



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

59th plenary meeting
 Wednesday, 4 December 2013, 10 a.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

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

Agenda item 9 (continued)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolution (A/68/L.20)

The President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 9 to take action on a draft resolution entitled “Graduation of countries from the least developed country category”, issued as document A/68/L.20. Members will recall that the Assembly had a debate on agenda item 9, jointly with agenda item 14, at its 50th plenary meeting, on 11 November (see A/68/PV.50).

I give the floor to the representative of Fiji, to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.20.

Mr. Daunivalu (Fiji): I have the honour and the pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, draft resolution A/68/L.20, entitled “Graduation of countries from the least developed country category”. The Group of 77 would like to thank all delegations for their constructive contribution to this draft resolution.

For both countries involved in the resolution — Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Vanuatu — graduation from least developed country status is an historic achievement. It is the fruition of many years of strong growth and national progress. It is also the welcome evolution of those nations to middle-income countries. Those dynamic, young and

competitive economies are ready for the challenges ahead. They will take the next steps with the aid of their multilateral development partners and through the oversight of the United Nations system.

The smooth transition process, guided by the G-77 last year, set provisions that mandate oversight by the United Nations, not only in the preparatory period leading up to graduation, but also during the smooth transition process that follows. Nations that are graduating will no longer be left to their own devices but will instead be encouraged to engage with the evaluation systems that will guide them through the formative years of that transition. The transition plans of those countries will be evaluated, assisted and eventually well implemented.

Development and trading partners are encouraged to work hand in hand with graduating countries and to develop bilateral and multilateral relationships through a consultative mechanism, established by the graduating country, to ensure the effective integration of those nations into the world economy.

In closing, let me underscore that for small nations there will always be vulnerabilities to external shocks, global crises and unforeseen adversities. Yet, it is with full faith in the promise of these two nations that we are honoured to welcome them in the step they are taking today into the community of developing countries.

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

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The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.20, entitled “Graduation of countries from the least developed country category”. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.20?

Draft resolution A/68/L.20 was adopted (resolution 68/18).

The President: I now call on those representatives who wish to make statements concerning the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): From the approval in 1990 of the Paris Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s through to the adoption in 2001 of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the objectives established at those conferences to improve the social and economic situation of the least developed countries (LDCs) have not yet been achieved.

The process of globalization has left LDCs behind and has increased their marginalization. For their part, most LDCs have undertaken programmes for economic reform and for the elimination of poverty, and for the overall success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The international community should always bear in mind the fact that the least developed countries constitute the weakest and poorest segment of this community. The economic and social development of those countries represents an enormous challenge for them and for their partners in development. Extreme poverty, the structural weakness of their economics and the related lack of capacity for growth and development are all serious problems for those countries, to which we often must add adverse geographic factors that impair their efforts to improve the quality of life for their peoples.

In the face of those factors of vulnerability and those difficulties, the necessary international support has been insufficient, despite commitments made to earmark a minimum percentage of their gross domestic product to the development of those countries. To overcome those conditions, a commitment is needed to provide greater and more effective international support to LDCs. To that end, sustainable development strategies applicable to the least developed countries should try to correct vulnerabilities, taking into account

the special needs, specific problems and the potential of each country.

Since the Group of Least Developed Countries was set up in 1971, only a very few countries have graduated — Botswana in 1994, Cape Verde in 2007 and the Maldives in 2011, and today, Vanuatu and Equatorial Guinea. That situation leads us to profound reflection on the criteria that were established for the inclusion and graduation of the least developed countries. One such thought is that when those conditions were established, the LDCs had no say in their formulation, which makes for a certain reticence on the part of the least developed countries with regard to graduating from the category, due to the existence of a disparity between the established criteria and the real conditions in the countries.

We believe that the least developed countries are synonymous with poor countries, and no Government would be proud of being eternally poor. All of the LDCs are making every effort to emerge from that category. The only reason for the existence of the group today has been a lack of solidarity and substantive support for those countries.

More than 40 years have not been sufficient to help those countries rise out of poverty. For all the foregoing reasons, the delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea believes that the Istanbul Programme of Action, which included a new element that was lacking in previous programmes, presents a new opportunity for there never to be a single country in that group again. The identification within the Istanbul Programme of Action of the need for national Governments to take the lead in their own development processes, rather than letting donors be in charge as was the case before, is a new value added to the Programme.

Equatorial Guinea decided to take the initiative and assume responsibility for its own development, thanks to the providence of nature. Oil was discovered in 1994, and the first national economic conference was organized, with the participation of all levels of society, to identify priority areas of investment of oil profits. The conclusions of that conference were then collected and reflected in the medium-term economic strategy and became the foundation of financing for large infrastructure works throughout the country. Ten years later, in 2007, we held a second national economic conference, at which we developed another medium-term economic plan that yielded the hoped-

for results — airports, ports, modern buildings, social housing, roads, bridges, schools, modern hospitals and so on were built to connect all parts of the country. The legacy of the second economic conference was the socioeconomic programme entitled Horizon 2020, the goal of which was to achieve social cohesion and diversification of sources of economic growth in the country.

The first result of the strategy was the first National Industrialization Conference of Equatorial Guinea, known as PEGI 2020, which identified priorities for industrialization of the country. A second result involved setting up one of the electric plants of the central subregion, the Djiploho hydroelectric plant, which will not only ensure better supply of energy for the industries created but will also provide electricity for people throughout the country as well as an opportunity to share electric power with neighbouring countries.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea, with its policies of health care for all, education for all, electricity for all, food for all and housing for all, is making ongoing efforts to make the country an emerging country by the year 2020 and thereby comply with the recommendations of the Istanbul Programme of Action. The graduation plan should be reinforced through international cooperation agreements, especially South-South cooperation, with countries that have the same problems and establish strategic alliances for development at the bilateral and multilateral level.

Equatorial Guinea has demonstrated and is demonstrating international solidarity by supporting countries that have suffered natural and man-made disasters and has co-sponsored such international humanitarian actions as the endowment of the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences with \$3 million and the pledge of the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to contribute \$30 million to create a trust fund for food security in Africa in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

In addition to those cutting-edge activities being undertaken by Equatorial Guinea, a report of the World Health Organization, the 2012 Africa Health Financing Scorecard, classified the Republic of Equatorial Guinea as a country that is leading investment in health care on the African continent on a per capita basis, with a per capita investment of \$612. Along those lines, the African

Economic Outlook Report, which is published annually by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), places Equatorial Guinea as the first destination for foreign investment in Africa. The study — conducted upon the initiative of the OECD, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme and a network of research centres and groups of African experts — evaluates the national economic and social development plan, Horizon 2020, the goal of which is to diversify the economy and thus alleviate Equatorial Guinea's dependence on oil and income derived it, which accounts for 78 per cent of gross domestic product.

Notwithstanding all this, the Government of Equatorial Guinea has requested and reiterated at several meetings, particularly the Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul and successive meetings, and in the statement of our President at the general debate of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.13), that the definitive graduation of Equatorial Guinea from the least developed country category be set for 2020, the year of the final evaluation of the Horizon 2020 Action Plan for Equatorial Guinea and related plans.

Despite all of these issues, we have just adopted resolution 68/18 to graduate the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, with a transition period of three years and an exceptional additional period of six months. In other words, effective graduation will take place in June 2017. For that reason, and with a view to guaranteeing the success of that soft transition, which will not alter or have a negative impact on the current process of development in Equatorial Guinea, it is absolutely necessary that, pursuant to paragraph 3 of the resolution just adopted, the United Nations system and other development partners support my country as soon as possible by drafting an assistance programme that, if it is to succeed, must take into account the unique characteristics of Equatorial Guinea. To that end, a multisectoral mission of the United Nations system should visit Equatorial Guinea with the main objective of deeply evaluating, in conjunction with the Government, the general context of our country, obviously taking due account of issues or strategic aspects related to the country's aforementioned vulnerabilities, many of which are linked to the world crises of the last few years.

The success of the graduation process for the group of least developed countries should be measured not only by the number of countries that graduate but by the sustainability of the development that they achieve and the consolidation of their economies so as not to fall back into that category.

Mr. Houde (Benin) (*spoke in French*): The adoption today, 4 December 2013, of resolution 68/18, on the graduation of Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu, is clearly a symbolic act, but it also has major implications for the group of 49 least developed countries (LDCs) that are Members of the United Nations. Indeed, the decision that we have just taken is the outcome and crowning achievement of a long process of negotiations involving several actors. Benin, as Chair of the Coordination Bureau for the LDC Group, would therefore like to thank, on behalf of the Group, the President of the Economic and Social Commission, Mr. Néstor Osorio, the Chair of the Group of 77 and China, and the members of that Group, particularly the facilitator States — Mexico, Turkey and the Maldives — which played a coordinating role. Our thanks also go to our development partners, who, in the course of difficult negotiations, showed understanding and flexibility.

We offer our sincere congratulations to Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu, which in the current sombre economic context have courageously committed to the road to the transition towards being middle-income countries. It is not easy for a country to take such a decision or to make such a commitment when its economy is largely dependent on a single resource, be it oil or something else, and when it is a small island State. That is why the group of LDCs wishes to underscore once again the need for our development partners to continue to support these countries more than ever during the transitional phase.

Furthermore, the adoption of resolution 68/18 demonstrates unequivocally the desire of LDCs to achieve the goals agreed in the Istanbul Programme of Action of May 2011, including, *inter alia*, the graduation of half the members of the group to middle-income-country status by 2020. However, if those goals are to be achieved, the commitments undertaken by partners towards the LDCs must be upheld. There can be no doubt that the failure of our bilateral and multilateral development partners to honour their commitments would undo the efforts being made by our States in the current difficult economic

context and undermine the much hoped-for graduation of a large number of our countries.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 9.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 131, 132, 135 and 142.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation’s vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee”.

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

Agenda item 131**Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/610)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/19).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 135**Programme planning****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/611)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/20).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 135.

Agenda items 132 and 142**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations****Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services****Report of the Fifth Committee (A/68/612)**

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services". The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/21).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 132 and 142.

Agenda items 121 and 122**Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations****Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly**

The President: I should like to make a statement in connection with this joint debate on agenda items 121 and 122.

Many representatives will recall my statement of 14 June (see A/67/PV.87), when I observed the need for any organization to change or adapt or it will simply lose its relevance. The agenda item under consideration today, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", provides us with an opportunity to examine the work of this body and seek ways in which we can collectively strengthen it so as to make it absolutely relevant to the entire United Nations system. It is an opportunity that should not be missed.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge with appreciation all of the work which has taken place to date, as reflected most recently in resolution 67/297 of 29 August 2013 and the related report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at the sixty-seventh session, contained in document A/67/936. In that regard, I would like to commend Ambassador Mootaz Khalil of Egypt for his dedicated service during the previous session.

As communicated in a letter dated 14 November 2013, I have appointed Ambassadors Ružička and Sinhaseni as co-Chairs for this session's consultations on this important agenda item. As they begin their work at the conclusion of our consideration here today, I encourage each representative to be open, transparent and most of all, efficient, and I ask delegations to fully support them so as to ensure an ambitious outcome.

Resolution 67/297 gives members of the Working Group a number of specific mandates, ranging from the role of the General Assembly and its authority to working methods, and from the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads to strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. While we have already begun to see significant changes in place, the non-implementation of resolutions of the General

Assembly, including those related to the revitalization of its work, continues to be a matter of concern for Member States, which have an important role and responsibility to play in that respect. I have every confidence in the commitment of the two facilitators to ensuring that the debate in the Ad Hoc Working Group is approached in a thoughtful and investigative spirit, mindful that the very relevance of the Assembly depends upon it.

Resolution 67/297 also assigns specific responsibilities to the presidency of the Assembly. I assure Member States that I am mindful of those responsibilities and that I intend to fully comply with them both in letter and in spirit. Members may already have noticed my zeal with regard to the use of our time, the relationship with the General Committee and interactions with the presidents of the other major organs, to name but a few areas.

The issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly has long been before this body. While some people would say that progress has not been fast enough, we here in this Hall know that the General Assembly is at the very heart of the United Nations — what it stands for and what it was created to do. With that in mind, I hope that members will allow me a moment to extol some of its virtues.

This body's pre-eminent place among international policy forums is perhaps best demonstrated by the annual general debate and the high-level participation by Member States. This year, we heard statements by more than 110 Heads of State and Government. No other body on this planet attracts the same level of representation or benefits from the same legitimacy.

We can also consider the concrete achievements that we have already seen during the current session. I will mention the adoption of a resolution on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (resolution 68/1); the inauguration of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development; the first high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament (see A/68/PV.11); and the outcome document that sets us on a path to create a universal and shared development agenda post-2015 (resolution 68/6), to name a few.

From a broader perspective, the General Assembly takes on issues that affect us all. It ties us together with the thread of universality. The issues before us so often affect our Member States, both big and small, developing and developed, North and South. The scope

of what we cover is extremely comprehensive and far-reaching — from peace and security, sustainable development, economic and social development, human rights and humanitarian assistance to international law, organized crime and terrorism, among other issues. When we come together to adopt a resolution, such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the work of the General Assembly not only carries moral weight, but also has the power to influence the course of global and national policies. Effectively, it changes the world.

Such an opportunity is before us once again with the mapping of the post-2015 development agenda. With that in mind, I have announced the convening of three high-level thematic debates and three high-level events on a range of issues of immediate relevance and direct importance to setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, I am pleased to inform members that I will be formally communicating the 2014 timetable for those events and debates to Member States in the next few days.

As we move forward, let us remain mindful that our true goal is to change not only the General Assembly but also the world in which we live. However, we must begin right here today with the work that is before us and by fulfilling the commitments that we have already made.

Mr. Djacta (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, allow me to express the gratitude of the members of NAM to Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil, Permanent Representative of Egypt, for his tireless efforts and excellent work in chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-seventh session. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. František Ružička, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, and Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni, Permanent Representative of Thailand, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-eighth session and to wish them every success in discharging their duties.

NAM welcomes the adoption of resolution 67/297 in August, by which the General Assembly established the Ad Hoc Working Group to discuss issues related to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly during the sixty-eighth session.

The Non-Aligned Movement underlines that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a political process rather than a procedural matter, aimed mainly at strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations in the wider United Nations system. That process should therefore be conducted in an inclusive, transparent and efficient manner. For that reason, the Movement reiterates the importance of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly as an item that deserves consideration on an equal footing with the other reform processes and important topics on the General Assembly's agenda.

I would like to take this opportunity to state that NAM emphasizes the need to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal organ of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain the balance among those organs within their respective Charter-based functions and powers. In that regard, the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions and all General Assembly resolutions that clarify its relationship with the Assembly and the other principal organs.

In that context, NAM reiterates its concern, raised during previous sessions, over the continuous attempt by the Security Council to encroach on the powers and prerogatives of the General Assembly. Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter does not in fact endow the Security Council with the competence to address issues that fall within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In the same vein, NAM reiterates its request to the Security Council to submit a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report to the General Assembly, assessing the work of the Council, including those cases in which the Council has failed to act.

Furthermore, in previous resolutions — resolutions 58/126, 59/313 and 60/286 — the General Assembly invited the Security Council to submit periodically, in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter, special subject-oriented reports to the General Assembly for its consideration on issues of current international concern. Since the adoption of resolution 58/126, no special, subject-oriented reports have been formally submitted to the General Assembly. Special subjects are, to some extent, covered only by the monthly assessments provided by the Presidents of the Security Council.

Moreover, NAM is convinced that the activities of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization will contribute greatly to the whole process of revitalization. In that context, NAM supports in particular the two proposals discussed by the Special Committee: first, the creation of an open-ended working group to study the proper implementation of the Charter of the United Nations with respect to the functional relationship of its organs; and secondly, the working paper on the strengthening of the role of the Organization and enhancing its effectiveness.

We reaffirm the role and authority of the General Assembly, including regarding questions related to international peace and security, as well as its intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic character, which have immensely contributed to promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the goals of the Organization. The group also reaffirms the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations, as such, and draws attention to the necessity of consulting with Member States on initiatives and activities undertaken within the Organization and the right of all Member States to express their position before the General Assembly at any time they wish to do so.

The General Assembly, as the policy-making organ of the Organization, has the authority and the essential role of drawing up the framework, establishing the principles and identifying the objectives of the wider United Nations system and its numerous organs, agencies and programmes. Furthermore, the Assembly should maintain its position as the principal organ in reviewing the work of all of its subsidiary organs and bodies.

The General Assembly should also maintain its role and mandate in setting the priorities of the United Nations in the consideration of all budgetary and administrative issues and reforms, including its absolute authority to allocate and reallocate financial and human resources, and in the appointment of senior Secretariat officials, in accordance with the Charter and relevant Assembly resolutions. In that regard, the prerogatives of the General Assembly as the chief oversight organ of the Organization, including on management and procurement for peacekeeping operations, must be respected.

NAM, while expressing its readiness to continue to support all ongoing efforts to strengthen the central

role and authority of the Assembly, wishes to state that it will oppose any approach seeking to undermine or minimize the achievements of the General Assembly, diminish its current role and functioning, or raise questions about its relevance and credibility.

It is clear that while the prerogatives of the presidency of the General Assembly have not changed, its role and activities have evolved over the past years in adapting to the growing activities, conferences and initiatives of the Assembly, performing official protocol functions, representing the Assembly throughout the world, and making the work of the Assembly better known and more visible.

The activities of the Office of the President of the General Assembly have therefore increased drastically over the years and the Assembly's agenda and, consequently, that of its President include a tremendous number of issues. The expanded activities of the General Assembly — including the yearly adoption of more or less 300 resolutions and decisions and the establishment of working groups and facilitators to convene meetings and consultations throughout the year — have led to the necessary presence or active participation of the President during the entire session. Moreover, the workload of the General Assembly is no longer limited to its main session, but rather covers the whole period from the opening of the session in September to its closing. Those increasing and tremendous activities should, of course, be matched with all the necessary resources, human and financial.

The Movement emphasizes the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President, including by strengthening its institutional memory. While noting with appreciation the progress already achieved in that regard, we are of the view that particular effort should be devoted to implementing existing resolutions on the matter and identifying, during the upcoming discussions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, ways and means to pursue that objective progressively and with determination.

Among other prerogatives and mandates of the General Assembly is the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It is a question that NAM considers to be of utmost importance. In that context, the selection of the Secretary-General must reflect greater transparency and inclusivity in terms of all Member States. We recall that, to date, no

consultations on the appointment of a new Secretary-General have taken place, as reflected in the updated inventory chart indicated in the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/67/936, annex I).

The Movement therefore emphasizes the need for the General Assembly's participation in the selection and appointment of future Secretaries-General to be more active, effective and efficient, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the provisions of resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301, 66/294 and 67/297. In that regard, the Movement stresses the importance of the full implementation of the aforementioned resolutions to the imminent process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General.

The Movement recalls the decision taken in paragraph 3 of resolution 67/297, requesting that the Ad Hoc Working Group continue the comprehensive review of the inventory of the status of implementation of the resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly and to issue an updated version, as well as the request to the Secretary-General to submit an update on the related provisions that have not been implemented, with an indication of the constraints and reasons behind any lack of implementation. Furthermore, the group believes firmly, as outlined in paragraph 5 of resolution 67/297,

“that non-implementation of General Assembly resolutions, including those related to the revitalization of its work, may diminish the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly”,

and that Member States are primarily responsible for their implementation.

Political will is indeed key to ensuring the effective implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. In that regard, NAM welcomes the decision to issue, at the sixty-eighth session, the updated inventory chart of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization, to be annexed to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group. That update will provide Member States with the opportunity to assess progress achieved in the implementation of resolutions since the sixty-third session.

In conclusion, NAM reaffirms that a reinvigorated General Assembly, in an environment of greater responsiveness and fully exerting its role and authority,

would significantly contribute to strengthening the wider United Nations system, improved international governance and enhanced multilateralism.

The President: I call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Area country Norway, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to warmly thank the previous Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Egypt, for the excellent work done. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for appointing the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand to serve as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We wish them success and express our full support for their efforts.

The European Union and its member States are strongly attached to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. The strengthening the United Nations based on effective and sustainable funding in line with real capacity to pay, and increasing the efficiency of its functioning, on which there is scope to do more, remain our top priorities. In that context, we continue to be committed to revitalization and to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions. Indeed, we hope that the General Assembly, as the only intergovernmental body with universal membership, and given its broad mandate and far-reaching responsibilities, is able to take up the challenges of reconciling legitimacy and efficiency in a context of emerging global challenges.

We believe that revitalization can be ensured only when the General Assembly takes relevant action on issues of common concern to the international community and produces results. By doing so, it lives up to its role as one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The European Union and its member States welcome the adoption of resolution 67/297, whose important

provisions include the call to involve civil society as an interactive partner of the General Assembly, where appropriate, and to explore the possibility of electing non-permanent members of the Security Council and members of the Economic and Social Council before October of each year. In addition, we would like to stress the importance of implementing all the Assembly's resolutions, including those on the revitalization of its work, and note its impact on the authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly.

The revitalization of the Assembly's work is clearly interlinked with the overall reform of the United Nations. We welcome the rotation mechanism for the Chairs of the Main Committees for the next five years and commend the efforts of the President of the General Assembly to that end. We hope for further discussion in the Ad Hoc Working Group so that the mechanism and other issues can be addressed in an in-depth manner.

The revitalization process of the General Assembly has already led to positive developments, including the introduction of thematic debates, which facilitate more in-depth discussions on current issues of critical importance to the international community. The European Union and its member States especially value the interactive character of thematic debates, which allows the closer engagement of the Assembly with other stakeholders, including international and regional organizations and groups outside the United Nations system. We look forward to the continuation of that practice and invite the President of the General Assembly to consult with Member States on the possibilities, where appropriate, of engaging a broad range of stakeholders in the spirit of partnership with a view to achieving result-oriented outcomes from such debates. We also recognize the importance of the interaction between the General Assembly and international or regional forums and organizations dealing with global matters of concern to the international community and the benefits to be drawn from such interaction.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's continued practice of holding periodic informal briefings on his priorities, travels and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations, and encourage him to continue with that practice.

With respect to the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations, the EU and its member States believe that improving transparency and cooperation

remain important goals. The Assembly should benefit from information about meetings among the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the chairs of subsidiary bodies. Periodic briefings by the President of the General Assembly on his recent activities, including his official travels, continue to be an appreciated practice and are a valuable source of information.

We also welcome resolution 68/1, adopted on 20 September, which addresses the relationship between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We underline in particular its call for the two bodies to ensure that their respective agendas are rationalized so as to eliminate duplication and overlap and to promote complementarity in the negotiation of similar or related issues.

On the issue of working methods, we would like to stress the need for the further rationalization and streamlining of the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. In that regard, we also recognize the importance of goodwill and cooperation on the part of Member States with that goal in mind. We are of the opinion that it would be appropriate to further explore the biennialization and triennialization of certain items, as well as their clustering or elimination. In that regard, the leadership of the Chairs and Bureaus of the Main Committees is of particular importance. We look forward to the briefings on working methods to the Ad Hoc Working Group by the Chairs of the Main Committees. Although each Main Committee has its own authority over the rules of procedure, we believe that streamlining and standardizing some rules would lead to more efficient work of the Committees.

We would also like to stress the importance of making full use of the e-services provided by the Secretariat. The widespread use by Main Committees and Member States of such services, including the PaperSmart portal, has had a positive impact on the work of the General Assembly during its main session. It has also saved a considerable amount of resources, energy and paper. We must continue to work in that direction.

We look forward to seeing the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly — including in his capacity as Chair of the General Committee — and the Chairs of the Main Committees play an active role, in consultation with Member States, in enhancing the coordination of the scheduling of high-level meetings

with a view to optimizing their number and distribution throughout the year, bearing in mind the need to preserve the integrity of the general debate. We believe that the General Committee could play a useful role in that process.

Finally, let me emphasize the important role of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. I would like to assure the Assembly that the EU and its member States will continue to engage in a constructive manner in the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We look forward to receiving a work plan soon.

Mr. Khalil (Egypt): Egypt associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, I would like to express appreciation to you, Sir, for the pledge you made on 14 June in your acceptance speech (see A/67/PV.87) to advance the reform processes of the principal organs of the United Nations during the sixty-eighth session, including by enhancing the role, authority and efficiency of the General Assembly. We are confident that you will give the process of revitalizing the General Assembly the same attention, if not more, as that you are already devoting to other reform processes, including the reform and expansion of the Security Council.

I seize this opportunity to congratulate the newly appointed co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly for the current session, my dear friends Ambassador Norachit Sinhaseni of Thailand and Ambassador František Ružička of Slovakia. The Egyptian delegation will provide them with all the support necessary to help to push the process of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly towards achieving tangible results.

Revitalizing the work of the General Assembly lies at the core of overall reform of the United Nations. The Assembly is and will remain the main deliberative, policymaking and representative principal body of this Organization. That revitalization has been on its agenda for more than two decades now. Member States have adopted by consensus many resolutions with specific provisions on the subject. The latest of those, resolution 67/297, adopted in August, built on the modest progress achieved so far under the four clusters of the revitalization process.

Much more must be done in order to ensure that the Assembly plays the leading role in global governance

at the political, economic and social levels that it deserves. If the political will to revitalize it exists, we should start by identifying the areas where we have already achieved tangible progress and those that require more attention. The cluster on working methods remains the area that has seen most improvement since the revitalization process began. On the other hand, no significant progress has been made regarding the role and authority of the General Assembly. The cluster on the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General remains in a stalemate. The modest budget for your Office, Mr. President, continues to be a serious obstacle to strengthening that Office and its institutional memory.

One major obstacle facing the authority of the General Assembly is the Security Council's continued encroachment on its role and functions. The Security Council tends to deviate from its mandate by addressing important issues even when they do not pose a threat to international peace and security. We need to develop a mutually reinforcing and complementary relationship between the principal organs of the United Nations as laid down in the Charter, by giving their individual mandates due respect.

The non-implementation of General Assembly resolutions is at the top of the list of the challenges for revitalization. It has a negative impact on the Assembly's credibility and affects its role and authority. The Assembly will not be able to respond to emerging challenges and events of common concern to the international community without the authority necessary to implement its own resolutions. If they were implemented effectively, we would have seen the question of Palestine resolved decades ago. We would have seen it taken off the agenda. Yet the adoption of those resolutions at every session proves that the General Assembly perseveres in upholding the principles of justice and equality. Having done that, it now needs the authority to implement its decisions without selectivity or politicization.

The first step in advancing the revitalization process of the Assembly is to transform related decisions and resolutions into actions. The Ad Hoc Working Group should benefit from the updated chart of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization (A/67/936, annex I) as a tool for following up implementation, and the chart should be updated at every session in order to determine the progress achieved in that regard.

During past sessions, many States and groups of States have reiterated requests for a more streamlined General Assembly agenda by clustering and biennializing or triennializing items on it. Nothing specific has been achieved in that area. It is Member States' responsibility to be both innovative and practical. Delegations should lead by example, by presenting items that they sponsor to the Ad Hoc Working Group or the General Committee for streamlining. Egypt has presented a practical proposal, related to streamlining the Second Committee's agenda, for incorporating related items under the agenda item on sustainable development, in order to integrate the economic and social aspects of sustainable development and address them on an equal footing with the environmental aspects.

The effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly depends on increasing its financial and human resources from the United Nations regular budget. It is not logical that its budget allocation has not increased since 1998. We look forward to seeing a positive outcome on this issue from the related deliberations in the Fifth Committee on the regular budget for the next biennium of 2014-2015.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. In accordance with previous resolutions, the Assembly is mandated to be engaged in the selection process for the Secretary-General at an early stage, with full regard to the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm the Egyptian delegation's full support for you, Mr. President, and for the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, with a view to enhancing the role of the General Assembly in achieving peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and would like to make some additional comments on this topic.

I would first like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly for preparing the report on the subject (A/67/936) and for their efforts to advance the process of revitalizing the Assembly.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a key element in achieving real reform of the United

Nations. At the present time, it is impossible to tackle the process of that reform overall if we do not make it a priority to ensure a more democratic and effective Organization, having as its centre a General Assembly fully able to exercise the powers invested in it by the Charter of the United Nations. Cuba has said on many occasions that the revitalization process should have the ultimate goal of restoring and consolidating the central role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as is clearly acknowledged in the Charter, the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and in multiple resolutions and statements agreed on in the United Nations.

In the current circumstances, the goals of the revitalization process should be to help the Assembly to strengthen its independence and its authority as a forum for broad debate, where the freedom of Member States to discuss subjects of interest to them is not restricted or limited. In order to restore the international community's confidence in the United Nations and its credibility in world public opinion, we must ensure that our Organization genuinely responds to the collective interests of its Member States. That can be achieved only by revitalizing the leading role of the General Assembly, the one organ of the United Nations where hegemonies have no place, where everyone has a voice and a vote, and where the obsolete right of veto does not exist.

The General Assembly has the capacity, in fact and in law, to examine crucial and urgent topics of international reality in order to adopt concrete, action-oriented resolutions. In our opinion, the Organization's main problem today consists precisely in the failure to implement the Assembly's numerous resolutions, which make up an important body of standards but remain largely inert because their application depends on the political will of the States that have the political, military or economic power to do so. This is also true of many resolutions on the very theme of the revitalization of the Assembly, whose implementation has unfortunately been very limited.

Cuba underlines the need to achieve an appropriate balance between the principal organs of the United Nations in accordance with the Charter and to put an immediate end to the growing and dangerous trend of transferring items on the General Assembly's agenda to the Security Council. The Security Council should strictly observe the provisions of the Charter and all

resolutions of the General Assembly, as the chief organ of the United Nations, and should not include in its discussions or agenda issues that clearly fall under the functions and powers of other organs.

The revitalization of the General Assembly cannot be a bureaucratic process. As Father Miguel d'Escoto, from the brotherly Republic of Nicaragua, wisely said in his farewell address as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session (see A/63/PV.105), the revitalization of this organ is not a technical issue but a political one.

We hope that as a result of the revitalization process, the interaction between the Secretariat and the General Assembly is strengthened, so that the former can fulfil more effectively the mandates set out by the Member States. Furthermore, as part of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group, the implementation of resolutions on this subject should be closely monitored and the inventory of resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly should be kept up to date.

We already have a large arsenal of legislation on the necessary revitalization of this principal organ. The priority is to implement the many resolutions already adopted and march resolutely towards the practical implementation of the reform process. It is urgent that we move forward with concrete steps on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We cannot have an Organization that responds effectively to the contemporary system of international relations without reforming the Security Council and transforming the General Assembly into the centre of the debate and multilateral work.

The delegation of Cuba would like to conclude by reiterating its willingness to continue to collaborate in the work to achieve the important and necessary goal of revitalizing the General Assembly.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the convening of today's meeting of the General Assembly on the revitalization of its work. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and to wish them every success in that endeavour. At the same time, I would like to express our gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Egypt for his effective leadership of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-seventh session.

Russia supports realistic initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of the General Assembly's activities, provided that paramount importance is given to improving the Assembly's working methods and streamlining its agenda, which is far too overburdened. We support the need to consider some of its agenda items on a biennial or triennial basis and to remove items that have lost their relevance.

We reiterate our proposal to ease up during the high-level week of the general debate, as Heads of State and Government and Foreign Ministers already have a busy schedule of bilateral contacts during their stay in New York. The number of high-level events during that period should be limited and the rest evenly distributed throughout the Assembly's entire session.

We also believe that any reform innovation should be based on strict compliance with the prerogatives allocated among the principal organs of the United Nations, as provided for in the Charter. In particular, we advocate maintaining the current practice based on Article 97 of the Charter regarding the role of the General Assembly in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, whereby the Secretary-General is appointed by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council.

During the current session, we will need to determine the procedure for electing the chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly in the future, given that the current scheme expires this year. We are willing to consider the proposals on the negotiating table.

We must carefully study the proposals to strengthen the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. At the same time, we note that, as with any issue that might have financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations, this issue should be considered in full compliance with the conventional procedure, namely, in the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Currently, the international situation continues to undergo profound and complex changes so as to effectively respond to the myriad global threats and challenges. The international community generally expects the United Nations to play a greater role in maintaining world peace, enhancing cooperation and seeking common development.

The General Assembly is one of the main policy-making and deliberative bodies of the United Nations and one of the most important Charter organs within the United Nations system. The broad membership, especially developing countries, hope to see the Assembly's authority and efficiency further strengthened. Thus the Assembly would respond to the expectations of the international community and better fulfil the duties entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

China supports the further strengthening of the policy deliberations of the General Assembly in the light of the developing international situation and in response to the outstanding challenges facing the United Nations in various fields. The Assembly is to give priority attention to the major issues of universal concern for the membership, especially those that have to do with the fundamental interests of developing countries.

At present, international cooperation for development is in a critical transitional stage. The General Assembly needs to focus its attention on how to scale up its support for development issues and play a greater role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, preparing the post-2015 development agenda and promoting sustainable development.

The principal organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, need to strengthen their cooperation and division of labour, give full play to their respective advantages and enhance their exchanges of information and interaction. On matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the division of labour set out in the Charter, the General Assembly should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with the Security Council.

China supports the General Assembly in its efforts to improve its working methods, streamline its decision-making process and improve its efficiency so as to cultivate a pragmatic and action-oriented culture. The authority and effectiveness of the Assembly depend to a large extent on the implementation and results of its resolutions. Members need to respect the sanctity of all General Assembly resolutions and maintain the Assembly's authority and effectiveness.

The effective functioning of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is an important

guarantee for the smooth proceeding of the Assembly's work. China supports the idea of strengthening the Office of the President in terms of financial and human resources, as a means to help resolve the practical difficulties facing especially the developing countries that assume the presidency.

China has in recent years contributed to the trust fund in support of the functioning of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We hope that more countries will take effective measures to support the functioning of that Office.

The membership generally invests great hope in the revitalization of the General Assembly. China firmly supports the President of the General Assembly in his efforts to revitalize the Assembly and to facilitate a significant role for the Assembly in the peaceful resolution of international disputes and in the promotion of global common development.

China congratulates the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We hope that, within the framework of the Working Group, the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions can be taken forward in a spirit of democratic consultations, via a stepwise approach and in accordance with the principle of easy matters first.

China stands ready to work with the rest of the United Nations membership in joint efforts to facilitate progress on the important agenda item of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): We thank you, Sir, for convening this important discussion. I am happy to place on record our appreciation for the good work done by the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly last year, Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil, Permanent Representative of Egypt. I also welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group for this session.

I would like to align myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement.

The impact of the political transformations sweeping parts of the world and the continuing weakness in the global economy have exposed the weakness of

globalization. The increasingly complex and pressing transnational challenges of our time, namely, the issues of peace and security, development, human rights, the environment and health, among others, also require more effective structures of global governance and a revitalized General Assembly.

In your acceptance speech in June 2013 (see A/67/PV.87), Mr. President, you rightly identified reinvigoration of the reform agenda of the General Assembly as critical. In your inaugural address to the Assembly at its sixty-eight session (see A/68/PV.1), you reiterated your determination to dedicate significant time and resources to the issues of reforming and revitalizing the major bodies of the United Nations, namely, the General Assembly and the Security Council. You can count on India's support in those endeavours.

The need for the revitalization of the General Assembly has long been recognized by the Assembly. However, after more than two decades of discussions, few changes have been made, even to its working methods, and negligible outcomes attained in terms of substantive changes to the norms and structures of the Assembly. Without prejudging the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which is soon to begin its work, I would like to place on record the Indian delegation's considered views on some of the most important aspects of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

We have consistently held the view that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is respected, both in letter and spirit. The Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the United Nations in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. In particular, revitalization must restore the primacy of the United Nations in development matters. We need to change the Organization from a talk shop to a place where transnational issues that impact each and every one of us are addressed swiftly and where truly global solutions are prescribed.

First of all, it is critical that we establish a relationship of mutual respect for the respective mandates of the General Assembly and the Security Council, in the spirit of the Charter. The Council should not encroach upon the mandate of the Assembly through extremely wide and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Secondly, we believe that the Assembly must have a greater say in the process of selection of the Secretary-General. The continued circumscription of the Assembly's role and responsibilities in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General needs to change in the interests of the United Nations system in general and the Assembly's prerogatives in particular.

Thirdly, the Assembly and the other entities that form part of the United Nations system must reflect best practices in their day-to-day functioning. They have a lot to learn from Member States in that regard.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative body of the international community.

You can count, Sir, on India's constructive support and participation in those efforts.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting on an issue that is of particular importance to us. I wish also to express Malaysia's appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Egypt for his tireless efforts and outstanding leadership in steering the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We appreciate the convening of the four separate thematic meetings on revitalization. The discussions undertaken and all efforts by Member States culminated in the report of the Working Group (A/67/936), for which we have the Chair of the Working Group to thank. Allow me also to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

On that note, I wish to align my statement with that delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Without a doubt, the General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Representing all 193 Member States, it is the highest authoritative body of the United Nations. As such, we must accord it the role and authority that it rightly deserves. Unfortunately, despite the extensive discussions that we have held throughout

the years, we have only managed to achieve qualified success in revitalizing the General Assembly. We have seen some improvement in its working methods. While we welcome those improvements, we must continue to address the actual reasons why there is a need to revitalize the General Assembly in the first place.

My delegation firmly believes that the non-implementation of the Assembly's resolutions continues to be the biggest stumbling block in enhancing the role and effectiveness of the Assembly. In fact, no other weakness of the General Assembly undermines its relevance or effectiveness more. Malaysia appreciates the decision to have the Ad Hoc Working Group continue its review of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization, and we welcome the updated inventory chart of those resolutions (A/67/936, annex I). That has enabled Member States to better understand the reasons behind the lack of implementation of such resolutions, with a view to addressing their underlying causes. It is the first step towards the ultimate goal of achieving full implementation of all Assembly resolutions.

Malaysia continues to take a serious view of the issue of encroachment. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of all principal organs — especially the leading two, the General Assembly and the Security Council — faithfully respecting one another's mandates in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Both organs must work together in consultation and cooperation to create a more harmonious working relationship.

We stand ready to look into issues such as rationalizing or clustering the list of agenda items, as well as the possibility of biennializing or triennializing agenda items and resolutions. However, the consent of the sponsoring State or States is absolutely vital before any such measures are implemented. At the same time, we agree that those who call for biennializing or triennializing agenda items and resolutions should lead by setting an example for others to follow.

Malaysia welcomes the convening of high-level meetings and thematic debates on issues that are important to Member States. However, we believe there should be better coordination with all the relevant parties in organizing such meetings so as to avoid or at least minimize scheduling problems for delegations, especially during the high-level week of the General Assembly. We look forward to discussing proposals — such as exploring the possibility of

scheduling such meetings during the early part of the year — for resolving the problem of too many meetings and events during that week.

Malaysia is concerned about the delay that occurred in electing the Chairs of the Main Committees for the current session of the Assembly. Situations such as occurred in the lead-up to this session should not be repeated. We hope that all concerned can respect the practice of holding the elections, on the basis of geographical distribution, at least three months prior to the next session, in order to encourage advance planning and preparation for the work of the Main Committees. We also look forward to discussing in greater detail and determining the rotation pattern for the Chairs and Bureaus of the Main Committees, bearing in mind the expiration of the rotation mechanism established in resolution 48/264. Malaysia believes that whatever rotation pattern is agreed on should be adhered to by all Member States.

It is undeniable that the role and activities of the President of the General Assembly have evolved significantly over the years. Compared with just a few years ago, the Assembly currently considers more issues and agenda items. Furthermore, its workload now covers the entire year and is no longer limited to the main session. Given those circumstances, it is only natural that the Office holder be provided with the necessary resources to enable him or her to efficiently and effectively perform the role entrusted to the Office by the Charter.

While we recognize the benefits of the trust fund established to assist in funding the President's work, it is nonetheless critical that funding from the regular budget be increased so as to avoid the President being dependent on the trust fund and voluntary contributions. In that regard, Malaysia looks forward to proposals from the Secretary-General for reviewing the budget of the Office of the President of the General Assembly for the biennium 2014-2015, pursuant to resolution 66/294.

On the issue of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, Malaysia firmly believes that the Assembly needs to play a more meaningful role in the process. The selection process must be more transparent and inclusive, since the Secretary-General represents all Member States of the United Nations, and not just the Security Council. It is therefore important to implement past resolutions on the issue, especially paragraphs 17 to 22 of the annex to resolution 60/286,

in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General in the future.

The issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly has been the subject of plenary debate since 1991. It is high time that all Member States approached the issue with openness and the political will necessary to realizing substantial progress. Should the pace of reform continue as it has over the years, we fear being left with the awkward agenda item of revitalizing the revitalization process. I am sure that is something we can avoid.

Mr. Toro-Carnevali (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil, the Permanent Representative of Egypt, for his tireless efforts and excellent job as Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the Assembly's sixty-seventh session. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassadors František Ružička and Norachit Sinhaseni, the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand, respectively, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group for our sixty-eighth session, and to wish them every success in fulfilling their tasks.

The revitalization of the General Assembly involves strengthening it as the preferred forum for promoting dialogue and cooperation in the search for solutions to the problems that affect the economic and social development of the peoples, as well as issues relating to international peace and security. In that regard, we should promote and maintain the role and mandate of the General Assembly in establishing United Nations priorities, including review of all budgetary and administrative matters. The Assembly is the only body authorized to allocate and reallocate financial and human resources, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and its own resolutions.

The Assembly should continue to function as a political space for the exchange of ideas and consensus, in which every Member State has the right to draw this body's attention to the issues of concern to it that have to do with the goals promoted by this Organization. Since the General Assembly is the supreme United Nations forum for debate, it must retain its independence

vis-à-vis other organs. As has been stated by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in various political documents, in particular the Final Document of its Sixteenth Summit, in Tehran, it is essential to reverse the Security Council's tendency to get involved in considering issues that are outside its purview.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly should be governed by the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability and should be achieved through open and inclusive consultations aimed at continuing to strengthen the role and standing of the Assembly as the chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations.

Venezuela reaffirms the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly through the necessary financial and human resources. While acknowledging the progress made to date, we call for the consideration of new ways to continue strengthening that Office.

In conclusion, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to state that it is firmly convinced that the revitalization and reform of the Organization to which we aspire should include strengthening the role and standing of the General Assembly.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. John Ashe for his leadership in addressing the various items on the agenda of the General Assembly. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Mr. Ahmadein Khalil, Permanent Representative of Egypt and Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the previous session.

In your acceptance speech, Mr. President, you mentioned that any organization that cannot evolve or adapt to the changing circumstances is at risk and that the United Nations must reform or it will become inconsequential (see A/67/PV.87). I completely share your views. The United Nations needs to adapt to the changing realities with a sense of urgency if it wants to remain relevant and to lead the world for the better. Revitalizing the General Assembly, together with Security Council reform, is a crucial component of the reform agenda. We must make steady progress towards achieving feasible and realistic results on this agenda item.

There have been many developments with regard to this item over the past several years. The compilation of a handbook on the General Assembly, the review

and update of the inventory of Assembly resolutions on revitalization, the practice of holding thematic debates and the close consultations among the Presidents of the different organs are among the concrete developments achieved so far. However, much more must be done and much greater efforts are required. Let me put forward some ideas that might be worth discussing and exploring during this session.

First, Japan is of the view that the proposal made during the previous session to bring forward the date for the election of members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council reflects the legitimate concerns of newly elected members. It should therefore be seriously considered. In fact, bringing the elections forward would ensure that the newly elected members had more time to prepare before taking up their roles in the respective Councils.

Secondly, enhancing fairness in the management of the General Assembly is an important aspect that we should discuss, particularly with regard to how the lists of speakers are decided in the Assembly. There is the issue of the rigid categorization of speakers when deciding the list of speakers for the general debate. Let me note that there are countries such as mine in which the Head of State plays a ceremonial role and the Head of Government has the highest political mandate. In cases where such a Head of Government makes a statement before the General Assembly, some flexibility should be considered when deciding the order in the list of speakers. Japan believes that further improvements in how the list of speakers is organized should be explored.

A particular case that Japan views with some concern is when representatives of countries of a regional organization speak immediately after the representative of that regional organization. Japan is of the view that when the representative of a regional organization has made a statement, countries that do not belong to that regional organization should be given the opportunity to express their views before the members of the regional organization.

Thirdly, I believe that everyone agrees on the importance of rationalizing the work of the General Assembly with a view to better enabling it to focus on important issues. The work of the Assembly has evolved over the years. Currently, around 170 agenda items are discussed and around 300 resolutions and decisions are adopted in the Assembly every year. Efforts have been made for biennial or triennial consideration and the

clustering and the elimination of items, but much more must be done. We really need to seriously consider and discuss concrete ways and criteria for the further streamlining and prioritization of the Assembly's agenda and its Main Committees.

With regard to the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly, allow me also emphasize the importance of following time restraints when speaking in the Assembly. We should encourage Member States to distribute a longer written statement for putting on record, while delivering concise oral statements within the time limits. We Member States should maintain a high level of discipline on that issue if we really want to enhance the work of the Assembly.

Such issues are some of the ideas that Japan believes to be worth discussing under this agenda item. The revitalization of the General Assembly, together with the reform of the Security Council, is an imminent task that we must address. Let me conclude my statement by saying that Japan stands ready to contribute in a constructive way to the discussions aimed at further enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United States would like to thank last year's Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassador Mootaz Khalil of Egypt, for his leadership of the Group. Under his able stewardship, we adopted a resolution that will serve as a strong basis for the Group's discussions as we move forward (resolution 67/297). We welcome the new co-Chairs, Ambassador František Ružička of Slovakia and Ambassador Norachit Sinhaseni of Thailand, and offer them our full support. We also look forward to working with fellow Member States as we consider the best options for revitalizing the General Assembly.

The United States is fully committed to multilateral engagement and a strong United Nations system. We support the contributions of the General Assembly in that regard. Accordingly, our delegation believes that making the work of the Assembly more focused and relevant should be a priority for everyone. While there has been modest progress on improving the work of the Assembly, it has not kept pace with the Assembly's workload in terms of the number of agenda items, resolutions adopted and reports requested of the Secretary-General. That number has grown exponentially over time. We therefore call on Member States to refocus their attention on efforts to streamline

the work and to reform the working methods of the General Assembly.

We welcome the updated inventory chart of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization annexed to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/67/936) submitted during the sixty-seventh session. We propose an emphasis on follow up of unimplemented provisions of the annex related to resolutions, the consolidation of reports, the preparation and issuance of reports, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, the practices and working methods of the Main Committees and the General Committee. Those efforts could enhance the role, authority and effectiveness of the Assembly.

We also support Ambassador Khalil's proposal to consider scheduling some high-level debates earlier in the year to remedy the congested General Assembly calendar. We should not shy away from thinking about new ways to make the Assembly a more nimble and responsive body. We recognize that many delegations continue to focus on other aspects related to the United Nations work, such as the role and authority of the President of the General Assembly, the working methods of the Security Council or the process to select the Secretary-General. While important topics, we do not believe they should be the primary focus of the Working Group's efforts.

The United Nations Charter makes clear the co-equal relationship of the General Assembly and the Security Council, which should be respected. And in our view, the selection process for the Secretary-General has already been adequately addressed. Article 97 of the Charter provides a straightforward and clear process.

My delegation looks forward to working closely with you, Mr. President, the co-Chairs and our counterparts from other delegations towards a constructive dialogue for concrete reform.

Mrs. Zarrouk Boumiza (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Egypt for his significant efforts as Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We would like to make the following remarks.

First of all, with regard to the role and mandate of the General Assembly, we believe that revitalizing its role is an integral part of all United Nations comprehensive reform. The General Assembly is the principal deliberative and policymaking body, and the most representative organ of the United Nations. The Assembly is also responsible for defining the criteria for codifying international law and for budgetary and administrative matters.

While reaffirming the importance of strengthening the role of the General Assembly and revitalizing its work, we believe that the common interest of the international community should be included in the General Assembly's agenda. The agenda must go hand in hand with development issues and challenges, such as the Millennium Development Goals, the post-2015 development agenda and its follow-up activities. At the same time, we reaffirm the importance of the holding of thematic debates, including interactive debates, which help to define the international community's important opinions and positions. We are convinced that such debates should continue during the sixty-eighth session and that, with the necessary implementation, they will yield positive, concrete results and follow-up actions.

We would also stress that strengthening the role of the General Assembly means recognizing its role in maintaining international peace and security. While Articles 12 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations give primary responsibility in that matter to the Security Council, that is not absolute because interaction with the General Assembly is necessary on matters related to international peace and security.

Furthermore, we also reaffirm the importance of improving the contents of the annual reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly and of their being more comprehensive and analytical in nature in order to reflect the decision-making framework within the Council on different issues. Similarly, we reaffirm the importance of holding periodic meetings between the Chairs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, and improving the coordination, cooperation and information exchange between the Main Committees and the General Assembly through transparent and regular mechanisms, enabling the participation of the different countries concerned.

With regard to improving the working methods of the General Assembly, while there have been improvements, it is important to ensure the early election of the Chairs of the Main Committees and

to have concise reports and resolutions in place and practical methodology for resolutions to improve the practices of the different Committees, while also giving each Committee its necessary jurisdiction. It is also important to avoid any overlapping and to ensure the coordination and distribution of high-level meetings.

With regard to the election of the Secretary-General and executive heads of the Secretariat, we would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who held broad consultations with Member States on transparency and cooperation in order to strengthen the role and focus of the Organization and to define his vision of its work, in accordance with the aspirations of the international community. We also trust that the election of executive heads of the Secretariat will be improved by taking into account the important recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit during the session, as well as the need for equitable geographic distribution.

With regard to strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly, sufficient financial resources need to be provided to the Office so that it is not a burden for countries with limited means and to ensure equality among States on this issue. Institutional memory should also be maintained.

In conclusion, I reiterate my country's support for resolution 66/294 of September 2012, on the creation of a working group to revitalize the General Assembly, and we welcome the appointment of the Ambassadors of Slovakia and Thailand to preside over those meetings.

Mr. Warraich (Pakistan): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We would like to make some additional points on our national capacity.

With regard to the agenda item on the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations, it is critical to reaffirm full confidence in the United Nations, especially as the General Assembly is the only universal and legitimate body for offering common solutions to common problems in this interdependent global environment. Secondly, addressing the concerns on the lack of implementation of resolutions will require not only a demonstration of requisite political will by all Member States, but also the availability of adequate resources in the United Nations. Thirdly, the selection of United Nations agendas in a manner that is relevant to the needs, preferences and priorities of the

peoples around the world will help the implementation of the agreements contained in the adopted resolutions.

Fourthly, continued monitoring of the status of implementation is important, and the current updating of inventory is useful. A more effective mechanism is needed, however. We would reiterate the suggestion that for every resolution, the Secretariat should submit, within a specific time frame, a report on the status of implementation. The report should include information on the reasons for non-implementation or delay in implementation. A special unit could be created within the Secretariat or within the Office of the President of the General Assembly for that purpose.

On revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, we welcome the adoption of resolution 67/297 on the subject. We take the opportunity today to thank the Permanent Representative of Egypt for his commendable work as Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-seventh session. We also welcome the appointment of Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and Thailand as co-Chairs of the Group for the current session.

Our discussions on the subject have advanced our work, particularly with respect to streamlining the agenda and improving working methods. It will be worthwhile to carry out a study to assess the impact of efficiency measures on the overall effectiveness of the General Assembly. There is also a need to further enhance coherence and coordination among the principal organs while building on their complementarities. Adherence to the Charter mandates can help to resolve the matter of the perceived encroachment of the Security Council on the role and the authority of the General Assembly. Meeting the expectations of Member States for an inclusive procedure for the selection of the Secretary-General is also important.

The efforts to improve the working methods and agenda-setting continue. We nevertheless emphasize that any biennialization or triennialization of draft resolutions — reasonable tools, indeed, for improving working methods — should be carried out with the clear and prior consent of the sponsoring State or States.

We must progress to further strengthening the General Assembly's status as the chief deliberative and policymaking organ of the United Nations. The Charter provides enormous space to the General Assembly, and we should enable the Assembly to fully utilize that

space. Our deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda provide an historic opportunity to reassert the Assembly's authority. We must endeavour to make sure that our agreement on the post-2015 development agenda meets the Charter's promise regarding the promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples.

A careful and skilful pursuit of Security Council reform will also contribute to the enhancement of the credibility of the United Nations. Shortcuts or procedural moves and manoeuvres cannot achieve results, and decisions in that regard must enjoy the support of all Members of the Organization. What we need is consensus. The reforms should aggregate and reflect the aspirations and interest of all, not the ambitions of the few. Council reform should make it more representative, democratic and equitable and should make its work more effective, transparent and accountable. As the Prime Minister of Pakistan told the Assembly, we should plan for a dynamic future, not entrenched, anachronistic, historical practices and privileges.

United Nations interaction with other international organizations such as the Bretton Woods institutions and intergovernmental groupings like the Group of 20, as well as relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, will make it more responsive and relevant with respect to global issues, which are the essential ingredients for any exercise aiming at the revitalization of the Organization.

We maintain that there is a need to bring more vigour, visibility and attention to the revitalization debate. We propose that, in its work during the current session, the Ad Hoc Working Group examine the possibility of convening a high-level meeting in the near future.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the agenda items before us. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 121 and 122.

Programme of work

The President: I would like to make the following announcements concerning the programme of work of the plenary.

The joint debate on agenda item 70, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special

economic assistance”, and its sub-items (a) to (d), and agenda item 71, “Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence”, originally scheduled to be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 12 December, will now take place at 3 p.m. on the same date.

In addition, consideration of agenda item 34, “Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development”, originally scheduled on Monday, 16 December, has been postponed to a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.