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Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sitaldin (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 121 (continued)

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

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Despite the efforts of the international community to ensure international peace and security over the past year, the global security situation has been further aggravated. That situation requires that the functions and role of the Security Council be reformed to conform with the rapidly changing international political situation and practical demands.

My delegation would like to clarify its position on the reform of the Security Council as follows.

First, the Security Council should reject the high-handedness and double standards of specific forces and adhere to the principles of impartiality and objectivity in its activities. The Security Council today does not fully discharge its mission and responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

As is well known, at the Security Council meeting held on 18 October (see S/PV.9442), the United States exercised its veto on the draft resolution on a humanitarian pause in the Gaza Strip on the unjust grounds that it did not mention Israel's right to self-defence. What cannot be overlooked is the fact that the United States actively protects and patronizes the atrocities of its ally, which has

caused a humanitarian catastrophe in the Middle East, calling it the "right to self-defence" while branding the just self-defensive measures and peaceful activities for space development of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a threat to international peace and security.

The question is not what is done but who does it. So long as double-dealing logic and practice prevail, the Security Council will never win back the trust of the international community.

Secondly, Security Council reform should be undertaken on the basis of the principle of ensuring the full representation of developing countries. The present structure of the Security Council, centred on the West, does not reflect today's reality, given that the membership of the United Nations has rapidly increased since its founding. As a result, the Security Council has been turned into a political instrument by specific forces and is completely paralysed in its functions.

In that context, my delegation maintains that the intergovernmental negotiations represent the only legitimate platform to discuss the issue of Security Council reform, and, owing to the absence of consensus on the direction and principles of reform, we are against any text-based negotiation that is not conducive to the desired result and would only exacerbate differences and confrontations among Member States.

Security Council reform should be undertaken by consensus through sufficient consultations among all Member States; at this stage, it is reasonable to expand first the category of non-permanent members on the basis of unanimous agreement by Member States.

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However, we emphasize once again that there is no place at all in the Security Council for a country such as Japan, which is an A-class war criminal. In Korea alone, Japan committed acts involving major crimes against humanity that were unprecedented in history, including forced abductions and the drafting of 8.4 million people, the massacre of 1 million and the sexual slavery of 200,000 Korean women and girls for the Japanese Imperial Army.

The fact that such a country is seeking a seat on the Security Council as a permanent member, whose main mission is to maintain international peace and security, makes a mockery of the Charter of the United Nations and represents an insult to international justice.

It is only logical that the Security Council should be composed of peace-loving States Members of the United Nations that can dedicate themselves to the maintenance of global peace and security and enjoy the trust of the international community.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses the hope that the deliberations on this item will make an active contribution to reforming the Security Council into a just and responsible organ.

Mr. Mao (Cambodia): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to President Dennis Francis for having convened this crucial meeting on Security Council reform, an issue that needs to be addressed carefully, taking into account the interests of all Member States. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albani, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. My delegation believes that under their leadership, the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly will make further progress, and they can count on our full support.

Making the Security Council more effective is the desire of every Member State, big and small alike, to strengthen the international rules-based order and address the global challenges that we face today, where peace and security are paramount. Justice and fairness must be at the forefront of our collective effort. Our shared commitment to a more representative and effective Security Council should guide our actions.

In that context, reform should be based on consensus, which is crucial to its success considering that the five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations are closely interconnected. Thus, it is important that Member States should first reach a clear understanding of the principles and goals of Council reform so as to build convergences and bridge differences in the proposals submitted by Member States. Any attempt to force a text-based negotiation without first obtaining consensus from all Member States would be counterproductive and hinder the negotiating process.

Cambodia has consistently advocated for a Security Council reform that aligns with the collective aspirations of developing nations. Our fundamental position is to support the enlargement of both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership in the Security Council based on an equitable and geographical representation that reflects current realities. Thus we strongly believe that any restructuring of the Security Council should make it more inclusive, representative and democratic.

Cambodia is committed to a Security Council reform that leads to meaningful progress. We believe that if the reform process benefits only a select few countries, that would contradict the fundamental principles of fairness and the noble goals that drive our pursuit of reform.

Finally, my delegation wishes to emphasize that the intergovernmental negotiations should be the only primary mechanism for conducting negotiations on Security Council reform, in accordance with decision 62/557. My delegation looks forward to a fruitful outcome of the negotiations.

Mr. Khaddour (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for having convened this important meeting, which once again provides an opportunity for a further exchange of views among Member States and for pursuing multilateral dialogue on this agenda item. I would like also to commend the efforts of the Permanent Representatives of the State of Kuwait and of Austria in co-chairing the intergovernmental negotiations.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the State of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/78/PV.34). I would like to make the following statement in my national capacity.

It is more urgent than ever to reform the Security Council and institutions of international legitimacy in general as more deadly and criminal wars and conflicts are dominating today's world, imperilling the safety of peoples. It is important to recall that those deadly conflicts are the result of the significant failure of the international legitimacy institutions, notably the Security Council, and their faltering performance following the cold war. As a result, the world has witnessed wars, massacres and crises that were for the most part deliberately instigated in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East, bringing misery, poverty and destruction to the peoples of those regions on the one hand and accumulated wealth, stained with the blood of the poor and deposited in brutal Western financial institutions, on the other.

At the turn of the century, unilateralism was inordinately upheld even as multilateralism was deliberately obstructed, if not controlled. Selective and arbitrary interpretations were made of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with complete disregard for their true meaning. The peoples of the world have therefore perceived institutions of international legitimacy as complicit with the great Powers in the destruction, looting and impoverishment of peoples.

Amid the chaos engulfing the international system and its institutions, the crimes of invading and occupying Iraq and Afghanistan were left unpunished, as was the criminal destruction of Libya and the Sudan. The continued violations that the Palestinian people have endured for 75 years have been overlooked, as has the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in Palestine and the Golan. The relevant Security Council resolutions have been invalidated, and attempts continue to put an end to the question of Palestine. Worse still, those violations and practices are mostly perpetrated in the name of international legitimacy and Security Council resolutions, under the pretext of maintaining international peace and security.

New and dangerous precedents that run counter to the spirit and the text of the Charter of the United Nations are being entrenched. Those include, most notably, preventive self-defence, pre-emptive war, the war on terror and self-defence against the non-State actors that those very States brought into being.

Today certain States continue to uphold that destructive formula by means of a hybrid product, the so-called rules-based international order that Western

countries relentlessly uphold and refer to in their statements, to our surprise. But when impartiality, objectivity and respect for the rules are put to the test, those countries fail, and their failure is resounding and shameful.

One such example is the ongoing genocide in Gaza, documented in audio and in video, which has manifested itself in death, bloodshed and destruction and in the screams of children crying out in pain and fear as they await death under the rubble. Faced with that, those countries have not even dared to condemn Israel, and, worse than that, some countries even endeavour to justify Israel's acts as self-defence. Shame on them. The occupier is now entitled to self-defence, while resistance has become an act of terrorism. Exterminating an entire people is now a means to counter terrorism and save the world from the danger that the children of Gaza pose with their toys and dreams.

All that is justified under the so-called rules-based international order championed by the West. Perhaps a more accurate description of that Western product would be the rules-lacking international system.

My country attaches great importance to the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and its reform. We stand ready to engage constructively with all parties during the intergovernmental negotiations, in the spirit of objectivity, to bring about the optimal reform possible. Going forward, that will ensure a well-functioning and effective Security Council that can fulfil its primary mandate of maintaining international peace and security. It will also ensure respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that context, my country's delegation reiterates its support for the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and appreciates the progress that the intergovernmental negotiations have thus far achieved in reaching consensual formulas that can support a comprehensive reform process culminating in a more democratic, representative and effective Security Council, one that can maintain international peace and security.

My country's delegation underscores the importance of in-depth negotiations on the five elements of the reform process so as to reach the broadest consensus possible, free from bloc policies, exclusion, hegemony and dependence. The five interdependent elements of

the reform should be discussed simultaneously and in a balanced manner without prioritizing one over the others. Moreover, that requires all of us to commit to engaging in a participatory reform process, without imposing non-consensual and specific texts with unrealistic deadlines as a basis for negotiations under unfavourable circumstances, which would only deepen divisions and steer us away from the desired reform.

My country's delegation stresses that the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including decision 62/557, must serve as the basis for negotiations. We believe that the intergovernmental negotiations are the fundamental and only forum that can ensure well-functioning negotiations, enable all Member States to engage in the reform process in a constructive and transparent manner and narrow differences so as to bring about a more balanced and representative Security Council that enjoys the acceptance of all Member States. That should be achieved in full respect of the principles underpinning the Charter of the United Nations, without any overlap in the mandates and powers of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Furthermore, the working methods of the Security Council should be upheld, and the Council should not be used as a cover or a tool for interference in the domestic affairs of States.

In conclusion, my country's delegation believes that it is important to rule out any factors or concepts that could foment divisions among Member States on the principles of reform. Efforts should be made to ensure the equitable representation and effective participation of developing countries, so that they can become part of the international decision-making process on international peace and security and exercise their sovereign rights on equal terms with others. The imbalance among the countries of the North and the South should be also redressed for the benefit and in the interest of all States Members of the United Nations. That will bring about greater security, peace and well-being for the peoples of the United Nations, in whose name the Charter was drafted and who must be saved from the scourge of wars, sorrow and injustice.

That is what we resolved to achieve in 1945, when the Organization was established. Let us always recall the opening phrase of the Charter: "We the peoples of the United Nations". Our mission is to represent them and to work for them and only for them.

Mr. Romero Puentes (Cuba) (spoke in Spanish): At the outset, we should like to congratulate the Ambassadors of Kuwait and of Austria on their appointment of as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at this session. We assure them of our support in the continuing dialogue on the necessary reform of the Security Council.

It is vital to address the issue of Council reform by means of a detailed discussion of the five key issues in the process, as stipulated in decision 62/557, in order to achieve the broadest possible consensus. We acknowledge the innovative practices implemented at the previous session and their intent to provide timely information to States on the process and to contribute to more transparent and inclusive discussions.

Our delegation reiterates its support for a holistic reform of the Security Council, including its working methods, in order to transform it into a transparent, democratic and representative body. To achieve that end, in our view, first, negotiations must be informal and transparent, and minutes of the Council's unofficial consultations should be issued, which should be the exception, not the rule. Secondly, its rules of procedure should be adopted, as they remain provisional to this day. Thirdly, an exhaustive and analytical report on its work should be submitted annually to the General Assembly, making it possible to analyse its decisions. Fourthly, its membership should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, with a view to rectifying the inadequate representation of developing countries, which make up a large number of Members of the United Nations.

The inclusion of new permanent members should include at a minimum two African countries, two Latin American and Caribbean countries and two Asian developing countries. It is not right that entire regions such as Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are not represented in that category. The category of non-permanent members should be expanded to at least 15 members.

Cuba has always been opposed to the existence of the veto. However, so long as it is not eliminated, new seats for permanent members must have the same prerogatives and rights enjoyed by current members, including the veto power. We must not establish selective or discriminatory criteria here. We do not want to see the creation of new categories or subcategories of members, because that would further deepen already existing differences and promote divisions within the Council.

Another key element that must be reiterated here is that there must be an end to the Council's interference in areas beyond its mandate, particularly on issues that fall under the exclusive mandate of the General Assembly.

We believe that in the interest of achieving a Security Council that is better for everyone, we must continue to promote broad-ranging discussions among Member States and groups, taking advantage of the good practices implemented since the seventy-seventh session of the Assembly. We trust that in that way we will be able to continue to make progress in narrowing the current gaps among the positions of Member States with a view to bringing about an inclusive and participatory reform aimed at achieving tangible outcomes.

Mr. Dvornyk (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine expresses its gratitude for the convening of this debate, and we join other delegations in congratulating the Ambassadors of Austria and of Kuwait on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations.

As a country that is defending itself from Russian armed aggression, Ukraine reiterates that the urgency of Security Council reform is now clearer than ever. For more than 20 months, since the full-scale invasion started, the Security Council has regularly addressed that situation, but no substantive action to restore international peace and security has been taken. That is not surprising. We praise the dedication of responsible members of the Security Council. That dedication, however, has been persistently undermined by the irresponsible behaviour of the aggressor, which occupies a permanent seat on the Council.

We have spent years discussing different options for increasing the Council's efficacy, with little progress achieved. We will no doubt spend years more with the same result if we are not brave enough to acknowledge the root cause, which is the tacit approval of Russia's de facto occupation of the Soviet permanent seat by means of circumventing the necessary legal procedures envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations.

The first in the long list of Russia's occupations, it has encouraged Moscow to undertake other violations. The Council itself has been taken hostage by Russia's practice of using its platform for the purpose of whitewashing, aggression and violations. Not only have its attempts to act on the Ukrainian track been blocked by Russia, but the Council's toolbox has also been misused by that country to disseminate

propaganda and overburden war-related discussions by duplicating meetings. That seriously undermines the Council's credibility, as do Russia's attempts to turn Council meetings into a vaudeville show, with pop stars and other eccentric guests brought into the Chamber by Russia.

The remedy for the deliberate practice of immobilizing the Council is closely related, although not limited, to the issue of the veto. We are convinced that the veto should not serve as a weapon for those who are obsessed with hatred and war. The legitimate reasons for restricting the use of the veto by a permanent member of the Security Council should therefore include cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as conflicts and situations in which a permanent member is involved and on which it cannot vote impartially owing to a conflict of interest.

Progress on that track is long overdue, and we encourage States Members of the United Nations to focus on the issue in the course of the next intergovernmental negotiations cycle. Different out-of-the-box ideas should be discussed at the negotiating table as well, including the idea of providing the General Assembly with the real power to override the veto. Ukraine also considers it unjust when billions of people do not have permanent representation on the Security Council. The African Union must be there permanently, and Asia deserves broader permanent representation. One should also take into account the fact that Germany has become one of the key global guarantors of peace and security. Latin America must be represented permanently, as must the Pacific States.

There are also a number of other issues that my delegation considers important for moving the intergovernmental negotiations process forward.

First, we could open new avenues for progress if we agree on text-based negotiations. That step would re-energize the process and strengthen its results-oriented nature.

Secondly, we consider that a text that is supposed to serve as a basis for negotiations should properly reflect the entire scope of positions and proposals as well as acknowledge unchallenged proposals as commonalities. Among those unchallenged proposals is strengthened representation on the Council by the Group of Eastern European States. At least one additional seat must be allocated to the Group in the category of elected members.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the delegation of Ukraine will be ready to engage constructively throughout all clusters of negotiations. We remain committed to contributing to our common goal of reforming the Security Council in order to make that organ fully operational and capable of effectively implementing its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ms. Concepción Jaramillo (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Austria, Ambassador Alexander Marschik, and of the State of Kuwait, Ambassador Tareq Albanai, on their appointment to the co-chairmanship of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during this session.

We express Panama's support and cooperation in this complex but vital process. We recognize the significant progress that has been made in the work done during the seventy-seventh session, which represented very important steps forward in terms of transparency in the negotiations and the accessibility of information emanating from the dialogues. Examples thereof are the public broadcasting of the intergovernmental negotiations meetings and the creation of a website with updated information — the first time that the process was publicized in that manner.

Today we are facing greater challenges and threats than almost six decades ago, when the last amendment was adopted that expanded the Security Council, from 11 to 15 members (resolution 1991 (XVIII)). For that reason, Panama reiterates its belief in the imperative need for the Security Council to evolve and adapt to new realities, allowing it to work with greater effectiveness, transparency and accountability. That would enhance in the capacity of the United Nations to respond decisively to the challenges of the twenty-first century, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the fundamental principles of international peace and security.

Panama supports an increase in the number of members of the Security Council. We believe that a feasible number would be between 21 and 27 members. However, before defining such a number, we must strike a balance between the categories and the way to determine which countries will occupy such new seats. We are ready to support an increase in the number of non-permanent members, ensuring an equitable

distribution of the new seats created by said expansion among all existing regional groups, in accordance with Article 23, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations.

Likewise, Panama reiterates its proposal that in an enlarged Council, non-permanent members could be elected for a longer period that could range from three to five years, allowing for the possibility of consecutive re-election. That would allow members to ensure greater continuity in their coordinated efforts to strengthen aspirations to peace and security, as the international community demands.

With regard to representativity, Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations is clear. The members of the Security Council act on behalf of all States Members of the United Nations when they exercise their primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although they belong to a specific region, their actions are aimed at the international community as a whole.

Panama, like the majority of States Members of the United Nations, supports the proposal to allow Africa to expand its representation on the Security Council.

The present global scenario is proof of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the Council over time to discharge its responsibility and its mandate to safeguard international peace and security, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Its principal function is to play a crucial role in the taking of key decisions that are vital to global stability. However, it is being hampered internally in the performance of its duties owing to the indiscriminate use of the veto. We therefore agree with the proposal to limit the use of the veto.

It is crucial that human dignity be given the greatest priority in decision-making. It is more important than political or individual interests. Political will to adopt decisions is what will allow the Security Council to discharge its functions and primary responsibilities as the body charged with ensuring international peace and security.

Fourteen years have gone by in this process of dialogue and negotiations. It is necessary to reflect on how many more years we will need to reconcile all viewpoints. Perfection is the enemy of action. We must move on to action and try to make progress on possible points of convergence.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*speak in Spanish*):

I should like to begin by paying tribute to the work carried out by Ambassadors Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Tareq Albani, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, in leading the intergovernmental negotiations process on Security Council reform during the previous session, and I congratulate them on their reappointment for this term.

During the most recent process, we made progress on creative aspects related to the format and logistics of meetings. Regarding substantive matters, we made headway on constructive dialogues, including the series of informal conversations allowing each delegation better to understand the viewpoints of other delegations.

However, we have not moved towards reform as such, because there is no consensus on where the process should lead us. We trust that at this session we will be able to achieve further milestones in the process. We must therefore take advantage of the experience of the co-Chairs and their teams. Once again, we are not starting from scratch; quite the opposite — we have as a basis the six paragraphs of the oral decision of the General Assembly adopted on 29 June (decision 77/559).

In that respect, I would recall that our ultimate goal is not to enhance United Nations organs; that is but a milestone on the road towards achieving our greater aim, which is international peace and security. Therefore, given the relationship between principal organs, in order to have a stronger and more effective Security Council we also require a more modern and effective General Assembly. We must therefore reaffirm the central role of the Assembly, including on the issue we are discussing: the question of equitable representation on the Security Council and increase in membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

Ecuador wishes to see the Security Council urgently reformed. We therefore stress the pressing need to introduce a solid basis of realism into this dialogue, one that is free of individual or group interests. We reiterate that Ecuador will participate in this new process independently, as it has been doing all along.

Many delegations have referred to the need to reform the Council because of its failure to act on certain issues that are central to the international agenda. But let us make no mistake: no institutional format of a reformed Security Council will be sufficient

to achieve peace and security if its members and the other Members of the United Nations do not fulfil their responsibilities pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Now that Ecuador has been elected to the Security Council, we have been able to observe more closely and, indeed, participate in the elaboration and adoption of provisions pertaining to peace and security. Therefore, we must be careful to assess the work done by the Council in its true dimension. Yes, the Council produces important results. If the opposite were true, I would ask, why do such a vast majority of countries wish to obtain a seat on the Security Council?

It is also undeniable that the Council must be in a position to take action on all the most pressing issues, as was the case the day before yesterday regarding the humanitarian situation in Gaza (see S/PV.9479). But it must be able to act more swiftly. How will that be possible? Not with more permanent members, but with fewer, and not with additional veto rights, but with fewer.

In just one month, on 17 December, we will be commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Assembly's decision to increase the number of members of the Security Council from 11 to 15 (resolution 1991 (XVIII)). But only 13 years later, the desire to expand the Council resurfaced, and that goal we have not achieved. That absence of agreement on reform stands in the way of the possibility of greater participation by all countries of the United Nations in the Council's work, as I have stated on several occasions in recent years.

Ecuador supports the expansion of the category of non-permanent or elected members of the Security Council in order to foster a diversity of ideas and initiatives as well as complementarity and to allow for a greater degree of turnover and participation by the countries involved.

For example, in the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States region — my region — there are candidates standing for the next 32 years — that is, until 2056, more than a decade after the centenary of the United Nations.

Ecuador therefore stresses the need for an urgent reform that would reflect the contemporary world, including the values of alternating representation, which the Assembly has promoted during this century. We will continue to seek a reform that will embrace

equitable representation for the various transregional groups of developing countries, as is the case of the small island developing States. Therefore, any increase would mean a speeding-up of the modernization of the Council's working methods; otherwise it would only work more slowly. Indeed, while we make progress on this process, we can and must continue to strengthen the working methods of the Security Council when it comes to aspects that do not require a reform of the Charter, but, rather, implementation. In that process, various permanent members have put forward once again their support for the reform and expansion of the Security Council, but those statements must be reflected in a consistent fashion in the context of a greater degree of democratization of the practices and procedures of the Security Council.

There must also be a reflection of the appropriate implementation of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, whereby the parties to a dispute must abstain from voting.

We once again reiterate our support for the French-Mexican initiative regarding the curbing of the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities, as well as the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct for the Council's response in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity.

I would conclude by respectfully inviting delegations, in particular those that consolidate the status quo by belonging to one group or another, to consider halfway measures that would make it possible to make progress on reform. One of those could be the possibility of the re-election of those members that desire it, provided that the Assembly so decides.

We are pursuing the process in a spirit of flexibility and mutual respect, avoiding any rifts or the use of confrontational rhetoric, so as to facilitate the best possible convergence of supporting views. In order to achieve results, we need flexibility on the part of all delegations, not just from certain groups or specific countries.

Mr. Segura Aragón (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador welcomes the convening of this important plenary debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

I wish to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude for the important work that has been done by the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. We also congratulate them on their reappointment and are confident that under their skilful leadership, we will continue to make headway in this important process.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Member States of this Organization confer on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, recognizing that the Council acts in their name in carrying out the functions this responsibility confers upon it. The Member States give the Security Council this competency to ensure that there are rapid and effective actions by the United Nations while clearly establishing that the Security Council will act in line with the purposes and principles of our Organization. My country takes this opportunity to recall that those purposes include taking collective and effective measures to prevent and eliminate threats to peace and to overcome acts of aggression or other actions that undermine peace. The settlement of disputes or international situations that could undermine peace is also an issue taken up by this Organization.

We therefore believe that the discussions on Security Council reform are more relevant today than ever. Current circumstances and the inability of the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities make clear the need to urgently reach transformative agreements on its reform. We agree with the President of the General Assembly that, without structural reform, the Security Council and its legitimacy will inevitably continue to suffer, as will the relevance of the United Nations itself. We believe that, without structural reform, millions of people will unfortunately be affected by conflict, and they will continue to be affected by the failure of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. El Salvador supports a reform that would allow the Security Council to be a more representative, legitimate, efficient and transparent body. We support a transformation of the Council that would enable it to act in an agile and responsible way in the face of conflicts and threats to peace.

To make the Security Council more representative, my country supports an increase in the number of its elected members. Recent events have made it very clear that elected members make important contributions and provide the Security Council with opportunities

to reach balanced and significant decisions. We firmly believe that this requires us to increase the participation of regions and countries that have historically been underrepresented in the Security Council. That would allow all Member States to make concrete contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The growing use of the veto by some non-elected members of the Security Council is of great concern to my country. That has caused paralysis in the Council and has seriously undermined its credibility, as well as that of the entire Organization. El Salvador is of the view that it is vital to limit the use of that outdated mechanism while it continues to exist. Accordingly, we supported the political statement on the suspension of the veto in case of mass atrocities, put forward by Mexico and France, and the code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. El Salvador encourages those States that have not yet done so to align themselves with those important instruments. We also support the strengthening of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. In that regard, we highlight the synergies that exist between the intergovernmental negotiations process on Security Council reform and the process of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. We also believe that the discussions on improving the working methods of the Security Council provide a valuable opportunity to strengthen its functioning and to make its activities more transparent.

For more than a decade, the intergovernmental negotiations process has mainly been a forum in which groups and Member States have repeatedly reiterated their positions without reaching any specific agreements on Security Council reform. We regret the fact that the ambition of decision 62/557 to seek a solution that enjoys the broadest possible political support among Member States is still far from being realized. While we recognize that under the leadership of the co-Chairs, major progress has been made in enhancing the working methods, including the live broadcast of the first segment of meetings and the establishment of a digital library with information on the process, much remains to be done to ensure that it is effective and inclusive.

El Salvador therefore adds its voice to those that have highlighted the need to ensure that the compromises made in the seventy-fifth session breathe new life into the debates on Security Council reform

and make this reform a reality. We support the idea that the main goal of deliberations during the current session should be to reduce divergences with regard to the five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations and to increase convergences among Member States. In our view, to achieve that goal, having a far-reaching, realistic and pragmatic dialogue is necessary in areas in which significant differences of opinion still exist. We therefore call on Member States to get involved in this process in a more constructive and flexible manner.

In conclusion, allow me to say once again that El Salvador is committed to participating proactively in future deliberations on the necessary and urgent reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Luemba (Angola): We would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for the importance he attaches to the issue of Security Council reform by appointing the two co-Chairs for the intergovernmental negotiations process for the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. We congratulate His Excellency Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and His Excellency Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. Angola assures them of its full support.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/78/PV.34).

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been under consideration by the General Assembly for too long. Fifteen years after the adoption of decision 62/557, the outcome from the various sessions of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform remains far below Member States' expectations. The more the membership postpones the conclusion of its deliberations on this highly important agenda item, the more complex and uncertain the solution becomes, as the global geopolitical landscape is changing at an unprecedented speed. We stress once again the importance of decision 62/557, which calls for intergovernmental negotiations on the issue of Security Council reform. We consider that the intergovernmental negotiations are the only viable platform to ensure an open, transparent and inclusive process to bring positions closer to achieving an acceptable, balanced outcome.

Angola welcomes the development of the framework document and the revised elements paper on convergences and divergences at previous sessions of the intergovernmental negotiations process, and other relevant documents of the preceding sessions. Those reference documents are all pertinent, as they reflect the Common African Position, as well as the positions of other Member States.

In the past few years, we have witnessed the inability of the Security Council to live up to its responsibility. Recent developments around the world indicate that the Council has not been able to effectively maintain peace and security or demonstrate the unanimity of views of Member States on the need for urgent reform. The transformation of the Council into an inclusive, credible body in the exercise of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is today an absolute necessity. Addressing the increasing challenges that our world is facing today in the field of peace and security requires a restructured, more responsive and more representative Council. Unfortunately, Africa remains the only continent with no permanent seats on the Security Council. Those unacceptable historical injustices must be corrected.

The Common African Position, espoused through the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, calls for the allocation of two permanent member seats to Africa, with all the attendant prerogatives, including the right of veto, as long as it exists. The Ezulwini Consensus also legitimately calls for the five non-permanent seats on the reformed Council to be allocated to Africa so that the African continent can enjoy representation that is commensurate with its current contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. Considering the momentum generated by high-level week regarding the reform of the Council, Angola expects that the co-Chairs of the upcoming session of the intergovernmental negotiations will guide the membership to take a decisive step towards areas of agreement and close the gaps on non-consensual matters in order to achieve a genuine reform of the Council in accordance with the current multipolar world order.

Angola supports the call to commence a formal process of text-based negotiations, guided by the modalities, working methods and rules of procedures of the General Assembly. My delegation also reiterates its commitment to working with all delegations to make tangible progress and to encourage thorough negotiation on the five pillars of the reform process.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): Guyana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Saint Lucia, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/78/PV.34).

We thank the President for convening this annual debate and welcome the reappointment of His Excellency Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and His Excellency Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform for the seventy-eighth session. We commend the co-Chairs on their leadership during the previous session and reaffirm our intention to work constructively with them in advancing the intergovernmental negotiations process.

Security Council reform is perhaps the single topic at the United Nations that generates the most discussion and the least action. Yet the ever-increasing, multidimensional challenges of our time should truly propel us to muster the political will to take action. Climate change, novel pandemics and global terrorism are adding new dimensions to the Council's work by triggering increased refugee flows, terrorist activities, organized crime and weapons trafficking. Moreover, the growing disrespect for the rule of law is cause for great worry. All of those factors threaten to undermine the authority and credibility of the Council and its decisions.

There is widespread agreement that the unfair decision-making rules and anachronistic composition of 78 and 58 years ago are not applicable to today's context. It is that configuration that aids the paralysis of the Council, especially when geopolitics and naked self-interest are not isolated from the overall business of the Council, which affects the timely and decisive response by the Council. Without structural changes to the Council, its legitimacy and effectiveness will inevitably suffer. That is why the world demands a Council that operates on the principles of equality and representation, and one that is fully equipped to respond effectively to today's challenges to global peace and security. We can no longer afford to continue excluding the voices of people from entire regions and continents from deliberations that have an impact on their future. We must also move from calling for change and reform to providing both political will and priority to the intergovernmental negotiations process as we concentrate on achieving more actionable outcomes. Guyana is ready to do its part.

In supporting the call for urgent and comprehensive Council reform, my delegation advocates for an expansion of both categories of membership and for a rotating seat on the Council for small island developing States. We believe that, given its unique experiences, this group of Member States has important contributions to make to the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in the light of emerging and non-traditional threats to international peace and security. We also support the Ezulwini Consensus for greater representation of Africa on the Council. Guyana is prepared to work with all delegations and remains fully committed to the goal of achieving Council reform.

Mr. Khousakoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The current international, geopolitical and security landscapes have underscored the urgency of advancing Security Council reform. We commend our co-Chairs, Ambassador Alexander Marschik and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, for their continued efforts and their initiative to webcast the intergovernmental negotiations debates and establish the intergovernmental negotiations repository website, which, we believe, will contribute to ensuring the transparency and effectiveness of the reform process. We would also like to join others in congratulating them on their reappointment.

Over the years, the intergovernmental negotiations process has provided an essential platform for all Member States to discuss Council reform. Taking into account the emerging security challenges that the international community is encountering, it is more crucial than ever for the Council to fulfil its mandate, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which is to address the ongoing global insecurity and armed conflicts and to prevent another catastrophe for all humankind. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its unwavering support for the reform of the Council through the intergovernmental negotiations process. Importantly, this member-driven process must be carried out in a comprehensive, transparent, inclusive and balanced manner. In that connection, it is vital that all the positions and proposals of Member States be carefully considered and guided by the relevant General Assembly decisions, in view of achieving a consensual outcome that is acceptable to all.

In moving forward, my delegation believes that the reform process must ensure the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories of

Council membership, while taking into account the interests of all Member States and ensuring equitable geographical representation.

Throughout the seventy-eighth session, the Lao People's Democratic Republic looks forward to working closely with all Member States on further advancing the intergovernmental negotiations process. We pledge our full support to the co-Chairs and hope that our deliberations will yield a fruitful outcome.

Ms. Alnesf (Qatar) (*speak in Arabic*): The State of Qatar thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. We commend the efforts of the Permanent Representative of the brotherly State of Kuwait and the Permanent Representative of Austria as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process regarding the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/78/PV.34).

The issue of Security Council reform is a major challenge and constitutes a strategic objective for the international community thanks to its link to one of the main pillars of the United Nations, namely, the maintenance of peace and international security. The Council is the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for maintaining international peace and security in accordance with its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations.

The reform process has become urgent in nature, particularly in the light of the escalating conflicts and crises around the world, at the forefront of which is the catastrophic humanitarian crisis and dangerous escalation in the Gaza Strip, as well as the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Israeli occupation against the brotherly Palestinian people. Such acts portend dangerous repercussions for peace and stability in the region, as well as for international peace and security, particularly in the face of the silence of the international community and the inability of the Security Council to fulfil its mandate and put an end to the death and destruction.

Promoting greater efficiency, transparency and representations within the Council would strengthen its legitimacy and contribute to international efforts to establish a more efficient and transparent global

governance order. Therefore, the success of the reform process through the intergovernmental negotiations requires respect for the basic references, in particular the link between the five elements provided for in decision 62/557, as well as respect for the principle of equality among all States.

In that regard, the State of Qatar has always participated in good faith in regional and international initiatives and efforts aimed at advancing the reform process within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations. In that connection, the State of Qatar is proud to have co-chaired the intergovernmental negotiations with Denmark during the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions of the General Assembly.

Any reform of the Security Council must be accompanied by an improvement in its working methods and its decision-making mechanism.

We reiterate the important role played by the General Assembly in matters relating to international peace and security in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter, including the formulation of recommendations to the Security Council. Indeed, the complementary link between the Council and the General Assembly is a crucial element in restoring the balance necessary for the work of the United Nations.

The question of the right to the veto is a central issue in the reform process. Experience has shown that restricting or refraining from use of the veto, particularly in the case of serious crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, genocides and ethnic cleansing, helps to prevent such crimes.

The aim of the Security Council reform process is to realize the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, any violation of the Charter or international law weakens the role of the United Nations and undermines its credibility and that of its organs. A lack of respect for the sovereignty of States, the threat or use of force and the commission of serious crimes are all tantamount to defying the role of the Security Council and that of the international community and constitute serious violations of international law.

In conclusion, we welcome the progress made in the intergovernmental negotiations, and we call for the process to be accelerated, while building on the points of convergence. We welcome the revised co-Chairs' elements paper on convergences and divergences,

which includes practical and constructive proposals. The State of Qatar hopes to continue participating in that process in order to strengthen the effectiveness, credibility and diversity of the Council and guarantee the representation of all regions of the world, including the Arab region, on an equal footing. It is also necessary to guarantee a transparent and accountable Council capable of taking decisions at the appropriate time to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Tammsaar (Estonia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's important debate. I also thank the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait for leading the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the previous session of the General Assembly, and I of course look forward to working closely with them during the present session.

Estonia continues to regret the lack of meaningful and substantive progress on the reform of the Security Council — the organ that should bear the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as stated in the Charter of the United Nations. Unfortunately, that is not always the case.

I would like to make a few points.

The main goal of the reform endeavours should be a strengthened multilateral world order based on international law, with the United Nations and its Charter at its core. We should use the momentum to restore the political relevance of the Organization. To do so, we need a Security Council that is fit for purpose, transparent, open and accountable, with strengthened decision-making capacity.

To ensure that the Security Council can carry out the tasks set out by the Charter of the United Nations, we need to adjust the structure and working methods of the Council. The central issue regarding the efficiency of the Council revolves around the use of the right to the veto. The veto initiative is an important step towards ensuring accountability within the United Nations system. It has also strengthened the role of the General Assembly in addressing matters of peace and security.

If we cannot agree on all the reform ideas, let us concentrate on commonalities. Let us make the small steps that we can already take today.

We would need further discussions on the respective roles of the Security Council and the

General Assembly, as well as the relationship between the two. We in the General Assembly should be able to collectively overcome a veto in the Security Council if the Security Council itself cannot uphold international law and the principles of the Charter. We have also seen the growing relevance of the “Uniting for peace” resolution, but more has to be done.

Let me make five points.

First, adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and full and unequivocal support for international law, the United Nations Charter and the International Criminal Court should guide us when addressing Council reform.

Secondly, there should be no right of the veto if there is a suspicion that the country that exercised it may have acted against international law. Estonia supports the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint and the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group on not voting against resolutions aimed at ending mass atrocities, including the crime of aggression. We encourage all 130 signatories to the code of conduct, which for many years have constituted a procedural majority, to work together to initiate relevant discussions and products.

Thirdly, in Article 27, paragraph 3, the Charter of the United Nations stipulates that “a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting” in the Security Council. I call on the Council to strictly and always implement that clause, as provided for in the Charter, and as it has been done in numerous cases after the United Nations was brought to life.

Fourthly, as for the future composition of the Security Council, it must adequately reflect the current world. We advocate for a fair distribution among continents and regions. Small, medium and large States should all have a chance to be represented.

Lastly, Estonia advocates for a meaningful results-oriented process to reform the Security Council. Therefore, Estonia supports moving to text-based negotiations.

Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/78/PV.34), presenting in detail the group’s position in today’s annual debate on reform of the Security Council.

We warmly welcome the reappointment of the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations and assure them of our full cooperation.

In my national capacity, I will make several complementarity remarks to the statement made on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group.

Spain believes that the reform of the Security Council is urgently needed. We must strive to make the Security Council more equitable, democratic and representative, and its work more transparent. To that end, the intergovernmental negotiations remains the most appropriate forum in which to make progress. In our approach to the negotiations, we must be realistic, supportive and strive for outcomes that reasonably meet everyone’s expectations. That is precisely what the United for Consensus group has proposed. We are not proposing a reform that will benefit one or only a few Member States. On the contrary, under our proposal, a greater number of Member States would be able to serve on the Security Council, with the ability of some to do so for longer or successive terms, thereby strengthening the influence of its elected members. We believe that elections confer a greater level of legitimacy upon Council members and the decisions made in that organ. We also propose a model for reform that strengthens the representation of States from regions and groups that are currently underrepresented.

Spain believes that the inevitable reform of the Security Council must respond to the reality of today’s world and the global challenges facing the international community. As a member of the United for Consensus group, we will actively contribute to the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations to move forward the reform of the Security Council, always keeping within the negotiations’ framework, which will also lend impetus to other ongoing processes, such as negotiations on a pact for the future.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Permanent Representative of Kuwait, Mr. Tareq Albanai, and the Permanent Representative of Austria, Mr. Alexander Marschik, for their able leadership of the negotiation process during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. We trust that the co-facilitators will continue their effective and thoughtful work during the current session, based on the principle of impartiality, with maximum regard for the opinions of all Member States participating in the process.

Security Council reform is not only one of the most important issues on the agenda of the world Organization, but also one of the most complex. That is because the organ under discussion, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Its decisions play a decisive role in the settlement of armed conflicts, as a result of which the stakes of any miscalculation in that regard are extremely high. Undeniably, adapting the work of the Council to the modern world has been long overdue.

Our position is well known. As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia subscribes to the need to make it more representative through the inclusion of developing States from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The priority remains correcting the historical injustice done to Africa, the current representation of which on the Council in no way corresponds to the total number of States on the continent or to its current role in international affairs. Moreover, we see India and Brazil as worthy candidates for permanent seats on the Security Council, but only on the condition that there is an agreed reform model that involves increasing the membership of the Security Council in both membership categories. At the same time, we still consider that the model of increasing Security Council membership only in the category of elected members is broadly acceptable to us.

It is obvious to those who follow the work of the Security Council that there is a bias towards Western countries and that expanding their representation will not add to our structure the diversity that we all seek within it, since that category of States, first, adheres to approaching issues as a bloc and, secondly, represents a disproportionately small portion of the world's population. It is of the utmost importance that efforts to enlarge the Council do not affect its ability to respond effectively and promptly to emerging challenges. In that regard, we advocate for preserving the compact nature of the composition of the Security Council. Its optimal size should not overly exceed 20 members.

We do not support initiatives that would infringe upon the prerogatives of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the institution of the right of the veto. We should recall that that institution is an important factor in encouraging Council members to seek balanced solutions. The use, or threat, of a veto has more than once prevented the United Nations from being drawn into questionable adventures. That was

made clear to everyone recently when the United States and its satellites attempted to push through a Security Council draft resolution (S/2023/792) in support of Israel's actions in Gaza, and only Russia and China's use of the veto spared the world from such a shameful outcome. The use of the veto in the Council has indeed increased in recent years. However, that situation is a result of the Western members' desire to embarrass their opponents by using their own comfortable majority in the Security Council. They begin to seek the optimal solution only after their opponent has been provoked to the use of the veto. In exploiting their majority, they readily vote against certain decisions, with the understanding that their numerical superiority will not be considered as a veto. We believe that the collective West's hidden veto must also be taken into account in the relevant discussions.

Finally, we all realize that if the Charter of the United Nations had not provided the right of the veto, the Council would have become merely a body to indiscriminately rubber-stamp documents for the benefit of a narrow group of countries and that the United Nations would have been destined to the same unenviable fate as the League of Nations. The founding fathers of our Organization wanted to prevent such a situation, to which end the right of the veto was conceived, which continues plays a key role today in guaranteeing the effectiveness and balanced nature of Security Council decisions, whether we like it or not.

The negotiations that have been under way for many years demonstrate the sincere desire on the part of the overwhelming number of Member States to find an optimal model for reforming the Security Council. At the same time, it is clear that a universal solution that could satisfy everyone, or almost everyone, is not yet in view.

Under the circumstances, we therefore do not see any alternative to continuing patient, step-by-step work, during the current session of the General Assembly, in order to bring negotiation positions closer together. Progress on Security Council reform cannot be achieved by imposing on Member States negotiating documents or other initiatives that are not agreed upon by all participants in the process. The key is to carefully consider the wide-ranging positions of all Member States. This process should become an example of a truly multilateral format for taking decisions so that no participant is left on the sidelines.

In conclusion, I would also like to stress that the platform for intergovernmental negotiations has both a unique and universal legitimacy related to the entire range of issues pertaining to reform. Departure from it or engagement in third-party negotiation platforms, albeit for the most plausible reasons, is counterproductive and could lead to setting the process back many years. We are convinced that if the Member States have the political will, they have all the prerequisites for the process to continue in a constructive way and ultimately lead to the development of a balanced solution that would satisfy all members of our Organization.

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/78/PV.34).

I thank His Excellency Ambassador Tareq Albanai, the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait and His Excellency Ambassador Alexander Marschik, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Austria for their efforts in leading the negotiations during the previous session. I thank them for the progress achieved thus far, particularly on the procedural matters that will contribute to the transparency and inclusivity of the negotiating process. I also congratulate them on the trust newly placed in them to lead the intergovernmental negotiations during the current session and wish them every success.

More than ever, we need genuine and comprehensive Security Council reform to make it more fair in representing today's reality, more effective in keeping pace with current changes and developments faced by the international community and more efficient in addressing common challenges. That was reaffirmed in the General Assembly declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1) and in the call to commit to new momentum in the negotiations on Council reform.

We welcome the progress made during previous sessions in identifying common ground among State positions and proposals and identifying differences that should be further discussed. Those efforts have revealed that various groups and States agree on several commonalities regarding the five negotiating clusters. Progress now requires positive discussions to bring views closer and to agree on a solution that

enjoys common ground capable of garnering the broadest possible political acceptance and achieves the desired genuine and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Security Council reform faces multiple challenges. On several occasions, the Council could not discharge its responsibilities and take necessary actions to maintain international peace and security. Recently, the Security Council was late in taking effective action with regard to the flagrant violations against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. As a result, the humanitarian situation has dangerously worsened in the Strip due to the continued brutal Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians.

The ultimate objective of Security Council reform is to establish a more transparent, credible, equitable, effective and representative Council that can meet the aspirations of the peoples and can address today's challenges through multilateralism. We therefore reiterate the importance of decision 62/557, the intergovernmental negotiations and the five reform clusters. We also need to reach a solution that garners the broadest possible political acceptance.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to fulfilling the purposes and principles of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. We also believe that Security Council reform is a critical element in the comprehensive reform process of the United Nations. We therefore stress the need for tireless efforts and cooperation among Member States in the run up to the Summit of the Future, in 2024, to confront current and emerging challenges and threats. We are ready to work with all Member States in order to reach comprehensive reform that will enable the Council to effectively discharge its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, my delegation wishes to express its gratitude for convening this debate, and we congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on this very important matter.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia believes that structural reform of the Security Council has never been as urgent as it is now, in this painful time. My country acknowledges and respects the positions that have been developed and presented by the various negotiating groups in this process, but we also believe that it is

time to start a new phase of discussions on necessary reforms in order to ensure that the Security Council can fulfil its aim. Those discussions cannot continue to be postponed because millions of lives depend on an efficient, agile and fundamentally accountable Security Council.

My delegation values the notable efforts of the co-Chairs during the previous session to improve the transparency and inclusivity of the process. We also recognize their hard work in the drafting of the revised framework document and the revised elements paper on convergences and divergences. We also believe that the establishment of a repository of documentation on the process and the creative use of more informal modalities are real changes that could better enable us to understand the various positions, which could help us more efficiently achieve consensus. That progress reflects the willingness of States to start to develop a more detailed discussion in the five clusters and must provide a minimum basis for deliberations during the current session. In this new phase of discussions, we must understand the degree of divergence among the positions of various delegations and identify ways of closing the gap. That includes divergences in proposals for changes in Security Council composition, but we must also compare divergent views on how to bring about those changes and how they are to be prioritized, as part of a reform package. That would enable the Member States to identify opportunities to reconcile and simplify proposals.

In the view of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, during this session we must develop proposals that include both a package of consistent changes and an implementation framework with specific time frames. The complexity of this reform requires us to aim for greater clarity regarding the time frame for initiating and finalizing a complete and effective reform. We believe that it is necessary to agree on a minimum set of principles to guide us in the negotiations as we address the most urgent issues, such as the proposal to increase the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council, which will allow for broader representation of visions and better geographical representation. Therefore, my country fully supports that initiative.

Another issue that can no longer wait is that of the veto. In an international community where all States enjoy sovereignty and independence and where the Charter of the United Nations recognizes equality among States as one of its fundamental principles, there cannot

be States with more power than other States. We must work urgently for the veto to be limited or definitively eliminated. At the same time, the General Assembly must be strengthened, given that it is the most suitable and broadest forum in which all the Member States meet.

Moreover, work must be done to make the Council's working methods and procedures more democratic and transparent, so that all States can have access to information and documentation, as that allows for greater involvement in and commitment to the Council's actions. Finally, Bolivia will give high priority to the intergovernmental negotiations during this and next year, and it is committed to continue seeking constructive alternatives, with the ultimate goal of delivering a reform of the Security Council that will ensure international peace and security free of geopolitical interests — faithfully reflecting the diverse world in which we live and in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Lamuwa (Nigeria): I thank the President for convening this debate on agenda item 121, concerning the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the Group of African States, and by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/78/PV.34).

Let me begin by congratulating Kuwait and Austria on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. Nigeria commends their determination to move the intergovernmental negotiations process forward during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. We extend our full cooperation to those efforts. Nigeria commends the co-Chairs for their disposition to continue webcasting and recordkeeping, as well as the informal-informal interactive session, which is energizing the process. We must strive to build on the gains recorded to restore faith in the purpose and process of the reform.

Despite the enumerated gains, more remains to be done to achieve our ultimate objective. During the high-level segment of the seventy-eighth session, world leaders again called for an urgent and comprehensive reform of the system, and in particular of the Security Council, in the light of current global security challenges.

It is obvious that the Security Council is incapacitated and has become ineffective in upholding its mandates to prevent conflicts and stop wars. The current geopolitical situation, the tragic war in Ukraine and the unfolding situation in the Middle East call for a more transformed and transparent multilateral system. The idea that the reform of the Security Council is long overdue has been expressed by Member States for a long time. They have consistently called for a revitalized, more representative and more inclusive body that will bring much-needed value and contribute more effectively to the promotion of international peace and security. In addition, such a reformed body will be more legitimate, more transparent and more accountable in its decisions.

Nigeria remains fully committed to the efforts to ensure a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system that will contribute to upholding that system's principles, objectives and ideals. The Security Council reform is inspired by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The objective of that process is based on the sovereign equality of all Member States and on the need to adhere to the principles of democratization and inclusiveness in the United Nations in order to achieve the all-inclusive reform we desire. Consciously referring to both the framework documents of 2015 and the revised elements paper, we thank the co-Chairs for the further revised version of the elements paper. Nevertheless, even within the latter, more clarity is required on areas of divergence and convergence.

As the pre-eminent global multilateral organization, the United Nations must ensure such participation of all sovereign States and their regional groupings in all spheres of the United Nations system for a more balanced and fairer system. It is in that light that we remain unequivocal in respect of Africa's demand for a reform that will ensure Africa's legitimate right to fair and equitable representation on the Security Council. African States offered a coherent, practical and persuasive blueprint for the Council's reform, which asserts the right of the continent, which has long been marginalized. More recently, the veto has become a weapon of interests. That is why Africa believes that the veto should be abolished. Nonetheless, as long as it remains, it should be extended to all new members in the permanent category of a reformed Security Council.

My delegation appreciates the overwhelming support for the African position and underscores the necessity of safeguarding it. We also recognize the legitimate aspirations of other regions and other Member States to be fully represented in the Council.

With regard to working methods, the Council should adopt its working methods to ensure transparent, efficient and accountable functioning, in the light of the anticipated increase in its membership. It should ensure the full participation of all members of the Security Council in its work, including the holding of the presidency of the Security Council by non-permanent members at least once during their tenure. That will entail refraining from using Chapter VII of the Charter for issues that do not pose a threat to international peace and security; avoiding any recourse to the imposition or prolongation of sanctions on any State, which serves only the interests of one or a few States as against the general interest of the international community; and undertaking a revision of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. Nigeria advocates for a single consolidated text, preferably with attribution; that is the best way to get to real negotiations. In addition, we look forward to more open debates and to the mobilization of the necessary political support for this annual reform.

In conclusion, we continue to acknowledge the intergovernmental negotiations as the legitimate forum for the achievement of our shared and common aspiration to promote a fairer world, based on universalism, equity, regional balance and a just world through equitable representation on the Security Council. We look forward to a constructive working relationship with the President of the General Assembly and the entire membership of the Assembly within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations, with a view to building on the progress made during previous sessions of the General Assembly.

Mr. Makarevich (Belarus) (spoke in Russian): The reform of the Security Council is a question that directly concerns the national interests of all the States Members of the United Nations without exception. The previous discussions have shown how vulnerable and fragile the process of finding a compromise can be when seeking to reform the Security Council. We believe it necessary to continue the search for a comprehensive solution to the current disagreements on this issue, taking into account the interests and concerns of all parties through dialogue and consultations.

Security Council reform is of great importance, and practical steps in that direction, without exaggeration, determine the peace and security on our planet. That is why we all have a responsibility to ensure that this project is as clear and precise as possible. That can be achieved only when the dialogue is based exclusively on consensus.

There is no doubt that the Security Council must be adapted to the changing conditions of the contemporary world. We recognize the need to adapt the Council's configuration to the realities of the contemporary world. Belarus fully supports the relevant efforts of the United Nations Member States aimed at broad dialogue to develop a path towards reform of the Council. In that regard, we continue to welcome the gradual and systematic consideration of all thematic clusters covering all areas and the whole range of the most pressing issues under discussion.

The current issues are interrelated and should be considered in relation to each other. We note the importance of preventing one element from taking precedence over another.

We call for preserving the current format of the intergovernmental negotiations. We see no alternative to it. Our colleagues from China and Russia have already spoken about that previously (see A/78/PV.35). Once again, we recall that the format is enshrined in decision 62/557. Any attempt to undermine the current format and the established practice of intergovernmental negotiations could destroy that already vulnerable process which, while gradual, is nevertheless moving towards finding a compromise.

Currently, there are major differences in the Member States' views with regard to categories of membership in the context of Security Council reform, as well as to the right of veto. There are fundamental differences in States' approaches with regard to the format of the reform. We note that none of the proposed solutions enjoys consensus support. That sends the clear message that, in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution, we must continue moving forward incrementally on the basis of mutual respect and trust.

We consistently call for greater representation of developing countries within the Security Council. In that regard, we support what was expressed by the representatives of Singapore and India (see A/78/PV.34 and A/78/PV.35). We would welcome the expansion of that primary organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, including through an additional seat for the Eastern European regional group. However, given the uncertainty of the outcome of the negotiation process, it would be premature to begin conducting text-based negotiations. Within these walls, we often see negotiations that are not centred on dialogue but rather on drawing up, at any cost, a document, without ensuring universal support. We oppose such

an approach — the so-called principle of attribution or authorship by text — because we believe it leads to only greater divergences among parties' positions and further entrenches their viewpoints, which is harmful. Sooner or later, reform will become practical, and it would be unwise to ignore the opportunities provided by that process.

However, everything has its own time. At present, all countries are facing a number of global challenges, and the most important thing is to maintain and preserve unity. Belarus is ready and calls on all countries to take incremental steps towards each other, including in the context of Security Council reform in the framework of the General Assembly, in order to create an environment conducive to cooperation for the constructive implementation of the current agenda.

I would like to conclude by quoting the famous Belarusian writer Yakub Kolas. "Mutual respect is the first step to freedom. The strength of the majority is in consent."

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I thank the President for convening this debate on a matter of utmost priority to many Member States, Kenya included.

Kenya aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/78/PV.34). I will make these additional remarks in my national capacity.

I congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Tareq Albanai of the State of Kuwait and His Excellency Ambassador Alexander Marschik of Austria on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations (IGN). I assure them of Kenya's continued support as they build upon the progress made during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

The current global security governance architecture is not in good shape. The Security Council is unrepresentative, undemocratic, divided, indecisive and unable to effectively discharge its critical mandate. As a result, that important United Nations body suffers increasing levels of mistrust and discontent. Nothing demonstrates that more than the current conflicts and crises around the world, including the worsening situation in the Middle East, amid the failure of the Security Council to take immediate and decisive actions.

We appreciate that, during the seventy-seventh session, we were able, with the leadership of the co-Chairs, to make some progress in the IGN process, including the holding of open meetings through webcasting, as well

as recordkeeping. However, progress has been slow on the substantive issues in the five clusters of the IGN process. The time is long overdue for bold, ambitious and decisive actions to restore trust and confidence, not only in the broader multilateral system, but also the Security Council. Otherwise, our ambitions for a new agenda for peace will remain a pipe dream.

Today Africa remains unequal in the highest levels of global decision-making. Its unique status as the only region without representation in the permanent category and underrepresented in the non-permanent category in the Security Council is an indictment of the multilateral system. Therefore, the Common African Position, as espoused by the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, is a modest and achievable proposal to rectify an injustice and correct a glaring imbalance. Indeed, Africa's demand for two permanent seats, with its prerogatives, including the right of the veto, if retained, along with two additional non-permanent seats, is not merely about justice. It is also about ensuring an equal footing in decision-making on matters of international peace and security, in particular, those that concern us, the people of Africa.

We thank the delegations that identify with the African position and support prioritizing an increase in African membership in the Security Council, including in the permanent category. We must all work together to deliver a reformed Security Council that is truly representative, transparent, efficient, effective and accountable. We should seize every available opportunity that would accelerate Security Council reform. The Secretary-General's seminal brief issued last July on a New Agenda for Peace clearly demonstrates and emphasizes the urgent need for the reform of the Security Council. Without prejudice to the process of intergovernmental negotiations, the Summit of the Future should therefore be leveraged as a once-in-a-lifetime platform to galvanize political support for expeditious Security Council reform.

Mr. Anulo (Ethiopia): My delegation wishes to thank the President for convening this important debate. We also wish to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Kuwait and Austria for their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process.

Ethiopia associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/78/PV.34).

Discussions on the Security Council reform agenda have been ongoing for too long, and the call for practical

actions has become increasingly urgent and imperative. Reform is a must because a reformed Council that reflects the current global reality is needed to effectively respond to contemporary challenges in maintaining international peace and security. It is in that context that Ethiopia has been actively participating in the intergovernmental negotiations process, firmly believing that the task of reforming the Security Council is achievable and within reach. Ethiopia has always maintained its principled position in support of comprehensive reform of the Security Council that encompasses all five clusters stipulated under decision 62/557.

Africa remains the only major continent without representation in the permanent category and underrepresented in the non-permanent category of the Security Council. That historical injustice must urgently be redressed. Ethiopia therefore calls for Africa's representation in the reform of the Security Council to be given the necessary priority. We are encouraged to see wider recognition and broader support by Member States for Africa's position in that regard in the deliberations of the intergovernmental negotiations process. As clearly stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, we also wish to underscore that Africa will decide the modality by which to determine its representation.

On the issue of the veto, Ethiopia does not believe that this system is democratic or effective. But if retained, Africa's demand for two permanent seats, with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, should also include this right.

In improving the working methods of the Security Council, we wish to see an accessible, accountable, democratic, representative and more effective Security Council that responds to the needs of the times. That is critical to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of Security Council reform.

Ethiopia wishes to seize this opportunity to reiterate Africa's Common Position on Security Council reform, which stands on its own under the coordination of the Committee of Ten with the oversight of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. We will continue to engage in the intergovernmental negotiations process in a constructive manner under this consolidated Common African Position as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Finally, my delegation expresses its readiness to closely work with the President, the co-Chairs

and all Member States to ensure progress of the intergovernmental negotiations process.

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

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

Mr. Nagano (Japan): It is regrettable that a certain Member State made a groundless statement regarding Japan yet again today. As the record clearly shows, Japan has been consistently contributing to the United Nations and the international community in a positive way, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic Republic of Korea): My delegation is compelled to take the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the remarks just made by the representative of Japan.

Let me reiterate our unwavering position once again that a country like Japan, a class-A criminal State, should never be allowed to be a permanent member of the Security Council at any cost. There is no doubt that Japan is a war criminal State that inflicted immeasurable misfortune and suffering upon humankind by invading many Asian countries in the past century, thereby placing its name under the shameful term of “enemy State” on the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, Japan is the only country that still denies its past crimes against humanity, including the forcible trafficking and abduction of 8.4 million young and middle-aged Koreans, the genocide of 1 million innocent Koreans and the military sexual slavery of 200,000 Korean women and girls. Instead of sincerely apologizing and compensating for its past crimes against humanity, Japan is further accelerating its scheme to become a military Power, in order to realize its ambition to re-invade, while beautifying its history of aggression.

Even today, in defiance of strong protests and the criticism of the international community, Japan discharged nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, causing irrevocable damage to the safety of humankind and the marine ecological environment. It is another crime against humanity in the current century to bring about nuclear disaster and gravely threaten global peace and security. That cannot be overlooked under any circumstances.

If Japan is allowed to become a permanent member of the Security Council, it is clear that it will only repeat its past, stained with invasion and plunder — far from maintaining international peace and security. There is no guarantee that it will not bring about the tragedy of plundering the world again. My delegation reiterates once again that the Security Council should naturally be composed of peace-loving States that are willing to contribute devotedly and practically to the maintenance of international peace and security and to protect the life and safety of humankind worldwide.

Also, in response to the groundless statement made by the representative of South Korea yesterday (see A/78/PV.35), we totally object and strongly condemn those reckless claims as a grave political provocation aimed at trying to tarnish the image of our State by fabricating non-existent facts. We strongly urge South Korea to stop deceiving the international community with those false and groundless claims and disinformation.

Mr. Nagano (Japan): I will not repeat Japan’s position against the groundless statement made by the representative of North Korea. On another point, I deeply regret that the representative of North Korea has chosen to refer to a matter that holds no relevance to the debate on Security Council reform.

Regarding the water treated by the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) at the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power station, Japan never discharged the treated water into the sea in a way that endangers human health and the marine environment. The comprehensive report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also concluded that the approach to the discharge of the ALPS-treated water into the sea and associated activities are consistent with relevant international safety standards and that the radiological impact on humans and the environment is negligible. The IAEA and international experts have been reviewing our efforts, and their review and monitoring will continue in a transparent way. This matter should not be subject to political discussions. We cannot accept any baseless allegations that lack scientific evidence. Japan remains fully committed to upholding transparency by providing information based on scientific evidence.

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

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.