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President: Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 122

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

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my great pleasure as we begin our meeting today to consider agenda item 122, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. This issue in particular is central to the reform process of the United Nations. There is clear consensus among the majority of the members of the international community on the need for the United Nations in general, and the Security Council in particular, to adapt to the changes that have been taking place internationally since 1945.

Our meeting today is of the utmost importance, because it constitutes the starting point for the resumption of discussions of this vital issue, which I have personally grown to appreciate over my more than a decade of experience at the United Nations. I am well aware of just how important this issue is and realize its centrality to the wider question of United Nations reform.

At the beginning of my presidency, I identified Security Council reform as one of the four pillars of my programme of work for the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Here I would also like to mention my statement of 16 September addressed to

Member States, in which I emphasized my confidence in the leadership of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, in chairing the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. I should also like to affirm my full support for his endeavours in guiding these negotiations. I hope that Member States will adopt a flexible and constructive approach during the forthcoming round of negotiations.

While I have no doubt that there continue to be tangible differences between the positions of different parties on various aspects of the issue, I hope that the discussions during these intergovernmental negotiations will lead to the formulation of well-defined steps in the reform process, steps, we hope, that will attract the broadest possible acceptance on the part of Member States, in the manner defined in decision 62/557.

I believe that achieving genuine progress in reforming the Security Council will make a positive contribution towards increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the response of the United Nations to global challenges. In that regard, I have no doubt that we all agree on the urgent need to bring the United Nations closer to and more conformable with the realities of the twenty-first century.

The general debate at the sixty-sixth session reflected world leaders' shared views on the pressing need for Security Council reform at the earliest opportunity, reform that will make the Council more efficient, transparent, inclusive and democratic. Here, I

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should like to make it very clear that the primary responsibility for realizing our aspiration to reform the Security Council lies with the Member States. The chances for our success will be improved by our collective will and by putting to good use the points on which agreement was reached during the intergovernmental negotiations.

Finally, I sincerely encourage the Assembly to fully engage in the relevant discussions with flexibility and effectiveness. I hope that our discussions today will move matters forward and make it possible to achieve the progress desired in a manner that garners the widest possible political support among Member States. I wish you every success.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I have the pleasure to speak today on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I would like to express the Movement's appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly at the sixty-fifth session, for his efforts and goodwill in advancing the important issue of Security Council reform.

I would also like, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to commend you, President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for putting this issue at the top of your priorities for the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly, and for expressing your commitment to exerting every all efforts to reform the Security Council, based on the collective will of the Member States. The Movement congratulates you, Sir, for reaffirming confidence in His Excellency Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, and in his continuing to serve as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council, which will help us to achieve maximum progress during the sixty-sixth session.

The Non-Aligned Movement attaches great importance to achieving concrete results on Security Council reform through intergovernmental negotiations and in accordance with decision 62/557 and subsequent decisions 63/565, 64/568 and 65/554. In that regard, The Movement's position is clearly reaffirmed in section E of the final document (A/65/896, annex), adopted by the sixteenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Bali, Indonesia, in May.

The Movement believes that the reform of the Security Council should be addressed in a prompt, comprehensive, transparent and balanced manner, without setting artificial deadlines, in order to properly reflect the needs and interests of both developing and developed countries, while at the same time addressing all substantive issues relating, inter alia, to the question of membership and regional representation and the Council's agenda, working methods and decision-making process, including the veto.

That is why the Ministers of the Movement, at their recent gathering in Bali, reiterated that decision 62/557 will continue to be the basis for intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. They also stressed that the enlargement of the Security Council and the reform of its working methods, as the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, should lead to a democratic, more representative, more accountable and more effective Council.

In that context, the Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement acknowledged the historical injustices against Africa with regard to its representation in the Security Council, and expressed support for increased and enhanced representation of the African continent in the reformed Security Council. They also took note of the common African position as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is of great importance to the Movement, as it is crucial for the effectiveness of the Council. Transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe and preserve in all its activities, approaches and procedures. The rules of procedure of the Security Council, which have remained provisional for more than 60 years, should be formalized in order to improve its transparency and accountability. Moreover, the Movement rejects any attempts to use the Council to pursue national political agendas and stresses the necessity of non-selectivity and impartiality in its work.

In that regard, there is an urgent need for the Security Council to adhere to the powers and functions accorded to it by Member States under the United Nations Charter. The Council should therefore stop encroaching on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council by addressing issues that traditionally fall within the competence of those organs. Close cooperation and coordination among all principal organs are highly indispensable in order to enable the United Nations to remain relevant and capable of meeting existing, new and emerging threats and challenges.

The Security Council should also avoid resorting to Chapter VII of the Charter as an umbrella for addressing issues that do not necessarily pose a threat to international peace and security. It should, rather, fully utilize the provisions of other relevant chapters, where appropriate, including Chapters VI and VIII, before invoking Chapter VII, which should be a measure of last resort.

Security Council-imposed sanctions remain an issue of serious concern to the Non-Aligned Movement. The use of sanctions raises fundamental ethical questions as to whether suffering inflicted on vulnerable groups in the targeted country is a legitimate means of exerting pressure. In that regard, the objectives of sanctions regimes should be clearly defined, and their imposition should be for a specific time frame and should be based on tenable legal grounds and be lifted as soon as the objectives are achieved. The conditions demanded of the State or party on which sanctions are imposed should be clearly defined and subject to periodic review.

The Movement remains committed to the dynamic and ongoing process of overall reform of the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council, in accordance with the objectives and scope of the review exercise set out in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). Such reform should not be considered an end in itself, and must be comprehensive, transparent, inclusive and balanced. It should be pursued in an effective and accountable manner, fully respecting the political nature of the Organization, as well as its universal and democratic character, consistent with the Charter. In that context, any reform measures should be decided by Member States through an intergovernmental process and the voice of each and every Member State must be heard and respected.

In my national capacity, I would like to associate my remarks with the statement to be delivered by the

Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group and to add the following elements.

Egypt reiterates its long-standing position towards achieving tangible progress and reaching concrete results in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform on the basis of consensus decision 62/557. Paragraph (d) of that decision clearly stipulates that the intergovernmental negotiations should be based on proposals submitted by Member States. The rationale is to preserve the intergovernmental nature of the process and avoid jeopardizing the neutrality and impartiality of the President of the General Assembly and the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The five key issues of our intergovernmental negotiations are clearly defined in paragraph (e) (ii) of decision 62/557. They should remain inextricably linked and constitute an integral and inseparable package that must be agreed upon together. Accordingly, any proposed outcome of the review exercise should include all five negotiable issues and should garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States.

Our efforts should be directed at reaching an agreement that would have an effect on the power structure of the Security Council and allow equitable representation of all regions. Selectivity in dealing with the five key issues or attempts to classify them into points of convergence and divergence will only divide Member States and jeopardize the progress achieved so far.

Egypt, along with the African Group, continues to call for agreement first on the principles and criteria of the negotiations regarding the five key issues before embarking on any drafting exercise involving merging language or streamlining positions in the compilation text, or even discussing any proposed draft resolutions.

In full observance of the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, limiting the expansion of the Security Council only to the non-permanent category or to the enlargement of the permanent category without veto rights is not an option for Africa, as both options will neither change the power structure of the Council nor correct the historical injustice to the African continent.

Accordingly, Egypt believes that one way to advance negotiations on the veto rights of new and

current permanent members alike would be the consideration of restricting the scope of application of the veto rights accorded to both current and new permanent members to exclude cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, grave violations of international humanitarian law, the cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties and the election of the Secretary-General.

Regional representation is also closely linked to the size of the enlarged Security Council. Therefore, when the Ezulwini Consensus states that Africa is demanding, inter alia, no less than two permanent seats with all prerogatives and privileges, including the right of veto, that should be read in the sense that Africa might demand more permanent seats if other regions, smaller in size and number, are to get more seats than justified by their ratio of representation among the wider membership. Despite the continued efforts and attempts within the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to improve the Council's working methods, none of those efforts has met the aspirations of the larger majority of Member States, as the views of the General Assembly have not been taken into consideration in that exercise.

Enhanced representation of developing countries and small States in the Security Council remains one of the fundamental pillars of the reform process since the adoption of resolution 48/26. Egypt stresses the necessity of taking duly into account the position of the members of the League of Arab States demanding a permanent seat for the Arab Group in any future expansion in the category of permanent membership of the Council. That position was reaffirmed in the Sirte Declaration adopted by the Arab Summit in its ordinary session of 28 March 2010. We also stress the necessity of taking into account the position of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which demands adequate representation of the Muslim Ummah in any category of membership in the expanded Council.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the group of countries that sponsored draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1. The L.69 group is a diverse group of 40 countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific that are united by a common cause, namely, to achieve lasting and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The L.69 group is firmly convinced that expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council is needed in order to better reflect contemporary world realities and achieve a more accountable, representative and transparent Security Council. Those are the principles that we feel should be at the heart of Security Council reform. And we are convinced that the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States think along similar lines.

The L.69 position is well known. But let me recap briefly that the L.69 group calls for expanding the Security Council from the present 15 to around 25 or 26 members, with the inclusion of new permanent and non-permanent members as per the Charter of the United Nations. The new permanent members would include countries from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The new non-permanent members would be from Asia, East Europe, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and from Africa, taking into account the need to ensure representation from developing countries, including small island developing States, wherein participation shall be based on the concept of rotating seats. There must also be improvement in the working methods of the Council and in the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Let me take this opportunity to applaud your commitment, Mr. President, to this important agenda item, which was evident in your opening address to the General Assembly on 13 September. You also acted fast in reappointing Ambassador Zahir Tanin as the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. That was a wise decision and the L.69 group applauds you for that.

The L.69 group will continue to work actively and constructively with Ambassador Tanin. We were instrumental in starting the intergovernmental negotiations. We remain engaged in those negotiations on the understanding that the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the relevant General Assembly resolutions require support from a two-thirds majority of the United Nations membership for any decision in that regard. We appeal to Ambassador Tanin, through the President of the General Assembly, to convene a meeting on the intergovernmental negotiations as soon as possible.

Let me say a few words on the L.69 group's assessment of the state of play. Member States have been engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations since 2009, including text-based negotiations, which began in mid-2010. Substantial progress has been made and a third revision of the negotiation text was issued in the beginning of the year. At the first exchange of the seventh round of intergovernmental negotiations on 2 March, it readily became evident that we were once again at an impasse. A small group of delegations expressed their opposition to the third revision of the negotiation text, throwing the negotiations into suspense mode.

To break the existing deadlock, a broad coalition of Member States undertook an initiative aimed at taking the process forward. The initiative took as its starting point the assessment made by Ambassador Tanin in September 2009 that the reform model seeking an expansion in both categories "commanded the most support from the delegations taking the floor." Further, the initiative was completely in accordance with the parameters laid down in General Assembly decision 62/557, which established the intergovernmental negotiations, and other relevant resolutions.

The initiative consisted of reaching out to Member States based on the proposition that the reform of the Security Council should include expansion in both of the Charter-provided permanent and non-permanent categories as well as improvement on its working methods. The results of the outreach indicated that the proposition enjoys broad support from delegations across various regions. To date, an overwhelming majority of delegations have signalled their support for the proposition, including 80 that have done so in writing.

The L.69 group believes that such strong support for the initiative should be the basis for further discussions in the intergovernmental negotiations.

Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone): Permit me, on behalf of the African Group of States, to thank you, Sir, for convening this debate on agenda item 122, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". Let me at the outset express thanks and appreciation to those Member States that have responded to the call of the facilitator and sent in documents outlining their respective initiatives on

Security Council reform, the results of which have been circulated to the entire membership. We share the Facilitator's belief that such documents would help inform the process as it moves forward and their circulation helps to maintain an open, transparent, inclusive and comprehensive process.

The facilitator has made his usual commitment to the process and circulated the documents he received under cover of his letter of 9 September. We are gratified by and take comfort in the declaration of support for the African cause that was unequivocally and forcefully documented in the outcome and principles that emerged from the ministerial-level conference on global governance and Security Council reform held in Rome on 16 May this year, which was attended by 123 delegations, including the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

The outcome and principles were contained in the facilitator's bundle. They expressed the common will that emerged at the meeting to correct, first of all, the injustice done to the continent, which is the subject of 70 per cent of the Council's decisions but is, at the same time, underrepresented in it.

As we continue to hold consultations and remain open to further exchanges with all interested groups and Member States that have proposed or are likely to propose initiatives on Security Council reform, we urge the facilitator, in keeping with the principle that the reform process is membership-driven and requires the broad support of the general membership, to translate and implement that common will of nearly two-thirds of the membership into action. That can be done by factoring the special needs of Africa into the reform process as a special case in the facilitator's programme of work during this session, in order to ensure that due regard is given to the voice of such a substantial majority of Member States.

We underscore our firm commitment to that very important issue and look forward to much progress during this session. Indeed, all Member States have recognized the need to reform the Security Council to make it more representative, more democratic and more legitimate. Therefore, all of us must seek to agree on a realistic reform that takes into account the core values of the United Nations, namely, inclusiveness, democracy, accountability and transparency.

After nearly two decades of debate, we seem to be gradually approaching a point where the United

Nations will lose its credibility, if we fail to generate the necessary political will to make progress on this very crucial issue. In that regard, we urge Member States to be flexible in their quest for a more secure world and a more representative and democratic global governance system.

Allow me at this juncture to refresh our memories of the call made by His Excellency Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Chair of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the United Nations Security Council and President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, in his statement during the general debate, on 23 September, in which he said:

“There is an increasing need for the Security Council to be more representative, inclusive and democratic, as well as for an improvement in its working methods and its relations with the General Assembly. The status quo is increasingly unacceptable and has the potential to undermine the legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency of the Council’s work in maintaining international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that we reaffirm our commitment to the standards and principles of this noble Organization by generating the political will for a reformed Security Council that would pave the way for correcting the historical injustice done to Africa, through the allocation during this session of two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats to Africa, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.” (A/66/PV.20, p. 3)

It is clear from President Koroma’s address as Chair of the African Union Committee that ours is a continental aspiration with which we believe all Member States and other stakeholders are now very familiar. In that sense and in the African context, we recognize the importance of paying due regard to, and strengthening the profile of, the regional dimension in a reformed Security Council.

The present geopolitical realities and circumstances clearly dictate the common sense and fairness of Africa’s full and effective representation in all decision-making bodies of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council. We reaffirm that, in accordance with the common African position set forth in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, Africa’s full representation in Security Council means, first, no less than two permanent seats together with all

the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto as long as it continues to exist; and secondly, five non-permanent seats, with the African Union being entrusted with the responsibility of selecting Africa’s representatives in the Security Council. It is our collective responsibility to correct the present imbalance in the composition of the Council, so as to give it greater legitimacy as an organ that is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We note that the task of the facilitator is not an easy one. The facilitator faces an array of initiatives and positions of interest groups and Member States on how to move forward and/or how to turn the third revision of the negotiating text into an acceptable working document, and must also respect the common will of a substantial majority of Member States to correct, first of all, the injustice done to the African continent. However, we pledge to continue to engage in the process as usual, in good faith and with mutual trust, in order to achieve a reform that will garner the widest possible political acceptance of the entire membership within the shortest possible time.

In conclusion, we hope that this session will set the tone for a more frank and lively debate in the intergovernmental negotiations, in which there will be more flexibility, compromise and decisiveness. We also hope that it will generate the political will necessary to bring about a speedy reform of the Security Council in accordance with the vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit.

Mr. Goddard (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

At the outset, CARICOM wishes to align itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the group of sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1.

We also wish to place on record our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your continued attention to this matter, which is of high priority to a great number

of Member States, including those of CARICOM. We also join previous speakers in commending His Excellency Ambassador Tanin, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, on his role as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations and we look forward to further progress in the negotiations during the current session.

In CARICOM's view, a reformed Security Council would ideally have the following characteristics. First, it should provide for the equitable representation of developing countries in terms of numbers.

Secondly, it should give continued and heightened priority to accommodating and responding to any complaint made by developing countries with regard to threats to their security.

Thirdly, a reformed Security Council should command, to a greater and broader degree, the respect necessary to be able to discharge its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Fourthly, it should be guided by working methods that are demonstrably flexible and transparent. Member States should have the right to participate in matters of which the Security Council is seized that have direct or indirect bearing on them. States wishing to express solidarity should also be allowed to participate.

Fifthly and finally, a reformed Security Council should be more responsive and accountable to the entire membership, on whose behalf it acts.

After almost two decades of discussions on the subject of Security Council reform, it is understandable that there is growing impatience for action, a desire for change that refuses to be denied. We in CARICOM are strongly of the view that the Council must be reformed. We share the impatience. As small vulnerable States and strong proponents of multilateralism and the principle of the equality of States, we have reiterated time and time again our principled position on this issue, a position endorsed by our Heads of State and Government and one which I now reaffirm.

First, CARICOM supports the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We are of the view that expansion should take particular account of those regions that are currently underrepresented or not represented at all, namely Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Secondly, we believe that special provision must be made for small island developing States to serve on the Council in the non-permanent category. Thirdly, we support the increase in the membership of a reformed Council from 15 to around the mid-twenties. Fourthly, we support comprehensive improvement in the Council's working methods, including in its relationship with the General Assembly.

Fifthly, we support abolition of the veto, an anachronism that has no place in a United Nations of the twenty-first century. In our view, it undermines our efforts to make the Council more transparent, accountable and legitimate. As long as the veto is retained, however, we believe it should be extended to all new permanent members of the Council.

In spite of CARICOM's impatience for change, we believe in due process. CARICOM looks forward to the early resumption of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform and assures its Chair of our full cooperation in carrying this process forward. CARICOM firmly rejects any notions of partial, interim or intermediate approaches to Security Council reform, which fail to address the compelling need for comprehensive Council reform and ignore contemporary global realities. In this as in all United Nations matters, we continue to be guided by our deep respect for the principles and the spirit of the Charter. As an Organization comprising sovereign Member States, we must practice the democracy and the transparency that we preach.

In closing, I reiterate CARICOM's full support for the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform and our commitment to work with all Member States to bring about meaningful, democratic reform of the Security Council. CARICOM pledges to continue to be actively engaged in this process.

Mr. Chua (Singapore): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the group of five small nations (S-5), comprising Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland.

It has been more than two decades since the end of the Cold War, when talk of reforming the Security Council gathered pace. Since then, the United Nations membership has increased by nearly 20 per cent, and the complexities of maintaining international peace and security have multiplied. The need for a more representative and effective Council continues to grow. We all risk irrelevance if the Council, a leading organ

of the United Nations, does not evolve to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century.

It is difficult to strike a balance between representation and efficacy. The protracted reform negotiations attest to this. Seven rounds of intergovernmental negotiations have come and gone without any progress. Other initiatives, such as the informal Group of Friends convened by the former President of the General Assembly, have not made headway due to the lack of political will for reform. We urge Ambassador Tanin to persevere. We also urge the relevant parties to break the deadlock over other issues.

We must remain steadfast in our efforts to agree on a comprehensive reform of the Council, covering all five aspects of the intergovernmental negotiations. It will take considerable time to bridge the fundamental divergences of opinion on the five areas of reform, but that does not mean that nothing can be done now to make the Council more inclusive, transparent, accountable and effective. Basic changes in the Council's working methods would make a practical difference and would substantially benefit all Member States. They would make the Council more nimble in the face of new and evolving realities.

That is why the S-5 has consistently advocated improvement in the Council's working methods, independently of and without prejudice to the other aspects of Council reform. In the absence of agreement on comprehensive Council reform, we should not shy away from picking the low-hanging fruit. We should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

The Council has taken some steps to improve its working methods, which the S-5 welcomes and further encourages. The revised presidential note 507 issued by the Council last year (S/2010/507) indicates its continued willingness to make serious progress on working methods. But these steps are not enough. The current implementation of the measures contained in both the original (S/2006/507) and the revised note 507 remains inconsistent and unsatisfactory.

In this regard, the S-5 has circulated a text entitled "Improving the working methods of the Security Council" as a follow-up to the draft resolution that we had issued in 2006. Our text sets out specific measures for the improvement of working methods, which the Council either should continue to implement on a regular basis or could consider adopting.

We have held open consultations about the text and have taken on board many good suggestions from Member States. Our text puts forward suggestions on enhancing the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly; evaluating outcomes of past decisions and improving the drafting of mandates for operations to increase the Council's effectiveness; increasing the transparency of the work of subsidiary bodies and Member States' involvement in those bodies; augmenting the Council's governance and accountability; consulting more widely in appointing the Secretary-General; and providing greater transparency when the veto is exercised. We believe that these proposals command the support of many Member States.

The S-5 believes that the Security Council, as master of its own procedures, can take decisive steps to continue improving its working methods. We hope that the members of the Council will seriously consider the suggestions we have put forward in our text, and we stand ready to engage with them. The S-5 also looks forward to continuing engagement with the wider United Nations membership, not just on the text, but on the improvement of the Council's working methods in general.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): I have the pleasure to speak on behalf of Belgium and the Netherlands. Our subject today is Security Council reform — an important issue for sure, but at the same time one that has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for a very long time.

Nearly 20 years ago, in a previous posting here in New York in the mid-1990s, I represented my country in the ongoing discussion on Security Council reform that was already taking place at that time. As is the case at this moment, the issue that was discussed most of the time was the Council's enlargement. The different options for such an enlargement remain the same. The ones that we discuss today are the same as we discussed then: enlargement in both categories of Council membership, enlargement only in the category of non-permanent members, and some sort of intermediary solution. All those ideas were already on the table nearly twenty years ago and all the arguments and considerations that were used then are still used today.

But while most of the membership seems to agree on the objective of a Security Council that reflects not

the world of 1945 but the world of today, there is little agreement on the road to take to reach that goal. The net result is that hardly any progress has been made in the many, many years during which we have discussed the question.

Mr. Khazaei (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In the view of Belgium and the Netherlands, this cannot go on. Here we have an issue on which the great majority of the Member States declares time and again that a solution needs to be found, but the same Member States have been unable to come to an agreement for twenty years now. That not only undermines the legitimacy of the Security Council, it also undermines the credibility of the United Nations as an institution capable of solving problems and of acting efficiently.

I was a bit surprised, I must say, when I heard in an earlier statement this afternoon a warning note that said, "no artificial deadlines". I wonder whether that is really one of the first concerns that should come to mind when one speaks about a process that has lasted nearly 20 years. The real issue is not the danger of artificial deadlines, but whether Member States have sufficient political will to start a process of real negotiations. Over the past couple of years, Belgium and the Netherlands have tried to stimulate a full discussion among Member States about this issue, among other things, by making concrete suggestions for a shorter and more focused text that could be the subject of negotiations. I am sorry to say that those efforts have not yet led to the desired result, despite our efforts to illustrate that technical progress could indeed be made.

Belgium and the Netherlands share the goal of the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations, namely, to reform the Security Council in such a way that it better reflects today's geopolitical realities. That is a very legitimate request, if only because it has a direct connection to the legitimacy of the Council. This is a time when we see emerging economies in different parts of the world that are ready to step up to the stage with global ambitions and that are preparing to take on future global responsibilities. That has to be reflected in the composition of the world's most important body in the field of peace and security — the Security Council.

In the view of our two countries, the way forward on this issue is first of all to agree that now is the time

to start a serious process of negotiations on this issue. If we cannot agree on this, then we can better spend our precious time on other pressing issues and put an end to this increasingly irrelevant process of continuously repeating well-known positions without coming to grips with the real issues, the central issues.

Apart from that, we cannot expect the P-5 members of the Security Council to take this issue seriously as long as the membership does not start a process of real negotiations. In that sense, we have not so far given all five permanent members an incentive to play an active role, although some have been showing a genuine interest in the issue. What we need now is a concrete proposal, or even a couple of concrete proposals, on the basis of which we can start our negotiations.

At this moment, there is a very short proposal of the Group of Four, kind of floating around in the corridors of the General Assembly. That proposal has the support of more than eighty Member States. So let us put it on the agenda and let us start a serious discussion about its contents and implications, in particular about a moderate — at least, in the view of our countries it should be moderate — expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent, an expansion that respects the provisions necessary for an efficient and effective Security Council. Let us discuss for the first time in depth the various aspects of that proposal, and see whether the necessary support is really there. If that does not work, let us see if there are any other proposals that we can discuss.

At this moment there are various groups with a stake in the discussion. We have the Group of Four, the Uniting for Consensus group, the sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1, the African States and so on. As we can read in the statement of the Group of Four ministers, they are prepared to take a flexible approach to this matter. I appeal to the representatives of other groups to do the same and also to show some flexibility.

Like other countries, Belgium and the Netherlands do not formally belong to one of the groups I just mentioned, but we are very much committed to finding a solution for the issue and we are willing to contribute constructively. Also in this regard, we are looking forward to hearing Ambassador

Tanin's ideas and initiatives on how to move the process forward during this session of the Assembly.

Finally, I want to thank Ambassador Tanin for his tireless efforts so far and his willingness to continue his good work on this issue. I also want to thank the President of the General Assembly for his commitment to this issue and for the points he made earlier in his introductory remarks, calling it one of the four important priorities of his presidency. I sincerely hope that with sufficient political will, combined with a minimum of flexibility among the membership and with the leadership of Ambassador Tanin and the Assembly President, we can make the necessary progress on this issue in the Assembly's sixty-sixth session.

Mr. Dua (India): I am honoured to address the General Assembly on behalf of my country on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters.

Let me place on record the Indian delegation's appreciation for the commitment the President has shown towards this important issue. He explicitly referred to it as one of the main priorities of his term. He also moved swiftly to reappoint the highly experienced and wise Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We call upon Ambassador Tanin, through the President, to convene a meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations as soon as possible.

We would also like to associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe of Jamaica on behalf of the group of sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1.

India played an important role in ensuring that the process of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform was initiated and has played an active role in the deliberations ever since their commencement in 2009. We supported the start of text-based negotiations in 2010 and have already stated our clear support for the third revision of the negotiation text. We feel that the logical next step is to narrow down the options in the third revision and make it a two- to three-page document.

India was among the originators of the initiative on a short resolution launched earlier this year that called for reform that includes expansion in both the

permanent and non-permanent categories of Security Council membership as well as improvement of its working methods. The success of the ongoing initiative is clear from the fact that an overwhelming majority of Member States have expressed their firm support for the initiative, including the more than eighty delegations that have done so in writing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank delegations for their support. We believe that the strong support shown for an expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent membership categories and for an improvement of its working methods should be considered as the basis for further discussion in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations.

India is a member of the two groupings devoted to early reform of the Security Council, namely, the Group of Four and the L.69 group. The positions of those two groups have a number of elements in common with other groups and Member States that have made proposals on the subject. During this Assembly session, we are keen to enhance our convergences with other such like-minded groups, particular the African Group, whose aspirations we support.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that India is of the view that reform and expansion of the Security Council are essential if it is to reflect contemporary reality. Such an outcome will enhance the Council's credibility and effectiveness in dealing with global issues. Early reform of the Council must be pursued with renewed vigour and urgently enacted. Let me assure the President and the rest of the United Nations membership of our willingness to remain constructive on all issues on the table in the months to come. We urge other delegations to do likewise.

Ms. Gankhurai (Mongolia): As a member of the group of sponsors of draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1, my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of that group.

At a time of global uncertainty, the urgency of Security Council reform remains as compelling as ever. The Council must reflect present-day political realities and become more broadly representative if it is to be viable and effective.

Since 2009 Member States have been engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations established by the historic General Assembly decision 62/557. However,

genuine negotiations are yet to start. While the third revision of the negotiation text and the shorter document prepared by Ambassador Zahir Tanin could be further improved, they provide a good basis for genuine negotiations. We call for convening a meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform as soon as possible.

Mongolia's stance on Security Council reform is well known. Our position has been echoed in the initiative on the draft resolution of the General Assembly to cut a decision on the categories of Council enlargement. Mongolia supports that initiative, as it aims to move the process forward. The overwhelming support for the initiative makes it compelling to use it as the basis for further discussion in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations.

It is imperative that enlargement in the permanent category of the Security Council membership derive from the principles of justice and equality, reflect contemporary world realities and ensure due representation of developing and developed countries. Equitable geographical distribution is also essential, with emphasis on the non- and underrepresented groups, particularly Africa, Asia and the Latin American and Caribbean Group. It is also critical to ensure representation of small States in the Council.

My delegation shares the view of the majority of Member States that the veto right needs to be abolished eventually. In the meantime, its use should be restricted, in particular by stipulating that the veto should not be used under certain circumstances, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, serious violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and terrorism. As long as the veto right exists, it must be extended to new permanent members to avoid creating a third category of members, which could/would entail overruling Article 23 of the Charter. It is imperative that new permanent members have the same rights and obligations as the current ones.

My delegation has noted that the Security Council has continued to improve its working methods since its last report (A/65/2). However, there is a critical need for further improvement and the full implementation of the note by the President of the Council in S/2010/507 in order to ensure transparency, a high degree of accountability and enhanced participation of and access for non-Council members.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the President for identifying United Nations reform and revitalization, including Security Council reform, as one of the four priority areas during the current session of the General Assembly. My delegation sincerely hopes that under his strong leadership, this session will achieve concrete progress on early reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Ragolini (Italy): I thank the President for convening this meeting and for his well-known commitment to advancing the Security Council reform process. In reappointing Ambassador Tanin as chair of the informal negotiations, he "encouraged all Member States to demonstrate a spirit of consensus, openness and good faith and participate actively in the upcoming round". Italy identifies with his words, and, together with its Uniting for Consensus partners, will be a constructive force during this session.

Today, I wish to focus on the recent past and the future. I am pleased to be doing so in a plenary meeting — the first after a nine-month stalemate in the intergovernmental process. That deadlock is the recent past. Negotiations in the General Assembly were suddenly broken off last March. Confidence-building was abruptly interrupted by a partial and divisive initiative launched by a few Member States. Transparency was lost. Confrontation made its way through New York and the capitals. A forceful rush towards collecting support for an ambiguous and overly simplistic text put stress on the membership. While the Arab Spring was blossoming, Security Council reform was entering its fall.

Italy and its partners refused to accept that development. We started a dialogue with every single Member State. We were open, transparent and respectful of what the Assembly decided by consensus at its sixty-second session. We wanted to continue negotiations on all five pillars of the reform in a comprehensive way, as mandated by Assembly decision 62/557. We tried to rebuild confidence among the groups.

We were honest with our African friends. Aware of the historical injustice to the continent and conscious of the differences between our positions, we tried to build bridges and possible convergences. We made clear that the African and Uniting for Consensus positions are compatible in many ways, most notably

on regional representation, seat allocation, rotation and consensus.

The dialogue ended up being held in Rome, where 123 countries met last May to launch an appeal to resume the intergovernmental negotiations in a spirit of compromise, openness and consensus. Mr. Al-Nasser's predecessor, President Deiss, attended the meeting and tried to bring Member States back to the negotiating table. Only then did the handful of States that had promoted the divisive initiative realize their failure and acknowledge that it had been rejected by the majority of the membership.

The Uniting for Consensus group — this time in Mexico City — tried once again to provide new impetus to the negotiations in July. The goal was to build on the ashes of the confrontation and seek a serious compromise. Both the Rome and the Mexico City meetings were attended by representatives of all negotiating groups. Good faith and inclusiveness were the basis of those attempts.

Yet with summer and the end of the session approaching, the deadline passed and our work was rolled over into the sixty-sixth session, and we committed ourselves to an immediate resumption of the negotiations. Today we are here to resume them. Today we are here to rebuild the future of the Security Council reform process.

The lessons of the past should show us the way to the future. Artificial acceleration blocks the process and cannot achieve the majority required by the Charter. The sixty-fifth session proved this once again. We therefore need to focus on true flexibility and political will. I say this in the conviction that the Uniting for Consensus group has already proved its willingness to achieve reform, which will make the Security Council more democratic, representative, accountable and flexible so as to adapt to future international realities.

We are the only group that entered the negotiations with a new proposal. Our traditional position envisaged an increase in the number of only the two-year-term, non-permanent members; we changed it in 2009. We now propose a solution involving longer-term seats, achievable through two different options: short-term seats with immediate re-election, or long-term seats without immediate re-election.

Our proposal is not, of course, a “take it or leave it” one. It is a step towards the middle of the aisle. The key principles are compromise, accountability and consensus. The key words are longer-term seats and re-election.

We call on President Al-Nasser to exert moral suasion on those Member States whose positions have never changed. If the membership really believes in the need for reform, it must be flexible and ready to negotiate a compromise. Italy and its Uniting for Consensus partners are, as they have been in the past, ready to engage constructively and in good faith.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): The issue of Security Council reform is high on the agenda of the General Assembly. During the general debate last September, more than 100 Member States mentioned in their statements the need for the United Nations to adapt to new political realities and embrace reform, including an enlargement of the Security Council. This is an important indication that the issue needs to be taken up as a matter of urgency.

There is no doubt that Member States agree on the need for the Security Council to be brought in line with today's political realities and thus become more representative, legitimate, efficient and effective. The majority view is that an expansion in the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats is a necessary step in that direction.

The current permanent members are limited to those in place at the end of the Second World War. If we are serious about bringing the Security Council into the twenty-first century, this state of affairs must be changed. Any other option would leave the status quo untouched and have an undesirable impact on the long-term legitimacy and credibility of the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the same vein, for the Security Council to reflect the dramatic expansion of the United Nations membership since 1945, more non-permanent seats are needed, in particular for developing countries.

Since earlier this year, we have been reaching out to other Member States to discuss the idea of a draft resolution aimed at opening the door to genuine reform and generating momentum for real negotiations to start. The proposal we made was concise and straightforward. It was a constructive attempt to complement and facilitate the ongoing process of

intergovernmental negotiations, launched by General Assembly decision 62/557, of 15 September 2008.

From the very beginning, the initiative sought to respond to the call of the facilitator, who had rightly pointed out that Member States should take the lead and engage in consultations so as to inject dynamism into the process. We were encouraged by the response received from the membership. The initiative has garnered cross-regional support, including more than 80 written expressions of support, in addition to a substantial number of strong verbal commitments, reaching well over 100 countries. No other proposal on the table has to date been able to garner such high numbers.

This demonstrates quite clearly that a wide coalition of Member States is willing to stand behind an expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and an improvement in its working methods. We believe that, should this draft resolution be submitted and put to a vote, many more countries would join this collective endeavour to move the process forward. That is why we believe that such strong support for the initiative should be considered the basis for further discussion in the intergovernmental negotiations, which have our full support.

If Member States keep their focus on this common goal, we can quickly move to the next stage, discuss the remaining issues and achieve successful reform without further delay.

We welcome the decision of the President to reappoint His Excellency Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We look forward to continuing to work with him constructively with him in the months ahead.

Brazil will remain engaged and work closely in consultation with other delegations, with a view to creating an enabling environment for a concrete outcome at this session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Cassidy (Indonesia): On behalf of Ambassador Hasan Kleib, I wish to thank President Al-Nasser for having convened this meeting. We would also like to congratulate Ambassador Tanin on his reappointment, at the sixty-sixth session, as Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in

the membership of Security Council and related matters.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement made earlier in this meeting by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Charter goals of saving humanity from the scourge of war and promoting social progress and a better standard of life in larger freedom remain a profound collective challenge. For the Security Council to play its crucial role, in the context of which support from all sides is key, it is critical that the Council be democratic, accountable and representative of all regions and civilizations.

Indonesia thus fully supports a comprehensive and meaningful reform of the Security Council and maintains that all five key reform issues should be negotiated as an integral part of a comprehensive package.

As we deliberate here, it is worth recalling that Council reform has been discussed for more than 16 years. Legitimate arguments by Member States have been expressed and reflected in the negotiating text of the informal plenary process. Divisions continue to exist, however, and progress has been slow. Progress will materialize when a formula for Council reform is found that is acceptable to the widest majority of countries.

In connection with the categories of membership, Indonesia is among the countries that believe that an expansion in both categories would offer the potential to address the fundamental shortcoming of the Council as it is currently constituted, namely, its lack of representation. Yet it is our considered view that the middle ground that could garner the widest possible political acceptance on this critical issue and move things forward is the intermediate approach, with a clear review mechanism occurring after the intermediate model has come into force.

There are many variants on this approach. Our view is that the Assembly, at its current session, should explore further the kind of intermediate approach that we can agree on. There should be enough points of convergence to ensure that the broadest majority sees the outcome as being a win-win solution. In stating this, we are certainly not ruling out the possibility of expanding the permanent membership in the future.

That issue could be addressed in the examination of the review concept as part of the intermediate approach.

A piecemeal approach focusing on merely one or two key reform issues, however, risks accentuating differences and affecting the overall process in the informal plenary of the General Assembly. Member States reached an agreement on that process in consensus decision 62/557, a decision that has been renewed annually by the Assembly. It is important that we abide by decision 62/557. Hence, all five key issues of Council reform should be considered in seeking a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance, well beyond the two-thirds majority.

Regarding the size of a reformed Council, we should also take a middle-ground approach. A suggestion at this stage is to expand the membership to a size between the mid-20s and 31. We need to arrive at an agreed number that reflects the world's plurality, which is the vast number of developing countries and regions, in a more balanced manner. The present underrepresentation of Asia and Africa on the Council must therefore be corrected. Asia and Africa should each be allocated at least four additional seats. In that regard, we also underscore the importance of regional and subregional representation.

On the question of the veto, Indonesia believes that the right of veto has no place in a world that is becoming more democratic. Until the veto is abolished, we will continue to support the principle that the veto right should not be exercised in cases involving genocide and serious violations of international humanitarian law. Indonesia does not support the creation of any new veto rights, and interested countries should consider this as a quid pro quo for limiting and regulating the existing veto rights of the Permanent Five.

Indonesia concurs with the views expressed by the overwhelming majority that the Council's working methods should be improved by making the Council more transparent, efficient, and accessible to the wider membership.

Article 31 and Article 32 of the United Nations Charter should be effectively implemented by consulting with non-members of the Security Council on a regular basis, especially members with a special interest in the substantive matters under consideration by the Council. The Council should grant affected non-members access to the Council's subsidiary

organs, including the right to participate and to provide substantive inputs. The Council should hold regular, timely and meaningful consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as with other countries that are directly involved in, or affected by, a given peacekeeping operation, throughout all stages of a mission.

Without prejudice to Article 24 of the Charter, the reform should also explicitly clarify the functions and powers of the General Assembly on the issues of international peace and security, which are not regulated under Chapter V of the Charter in its present language. In a scenario where the Council does not take action on a case that is clearly threatening international peace and security, the Assembly should have the power to make recommendations, even if the Council does not request it to do so.

My delegation notes with appreciation Ambassador Tanin's hard work in drawing up and updating the negotiating text. While it provides a good basis for further negotiations, no matter how hard we try to fine-tune the text, any breakthrough in resolving differences will have to be made beyond the text.

While the respective positions of Member States are dear to them, greater political flexibility will be required of all in order to move towards the points of convergence. In our view, Council reform will be best achieved through a consensus-based formula or at least, as we agreed, with the widest possible political acceptance.

For its part, Indonesia remains determined to engage constructively with all countries to find ways to ensure the tangible and comprehensive reform of the Council.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Today's debate on Security Council reform provides a good opportunity to take stock and to further build on the momentum achieved during the preceding session of the General Assembly. In that regard, allow me to highlight the three lessons learned from last year's experience.

First, we have made progress. I wish to highlight, in particular, that the process of intergovernmental negotiations was renewed in an important session under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Tanin. However, when it comes to the concrete and forward-looking initiatives presented, one lesson is clear. One, and only one, concrete proposal has received the

support of a large majority of Member States from all regional groups. That was the initiative taken by the Group of Four countries to increase the number of permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council and to improve its working methods. I daresay that, while that initiative may not be the only game in town, it is surely the strongest. It should thus also be at the centre of our discussions in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations process.

Secondly, a number of meetings and conferences on Security Council reform were held, both within and outside the United Nations, which clearly demonstrates that Member States are eager to achieve progress on that issue. However, if we want to ensure substantive discussions among the entire United Nations membership, we need the intergovernmental negotiations to be held more frequently. We therefore urge the Chair of the informal intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform to resume those negotiations as soon as possible and to maintain a regular meeting schedule. Also, should President Al-Nasser deem any other format to be appropriate for achieving substantial results, we can assure you of our support.

Thirdly, we all agree that the process of Council reform should be membership-driven. However, negotiations during the last session of the General Assembly demonstrated that we cannot negotiate reform on the basis of a 30-page document. We will need the assistance of Ambassador Tanin in focusing our discussions on a realistic range of options. As a first step, we suggest continuing discussions based on those options that have been proven to reflect majority positions. Let us focus on those principles on which we have reached broad agreement and use them as a starting point to narrow our differences.

In September, during the opening of the current General Assembly session in New York, the majority of heads of delegation called for the United Nations system to be reformed. That includes a reform of the Security Council at its core. Reform is urgently needed, not least because other institutions of global governance, such as the Group of Eight or the Group of Twenty, are gaining influence. The Security Council has to adapt in order to remain the centrepiece of the international peace architecture in the twenty-first century. We must therefore redouble our efforts to achieve concrete outcomes during the current session of the General Assembly. My country, Germany, stands ready to contribute its part.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Security Council reform is an important part of the larger reform process of the United Nations. China supports a reasonable and necessary reform of the Security Council in order to increase its authority and efficiency and enable it to better fulfil the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Security Council reform should give priority to increasing the representation of developing countries, those in Africa in particular. The reform should offer greater opportunities to more countries, particularly small and medium-sized countries, to serve in the Security Council on a rotating basis in order to allow them to participate in its decision-making process.

The five clusters of core issues involving Security Council reform are interrelated. Reform should strive to reach a package solution on these core issues. The artificial isolation of part of the intrinsically linked five clusters of issues or the adoption of a step-by-step or piecemeal approach will not work.

Security Council reform involves the immediate interests of all Member States. Reform requires in-depth participation by all Member States and accommodation of the interests and concerns of all parties in order to reach the widest possible consensus through extensive and democratic consultations.

As Member States may be seriously divided over the core issues involving Security Council reform, they need to remain engaged in dialogue, negotiations and consultations. China is against setting an artificial time limit for reform or pushing through any solution over which Member States still have serious disputes. Gamesmanship or playing on words will lead us nowhere.

Since the launch of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Member States have had serious discussions on the core issues involving reform of the Security Council, which has deepened the mutual understanding of one another's positions. The intergovernmental negotiations have emerged as a main channel for pursuing Security Council reform. Recent developments have shown that any acts that may undermine the intergovernmental negotiations are detrimental to the process of Security Council reform and do not serve the common interests

of the Member States. Meanwhile, China opposes any attempt to create separate tracks beyond the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations.

China supports the decision to continue intergovernmental negotiations pursuant to General Assembly decision 62/557 at the current session of the General Assembly. The intergovernmental negotiations should follow the principles of openness, inclusiveness and transparency and should be driven by Member States, so as to arrive at a solution that promotes unity among Member States and serves their overall interests and the long-term interests of the United Nations. China stands ready to support the work of Mr. Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly, and Ambassador Tanin, Facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): The President of the General Assembly has made United Nations reform into one of the priorities of his term in office. In his inaugural speech, the focus was on the reform of the Security Council and on the need to pursue the efforts made hitherto. He is quite correct; we do need to continue move the process and initiatives launched at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly forward in to order to move beyond mere words, if we wish to see a Security Council that reflects to a greater extent today's world — a Security Council that is adapted to new challenges and fully capable of shouldering all of its responsibilities when confronted with crises that threaten international peace and security.

Much progress has been made since we began the intergovernmental negotiation process in 2009 led by Ambassador Tanin. That progress was made thanks to the efforts of the facilitator, the successive Presidents of the General Assembly and the Member States. We have succeeded in identifying elements of convergence that we could explore further, for example, concerning enlargement of the Council in the two categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. We are duty-bound now to be bold and to move to the heart of the matter. Out of respect for the work already accomplished, standing still or moving backwards is not an option.

The requirements are straightforward and unchanged. Reform of the Security Council must take on board the emergence of new Powers that have the will and the capacity to shoulder the responsibilities of

permanent membership of the Security Council and which are, in conformity with the United Nations Charter, in a position to make an important contribution to Council action in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In that context, France supports permanent membership for Germany, Brazil, India and Japan, as well as representation for the countries of Africa. The matter of representation for the Arab countries is also on the table. Beyond that, France's position has not changed. We stand ready, as do many States of goodwill in this Assembly, to work actively to break the deadlock and overcome the principled positions. That could involve considering an interim solution in accordance with a proposal that was made jointly three years ago by the President of the French Republic and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The modalities and parameters of that solution are not set in stone or predetermined; they must result from negotiations among the Member States.

The reform must not be allowed to fall off our priority agenda, because if it does, it will stay off it indefinitely. Alongside the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, it is within the powers of the President of the General Assembly to give new impetus to the discussions. Getting Member States to negotiate in a genuine manner is a matter of shared political will. The guidelines that the President of the General Assembly gives us will be crucial to that end. Far-reaching reform of the Security Council, which could take place after a transition period, will require audacity and perseverance. France stands ready to make our contribution and provide our support to this objective.

Mr. Oyarzun (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have been mandated by the General Assembly to immediately continue intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. I am referring to decision 65/554 adopted by consensus on 12 September. I am afraid that the task will not be an easy one. Allow me to explain why.

It is a fact that negotiations are now at a standstill. The seventh round of negotiations took place on 2 March, and since then no other meeting has taken place. Eight months have already gone by.

From our point of view, there are two primary reasons for the current impasse — on the one hand, the rejection of the third revision of the negotiating text by

some of the groups and countries present at that meeting, and on the other hand, the launching of divisive initiatives by some other groups, in an attempt to take advantage of the impasse exclusively for their own gain.

I have called those initiatives “divisive” for the following reasons. First of all, the initiatives were launched outside of the negotiations. They were therefore not open, inclusive and transparent, as required by decision 62/557. Secondly, they did not include each and every one of the five key issues of the reform, but only those that fit the promoters’ own interests. The result is quite clear; the stalemate has only become more entrenched. This is the situation in which we find ourselves. I am quite sure that we all agree that it is urgent that we put an end to the present situation.

We believe that it is the role of the President, as well as Ambassador Tanin’s — whom we congratulate for his confirmation as Chair of the negotiations — to make a concrete proposal to that effect.

In our opinion, the starting point should be the two main lessons we learned during the previous session. First of all, we should recognize that the third revision of the negotiating text has not been accepted by all on a consensual basis and that, consequently, it should be revised again. Otherwise, we believe that we have no alternative but to go back to the second revision of the text, the only one endorsed by all groups and countries.

Secondly, we should acknowledge that we cannot unilaterally change the rules set by resolution 62/557 in the middle of the game.

The President can count on the full support of the Spanish delegation in this matter. I think we have given sufficient proof of our flexibility and constructive spirit. Obviously, the President can also count on the full support of the Uniting for Consensus group, to which we belong. I would like to bring to the Assembly’s attention the fact that the Uniting for Consensus group continues to be the only one so far to have presented an alternative model of its original position. It was presented in April 2009, during the first round of negotiations, as the representative of Italy has pointed out.

That model contains some elements of the so-called intermediate model, such as the creation of a

new or intermediate category of non-permanent members with longer-term seats. I would like to clarify that the model was presented with the expectation of reciprocity on the part of other groups, an expectation that has, unfortunately, not been fulfilled. For that reason, the position of Spain and the Uniting for Consensus group continues to be the original one that we presented in 2005. It is a comprehensive model with realistic proposals for each of the five key issues regarding Security Council reform: categories and veto, size, regional representation, working methods and the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

It is a well-known fact that one of its main characteristics is a provision to enlarge the Council exclusively in the category of non-permanent members. We firmly believe that only an expansion in the number of elected seats can ensure the preservation of the democratic principle that should lie at the heart of the legitimacy of any Security Council reform.

During the 2005 World Summit, we committed ourselves to an early reform of the Security Council, including its working methods, to make it more effective, efficient, transparent, representative and legitimate. We committed ourselves to increasing the involvement of States that are not members of the Council and to improving its accountability. Six years have passed since then. We have made progress, but not enough.

We believe that the time has come to make headway in a more decisive way towards a compromise solution, the only one in our opinion that can be adopted by consensus. To that end, perhaps we can be guided by the five principles presented by the President of the previous session, Mr. Deiss, to whom we pay tribute, during the Rome ministerial conference on global governance and Security Council reform, held on 16 May of this year. Those principles are the broadest possible support, respect for the fundamental values of the United Nations, simplicity, efficiency and flexibility.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the determination of the Spanish delegation to work with a spirit of flexibility and constructiveness towards this objective.

Mr. Alcántara Mejía (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the sense of urgency with which the President has dealt with the topic of

equitable representation on the Security Council, the increase in its membership and other related issues. We likewise welcome the fact that the President has confirmed the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, as chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We value the effort and leadership that Ambassador Tanin has shown over many years on this complex question.

The Dominican Republic would like to state right away that we support the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Security Council reform is a topic that has been on the Organization's agenda for 18 years. We are struck by the fact that we have still been unable to achieve conclusive results. If we were to take this situation as an example of the way we work in this house, it would clearly serve as a very bad example. And if the outcome of this exercise had been crucial for halting an international conflict, we would have had a disaster on our hands a long time ago.

The Dominican Republic would like to stress its commitment to cooperating constructively with the other delegations to reform the Council to bring that important organ into line with today's geopolitical realities, and also to make it more efficient in its task of maintaining international peace and security. The world of 2011 is very different from the one of 1963, when the number of members on the Council rose from 11 to 15. At that time there were 115 Member States; today our number has risen to 193.

A reformed Council would enjoy greater credibility and authority to address the challenges we face in the international arena. Those are challenges that require structural reform, including an increase in the number of members and their categories, the Council's working methods, the veto, the nature of representation and the relationship of the Council to other United Nations organs such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

However, for the Dominican Republic, given the time that has gone by and the meagre results that have been achieved, it would make sense to speed up our conversations on Security Council reform and to focus them on two fundamental issues: the increase in the number of members and their categories, and the Council's working methods. Put to the test, such a plan

would enhance this Organization's credibility and its ability to fulfil the goals set forth in the Charter. In addition, we would be complying with a request for reform that has been consistently demanded by the majority of the Member States.

My country has always advocated a fair and equitable expansion of the Security Council that would increase the total number of permanent and non-permanent members and that would guarantee the proper representation of developing countries. To correct the prevailing lack of equity on the Council, we would hope for an increase in members coming from such under-represented regions as Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

There have been a few significant improvements to the Council's working methods and procedures. However, both accountability and transparency need to be enhanced, and the Council's operation needs to be made more inclusive in order to strengthen its legitimacy and effectiveness. We support an increase in the number of public debates and interactive information sessions as a standard that would benefit States not members of that body.

We have focused on those two aspects of reform because we must prioritize the objectives of the intergovernmental negotiations on a basis that ensures that the Security Council's decision-making ability is strengthened through efficiency and a fair and equitable representation.

That is why we have joined the coalition of countries promoting a draft resolution aimed at achieving a Security Council that is broader, acts with greater authority, greater unity and greater credibility and operates in a more democratic manner. The initiative includes the proposals and positions that have largely been accepted by the Member States, regional groups and other groupings that have taken part in the Security Council reform process over the years.

The Dominican Republic is convinced that the challenges of today's world require a United Nations system that is more robust, more representative and more effective, including the Security Council. That task was entrusted to us by our political leaders at the 2005 World Summit. My delegation is ready to work towards that objective with the greatest flexibility, compromise and political will, because we believe that those conditions will be essential to be able to move

forward and to obtain specific results in the debates on Security Council reform.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): I would like to thank the President for convening today's plenary meeting to discuss Security Council reform. Japan highly appreciates his identification of United Nations reform and revitalization as one of the four priority areas of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. As he pointed out, in order for the Organization to remain legitimate it is important that there is strong political will to realize previous resolutions and decisions. In that regard, early reform of the Security Council is truly needed.

I would also like to commend the President's swift reappointment of Ambassador Tanin as the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. We fully trust that he and Ambassador Tanin will exercise proactive leadership in order to promote substantive and meaningful discussions among Member States.

Various efforts have been made to reform the Security Council so that it better reflects the realities of the twenty-first century, and not the world of 60 years ago. I believe that all Member States are committed to realizing early reform so that the United Nations can address present challenges with greater representativeness, legitimacy and effectiveness.

In the Assembly's prior session, the Group of Four (G-4) took the initiative to propose a draft resolution on reform, and other Member States were also actively engaged in serious discussion of the issue, thus creating strong momentum towards real negotiations.

On the basis of the progress achieved at the last session, we must take the next step towards achieving a concrete outcome. Although there remains a wide difference in views among Member States, I believe that all are now ready to begin substantive negotiations aimed at finding a solution that can accommodate different views and garner the widest possible political acceptance, as required by previous decisions of the Assembly. To that end, we hope to see a spirit of flexibility demonstrated by every Member State for the purpose of beginning constructive, results-oriented discussions on the way forward.

We fully share the President's view that the collective political will of the membership is necessary to advance our efforts to reform the Security Council.

The G-4 Foreign Ministers met in New York on 23 September and expressed their determination to work in close cooperation with other Member States in a spirit of flexibility and to press ahead with all steps necessary to achieve a concrete outcome in the current session.

With regard to the draft resolution on expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and on improvement of its working methods, the Ministers expressed the view that the strong support extended to the initiative should be considered as a basis for further discussion in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations.

All Member States must proactively commit to the reform effort and take steps to accelerate the process with a sense of urgency. Japan, for its part, is sparing no effort to promote substantive discussions with like-minded countries, in a spirit of openness, transparency, honesty and realism.

In that regard, I take the opportunity to mention today that the Japanese Government is organizing a dialogue in Tokyo on Security Council reform, to be held on 14 November. Our goal is to open a new chapter on an honest, open and substantive dialogue, which is essential in order to explore achievable reform. Japan would highly appreciate the participation of the President of the General Assembly in that meeting. It is our hope that the dialogue will stimulate fruitful discussions, in continuity with previous efforts, to generate further dynamism for meaningful progress. We are ready to share the results with all interested Member States.

Now is the time to take concrete action. Japan welcomes the next round of the intergovernmental negotiations, to be held at the end of this month, and hopes that the Tokyo dialogue will add impetus to the discussions in the negotiations. We strongly wish to see more frequent and substantive negotiations and welcome any initiative from Member States that can generate momentum towards a real solution. In that regard, we believe that the streamlining of the third revision of the negotiation text to include narrowed-down options would help in moving the negotiation process forward.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate once again Japan's firm commitment to exert all efforts to achieve a concrete reform outcome during the present session,

in close cooperation with the President, Ambassador Tanin and all Member States.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): At the outset I would like to express our appreciation to the facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, for his tireless efforts to advance the process of Security Council reform, and I wish to congratulate him on his reappointment for the current session. My delegation remains committed to the intergovernmental negotiations process, which is the appropriate and only framework in which Security Council reform should be discussed, as mandated by the General Assembly.

Algeria aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the African Group.

Algeria reiterates its commitment to the aspirations of Africa as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, asking for no fewer than two permanent seats for Africa with all rights and prerogatives related to that category of membership, including the veto, as well as two additional non-permanent seats. In our view, enlargement in both the permanent and non-permanent categories should be understood in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and should include the veto. That position aims at correcting the historical injustice that makes Africa the only continent that is not represented in the permanent category.

Algeria is ready to work constructively for substantive progress in the intergovernmental negotiations within a transparent and inclusive process and in a spirit of consensus-reaching. It is important to note the comprehensive nature of Security Council reform and that all its themes and elements are interrelated and cannot be addressed in an isolated manner. In that regard, the Council's working methods should receive equal attention and should be treated in an approach integrating the other clusters.

Algeria is ready to consider the third revision of the compilation text as the basis for the negotiations, provided that such consideration is done in the spirit of decision 62/557 and subsequent General Assembly resolutions. However, we continue to believe that that document requires further elaboration in order to reflect all positions and proposals. The Member States

should work together to agree on a set of principles before streamlining the compilation text and narrowing down positions in all their aspects. Algeria is of the view that once an agreement on a set of principles is reached, it will become much easier to identify the many areas of convergence that exist between the different proposals and positions.

Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea): First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to once again convey to the President my Government's sincere wish for his successful presidency. I would also like to thank the current President of the Security Council, His Excellency Ambassador Moraes Cabral of Portugal, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council (A/66/2) earlier this morning.

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the extensive work carried out by the Council during the reporting period. In particular, it should not be forgotten that the Council made a very meaningful and historic contribution to the democratization process in the Middle East during the tumultuous period that began late last year.

Let me start by mentioning that the Republic of Korea has constructively taken part in the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the past few years. As a member of the Uniting for Consensus group, I would like to highlight that we were the only group to exercise flexibility by modifying our initial stance of 2005. That step was a genuine effort to bridge the gap in the differences of opinions and perspectives among the major groups with a view towards making the Council more democratic, representative and accountable.

Unfortunately, however, the Uniting for Consensus group's sincere efforts to reach some form of common ground have not been reciprocated. Instead, during the last session of the General Assembly, there was a unilateral initiative outside the intergovernmental negotiations framework. As a result, the intergovernmental negotiations were on hiatus. The entire membership suffers the consequences of that inaction.

The current structure of the Security Council is the outcome of a war that ended 66 years ago. Obviously, the Council does not adequately reflect the current environment surrounding the state of international affairs, nor does it duly reflect the capacities of its relevant actors.

However, that simple truth cannot be the grounds for causing even more injustice by adding a handful of permanent members to remain on the Council indefinitely, thereby turning a blind eye to the needs and wishes of the greater membership. If we were to commit ourselves to the rigidity of having additional permanent members, we would lose the flexibility and legitimacy necessary to adapt to the changing political and economic landscape of the future.

Against that backdrop, I would like to emphasize that the only reasonable way to bring about a more accountable, transparent and efficient Security Council is to hold periodic elections. Only through periodic elections for an enlarged Council of a reasonable size will we be able to attain a more democratic and equitable representation. Only then will the members of the Council be subject to performance and contribution reviews to determine if an additional term is warranted for a given member.

My delegation strongly believes that the most tangible way to break the current deadlock in these negotiations would be to reach some sort of middle ground through an intermediate solution. We have been flexible in the past and we are willing to work constructively with the greater membership in the future as well to further flesh out the details of this approach.

The Republic of Korea, as a democratic mid-power State, like most of the Uniting for Consensus members, genuinely looks forward to reasonable, simple and realistic yet durable and justifiable Security Council reform. Looking back, the most serious obstacle on the road to reform has been the lack of trust and of willingness to compromise. The process has at times been frustrating. However, this issue is too important for inaction. Indeed, we have a collective duty to achieve this crucial task not only for the United Nations, but also for future generations.

My delegation is convinced that there have been convergences in other key areas, such as the idea of increasing the size of the Security Council to the low to mid-twenties, more reasonable exercise of the veto, better representation by underrepresented regional groups, stronger relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and ameliorating the Council's working methods. Again, my delegation hopes that those ideas can be realized and finalized under the framework of an intermediate approach.

It is our understanding that the intergovernmental negotiations will finally be resumed in the coming weeks. We look forward to the impartial stewardship of the chair, Ambassador Tanin, so that notable progress can be made during the Assembly's current session.

For our part, the Government of the Republic of Korea will continue to make constructive efforts to realize the goal of establishing a more accountable, efficient and democratic Security Council.

Mr. AlJarallah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the Permanent Representative of Portugal, current President of the Security Council, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council on its activities during the past year (A/66/2) to the General Assembly. The report shows a significant increase in the workload of the Council.

My delegation warmly congratulates the new non-permanent members of the Security Council — Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo — on their election to the Council for the period of 2012 and 2013.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We welcome and support the efforts of Ambassador Tanin, who has been leading the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. We hope that at the current session we will achieve progress in this matter and that we will see the long-awaited historic agreement that will fulfil our aspirations on revitalizing the Council and improving its working methods.

It is perfectly natural that the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters should be considered one of the most important agenda items. In fact, a firm and critical decision is necessary, today, in order to promote Security Council reform. Despite the consensus of Member States on the principle of reform and change, we have remained incapable of carrying out the basic steps for such necessary change.

My delegation reaffirms the importance of the proposals on expanding and reforming the Council garnering the support of all the Member States. Nineteen years have passed since the start of

negotiations on expanding the Council and improving its working methods, and several initiatives and ideas have been submitted. However, the issue remains hindered, and thus political will is required to find common ground on the issues and achieve the expected objective.

The recurrent challenges in the international sphere impel us to make an even greater effort to improve the negotiations. We must reaffirm our support to that collective work whose noble final objective involves the entire international community.

The position of the State of Kuwait has remained firm and unchanged in recent years and is based on the following elements.

First, the issue of Security Council reform must be part of a comprehensive vision aimed at reforming the Council and improving all United Nations bodies. We must support integrated and balanced work in the Council and focus on improving the relationship between it and other main United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We must avoid any interference in or encroachment on the prerogatives of the General Assembly, and the Security Council must stress its main function, according to the Charter, of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Secondly, any possible reform of the Council must result in its increased representativeness and must reflect the current international situation, which has drastically changed since 1945.

Thirdly, it is extremely important to improve the Council's working methods. We must improve its transparency and develop formal and regular procedures in order to improve and organize its working methods.

Fourthly, the veto must be subject to certain limits and controls to ration its use, perhaps under the framework of issues arising under Chapter VII of the Charter.

Fifthly, increasing the number of seats in the Council must provide an opportunity for small States to join the Council and take part in its work. My delegation would also stress the right of Arab States and Muslim States to representation, in line with their importance and their contribution to defending the principles and purposes of the Charter.

The complex and urgent challenges and issues facing the international community should encourage our increased determination in stepping up efforts to strengthen and revitalize the Council's role and thus enable it to deal effectively with those challenges. The Council must bolster representation and enhance transparency in order to strengthen both its neutrality and credibility.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United States warmly welcomes the reappointment of Ambassador Tanin to chair the forthcoming rounds of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, and we thank him for his efforts to guide these negotiations forward.

Allow me to reiterate our full support to Ambassador Tanin as we head into the eighth round of negotiations, which we hope Member States will approach with flexibility and patience. We believe that intergovernmental negotiations offer the most transparent and inclusive forum for these discussions to produce an outcome that enjoys broad consensus. While genuine disagreements remain, we hope that these talks will ultimately serve to bring the membership of the United Nations together.

The United States believes that the Security Council should reflect the world of the twenty-first century. We support expansion of the Council in a way that will diminish neither its effectiveness nor its efficiency. Therefore, my delegation will continue to make a serious, deliberate effort, working with other Member States, to enhance the Council's ability to carry out its mandate and effectively meet the challenges of this century.

Allow me to highlight our position on the key issues related to Council reform.

The United States is open, in principle, to a modest expansion of both permanent and non-permanent members. We strongly believe that any consideration of an expansion of permanent members must be country-specific in nature. In assessing which countries merit permanent membership, the United States will take into account the ability of countries to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to other purposes of the United Nations.

We support a Security Council membership that upholds human rights, democracy and the rule of law at

home and abroad and that makes significant contributions to the implementation of Council decisions, especially through their enforcement, as well as through financial, personnel and political support.

The United States is not open to an enlargement of the Council that changes the current veto structure.

We remain committed to a serious, deliberate effort, working with other Member States, to find a way forward that both adapts the Council to current global realities and enhances its ability to carry out its mandate effectively and to meet the challenges of the century.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We wish to acknowledge here the complex work carried out by Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, and his efforts to move forward in the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. We also welcome the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Mr. Raymond Wolfe, who spoke on behalf of the countries that sponsored draft resolution A/61/L.69/Rev.1.

Although the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has already, on various occasions, presented its position on the subject we are discussing today, we would like to reiterate a few points.

We support the enlargement of the permanent and non-permanent member categories of the Security Council in order to ensure the inclusion of developing countries from the regions of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. A Security Council enlarged on the basis of an acceptable numerical formula could comprise 25 or 26 members. It would give greater representative balance to the body by incorporating the various geographic, political and cultural realities from the developing world.

The peoples and countries of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia have been deprived for more than 60 years of the right to exercise that responsibility. We must therefore heed their recurrent pleas for the present imbalance or asymmetry within the Council to be corrected.

With respect to the decision-making mechanism, Venezuela believes that the veto is inseparably linked to the question of the enlargement of the Security Council. From that point of view, the Bolivarian Government believes that the use of the veto is an anachronistic and antidemocratic mechanism that goes against the principle of sovereign equality among States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Along those lines, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela advocates the elimination of the veto or the limitation of its use, with a view to its total elimination.

With respect to the working methods of the Security Council, we acknowledge that we have seen, in recent years, some limited progress. However, the steps forward are still insufficient because we have not duly addressed the pleas for greater openness and greater transparency in the way the Council operates.

Bearing in mind that peace is a matter of concern to all countries, Venezuela expresses its rejection of the procedure that people have tried to apply in the Security Council, namely, to hold closed meetings and convert informal sessions into a rule. That type of action prevents the participation of the majority of Member States. Those meetings must be an exception, as stipulated in article 48 of the provisional rules of procedure.

In order to maintain the spirit of transparency, the Security Council must hold frequent consultations with the countries affected by its decisions. Countries that are not members of that organ should be invited to take part in informal consultations, using a procedure similar to the one stipulated in Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter.

An overwhelming majority of countries would like to see Security Council reform that would convert it into a democratic body with greater accountability, a body that reflects the sovereign equality of States in the way it operates. If we do not comply with those requirements, the Security Council will not be transparent or legitimate, nor can it be considered a body that is representative of the community of nations.

Our delegation has participated constructively in the Security Council reform process, and we have been able to observe that the call to remedy the absence of developing countries among the permanent members of the Council is practically universal.

The number and distribution of permanent seats by regional groups that the majority supports is about two seats for Africa, one or two for Latin America and the Caribbean, and two for Asia. It is also clear that there is majority support for the expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent member categories.

There is also a consensus on the need to alter the Security Council's working methods so as to make its action more transparent. We have to acknowledge, however, that despite the commitment of many Member States or groups of Member States, which have submitted proposals in order to move the intergovernmental negotiations forward, the process has been on hold since the beginning of the seventh informal round. Given that situation, we have to look carefully at positions that unquestionably reflect the opinions of the majority and we have to agree on a strategy that would allow us to move forward.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hopes that Security Council reform will not continue to be postponed.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that the Venezuelan delegation declares its firm intention to continue to play an active role in the negotiations with a view to achieving a result that would thoroughly reflect the positions of the majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Singapore, who spoke on behalf of the group of five small nations (S-5) earlier this afternoon.

We are entering the eighteenth year of our collective effort to reform the Security Council. Much has happened during those years. Significant geopolitical changes have taken place, with some still under way. None of that, however, seems to affect our inability to move this discussion forward, at least in the area of enlargement.

The President of the General Assembly at its last session took an approach to the topic that was slightly different from that of most of his predecessors when he put together a small informal group of ambassadors to explore ways to move this agenda forward. It was a worthwhile effort, though it yielded much the same result. One must therefore wonder what to expect from this session and whether there are any avenues left for

us to explore. We express our continued support for Ambassador Tanin and welcome any initiative that has the potential to lead us out of the ongoing impasse.

If the Council's composition was outdated and a poor reflection of geopolitical realities in 1993, that is obviously even more the case today. But it is hard to argue that there is stronger momentum for reform today than there was back then. In some ways, the opposite may even be the case, despite all the unsuccessful attempts of the past few years and after all this time of circular discussions.

We know the talks that we are engaged in are not really negotiations, despite the fact that we have decided to call them just that. We are now facing the real risk of the process being taken outside of the Assembly, with movement and progress being sought elsewhere, which could result in a politically dangerous showdown in the Assembly and which would certainly undermine its authority, as it is often criticized for its inability to take decisions on essential issues. That would be all the more deplorable as the reform of the Council falls squarely and exclusively within its competence.

As is well known, Liechtenstein has for some years now advocated an enlargement model that could represent a compromise by creating a new category of seats. Six members would be allowed to serve for a much longer term than the two years currently foreseen for elected members under the Charter — perhaps as many as 10 — and they would also be immediately eligible for re-election. This new distribution of seats could lead to some States serving permanently on the Council, without, of course, the privileges of the current permanent members. But it could also lead to a system of rotation among a number of powerful States that could divide these new seats among themselves, with the support and consent of their respective regions. It would both safeguard the interests of small States and avoid the difficulties that would come with the enlargement of the category of permanent members, which is the core of the conundrum of Security Council reform.

Enlargement is not the only and perhaps not the most important aspect of reform. The way in which the Council carries out its tasks also needs to be addressed, as well as the "corporate culture" governing its activities, which the Council, in accordance with the Charter, is carrying out on behalf of all Member States.

This is all the more important because many of us have never served on the Council, and many of us will always have great difficulty in getting an opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the ever more far-reaching decisions of the Council can be effective only if they find broad political support among the membership and are matched by a strong political will to implement them. The S-5, of which we are a proud member, therefore views real progress in the area of working methods as a means of improving the effectiveness of the Council. It is certain that the discussions on Security Council reform have created positive momentum in this respect. It can even be argued that the only tangible, if indirect, results of past years have been in the area of working methods. That said, the measures decided on by the Council itself as part of this process are not sufficient; more importantly, their implementation has been uneven, inconsistent and at times arbitrary. It is thus essential that our efforts to improve its working methods continue.

The issue of working methods is an indispensable part of the comprehensive project to reform the Security Council. But it also must be pursued on its own merits, irrespective, and particularly in the continued absence, of any progress in the enlargement of the Council. By the same token, no one would argue that the Council cannot be enlarged in the absence of an agreement on how to improve its working methods. We as the S-5 have therefore circulated a new draft resolution for consideration by the members of the Assembly, and we look forward to a continued dialogue with all States on how to further pursue our initiative. The text does not aim to offer a complete set of measures necessary to bring about the improvements from which the Council would benefit. Rather, it addresses some of the main political challenges, including the use of the veto, and provides for an ongoing dialogue between the Assembly and the Council on the application of such measures. This would also be very helpful in launching a genuine dialogue between the two bodies, which is foreseen under the Charter but does not currently exist in our practice.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to pay tribute to President Al-Nasser's predecessor, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and to his facilitators for their contribution to the issue that we are discussing today.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In that context, my delegation welcomes the outcome of the new stage of the intergovernmental negotiation process, which is based on the proposals of Member States on the question of equitable representation on and an increase in the membership of the Security Council, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, aimed at identifying a solution that would garner the political support of the broadest possible number of Member States.

I should like also to express my sincere appreciation to the Ambassador of Afghanistan for the way in which he conducted the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. I wish to assure him of our full cooperation in this process.

As we await the resumption of the negotiations, I wish to make several comments.

The Security Council must reflect the political and economic realities of today's world. It must be given the legitimacy needed to act on behalf of the international community in discharging the mandate that devolves upon it in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Likewise, my delegation is of the view that the ultimate aim of any Security Council reform effort must be the strengthening of equitable representation within that body as well as of its credibility and effectiveness. The Council must under no circumstances become a private club of countries that are endowed with special privileges or be perceived as such. That would pose a real danger with respect to its resolutions and their effectiveness, as well as its legitimacy in dealing with issues as sensitive as those relating to international peace and security.

At a time when the world is changing radically and undergoing major geostrategic changes, and at a time when the Arab Spring, which began in Tunisia, is most probably one of the most visible current manifestations of that change, the permanent members of the Security Council themselves recognize the imperative need for an adaptation of international relations and the dynamics governing them. Given that the Council, as the organ that is ultimately responsible for the crucial task of the maintenance of international peace and security, is at the heart of those dynamics, it

must not be spared such adjustment and adaptation to the current regional and international realities.

The realities that obtained in the 1940s, when the Charter of the United Nations was adopted, no longer prevail; they have mutated, and often new realities have come into play without the Council's changing its composition or its working methods. Council reform is therefore a necessity and not a luxury. The future of that executive organ depends upon it, as does its legitimacy and the legitimacy of the Organization as a whole.

Such reform must be comprehensive, transparent and balanced. The agenda of the Council must reflect the needs and interests of both developed and developing countries in an objective, rational, non-selective and non-arbitrary manner. All substantive issues must be addressed, including its composition, regional representation, agenda, working methods and decision-making process, including the right of veto, and we must secure the most broad-based political consensus possible among Member States.

These aims can be achieved only through expansion, particularly in favour of developing countries. Likewise, the makeup of a restructured Security Council must reflect all the sensibilities of the international community.

In that context, Tunisia continues to strongly support the position of the African Union, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus on the issue of Security Council reform and the Sirte Declaration. We believe that it is time to redress the current situation whereby the African continent remains deprived of a permanent seat on the Security Council.

We will support any solution that gives developing countries in general and Africa in particular their rightful place in the Security Council.

Tunisia, which has since the 1960s participated in several peacekeeping operations and has helped, through diplomatic channels or using its forces, to resolve conflicts, and which has recently suffered the fallout of conflict in a neighbouring country, understands all too well the challenges posed by war and hotbeds of tension.

My country remains convinced that a Security Council with such a limited membership and such rigid mechanisms is not in a position to meet either the current need to provide rapid, effective and appropriate

intervention in connection with the growing number of conflicts, or the aspirations of the peoples of the world, who see the United Nations and its executive body as their only champion when all hope has been lost.

In conclusion, we believe that for the Security Council to continue to enjoy the trust of States and world public opinion, it must demonstrate that it can tackle the most difficult issues effectively, while becoming more representative of the international community as a whole and of the realities of today's world.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We wish to reiterate our support for the work of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Chair of the negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council.

With regard to agenda item 30, "Report of the Security Council", Cuba welcomes the efforts to improve the quality of the Council's annual report (A/66/2). However, the report essentially remains a descriptive document, lacking the analytical focus that we, as Member States, need in order to assess the work of that organ. We emphasize the need for the Council to present to the General Assembly the special reports stipulated by the Charter in Articles 15 and 24.

Cuba underscores the responsibility of the Council to give due account of its work to the General Assembly. In conformity with the Charter, we have entrusted that organ of very limited membership with the primary responsibility to act on our behalf to maintain international peace and security.

With regard to agenda item 122, we reiterate the need for an urgent and far-reaching reform of the Security Council. There cannot be true reform of the United Nations without reform of the Security Council. That reform cannot continuously be postponed nor can it continue to ignore the demands of the majority of Member States. The international community needs a Security Council that is more representative, democratic and transparent, in accordance with the minimum standards of the rule of law and in order to adequately tackle global challenges.

Cuba supports an immediate enlargement of the Security Council, in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Increasing only the number of non-permanent seats would further widen the huge gap that already exists between permanent and non-permanent members. Developing countries should have greater representation and participation within the Council, in particular, in the category of permanent membership. There is no justification for entire regions, such as Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, to lack permanent representation. Suffice it to say that more than half of the Council's agenda items relate to Africa, and it is not hard to understand the justice of that continent's demands, which enjoys our full support.

Cuba does not support any kind of discrimination among sovereign States. That is why we believe that the new permanent members must have the same rights and obligations as the current ones. The entry of new permanent members not having the right of veto would be equivalent to creating a new category of Security Council members, which Cuba does not support. There is no justification for developing countries that enter as new permanent members to have a lesser status than the current permanent members. Cuba's position on the veto has been and remains very clear. The veto is an anachronistic and antidemocratic privilege, which is why it must be eliminated as soon as possible.

With regard to the size of the Security Council, Cuba believes that an enlarged Council should have no more than 26 members. With that number, the ratio of new Council members to the membership of the United Nations would be similar to the ratio at the time of the Organization's establishment.

The reform of the Security Council must include a thorough reform of its working methods. Although some modest changes have been introduced in recent years, most of them have been more formal than substantive. The truth is that, at present, the Security Council is not transparent, democratic or efficient.

We advocate a Security Council in which closed-door consultations are the exception. We aspire to a Council that addresses only matters under its remit and does not encroach on those of other bodies. We want a Council that truly takes into account the views of the Organization's members before making decisions and that ensures non-member States of that body genuine access.

In short, we advocate a democratic, participatory and transparent Security Council that has the ability and true legitimacy to mobilize the international community as it addresses current global challenges to international peace and security.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.