



General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

35th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 31 October 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Botnaru
(Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the
Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 49 (continued)

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

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): It is a great privilege for me to speak on this important agenda item. The question of equitable representation on the Security Council and the urgent need to expand its membership have been discussed in the General Assembly, and in the Working Group set up for that purpose, in a continuous manner during the past eight years. An acceptable outcome is still far beyond our reach. This is a critical moment for the Working Group: we should either throw in the towel or move the Group to a new stage — a stage of true and faithful negotiations, with a view to reaching a solution agreed upon by all Members of the United Nations.

In this connection, I commend the previous President of the Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his dedication to the work of the Working Group and for taking the initiative to write to his counterparts and seek their views and assistance so as to make further progress in the exercise. We also congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador

John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingólfsson of Iceland, for their patience and painstaking efforts in guiding the discussions in the Working Group during the previous session.

At the Millennium Summit the heads of State and Government agreed to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. A new momentum emerged since the Summit, and we should work much harder to carry out the mandate set out in the Summit Declaration.

The United Nations cannot afford to fail in this important task, or the credibility of the Organization as a whole will be put at substantial risk. My delegation therefore strongly supports the view that more vigorous efforts should be made by all countries — the five permanent members of the Security Council in particular — to move the process of reforming the Security Council forward.

We are now at a crossroads in our exercise to achieve a reformed and expanded Security Council that is more transparent and democratic in its work and more accountable and representative in its membership. Obviously, there is a general agreement among all Member countries on the need to reform the working methods and to expand the membership of the Security Council. There is also concrete agreement on principles and criteria for renovating the working methods of the Council, as correctly reflected in the report of the Open-ended Working Group.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



There are, however, clear differences of view among Member countries concerning expansion of the permanent membership and ways to deal with the decision-making modes, the veto power in particular. The whole process is truly very complex and challenging. There is no doubt that the common objective is to bring the Council better into tune with the economic and political realities of our time and to enable it to be better equipped to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century. The enormous increase of the general membership of the United Nations following the demise of the colonial age has brought a call for redressing the serious imbalance in the membership of the Council.

The reform of the Security Council will be durable and fruitful only if it fully reflects the principles of the sovereign equality of States, equitable geographical distribution, accountability, democratization and transparency in the working methods and procedures of the Council, including its decision-making process. The genuine legitimacy of the decisions of the Council relies heavily on the measure of its accountability to the membership of the United Nations.

Viet Nam's position in this matter is clear. It has been stated on various occasions, both in this forum and in the Open-ended Working Group. I wish to reiterate that Viet Nam strongly supports an increase in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

As regards the new permanent members, Viet Nam shares the view that developing countries must have appropriate representation on the Council, taking into account the fact that most of the issues under the authority of the Council today involve or are of vital interest to the developing countries. Developing countries from the three regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean must have their permanent representatives in an expanded Security Council. On the other hand, it is reasonable that new permanent seats should be allocated to industrialized countries that are willing to undertake greater commitments to the work of the United Nations. Viet Nam supports the aspirations of countries such as India, Japan and Germany to permanent seats in the Council.

Given the fact that there are quite a number of countries that may be eligible to become new

permanent members of the Security Council, Viet Nam is willing to support the proposal to work out rotation arrangements that will allow more countries to serve on the Council.

Any formula of reform will fail to be satisfactory if the veto power is left intact. In this respect, our delegation wishes to reaffirm that, pending its final elimination, that power should be used only with the greatest restraint and only on issues that fall under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. In the meantime, Viet Nam shares the view that new permanent members of the Council should enjoy that privilege in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality. This will also help to redress the inherent imbalance of power between the developed and the developing countries within the Council.

With reforms taken along these lines, we are confident that the United Nations, including the Security Council, will be enabled to make further positive contributions to realizing mankind's shared aspirations to peace, independence, justice and prosperity.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, please allow me to thank Mr. Harri Holkeri, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session and former Chairman 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, and his two deputies, Ambassador Ingólfsson and Ambassador De Saram, for their vigorous efforts in the preparation for and smooth running of the Working Group. We believe that, under Mr. Han's guidance, the Open-ended Working Group will achieve further positive results.

Mr. Holkeri pointed out at the concluding meeting of the fifty-fifth session that

"there is a common recognition that the Council needs to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century to better serve the interests of peace and security". (A/55/PV.112, p. 3)

This indeed reflects the general view of Member States on Security Council reform. Over the past 50 years and more since the founding of the United Nations, great changes have taken place on the international scene and in the United Nations itself. In our view, the Security Council needs appropriate and necessary

reforms in order to adapt itself to these changes and the needs of the times and to fulfil more effectively its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The most notable change in this Organization since its foundation more than half a century ago has been the growth of its membership from 51 at the time of its establishment to the present 189 members, most of which are developing countries, making the United Nations truly the most representative intergovernmental international organization in the world. Therefore, the overriding priority in the reform of the Council is to correct the imbalance of its composition and to increase the representation of developing countries, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution, so that the composition of the Council will reflect the current reality of the membership of the United Nations. Only thus can the reform be of practical significance and conform to the common aspirations and interests of all Member States.

In September last year, the Millennium Summit of the United Nations adopted the Millennium Declaration, which, *inter alia*, expresses the resolve of our heads of State and Government

“to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects”. (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

This represents the solemn commitment of the leaders of all Member States to Security Council reform. In order to implement this commitment, the Open-ended Working Group conducted a series of discussions on Security Council reform, in which Member States participated in an active manner. Over the past year, the Open-ended Working Group has made no remarkable progress in any area except the working methods of the Council. This demonstrates once again that reform of the Security Council involves the interests of all countries and that there are therefore differing views, positions and concerns when it comes to issues of importance and principle. In order to implement the will of the leaders of Member States, there should be full, careful and in-depth discussions and exchanges of views among the Member States so as to seek solutions on the basis of consensus. We cannot simply impose a specific timetable.

The Chinese delegation supports the continuation of in-depth discussions on reform within the Open-ended Working Group. At present, almost all Members are seriously concerned about how to enable the Open-ended Working Group to achieve greater progress. We have taken note of the indication by the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, in his remarks at its concluding meeting, that many countries believe that “the time may have come to consider other avenues that would advance this process” (*A/55/PV.112, p. 4*). We feel that his remarks are quite inspiring to our efforts to identify priorities and working methods for the future work of the Open-ended Working Group and therefore merit our attention. The Chinese delegation will continue to support and participate actively in the work of the Open-ended Working Group and to join hands with all other Members to facilitate the reform process.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today’s meeting and the debate that has taken place in recent days mark the beginning of a new year in the consideration of the item on Security Council reform, in accordance with the decision adopted by the General Assembly in the closing days of the fifty-fifth session, when it took note of the report of the Open-ended Working Group for that year.

In the course of our consideration of this question, the Open-ended Working Group established by resolution 48/26 has made progress towards the objective for which it was created: designing a more representative, more democratic and more transparent Security Council capable of successfully meeting the challenges of the new century. That is a task to which Mexico is deeply committed.

It has been clear throughout the Working Group’s deliberations that Security Council reform is no easy task. The aim is ambitious: in-depth reform of the structure and working methods of an organ whose decisions affect all Member States. The political sensitivity of these matters precludes hasty progress or dramatic change. But with tenacity and dedication we have succeeded in making the international community aware of the need for reform, and we have identified the main issues that must be resolved.

Security Council reform is an indivisible package whose elements cannot be dealt with in a fragmented manner. Decisions cannot be taken on them one by one or step by step: the Working Group must adopt a

comprehensive package by general agreement, in conformity with resolution 48/26, which initiated this exercise. The package must, at the least, include the following elements: a reasonable increase in the number of Council members on the basis of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution; rules relating to the privilege of the veto; and substantive changes in working methods with a view to improved transparency and openness.

The areas in which there has been the most progress relate to the Security Council's working methods: the so-called cluster II issues. We must acknowledge that the Working Group's deliberations on these issues have influenced the members of the Security Council, which have taken steps to enhance the openness and transparency of the Council's work. We welcome the good will they have shown with respect to implementing some of the recommendations. We urge the members of the Council to continue along that path and to find ways to provide a legislative foundation for innovative aspects of current practice by incorporating them into the Council's provisional rules of procedure or into other binding documents.

Transparency and openness must become central pillars of the work of the Council, on which the members of the General Assembly have conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Transparency engenders trust; openness makes possible greater participation by all: we must not forget that the Security Council has no authority of its own and acts on behalf of the General Assembly.

In the Millennium Declaration, our heads of State or Government called for redoubled efforts to attain the goal we have set: comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. In that spirit, we must continue to work patiently and with tenacity in the context of the Working Group established by the Assembly to overcome obstacles without deadlines or undue haste. We cannot minimize how difficult is the task before us. Only comprehensive reform adopted by general agreement will enjoy political legitimacy and legal validity.

Mexico reiterates its firm commitment to continue its enthusiastic, dedicated efforts to attain the principal goals of the Working Group.

Mr. Stańczyk (Poland): Eight years after the inception 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, adapting the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security to the requirements and challenges of the twenty-first century remains at the forefront of the issues before the General Assembly. The progress achieved so far has been uneven, and, while we are heartened by what has been achieved in reforming the working methods of the Security Council, we have to recognize that the discussion of crucial issues with which the Working Group has been entrusted — equitable representation on and enlargement of the Council — seems to have reached a dead end.

While it is widely recognized that in order to meet present and future challenges the United Nations needs a reformed Security Council that will reflect the profound changes that have taken place on the geopolitical scene in recent decades, agreement on practical ways to achieve that goal still remains elusive. The lack of tangible progress in fundamental areas of reform despite several years of discussion has no doubt been frustrating. It is true that the issues on the table are of a complex and sensitive nature, which makes the task of reaching general agreement a formidable challenge. The importance of a successful outcome of the Security Council reform process for the future of the Organization and for its ability to better cope with challenges to international peace and security requires that all the parties to the discussions work in a spirit of compromise and show the flexibility necessary to move our work forward.

I would like to use this occasion to thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his untiring efforts to find common ground among the divergent views and proposals and to move the process from the discussion phase to the negotiating phase. Our appreciation extends likewise to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group.

The General Assembly debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters allows us to better grasp the nature of the challenges ahead. Although the position of my country on various aspects of Security Council reform has been presented in this forum on numerous occasions, we feel that it is important to highlight once again the gist of

our standpoint. Poland views reform of the Security Council as a key component of the overall reform of the United Nations and an indispensable element of the effort to increase the Organization's effectiveness in dealing with the complex challenges of the new millennium.

The changed realities of the world should be recognized in an agreement that would allow for a simultaneous increase in both categories of membership. The increase in the permanent-member category should both encompass developed countries that have demonstrated their ability and willingness to act in that role and take into account the legitimate aspirations of developing countries. We believe that increasing the composition of the Council by five permanent members, two of which should be from industrialized and three from developing countries, would be the optimal solution. While each regional group should have discretion as to the way to select its representative in this category of membership, its decision in that respect should be subject to General Assembly approval.

At the same time, the non-permanent category should be expanded so as to take into account the legitimate interests of all regional groups. The Group of Eastern European States should be assigned one additional non-permanent seat in the Council. Such a solution would reflect both the large increase in the number of Members from our regional group in recent years and the comprehensive nature of the reform, including in its scope all the regional groupings.

A solution will also be needed with regard to the decision-making process, specifically, the question of the veto. We recognize the sensitivity of the issue and the difficulties lying ahead in the search for a broadly acceptable solution. A balance will have to be struck between the need to maintain equality of rights in the permanent member category and the need to enhance the efficiency of the Security Council as one of the main objectives of its reform.

A comprehensive reform of the Security Council should also address the question of the periodic review of the enlarged Council. Introducing a mechanism allowing for the evaluation of decisions taken during the current reform process would be reassuring for Member States taking part in the process and thus conducive to an early agreement.

We welcome the progress achieved thus far in the reform of the working methods of the Security Council. The work done in this respect in the Open-ended Working Group during recent years has already yielded practical and tangible results, and we are confident that the current session will bring even further progress. The progress achieved in this cluster of issues, however, makes us all the more aware of the need to make every effort to achieve similar progress in all aspects of reform, as mandated by resolution 48/26 of 1993. I can assure President Han, that my country will spare no effort to assist him in his efforts to achieve this goal.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): The debate on reform of the Security Council has become an annual ritual, culminating last year in the Millennium Summit debate, in which many world leaders made references in their statements to the question of Security Council reform. In the Millennium Declaration, the heads of State and Government resolved "To intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects" (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*). In his contribution to the Millennium Summit debate, President Olusegun Obasanjo stressed the need to reform the United Nations, in particular to expand and democratize the Security Council, which in his view is "a task which can no longer be postponed" (*A/55/PV.7, p. 14*) if the United Nations is to withstand future challenges.

Our world has changed dramatically in the last 55 years. It is likely to change more and more in the years ahead. It is therefore naive to believe that the Council that was created in 1945, reflecting the geopolitical and geostrategic interests or considerations of the victorious Allied Powers of the Second World War, is still adequate in its composition and practice to cater to the needs and interests of our times. Certainly, the present composition of the Security Council is lopsided in favour of a particular group. The Council as presently constituted cannot be said to be a microcosm of the 189 Members of our Organization.

My delegation believes that it has never been the purpose of the United Nations to prescribe democracy and change for its Members while making little or no progress in the democratization of its own organs, such as the Security Council. We believe that the United Nations will not be strengthened if reform concentrates only on cost-effectiveness, efficiency and better coordination. Indeed, no reform of the United Nations

will be complete without addressing issues related to the expansion and working methods of the Security Council. The thrust of reform, therefore, should include expansion of the Council's membership, improvement in its working methods and reform of its decision-making process.

Regrettably, after more than eight years of deliberations, the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Council and other related matters has not made any appreciable progress. The decision-making process in the Open-ended Working Group is governed by "general agreement" pursuant to the ninth preambular paragraph of resolution 48/26 of 3 December 1993. In the absence of a precise definition or meaning, the term "general agreement" has been interpreted by some delegations to mean "consensus". However, in his speech of 12 September 2000 in the General Assembly, the Secretary-General stated, *inter alia*,

"Consensus is highly desirable, but it need not mean waiting for absolute unanimity on every sub-clause among 189 Member States. A minority, often a very small minority, should not withhold its consent unreasonably. ... We can no longer afford to always operate at the level of the lowest, and slowest, common denominator." (*A/55/PV.10, p. 2*)

My delegation subscribes to that statement of the Secretary-General. The time has come for the Working Group to revisit its decision-making process in the light of this statement. A handful of States cannot hold the Working Group to ransom in the name of general agreement or consensus. We believe that a more plausible and practical approach is for the General Assembly, in the light of the Secretary-General's statement, to apply resolution 53/30 of 23 November 1998 to the decision-making process of the Open-ended Working Group.

Notwithstanding the apparent lack of progress, especially on cluster I issues, the Open-ended Working Group has registered provisional agreement on some cluster II issues. Areas where provisional agreement has been reached include greater transparency in informal consultations, more involvement of troop-contributing countries, more formal open meetings of the Council, a more substantial report of the Security Council to the General Assembly and more prompt and

detailed briefings on the Council's activities by the President in office.

We note that the Security Council is already implementing some of the suggestions in these areas. We welcome the increased interaction between the Open-ended Working Group and the Council. That trend should continue.

On the very important question of the enlargement of the Council, Nigeria wishes to recall its previous position. We believe that the Security Council should be much more reflective of contemporary global realities. It should therefore be made more representative of the membership of the United Nations today. The enlargement of the Council should take place in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and it should take into account the principle of equitable geographical representation. Other criteria, such as whether States are emerging regional players or centres of economic power, should also be taken into consideration.

In this regard, Nigeria unequivocally supports the position of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which calls for the allocation of two permanent seats for Africa in an enlarged Security Council. Africa, with its 53 Member States, collectively constitutes almost one third of the entire membership of the United Nations. We believe, therefore, that the OAU's decision to seek two permanent seats for Africa in a reformed and expanded Council cannot be ignored.

My delegation believes that the essence of reform is to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council. In this regard, expansion of the Council to 26 members will not detract from its effectiveness. The fate of the new permanent members should be inextricably linked so as to forestall the so-called quick fix: no single State should become a permanent member until the remaining new permanent members are elected in the General Assembly.

With regard to the related question of the veto as a voting instrument in the Security Council, Nigeria supports the curtailment of its use by the permanent members of the Council. We would even support its abolition if that is the consensus of the international community. However, if the veto is to be retained in its present form, it is my delegation's view that it should be extended to new permanent members of the Council. To deny the veto to new permanent members in an enlarged Security Council would not only be

discriminatory but would also create two different classes of permanent membership.

However, in order to forestall any abuses of the exercise of the veto — if the veto is to be retained — it may be necessary for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution reminding the permanent members of the fact that they are acting on behalf of the United Nations as a whole, and that they should therefore exercise the veto only when they consider the question to be of vital importance, taking into consideration the interests of the United Nations; and that they should also state in each case, in writing, on what grounds they consider the conditions for a veto to be present. Nigeria believes that the veto should not be used for the attainment of selfish or parochial interests.

There is a general agreement on the need for a coherent and coordinated approach to render the Security Council more efficient and increasingly capable of addressing universal challenges. Universal challenges come in different forms and therefore need different responses. The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Not only must its decisions and actions command legitimacy, but it must also be seen by other players within the international system to be transparent, democratic and timely. In this regard, a reformed Council is inevitable. We urge all Member States to demonstrate the political will needed to achieve, in a timely fashion, the desired reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Speaking on the topic of the reform of the Security Council has become a perennial event. But instead of simply restating our position on the proceedings of the Open-ended Working Group, we have, over the years, found it more useful to focus on the changes that the Security Council can and should implement until there is agreement on its comprehensive reform.

I will therefore focus my comments on aspects of the Security Council's working methods — what we call cluster II issues in Security Council reform parlance — a cluster which we feel need to be improved.

First, the Security Council still conducts far too much of its regular business behind closed doors. Some of its meetings involve briefings from the Secretariat on important developments in relation to whatever the subject matter is — often peacekeeping operations.

Following these briefings, Security Council members offer their views on these developments. None of this information needs to be withheld from Member States of this Organization. In our view, there are few occasions when the Council needs to meet in camera.

So what are the factors that are continuing to prevent the Council from achieving the proper balance of open and closed meetings? First, open meetings have typically been rather dull and long-winded affairs — a fact that has lessened the Council's interest in holding them. This need not be so. Interventions do not need to state and restate well-known national positions. Instead, they should provide an opportunity to pose questions to Council members and Secretariat officials and to respond interactively. In this way open meetings would be shorter and certainly more interesting.

The other obstacle is a problem of habit. We could even say that informal consultations are the default position of the Council — unless a Council member suggests otherwise, often over the objections of the permanent members, which perhaps feel less compunction to respond to the demands of the general membership, their tenure being secure. Once again, this need not be the case. The default position should be a meeting open to Member States of this Organization. Only if circumstances require should the Council meet behind closed doors.

Secondly, the Council needs to end the fiction that informal consultations are not meetings of the Security Council. It serves no one, least of all the Council, to pretend that these meetings do not exist. Informal consultations are closed meetings of the Council and should be treated as such. This would ensure that official records could be kept of the decisions taken.

It would also ensure that the rights of participation pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter would be respected. Most importantly, it would mean that meetings of the Security Council would be treated with all the seriousness deserving of the organ with the primary responsibility for international peace and security.

Thirdly, Security Council working methods could be improved by strengthening the relationship between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. Indeed, we have a consultation process with troop contributors and, with the commitments undertaken

and renewed in Security Council resolution 1353 (2001), the information and consultation process with the troop contributors as a group seems better served. Yet, there is a need to go beyond consultations to genuine cooperation with the main contributors of troop deployed in complex missions. If properly executed, such cooperation would narrow the accountability gap between those that make the decisions and those that assume the risks. It would also ensure that the Council had the most reliable information at its disposal from the countries with forces deployed in the field. And it would give the Council access to the perspectives and ideas of the major troop-contributing countries. We hope and expect the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations to take to heart the proposal that a number of troop-contributing countries have submitted in this regard.

Lastly, as we stated a few weeks ago during our statement on the report of the Security Council, however compelling the rationale for a veto, it remains true that much of the general membership's dissatisfaction with the Council arises from the use or the threat of the use of the veto. An overwhelming number of delegations continue to call for limitations on the veto power. The permanent members who expect the general membership to respect Council decisions need to respond to this demand. As proposed by one permanent member of the Council two years ago, a voluntary code of conduct would be a good starting point. The code could clarify under what circumstances veto-empowered members should consider it legitimate to exercise the veto — and could also, as some colleagues have suggested, require them to explain their reasons for using it. Such a code would assist our efforts to reform the Security Council by initiating movement on a topic that has long held up our progress.

We will refrain from commenting on cluster I issues today, except to say that we call on those delegations that continue to insist that we enlarge the Council in a way that grants them permanent seats to set aside their national aspirations for the sake of moving forward on the reform of the Security Council. An agreement on enlarging the Council in the non-permanent category alone could help us get out of this quagmire and assure a more representative — and elected — Council. But as long as a handful of countries insist on more individual permanent seats and

additional new privileges, such agreement will be difficult to reach.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Holkeri, the President of the fifty-fifth session of General Assembly, for the manner in which he conducted the work 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.

I also wish to extend our thanks to the two Vice-Chairmen, the representative of Sri Lanka and the representative of Iceland. Their report reflects their tireless efforts to achieve tangible progress on the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

When the General Assembly decided to establish the Working Group on Security Council reform in 1993, we hoped that the Working Group would conclude its work in a manner meeting the goals set forth in General Assembly resolution 48/26, so that the new composition of the Council would be equitable in its representation of all geographical areas, democratic in its decision-making, and more transparent in its working methods. If we pause a moment to evaluate the results of the negotiations of the past nine years, we find that all Member States of the United Nations were able during that period to express their views and to submit their proposals on Council reform.

Two years ago, the Assembly adopted resolution 53/30 by consensus. It enabled us to settle the question of the majority required for adopting any resolution on Council reform. It is clear from the negotiations that there is unanimity on the need to reform the Council so as to reflect the changes witnessed by the United Nations since 1945, particularly the great increase in the number of its members, on whose behalf the Council works. Despite the fact that there are numerous matters that have not been settled yet, the report of the Working Group, contained in document A/55/47, indicates that there is broad consensus on many proposals to improve the Council's working methods. The Council has begun work on some of the proposals, such as consulting with troop-contributing countries on peacekeeping operations and increasing the number of open formal meetings. These steps are correct. However, they do not answer all the demands. It is important that the Council take into consideration the proposals of all Member States and abide by the

measures aimed at enhancing its links with members of the United Nations and at expanding its cooperation with regional organizations, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter. It should also take necessary measures to make such proposals binding and to include them in the rules of procedure of the Council so that such practices would not be tied to the States that succeed to its presidency.

In the framework of the reform process, it is important that the Council cooperate better with the other main organs of the United Nations system. It is not acceptable that its relationship with the General Assembly be confined to presenting its annual report. The Council should submit to the General Assembly special reports as provided for in articles 15 and 24 of the Charter, so that both bodies can cooperate closely in matters relating to international peace and security.

It is important that the Council foster relations with the International Court of Justice by seeking its advisory opinions on legal matters. The Council should abide by its rules of procedure in its meetings, so that official open meetings become the foundation of its deliberations. That way, all Member States could express their positions on matters deliberated on in the Council before it adopts resolutions on them. What is currently transpiring in the so-called informal consultations, which are the main forum for decision-taking, is not characterized by clarity or transparency. It does not reflect in most cases the opinions and positions of Member States. It gives the impression that one member or a few permanent members are the real decision-makers. This puts the legitimacy of Council's resolutions in question. The Council then would not be characterized as working on behalf of the international community.

Increasing the membership of the Security Council is one of the main elements of Council reform. Annex XIII of the Working Group's report contains many important and constructive proposals submitted by States and groups, including the Non-Aligned Movement. Equal sovereignty among States should constitute the basis of any effort to expand the membership of the Council. We would like to state here that our delegation has continuously maintained that an increase in the membership of the Council should be confined to the non-permanent category. We are convinced that there is no need to create new permanent members, which would perpetuate the state of discrimination in the United Nations. If there is an

actual need for new permanent members, their selection should not be a way of granting privileges to those that bear the greatest responsibility for the United Nations budget or that can provide troops and equipment to peacekeeping operations. Abiding by such criteria would strengthen the grip of the rich and powerful on the Security Council.

It is essential to apply the principle of fair geographical distribution in the expansion of the Council while taking into consideration the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, some of which are not represented at all. In this regard, we wish to point out that any increase in the membership of the Council should result in increasing Africa's representation. We would like to point to the position formulated by African leaders in 1997, whereby they asked for an increase of 11 in the Council's membership, of which two permanent, rotating seats should be allocated to Africa in accordance with criteria agreed to by Africans themselves.

The discussions that have so far taken place have indicated that a main obstacle is the desire not to relinquish the privileges that have been gained by some, especially the privilege of the veto. Many countries object to this, including mine. We are convinced that the veto runs counter to the equal sovereignty of States as guaranteed by the Charter and undermines the values of justice and democracy. Many arguments have been made for this, including the one that holds that bearing the greatest share of responsibility for the budget should be the main criterion for permanent memberships and for veto power. If we accept that, then how are we to force such a party to pay its contributions? We have also been told that the veto was given to States that have a greater responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. How can we guarantee that their conduct does not run counter to the interests of other States?

The fact is that the States that emerged victorious from the Second World War gave themselves special privileges. The United Nations today is different from what it was over five decades ago. Among the main differences is the fact that its membership stands now at 189. Two thirds of the current Members were not Members then, and had no say about the privileges conferred upon five States.

My delegation has for over 30 years maintained that the veto should be eliminated. At a minimum, it

should be used sparingly. It cannot be effective unless specific conditions are placed on its use, such requiring at least two negative votes among the permanent members in order to prevent the adoption of a draft resolution supported by the required majority, or subjecting the veto to the General Assembly's approval by at least two-thirds majority. We believe that without taking these measures, or eliminating the veto, the process of reforming the Security Council will continue to allow some States to retain their privileges, to have hegemony over the rest of the world and to control international resolutions.

We are now in the process of a new round of negotiations to reform the Security Council. We hope that we will not have to wait a long time before the Working Group reaches a conclusion on reform proposals that has the approval of all members. Our position should not be interpreted as a desire to set a timetable for the conclusion of this important process. In this connection, we support the position adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that the efforts at Security Council reform should not be subject to a timetable and that it is important to reach a comprehensive agreement on all these matters so that the Council may be more representative in its membership, transparent in its work, and democratic in its decision-making, and so that it may be accountable to the entire membership of the Organization represented in the Assembly.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): During the Millennium Summit, heads of State and Government reaffirmed the unique and indispensable role of the United Nations in promoting international peace and shared prosperity. To meet the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the challenges of the new millennium, the functions of the United Nations should be strengthened in a systematic manner. For that purpose, the Organization will have to be reformed in a way that would allow it to function more effectively and authoritatively. My delegation firmly believes that achieving this goal through concerted efforts should become our first priority, particularly at this extraordinary time when cooperation among Member States is sorely needed.

The most crucial component of this overall United Nations reform process should be the reform of the Security Council, given its critical role and weighted authority in the maintenance of international peace and security. The reform of the Security Council

must be comprehensive, a guiding principle expressed by the heads of State and Government in last year's Millennium Declaration.

The reforms should reflect our current reality and encompass all aspects regarding the structure of the Council, while honouring the purposes and principles of the Charter, as well as emerging principles that can guide the actions of Member States in the future. We should also bear in mind that the reform of the Council has implications not only for peace and security, but also for a number of other issues, such as improving the financial and budgetary structure and upgrading the United Nations role in economic and social development.

As we have witnessed, a growing number of States are playing an increasingly active role in the work of the United Nations, and have become indispensable to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. However, only a small number of Member States are given the opportunity to fully participate in the work of the Security Council. Moreover, a large majority of Member States are marginalized from the Council's decision-making process. This discrepancy lies at the heart of the Security Council reform effort. While some progress has been made in improving the working methods of the Council, the most critical issues remain unresolved. My delegation firmly believes that, if the United Nations is to be a relevant international actor in the twenty-first century, a genuine effort must be made to enhance the representativeness, transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council.

Reform of the Council, both in its shape and decision-making process, should be guided by democratic principles and reflect our current reality. The two major sticking points of the Security Council reform process — the enlargement of the Council and the veto power — are inextricably linked, and should therefore be considered in one context. A quick and partial solution for expansion, while setting aside the question of decision-making procedures, is likely to undermine our efforts to achieve far-reaching comprehensive reform.

As a strong advocate of United Nations reform in general, and Security Council reform in particular, the Republic of Korea has been an active participant in the Open-ended Working Group since the inception of its work eight years ago. I am well aware of the sense of

frustration over the slow pace of the discussions and the lack of tangible progress in the group. However, we must bear in mind that this stalemate is not due to the ineffectiveness of our discussion process; rather, it is a reflection of the tremendous implications and politically sensitive nature of this issue. My delegation believes that the Working Group, the sole body mandated by the General Assembly to actively discuss Security Council reform, still remains the best forum for advancing reforms.

The landscape of the world has changed dramatically since the creation of the United Nations 55 years ago, and these changes should be reflected in the structure and decision-making process of the Security Council. And, as I noted earlier, many countries contribute to the work of the United Nations without having their views adequately reflected in the Council's decision-making process. Accordingly, we should make a greater effort to find ways to give as many countries as possible the opportunity to serve the Council on a more frequent basis.

The Republic of Korea supports the view that an increase only in non-permanent seats is a viable option for the time being, if we are unable to reach an agreement on expansion. This enlargement could be achieved by allowing more seats to be elected for regular terms, thereby making the Council more democratic and accountable.

While there may have been little progress in the overall Security Council reform process, there have been marked improvements in the working methods of the Council. Among the many positive developments over the course of the past five years, my delegation is pleased to note the more frequent holding of public meetings and improved briefings for non-members of the Council. And, as a troop-contributing country and strong advocate of Security Council reform, the Republic of Korea particularly welcomes the enhanced cooperation between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council. As we experienced over the course of the discussions in the Working Group in the fifty-fifth session, many constructive proposals to improve the working methods of the Security Council have been raised by Member States. My delegation firmly believes that we must all exert extra effort to reach conclusions on whatever progress is already in our reach.

At this particular time of challenge, unity among Member States is needed more than ever before.

My delegation firmly believes that reform of the Security Council should be carried out in such a way as to unite, rather than divide, Member States. I call upon all Member States to make an effort to overcome major differences, while remaining faithful to the purposes and principles of these reform efforts, which we have already agreed upon.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): A few days ago in this very Hall in the course of discussions on the report of the Security Council, many delegations expressed their dissatisfaction with the limited representative nature of the Council, which, together with the lack of transparency in its proceedings, makes this body of restricted membership act separately from the General Assembly, a truly representative body of the international community.

These criticisms basically reveal that the main organs of the Organization are not acting in accordance with the United Nations Charter, which in Article 24 stipulates, firstly, that all members of the Organization — this Assembly — confer on the Security Council the non-exclusive primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Secondly, it stipulates that the Council, in fulfilling its duties, acts on behalf of all members. In other words, the Council is the body that carries out instructions and the General Assembly is the body that issues those instructions.

These criticisms are not new. They have been repeated for years in this Assembly and other forums. Similarly, the remedies for these shortcomings have been known for a long time. If the Security Council is not sufficiently representative, then the number of its members should be increased. If the Council does not act with sufficient transparency, then its working methods should be modified.

This logical response has never been refuted. Since the beginning of consultations on the reform of the Council, more than eight years ago, no one could deny the need to increase the membership of this body. Since the first day of consultations, there was agreement at all times that regardless of the reform to be adopted, it should include an increase in the non-permanent members. There has not been nor is there disagreement on this.

It is true that there has not been agreement on the number of seats that should be added. But the range that is being considered make it possible to predict that there would not be major difficulty in reaching agreement on this point; so this question does not constitute a genuine difficulty.

Why then, if we agree that an urgent need exists to increase the membership of the Council in order to improve its representativity, and if we all agree that, at the very least, the number of non-permanent members should be increased, why, I repeat, have we do not that? We have not done so because the question of an increase of the non-permanent membership, on which there is no disagreement, has become hostage to the acceptance of other reforms on which there is no agreement nor, in my view, any prospect of agreement, because of their highly controversial nature.

We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation, in which a reform desired by all has been blocked by the desire to carry out a controversial reform that does not have general support, because it affects basic principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law, such as the principle of the sovereign equality of all the Members of the Organization.

This has been happening for more than eight years with the outcome that we continue to have a Council whose representative nature and working methods are unsatisfactory. Frankly, as I do not see any signs of change in the position of the groups that participate in the consultations, I fear that this situation could continue for at least another eight years.

However, the conduct of the consultations at their most recent stages could not have been in better hands. The President's predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, and Ambassadors Thorsteinn Ingólfsson of Iceland and John de Saram of Sri Lanka, have been making patient and ingenious efforts to lead the Open-ended Working Group to tangible results. We have every confidence in the continuation of these efforts under the chairmanship of President Han.

Nonetheless, we think that no matter how patient or ingenious future efforts may be, we will not make progress so long as the negotiations continue on the same bases and proposals as were put forward eight years ago. We therefore believe that if we are to renew the Working Group's mandate for the ninth time we must prepare to give the consultations a different directions.

The Working Group now has three options. One is to delink the question of increasing the non-permanent membership and the already accepted reforms of the working methods from the more controversial issues, thus achieving a simple reform, without prejudice to continuing discussion of other reforms. Another option is for consultations to continue on the basis of new proposals with a better chance of general acceptance than those that have been under discussion so far. The third possibility — resuming consultations on the old proposals — does not seem very promising to my delegation. Choosing this option would be very frustrating — unjustifiably so — since it would mean preventing wider participation of Members of the Organization in the Security Council. I shall explain why.

In the course of this debate, some delegations have maintained that proceeding to an increase only in the non-permanent membership would be detrimental to the Organization and to ourselves. But nobody has explained the nature of this damage, and I cannot imagine what it might be. On the contrary, as one speaker suggested this morning, precisely by not delinking these two aspects of the problem we have harmed the Organization and ourselves. If an increase in the non-permanent membership had been accepted in the year when the consultations began — in 1993 — and if the increase had been, say, 10 non-permanent members, a figure which probably would have commanded general support, then in the eight years since, 40 countries could have been members of the Security Council, in addition to the 40 which have occupied the 10 existing non-permanent seats. With the lack of any real prospect of agreement on the other reforms, the years keep passing, and with them our countries keep being deprived of the opportunity to take part in the work of the Security Council.

In any event, whatever option the Open-ended Working Group chooses, Uruguay will continue to participate in efforts to reach agreement on all aspects of Council reform, and will do so in a flexible spirit, but with one limitation: we cannot go along with any reform that is contrary to the fundamental principles of this Organization through an extension to other States of existing privileges and inequalities.

Ms. Novotná (Slovakia): I begin by expressing my gratitude to the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the leadership he demonstrated on Security Council reform. I also thank

Ambassadors de Saram of Sri Lanka and Ingólfsson of Iceland for their good work.

The Slovak Republic, like the overwhelming majority of Member States, supports a Security Council reform that would enhance its representative character, improve its working methods and the transparency of its work, and preserve the Council's capability to act promptly. All of us undoubtedly know that the size of the Council has remained unchanged for 37 years, whereas the number of United Nations Member States has risen during this period from 113 to 189.

Security Council reform is urgently needed in order to strengthen confidence in the United Nations in general, and in particular to enhance the perceived legitimacy of the Council and its actions. A truly effective Security Council requires comprehensive reform. This is essential not least in order to strengthen the Council's ability to perform its role in preventive diplomacy. In this regard, I would like to express my country's views on both the role of the Council in the international system and its internal functioning.

Effectiveness means that the decisions of the Security Council are respected and carried out. Reform should ensure that a broad range of international concerns is brought to the attention of the Security Council. It should ensure that important global and regional perspectives are included in the Council's decision-making process and that States take the responsibility for its results. It should also ensure that the Security Council acts, and is seen as acting, on behalf of all Members of the United Nations. Comprehensive Security Council reform, therefore, has to deal with the content of Council decisions, with its working methods and with its size and composition.

It should be our goal that a global decision on Security Council enlargement — and it must be a global decision — takes regional views into account as much as possible. The members of the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent, share a global responsibility. At the same time, all of them bring valuable regional knowledge and experience to the Council. Balance and interaction between these global and regional factors is a key element in the work of the Security Council. It should also be a major factor in the process of enlargement.

With regard to the issue of the enlargement of the Security Council, Slovakia considers increasing the number of members in both categories to be the best

way to make the Security Council correspond to the realities of the international community. The failure to reach an agreement on enlargement in both categories should not, however, necessarily preclude the endeavours to reach agreement on enlargement in at least one category. The total number of the Council's members should not exceed 25. The Slovak Republic is convinced that a 25-member Council will be sufficiently representative and, at the same time, able to preserve its operational flexibility. We share what seems to be a clear majority view — namely, that it is important to reflect major changes in the international system in this way. The Group of Eastern European States, whose membership has more than doubled over the last 10 years, should not be omitted in the enlargement process of the Security Council.

Let me address some of the crucial issues in mutual dependence where some improvement in the work of the Security Council is needed. The credibility of the Security Council and the transparency of its work are indeed related. Discussions and proposals from the Working Group have very clearly influenced the tendency in the last few years towards a more open Security Council. Progress has been made, but more still needs to be done. We realize fully the need for Council members to deliberate behind closed doors when specific situations so require, but we also expect substantial briefings to follow such meetings. Gradual improvements in this regard have been duly noted.

The Security Council should continue to improve its practice with respect to regularly informing the non-members. The practice of open debates, the inclusion of affected non-members in its discussions and troop-contributors' meetings should be continued. Openness, transparency and consultation are to a large extent a matter of improving the practices and culture of the Council. This could also be reflected in the rules of procedure, provided that enough flexibility is left for further development.

The new international situation has created fresh opportunities for unity in the Security Council and for a cooperative approach to its decision-making. In this regard, Slovakia considers that the problem of the threat of the veto remains the issue of central importance. The Slovak Republic can accept the right of veto being extended to new permanent members of the Security Council, but at the same time we would want to see concerted action to reduce the role of the veto. The permanent members should be strongly

encouraged to minimize their use of it. They should now be able to do what the General Assembly requested 55 years ago: to agree among themselves on limiting the number of situations in which the veto may be used, and also to agree which issues should be defined as procedural. And, as a part of the future amendments of the Charter, the right to exercise the veto could perhaps be excluded for a number of specific situations. The right of veto should be restricted to decisions on matters taken under Chapter VII of the Charter. As regards the decision-making process, the Slovak Republic considers it possible in a 25-member Council for decisions to be taken by a majority of 15 votes.

The Council has already moved considerably towards greater flexibility, and the use of the veto has been reduced. As the Security Council, hopefully, continues on this course of gradually limiting the use of the veto, it might also become less difficult to find a consensus and make progress in the negotiations on Security Council reform.

For those of us — and I believe that we are many — who put our trust in the United Nations as the ultimate guarantor of upholding peace and security, this debate on essential changes leading to the reform of the Security Council is very important. This is also the only way in which the credibility of the Security Council can be improved. Our delegation is prepared to work in a flexible manner in the Working Group together with other members of the United Nations on this challenging task.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): After many years of work, we are at the beginning of yet another — and we hope more fruitful — period of discussion on the comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.

Let me first recognize the contributions of the previous President of the General Assembly, Mr. Holkeri, as well as his Working Group Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors de Saram and Ingólfsson. Turkey now looks forward to working with the President and his Vice-Chairmen during the coming months.

Since the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group, Turkey, like many others, has been a strong advocate of a comprehensive reform, which should give the international community a more effective, cooperative, representative and transparent

Security Council. There is no doubt that this reform is necessary, and would, in the end, reflect the adaptation of this world body to the current realities of the international arena, which has changed so drastically during the last decade.

I reiterate Turkey's firm commitment to a comprehensive reform, encompassing all facets of the question. The Open-ended Working Group is, and should remain, the only appropriate forum to examine in substance all the issues at hand. We believe that the progress achieved so far is modest, and therefore call upon all members to commit themselves to the reform process with more dedication and the necessary political will. This would also be in conformity with the call of our leaders at the Millennium Summit to intensify reform efforts.

We acknowledge that the right of veto played an important role in the past in sustaining global peace. Nevertheless, its scope and use today are in dire need of reassessment. Moreover, during last year's deliberations it became evident once again that the veto is a central element in our entire discussion and inextricably linked to other issues of the reform process. However, insofar as those countries enjoying this prerogative are not prepared to review in earnest its scope, we must work towards increasing the number of non-permanent seats, and thus not allow the issue of the veto to preclude us from moving in the direction of reform.

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to address the other issues waiting for reform as well. Progress on improving the working methods of the Council is still slow. During last year's work we observed a certain willingness on the part of some members of the Council to improve the existing working methods, with a view to making its work more transparent. In this context, I would like to mention particularly the consultations with countries contributing troops to peacekeeping operations, and improved means of dialogue with the Council's secretariat.

We appreciate the interaction between the Council and the Working Group, and we hope that it will intensify in the coming months. Yet, at the same time, we believe that the modest steps taken by some Council members cannot be a substitute for a more comprehensive reform of the Council and its more effective functioning.

With these thoughts in mind, Turkey looks forward to the next session of the Working Group and is convinced that under the President's guidance it will be able to make more progress.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first, to reiterate the thanks of France to the President's predecessor, President Harri Holkeri, and to the other members of the Bureau, who spared no effort to make more constructive and operational the debates in 2001 of the Working Group on Security Council reform. Their efforts contributed to deliberations on matters whose sensitivity and complexity are appreciated by all.

As the President of the Republic indicated on 7 September 2000 at the Security Council meeting held at the level of heads of State and Government, France supports an enlargement of the Council in both categories of membership — permanent and non-permanent.

That expansion must include developed countries and allow for better representation of developing countries. France's consistent position is guided by the need to bear in mind the emergence of new powers and to enable the Security Council to continue to play its role in full. It is therefore based on the idea of better representativeness of the Security Council, while preserving the indispensable efficiency of its work.

France is therefore prepared to consider an increase of five permanent seats for two industrialized countries and three developing States representing major regions of the world: Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. With respect to the enlargement of the Council, France believes that Germany, Japan and India could occupy permanent seats. France could also accept an increase of four non-permanent seats to be allocated respectively to the African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and Central and Eastern European Groups.

We are attached to the right of veto, as recognized by the Charter. Its use cannot be regulated or constrained by pre-defined criteria. At the same time, France believes that the Security Council must be able fully to exercise the primary responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter, in particular in situations of serious violations of international humanitarian law that threaten international peace and security. For the permanent members, that would entail a responsible use of their right of veto.

France also attaches great importance to improving the working methods of the Security Council. Clear progress has been made in this area on two fronts: better cooperation and greater transparency. The Council, engaged in numerous and increasingly complex peacekeeping operations, has been able to develop a dual partnership, first with troop-contributing countries. In September, during its presidency of the Security Council, France was pleased to preside over the first implementation of resolution 1353 (2001). Henceforth, the representatives of troop-contributing countries can have genuine dialogue, whenever desirable, with the representatives of the members of the Council. A partnership has also evolved with the representatives of financial and development organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions in order to clearly define the actions of the Council and the complementary work undertaken by these agencies in the field.

We must still give thought to a clear definition of the responsibilities of the Security Council and those of the General Assembly in the implementation of operations that incorporate peacekeeping and nation-building or national reconstruction activities. I spoke on this important question at length this morning with regard to East Timor, but of course it applies to all other missions of that nature.

The Council has also striven to work with greater transparency. More public meetings are now being held and the daily summaries of consultations are being made available more quickly. Thus, during its presidency last month, France daily summarized all the Council's work on its Web site. Its monthly report was issued on the last day of September. Greater transparency, however, may also mean involving the representatives of countries directly concerned by a conflict more directly in the consultations on the issue. This idea has been proposed and France believes that its immediate implementation could only be of great benefit.

The reform of the composition and working methods of the Security Council is an important objective for France. We have no doubt that, under Mr. Han's presidency, no effort will be spared to register progress in the discussions of the Working Group.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing high

appreciation for the outstanding leadership and patience of the former Chairman and his two Vice-Chairmen 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 for their outstanding work over the past year. We also trust that, under Mr. Han's skilful and able leadership, the Working Group will explore all possible avenues and exhaust every possibility to fulfil its mandate.

As members of the General Assembly are aware, despite the passage of eight years, the Working Group has yet to agree upon such substantive matters as the size and composition of the Security Council, and especially on an increase in the permanent membership and the power of the veto. In other words, the fundamental question of how to advance from the Security Council that we have now to an organ that is more representative and democratic, but no less efficient, has yet to be answered. As the debates in the course of the last and current sessions of the Working Group testify, uphill efforts are still ahead.

At the same time, we need also to recall that some considerable progress in the issues relating to the Council's working methods, achieved in the course of some previous sessions of the Working Group, could still serve as a source of encouragement. Likewise, there is no doubt that the deliberations in the Group over the past few years have to some extent positively affected the day-to-day work of the Council, leading it in the direction of increased accessibility and transparency. However, it is unfortunate that the momentum built up in this field could not be maintained in the last session.

On the other hand, we believe that the impasse or lack of progress in the expansion of the permanent membership of the Council, which continued during the last session, should be viewed as a direct product of the enormous importance of the issue and the diversity of views and interests. It proves that the same mechanism — the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council — with the same format and rules of procedure, is not yet exhausted and should be given another chance.

A considerable number of delegations, including mine, have been expressing frustration over the slow progress — if not an impasse — in the work of the Working Group. But we do not believe that we should

contemplate working out a way out of the current situation by, for instance, relinquishing the basic principles that the great majority of the States Members of the United Nations have relentlessly endeavoured to uphold over the years. In other words, we believe that agreement on the reform of the Council should reflect the legitimate objectives of the general membership of the United Nations.

Here, it is worth reaffirming the fallback position maintained by the Non-Aligned Movement, namely, that if agreement is not reached on the expansion of the permanent membership, the expansion should be limited, for the time being, to non-permanent seats.

Because of the importance of Council reform, we are of the view that, while respecting the principle of the equality of all Member States, every effort should be made to reach the broadest possible agreement among Member States. In other words, the interests of all States and regions should be seriously considered in this unprecedented and historic exercise, which is at the same time crucially important for the future of the United Nations and international relations. The process of reforming the Council, therefore, should not be subject to any predetermined or superficial timetable. Any attempt to impose a premature, hasty decision would run the risk of doing harm to this very delicate process, which is so important to all the States Members of our Organization.

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council — with the current format and rules of procedure — continues to be the appropriate forum in which to pursue efforts aimed at reforming the work of the Council. It should therefore be given an opportunity to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

As to the objectives of the reform of the Council, we continue to believe that the goal of the process is, and must remain, to make the Council more representative, more democratic, more transparent and more accountable, thereby helping to strengthen its efficiency and increase its authority and that of the United Nations as a whole. It must therefore take into account the dramatic changes which have taken place since the creation of the United Nations 55 years ago, such as the end of the colonial era, which has resulted in the growing number of developing countries, and the end of the cold war. We believe that the attainment of these objectives will require, among other reforms, the

expansion of the membership of the Council to at least 26, so that the developing world can be better represented.

The curtailment of the veto figures prominently among the minimum objectives sought by the general membership of the United Nations over the years. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there is a near consensus on this issue. At their most recent summit meeting, 114 members of the Non-Aligned Movement agreed on the need for the curtailment of the veto, with a view to its eventual elimination. Moreover, in last year's general debate in the General Assembly on the reform of the Security Council, about 95 out of 110 speakers who took part in the debate pronounced themselves, in one way or another, in favour of the curtailment or limitation of the veto.

We believe that a position so widely expressed and maintained cannot and should not be overlooked in the course of our exercise. Furthermore, we believe that disregard of the widespread call for the curtailment of the veto is not in the interests of the Security Council and will not contribute to making it more democratic and transparent or to enhancing the legitimacy of its decisions.

The issue of the veto is a key element in the reform of the Council. It links both clusters under consideration, and relates closely to the expansion of the Council. We doubt that a vague commitment to apply self-restraint in the exercise of the power of veto or to resort to it in a responsible manner could supplant its curtailment in a legally-binding way. Nor would it, therefore, be an acceptable response to the aspirations of the vast majority of United Nations Member States.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): As I am speaking from this rostrum for the first time, I would like to congratulate Mr. Han on his election as President of the General Assembly. I would like to add my voice to all the delegates who have spoken before me on this very important agenda item on Security Council reform, in expressing our deep appreciation for the perseverance and hard work of the outgoing Bureau 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. I am confident that under the new leadership, the Open-ended Working Group will continue to make progress in implementing its daunting task.

This session of the General Assembly will usher in the ninth year of deliberations on the reform of the Security Council by the Open-ended Working Group. The Thai delegation fully sympathizes with the Working Group in view of the difficulties and challenges that it faces. Because of the multifaceted nature of the issue of Security Council reform, and the inter-linkages between those facets, it would be wise to deal with Security Council reform comprehensively, using a package approach. That is why we have to attach equal importance to achieving progress — incremental as it may be — on both cluster I and cluster II issues.

Within cluster I, we are faced with three key issues, namely, the expansion of the Council; the decision-making process of the Council; and the periodic review of the enlarged Council. According to the overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations, the core issue is, without doubt, the decision-making process of the Council and, with it, the central question of the veto.

The exclusive character of the veto is anathema to any notion of democracy. In our view, the legitimacy of the veto will be increasingly difficult to justify by the permanent members of the Security Council as we build a more democratic and more representative United Nations. We recognize that this will not happen overnight. That is why we echo the call made by the Non-Aligned Movement for a gradual approach, beginning with curtailment of the veto, and leading to its eventual abolition.

In this connection, indications by some permanent members of a political willingness to constrain the use of the veto are encouraging signs. But these indications should build towards, rather than detract from, the ultimate goal of veto elimination. We hope that the five permanent members will recognize that the entrustment to them of the veto by the international community more than 55 years ago implies the need to exercise moral and political responsibility in its use. We thus call on the five permanent members to take an important first step forward by pledging publicly to use the veto only with regard to actions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Given the increasing membership and diversity of the United Nations body, the need to expand the Security Council is self-evident. In fact, the need to

expand the Council is one of the few issues related to Council reform on which there is near-universal agreement. How, and to what extent, the expansion should proceed have elicited many competing views, as enumerated in the report of the Working Group.

The proposed number of seats on an enlarged Council ranges from 20 to at least 30. Thailand favours the mainstream approach: expansion in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Such expansion should be based on two considerations: equitable geographical representation on the one hand, and the ability and readiness to share and to make financial and political contributions to the United Nations on the other. On the basis of those criteria, we see Japan as a worthy candidate to be a new permanent member of the Council. Regarding the upper limit on the size of the Council, we need to find a balance between ensuring the representative nature of that body and its need to work quickly, effectively and efficiently to resolve both old and new challenges to international peace and security.

In terms of expanding the Council, any solution agreed upon should be subject to periodic review in view of the increasingly dynamic nature of political and economic developments. That is because solutions that may seem equitable and practical today may not be so 10 or even five years from now.

It should come as no surprise that most of the progress in the deliberations on Security Council reform has come about on cluster II issues, which deal with the working methods of the Council and the transparency of its work. We have indeed witnessed a greater willingness by the Security Council to interact more frequently with the general membership of the United Nations. Within the context of the work of the Working Group this year, we welcome the participation at one of the Group's meetings — on 13 June — of representatives of the Security Council. We hope that this practice will be intensified and institutionalized in coming years. We indeed welcome and appreciate the efforts by many Presidents of the Council to ensure a continuous flow of information between the Council and non-members. Moreover, we would like to encourage the Council to accept the involvement of non-members directly concerned prior to or during the deliberation of issues.

The importance of transparency and the need for close interaction between the Council and the general

United Nations membership cannot be better exemplified than by the formulation and implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). While recognizing the prerogative of, and the need for, the Council to act quickly and decisively to confront the threat of international terrorism, we cannot but feel that members of the international community should have been able to make some important contribution to strengthening that new framework for cooperation against international terrorism. The ramifications of resolution 1373 (2001) for Member States are tremendous, and yet they are unclear in some aspects. The Council will need to work very closely with the general United Nations membership to fine tune the evolving framework for cooperation to ensure its effectiveness and universality of its application. In that connection, I commend the efforts of the United Kingdom, as Chairman of the counter-terrorism Committee, as well as the three Vice-Chairmen — Colombia, Madagascar and the Russian Federation — to institute a continuous dialogue between the Council and the rest of the international community on that very important matter.

As additional examples, I should like to highlight other two issues that have a great impact on the international community and on which we had hoped for greater interaction between the general membership and the Security Council during the latter's deliberations.

The first is the issue of reform of the sanctions regimes of the Security Council. That issue is of great interest because it not only affects international trade and investment but also involves the important issue of the humanitarian consequences of sanctions. It also has a direct bearing on our Charter responsibilities as third parties with regard to compliance with sanctions regimes. Surely, ideas and perspectives from the general membership of the United Nations would have been useful to the Security Council's deliberations on the matter. Thailand wishes to see continued efforts by the international community to develop targeted sanctions and endeavours by the Council to improve the international monitoring of sanctions regimes and to assess the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

The second issue is that of peacekeeping. As a troop-contributing country that is currently contributing a sizeable force to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, as well as its Force Commander, Thailand appreciates and would

like to commend the enhanced interaction between the Council and troop-contributing countries, which is effective and continuous.

Finally, there is no substitute for strong political will, by each and every one of us, as the key ingredient for progress on the reform of the Security Council. During the Millennium Summit last year, the international community expressed its political will for reform. What is needed now is our strong political will to take the work forward. It is my hope that by the tenth anniversary of the operation of the Open-ended Working Group, we will be witness to a reformed Security Council that is more representative but whose effectiveness in maintaining international peace and security has not been impaired.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): Once again, Ghana welcomes the opportunity to participate in the General Assembly's consideration of agenda item 49, which deals with a matter of cardinal importance to the long-term development and effectiveness of the United Nations in its aspiration to ensure global peace and security. I wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, and Ambassadors John de Saram of Sri Lanka and Thorsteinn Ingólfsson of Iceland for their leadership and assiduous work in guiding the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform over the past year. The debate and the issues involved are not new and have gone on for the past eight years as the Working Group has continued to grapple with disparate proposals on the underlying principles, nature and scope of reform.

We must acknowledge that the process has been slow and laborious, and sometimes frustrating and disheartening. What is not in doubt is the convergence of views on the need for comprehensive reform of the Security Council to make it more democratic, transparent and in conformity with current global political configuration. Our slow progress is a reflection of a substantial divergence of views on key issues such as the size of the increase, the use of the veto, improvements in the working methods of the Council, and the need for periodic review. That situation is all the more regrettable because the most persistent advocates of democratic governance, accountability and transparency in decision-making at the national level do not seem, on the international

plane, wedded to those same principles, which underline the issue of reforms of the Council.

Ghana has stressed time and again that the needs and the challenging responsibilities that the Organization faces — issues of peace and security, development, poverty alleviation, the dimensions of globalization, humanitarian intervention and its implications for contemporary international law, the concept of good governance and, now, international terrorism — require the active support and cooperation of all Member States, irrespective of size.

The recent terrorist attacks in the United States have been soundly condemned. They have ushered in a new spirit of cooperation, coalition and collectivity that will bode well for multilateralism if we allow the same spirit and enthusiasm to pervade all aspects of the work of the United Nations. The Council itself has demonstrated recognition of that approach through the speed with which it is spearheading the Organization's agenda on countering terrorism at all levels. My delegation hopes that the Council, particularly its permanent members, will demonstrate a similar commitment to the process of discussion at the level of the Working Group on Security Council reform.

Ghana wishes to stress, as it has done in previous statements, the need to enhance the credibility of the Council through substantive reform which is guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation. A reformed Security Council should be transparent in its activities and more responsive to the interests of the general membership in matters deriving from its mandate under the Charter — the more so as all Members of the United Nations are called upon to share the burden of the maintenance of international peace and security through, *inter alia*, assessed contributions to the peacekeeping budget and provision of troops for United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Against this backdrop, Ghana continues to subscribe to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council, complemented by the African position, as expressed in the Harare Declaration of June 1997. Africa's claim to at least two permanent seats should be adequately addressed, since Africa is the largest regional group in the Organization.

The new spirit of cooperation and collectivism that is beginning to characterize multilateral diplomacy reflects a trend that augurs well for our active and positive consideration of this subject. It is only in this way that we can translate into reality the resolve of our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration to, *inter alia*, intensify efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. Any piecemeal and *ad hoc* approach to the reform process would thus be a betrayal of the intentions of our political leaders.

Mr. Kmoníček (Czech Republic): The representative of Belgium yesterday presented the joint position of the Group of Ten on issues related to enlargement and reform of the Security Council, and he also spoke on behalf of my delegation. This allows me to be very short.

The response by the international community to the terrorist attack was immediate and firm, and in that response the Members of the United Nations were more unified than ever before. The prestige of the Council in this historic moment grew, but so did its responsibility and, in a way, the scope of its action. Indeed, our very understanding of security has been modified. The overall message is clear: as international security *vis-à-vis* globalized crime calls for broader coalitions, for collective action by as many States as possible, the need for a truly representative Council becomes more urgent. The Council should be enlarged, and its working methods should be improved.

Together with many other countries, the Czech Republic has been pushing the reform agenda through the years of protracted debates in the Open-ended Working Group or in this plenary. We are of the opinion that there exist enough reform proposals from which to choose. Our own choice is what we believe is in the realistic mainstream of the reform.

We believe that the Security Council should be enlarged in both categories, preferably with five additional permanent seats and four to five additional non-permanent seats, including one for Eastern Europe. We respect the option of rotating permanent seats for specific regions, but no country or region should be forced into such a scheme.

We continue to favour some reduction in the areas where the veto can be applied, possibly through individual commitments by permanent members and

other steps which do not necessarily require Charter amendments.

In the area of Security Council working methods, we generally welcome and support any reasonable motion towards greater openness and transparency in the Council's work.

I am confining myself to these brief comments. There is little need to elaborate the details of the proposals before mobilizing the political will and environment conducive to reform. Let me express my hope that the newly found unity in action against terrorism will help to generate such a momentum, and that this will soon be mirrored in greater unity in our reform efforts. In this, the guidance of the President will be crucial.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation has noted with great attention the report submitted by the Working Group on Security Council reform and would like to present its views on this issue.

Proposals to increase membership of the Security Council and thus ensure equitable representation by all regions constitute an essential part of the deliberations on Council reform. They are also part and parcel of the movement to democratize the United Nations as a whole.

We are of the view that it is important, above all, to have a correct concept of the purpose of Security Council reform in order to further proceed with reform in a proper way. Ensuring equitable representation in the Security Council undoubtedly means an increase in the number of developing countries in its membership. However, the present debates on reform give rise to concern as to whether reform of the Council would be carried out in conformity with its intrinsic purpose.

The need for reform is recognized by all Member States, but we have noticed some goals being pursued that stray from the purpose of reform. Certain countries are interested in decreasing their financial burdens while preserving their privileges, and some others are trying to gain a privileged position by waving the money purse without having any political qualifications. If these erroneous purposes keep being pursued in disregard of the intrinsic purpose of Council reform, reform will not be achieved for a long time and, even when carried out, will make no contribution to the establishment of a fair international order.

It is a prerequisite for proper reform of the Security Council that all matters be settled by consensus through full negotiations by all Member States. Any pressure or arbitrary action should not be tolerated in the discussion of reform issues. If we cannot agree on all issues at one time, we can start one by one with the issues that can be easily agreed. And reform of the Security Council, as it is only one part of overall United Nations reforms, should be addressed in the context of the increased power of the General Assembly.

A main point in the issue of enlarging the composition of the Security Council is an increase in the representation of developing countries. Since the composition of the Council, which was formed on the basis of the United Nations membership 40 years ago, remains intact and more than 70 developing countries have joined the Organization since then, it cannot reflect the reality. In light of this, my delegation holds that developing countries would be fully represented in the Security Council if the number of non-permanent members were to be increased.

We consider it appropriate that increasing the number of non-permanent and permanent members be discussed separately and that enlargement of non-permanent membership be given priority. My delegation also holds that greater prudence should be exercised with regard to the enlargement of the permanent membership. Enlargement of Council does not necessarily require more permanent members.

We must consider very carefully if enlarging the permanent membership would really help to democratize the United Nations and enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council, or, rather, if it might not bring about the opposite result. Furthermore, if enlargement of the permanent membership is agreed, priority must be given to the developing countries.

However, to submit the candidature of an individual country as a new permanent member, before any agreement on the enlargement of the permanent membership has been reached, is tantamount to putting the cart before the horse. Furthermore, it is not in line with the lofty objectives of Security Council reform to consider for permanent membership in the Council a country that has not yet made amends for its past crimes against humanity.

My delegation hopes that discussion of this item will serve to democratize the Security Council and

strengthen the role of the United Nations, in conformity with the legitimate demands and aspirations of the majority of Member States.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): May I first pay tribute to Mr. Han's predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, Chairman of the Working Group on the reform of the Security Council, and to the two Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassadors of Sri Lanka and Iceland, for the sustained efforts they have made to advance our work on this question during the past session.

The report submitted to us is a good reflection not only of the results of their personal efforts but also of the contributions of Member States to ensuring the progress of the reform of the Security Council.

The deliberations of the Working Group over the past eight years have demonstrated the importance of reforming the Security Council in order to make it more effective and better able to meet the growing challenges of our century. The climate of uncertainty now prevailing in international relations is making it more urgent than ever to undertake a comprehensive reform of the Council, which is the primary organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Like other delegations, Madagascar cannot conceal its concern at the little progress achieved in the process that has been under way these past years. It is all the more regrettable that the momentum conferred by the Millennium Summit and supported by the General Assembly has not led to any significant advances, notwithstanding the appeal contained in the Millennium Declaration for additional efforts to be made in order to bring about a global reform of the Security Council.

It is therefore not surprising that such a situation should give rise to weariness and scepticism as to the prospect of continuing further along this road.

Nevertheless, we feel that, despite the continuing difficulties, reform is indispensable if we really wish to enhance the effectiveness of the Council, as Member States so ardently wish to do. Furthermore, it is undeniable that the Security Council can gain credence and win the confidence of the international community only if it becomes more representative, democratic, transparent and accountable.

It is widely recognized that currently the structure and composition of the Council do not reflect the political, economic and demographic realities of our time. Despite the changes that have occurred in the global configuration, the permanent members have remained the same, with all of the privileges attached to that status. Developing countries, which represent a majority in the new global landscape, have become marginalized and must simply accept the decisions taken by the small Security Council club.

This anomaly must be done away with through an enlargement of the Security Council in both categories of seats — permanent and non-permanent — on the basis of equitable geographical distribution and in the framework of an adequate balance between North and South and between developing and industrialized countries. Africa, which represents one quarter of the membership, must have at least two additional permanent and two additional non-permanent seats in a reformed Security Council.

Madagascar welcomes the fact that there is general agreement on the idea of enlarging the Council, but deplores the absence of consensus on practical arrangements for bringing it about. My delegation entertains the hope that, in the course of this session, the Working Group will find some common ground upon which agreement could be reached on this fundamental aspect of the reform.

Turning now to the right of veto, the debate that has been held on this subject, both in the Working Group and in plenary, has shown that a great majority of States consider the veto to be an anachronistic and discriminatory right and that therefore its scope should be limited, with a view to its elimination. Exercised in breach of the principle of the sovereign equality of States and of the principle of democracy, the right of veto should no longer have any place in a Security Council that is seeking effectiveness and legitimacy.

Efforts to reform the Council should therefore lead to the abolition of the veto right, without which no change can be meaningful. Pending the elimination of the right of veto, its use should be limited to Chapter VII of the Charter. In this context, it is essential to envisage the possibility of the General Assembly's requiring explanations as to the way in which use is made of the veto in certain cases, in order to avoid abuse of the veto.

Bearing in mind the political considerations that are intrinsic to the right of veto, my delegation supports the idea of holding a substantive debate on this question with the permanent members, so as to find, in concert with them, formulas that could help us to break the current deadlock.

As other delegations have noted, transparency is an important measure in innovations to the Council's working methods. On this subject, my delegation welcomes the efforts undertaken by the members of the Council to increase the number of open meetings, even though they are still fewer in number than the closed meetings. My delegation hopes that the Security Council will maintain this timely trend towards openness in order to enhance the transparency of its work.

Given the collective and shared responsibility of all Member States in the maintenance of international peace and security, my delegation considers that the Council's debates are effective only to the extent that they afford an opportunity for interaction between that body and States that are not members of the Council. It is in that spirit that my delegation would have wished for a more open debate in the process of adopting resolution 1373 (2001), which addresses a subject of vital importance to the international community. The implementation of that resolution requires the collaboration of all Member States.

Security Council reform affects the vital interests of all Member States and plays a crucial role in the future development of the United Nations. For this reason, the continuation of efforts to arrive at a final agreement on the totality of measures envisaged for reforming the Council has become an urgent task that we cannot postpone and a moral duty that we must not shirk.

We have confidence that under President Han's guidance, the Working Group will prove equal to the mission that has been entrusted to it, ensuring that a spirit of compromise and cooperation prevails. The future of our Organization and of humankind are at stake.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): At the outset, I wish to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Harri Holkeri, former Chairman 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, and to the Ambassadors of Sri Lanka and Iceland, Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for their tireless efforts to move forward the discussions on Council reform.

How to move forward the discussions we started on this issue in 1993 is the most pertinent question of the day. This is the question that many delegations are asking and, may I say, with justification. We find it frustrating that we are still faced with a stalemate, especially after we have spent so much time, energy and effort for many years to reach general agreement on a final package for submission to the General Assembly. For many, this frustration has given rise to dwindling interest in the issue of Council reform. As many delegations have rightly assessed, the present stalemate is the result of the lack of necessary political will and of leadership on the part of the most responsible members of the Security Council. It is our belief that without that leadership, it will not be possible to move Council reform forward. We are greatly concerned that this stalemate will undermine confidence in the Security Council, the organ primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The reform of the Security Council is not a mere restructuring of an organ. It goes far beyond that. It also represents the most fundamental question in international relations. As the Secretary-General has aptly remarked in his Millennium Report, the present composition of the Council does not fully represent either the character or the needs of our globalized world. Therefore, a continued stalemate would perpetuate the anomalous situation of the Council in the complex and difficult international situation which we face today.

When the Foreign Ministers of the 10 member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) met in Hanoi in July this year, they emphasized the need to strengthen the representativeness, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the Council through our efforts to reform it. As today's world situation clearly demonstrates, the Council needs to enhance these qualities to be able to deal with the new and complex issues of peace and security.

Concerning its representativeness, there is no denying that a membership of 15 countries could not adequately represent the 189 countries of the

Organization. However hard we may try to observe scrupulously the principle of equitable geographical distribution in electing new non-permanent members of the Council, the small membership leaves many regions and subregions either underrepresented or wholly unrepresented.

It is therefore generally agreed that the Council must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership to enhance its representative character. Given this general agreement, the immediate and most important question, deserving our urgent attention, is, in my delegation's view, the overall size of the new Council and its corollary issues of how many new seats should be created and which countries should fill these new seats. Because of its linkage to the distribution of new permanent and non-permanent members among regions, the question of size must be addressed as a matter of top priority if we wish to see forward movement in our now-stalled discussions. Although there are divergent positions on the total size of the enlarged Council, we hope that some flexibility on all sides will enable us to arrive at a realistic figure that is both representative and effective. We consider that an agreement on size would certainly facilitate our next stage of discussions on how to distribute the new seats among regions. Therefore, there is a strong case for focusing our new attempts on this core issue.

With regard to the effectiveness and transparency of the Council, it is encouraging that some progress has been made on the question of the working methods of the Council. We are also pleased to note that that progress has been reflected in the actual practices of the Council and that some useful proposals have been taken up by the Council. These are welcome developments.

We are of the view that we should seek ways and means to institutionalize the suggestions that have been submitted to make the work of the Council effective and transparent. We are also of the view that further improvement in the Council's working methods and its greater openness to the general membership would make our discussions on Council reform a worthwhile exercise. This would also send to the international community the important message that our sustained efforts to modernize the Council have paid off in regard to certain aspects.

The Security Council derives its mandate from the general membership of the Organization, which agrees to fulfil any obligation that stems from a decision taken by the Security Council. The effectiveness of the Council in its cardinal task therefore depends on the full and willing implementation of the relevant decisions by the Members of the Organization. The division of obligations between the Council and non-members of the Council, as provided for in the Charter, requires the Security Council to fulfil its part of the obligations. These include being alert to the threat to international peace and security; taking necessary measures in accordance with Charter provisions; ensuring that decisions adopted are fully implemented; and, last but not least, being accountable to the general membership, which in fact is the source of the enormous powers vested in the Council.

As for the accountability of the Council there is still much room for improvement although the annual reporting mechanism, the resort to more presidential briefings of non-members of the Council and the holding of more open meetings served as useful devices to account for what the Council has done on our behalf under Article 24 of the Charter. The Council's accountability would be much enhanced if more formal channels could be established between the Council and the General Assembly, other than the stop-gap measures being taken to assuage our concern to know more about the Council's work. In this respect, special reporting on issues of particular concern to our members could be an effective device, although that would mean an extra burden on the Council's already heavy agenda. However, such a mechanism would greatly strengthen confidence in the Council.

It is the general feeling that, due to the continued stalemate, the momentum that we have created over the last several years has been lost. Given that the great majority of Member States wish to see the early realization of Security Council reform, as reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit, it is vitally important to rekindle the interest of Member States in the issue of Council reform. One way of doing this is to explore how to give effect to many worthwhile proposals on the table while we attempt to arrive at a Council size acceptable to all, including the permanent members. We believe that this parallel approach will have the benefit of achieving something tangible from our years

of discussions in the event that no progress is possible on the expansion question.

At a time when economic and political processes all over the world are being liberalized and democratized, the Security Council cannot maintain its status quo. Its continued relevance and legitimacy will not stand if its composition and powers are not compatible with the changes of the time and the ideals of democracy. As we stated last year, our success in the reform of the Council will be tantamount to the genuine democratization of the United Nations. Despite the fact that we appreciate the achievements made in our endeavour to reform the United Nations, this success will not be genuine if we cannot resolve the expansion question. The resolution of this question will be possible only if we focus on the issue of the size of the Council and show a spirit of accommodation in our new attempts at progress in our future discussions. In a spirit of accommodation, my delegation will continue to cooperate with other delegations to achieve as much success as possible in our common efforts. The absence of discernible success in this important task of the United Nations could do great damage to the credibility of the Security Council.

Ms. Ognjanovac (Croatia): This topic has been on our agenda for eight years now. During all these years we have all been aware that the fundamental changes in international relations aware since the founding of the United Nations, more than 50 years ago, require corresponding change in the composition and work of the Security Council. Although many of us were ready to undertake certain steps in that direction, some, remained reluctant.

Although we have been discussing this matter for so long, there still remain many differences amongst us. At the same time, valuable work has already been done, and we believe that we should continue to build on it. In this regard, let me pay tribute to the contribution towards reform made by the President's predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, and his two Working Group Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors de Saram and Ingólfsson. We look forward to working with the President and his Vice-Chairmen during the coming year. However, we are aware that visible progress cannot be achieved without the clear political will of all Member States. We are therefore of the opinion that we should not exclude the idea of moving this process to a higher political level at the appropriate time.

The Croatian position is very well known, and therefore I will reiterate just its main outline. We hold that the Council must be enlarged in both categories of membership to reflect changes in international affairs. In this regard, we support the creation of five new permanent seats, of which two should be allocated to the industrialized countries and three to developing countries. Regarding the possible rotation of these posts, we believe that it is up to the regions to decide about such an arrangement, with the consent of each Member State in question. On the question of non-permanent seats, we support the idea of increasing them by four seats, with one each allocated to the African, Asian and Latin American and Caribbean regions, and one to the Eastern European region. In this way, we support increasing Council membership to a maximum of 24 seats.

With regard to the veto, we favour its abolition, as do a number of other Member States, arguing that it is not a democratic method of decision-making. However, if political realities will not allow the negotiations to go in this direction, we would support a reduction of the power of the veto and the use of the so-called double veto.

We all agree that the working methods of the Security Council should be more transparent and further democratized. We commend the latest endeavours by some Security Council Presidents to hold regular exchanges of views with non-members regarding topics discussed in the Security Council, a good example being the meetings with troop contributors to peacekeeping missions. Even so, there is much more to be done, not just in the area of transparency and improving the working methods of the Security Council, but in improving coordination of the work of all the main bodies of the United Nations based on the new, multifaceted approach to peacekeeping and peace-building.

Today, following the tragic events of 11 September, when we are all united in the common fight against terrorism, we should use this positive spirit of togetherness and respect for our Organization as a global leader to strive to achieve our goal of moving the process of Security Council reform forward. The Nobel Prize awarded to our Organization demonstrates that we are on the right path, and should give us added impetus to complete the unfinished agenda before us.

Mr. Nacerodien (South Africa): We would like to express our gratitude to the President's predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, whose unwavering commitment to the work of the Working Group was exemplary. We thank him, the Vice-Chairmen and the Bureau for making every effort to ensure that the Working Group remains true to its mandate.

The report before us is testimony to the efforts made to address all the issues related to Security Council reform. However, the Open-ended Working Group remains deadlocked on key issues. Even more disconcerting is the fact that the Open-ended Working Group was again unable to properly engage on issues such as the veto or the final size of an expanded Security Council.

This Assembly adopted resolution 48/26 on 3 December 1993 in recognition of the need to review the membership of the Security Council and related matters. It did so because the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially in terms of developing countries, as well as the changes in international relations, necessitated a review of the composition of the Security Council.

My delegation realizes that any final decision on the reform of the Security Council will have to take place at the highest political level. However, such a decision is meant to emanate from the technical deliberations and recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group.

In practice, the ongoing stalemate has meant that many Member States, particularly from developing countries, are unable to justify continued participation in the Open-ended Working Group. Surely, we cannot have a Working Group that will eventually mirror the body it is trying to reform — an unrepresentative club presiding over and deciding on matters of importance to us all.

We are convinced that the lack of participation by developing countries, particularly African countries, is not due to a lack of interest in, or diminished importance attributed to, Council reform. To the contrary, on those occasions when permanent members of the Security Council have demonstrated some flexibility, discussions in the Open-ended Working Group have been lively and well attended. The assumption can therefore be made that delegations from developing countries would be more willing to

participate in the Open-ended Working Group if they anticipated some concrete progress in its deliberations.

At the Millennium Assembly our political leaders stated that the

“Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally.” (*resolution 55/2, para. 6*)

In order to translate these shared values into actions, the Summit identified key objectives to which they assigned special significance, including to “intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects.” (*ibid., para. 30*)

When set against this overwhelming expression of the need to reform the Security Council made just one year ago, the ongoing stalemate leads one to the conclusion that the Open-ended Working Group is in danger of losing its credibility.

In our view, the General Assembly should not merely mandate the Open-ended Working Group to continue with business as usual. Neither would it be productive to review the Open-ended Working Group’s current mandate and working methods, as this would most likely result in an unproductive debate on reforming the Open-ended Working Group and not the Council.

At the concluding plenary meeting of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the President of the General Assembly and Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Harri Holkeri, noted that many Foreign Ministers had responded to his request for assistance on ways to intensify efforts to reform the Security Council, as called for in the Millennium Declaration. He observed that many Ministers acknowledged that the Open-ended Working Group had worked well as an initial discussion forum, but that the time had perhaps come to consider other avenues to advance the process.

Mr. Holkeri also made the important point that in order to resolve the stalemate and maintain the impetus of the Millennium Summit, Member States should move from discussions into negotiations. Again it is clear that the issue needs to be taken to a higher political level, because the technical experts in the Open-ended Working Group are apparently not able to fulfil the task of negotiating Security Council reform.

If we are to achieve measurable results, South Africa believes that the next session of the Open-ended Working Group should be devoted to ensuring that the technical work of the Open-ended Working Group is brought into step with the political will expressed by our leaders in the Millennium Summit. Since it appears that the Open-ended Working Group is unable to achieve this on its own, then clearly it is now time to establish the high-level political dialogue proposed by Mr. Holkeri in order to take the process forward.

We look forward to cooperating with President Han, in the coming session on this important work.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/56/3/Add.1, which covers the period from 5 November through 11 December 2001, and which has been distributed to Member States in the Hall this afternoon. The lists of speakers for the items mentioned in document A/INF/56/3/Add.1 are open.

The General Assembly in due course will be kept informed of the dates for the consideration of other agenda items as well as of any additions or changes.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.