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President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 124

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

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council has been addressed by the General Assembly for more than two decades. Nevertheless, despite our efforts, we have yet to reach agreement on the reform of that body, which is essential to the United Nations and the multilateral system. In accordance with the mandate that I have been given, I would like to announce the names of the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on this topic for this session. I have reconfirmed Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, who held the post in the previous session. I have also appointed Ambassador Christian Braun, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, as a new co-Chair. I trust that Member States will provide their full cooperation to assist them in the fulfilment of their functions. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the work of those who fulfilled the roles in the previous session, Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates, whom I have already mentioned, and Ambassador Kaha Imnadze of Georgia. I deeply appreciate their efforts and work.

Member States are convinced of the need to reform the Security Council. In fact, during September's general debate, at least 80 world leaders emphasized that point. In order to achieve tangible results in that process, political will is undoubtedly required. My position on the subject has been very clear: I have reiterated on several occasions that the Security Council must adapt to the new political realities. The reform of the Council is important, not only for Member States but also for the entire United Nations system. A Council with greater representativeness, efficiency and transparency would undoubtedly increase the legitimacy of its decisions and speed up their implementation. In addition, it would strengthen multilateralism and contribute to efforts to achieve a more democratic and effective system of global governance.

Upon assuming my post as President of the General Assembly, I committed my full support to the reform process of the Security Council, in tune with the urgency set by Member States. I would like to stress that that process is in the hands of Member States. Given that it is a process driven by Member States, I can assure the Assembly that my role will be to support them in that challenge. Given the complexity of the issue, it is vital to call for dialogue at all times, in earnest, with respect and in a spirit of openness. Dialogue always offers an opportunity — a gateway to reach agreement. I encourage Member States to explore more pragmatic approaches and appropriate working methods to advance the reform of the Council, particularly in those areas in which there are still major differences.

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The issue of Security Council reform is undoubtedly a complex challenge, closely linked to one of the main pillars of our Organization — that of peace and security. It is perhaps one of the issues that requires our best diplomatic skills. The calls for greater transparency, accountability and efficiency in the actions of the Security Council are a reality. I am confident that Member States will continue to devote their best efforts to finding appropriate responses to those challenges. I reiterate my commitment to supporting them in that quest in an impartial, objective and open manner, and thereby to advance our shared aspirations to reform and optimize the quality and efficiency of the Security Council.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States on agenda item 124 concerning the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

At the outset, I would like to assure you, Madam President, of the support of the Arab Group for your efforts in managing the work of the General Assembly during the current session, particularly with regard to the item under discussion today, which is of special importance for all Member States, particularly the Arab Group. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, and the Permanent Representative of Georgia, Ambassador Kaha Imnadze, for their appreciated efforts as co-Chairs of the negotiations during the previous session.

At a time when the United Nations is undergoing numerous reform processes that are intended to strengthen its role and enable it to address the growing challenges faced by the international community today, the reform of the Security Council and its equitable representation constitute one of the fundamental pillars for the overall reform of the United Nations. That is why we are more determined to step up efforts towards the genuine and comprehensive reform of the Security Council — the body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations — in order for it to be more capable and effective in dealing with and overcoming those complex challenges in a more transparent, neutral and credible way.

After two decades of negotiations aimed at expanding the membership of the Security Council and improving its working methods, during which there have been several initiatives and stances taken by numerous States and groups of States, including the Arab Group, it is now important that we move forward with the process of Security Council reform. That can be achieved through consensus-based solutions that are supported with broad acceptance by Member States. However, we do not necessarily have to act hastily in setting a time frame for the process, as that would undermine a comprehensive, genuine and real reform.

In that regard, the Arab Group reiterates that the intergovernmental negotiations within the framework of the General Assembly represent the only way to reach an agreement on the expansion and reform of the Security Council, in line with General Assembly decision 62/557, which was adopted by consensus and established the practical basis for the negotiations. The Arab Group also underscores that all the five main topics of the reform negotiations are interconnected and share common elements, meaning that they should be dealt with in a way that upholds that interconnection in order to achieve the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The Arab Group reaffirms its stance on maintaining the coherence of the general membership without undermining the credibility of the intergovernmental negotiations, which could result from efforts to impose steps that do not enjoy the unanimous support of Member States. We face several challenges with regard to Security Council reform, particularly the veto power and the arbitrary use of that power by certain permanent members of the Security Council. In many cases, that arbitrary use has harmed the credibility of the decision-making process within the Council, and has sometimes made the Council unable to shoulder its responsibility to take the necessary measures to maintain international peace and security. The veto power of the permanent members of the Council has been used in recent years to protect their national interests or those of their allies. In that regard, I regret to note that the majority of cases in which the veto power was used, particularly over the past three decades, concerned issues relating to the Arab region.

The overall and major goal of Security Council reform and the expansion of its membership are to ensure that all geographical and regional groups are fairly and proportionately represented within

an expanded Security Council. In that regard, it is important to recall that the Arab Group represents nearly 350 million people from 22 countries, which constitutes around 12 per cent of the United Nations membership. In addition, much of the Security Council's work and many of the items on its agenda concern the Arab region. The Arab Group should therefore be fairly and equitably represented within an expanded Security Council, so that we can express and convey the Arab perspective in the Council and thereby ensure the legitimacy and credibility of its resolutions.

Moreover, the Arab Group calls for full-fledged permanent Arab representation in the permanent membership category in an overall expanded Council. Fair and equitable geographical representation also requires Arab representation in the non-permanent membership category in the expanded Council.

In that regard, I wish to underscore the importance of the requirement that any documents published in the context of the intergovernmental negotiations should reflect the accurate stances of all States and groups of States, including that of the Arab Group, given that the positions taken by the various countries should form the basis of negotiations on the issue, in line with decision 62/557, so as to uphold the principle of Member States' ownership of the intergovernmental negotiations.

It is now crucial that we improve and develop the working methods and procedures of the Security Council in order to make it more effective and transparent. We also need to reach agreement on the Security Council's standing rules of procedure, which should replace the provisional rules of procedure that have been in place for decades. There is also a need to increase the number of plenary meetings of the Security Council that are open to all Members, and to let the relevant States participate in the decision-making process on issues being discussed that are related to them. Those meetings would provide non-members of the Council with more concrete opportunities to participate in the Council's debates.

Furthermore, the number of closed meetings and informal consultations must be reduced to a minimum, with such meetings being the exception rather than the rule. The Council's resolutions and statements should be considered with the relevant States, which should be allowed to participate in the discussion of issues pertaining to them, in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Arab Group calls on subsidiary bodies and committees of the Security Council to provide Members of the United Nations with more information regarding the work of those bodies. It emphasizes that the Security Council must adhere strictly to its mandate, as defined by the Charter.

The Arab Group welcomes the progress made during the previous sessions with regard to defining common elements based on the views and proposals of States, as well as areas of divergence that require further discussion. The efforts made so far reflect the numerous common elements among the various positions held by States and groups of States with regard to the five agreed categories of reform. At the same time, those efforts show that there are a number of fundamental divergences and different points of view. Any future progress will therefore require further debate, in a positive spirit, to bring those various perspectives closer together, in an attempt to find common ground for a solution that enjoys the support of the majority of Member States and achieve the desired comprehensive and genuine reform of the Security Council.

In conclusion, the Arab Group is firmly determined to continue participating constructively in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. We stand ready and willing to consult with all other negotiating groups in order to reach a comprehensive and genuine reform of the Security Council, within a transparent framework and in a constructive spirit.

Mr. Kai-Kai (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

We thank you, Madam President, for convening today's debate on agenda item 124, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council". We take note of your opening remarks and wish to reiterate our commitment to achieving progress on this very important issue.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam, once again on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We look forward to working with you and all Member States in achieving the widest possible consensus on the reform of the Security Council. We would also like to thank the former co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United

Arab Emirates, respectively, for their stewardship of the process during the seventy-second session. We look forward to working with the new co-Chairs, who were named this morning — Ambassadors Lana Zaki Nusseibeh and Christian Braun — to steer the intergovernmental negotiations process at this seventy-third session.

Africa remains convinced of the need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, which will significantly contribute to upholding the principles, objectives and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations for a fairer world based on universalism, equity and regional balance. To that end, we remain true and faithful to decision 62/557 and other relevant General Assembly decisions for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council on all five clusters of issues, taking into account their interconnectedness. We therefore reject any piecemeal or selective approach that contradicts and violates the spirit of comprehensive reform.

The President of Sierra Leone, Mr. Julius Maada Bio, in his capacity as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the reform of the United Nations, reiterated, during the high-level general debate in September, the concerns of Africa over the continuous failure of the General Assembly to adopt measures that would enable Africa to take its rightful place in the Security Council. Let me echo the Coordinator's statement:

“The Assembly made a historic pledge during the 2005 World Summit to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and effectiveness, as well as its capacity to address effectively, and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter, the full range of the challenges of our time. A number of gains have been made, including the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council... Those are laudable gains, but... unless and until we are able to contend with the reform of the Security Council, the most critical question of the day, the Organization will remain seemingly constituted on undemocratic and discriminatory principles.” (A/73/PV.10, pp. 23–24)

The need to reform the Security Council is therefore more urgent and imperative than ever. Over the years, we have made some progress through heightened

engagement in the intergovernmental negotiations. At the same meeting, our President also said:

“We should now endeavour to demonstrate the political will to redress, in particular, the historical injustice done to the African continent.

“The present geopolitical realities compel us to carry out a comprehensive reform of the Security Council... Africa is the only continent without representation in the permanent category of the Security Council. Africa is also underrepresented in the non-permanent category. Africa's demand for two permanent seats with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, including the right of veto, and for two additional non-permanent seats is a matter of common justice and the right to have an equal say in decision-making on issues that affect the African region. It is time that we addressed without any further delay the long-standing injustice and imbalance that is being perpetuated in the present configuration of the Security Council.” (*ibid.*)

The urgent need for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council cannot be overemphasized. It is important to keep in mind that 1.2 billion of the world's population of 7.5 billion people are African and that they continue to contribute their fair share to maintaining world peace and security. About 70 per cent of the decisions made at the Security Council ultimately affect those 1.2 billion Africans. Almost one-fifth of the world's population is therefore asking why it is excluded from the permanent category of the Security Council. In addition, most of the issues discussed in the Security Council are related to Africa. In view of that, the continent must be in a position to effectively participate in the decision-making processes of all the organs of the United Nations.

The Common African Position on Security Council reform, as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, is well known to the Assembly. However, for the purposes of clarity and precision, let me reiterate that Africa demands no less than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, and five non-permanent seats. Although Africa is opposed in principle to the veto, it is of the view that, for as long as it exists and as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council.

Our call for the immediate redress of the African demand for the equitable representation of Africa in the Security Council continues to garner broad support from States Members of the United Nations. In particular, the previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations recorded in the outcome of the seventy-second session that Member States acknowledged the legitimate aspirations of African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage.

That development further reinforces the credibility and viability of the Common African Position on the reform of the Security Council. It not only builds on the broad support that our position continues to garner but also signifies that the Common African Position remains unchallenged in its claim to redress the historical injustice resulting from Africa not being represented in the permanent category and being underrepresented in the non-permanent category of the Security Council. That is a welcome development on which we will continue to build until we achieve a reform that recognizes Africa and gives the continent its rightful place in global governance at the United Nations.

Notwithstanding those gains, divergences in the various positions of Member States and interest groups on the models of reform, as well as differences over procedural matters, continue to challenge the overall progress on the effort to build consensus on all five clusters of the intergovernmental negotiations. The co-Chairs' paper, entitled "Revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration", which was circulated on 14 June by the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, represented a welcome step in identifying areas of commonality around which Member States can unite for consensus-building. The paper did not, however, adequately and accurately reflect the Common African Position. The adoption of a consensus roll-over decision by the General Assembly on 29 June, which called, *inter alia*, for the immediate continuation of the intergovernmental negotiations in informal plenary at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, was another significant manifestation of the acceptance of the intergovernmental negotiations as the appropriate forum to continue to discuss the reform of the Security Council.

In fulfilment of the forthright vision of our leaders at the 2005 World Summit, we look forward to working with all Member States in an open, transparent and inclusive Member-driven process, with a view to

achieving the progress that will lead to the ultimate realization of the goal of making the Security Council more broadly representative, democratic, effective and transparent, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of its decisions. On the other hand, the status quo undermines the principles of equity, legitimacy, accountability and transparency, which are core values of multilateralism.

We have a unique opportunity to keep the international system on the track of dynamic and effective democratic multilateralism that can ensure the role of the United Nations at the centre of global governance. We cannot afford to remain indifferent to the realities of our rapidly changing global circumstances. Africa will continue to advocate for a meaningful reform that will make the Security Council more relevant and responsive to the present and emerging global challenges, and will continue to promote the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Let me reiterate that Africa's demand for two permanent seats and two additional non-permanent seats, as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, provides a framework for correcting the historical injustice that the continent continues to endure.

To conclude, Africa remains committed to a comprehensive reform, as stipulated in decision 62/557 and other relevant General Assembly decisions. We remain open to working with all Member States in canvassing support for the Common African Position.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as our contribution to today's debate on the question of Security Council reform.

At the outset, CARICOM would like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze and Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, respectively, for their excellent stewardship of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-second session. We are glad to have Ambassador Nusseibeh back as co-Chair, which will ensure a degree of continuity in the intergovernmental negotiations, and we welcome Ambassador Christian Braun of Luxembourg. CARICOM will continue to remain engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations under the stewardship of the new co-Chairs.

The General Assembly meets annually to debate the critical question of the reform of the Security Council. That debate is followed by engagements within the intergovernmental negotiations. Member States have spent many hours over the past several years discussing this important question and offering myriad proposals on how we might achieve a reformed Council. Given that heavy investment of time and other resources, it is deeply regrettable that more progress has not been made on the long-standing and important issue of Security Council reform. Progress is in the hands of the Member States, and CARICOM firmly believes that if each of us summons the political will to go further than we have heretofore gone, progress could be achieved.

Every session that concludes without achieving any of the goals envisaged in the reform process is a stark reminder that the imbalances that exist in the Council will continue to be perpetuated through the maintenance of the status quo. Those imbalances include the exclusion of entire regions — specifically Africa and my own region of Latin America and the Caribbean — from the permanent category of membership. The perpetuation of those imbalances has effectively meant that nearly 50 per cent of the current membership of the United Nations remains excluded from permanent membership of one of its principal organs.

The perpetuation of that imbalance has also meant that the composition of the Security Council has not kept up with the evolution in the membership of the Organization and therefore raises concerns about its representativeness. In 1993, when the General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council in order to consider matters related to the reform of the Council, its decision was based on the recognition of

“the need to review the membership of the Security Council... in view of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially of developing countries, as well as the changes in international relations” (*resolution 48/26, fourth preambular paragraph*).

The perpetuation of the status quo has also meant that the work of the Security Council continues to miss out on the benefit of important perspectives and experience. As you are aware, Madam, CARICOM

advocates for a guaranteed presence of small island developing States on the Council. We believe that, given its unique experiences, that group of Member States has important contributions to make to the maintenance of international peace and security. With the continued lack of progress on reform, however, CARICOM’s advocacy has not yet achieved the desired end.

In your statement prior to the opening of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session on 18 September, you rightly observed that “the Security Council must adapt to new political realities”. CARICOM supports that view and notes that the United Nations continues to affirm the value of multilateralism and equitable involvement in decision-making. On that basis, the Security Council must be restructured in a way that provides opportunities for equitable involvement in the peace and security questions of which the Council is seized.

As we approach the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during this session, CARICOM takes this opportunity to share its expectations going forward. First, we hope to have continuity and to build on what has already been done. We believe that the revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration paper, circulated on 14 June, should be one of the principal bases for our work during this session. While the paper captures many of the perspectives expressed regarding the five pillars of negotiation, we believe that there is still scope to further shape its substance. CARICOM underscores the need for responses to the expressed wishes of the membership and, in the spirit of transparency, the need to avoid the exclusion of ideas in any revisions of the paper.

Secondly, CARICOM emphasizes the importance of respecting the voices and views of every Member State. Reform of the Security Council is a particularly sensitive issue, and there are many divergent positions on the process and substance of the reform. However, CARICOM believes that, as sovereign States, every one of us can contribute meaningfully to the dialogue on Security Council reform. Maximum participation should be encouraged as a means of enhancing the legitimacy of the process.

Thirdly and finally, CARICOM hopes that the meetings this year can achieve some concrete and actionable outcomes. We have spent many years elaborating our positions, and CARICOM hopes

that we can find a way to go beyond that in the upcoming months.

In conclusion, I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important debate and assure you of CARICOM's full commitment to the early and urgent reform of the Security Council.

Ms. Miguel (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the L.69 group, a diverse group of countries — the majority of which are small States from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific — that are united by a common cause, namely, the need to achieve lasting and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

We thank you, Madam, for convening this meeting and for your thoughtful words. The L.69 group believes that your continued involvement in the issue of Security Council reform is critical to our ability to move the process forward.

We are also grateful to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and the previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Her Excellency Mrs. Lana Nusseibeh and His Excellency Mr. Kaha Imnadze, who led the process with skill. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the recently appointed co-Chairs, Her Excellency Mrs. Lana Nusseibeh and His Excellency Mr. Christian Braun. The L.69 group stands ready to engage with them to consolidate the gains made in previous sessions and to work towards text-based negotiations. They can rest assured of our support.

Shepherding that process in today's world is no easy task. We have engaged in more than 25 years of discussion on this topic and have maintained it on the agenda of the General Assembly for over 40 years. We have produced volumes of documents, delivered numerous statements and, on countless occasions, expressed our desire to see tangible expressions of the political will for a reformed Security Council that has been professed by all Member States for many years. Nevertheless, we still do not have a text on which to base our negotiations. Over the past two years, the L.69 group has highlighted the fact that at least 164 Member States have called for text-based negotiations. In the previous session, the L.69 group produced a handbook compiling important documents from the past 25 years of deliberations on Security Council reform. In doing so, we were motivated by the need to highlight the

amount of work, time, diplomatic resources and sheer effort that has been expended on the advancement of this process.

Our sustained commitment to reform is of particular importance at this time. The world is experiencing fissures in the fabric of the rules-based multilateral order, which have laid bare the dysfunction and paralysis that have increasingly gripped the Security Council.

There is, however, an antidote to the malady that has afflicted the Council, which remains caught in the grip of a fever that it cannot break. The remedy lies in our hands, which must work through the vital organ of our Organization, namely, the General Assembly. This is as it should be, as it is the General Assembly that is charged with the duty of recommending

“measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations”.

As we prepare for our eleventh session of intergovernmental negotiations, we hope that our fervour for multilateralism and commitment to achieving a well-functioning and representative Security Council will imbue our deliberations with the sense of hope and vitality that is required to make the United Nations a vital and energetic organism, heavily engaged, day after day, in the practical job of resolving the worst problems through cooperation among nations.

But what can we do to make the United Nations a better, if not the perfect, international organization, starting with its most visible organ? First, by making the Security Council truly representative, including through expansion in the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership; secondly, by making good on our leaders' promise of early Security Council reform made at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly; thirdly, by showing our people that we are serious about our commitments by moving from rhetoric to action; and fourthly, by fashioning the Security Council into a forum where multilateral engagement leads to lasting international peace and security. This fourth point is particularly relevant as we debate ways to reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism. In that vein, movement on this stalled process will represent a reaffirmation of commitment to multilateralism.

The L.69 group believes that transparency is key in moving the process forward. We ask that the President of the General Assembly convene another plenary meeting under this agenda item in the next resumed session to facilitate more discussions in the open. As a housekeeping matter, the L.69 group would like to request the calendar of meetings for the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform as far in advance as possible. However, we must also ensure that we are not unduly constrained in our planning. In keeping with the need for more dialogue, we suggest that the intergovernmental negotiations calendar be open so as to allow as many meetings as possible. Moreover, we must not start from scratch. Let us begin where we left off, with the paper we discussed during the previous session of intergovernmental negotiations.

Before closing, I would like to note that, while progress on this agenda item has been slow, we have made a few gains. For instance, at the previous session, the Common African Position — also supported by the L.69 group — received overwhelming support in the intergovernmental negotiations. Further work was done to build on the papers produced in previous sessions, and we are committed to making further progress this year. In that regard, the L.69 group supports the African Group's request to have its position better reflected in the revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration paper.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations will soon be upon us; let us not be weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the Group of Four — Brazil, Germany, Japan and my own country, India. We thank you, Madam President, for organizing this annual debate on an issue that remains central to the reform of the Organization. As the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated, and Secretary-General Guterres reiterated, “no reform of the United Nations will be complete without the reform of the Security Council” (*A/61/1, para. 161*).

At the outset, let me begin by expressing my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and the previous co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Her Excellency Mrs. Lana Nusseibeh and His

Excellency Mr. Kaha Imnadze, for their contribution to the progress of this important process. They have left us with a result on which we can build. We hope that you, Madam President, and your team will effectively carry the baton handed over to you by making credible progress at this session, too. In that context, we note your announcement of the appointment of the co-Chairs for the current session and look forward to seeing them start to move the process forward.

The views of the Group of Four on Security Council reforms are well-established. The Group of Four supports the early reform of the Council, and we seek expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent categories of membership to enhance the Council's legitimacy, effectiveness and representativeness. We also desire an improvement in its working methods. It is our conviction that this sentiment is indeed shared by a broad majority of States Members of the United Nations, including several of the groups on whose behalf representatives spoke earlier, namely, the Group of African States, the Caribbean Community, the Group of Arab States, the L.69 group and a vast number of individual States.

The intergovernmental process has been under way for a decade, and yet we have very little progress to show, despite all the efforts by Member States over the years. Next year will mark 40 years since the request to include the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council on the General Assembly's agenda.

At a time when old challenges to peace and security have become more intense and the variety of new threats is expanding, we cannot afford to delay the reform of the body charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. The emphasis on reform and change was a constant theme in addresses given during the high-level debate of the General Assembly. In several debates since then, the desire for change has been repeated, including during the open debate on multilateralism in the Security Council earlier this month (see S/PV.8395).

Words now need to be followed by actions if we wish to achieve credible progress at the current session. After a decade of discussions, it is time to normalize the intergovernmental negotiations process. We need to begin negotiations in the same way as we have begun other intergovernmental processes. For that to happen, certain steps need to be taken. Allow me to elaborate.

First, we must start where we culminated our deliberations at the previous session. We had a document that we were discussing: the paper on revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration. We need not reinvent the wheel at this session. We need to start our deliberations by addressing issues where we left them in that paper. The document that served as the basis of our past discussions can be the starting point of an open and transparent way forward during this session. We need to complete the tasks that we were unable to complete at the previous session for want of adequate time. For our part, as the Group of Four, we would like an accurate reflection of key elements of the positions of all groups to be included in the paper, for example, the Common African Position, which has garnered the support of a very large segment of the total membership.

Secondly, we must endeavour to foster dialogue, not hinder it. It is our belief that the more opportunities there are for dialogue, the greater the chances for making progress. Taking cues from success stories of the previous session, we suggest that our discussions on Security Council reform should begin as early as possible and that there should not be any artificial deadlines to end discussions prematurely in June. Continuous dialogue, for example, helped to resolve differences and reach agreement on important matters relating to global health at the end of the seventy-second session.

Thirdly, the intergovernmental negotiations should operate under normal rules of procedure, like all other General Assembly processes. At the General Assembly, we carry out our work through give-and-take negotiations, focused on a document, with the co-Chairs or facilitators acting as agents for facilitating dialogue. At the General Assembly, all a naysayer can do is, at worst, to cast a negative vote. What we have seen in the past couple of years is no credit to any of us. Naysayers cannot be allowed to cast a dark shadow over the entire membership and hold the overwhelming majority back. Some among us cannot be permitted to hold the entire process hostage by bending the rules of negotiations. If we permit that, we run the risk of breaking the process beyond repair.

Credible progress on this issue, Madam President, will require your commitment and leadership and supporting efforts in facilitating discussions between the various groups and countries. The Group of Four, while holding a common position, is also respectful

of the different positions existing in this process. We are committed to negotiating with all groups but, for negotiations to be meaningful, it is essential to list the various aspects of the various positions. It is therefore crucial that we work on a text for negotiations.

The desire for text-based negotiations is not a slogan. It is a necessity for a transparent negotiating process in good faith. A text that reflects all the positions and proposals of Member States will be a mark of the process's credibility going forward. If we fail, we must not hesitate to take another look at the process itself. We remain open to all options.

Next year, the presidency will be handed over to an African President of the General Assembly, who will usher us all into the seventy-fifth year of the Organization. Let our work at this session do the aspirations of our people justice, especially those on the African continent, so that we can find a way to correct the historical injustice to Africa and address their sense of grievance. For our part, I assure you, Madam President, that you will find the Group of Four on the side of progress and forward movement.

Mrs. Zappia (Italy): On behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group, I wish to thank you, Madam President, for convening this annual debate on Security Council reform and commend you for your commitment to a reform process that is credible, transparent and inclusive. Building on those same principles, the UFC group looks forward to cooperating with the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Ambassadors Lana Nusseibeh and Christian Braun. We warmly welcome them in their new capacities and wish to express our full support for them in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations session.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the intergovernmental negotiations. In decision 62/557, adopted on 15 September 2008, the General Assembly agreed to start intergovernmental negotiations "in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner". Over the years, the intergovernmental negotiations have met those expectations. There has always been transparency and inclusivity, and the discussions have enabled us to identify broad convergences among Member States. Those convergences include the fact that an increase in non-permanent seats is supported by all Member States and provides common ground for advancing Security

Council reform; that all Member States agree that such an expansion of seats should favour underrepresented regions of the world; and that a significant, growing number of Member States oppose expanding the veto to other States and instead support limiting or abolishing it.

Our deliberations have already had an impact on the current working methods of the Security Council. More transparency, open-format meetings, informative briefings and better access to information have already improved the Council's performance. However, our work is far from complete. We need to do more to achieve the broadest possible consensus on a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

In past years, the UFC group has complemented our participation in intergovernmental negotiations meetings with a series of informal consultations with other negotiating groups. The purpose of those consultations has been to explore and identify common ground, in parallel with the efforts of the intergovernmental negotiations to narrow differences among Member States. One of the most recurrent concerns that we have heard is the question of the number of opportunities that Member States will have to serve on an enlarged Security Council. Looking ahead, we believe that that specific question should be at the centre of our debates.

The General Assembly needs to properly address the request of Africa to correct its underrepresentation on the Council. The General Assembly must consider the growing importance of the Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions and grant them a more equitable representation. Arab countries are asking for a more proportionate and more stable representation than the swing seat they currently have.

We should listen to the call of over 60 countries — mainly small States and small island developing States — that have never had the opportunity to serve on the Council and will rarely have the opportunity to do so without proper reform. We should also heed the appeal of the 23 Eastern European countries that wish to obtain one more seat, thereby increasing their chances of serving on the Council.

In calling attention to those appeals and in a true spirit of flexibility, the UFC group has brought to the table the most detailed and comprehensive proposal, trying to take the demands of all negotiating groups into consideration. Our proposal is the result of

many adjustments made over the years in response to feedback from the various rounds of negotiations.

Our proposal is to create new, longer-term non-permanent seats with the possibility of immediate re-election and to increase the number of two-year non-permanent seats, coupled with a more equitable distribution of seats among regional groups. The longer-term seats would fulfil the legitimate desire of some Member States to make a greater contribution to the work of the Council and, at the same time, foster a fairer system of rotation.

The Security Council would consist, then, of 26 members. That would include 21 non-permanent seats, assigned as follows: six seats for the Group of African States, three of which would be longer-term seats; five seats for the Group of Asia-Pacific States, three of which would be longer-term seats; four seats for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, two of which would be longer-term seats; three seats for the Group of Western European and other States, one of which would be a longer-term seat; two seats for the Group of Eastern European States; and one seat reserved for small island developing States or small States. The latter would be a rotating seat, which would not prevent them from running within their regional group, but would instead be an additional way for them to gain access to the Security Council.

Attached to the statement that we have circulated are copies of the breakdown of our regional representation proposal and a comparison between the present Security Council and the one that we envisage. Everyone benefits, and everyone gains greater access to the Council under our proposal. No one loses out, and the Council's ability to take decisions remains undiminished.

Multilateralism has been debated in various forums recently. There is a widespread consensus that Security Council reform is needed to strengthen multilateralism. In order to foster the trust of public opinion in this institution, the Security Council needs to become truly representative, accountable, democratic, transparent and effective. We should not aim to enlarge the small circle of permanent members, but rather to give all Member States — even the smallest ones — a greater chance to contribute to finding solutions for the maintenance of peace and security. Concerning the veto, we fail to see how the addition of new vetoes

would make a new Council more effective and more responsive to international crises.

For many years, the UFC group has pointed to the main obstacle to reform, namely, the demand for an increase in the number of permanent members. After 25 years of focusing only on demands for new permanent seats, which would benefit just a handful of Member States, it is high time to give a concrete chance to all Member States. It is high time to offer real prospects to the groups of States and regions of the world that are underrepresented on the Council.

To move the process forward, the UFC group is ready to cooperate with you, Madam President, as well as with the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations and the membership as a whole. Our common goal must be to increase the Council's legitimacy in the eyes of both the general membership and international public opinion. That would enhance the Council's authority and, ultimately, its effectiveness. We are ready to redouble our efforts to achieve reform, building on the many convergences that exist among Member States.

Mrs. Ellertsdottir (Iceland): I am speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Iceland.

Let me start by thanking Ambassador Nusseibeh and Ambassador Braun for agreeing to co-chair the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during this session. We wish them success in that important task.

I reaffirm the commitment of the Nordic countries to engage in the collective effort to reform the Security Council. The complex political and multifaceted challenges we face globally today also have a direct impact on the role of the United Nations. It is more important than ever that the Security Council becomes more transparent, more effective, more accountable and more representative. We are encouraged by the steady progress on United Nations reform that is currently energizing the work of the Secretariat and Member States, particularly the ongoing efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work in its existing format. We look forward to listening to and working with other Member States from all regions in support of continued reforms.

The Nordic countries support a balanced expansion of the Security Council. The aim must be to better

reflect the current global political and economic realities and to ensure increased representation of developing countries, including both permanent and non-permanent seats for Africa. In our view, it is also important to enable possibilities for small States to participate in the decision-making process of the Security Council as elected members.

Today, as we embark on a new intergovernmental negotiations session, we welcome the co-Chairs' outlining of the forthcoming meetings and their invitation to explore potential elements of convergence so that we can move forward in a frank dialogue on the important issue of Security Council reform. We join others in calling for the commencement of text-based negotiations. We see that as the best way to harness the progress achieved to date in the intergovernmental negotiations process and to move it forward. Rest assured that the Nordic countries will contribute to a constructive dialogue among Member States, with a view to achieving further progress during this session.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At present, Security Council reform is one of the core elements of the reform of the United Nations with the aim of enabling the Council to better carry out its mission to ensure peace and security in the world. The Security Council is one of the major organs of the United Nations. It has a fundamental mandate to safeguard world peace and security and plays an important role in building a peaceful and stable world.

However, nowadays the principles of respect for sovereignty, equality and non-intervention are openly disregarded in the Security Council, and interference in internal affairs, pressure and infringement on the independence of sovereign States continue unabated. More than 70 years have passed since the United Nations was founded. Nevertheless, the Security Council, which is becoming infested with unilateralism, has turned into the Insecurity Council. If the Security Council is to fully carry out its mandate, it should firmly ensure international justice and impartiality for the benefit of all Member States and not just strategically benefit certain countries. The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would hereby like to clarify its principled position with regard to Security Council reform.

First, Security Council reform should be carried out based on the principle of ensuring international justice, impartiality and democracy. Carrying out

Security Council reform on the principle of ensuring international justice, impartiality and democracy means building a Security Council where the principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention and the peaceful resolution of conflict — which, as stated in the Charter of the United Nations, are the foundation of international relations — are strictly observed.

Secondly, Security Council reform should be carried out based on the principle of ensuring the full representation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other developing countries, which make up the majority of Member States. Therefore, providing those countries with full and equal representation is an absolute necessity for building a democratically strengthened Security Council. Intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform should have begun over 10 years ago. There are still many different views with regard to increasing the number of permanent seats on the Security Council. In that context, the most feasible way to solve the problem is to proceed by increasing the number of non-permanent seats ahead of all other reforms. We regard that as one of the ways to help correct the unequal composition of the Security Council.

Thirdly, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly opposes Japan's aspirations for a permanent seat on the Security Council. Japan is a war criminal State that in the past invaded many Asian countries by force and committed heinous crimes against humanity. Although more than 70 years have passed since the end of the Second World War, Japan has not admitted to its past crimes; rather, it continues to defy the international community by sugar-coating its history. To give Japan, a country that committed the gravest crimes against humanity, a permanent seat on the Security Council would be nothing short of a mockery of human conscience and a disgrace to the United Nations.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to hope that the sincere efforts of all Member States for Security Council reform will achieve success and meet the high expectations of the international community.

Ms. Brink (Australia): At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassadors Imnadze and Nusseibeh for leading the important process of Security Council reform during the seventy-second session. Australia also warmly welcomes the reappointment of Ambassador

Nusseibeh and the appointment of Ambassador Braun as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for this session.

The international rules and institutions that support security and stability and promote collective responses to global challenges are under significant strain. The Security Council is one of the most important mechanisms that we have to support the rules-based international order, sitting, as it does, at the apex of the peace and security pillar of this Organization. We need to ensure that it is as effective as possible. Australia has long called for Security Council reform. We believe that there is a clear consensus to the effect that substantive reform of the Council is well overdue and that the membership should act on that issue. But, as a group, we have not delivered.

As one of the founding members of the United Nations, Australia has been calling for ways to increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Security Council since the Organization was created. Increased transparency and limits on the use of the veto have been our ongoing themes. The document from the past session entitled "Revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration" was a step forward. However, to date there has been only minor, incremental progress, and it is clear that we need to change our approach. Converging consensus is a reasonable aim, but it is proving to be very slow to materialize. As we know from our other work at the United Nations, text-based negotiations can accelerate consensus. It is time that we moved from statements in meetings like this one to drafts.

Australia supports greater representation on the Council for Asia, Latin America and Africa in order to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. We agree that an expanded Council should still be able to act swiftly and decisively, within limits. We support the restraint on the use of the veto in situations of mass atrocity. And we support improvements to the Council's working methods in order to enable the effective operation of those reforms. We do not underestimate the complexity of that task. There are diverging views and differing interests. Deliberations in the current format on Council reform have now been held for more than 25 years. If the task were easy, we would have solved it by now. But we deal with complex tasks every day. Australia joins its voice and its commitment to the efforts aimed at reforming the Security Council so that it may be more legitimate and more effective

in carrying out its crucial function in support of international peace and security.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting on agenda item 124 concerning the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone, which represents the Common African Position, and the statement delivered by the representative of Kuwait, which represents the position of the Group of Arab States.

We hope to begin a serious negotiation process aimed at achieving the desired objectives in the intergovernmental negotiations, which will lead to an unprecedented reform in the work of the Council and should allow us to achieve the noble objectives of our Organization. My country's delegation would like to thank all those who have participated in previous negotiations, whether delegations, co-Chairs or the Secretariat.

The Charter of the United Nations primarily seeks to regulate inter-State relations and to prevent crises, wars and catastrophes, which are caused by the behaviour of certain States. Such behaviour is restrained by international legal rules and the implementation of pre-emptive and deterrent diplomacy. That depends, in the first place, on the collective will of States, which must also work in good faith within the principles of the United Nations.

Today's world has witnessed major new developments, nothing like those seen in the 1940s and the 1950s. We therefore need to take important and necessary measures that have been imposed on us by the new circumstances, which make it imperative to carry out reforms to the main organ of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, namely, the Security Council. Those reforms should be holistic and should focus on the five aspects of the reform process, including the question of equitable geographic representation, especially with regard to the African continent.

Africa has 54 States Members of the United Nations. However, it is not equitably represented in the Security Council, even though more than 75 per cent of the agenda items before the Council are related to Africa. In that regard, all States Members of the United

Nations should recognize that the time has come to address the historical injustice that has been done to the African continent and to consider Africa's demands as legitimate, realistic and applicable. The Common African Position has been reaffirmed by the States of the African continent on a number of occasions, as stipulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, which call for two permanent seats on the Security Council for the African continent with all the privileges of permanent seats, including the veto power, as well as two non-permanent seats.

My delegation welcomes the position that has been taken by members of the General Assembly on resuming the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. We would like to stress that we must do our utmost to reach a common understanding on the way in which we can proceed and achieve our desired objectives concerning that long overdue process, given the agreement on certain issues and common ground. My delegation would also like to emphasize the need to start serious negotiations, given the urgent need to reform the Security Council and develop its working methods in a transparent and democratic way. That would contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, while allowing all parties concerned to participate in all of the discussions of the Council.

Intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council require a holistic view of all aspects of those reforms, while taking into account the need to expedite them. That cannot happen, as Members know, without demonstrating collective will and recognizing the injustice that has been done with regard to Africa's representation on the Security Council, as well as the Council's non-democratic methods of work, as some have said. Even some countries that have enjoyed non-permanent membership of the Council have complained about the control of the permanent members over the Council's work. In addition, the two-year membership of the Council is too brief to allow non-permanent members to make a contribution. We also believe that there is a need to develop the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, the body that represents all Members of the United Nations, in a way that can achieve harmony in the work of the two organs without allowing an overlap.

Those two organs should not appear to be working in two different organizations.

To conclude, my delegation reiterates its readiness to participate in the new round of intergovernmental negotiations on reforming the Security Council. We hope that the new round will be the beginning of a serious process that will achieve the desired objectives and transform the most important organ of the United Nations into an effective one that can accomplish its duties as required. That would also correct the historical injustice with regard to the representation of certain regions and would change the working methods of the Council, allowing it to work in a transparent and more democratic manner.

Mr. Sparber (Liechtenstein) At a time when the international rules-based order is under increasing pressure, the world cannot afford a dysfunctional Security Council. The fact that the Council is unable to act decisively on many of the defining crises of our time is in stark contrast to its mandate as set out in the Charter of the United Nations and is also detrimental to the United Nations. The prolonged standstill in the intergovernmental negotiations process compounds an already sobering track record of the General Assembly holding the Security Council accountable for its performance. The potential for conflict is rising, and a strong and robust United Nations as the beacon of multilateralism is needed more than ever.

It is imperative that we make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent; yet we seem to be unable to overcome the current deadlock. In the area of enlargement, there is no prospect for progress as long as deeply entrenched views on opposite sides of the discussion prevail. Without any indication of flexibility, it is hard to imagine a way forward. Liechtenstein has actively contributed to the intergovernmental negotiations, and we continue to see high-level engagement by many Member States.

At the same time, we should have a serious discussion about the fundamentals of this process, which we increasingly see as benefiting most those that show the least interest in progress. As is well known, Liechtenstein suggested an enlargement model that we hoped could provide a middle ground in going forward — adding a new category of long-term seats of 8 to 10 years with the possibility of immediate re-election. The other main elements of our proposal are no new veto powers, flexibility to add new two-year

seats, a strong review clause and a flip-flop clause that bars Member States that have lost an election for long-term seats from running for short-term seats.

The enlargement of the Council does not equal reform. Which States serve on the Council is certainly an essential question for how the Council is perceived and for its credibility. How the Council goes about its daily business and how it carries out its functions is of no less importance. We have consistently worked together with like-minded States to help the Council do better in that respect, and we have achieved important results. The Ombudsperson to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities was an initiative that had its origins outside the Security Council. We see great merit in expanding its mandate to other sanctions regimes.

Another key initiative is the code of conduct submitted by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group for the Security Council to prevent and end atrocity crimes. We had the honour to lead the effort in the ACT group that resulted in the code of conduct on veto restraint, which is currently supported by 118 States, nine of which are current Security Council members. Since 2019, with five new incoming non-permanent Council members, two-thirds of the Security Council membership will have signed the code. All those States have committed to taking action to prevent and end atrocity crimes when serving on the Council. Relevant situations to which the code applies today include Myanmar, Syria and Yemen.

For Liechtenstein, subscribing to the code of conduct is the minimum commitment that we expect of any Council member. We will therefore continue to support Security Council candidatures only from States that have signed the code of conduct, and we call on others to do the same. Such a policy can make a tangible contribution to improving the work of the Council, which is one of the very concrete measures that members of the Assembly can take while progress on enlargement of the Council eludes us.

Mr. Sukhee (Mongolia): Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing our genuine appreciation to you, Madam President, for convening this important debate. We welcome your intention and readiness to guide and move the Security Council reform process forward despite the existing difficulties. I wish to extend our

thanks to the co-Chairs, Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Kaha Imnadze of Georgia, for their active engagement during the previous session and their efforts to make progress in reforming the Security Council.

While aligning my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group of developing countries, I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Little progress has been made despite 25 years of efforts to reform the Security Council. Those years have been marked by the establishment of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of Security Council reform in 2008 and its predecessor, the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, in 1993. The intergovernmental negotiations have failed so far to yield a concrete outcome, although their sessions have resulted in outcome documents, including the latest paper, entitled “Revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration”. In order to realize a timely reform of the Security Council — an essential element in our overall effort to reform the United Nations — we should urgently commence text-based negotiations instead of convening unproductive circular discussions. We are called on to continue our efforts to achieve the objective of making the Security Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, thereby further enhancing its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions and their implementation.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Mongolia’s principled position concerning the reform of the Security Council with regard to the following key issues. A just and equitable expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories should be maintained. Our stance in favour of an enlargement of both the current categories is guided by considerations based on the Council’s composition as defined by the Charter of the United Nations, and reflects contemporary realities, as well as the principles of justice and equality. We seek to ensure greater and enhanced representation of developing countries, particularly the non-represented and underrepresented regional groups.

The right of veto should be abolished. The use of the veto should be restricted in the Security Council,

in particular with regard to Chapter VII-related decisions. If the use of the veto is to be maintained, it should be extended to all new members of the permanent category of the Security Council, which must enjoy all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto. Adequate representation of all groups, particularly non-represented and underrepresented ones, in both categories of the Security Council membership must be duly considered. The solution should be fair and just. We therefore attach great importance to the criterion of equitable geographical distribution as we emphasize the representation of the non-represented and underrepresented groups, particularly Africa, Asia and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

With regard to the non-permanent category, the strengthening of a fair and equitable rotation system within a geographical regional group is of high importance to my country. In that respect, my delegation also supports the allocation of additional seats to the current regional groups, while ensuring the representation of small developing countries.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I wish to express my appreciation to you, Madam President, for convening this important debate on the question of the reform of the Security Council. I would like to thank the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, and Ambassador Kaha Imnadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia, for the effective manner in which they conducted the process last year.

Whenever we mention the words “United Nations reform”, we imagine a Security Council that reflects the realities of the world in which we live; a Council whose debates, decisions and decision-making processes are consistent with the democratic values that we preach and promote at home; and a Council whose membership, including the manner in which members are elected, reflects the letter and spirit of the provisions of Article 23 of the Charter of the United Nations.

For the Maldives, a reformed Security Council is one in which there are more permanent members and that is more representative and reflects the political and economic realities of our time. A reformed Council is one whose membership maintains equitable geographical distribution, which the Charter explicitly requires. It is our firm belief that every country

deserves an opportunity to be heard and to have a say. For the Maldives, a reformed Council is one whose membership comprises developing countries, including small States. That is necessary in order to reflect the diversity of the United Nations membership.

Larger countries, especially those that have served on the Council, have a moral, and a Charter, obligation to ensure that small States, especially those that have not served before, get a fair chance. A reformed Council is one where the candidates for membership do not have to spend a fortune on their election. Elections to membership of the Council have become such that smaller States find themselves having to undertake expensive campaign practices despite limited resources. Those that cannot afford to undertake such expensive campaigns lose out. We believe that that is most certainly why only eight small island developing States have managed to secure a seat on the Council since the founding of the United Nations. Smaller States can bring unique perspectives and fresh ideas to the Council if they are able to be elected and to serve. Equitable geographical distribution should not resemble a principle with a financial price tag. That, we believe, is a necessary topic for discussions on the reform of the Security Council.

A reformed Council must also improve its decision-making and implementation processes. There is a need for the Council to look beyond the traditional definition of security and to include emerging threats, such as climate change and sea-level rise as threat multipliers. The Maldives has made several proposals in the past aimed at enabling the Council to establish a regular consultative dialogue with the Assembly and the relevant United Nations agencies so that climate-induced threats to international peace and security can be addressed in a more holistic and coordinated way.

Relevance and resilience are concepts central to the legitimacy and effectiveness of any political body. The Security Council must be seen to be relevant to the real issues and represent the real aspirations of “We the people”, the words with which the Charter begins. It cannot continue to live in an order shaped by the environment of 1945. Unless it is able to adapt to the changes in world politics and be seen to represent the international community, it cannot draw legitimacy for its decisions. It is therefore imperative that the necessary reforms be brought to the Council in a timely fashion.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): Brazil associates itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of India on behalf of the Group of Four and by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group, and wishes to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

I would like to express the gratitude of my delegation to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, and to thank the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassadors Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Kaha Imnadze of Georgia, for their contribution during the previous session to advancing Security Council reform.

I would also like to welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Nusseibeh and the appointment of Ambassador Christian Braun of Luxembourg as the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. As always, they can count on Brazil’s full support in their endeavours.

On 15 September 2008, the General Assembly adopted decision 62/557, which established the intergovernmental negotiations. That decision was the result of the desire of Member States to move from the discussions in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council to a more results-oriented process that could effectively achieve the reform of the Security Council.

A decade later, however, we still have not witnessed the necessary progress that we had hoped would accompany the intergovernmental negotiations. That progress should not take the form of an endless debate on abstract concepts that leads nowhere, which not only does not advance the interests of the majority of Member States but could jeopardize the legitimacy of the intergovernmental negotiations as a whole.

Brazil reiterates its commitment to helping the intergovernmental negotiations, which have seen considerable progress at recent sessions of the General Assembly. To that end, we must effectively commence the long-overdue text-based negotiations. We fully support the three-step strategy proposed by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin of India, on behalf of the Group of Four. Allow me to further elaborate.

We need to guarantee continuity in the intergovernmental negotiations. During the previous session, the co-Chairs — Ambassadors Nusseibeh and Imnadze — drafted a document entitled “Revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration” based on the outcome papers of the intergovernmental negotiations of the sixty-ninth, seventieth and seventy-first General Assembly sessions and on the statements made from the floor.

Nevertheless, despite all efforts made during that harmonization exercise, the outcome document is still incomplete. What we should do during the next intergovernmental negotiations is quite clear. We need to start the session by debating the revised document in order to ensure that it includes, among other points, the positions that clearly received overwhelming support from Member States and that were, unfortunately, not taken into account.

In that regard, the identification of the countries supporting the various options contained in the text or the attribution of names and an adequate reference to the Common African Position are two requests from Member States that enjoyed clear approval from the floor during the seventy-second session. They deserve special consideration. In that context, allow me to underline the importance of correcting the historical injustice done to the African continent by it not being adequately represented in both categories of seats — permanent and non-permanent — in the Security Council.

We need to make full use of the time available to us. The next meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations should start as early as possible, and we should not impose upon ourselves artificial deadlines for the conclusion of our debate. More explicitly, there is no need for the negotiations to end in June, as was the case last year, almost three months before the end of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. It is quite common in the General Assembly for important negotiation processes to be carried out up until the last days of the session — even in August or September. My delegation truly believes that negotiations regarding the reform of the Security Council are indeed some of the most crucial negotiations conducted in the General Assembly. It is also important that the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations enjoy flexibility in managing their provisional schedule of meetings so that they can convene as many additional meetings as necessary.

In the same vein, we also support the idea that you, Madam President, convene another plenary meeting under this agenda item in the next resumed session, as proposed by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69 group. As some Member States have already stated, many of the points related to the reform of the Security Council need further discussion. That is exactly what we are proposing — to discuss this complex question as much as possible during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

Finally, we need to make sure that the intergovernmental negotiations follow the normal rules of procedure. As I already mentioned, the negotiations on the reform of the Security Council were created by the General Assembly and are conducted by the General Assembly — the most universal decision-making organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly includes 193 Member States, and each Member’s vote has equal weight. That is to say, no State has any veto rights in the Assembly. Therefore, it is not reasonable that some countries reserve for themselves the power of obstructing an entire negotiation when a broad majority is working constructively for its development. It is necessary to ensure that, like any other process in the General Assembly, the intergovernmental negotiations work with a text with identified positions and proposals, and with the sincere and transparent engagement of Member States aimed at finding acceptable compromises. That is what a negotiation is, and that is what the intergovernmental negotiations should truly become in order to keep States Members of the Organization committed to that exercise.

I have no doubt, Madam President, of your strong commitment to reforming the Security Council in order to make it more representative and fit to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. We look forward to working with the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I thank you, Madam President, for your leadership and your personal engagement on this very important issue. I join previous speakers in thanking Ambassadors Kaha Imnadze of Georgia and Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates for their hard work over the past year as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session. I also welcome your announcement, Madam President, that you will reappoint Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh and appoint Ambassador Christian

Braun of Luxembourg. We wish them good luck, and we commend their courage in taking on this very important assignment.

During the high-level week, much was said by our leaders about the need to strengthen and reinforce multilateralism and the multilateral rules-based system. A critical part of our multilateral architecture is the Security Council. As we look for ways to strengthen and reinforce multilateralism, we cannot ignore the important question of Council reform. Indeed, we need to make the Council more effective, accountable and representative if we are to strengthen our multilateral system. All members of the United Nations would benefit from the reform of the Council. Let me make a counter-intuitive point — the greatest beneficiaries of Security Council reform will, in fact, be the permanent members because, ultimately, any reform will enhance the credibility of the Council and that, in turn, will enhance the legitimacy of the permanent members as they discharge their special responsibilities. I would therefore urge the five permanent members to embrace the need for reform and to lead the process from the front rather than from the rear.

It is evident that vast differences in opinion remain among Member States on the issue of Security Council reform. In that regard, Singapore believes that the updated paper circulated in June, entitled “Revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration”, broadly reflects the current state of discussions on Council reform and offers a good basis for all of us to build upon. It is a reflection of all of the work that has been done so far, and it is important that we build on it further.

The intergovernmental negotiations process urgently needs to produce tangible results so as to demonstrate that there can be progress, that reform is possible and that the intergovernmental negotiations remain a suitable platform for achieving such reform. If the intergovernmental negotiations are unable to show progress, they will become irrelevant. Let me once again ask a question that I have often asked from this rostrum — are the intergovernmental negotiations a vehicle for reform or merely an instrument for maintaining the status quo? Are they capable of delivering reform or will they end in gridlock?

The point I am making is that if the intergovernmental negotiations are to be taken seriously, they must deliver results soon. Failure to reform the Security Council in

the interest of better reflecting present-day realities will inevitably undermine the trust that people have in the Security Council and, more broadly, in the United Nations.

Singapore has reiterated its consistent and long-standing position on Security Council reform many times. I echo the sentiment of many others in stating that the Council must reflect and exemplify the diversity among States Members of the United Nations of today. There must be broader geographical representation and inclusivity in the Council, particularly from underrepresented regions such as Africa. That means that both the permanent and the non-permanent membership must be expanded. We also wish to underline the need for small States, particularly small island developing States, to be represented. No reform process should disadvantage the small States or the small island developing States. In that regard, we welcome the expression of support from groups and delegations for the representation of small States and small island developing States in an expanded Security Council.

Singapore would therefore like to make the following comments on the way forward for the intergovernmental negotiations process this year. First, we must recognize and build on the progress that we have made in our discussions over the past three years on elements of commonality and issues for further consideration. We will rely on the co-Chairs’ wisdom as to how best to take forward those discussions, based on the work that has already been done. We welcome the fact that there will be continuity through the continued presence of one of the co-Chairs. We think that will be very helpful.

Secondly, with regard to the Security Council’s working methods, we believe that there have been steps in the right direction to improve the Council’s transparency, efficiency and engagement with non-members. We welcome the adoption and implementation of Security Council presidential note 507 (S/2017/507), and we note the increased regularity of introductory and wrap-up sessions by Council Presidents. But we think more can be done to ensure equity in the distribution of the chairmanships of subsidiary bodies, as well as the famous — or should I say — infamous penholdership system. We welcome the more active role played by the 10 elected members in the Council and we encourage all elected members to continue to play an active role within the Council.

Finally, there must be greater accountability and transparency in the decision-making processes of the Council, particularly with regard to the role played by its sanctions committees. I am encouraged by the initiative launched by several Member States and bodies this year to create a best practices guide for representatives on the sanctions committees and the experts, aimed at improving the effectiveness and transparency of the Council's use of sanctions. The regional meeting reaching out to various groups held by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) yesterday is another good example of the sort of thing that needs to be encouraged. We believe that, over time, such initiatives will add to the body of knowledge and help to foster greater understanding and participation in the United Nations sanctions system, which is of the utmost importance given the impact and consequences that sanctions can have on all States Members of the United Nations. The Council should find ways to continue working with the General Assembly to take that issue forward.

I assure the co-Chairs of Singapore's commitment to and continued support for the important topic of Security Council reform. Singapore is a small country, and its survival depends on there being a world governed by a multilateral rules-based system. The success of the United Nations is critical to small States like Singapore. As the United Nations organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council also has a special responsibility to be the guardian of the multilateral rules-based system. We ask the members of the Council, especially the permanent members, to reflect on the role that has been entrusted to them and the role that they should play with regard to the Council's reform process. They too have a special responsibility to lead the reform process. Robust debate within the Council must also be accompanied by a willingness to compromise and the political will to change. Otherwise, the Security Council will amount to little more than a stage for politics and posturing without meaningful impact on the lives of ordinary people on the ground.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work of Ambassadors Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Imnadze of Georgia in the arduous task of co-chairing the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. To

them and to the new, recently appointed co-Chairs for the next round of negotiations — Ambassadors Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates and Christian Braun of Luxembourg — I would like to express Argentina's commitment to continuing to cooperate constructively in order to achieve tangible progress on such an important issue.

While Argentina associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of Uniting for Consensus, I would like to highlight a few aspects.

Argentina reiterates its commitment to a negotiations process governed by the principles of democracy, transparency and the spirit of flexibility, and reaffirms its deep commitment to multilateralism as a means for achieving a successful outcome. In that connection, Argentina believes that it is necessary to attain results democratically on the basis of the broadest possible consensus. As expressed by Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus countries, the proposal that has enjoyed the greatest consensus among Member States is the increase in non-permanent members. In that regard, Argentina continues to be willing to propose and find innovative and coherent formulas that ensure a more democratic presence, improve the prospects of rotating non-permanent members, and reformulate the working methods so that the Council can truly become more transparent, interactive and inclusive.

Therefore, together with Uniting for Consensus, we are ready to continue working in favour of a viable and realistic reform, exploring intermediate and alternative formulas that, while respecting the equality of States and an adequate rotation, would allow us to reach the broadest possible consensus. In that respect, we believe that proposals for Council reform that envisage longer terms for non-permanent members, their re-election or a combination of the two would enjoy the general consensus that is so critical. Argentina trusts that all delegations will show the same commitment to multilateralism through concrete actions and leadership, according to their individual capacities, in order to make progress, now that the tenth anniversary of the intergovernmental negotiations is drawing near.

As indicated by Italy on behalf of Uniting for Consensus, there is also consensus on the need to redress the underrepresentation of certain regions, especially the African continent. The Uniting for Consensus proposal addresses that concern and is the only compromise proposal presented in recent years

that seeks, in a balanced and fair manner, to tackle the aspirations expressed by the various groups involved in these deliberations.

With regard to the right of veto, Argentina has historically opposed such a privilege, which we and others consider to be a violation of the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Our country has defended that principle since the Organization's very inception, and has reiterated it continually since the beginning of the negotiations process for Security Council reform.

The sovereign equality of States can be ensured only if all Member States have access to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, thus avoiding privileges for only a few countries. The proposal seeks to promote regional representation by adjusting the ratios of each regional group to ensure more equitable representation. Argentina maintains, however, that the inclusion of new permanent members will not ensure the participation of countries that are not represented on the Council today. The only way to achieve that objective is through a system based on elections, where the will of those represented lends legitimacy to their representatives.

The improvement of the Council's working methods continues to be of paramount importance for Argentina. We have taken every opportunity to encourage the Council to work in an open and transparent manner and to be accountable for its actions to the entire Organization. In that regard, Argentina hopes that the principles of democracy and accountability will continue to guide the process during the next round of negotiations, encouraging the broadest participation of Member States.

In conclusion, Argentina reiterates and reaffirms its willingness to consider with an open mind any proposal that respects the principles set by the General Assembly, and hopes that the next round of negotiations will be able to fully address the five dimensions of Security Council reform in order to achieve satisfactory results for all parties involved.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): We welcome the convening of the timely and relevant debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. We appreciate, Madam President, that you have identified the reform of the Security Council as one of the key priorities of your presidency. I would therefore like to assure you of my delegation's unwavering support in that endeavour

and trust that, through your leadership, considerable progress will be made in moving the intergovernmental negotiations process forward.

Allow me also to congratulate the incoming co-Chairs, Mrs. Lana Nusseibeh and Mr. Christian Braun, on assuming the important and challenging role of facilitating the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-third session. The incoming co-Chairs can once again count on my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Saint Vincent and Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group and of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States, respectively. We wish to make the following additional remarks.

This year marks 53 years since the first and only expansion of the Security Council. That limited expansion led to an increase in the non-permanent membership category only, while the vast majority of our Organization's members remained excluded from the Council's permanent membership category. It has been 26 years since the adoption of resolution 47/62, which initiated the General Assembly process for dealing with the reform of the Security Council in the comprehensive manner that we had set out to undertake. This year marks exactly one decade since the start of the intergovernmental negotiations process and 13 years since the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which unanimously agreed on the early reform of the Security Council. It is with deep regret that, despite those efforts, the reform process of the Security Council has not produced any results.

South Africa urges all Member States to redouble their efforts and to exercise the necessary political will in order to reinvigorate the negotiations with the mandated aim of achieving the reform of the Security Council in an inclusive manner. In that regard, South Africa firmly believes that continued, direct, enhanced and constructive engagement by all Member States is required.

In that context, we would like to propose the following. First, we join other Member States in calling for the start of text-based negotiations and the establishment of a road map with clear and implementable time frames for the immediate normalization of the intergovernmental negotiations process. It is important to underscore the fact that 164

out of the 193 countries of the United Nations want the immediate commencement of text-based negotiations. That overwhelming number represents more than 80 per cent of the Organization's membership and comprises all the regions of the United Nations, the small island developing States and some of the members of the permanent five. That vital point cannot be ignored.

Secondly, the intergovernmental negotiations process need not be reinvented. The current revised document on the negotiations, produced during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, is a positive step on which we could build. In our view, the revised document is not definitive but it is a step closer towards the next logical step of give-and-take negotiations. South Africa would welcome the accurate inclusion of the Ezulwini Consensus in the revised document, in line with the overwhelming support that the Common African Position has received thus far. We also strongly advocate for the expansion of both the permanent and the non-permanent membership categories in order to ensure that all the regions are represented on the Council on an equitable basis.

Thirdly, ending this year's intergovernmental negotiations in June, as in the two previous sessions, would not be an effective use of time and would not provide an adequate opportunity for full discussion. It would also create the impression that there is no urgency to this very important and long-standing process. The vast majority of our Organization's membership continues to hold the view that reform of the Council is long overdue.

My delegation therefore wishes to emphasize and reiterate its urgent call for the speedy reform of the Security Council. The world and the work of the Council have changed markedly over the past 73 years, with an ever-increasing focus on developments on the African continent. It is therefore our steadfast belief that it remains an anomaly that the more than 1 billion people on our continent remain without a voice in the permanent membership category of the Council, a central and global organ of the United Nations. That cannot be justified. The prolonged present composition of that organ since the inception of this debate years ago will continue to undermine the legitimacy, credibility and high standing that we accord it, should we fail to urgently implement the necessary and required reforms.

The current stalemate in the Council on many of the key issues on its agenda and the glaring failure

of the Council to carry out its mandate, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, of maintaining international peace and security can be largely attributed to its current configuration. It is for that reason that South Africa calls for urgent practical steps to be taken during the current seventy-third session.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to working with you, Madam President, and other Member States to ensure that this session of the intergovernmental negotiations is a success. We reiterate our call for this session to produce a fair and successful outcome in order to restore the credibility and legitimacy of the Council as one of the critical organs of the United Nations.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting.

Japan fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, Permanent Representative of India, on behalf of the Group of Four. Please allow me, however, to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

This year marks 10 years since we began the intergovernmental negotiations. Yet, in that time, we have seen little progress. It is essential for the Security Council's credibility that its composition reflect the realities of the twenty-first century. As Prime Minister Abe said during the general debate in September,

“in the light of the lack of progress in reforming the Security Council, the significance of the United Nations in the twenty-first-century world is already being severely questioned” (*A/73/PV.7, p.43*).

I wish to focus on four key elements in my remarks today.

First, Japan notes with satisfaction that the President of the General Assembly has highlighted the revitalization of the United Nations as a core item on her agenda, which, we understand, includes Security Council reform. We welcome the President's emphasis on that issue, and ask her to exercise her leadership in guiding us forward in the coming year. We look forward to cooperating closely with the co-Chairs, whom the President has just named to oversee the intergovernmental negotiations during this session.

Secondly, we strongly request the long-overdue commencement of text-based negotiations to be agreed to immediately. That is a natural next step to our work

over the past decade. Negotiating based on a text is the way we take action here at the United Nations, and we are concerned that, after a decade of intergovernmental negotiations, we do not even have a text on which to base our negotiations, which impairs our ability to proceed. More than 160 countries have expressed support for text-based negotiations, and we need to take action accordingly.

Thirdly, we believe that we should continue work on the document that we were drafting at the end of the previous session. We also reaffirm our support for the attribution of views in the text. That will enable us to see clearly who made what proposal and, in particular, will ensure an accurate and appropriate reflection of the Common African Position in the negotiations. For our part, we have long held that the Council should be expanded in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, a view shared by a broad majority of the membership. A text that clearly reflects the positions of all Member States will allow us to engage in the give-and-take discussions that will be necessary in order to reach an agreement.

Finally, we believe that the current intergovernmental negotiations process should be reviewed. If we need consensus for decision-making, it gives a de facto veto over the process to just a few countries, which we believe does not represent the will of the great majority.

This is an inflection point for Security Council reform. If we fail to make significant headway in the coming session, I fear that the legitimacy and viability of the intergovernmental negotiations process itself will come into question. It is urgent that this year's session be a productive one.

In 2020, we will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It is our responsibility as Member States to make concrete progress on Security Council reform in time for that milestone. Only through reform can we ensure that the Council will maintain the legitimacy it needs in order to play its vital role as we move forward.

Lastly, I have to add that it is regrettable that a groundless statement was made about Japan in this Hall just a few minutes ago. That statement is irrelevant to Security Council reform.

Mr. Fernández de Soto Valderrama (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia associates itself with the

statement made by Ambassador Maria Angela Zappia, Permanent Representative of Italy, on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group, of which we are a part.

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to allow the membership to conduct a frank dialogue on the now critical enlargement of the Security Council, an issue that impacts the functioning, representativeness and credibility of the United Nations. It must be remembered that the philosophy that drives our Organization has been that the collective decision-making process should be oriented towards the greatest possible majority, not towards the granting of privileges to a few members.

That is why we believe that the granting of new permanent seats with veto rights is not the way to lend a more democratic and inclusive character to the Security Council. That is why Colombia's historic position has always been guided by the democratic principles of transparency and inclusivity, as stated by Ambassador Zappia. That is also why Colombia maintains that a discussion on truly democratic and inclusive reforms requires the broadest possible consensus, if it is to be successful. That is why the United for Consensus group has always proposed an openness to explore points of convergence with the entire membership, which we can reach only by showing flexibility on an ongoing basis.

Certainly, I have no doubt that the question of the veto is one of the main elements that has prevented progress in the intergovernmental negotiations process over the years. On that issue, my country has held its principled position since 1945, firmly rooted in the sovereign equality of States, and the veto goes against that fundamental pillar.

In that regard, our proposal, the proposal of the United for Consensus group, seeks to ensure that the Council is representative in a way that reinforces its effectiveness. We believe that a regional rotation based on elections is a key element in achieving that objective. In that way, the regional groups that are clearly underrepresented will have access to the Council. Regions such as mine, Latin America and the Caribbean, small island developing States, the many countries in the Group of Eastern European States, Arab countries and especially Africa must have new seats, which would allow them to see their interests directly represented in the Council.

The enlargement of the Security Council is intended to make it more representative — that is, a body that is capable of acting on behalf of the international community in line with the guiding principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It could be argued that, from a purely numerical perspective, over the years the Council has become less representative of the United Nations general membership.

A greater possibility for Member States to sit regularly in the Council will also be required. The best way to achieve that goal is through an increase in the number of elected seats, which is a measure that would also make the Security Council more responsible and more accountable to the entire Organization. Otherwise, we would be making the mistake of creating a more exclusive Council, rather than the more inclusive one we want, in the midst of an international situation that calls on all States to respond to the universal ideals of sustainable peace and security and where the actors in the Council are regularly accountable to all Members.

My country, myself included, can be counted on to make progress in the work to achieve that Council.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): The United States is pleased to continue this discussion on Security Council reform, and we look forward to coordinating closely on issues within the group handling the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-third session.

We also thank the outgoing leadership, Ambassador Nusseibeh and Ambassador Imnadze, for their stewardship. Their efforts have resulted in one of the core documents of the intergovernmental negotiations from the seventy-second session of the General Assembly — the paper on the revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration — which has crystallized the areas requiring a greater focus in the coming year. The input from Member States was also critical to determining how the intergovernmental negotiations should best approach its work in the year ahead.

In this coming session, we look forward to addressing the topic, as outlined by our co-Chairs, of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. We have been very clear that the United States approaches those negotiations with four core objectives in mind.

First, we support a modest expansion of the Council in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Consideration of any new permanent membership must take into account the ability and willingness of candidates to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. It must also take into account their willingness to exercise the responsibilities that come with Security Council membership. That includes an enhanced financial responsibility as well.

Secondly, the United States opposes any change to the veto. Any expansion or alteration of the veto is a red line for the United States.

Thirdly, the United States remains open to any form of negotiation within the intergovernmental negotiations framework — whether text-based or otherwise — as long as that format allows for broad consensus. Wide agreement across the intergovernmental negotiations is the only way that reform will ultimately succeed.

Finally, we seek an effective and efficient Security Council. The United States will support only those reforms that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council and advance the Council's core mandate of addressing challenges to international peace and security. We remain committed to a process that achieves the right reforms, rather than to a fixed timeline for those reforms.

The United States remains committed to a comprehensive solution that can secure the broadest support of Member States. A modernized Council should be not only representative of the twenty-first century but also capable of responding to new challenges and be well-positioned to fulfil its mandate with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. In combination with other appropriate Security Council reforms, a thoughtfully considered enlargement of the Council could help to maintain its effectiveness in the long run.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's meeting. China welcomes the President's appointment of Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, and Ambassador Christian Braun, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We expect that the co-Chairs will fulfil their responsibilities in line with their

mandate. China will actively support the co-Chairs in the conduct of their work.

During the negotiations at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, Member States had candid, patient and in-depth discussions on all five clusters of issues concerning Security Council reform, as well as their inherent interconnectedness. Better mutual understanding, which is necessary for reaching the broadest possible consensus, has been achieved. China appreciates that fact and is grateful to the previous co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Georgia, for their efforts.

Security Council reform involves the vital interests of all Member States and the long-term development of the United Nations. It bears on the future of the global collective security system and is an important part of the reform of the global governance system. China has always supported a reasonable and necessary reform of the Council. It is our consistent view that priority should be given to increasing the representation and voice of developing countries, especially African countries.

Reform should enable more Member States, particularly small and medium-sized countries, which account for the majority of the United Nations membership, to be more involved in the decision-making process of the Council and to play a greater role. The only viable way to achieve reform is to pursue decision 62/557 and the consensus of Member States, while seeking the most widely acceptable package that offers a solution to the five clusters of issues through extensive and democratic consultations within the membership-driven intergovernmental negotiations process.

Rather than further the process of reform, attempts to set an artificial timeline aimed at rushing through insufficiently developed reform proposals or to arbitrarily launch text-based negotiations when the conditions are not ripe would only undermine unity, while failing to substantially address the underrepresentation of developing countries in the Security Council.

The intergovernmental negotiations process is an important platform for Member States to exchange views and reach greater mutual understanding on Security Council reform. It is a credible, transparent and inclusive communication channel. At a time when serious divergences remain on the issue of reform, Member States should continue a frank, thorough and in-depth exchange of views in order to better

understand each other's positions. China expects the intergovernmental negotiations to remain a Member State-driven process aimed at seeking the broadest possible consensus that meets the common interests of all. China will work with all the other parties and continue to play a positive and constructive role towards that end.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. We reiterate our support to the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process on Security Council reform.

The State of Qatar aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The increasing challenges that face the international community in the area of international peace and security compel Member States to forge ahead with negotiations on comprehensive and genuine reforms of the Security Council aimed at rendering it more capable of dealing with such challenges. Although the negotiations process on reforming the Security Council started many years ago and despite the complexity of the issues under discussion, the progress achieved so far and the elements of commonality that have been identified, thanks to the determination of all States, call on us to intensify our efforts and demonstrate more flexibility in the reform process so as to render the United Nations stronger and more effective.

Security Council reform remains a crucial issue for the credibility of the United Nations with regard to its ability to fulfil its mandate, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and to become more transparent, representative and effective. In that regard, a successful reform process requires adherence to the terms of reference of that process, in particular the interrelation of all the principal negotiated issues and the common elements among them in accordance with decision 62/557, which was adopted by consensus. Any attempt, therefore, to reform the Security Council will not be successful if it focuses only on one aspect and ignores the others.

Against that perspective, the State of Qatar supports a comprehensive reform that renders the Security Council more inclusive, democratic and representative of all regions. The reform must reflect the geopolitical realities that exist today, an aspect that has been widely stressed during the negotiation process, including granting small and medium-sized countries

more opportunities to serve in an enlarged Council. Such reforms would strengthen the accountability, transparency, legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council.

The State of Qatar reiterates that any reform of the Security Council must go hand in hand with improvements in the working methods of the Council and its decision-making process. Interaction and dialogue with non-Council members through informal interactive meetings would therefore contribute to enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of the Council.

The State of Qatar reaffirms that the question of the veto power is a crucial issue in the Council reform process. Experience has shown that restricting the use of the veto power or refraining from using it in cases of atrocity crimes, such as war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing, helps to stop those crimes. We also underscore the important role played by the General Assembly in issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter, including the submission of recommendations to the Council. The complementary relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is therefore vital and of paramount importance in efforts to strike a balance in the work of the United Nations.

Consistent with that approach, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the desired aims of the reform require a commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter in the areas of peace, security, development and human rights. Any violation of the Charter and international law weakens the role of the United Nations, undermines the credibility of its bodies and adversely affects international efforts to enhance the mechanisms available to maintain international peace and security. Accordingly, threats to the sovereignty of countries, military interventions and the use of force against countries represent a challenge to the mandate of the Security Council and the international community, as well as a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar remains committed to the mechanisms of international cooperation. We will participate positively in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council with

the aim of making it more efficient and accountable, while rendering it better able to take timely decisions aimed at maintaining international peace and security.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the work carried out by the Ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates and Georgia, who served as the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process on Security Council reform during the seventy-second session. We congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Luxembourg for taking on that responsibility during the current session.

During the first half of the year, a total of five consultations were held within that process, which concluded with the adoption, by consensus, of the oral decision of the President of the General Assembly renewing the mandate of the process so as to continue those negotiations at the seventy-third session. During the consultations, the deep divergences among delegations were evident, not only on issues related to the five thematic clusters but also on the course of action around the negotiations.

In that context, Cuba reiterates that only through debate and negotiations, within the established time and frameworks, will it be possible to define a route towards a consensus on that reform. To that end, it is essential to analyse comprehensively, and not separately, the five thematic clusters on Council reform, namely, the categories of membership, regional representation, the size of an enlarged Security Council and its working methods, the question of the veto, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

The update of the paper on the elements of commonality and issues for further consideration clearly shows that numerous consultations are still required in order to narrow the gaps between the various positions. We reaffirm the fundamental role of the General Assembly in the reform of the Security Council. Accordingly, all proposals of Member States must be heard, analysed and included in the basic document of the process.

This meeting has demonstrated the importance of a genuine reform of the Security Council that would transform it into an effective, transparent and representative body. An essential element of Security Council reform is the modification of its working methods. Although documents have been adopted with

the aim of improving those methods, including the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507), greater efforts are still required in the search for effective formulas that ensure the genuine participation of Member States in the work and decision-making of the Council.

Measures that do not take into account the views of all members of that body or, at times, even those of all its permanent members have often been adopted. The lack of transparency and the exclusionary practices are constant traits of the Council's working dynamics. The Security Council must adjust its functions to the mandate established by the Charter of the United Nations and respect the role, authority and functions of the General Assembly.

We share the concerns about the growing tendency of the Security Council to consider issues and assume functions outside its competence, increasingly usurping the role assigned by the Charter to the other organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly. That trend must cease immediately. Too frequently and often prematurely, the Council has been addressing issues that do not necessarily pose an immediate threat to international peace and security, even invoking Chapter VII of the Charter for that purpose.

In accordance with the mandate assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council should specifically focus its attention on addressing the most urgent problems that threaten international peace and security. As set out in the Charter, Chapter VII should be invoked only as a last resort. The application of double standards and political manipulation in the analysis of certain issues under the consideration of the Council also pose a concern that is shared by many delegations. In accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, Member States recognize that the Security Council acts on their behalf in carrying out its functions. The work of the Council is therefore the collective responsibility of the States Members of the United Nations, to which true participation in the decision-making in the work of that body must be ensured.

We object to national agendas and interests being imposed as issues for the Council's attention under the false pretext that there exists a threat to international peace and security. It is necessary to increase the number of public meetings of the Council. Closed meetings and informal consultations should be the exception and not the rule. In order to increase the transparency and the

level of accountability, a final text that contains the definitive rules of procedure of the Security Council should be adopted. It is inconceivable that the Council's rules have remained provisional for more than 70 years. The annual reports that the Council is obliged to submit to the General Assembly should be genuinely analytical and must adequately evaluate performance.

The question of the veto is intrinsically linked to the working methods of the Council, particularly the decision-making mechanism. The veto is an anachronistic and undemocratic privilege that must be eliminated. Regarding the membership of the Council, Cuba reiterates that it supports the expansion of that body in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent membership. The main objective of the expansion of the Security Council should be to rectify the underrepresentation of developing countries. The main increase in membership should therefore correspond to an increase in the number of developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

If the category of permanent membership is not expanded and only the number of non-permanent seats is increased, the existing gap between permanent and non-permanent membership will be further widened, increasing the disproportionate representation of developed and developing countries on the Council. As a consequence, the Council would become even less representative and, thereby, less legitimate and effective.

Lastly, I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our aspiration for a representative, democratic, transparent and efficient Security Council, in which the views of all States Members of the Organization are taken into account, in accordance with the mandate of the Charter and the diverse realities of the current world. For that purpose, the Organization can count on Cuba's full support.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Luxembourg, respectively, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group.

In your inaugural address, Madam President, to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, you invoked the Andean principle of *minga* — a joining of ranks by the international community — to address the complex and interconnected challenges that we all confront today (see A/73/PV.6). We heard an equally impassioned call for collective action by world leaders during the high-level general debate of the General Assembly.

That firm commitment to international cooperation based on mutual respect and shared benefit is the very quintessence of multilateralism, an outlook that prizes a spirit of flexibility and compromise to achieve the common good and that opposes unilateralist approaches, which seek to achieve narrow, self-serving interests. As the foundation of the rules-based international order, it is imperative that the United Nations remain fully imbued with those ideals and continue to be an Organization that does not merely act on behalf of Member States but rather acts for them; one that not only embraces the spirit of our times, but also epitomizes those values.

The contemporary reality is a democratic reality. A credible United Nations is therefore a representative United Nations, reflecting the interests and views of all Member States — small, medium and large. That is also a point of departure for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and serves as a guiding principle for my country and the Uniting for Consensus group in seeking a more democratic, representative, accountable, transparent and effective Council. For us, the reform process is therefore not an end in itself; it is also a true expression of our commitment to the fundamentals of multilateralism.

As the intergovernmental negotiations process marks 10 years since its establishment, it would be appropriate to reflect on the progress achieved so far in relation to the goals that we have set ourselves, namely, a democratic and representative Council that is in line with the ever-changing and dynamic global landscape surrounding it. Evidently, while there is consensus on expanding the non-permanent category, fundamental questions and divisions persist on the very need for or desirability of expanding the permanent category. The reasons for that are more than apparent. New permanency is seen as nothing but an imitation of old permanency, for it seeks to address the inherent dysfunctions of the Council, stemming from permanent

membership and the veto, by reinforcing them instead of reforming them.

It also undermines the democratic and representative nature of the reform process, for it denies the larger membership its democratic right to hold Council members to account in an environment in which nearly one third of the membership has never served on the Council. Furthermore, an expansion in the permanent category at the cost of non-permanent members would also significantly diminish prospects for many smaller States, in particular small island developing States, to ever be elected to the Council. Those that base their claims for permanent seats on the imperative of addressing contemporary realities in fact offer fixed solutions to transient situations. The question of the veto is another by-product of permanence. If the Council cannot reconcile the interests of its five permanent members, how will it cope with the interests of a larger permanent membership and still be effective?

If progress is indeed to be made, we must debunk the fallacy that expansion in the permanent category is intrinsic to the reform of the Security Council. The work and effectiveness of the Council are not a function of its composition, much less of its permanent members. As the historical record shows, it is the non-permanent members that have traditionally championed greater inclusiveness and transparency in the work of the Council, especially within the framework of its provisional rules of procedure. It is also in the non-permanent category that the Council's failure to be representative can be addressed.

A solution that offers more seats to all the regions provides a better opportunity for all Member States, including cross-regional and subregional groups, to serve on the Council. That is why the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) group is proposing a significant increase in the number of elected seats for all regional groupings, especially for Africa. It also puts into perspective our firm opposition to the creation of new permanent seats. Fresh chains of inherited privilege would invariably threaten, not strengthen, norms of democracy, accountability and transparency in the Council.

What is required now to move the reform process forward is to identify our convergences and build on such common ground. Finding that common ground requires flexibility and compromise on the part of all sides. There are, after all, no procedural quick fixes

that can substitute for or sidestep the need to forge a real consensus. Unless we are willing to go that extra mile, progress will remain elusive. The UFC not only has lived by those ideals but will continue to be guided by them in its engagement with efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, one that takes into account the positions of all Member States.

Anything less would be regression, not reform. After all, the burden of a large, unwieldy and inefficient Council confounded by an enlarged clique is an outcome that the international community neither seeks nor would be prepared to support.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.