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Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 121

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

The President: As members are all aware, the General Assembly added the question of equitable representation in the Security Council to its agenda way back in 1979. Since then, not much has changed in re-adapting the institution to better reflect current realities. It is therefore not at all surprising that over the past years, there has been steady growth in the calls for the long-overdue reform, with such calls, of late, reaching something of a crescendo. In recent weeks, those calls have been forcefully articulated by the numerous groups and individual Member States with whom I have met, advocating for meaningful progress, despite the variable positions that we all know. Never before has this issue been more pressing, both contextually and practically.

While we ponder the way forward, let us also consider the task before us. Violence and war continue to spread in regions across the world, while the United Nations seems paralysed due largely to divisions in the Security Council. While some of today's challenges could not have been envisioned eight decades ago, those that we did foresee are blazing onto the geopolitical landscape with new and deeply worrying ferocity. Amid this sea change, the Council is dangerously falling short of its mandate as the primary custodian for the maintenance

of international peace and security. Absent structural reform, its performance and legitimacy will inevitably continue to suffer, and so too will the credibility and relevance of the United Nations itself. Without public allegiance and support, the institutional strength of the United Nations will be further weakened, leading inevitably to its termination. May I caution this house that stasis can be as formidable a foe as chaos. We cannot usefully perpetuate positions that — while familiar — fail to bring us closer together.

I approach the question of Council reform also within the context of wider United Nations reform — a steadfast determination to help to overcome divisions. Early in the session, I re-appointed co-Chairs to continue the important intergovernmental negotiation process on this issue. I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Alexander Marschik, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria, and His Excellency Mr. Tareq Albanai, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, for their acquiescence in bearing this weighty responsibility. I trust that Member States will continue to extend their full support as the co-Chairs steer these critical deliberations and work to build on the landmark progress made last session.

The agreement to webcast intergovernmental negotiation meetings and to create a repository of our decisions and proposals on a dedicated United Nations website were meaningful steps in the right direction. They are worthy of applause. Given the stakes, we will, however, need fresh, innovative thinking on reform pathways. One of the ways we can repair trust — first among ourselves in this cocoon and, crucially, with

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our 8 billion constituents who live beyond it — is to infuse our deliberations with the spirit of solidarity and conciliation needed to meet this moment and, thereby, to nullify the ever-present disposition towards dissention and discord.

Certainly, one occasion not to be missed is the Summit of the Future in September 2024. In preparation for that ground-breaking event, we must work purposively to ensure that world leaders are provided with the opportunity to advance key debates and to bring multilateral institutions and frameworks into alignment with the dictates and circumstances of today's world. I therefore urge Member States to grasp this opportunity to break through ingrained positions, and to promote Security Council reform through practical steps that support effectiveness and, moreover, represent the full diversity of geographies.

At the end of the day, the fate of Security Council reform is in the hands of the Assembly. The General Assembly is the only United Nations body with a mandate to seek an appropriate and worthy response to this question that has staunchly defied our efforts for decades. With the eyes of the world fixated upon us even more constantly now, a posture of procrastination will only feed perceptions that our structures are antiquated and irrelevant and, therefore, structurally incapable of delivering outcomes that protect and/or bolster international peace and security. In the final analysis, the decision belongs to Member States to determine how to use these intergovernmental negotiations to make real progress if, in fact, there is a real appetite for substantive progress.

I assure and reassure members that the Assembly can count on me as its President to provide full support to the co-Chairs and to offer an open door to all to help facilitate dialogue in an impartial, inclusive and trustworthy manner. Peace demands commitment from all of us. Imbued with the requisite will, I am confident that together we can move the dial on our efforts to create a Security Council that is more representative of, and better equipped to effectively serve, the modern age.

Ms. Miguel (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the L.69 group, a diverse, pro-reform group of cross-regional developing countries united by a common desire for reform of the Security Council that ensures its credibility, representativeness, transparency, democracy and effectiveness.

We begin by congratulating Kuwait and Austria on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. We remain appreciative of all efforts made during the last session to steer our work and particularly welcome the working method advancements that have made it easier for capacity-constrained Permanent Missions to better follow the discussions. We trust that strides towards tangible progress on substantive issues will also be achieved this session and that the co-Chairs will remain responsive to the calls made by the intergovernmental negotiations, specifically when such calls emanate from an overwhelming majority of the negotiating groups and members. The L.69 group will continue to support every endeavour that brings us closer to comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Seventy-eight years after the emergence of this multilateral institution, the current global context features a more interconnected world that continues to be assailed by conflicts with far-reaching consequences. Tasked with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has too often found itself paralysed by the geopolitical realities of today, which have evolved far beyond the realm of 1945. That it is no longer fit for purpose is now a stark reality, and the international community's frustration and disillusionment with the Council is both justified and palpable. The overrepresentation of Western countries in the Council neither reflects the geopolitically diverse composition of the United Nations nor the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. The Council's current composition has relegated the global South, along with its perspectives and voices, to the margins of discussions on issues that impact them directly. To preserve the current configuration is to deliberately perpetuate the exclusion of the majority of the United Nations membership from decisions and deliberations on issues that will most drastically affect them. In that context, reform of the Security Council is not only urgent but is a precondition to international peace, stability and security, and to an effective multilateral order.

As we look ahead to the next session of the intergovernmental negotiations, it is important that we approach it with a clear intention for progress. The L.69 group's positions on the five clusters are unambiguous and well established, along with the positions of other groups and delegations. Therefore, the most pressing issue is to determine where we go from here. How do

we transform these positions into something actionable that would enable us to make concrete progress? We must first ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the framework within which we aim to make this progress. To that end, we underscore once again that our current modalities are not only ineffective but counterproductive. We fail to understand what is to be expected from speaking at each other instead of with each other. We have repeatedly stated that the intergovernmental negotiations should not be treated differently from any other process at the United Nations, which utilizes a text upon which the process of negotiations facilitates compromise that engenders an acceptable outcome. That is the approach employed in spite of deep discord and divergencies at the outset. As such, there is no reason why the intergovernmental negotiations should be regarded as an aberration. If Security Council reform is really our genuine aim, then it is unfathomable that Member States would prefer to rely on an approach that has proven ineffective in yielding results for more than a decade.

Within that context, allow me to reiterate the L.69's proposals for the next steps. The well-established positions of all groups and delegations must be outlined and accurately captured in a streamlined manner. We recall the concern that was expressed by many members during the last session over the incorrect reflection of some of the positions in the co-Chairs' revised elements paper. To address those concerns and safeguard accuracy, we continue to call for the tried and tested use of attribution, even on a voluntary basis. While we have taken note that a small number of delegations within the intergovernmental negotiations have expressed concern over such an approach, we emphasize that the purpose of this initiative is to not only bring the intergovernmental negotiations in line with standard United Nations practices but also clarify and enhance our broad understanding of the current state of play, determine where the convergences exist, ascertain the divergences that necessitate more in-depth consultations and clearly identify where there is scope to bridge divides and achieve real progress in the next session.

In that regard, we recall that this is a Member-State-driven process, guided by a threshold that requires not consensus but rather the widest possible political acceptance. Committing our attributed positions to paper is the tried and tested way to ascertain and track where we are on that score. We must also recognize

that delaying this process threatens the credibility of this Organization, undermines international peace and security and has a real impact on the lives of millions, particularly those living in conflict-affected areas. That notwithstanding, the L.69 group remains open to hearing from delegations that reject this approach on alternative avenues that could be considered.

In conclusion, we urge Member States to recommit themselves to working constructively towards urgent reform of the Security Council in line with the calls made by an overwhelming number of leaders at the General Assembly high-level debate this year. There is no doubt among the international community that reform is an imperative. But we must demonstrate the requisite will to make it a reality. That is a task that goes to the heart of credibility, legitimacy and the relevance of the United Nations, lest there emerge an alternative platform that might prove more capable in tackling and addressing the exigencies of the twenty-first century.

In his recent world message in advance of the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis writes that the old diplomacy continues to show its importance and necessity. Still, it has not succeeded in generating a model of multilateral diplomacy capable of responding to the new configuration of the world. Our world, the Holy See emphasizes, has become so multipolar and at the same time so complex that a different framework for effective cooperation is required.

The L.69 group remains open to real solutions that can help us to achieve a much-needed reform of the Security Council and will continue to engage constructively during the next session. Our sole purpose in this process is the construction of a Security Council that is fit for purpose. We trust in the membership of the United Nations to make that a reality.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

I would like to communicate the Arab Group's support for your efforts, Mr. President, in steering the current session of the General Assembly, particularly in the context of the agenda item on reforming and expanding the Security Council. That is an important issue for all Member States, including the Arab Group.

I would also like to congratulate Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations, and Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Austria to the United Nations, who co-chair the intergovernmental negotiations during this session. I pay tribute to and appreciate the efforts they made in chairing the negotiations during the previous session, in particular with regard to the procedural measures, which are important to promoting transparency and the comprehensive nature of the negotiation process. I wish them every success during this session.

The Arab Group would like in particular to express its appreciation for the important developments made in the intergovernmental negotiations during the previous session, including the direct broadcast of the first part of the intergovernmental negotiations and the launching of the website, which is an important repository for maintaining a register of the broadcast recordings, decisions and other documents on the negotiating process.

The world has witnessed over previous years the Security Council's inability to assume its responsibility with regard to maintaining international peace and security, particularly with regard to putting an end to the war and aggression against Gaza and protecting the Palestinian people in all the occupied Palestinian territories. During this decisive stage in the history of the United Nations, and with the multiple crises that continue to spread in the world, there is an urgent and clear need today for real and comprehensive reform, including a reform of the United Nations organs, in particular the Security Council, that would allow it to embody the purposes and principles of this Organization in line with its Charter.

The question of Security Council reform and equitable representation in its membership is one of the fundamental pillars of the comprehensive United Nations reform process. In the light of the preparatory work now under way for the Summit of the Future in 2024, we must be even more determined to step up our efforts to achieve a real and global reform of the Security Council, which is the body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, in line with the United Nations Charter. The Security Council will be more able and effective in facing current challenges and emerging threats and will guarantee the prevention of conflicts in a more representative, transparent, neutral and credible context. In that regard, the Arab Group reiterates that

the intergovernmental negotiations in the context of the General Assembly are the only forum in which to reach an agreement on the enlargement and reform of the Security Council, in line with decision 62/557, which was adopted by consensus and established the basis for the negotiation process.

The Arab Group also stresses the link among the five principal clusters in the negotiations and the joint issues that we need to manage in order to maintain that link and ensure a global reform of the Security Council. As we stressed earlier, when the Council's enlargement takes place, the position of the Member States of the Arab Group on the Council's reform process requires Arab representation in the permanent category with full authorities. There should also be a fair representation of Arab countries in the non-permanent category in an enlarged Council.

We are encountering multiple challenges regarding the reform of the Security Council, in particular the right to the veto. The use of the veto in an arbitrary manner has undermined in many situations the credibility of the decision-making process in the Security Council. Furthermore, the veto has led in certain cases to the inability of the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and take the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. It is regrettable that the majority of situations in which the veto has been used, especially during the last three decades, have been issues related to the Arab region. Moreover, the principal and broader goal of Security Council reform and the enlargement of its membership are to ensure that all geographical and regional groups are represented in a fair and adequate manner in the membership of an enlarged Security Council.

In that context, I would like to stress that the Arab Group, in the light of its political, cultural and heritage specificities, deserves, as a Group, permanent and adequate representation in an enlarged Security Council. The Arab Group represents more than 400 million people and 22 States. That constitutes 12 per cent of the United Nations Member States. Furthermore, much of the work of the Security Council and issues on its agenda deal with the Arab region and current events taking place in the region, in particular the events in the Gaza Strip over recent weeks, where we have seen the brutal Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians. That clearly shows the crucial importance of reforming the Security Council and the permanent Arab representation within it, as the resolutions adopted by

the Council have an impact on the security and peace of the Arab region. Consequently, there is a need to enable the Arab Group, represented by the Arab member in the Council, to participate in making Council decisions that affect the security and stability of the Arab region and the world.

Turning to improving and developing the working and procedural methods of the Security Council, it is necessary to ensure greater effectiveness and transparency in its work, including by adopting permanent rules of procedure rather than the provisional rules of procedure, which have been in place for many decades. We should consider increasing the number of Security Council meetings open to all Member States while taking into account the importance of informal consultations and allowing the concerned States to take part in matters discussed by the Council. Furthermore, draft resolutions and statements considered by the Council must be discussed with the concerned States.

The Arab Group would also stress the importance of the participation of the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations. We should take into account their views during Security Council discussions of the issues on the agenda of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Arab Group calls on subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and its committees to provide adequate information on their activities to the Member States. It is vital that the Security Council be strictly committed to respecting the limits of its mandate in line with the United Nations Charter.

The Arab Group reiterates its position in support of maintaining coherence in the general membership and not undermining the credibility of intergovernmental negotiations by imposing non-consensus-based measures or deadlines. That could obstruct a comprehensive and genuine solution to the reform process. In that context, I would like to stress that every document published during the negotiating process must accurately reflect the position of all States and Groups, including the position of the Arab Group. That will ensure that the positions and proposals being made by States are at the basis of the negotiations, in conformity with decision 62/557, and preserve the principle of ownership by the Member States of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The Arab Group welcomes the progress that has been achieved during the previous sessions with regard to defining the common elements of States and positions, as well as defining the divergences

that require further discussion. Those efforts reflect important areas of agreement among the positions of various Member States and groups of countries with regard to the five clusters in the intergovernmental negotiations. Achieving progress requires further discussions in a positive spirit with the aim of bringing viewpoints closer together in order to reach common ground and agree on a solution that enjoys the broadest political acceptance, thereby ensuring genuine and global reform of the Security Council.

In conclusion, the Arab Group affirms its commitment to continuing active and positive participation during the next round of intergovernmental negotiations and expresses its openness to consulting with all other negotiating groups with the aim of achieving genuine and comprehensive reform of the Security Council in a context of transparency and constructive spirit.

Mr. Massari (Italy): On behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group, I wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this important debate. Thanks to your leadership and commitment to advancing the Security Council reform process, we are confident that we will be able to achieve significant progress during the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. The UfC group is ready to support and work with you. We also thank you for reappointing, early on in the process, two extremely competent, skilful and experienced co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations — His Excellency Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and His Excellency Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait — who managed the previous session of the intergovernmental negotiations with great balance. We look forward to cooperating with them in full transparency and willingness to make progress during this session as well. We trust that they will help Member States get closer to the common goal of a reformed Security Council. The UfC group is ready to continue its constructive approach in the next intergovernmental negotiations, confident that we can build on the positive gains achieved during the previous intergovernmental negotiations.

The UfC group feels strongly about the need for progress in the negotiations. Recent developments have shown how urgent the need for reform is and how it should no longer be postponed. However, we stress that we do not want reform at any price. This is not an easy undertaking, and a solution to move the process forward cannot be improvised or fast-tracked. We cannot afford

to make mistakes. We have to aim for a comprehensive reform that would make the Security Council truly representative, democratic, accountable, transparent, effective and adaptable over time. In particular, we need to strengthen the voice of underrepresented regions. We believe the UfC group's proposal would achieve all those objectives.

In order to bridge the gaps still remaining among the various positions held regarding Security Council reform, we feel it is important to continue our work in the intergovernmental negotiations. That is especially the case in view of the progress made during the previous session of intergovernmental negotiations, and noting that important innovations to our working methods have reinvigorated the process. I refer here to the web streaming of the meetings, the intergovernmental negotiations website and the convening of informal-informal meetings. The intergovernmental negotiations still have an untapped potential to bring about a compromise solution.

Furthermore, the recommendations made by the co-Chairs in their letter to the former President of the General Assembly, dated 2 June 2023, represent a good basis for further progress. In particular, we look forward to discussing the five clusters mentioned in decision 62/557. Those should be addressed in a comprehensive and focused manner, while shedding light on the interlinkages and connections among those clusters and eventually building further, new convergences among Member States. That discussion cannot be sidestepped if we really want to advance and eventually move to negotiations on a text, as positions still diverge on some main pillars of the reform.

We also welcome and look forward to participating in a structured dialogue on the conceptual models proposed by States and groups. Finally, in the context of next year's Summit of the Future, we look forward to providing our contribution on Security Council reform within the intergovernmental negotiations. It is important that that remains a separate process, distinct from the Our Common Agenda and the Summit of the Future processes.

The intergovernmental negotiations are a Member State-led and owned process and has been agreed by all of us as the sole forum through which to engage on Security Council reform; it is important that that remain the case. We welcome the recommendations and are amenable to having the intergovernmental

negotiations produce the input for the Summit of the Future. No new parallel processes should be created to fast-track Security Council reform, as that would only add confusion and stop us from achieving our overall goal. All Member States should approach the Security Council reform process in good faith and show some flexibility. We are all eager to ask for something, but if we really want to succeed in this endeavour, we should also be ready to concede something.

The UfC group's positions on each of the clusters of Security Council reform are clear and known and, for the sake of brevity, I will not dwell on them today. Nevertheless, let me recall that over the years, the UfC group has listened carefully to others, and we have displayed flexibility, adjusting our position to take into consideration the positions of all negotiating groups; we will continue to show flexibility. We expect other groups and countries to display similar flexibility. They too should present their compromises on the five clusters.

Our proposal of longer-term, re-electable seats stems from the understanding that some Member States, irrespective of their size, legitimately desire to make a greater contribution to the work of the Security Council and have the means to do so. At the same time, increasing the number of two-year term, non-permanent seats stems from the understanding that a fairer system of rotation in the Council is critically needed. We reject the creation of new permanent members, however, as we believe that permanent membership — with or without veto — is undemocratic. There are no guardrails of accountability between permanent members and the wider membership, the General Assembly. Life tenure is incompatible with the principles of democracy, accountability and equality among Member States.

As we have reiterated many times, the UfC group is not asking anything for our individual members; we are not aspiring to permanent membership. Rather, we are working for the common good: a reform for all, a reform of the Security Council that is beneficial to all Member States and to the United Nations itself. We firmly believe that our idea of reform serves the whole membership. Under the UfC group's proposal, everyone benefits, no one is left behind or left out and everyone gains better access to the Council. To date, 59 Member States have never served in the Security Council, a little less than one third of the whole membership. It is high time to offer better access to all.

Looking to the next intergovernmental negotiations, we confirm our openness to constructive discussion, bearing in mind that there are no procedural shortcuts. That is one of the main lessons learned over the years — the reform process can succeed only if it is underpinned by the widest possible political acceptance, translated into an amendment of the Charter that will be approved and ratified by the required majority, including the five permanent members.

Let me conclude by reiterating that, here, all Member States are equal; thus, an approach to reform that serves only a few cannot be a solution for the entire membership.

The UfC group stands ready to cooperate with you, Mr. President, the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations and the entire membership in order to advance this process in earnest.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. Also, let me congratulate the newly reappointed co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process.

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the group of four (G4) countries: Brazil, India, Japan and my own country, Germany.

The urgency of reform cannot be overstated. The current composition of the Security Council fails to reflect the contemporary geopolitical realities. It lacks the necessary representation, including permanent representation from Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, it is not effective in addressing the challenges we face. It is no surprise, that, time and again, we have witnessed the Security Council unable to live up to expectations in addressing some of the most serious threats to international peace and security in a timely and effective manner.

Everyone's awareness regarding this issue has grown significantly. During this year's general debate of the General Assembly, more than 80 high-level representatives underscored the immediate necessity of Security Council reform. Many regions remain underrepresented and even unrepresented, including Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. They have called for a comprehensive reform of the Council, including expansion in both permanent and non-permanent membership categories. That element is also one of the main pillars of the G4 proposal for reform.

Regrettably, we have made no progress in advancing text-based negotiations in the past cycles of the intergovernmental negotiations. We appreciate the extraordinary efforts of the current co-Chairs to make said negotiations more transparent and accountable, such as by establishing an online repository and ensuring that they are webcasted. That can facilitate moving in the right direction, but it will not, by itself, ensure substantive progress.

We therefore strongly urge all Member States to engage seriously and constructively in the structured dialogue on the various models, as suggested by the co-Chairs. That will deepen our understanding of each other's positions and help to identify common ground or the largest common denominator, which we cannot know by simply repeating the well-known fixed position of each Member State. Our goal remains the start of text-based negotiations at the earliest opportunity.

The future of the United Nations hinges on our ability to adapt and remain relevant. That implies the ability of one decisive organ to reflect the world of today. I wish to emphasize that the upcoming Summit of the Future is an opportunity to achieve concrete results on the issue of Security Council reform. Let us seize that opportunity and use the next cycle of the intergovernmental negotiations to craft precise language for inclusion into the pact of the future.

These days, we are faced with a proliferation of crises that dramatically impact international peace and security. More than ever, we need a representative and well-functioning Security Council to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and to make progress towards that goal is our responsibility.

We have full confidence, Mr. President, in your capable leadership and in the guidance of our experienced co-Chairs. Together, we can make tangible progress towards a more representative Security Council.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Benelux countries: Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and my own country, Luxembourg.

At the outset, we express our gratitude to the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiation process on Security Council reform — Ambassador Alexander Marschik of Austria and Ambassador Tareq Albanai of

the State of Kuwait — for their able leadership during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly and for their concerted efforts to breathe new life into the substantive negotiations and to the process itself. Indeed, they succeeded in injecting new energy and enhancing the transparency and accountability of the intergovernmental negotiations.

We therefore warmly welcome the reappointment of the two Ambassadors as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for this seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. We look forward to continuing to work with them to advance Security Council reform and support their proposal for the three elements outlined in their letter of 2 June 2023 as a step towards text-based negotiations as soon as possible. Intergovernmental negotiations have proven to be one of the most difficult, complex and slowest processes at the United Nations — perhaps even in the history of the United Nations. However, that does not mean that we cannot make progress towards meaningful reform. Indeed, we must and can do better.

This debate comes at a critical time as the world once again turns towards the United Nations and the Security Council for urgent action. Against the backdrop of a growing number of conflicts and threats to international peace and security around the world, the deadly and devastating conflict in Gaza and Israel and the continuing aggression by a permanent member of the Security Council — Russia — against Ukraine, reform of the Security Council is crucial, now more than ever, to safeguard the credibility of the United Nations and, in particular, that of the Security Council. It is essential that we all work together in good faith to reform the Security Council in order to enhance its representativeness, effectiveness, legitimacy and credibility.

It is clear that the Security Council should be more representative of today's world. The Benelux countries support the call for greater representation of developing countries and small and medium-sized Member States, including small island developing States, on the Security Council. We also recognize and support the legitimate aspirations of African countries for a greater presence on the Security Council. As stated in the Secretary-General's policy brief entitled "A New Agenda for Peace":

“[a] Security Council that is more representative of the geopolitical realities of today, and of the contributions that different parts of the world

make to global peace, is urgently needed.” (*A/77/CRP.1/Add.8, para. 80*)

The question of the veto is one of the key issues in the reform of the Security Council and has resurfaced in relation to the situation in the Gaza Strip and Israel. The escalation of the conflict and the gravity of the humanitarian situation demand urgent action from the Security Council. We welcome yesterday's adoption of resolution 2712 (2023), which shows that the Council is able to act when the members of the Council as a whole make a concerted effort. We also recognize the essential contribution of the elected members to that outcome. However, we still deeply regret that for too long the use of the veto has prevented the Security Council from effectively discharging its primary responsibility — the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Benelux countries are among the large and growing number of Member States that support limiting the use of the veto. In particular, we firmly support the political declaration on suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity, presented by France and Mexico, as well as the code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, developed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. We encourage all Member States to join those important initiatives.

We are also of the view that the General Assembly has a political responsibility to address situations where the use of the veto leads to paralysis in decision-making in the Security Council. Any permanent member using the veto must be held accountable. That is why we supported the resolution initiated by Liechtenstein entitled “Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council” (resolution 76/262). The veto initiative introduced a welcome change in the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Benelux countries support the process of revitalizing the General Assembly. As the Secretary-General's policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace states,

“[t]he General Assembly has a critical role to play, based on its strong legitimacy and universal membership, to address a range of peace and security challenges and exercise its powers under Articles 10 to 14 of the Charter.” (*ibid.*, para. 82)

Regarding the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations, the Benelux countries believe that progress is possible, necessary and within our reach. We very favourably welcomed the Revised co-Chairs' elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, which was first distributed on 26 April and whose final version was circulated on 2 June of this year. We believe that this document reveals growing agreement on the principles of Security Council reform. There are more elements that unite, rather than divide, us. The area of convergence is rather broad, and the points of divergence have been amply clarified. In our view, the way forward in this process is to finally begin text-based negotiations. As in all other United Nations negotiating processes, a text is the necessary basis for truly substantive negotiations. Ahead of next year's Summit of the Future, which is expected to result in a pact for the future, including chapters on international peace and security and the transformation of global governance, it is important to make tangible progress on comprehensive Security Council reform.

There is a considerable amount at stake in terms of Security Council reform, and the world rightly expects the United Nations and the Security Council to fulfil their mandate to maintain international peace and security. The Assembly can count on the resolute and constructive commitment of the Benelux countries to help make the Security Council more inclusive, transparent, representative, accountable, legitimate and effective. That is what we are depending on, and we need it now.

Ms. Rambally (Saint Lucia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Allow me to begin by expressing CARICOM's appreciation to the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process during the seventy-seventh session, my colleagues the Permanent Representative of Austria and the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait. CARICOM commends their excellent stewardship of the intergovernmental negotiations during the previous session and congratulates them on their re-appointment as co-Chairs of the process during this session. They can count on our full and constructive support.

Our world is encountering many difficult challenges that require robust responses from the United Nations if we are to be true to the commitment of the Charter of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. An Organization that is fit for purpose is critical to that end, and it is vital that its organs are constituted in a manner that best serves the interest of the peoples of the world. In that context, CARICOM remains fully supportive of the need for urgent reform of the Security Council, among other things to increase its responsiveness and its representativeness. We underscore the indispensable role of the intergovernmental negotiations in advancing that goal and will continue to play a constructive part to ensure its progress.

CARICOM has taken note of the various positions and proposals on the five key issues of the reform and emphasizes the importance of continued and dynamic engagement with a view to creating greater convergences. Our goal must be a solution that could garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States. CARICOM continues to advance the proposal for a dedicated seat for small island developing States, and we are pleased to note the significant and growing support for the creation of such a seat.

CARICOM also takes note of the various positions on the procedural elements of the reform process. We emphasize the need to also continue engaging on those positions so that real reform can be realized. CARICOM notes with appreciation that the first segment of each of the meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations is now webcast and that there is now a specific website where those webcasts, statements by Member States and other documents can be accessed. That development sends a positive signal to the international community about our commitment to making the intergovernmental negotiations process as transparent and accessible as possible. CARICOM also welcomes the efforts to expand the discussions on Security Council reform to garner the views of other stakeholders through the Taxel talks. CARICOM hopes that Member States will continue to build on those gains during the seventy-eighth session, and the subregion will work closely with fellow Member States to that end.

CARICOM welcomes the progress achieved on the revised co-Chairs' elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

It is the considered view of CARICOM that the question of the reform of the Security Council should be included in the pact for the future. CARICOM believes that it would send a very positive signal if the outcome document of the Summit of the Future could reflect the aspirations of Member States to advance Security Council reform. That proposal would align with Target 16.6 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is focused on developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels by 2030.

CARICOM reiterates its full support for, and commitment to, reform of the Security Council as part of the wider objective of reforming the United Nations so that it better serves the interests of the people of the world.

Mr. Laursen (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

Let me begin by expressing our wholehearted appreciation to the co-Chairs, Ambassadors Marschik and Albanai, and their dedicated teams for their proactive and innovative efforts towards Security Council reform during the previous session. They truly operationalized our joint commitment in the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations to instil new life into the reform of the Council. We also thank you, Mr. President, for your wise decision to reappoint the co-Chairs this session. We appreciate your convening of our discussion today, and we hope that this plenary meeting will serve as a useful platform for the intergovernmental negotiations framework to dive immediately into its substantive work. In that regard, we firmly welcome the indications provided by the co-Chairs in their letter to the former President of the General Assembly, dated 2 June 2023, of three elements for our work during the seventy-eighth session.

The first is to focus reinforcing and building convergences. That is truly the heart of our work. We must build on the elements paper, which was faithfully updated during the previous session, and we must continue to work together towards the establishment of the broadest possible political agreement around our convergences as we continue to narrow our divergences. In doing so, we will continue to rely on the flexibility and ingenuity of Member States and their willingness to compromise towards our common goal of a more inclusive, transparent, accountable and, ultimately, more effective Security Council.

The second is to follow the proposed approach for a structured dialogue on models proposed by States and groups. We agree that that could be a good way to structure our work this session. While the Nordic countries do not have a Nordic model as such to present, we do have clear priorities and preferences. We very much look forward to engaging in an interactive way on the details of all models, both with the ones we generally agree with and those less so, with the aim of clarifying details and perhaps finding new common ground.

The third is to ensure the Summit of the Future's contribution to reforms. We the Nordics see next year's Summit of the Future as an important milestone and opportune inflection point for Member States to reaffirm our common commitment not only to the Charter of the United Nations and the reform of the Security Council but also to bringing forward concrete shared recommendations. We welcome the work of the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism and his New Agenda for Peace as valuable inputs into those discussions. We agree with the co-Chairs that it makes sense that that work take place in the intergovernmental negotiations to avoid any duplication of our work and further strain on the capacity of smaller delegations. We very much look forward to hearing more from the co-Chairs about how we will take that forward.

We are also optimistic about the fact that many excellent innovations continued to enrich our substantive discussions during the previous session, including the webcasting of intergovernmental negotiations discussions, the repository of Member States' positions and reform documents, different discussion formats, including with civil society, and particularly the initiative by the co-Chairs to share Member States' recommendations related to working method reforms for the current Security Council with the Chair of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. That is valuable to strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the Council, both now and in a reformed format. We hope that that regular dialogue can continue.

All that is to say we very much look forward to continuing to engage in these vital discussions on the reform of the Security Council during this session. The Nordics will not insist on a specific process. The most important thing is that we arrive at a concrete and meaningful result. We can do so only when Member States approach each other, the co-Chairs and, indeed,

all our discussions with flexibility, openness and trust. This issue is simply too important and too urgent not to. In order to have the required legitimacy to tackle the ever-mounting global challenges of today, the international community requires a Council that is more transparent, effective, representative and accountable. You, Sir, and the co-Chairs, can count on the full support of the Nordic countries to that end.

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

We commend you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate and welcome your important remarks this morning. We wish to reiterate our commitment to achieving progress on the critical issue of the reform of the Security Council, noting the imperative to do so now. On behalf of the Group of African States, allow me to commend you on re-appointing Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, and Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. We welcome the re-appointed co-Chairs most warmly and assure them of our continued support in building on the progress made thus far in the reform process. With your leadership, Sir, and that of the co-Chairs, we look forward to working with all the Member States in achieving the widest possible consensus on the reform of the Council, especially at a time when the Council must uphold its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Africa remains convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, which would significantly contribute to upholding the principles, objectives and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, for a fairer world based on universalism, impartiality and regional balance. In that regard, we remain true and committed to decision 62/557 and other relevant decisions of the General Assembly aimed at a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, on all the five clusters, considering their interconnectedness.

His Excellency Mr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the United Nations Security Council Reform, reiterated the demands of Africa during the just-concluded high-level general debate in September (see A/78/PV.7). He recalled the injustice of

the non-representation and the underrepresentation of Africa in the permanent and non-permanent categories of the Council and stressed the urgent need for redressing that historical injustice perpetuated against the African continent. Africa remains the only major continent without representation in the permanent category of membership and is underrepresented in the non-permanent category. The regional group with the highest number of Member States and more than 1.4 billion people are not equitably represented in the Council.

Africa's demand for two permanent seats, with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, including the right of the veto, if retained, and two additional non-permanent seats, is a matter of common justice. It is equally a matter of common justice to have an equal say in decision-making on issues of international peace and security, in particular matters that affect the African region. We must now demonstrate our renewed commitment to reforming the Security Council and address the long-standing injustice and imbalance perpetuated in the Council's present configuration without any further delay.

The Common African Position, as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, is widely recognized in the Assembly. It is evident that our call for the immediate redress of the African demand for equitable representation in the Security Council continues to garner wide support from the membership of the United Nations. In particular, in the current iteration of the revised co-Chairs elements paper dated 2 June 2023 and shared by the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, the co-Chairs reflected that:

"There is a wider recognition and broader support by Member States for the legitimate aspiration of the African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage, including through an increased presence in the Security Council, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration adopted by the African Union in 2005. Redressing the historical injustice against Africa is viewed as a priority, and several delegations emphasized that Africa should be treated as a special case."

That welcome development reinforces the credibility and viability of the Common African Position on the reform of the Security Council. We will continue to build on that general convergence to the point of

achieving a reform that recognizes Africa and gives it its rightful place in multilateralism, in particular at the Security Council.

Recognizing the gains made during the previous session, including the introduction of a webcast for the first segment of each of the intergovernmental negotiations meetings and the establishment of the repository, the African Group notes that divergence persists in the positions of Member States and interest groups on models of reform. There are also differences on procedural matters, challenging the overall progress and consensus-building on all five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Substantively, the African Group notes that not all the positions and proposals of Member States have been reflected in the co-Chairs' elements paper. Accordingly, we continue to see the framework document of 2015 as the main reference document of the intergovernmental negotiations, as it encapsulates the positions and proposals of approximately 120 States Members of the United Nations, including the Common African Position.

We would therefore continue to advocate that the co-Chairs consult those Member States that did not populate or expressed reservations in the framework document to reconsider their stance in order to make significant progress in the intergovernmental negotiations process, since we now have a repository. That will in turn be a framework document 2.0 that will enable the intergovernmental negotiations to have a truly Member States-driven document that is agreeable to all Member States and interest groups.

In fulfilment of the forthright vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit, we reiterate that we will continue to constructively engage with Member States and interest groups in an open, transparent and inclusive membership-driven process with a view to achieving progress that will lead to the ultimate realization of making the Security Council more broadly representative, democratic, effective and transparent. That will enhance the legitimacy of Council decisions and make it fit for purpose. We therefore encourage the co-Chairs, as the guarantors of the process, to again use their good offices to appeal to Member States to own the process by actively participating in a frank and constructive manner for us to reform the Security Council.

To conclude, let me reiterate that Africa will continue to advocate for a meaningful reform that will make the Security Council more relevant and responsive to the present and emerging global challenges, as well as to promote the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations and fulfil its mandate to maintain international peace and security. We remain open to working with all Member States on canvassing support for the Common African Position.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): There is a word that resonates in the General Assembly but too often falls on deaf ears. It is a word that, for some, represents a challenge to their entrenched power, while for many others it means a call for change, action and progress. That word is "reform".

The history of the Security Council is plagued by inequalities and self-interests that overshadow its core mission. The solution to that impasse is clear: greater cooperation through greater representation. It is obvious, but we know that it is not simple. The 10 elected members, through their history of collaboration, have demonstrated their immense value in strengthening our collective security system. What we must do now is harness the collective power of the elected membership to introduce the reforms we urgently need.

The question of the reform of the Security Council is a pressing issue. Much has changed since the Council went from 11 to 15 members in 1965. However, since then, elected members have consistently demonstrated their ability to drive change within the Council, often in the face of stagnation. It is assumed that all members of the Security Council act on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization, but in practice that function of representation usually falls to the elected members. Their status as elected representatives makes them more accountable to the General Assembly and other organs of the Organization.

The presence of elected members brings new approaches to matters that are critical to international peace and security, bringing attention to various issues and fostering dialogue, even when permanent members hesitate or face political constraints. They refuse to remain silent when powerful States look away. More often than not, when the Security Council shines like a beacon, reminding the world of the founding promises of the United Nations — namely, to preserve peace and security, to foster development and to promote and protect human rights — it is thanks to the work of its elected members.

Tunisia did not let us forget those who needed help when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic first hit. In response to those who initially did not believe that the pandemic should be considered a security issue, Tunisia worked with other elected members to draft a text discussing the possible impacts of COVID-19. Eventually, Tunisia became a co-penholder with France and, after painstaking negotiations, came up with a draft resolution that stressed the pandemic's potential to create disruptions and the need to provide humanitarian assistance (Security Council resolution 2532 (2020)).

Malta did not let us forget those most vulnerable to sea level rise. In convening an open debate earlier this year (see S/PV.9260), Malta facilitated a crucial discussion on the disproportionate effects of sea level rise. Experts and representatives came together to discuss the threats posed to coastal communities and island States, the needs of small island developing States and the fact that sea level rise will only multiply existing threats posed by insecurity caused by the lack of resources. As part of the broader conversation on climate change, Malta used its status as an elected member to raise a specific issue that might have otherwise been overlooked.

Estonia did not let us forget the importance of cybersecurity. In May 2020, as President of the Security Council, Estonia hosted a high-level event that drew attention at the international level in highlighting the critical role that international law plays in cyberspace security. Estonia's innovative approach, which attests to the important contributions made by elected Security Council members, added new perspectives and creative approaches to global discussions. That experience underscores the dynamic potential of elected members and reinforces the importance of a more inclusive and proactive approach to addressing today's multifaceted challenges.

Australia and Luxembourg did not let us forget about the innocent civilians in Syria. Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) was, and remains, a breakthrough in terms of the international system's ability to provide humanitarian aid to those most in need. Frustrated by the Council's inaction, those countries worked diligently to enable the delivery of aid to the region. After five weeks of intense negotiations among the parties concerned and the permanent members of the Council, and the eventual endorsement of Jordan, a resolution was adopted that would enable the delivery of

international humanitarian aid into northern Syria for 180 days through four border-crossings. The Council adopted that ground-breaking resolution unanimously.

Ireland and the Niger did not let us forget about our planet when they jointly submitted Security Council draft resolution S/2021/990, which sought to legitimize the critical link between climate change and conflict on the world stage. Despite painstaking negotiations, they admirably succeeded in putting it to the vote, and a single use of veto prevented its adoption. That effort nevertheless underscores the ability of elected members to unite and innovate. They lead the way in showing the potential to address urgent challenges based on international cooperation. Although that draft resolution was not adopted, it gives hope for a collaborative future in shaping a more sustainable world for all.

Elected members will never let us forget the protection of civilians; those who have been displaced in the Sahel; the poverty and violence in Haiti; the women and girls in Afghanistan; and the other countless names and faces that require our action now. Action requires empowerment, and the expansion of the Security Council by increasing the number of its elected members will enable smaller States to work together, to raise issues concerning threats to our countries and regions and to shed light on dangers overlooked by larger States, blinded by their eagerness to win their zero-sum games. Improvements can — and must — be pursued through better working methods, in particular by limiting the right of the veto, which includes democratizing the system of penholdership to decrease the disproportionate influence of the permanent members and to improve inclusiveness, collaboration and communication between the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership.

However, taking meaningful action must be fundamental to the reform of the Security Council. In that regard, equitable expansion can no longer be considered as wishful thinking. Its discussion must no longer remain prefaced by a hypothetical "if". Inaction has cost and continues to cost lives. Increasing the number of elected members must be prefaced by "when", and that "when" is now. Some might think that until there is no longer any distinction between the five permanent non-elected members and the elected members, expanding the latter group will be an exercise in futility. It will not be. One need only look at the track record to realize that the price for

exercising their privilege increases, as there is more global awareness of the impact of Council's inaction. With more elected members, the peoples of the world will be better represented in the forum where decisions concerning peace and security for them are forged, and the permanent members will be more encouraged to reach agreements that take into account the views of those who have demonstrated that they are both empowered and empowering.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): The international community today is confronted by unprecedented challenges that no country can avoid. Rising geopolitical tensions in the global strategic landscape have unfortunately further undermined our ability to work together in unity to maintain international peace and security. It has also hampered our progress towards promoting human security and sustainable development. The Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But the increasing recourse to emergency special sessions of the General Assembly and the mandate under resolution 76/262 reflects an unfortunate trend, and that is that polarization has rendered the Council less able to take decisive action when needed. We therefore welcome the Security Council for taking action yesterday to help save lives in the Middle East and hope that that will be followed up by further action. Let us hope that the Council coming together will be the rule, rather than the exception. Strengthening and restoring trust in multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, is more necessary than ever. A reformed Security Council would contribute to the process.

I would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait, our colleagues Mr. Alexander Marschik and Mr. Tareq Albanai, the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, for their able leadership and initiatives to take forward the intergovernmental negotiations process at the General Assembly during its seventy-seventh session. We look forward to further moving the process forward during this session next year.

Thailand remains committed to reforming the Security Council to enhance its efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency. To that end, Thailand would like to emphasize the following four points.

First, a reformed Council must help renew our collective commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to the primary

mandate of diplomacy and peaceful means. A reformed Council, and the United Nations as a whole, must be able to cultivate greater unity, partnership and solidarity to overcome present and future global challenges so that we can fully exercise diplomacy and peaceful means to their fullest potential. A reformed Council should also be more oriented towards cultivating cooperation, rather than confrontation, as a means to address disputes.

Secondly, greater participation and partnership are key to a more efficient, effective, accountable and transparent Security Council. Thailand emphasizes the necessity of enhancing equitable geographical representation, cross-regional balance and greater representation of developing countries in a reformed Council. But the issue of participation should not be limited to the narrow view of enlarging membership. Rather, a reformed Council should encourage the regions and affected countries to take part in, and integrate their input and valuable recommendations for, the Council's deliberation. As affected regions are the first to suffer the devastation of conflict and the first to enjoy the fruits of peace, their voices, their views and their concerns matter, because every region matters. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's view in the New Agenda for Peace on the need for strong partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations as critical building blocks for an enhanced and more effective use of diplomacy and peaceful means. The Secretary-General's idea for new models for diplomatic engagement that can address the interests of all actors involved and deliver mutually beneficial outcomes should reinforce strong multilateral, regional interfaces to support preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention.

That brings me to my third point, which is that the participation of, and partnership with, the regions and affected countries are possible only if they are informed. Regrettably, in recent months, division and polarisation have, in some instances, barred the Council from adopting monthly programmes of work. Delays in the circulation of concept notes and lists of speakers for the Council's open debates have prevented Member States from fully contributing to discussion on key agendas. The wider membership encounters difficulties in accessing timely and adequate information for them to make informed decisions. We would therefore like to recall once again that inclusive and timely information-sharing on the work of the Council is

essential to enable non-Council members and regions to express their views and take part effectively in the Council's considerations.

Fourthly, and lastly, my delegation reiterates its view that adopting new perspectives to reaching the low-hanging fruit on enhancing the Council's working methods can galvanize our collective efforts towards an early reform. Throughout the intergovernmental negotiations this year, Member States have once again expressed general agreement for the Council to promote the roles of elected Council members, especially developing countries, to be entrusted with penholdership in drafting the Council's resolutions; further engage host countries, troop- and police-contributing countries and other stakeholders in the planning, deployment, adjusting and exit of peacekeeping missions; and enhance engagement and information-sharing with regional organizations and non-Council members. In fact, non-permanent members of the Council have made many contributions to it, as mentioned by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica. We welcome the initiative of the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for regular engagement with the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to convey the views and proposals of the wider membership to the work of the Council.

In conclusion, Thailand reaffirms its commitment to collective efforts aimed at revitalizing the Security Council, making it more responsive to the challenges of our time and forging a path towards peaceful, prosperous and equitable future for all.

Mr. Kadiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to express the Kingdom of Morocco's thanks to you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council.

My congratulations also go to His Excellency Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, and His Excellency Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, on their renewed mandates as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiation process. I would like to assure them of Morocco's full support in fulfilling their mandate. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to their exceptional work during the previous session of this process, which led to the decision to broadcast the first

phase of intergovernmental negotiations on the United Nations website and to create a dedicated, informative website bringing together information pertaining to meetings, as well as letters, decisions and other documents linked to the process of intergovernmental negotiations. This represents significant progress in strengthening our process.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the representative of Bahrain, on the behalf of the Arab Group. I would like to underscore the following points our national capacity.

Security Council reform is part of wider United Nations reforms aimed at revitalizing our Organization. The reform includes the enlargement of both categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent members. It should be current, thereby reflecting the evolution in the Organization's membership in the twenty-first century. In line with the framework established by decision 62/557, the Council reform must be comprehensive and not incremental. It must encompass the five clusters in a complete and exhaustive manner, while taking into account the interlinkages that exist among them in order to guide the reform process. We reiterate our position in favour of strengthening the United Nations, including Security Council reform, with the aim of making it more representative. The Security Council is designated by the Charter of the United Nations as the principal organ for maintaining international peace and security. Its mandate is clear and unambiguous. In order to enlarge the Security Council in a modern way and in step with the changing composition of the United Nations, Morocco remains convinced that our work must continue in the current format, through the intergovernmental negotiations process.

The recommendation to convene an annual meeting between the Chair of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process is a positive step towards improving coordination and communication between those two important bodies. The Informal Working Group plays a crucial role in the functioning of the Security Council because it is responsible for the follow-up and improvement of its working methods and procedures, particularly with regard to Council presidential note S/2017/507. That cooperation between the Informal Working Group and the intergovernmental

negotiations process will allow for greater consistency between the working methods and procedures of the Security Council and the efforts under way to reform it in the context of the intergovernmental negotiations. By holding an annual meeting between the Chair of the Informal Working Group and the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, it will be possible to exchange information and ideas, identify areas of cooperation and ensure that the efforts of both bodies are aligned towards the common goal of strengthening the Security Council in the context of the reform.

Regarding the working methods of Security Council, we welcome the increase in the number of public meetings and briefings where possible. However, we also recognize that consultations play a crucial role, whether it be to discuss sensitive issues or to reach compromises on difficult topics. Furthermore, as a major troop-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping operations since the 1960s, Morocco has seen the positive impact of the Security Council's work towards building, consolidating and sustaining peace. In that context, we would like to stress the crucial importance of consultations between members of the Security Council and troop- and police-contributing countries and trilateral meetings including the Secretariat.

Moreover, the Kingdom of Morocco places the Organization's emphasis on peacebuilding among its own priorities. My country firmly supports the central importance afforded by the Secretary-General to peacebuilding in our common programme and in the New Agenda for Peace. In that context, we must continue to strengthen cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configurations, including the systematic participation of the Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission and its configurations in meetings of the Security Council and consideration of their recommendations in Security Council decisions.

It is unacceptable and inconceivable that Africa is the only continent that is not represented in the permanent member category and is underrepresented in the non-permanent member category. Those historical injustices committed against Africa challenge us all and demand that we redress them by ensuring greater representation for Africa within a reformed Security Council.

Africa's demand for equitable geographical representation in the Security Council is just, legitimate and vital. Africa has made an extremely important contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. By way of example, 13 of the 20 largest troop- and police-contributing countries are African countries, including the Kingdom of Morocco. Those countries participate directly, substantially and humanely in peacekeeping efforts around the world. In that regard, I reiterate that Morocco endorses the Common African Position, the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. My country supports just and equitable representation of Africa in both categories, with a minimum of two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats, in order to deliver justice for our continent. It will then be up to Africa to select its representatives in the reformed Security Council.

Like the African Group, the Group of Arab States also deserves greater representation on the enlarged Security Council. The lack of permanent representation on the Security Council for Arab countries —which are nevertheless greatly affected by the issues that the Security Council deals with— is extremely unfortunate. In that regard, a permanent seat for Arab countries, with all the prerogatives it entails, and adequate representation in the non-permanent member category would duly address the Arab Group's legitimate demands. With regard to the veto power, we believe that, as long as it stands, it must be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council.

The Kingdom of Morocco believes that the questions of Security Council reform and the equitable representation of its members constitute key elements in the overall United Nations reform process. We look forward to receiving the President's guidance throughout the intergovernmental negotiations process for the current session. I would like to reiterate the support of my delegation to the two co-Chairs of the process, and I also reaffirm my delegation's determination to continue to participate constructively and positively in this round of intergovernmental negotiations. The Kingdom of Morocco stands ready to engage with all Member States with the aim of achieving a comprehensive and genuine Security Council reform process in a constructive and transparent spirit.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I would like to begin by thanking the Permanent Representative of Kuwait, His Excellency Mr. Tareq Albanai, and the Permanent Representative of Austria, His Excellency

Mr. Alexander Marschik, the two co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process, for their hard work during the previous session. I congratulate them on their reappointment, and I am glad that this process will remain in their good and experienced hands. I wish them every success, and I assure them of my delegation's full support.

I also share your view, Mr. President, which you expressed in your opening remarks this morning, that the issue of the reform of the Security Council has become more pressing than ever and that there is therefore a real need for meaningful reform.

As I begin my remarks, let me underline a point that is well known, and that is the fact that Singapore is not part of any informal grouping in the intergovernmental negotiations process. We therefore speak only as Singapore, and we do not associate with the position of any group within this process. It has always been Singapore's approach to look at every proposal in the intergovernmental negotiations process carefully and from an objective point of view and to offer our comments from the perspective of making the United Nations and the multilateral system stronger and more effective. And as a small State, Singapore would also like to bring to this debate the perspective of a small country, of which there are many in this Hall. It is important to keep in mind that the reform of the Security Council is not an exercise to address the ambition and interests of the major Powers or the regional Powers. If the intergovernmental negotiations process is to lead to effective outcomes, it must address the needs and interests of all countries, and it must in particular address the concerns and priorities of the small States that form the silent majority in the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General said recently that the world has entered an era marked by the highest level of geopolitical tensions and major Power competition in decades. We cannot agree more with that very sobering assessment. The world is indeed polarized and fragmented on many issues, and the major Powers have unfortunately not always shown signs of working together to manage issues of international peace and security.

Yesterday members of the Security Council, in a rare show of unity, adopted a very important and much-needed resolution on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (see S/PV.9479). Naturally, we are all gratified by that positive development. Nevertheless,

the fact remains that the Security Council took 40 days to adopt a resolution, while the General Assembly, by meeting in the format of an emergency special session, was able to act much earlier. What was also evident was that in the Council there were vetoes, counter-vetoes and pocket vetoes before the Council eventually arrived at the adoption of resolution 2712 (2023) yesterday.

In the context of geopolitical tensions and political fragmentation, the question arises: will enlargement lead to a more effective Council, or will it lead to greater disunity, paralysis and inaction? And to put the question differently, if there is enlargement, how can we be sure that the Council will discharge its mandate effectively and with a sense of urgency? Those are questions that we believe require serious reflection within the intergovernmental negotiations process. My delegation has always said that reform must lead to a stronger, more effective and more responsive Security Council. In that regard, the reform of the Security Council has to balance two competing requirements: the need for greater representativeness and the need for more effectiveness.

The question of greater representation is related fundamentally to the issue of inclusion and legitimacy. The fact is that the Council has not been reformed in nearly 60 years. The one and only time the Council was reformed was when four additional non-permanent seats were added to the Council in 1965, following the adoption of a resolution in December 1963. It is worth noting that, in 1963, the United Nations had only 113 Member States, out of which approximately 40 Members were considered — or could be considered — small States. Today we have 193 Members, and small States from all regions of the world make up more than half the United Nations membership. It is therefore vitally important for the intergovernmental negotiations process to consider the perspective of small States, many of which have never had the opportunity to serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In fact, more than 50 small States have never served on the Council. And of those that have served, more than half of them have served only once on the Council.

The reality facing many small States is a simple one: the chances of getting elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council are getting smaller and smaller, especially for small States that come from regional groups that do not have an established practice of subregional rotation. In theory, the process of elections for a non-permanent seat is democratic

and open to all States. In practice, however, there is no level playing field for small States. The elections for non-permanent seats are very often dominated by larger regional States, many of which have established a pattern of seeking a seat on the Council at frequent intervals. Even if a small State were to seek election and exercise its democratic rights, it is extremely challenging for a small State to campaign and run against much larger States with any success. The last seven decades are full of examples of small States who have failed to be elected to the Security Council. To put it starkly, the door to the Security Council is shut for many small States. There is a glass ceiling that discourages and disadvantages small States from presenting their candidature for elections and from getting elected. In such a context, the question is — and we hope this will be addressed in the intergovernmental negotiations — how can we level the playing field for small States? The solution does not lie in fancy formulas or mathematical diagrams to show how an expanded Council might look in the future. What is needed are concrete arrangements that will allow small States adequate and equitable access to membership in the Council.

Allow me in that regard to make three points on the question of reform.

First, we have consistently supported the need for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, and our position remains unchanged. In particular, we recognize the need to address the issue of historical lack of representation and underrepresentation, in particular for Africa. However, while we support an expansion in permanent membership, we do not look at expansion as a preordained right for the major Powers. It is a privilege and a heavy responsibility, and it must be earned. In that regard, there are some related questions we need to address collectively. First, how can we be sure that new permanent members will be committed to upholding international law, international humanitarian law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations? That has been the very topic of our discussions here in this Chamber and in the Council in the past few weeks. To put it differently, how can we be sure that new permanent members will not behave like old permanent members? Secondly, what are, broadly, our expectations for new permanent members? And thirdly, what safeguards can we put in place to ensure that new permanent members will meet our expectations? Recent events in the Council have shown

that permanent members do not always rise to meet expectations, nor do they always rise to discharge their Charter responsibilities. Therefore, we need to make sure that new permanent members do not act without accountability once they become permanent members. Singapore has put forward the idea of a declaration of responsibilities for all Council members, to be adopted as part of any reform package eventually adopted. I hope that we can continue to examine and discuss this proposal further during this session.

The second point that I wanted to make is that Singapore would be open to all ideas to make the Council more representative, more transparent and more credible. Over the many years of intergovernmental negotiations discussions, several different visions of reform have emerged, which have been captured in the revised co-Chairs' elements paper. However, one issue that has not been adequately addressed — at least from our point of view — is the question of representation of small States. We welcome the fact that there are proposals on the table that recognize the need for representation by small States and small island developing States (SIDS). We also welcome that there are already some proposals to allocate, for example, one dedicated seat for small States and SIDS. However, when we compare the number of small States that have never served on the Council, which is more than 50 States, allocating just one seat is far from sufficient. If we were to allocate one dedicated non-permanent seat to small States, given the fact that there are more than 50 States who have never served in the Council, we would need 100 years to enable all the small States to have just one opportunity to serve in the Council — 100 years of solitude for small States. Does that arrangement sound anything near equitable and reasonable from the point of view of small States?

We do appreciate the fact that there are proposals for a dedicated seat for small States and SIDS. I do not wish to denigrate the importance of the proposals that are there. They represent a good start. But the point I am making is that we need to move much further and deeper if we are to address the systematic underrepresentation of small States in the Council. In fact, yesterday's results in the Council, in which the delegation of Malta played a crucial role in building consensus and finding a solution forward for the Council, demonstrated the value added that small States can bring to the Council. It underlines the role that small States can potentially play in the Council, provided they have an opportunity

to serve in the Council. Therefore, any reform process that allocates just a single seat for small States will not level the playing field, and any reform that does not level the playing field will not be credible in the eyes of many small States.

My third and last point relates to the question of the veto. That is currently the privilege and preserve of the five permanent members (P5), and the P5 hold an important key to reform in how they choose to exercise that tremendous power. We have always been a strong supporter of the initiative, and any initiative, to introduce greater accountability in the use of the veto. And we will continue to maintain that position. We have also stated that Member States, including all members of the P5, should respect the plain meaning of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter and refrain from voting on a dispute to which one is a party. There is no doubt that the veto is an impediment to a more effective and accountable Council and to fulfilling the Council's mandate, and the frequent use of the veto to block Council action in recent years show has shown this to be very true. It is for that very reason that my delegation does not support granting the veto to new permanent members.

A related point that I wish to make regards the working methods of the Security Council. That is an issue that I had addressed in the Council's debate in September on working methods (see S/PV.9410), so I do not wish to repeat the points that I made there. But I do want to say that it is important that the Council's work be made more accessible to the wider United Nations membership through open debates, documentation and timely monthly assessment reports from the rotating Presidents of the Council, and that — a point we made previously — there is a need for an informal exchange between the Council and the wider membership before the annual report of the Council is finalized. That proposal is made in accordance with paragraph 129 of the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2017/507, with which Council members will be very familiar.

A difficult year for the United Nations and for the Security Council is coming to a close. But we have also taken some good steps forward, including one yesterday. The work in the intergovernmental negotiations has just begun. We believe that the intergovernmental negotiations remain the best vehicle to build consensus on the question of reform, and we believe that reform is possible if there is political will to make progress. We

have a collective responsibility to work together to build the broadest possible convergence on the reform of the Security Council. The ultimate goal of our exercise is to make the United Nations and the multilateral system stronger and more effective.

The President: I would like to thank the representative of Singapore for his very comprehensive treatise on the reform of the Security Council.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I often find it useful to look to the words and wisdom of one of the founders of the United Nations, Ralph Bunche. Nearly three quarters of a century ago, he said that "The world and its peoples being as they are, there is no easy or quick or infallible approach to a secure peace." The same can be said for securing Security Council reform. But I believe that if we want the Council to operate at its full potential, if we want to remain the world's primary forum for addressing threats to international peace and security, and if we want to represent the world as it could be — as it should be — then the Council body needs to represent the world as it is, not as it was three quarters of a century ago. It needs to adapt.

As members know, at the General Assembly last year, President Biden announced that the United States was committed to reform, including the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats on the Security Council, with permanent seats for countries in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean (see A/77/PV.6). Since then, the President has reaffirmed that commitment, including in his speech to the Assembly in September (see A/78/PV.4), because he recognizes, as so many of us do, that the Council, as it is constituted today, does not represent the realities of today. And we know that a Council that is not representative can be less credible in the eyes of those who do not feel seen, heard or understood.

Mr. Milambo (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

More than ever before, we cannot afford a crisis of confidence in the Security Council. And so, as many others here have experienced, I have spent the last several months on a listening tour. I have met with many different Member States, regional groupings and institutional stakeholders to better understand their perspectives on reform. I have heard from Member States that are understandably concerned about dysfunction and politicization within the Council. I

have heard from Member States that are dealing with dire humanitarian crises and from Member States that are disproportionately affected by climate change, many of whom believe their voices have gone unheard. To be sure, many of those representatives have offered different ideas about how best to go about change, but they are united in their belief that we must forge consensus in the name of progress. We will need to re-examine long-held national positions, ask ourselves tough questions and remain open to compromise in order to effect lasting change.

We are grateful to be aided in this effort by the Permanent Representatives of Kuwait and Austria, the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, who are using their considerable creativity and energy to spur new conversations and meaningful engagement. And we look forward to participating in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations session to make additional progress on Security Council reform.

In conclusion, let me leave the Assembly with this. Ralph Bunche, in the same address, said that “It is only by patient, persistent, undismayed effort, by trial and error, that peace can be won.” As we work to modernize the place where peace can be won, let us do so with the same spirit of patience and persistence. We are eager to continue working with all members of the Assembly to bring the Council at long last into the twenty-first century.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland has been a member of the Security Council for almost a year and is conscious of its responsibility towards the General Assembly, which elected it to the Council. Unfortunately, we have observed that all too often there is a lack of willingness to compromise and a lack of trust within the Council, especially between some of its most powerful members. At the same time, Switzerland welcomed the Council’s adoption yesterday of its first humanitarian resolution on the current situation in the Middle East (resolution 2712 (2023)). It was the result of tireless efforts by the elected Council members to uphold international law, in particular international humanitarian law. Too often, however, the Council fails to act to protect civilians or does so only belatedly, as in Ukraine, the Sudan and Myanmar, and now in the Middle East. It also struggles to show unity on issues such as non-proliferation or the effects of climate change on peace and security, thus running

the risk of neglecting its duty in the face of existential threats and of failing to fulfil its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations.

Faced with working methods that all too easily lead to the Council’s decisions being blocked, even in situations of genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, it is our collective duty not to let ourselves become discouraged and to engage in reforming those working methods, even before a so-called major reform of the Council takes place. Every Assembly member and every Security Council member, whether permanent or elected, shoulders that responsibility. We therefore welcome the fact that, in the meantime, two thirds of members of the Assembly have signed the code of conduct against atrocities, launched by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, and have pledged not to vote against Council action in such cases. Today the code of conduct is more relevant than ever. In the same spirit of accountability and responsibility, we call on Council members to do their duty by abstaining from voting in certain circumstances, as required by Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations.

The vetoes we have witnessed in the past few months have reinforced the urgency and the calls for the reform of the Security Council. They also underline the growing importance of our intergovernmental negotiations aimed at ensuring a more equitable representation on the Security Council. We therefore welcome the reappointment of the able co-Chairs of the negotiations, the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait, whom we congratulate and wish every success. My delegation assures them of our full support and will engage constructively during the current session.

The crisis facing our multilateral system, which is particularly visible within the Council, must be resolved by improving representation, accountability and efficiency. In terms of representation, Switzerland is in favour of enlarging the Security Council to reflect the reality of the world we live in. That enlargement should provide for better representation for certain groups of countries, in particular the Group of African States. In view of the deadlock resulting from apparent divergences within the intergovernmental negotiations to date, a third category of a very limited number of non-permanent, but renewable, seats should also be considered.

The exercise of the veto also raises the question of accountability. In this respect we advocated for the existing right of veto being now subject to voluntary constraints, as proposed by the French-Mexican initiative and the abovementioned ACT code of conduct.

Finally, we must not abandon the Council's vital duties, even in the deepest time of crisis. Upon its election last year, Switzerland undertook to work towards greater efficiency and effectiveness within the Council. Together with our partners in the ACT group and the elected members of the Council in particular, we will continue our efforts to strengthen the Council's working methods in favour of transparency and accountability to all United Nations Member States.

Powerlessness is not inevitable. We can make a difference. We will support any progress within the intergovernmental negotiations and the efforts to reform other United Nations organs. In that respect, we welcome the Secretary-General's appeal and recommendations in the New Agenda for Peace. It represents an opportunity for all Member States to commit to peacebuilding and better conflict prevention. We encourage them all to make that the key to their efforts and to contribute to strengthening confidence in our multilateral framework.

Mr. Zuhuree (Maldives): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important debate on the issue of Security Council reform.

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the seventy-seventh session — the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait — for their dedicated efforts and leadership in steering the intergovernmental negotiations.

The new approach ushered in by the co-Chairs of the seventy-seventh session and continued by the current co-Chairs has contributed to instilling new life into our deliberations within the intergovernmental negotiations process. The Maldives appreciates the co-Chairs' decision to webcast intergovernmental negotiations meetings and the establishment of a specific website to act as a repository of the recordings of intergovernmental negotiations meetings. We believe that those initiatives have enhanced the transparency of and trust in the process.

The Security Council is one of the most critical organs of the international community, entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining global peace and

security. However, the world has watched as the Council has repeatedly failed to take action and deliver on that responsibility, most recently in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The failure of the Council even to agree on a humanitarian ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza crisis clearly shows that discussions on the most pressing issues cannot be held exclusively by a small group of Member States.

Amid inaction by the Security Council, the Assembly reconvened its tenth emergency special session last month, during which a landmark resolution was adopted, calling for resolute action to halt violence against innocent civilians (resolution ES-10/21). My delegation welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2712 (2023) yesterday. We strongly support the Council's demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. We appreciate the leadership of Malta and other elected members of the Council in finding unity on that resolution. The Council must continue to build on that unity and do more with the aim of an immediate, enduring and sustainable humanitarian truce in Gaza.

Maldives believes that the reform of the Security Council is a critical aspect of the revitalization of the United Nations. Indeed, Maldives was among the first 10 Member States to request the inclusion of that agenda item in 1979. We are of the view that the comprehensive reform and expansion of the Security Council are essential to making the Security Council democratic in its composition, effective in its decision-making and accountable to the general membership.

In that regard, I wish to reiterate the Maldives' positions during the intergovernmental negotiations process.

First, in the past 58 years, the United Nations membership has increased from 113 to 193 States, yet the Council remains unchanged, consisting of a mere 15 members — just 7.7 per cent of the membership. The permanent members reflect only 2.5 per cent of the entire membership. Therefore, we support the expansion of the Security Council's membership in both permanent and non-permanent seats. That expansion should be aimed at achieving equitable geographical distribution, should redress the historical injustices against Africa and should include continuous representation for small island developing States and small States.

Secondly, Maldives advocates for a more democratic Security Council. Often, the disproportionate influence of the five permanent members' veto power leads to a decision-making gridlock. Maldives wishes to reiterate our view that we must ensure the restriction of veto use, especially in crises such as mass atrocities. It is also our view that any decision at the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council, must be based on equitable representation, transparency and accountability. Therefore, as long as the veto right exists, Maldives believes that new permanent members should, as a principle, have the same rights and obligations as current permanent members regarding the exercise of the veto power. That is why we must move beyond the status quo. However, we must also ensure that newly elected members of the Council adhere to the principles of the United Nations and work towards maintaining peace and security, as constituted in the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Security Council, streamlined working methods are vital. Maldives, a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, emphasizes the importance of regular dialogue and thorough discussions among the Security Council, the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations organs to bolster its effectiveness. We encourage the sharing of responsibilities such as penholderships among members to ensure diversified perspectives and avoid singular dominance.

Given the slow pace of the intergovernmental negotiations process, Maldives supports increasing the substantial role and moral authority of the General Assembly. We stress the importance of a more complete, substantive and analytical account of the Council's work to the General Assembly. During the seventy-sixth session, Maldives was among the 83 Member States that co-sponsored the landmark resolution aimed at holding the five permanent Council members accountable for their use of the veto (resolution 76/262). We are encouraged by the Council's establishment of a consistent practice regarding the initiative's implementation.

Finally, after 16 years of the intergovernmental negotiations process, it is imperative to focus on concrete progress. Maldives reiterates its firm view that we must move towards a single negotiating text during the seventy-eighth session. Our intention with that text should be to incorporate the positions of Member States

and groups, with their attributions. That goal will improve transparency and accountability — principles that will further instil new life into our discussions on Security Council reform.

Reform is also necessary to ensure that the Security Council can sufficiently address emerging non-traditional security threats, such as climate change. Those non-traditional challenges threaten the very existence of several States, significantly affecting the survival of small island developing States. The Council's reform must consider those States, which, owing to limited resources, struggle to secure representation and thereby face unfair disadvantages in voicing their unique security concerns.

Maldives stands firm in its belief that every Member State, irrespective of its size, plays a crucial role in global peace and development. That is why we have presented our candidature to the Security Council for the 2033–2034 term. Small States deserve a seat at the table, as we have the most to gain from multilateralism and, indeed, the most to lose.

Maldives believes that the Security Council should reflect the realities of the world today. Reform is necessary to have an efficient, effective, representative and accountable Council. It is our expectation that we make fast progress enabling us to move from rhetoric and discussion towards achieving more concrete actions and solutions in rendering the Security Council as an institution that is indeed representative of all regions and diversities. We hope that the achievements we made and the constructive spirit demonstrated during the seventy-seventh session will guide negotiations among Member States at the seventy-eighth session.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group, and I would like to make some additional comments in my national capacity.

We particularly welcome the decision to reappoint the Ambassadors of Austria and Kuwait as co-facilitators. They can both count on Mexico's support for the success of our work.

Recent events have once again exposed the paralysis of the Security Council, while underscoring the urgent need for its reform. The reality of the paralysis is undeniable and has been noted by world leaders and ordinary citizens alike. While there are

problems, it is our duty to resolve them. But how? The answer is by working towards making the Security Council more democratic, representative, transparent and accountable.

At the General Assembly during its first session, the then-Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico pointed out that what was most concerning about the use of the veto was the likelihood, not the mere possibility, that it would thwart the best intentions of the Organization and subsequently the main hope of achieving lasting peace on the path of justice. Today, almost 80 years later, it is clear that our concerns were well-founded and persistent. The Security Council has been unable to act in the most urgent cases, of which there is no shortage of examples. We do not want a reform aimed at perpetuating the Council's current structure, with more permanent members and more vetoes. Rather than seeking to enjoy the privileges that have paralysed that organ, we as members of the international community have the moral responsibility to work for a reform aimed at enabling the Council to fulfil its mandate. The latter is especially urgently needed to ensure not only the support of Governments, but also the trust of people in the Organization, for whom we must provide a Security Council capable of ensuring international peace and security. Its reform is therefore more urgent than ever.

This round of negotiations will be particularly important in view of the renewed awareness of the need for comprehensive reform. Mexico therefore urges the co-facilitators to take up their own recommendations from the previous round of negotiations. Measures such as webcasts and the creation of a document repository were widely welcomed and are key to ensuring transparency and access to information for all Member States. It is important to continue to deepen the discussions and not to focus on the repetition of known positions. In that regard, we believe that launching discussion on the models for reform of the Council is critically urgent. We welcome such a proposal, as the Uniting for Consensus group has been a strong supporter of in-depth deliberations on models for many years. I would like to recall that in early 2023, Mexico circulated its reform proposal in document A/77/717. That model builds on the Uniting for Consensus proposal and proposes structural and functional changes that reflect current global dynamics. We advocate for more democratic, fair and equitable representation. We encourage other States and negotiating groups to consider the proposal and make their own views public in order to enrich the debate.

A second recommendation from the previous round of intergovernmental negotiations, which we also strongly support, is that the intergovernmental negotiations be used as the forum to create input concerning Security Council reform for the Summit of the Future. The intergovernmental negotiations represent a democratic and transparent framework in which all Member States can actively participate. The process must not allow any room for ambiguity in interpretation. It is within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations that our collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive, meaningful and lasting reform of the Security Council must be focused. We should not allow the Summit of the Future to take decisions on Council reform when there is already a process for that purpose, and we would recall the parameters set out in resolution 53/30.

In conclusion, my country urges delegations to participate constructively in the discussions that are about to begin. The reform of the Council is a collective responsibility on which the continued relevance of the Organization will largely depend.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): At the outset, let me congratulate Ambassadors Albanai and Marschik on their well-deserved reappointment as the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. We appreciate the progress made under their able leadership earlier this year and look forward to that continuing.

It is difficult to ignore the context for today's debate. The world, and our multilateral system, face increasingly complex and interconnected challenges. Since we last debated the need for Security Council reform here in the General Assembly, we have grappled with increasing conflict around the world. The impact of Russia's illegal war continues to be felt in Ukraine, and globally. In the Sudan, conflict is causing mass displacement and huge suffering for the Sudanese people. And, of course, we have all witnessed the harrowing images from Gaza, as the humanitarian crisis there deepens. In that regard, yesterday's Security Council resolution calling for humanitarian pauses (resolution 2712 (2023)) was an important step. There are, regrettably, numerous other examples around the world.

The United Kingdom believes that global multilateralism is the best tool that we have to collectively tackle such challenges. We want it to succeed and thrive. That is why we also support multilateral

reform, including reform of the Security Council. The Council's mandate to safeguard international peace and security is as relevant today as it was when the Charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945. But the Council should evolve and expand to make it more representative of the international community that it serves. The United Kingdom continues to call for the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We believe permanent African representation on the Council is long overdue, and we support new permanent seats for India, Germany, Japan and Brazil. We also support the expansion of the non-permanent category of membership, taking the total number of Council members to the mid-twenties. With those changes, the Council would be better able to respond decisively to present and future threats to international peace and security.

Since the General Assembly last met on this topic (see A/77/PV.38), we reaffirm our position regarding the use of the veto. It is a heavy responsibility and, following the introduction of the veto initiative, the Assembly can now rightfully hold vetoing Powers to account. For our own part, the United Kingdom has not exercised its right to use the veto since 1989. As supporters of the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, we remain committed not to vote against a credible draft resolution to prevent or end a mass atrocity, and we encourage all States to join us.

Agreeing the precise model for reform of the Security Council will take hard work and compromise. We must not let the process stall. We therefore support a move to text-based negotiations and commit to working constructively with all partners to find practical solutions that can command the necessary support. In that regard, we welcome the concrete ideas set out by the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on how to make meaningful progress. In the meantime, we pledge our commitment to serious and sustained engagement on Security Council reform.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): I would like to thank the President very much for convening this annual debate, and our thanks also go to the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for taking on their demanding and important task.

Recent and ongoing crises do not make the task of Security Council reform easier, but they make it even more important and relevant. We are not yet at the depths of great Power collaboration that we saw during

the Cold War, but all too often the Council is unable to meet the expectations of the peoples we serve. There is an urgent need for Council reform, which we must take seriously. For us, as is well known, enlargement of the Council is part and parcel of such a reform, but there are other areas in which improvements are necessary.

It was as a response to the dynamic in the Council that Liechtenstein, with partners, put forward the veto initiative in April 2022, which has been referenced in this Hall during our discussion this morning. We are pleased that the implementation of the veto initiative has been swift and effective every time a veto has been cast. We thank the Council in particular for sending a special report to the General Assembly every time they have been invited to do so. At the same time, of course, we are disappointed that the Organization has been called upon so often to apply its provisions. The veto initiative is a measure aimed at recalibrating the balance between the Security Council and the General Assembly, and it is a prompt to empower the Assembly to make full use of the authority given to it under the Charter of the United Nations. As such, the veto initiative can provide great impetus for Council reform, including through the impact it has already had on the use of the veto in practice.

The Assembly must continue to think about how our Organization as a whole can more coherently and more effectively address issues of peace and security. The upcoming Summit of the Future and the discussions leading up to it offer an important opportunity in that respect. Under the Charter, the Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, but its responsibility is not exclusive, as Chapter IV of the Charter makes plain. The process of Council reform must acknowledge the body's strengths and weaknesses and prioritize its functionality, absent more far-reaching change.

We look forward to more detailed and substantive discussions on the essence of Council reform next year, under the continued leadership of our co-Chairs. Key actors agreeing that reform is necessary must put their proposals on the table for discussion. We have transmitted to the co-Chairs our own document outlining an intermediate model, which proposes the creation of long-term renewable seats without additional veto rights. We look forward to a detailed and in-depth exchange on that model and the others that are on the table. We believe that our model has the potential to better represent the geopolitical realities of

today. It is unacceptable and politically unhealthy that some regions — in particular Africa — are seriously under-represented in the Council, while our own part of the world continues to be over-represented. We fail to see how adding new veto powers can be considered beneficial to the effectiveness of the Council, given the already pernicious impact of the existing veto power on its work. But we do agree that a permanent presence of additional countries selected for that purpose by the membership on a regular basis can help to establish a better power balance in the Council and a more accurate reflection of the geopolitical realities of today's world. We believe this to be a balanced, pragmatic and, hopefully, practical approach, and we look forward to discussing it with the membership.

In the absence of wholesale reform requiring Charter amendment, the consistent improvement of Council working methods is key. We appreciate the discussions that we have had over recent weeks and months with Council members on their adherence to the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, support for which continues to grow. Two thirds of this membership have now signed up to this important political commitment. All signatories should take their involvement just as seriously, with support from us, the signatories from outside the Council. We encourage signatories on the Council — which, for many years, have constituted a procedural majority — to work together to initiate discussions and products when doing so could supplement their commitments under the Code.

We must also encourage the Council to implement the Charter as it stands, in particular Article 27, paragraph 3, which has been neglected for far too long. How can the interpretation of the law reflected in the Charter of the United Nations be left to the actor whose behaviour it is supposed to govern? This provision must be implemented in the light of the overall provisions of the Charter, including Article 2, as highlighted by various Council members in recent years and in many statements in this Hall. We also look forward to seeing further statements from permanent members on how they interpret their role in the Council, their future use of the veto and more wide-ranging self-declarations with respect to the principles and commitments, something we believe States aspiring to being given a veto should also share with the membership as an element that would be helpful in our common efforts and discussions to decide on Council enlargement.

Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the convening of this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the reform of the Security Council, which is a matter of paramount importance to the entire membership.

I would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Austria and the State of Kuwait on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process for the seventy-eighth session.

Colombia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group, and I would like to highlight five points that reflect Colombia's vision for this long-awaited and unavoidable reform.

First, as a founding Member of the United Nations, my country has played an active role in the Organization, based on its unwavering commitment to promoting multilateralism and adherence to international law, which are central pillars in building an equitable international rules-based order. Colombian Ambassador Eduardo Zuleta Ángel presided over the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations in 1946 and opened the first session of the General Assembly, at an historic moment that launched a new phase in relations among States based on democratically agreed principles and embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco. We are therefore determined to make the Security Council a more comprehensive body that will allow all the members of our Organization to participate in the elaboration of the rules that emanate from it and to contribute their experiences with and positions on diverse problems on an equal footing.

Secondly, Colombia reiterates that the intergovernmental negotiations are the appropriate platform for the debate on Security Council reform, and we are confident that in 2024 we will advance in the substantive discussions on the five thematic clusters established in decision 62/557 of 2008. A parallel negotiation within the framework of other United Nations processes, such as the Summit of the Future, is not advisable, as it would lead to duplication of efforts and to the dilution of discussions in the appropriate format, namely, that of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Thirdly, we cannot accept a reform based on an expansion in the number of permanent seats or the extension of the veto power. The veto represents an anachronistic, undemocratic and exclusionary mechanism that obstructs cooperation in a collective

security system, and all the more as we face the complex and multidimensional threats that affect us all today in equal measure. Exhausting the negotiations on whether or not to expand the number of permanent members and the veto power hinders the possibility of achieving a just and comprehensive reform and contravenes the democratic principles of equity and equality among States. On the contrary, Colombia believes that the most appropriate option is to increase the number of new seats in the category of elected members, with the traditional mandate of two years and the possibility of re-election for two additional years. The Uniting for Consensus group has developed a platform that illustrates how that would be applied in practice, and we will present it in due course during the intergovernmental negotiations. Consequently, the Security Council model proposed by the Uniting for Consensus group opens the door to developing countries from all regions of the world, offering them the opportunity to work on and contribute to building international peace and security on equal terms.

Fourthly, Colombia reiterates that it is essential to bolster the legitimacy of the Security Council, both in its functioning and its mandate, incorporating suitable tools in order to address current challenges, including lessons learned in such matters as peacebuilding or transitional justice, and thereby increasing its capacity to anticipate and prevent breaches of international peace and security. To cite just one example, we can see how the Peacebuilding Commission has become the epicentre of positive action for the benefit of the rule of law and the protection of children and women in post-conflict contexts, while at the same time promoting productive undertakings that limit the risk of conflict and reinforce peace and well-being.

Lastly, as we seek to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and face challenges such as overcoming the consequences generated by the coronavirus disease pandemic — including high levels of poverty and inequality — and addressing the climate crisis, among others, we cannot ignore the fact that the global governance that we seek to reform is necessarily based on strengthening the capacities of the United Nations as a whole. The Security Council therefore cannot replicate in perpetuity a structure anchored in the past, which grants privileges and prerogatives to a few and replicates the same logic of competing interests among its permanent members that prevailed almost eight decades ago.

Mr. Passmoor (South Africa): South Africa wishes to align itself with the statements made by the representatives of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the African Group, and of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation go to the President of the General Assembly for convening this debate, which is all the more necessary in the current global situation, especially in relation to enduring new conflicts and the threat to international peace and security. Those development necessitate an urgent and committed discussion on reform of the Security Council, for as long as people are denied their rights to fundamental freedoms or subjugated by those more powerful and continue to yearn for their right to development and progress, a just, fair and more equitable world at peace will remain elusive.

The Security Council's mandate, as per the Charter of the United Nations, is based on the imperative that all members work together cooperatively in order to fulfil their mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Sadly, the lack of cooperation between Council members, especially the permanent members, and their pursuit of narrow national interests have cost many thousands of people — innocent women, children and the elderly — in various parts of the world their lives. Unfortunately, that has created the impression that some lives are worth more than others. That criticism will be maintained unless the Council proves otherwise.

The calls for the reform of the Council have grown louder, and the opportunity to carry out such reform lies in Council members taking action, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. However, the Council must be reflective of current geopolitical realities, cognizant that the world is not the same as it was in 1945. Decision-making that seeks to protect the future of humankind cannot be guarded by a select few. For decades, the lack of diversity and the unrepresentativeness of the Council has opened it up to the criticism that it is anachronistic, that it lacks credibility and legitimacy and that it employs double standards in subscribing to international law based on members' own interests.

The lack of permanent representation of countries from the African continent and Latin America further fuels those criticisms while simultaneously eroding the belief in the ability of the United Nations to foster

cooperation between States, to avert the catastrophe of another war that could engulf humankind. To do so, Member States must agree that, in order to demonstrate the urgency of reforming the Council, the intergovernmental negotiations must move to text-based negotiations. The resistance to text-based negotiations we have seen in the past reflects disproportionately on the divergences in view. South Africa firmly believes that if we proceed on the basis of the utility of multilateralism, working collectively to explore common goals, divergences can be moved to convergence. The co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-sixth session circulated a revised elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters in May 2022. That document provides a preliminary basis for text-based negotiations. Member States should engage with that document and use it to take the intergovernmental negotiations forward.

Reform of the Council to include the voice of the historically excluded and marginalized is more necessary than ever. Consequently, we welcome support for the African Common Position, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus of 2005, to ensure that Africa is included in global decision-making structures. The Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report (A/75/982) also remains relevant in that it recognizes that the Security Council could be made more representative of the twenty-first century by enlarging the Council and ensuring better representation for Africa, as well

as systematic arrangements for more voices at the table. The Secretary-General's report also calls for reinvigorated multilateralism, and we look forward to continued discussions on reform of the United Nations and the Security Council as we discuss our envisioned outcomes for the Summit of the Future.

If we are to reinvigorate multilateralism, let us restate here that its utility has been demonstrated at critical points in history after the two World Wars, among others. We need multilateralism now to underpin discussions on the reform of the Council. But we need multilateralism to be inclusive if we are to work together to address our common challenges.

If we are to act collectively, it is urgent that the Council be reformed. South Africa reiterates its willingness to engage as broadly and widely as possible, acting always to ensure that we arrive at multilateral solutions, and we believe that in so doing we can support the substantial progress that is needed to reform the Council.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall, after consideration of sub-items (a) to (e) of agenda item 115.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 121.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.