as co-Chairs for the seventy-eighth session. We look forward to their direction and leadership on this critical item.

The United States would like to highlight three successes from resolution 77/335, adopted in September, on the revitalization of the General Assembly. First, we made significant progress on accessibility, including establishing a focal point for reasonable accommodation requests, an assessment of digital accessibility and the further integration of accessibility considerations into the work of revitalization.

Secondly, we reinforced the importance of continuing to push for gender equality in appointments and leadership. However, my delegation would like to reiterate a point that many speakers before us have made, which is that only four of the 78 Presidents of the General Assembly have been women, and that is unacceptable.

Finally, we worked to streamline the agenda of the General Assembly, reduce overlap and minimize the overall number of high-level, thematic and commemorative meetings. While those achievements should be commended, we must acknowledge that substantial progress is still needed. The United States will advocate for those priorities as our collective efforts continue. Regarding the point on streamlining, we should acknowledge that we are now in our sixth hour and second day of this debate. If we do not insist on further minimizing meetings, limiting speakers' time for statements and ensuring a dedicated focus on the issues being discussed, we fear that the Assembly will struggle in conducting its essential work. Let us keep streamlining.

Mr. Feruță (Romania): I have the privilege to speak on behalf of Ambassador Menissa Rambally, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia and myself, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly for the seventy-eighth session. We very much appreciate the decision of the President of the General Assembly entrusting us with that honour, and we of course look forward to the process during the seventy-eighth session. We listened very carefully to the comments, proposals, ideas and reflections shared last week and today. Of course, we have been going through a number of them, which is why I think this meeting is very important to get a sense of the expectations and ambitions of Member States, as well as the priorities. For the conduct of the process, this will be very helpful in setting the level of ambition for the period to come, while being mindful of the human, logistic and financial constraints that many Member States face.

We would also very much like to thank the Permanent Representatives of El Salvador and Australia — Mrs. Egriselda Aracely González López and Mr. Mitch Fifield — for the important work they did over the previous session. We heard that important work echoed in many of the statements made by Member States throughout this debate. We welcome the tremendous work and very constructive proposals agreed in previous resolutions, such as enhancing transparency and accountability in the selection processes, promoting gender equality, a multilingual approach and improving accessibility for persons with disabilities.

I would like to highlight a few points that would merit further reflection.

The processes and procedures of the General Assembly must continue to be streamlined and adapted. We heard that point repeatedly, as the workload increased significantly over the past years due to a proliferation of topics on the agenda and the growing number of annual technical rollovers. We need to avoid working in silos on cross-cutting issues such as human rights. It is important to focus on thematic aspects from different committees' angles — for example, on issues such as health and digital matters. We also clearly heard calls to avoid cluttering high-level week during the General Assembly's meetings in September, while allowing for appropriate attendance and time for debates. And we all largely recognize the need to improve time management for general debates in order to allow for an inclusive process.

As I said, together with my co-Chair, Ambassador Rambally, we listened very carefully to members' reflections and suggestions. We will come up with a structured road map that will encompass formal and informal exchanges in the weeks and months ahead. I would like to conclude by reassuring all members of our availability and openness for discussions on how to render the General Assembly and our decision-making process more efficient and effective and attuned to concrete needs and expectations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

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

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Shapir Ben Naftaly (Israel): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply with regard to comments made in the Hall in relation to the situation in Gaza. Out of consideration for your time, Sir, and that of the representatives in the Hall, I would like to refer to our comments made in a right of reply on a previous item earlier in today's meeting.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 119 and 120.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.