



# General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

**35<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting

Thursday, 16 November 2023, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Francis . . . . . (Trinidad and Tobago)

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Brandt (Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Reports of the Fifth Committee

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on sub-items (a) to (e) of agenda item 115, “Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments”.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. Therefore, if there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Committee that are before the Assembly today.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. May I remind members that in accordance with decision 34/401, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation’s vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee and that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Committee, I should like to advise representatives

that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance. I should therefore hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Committee.

## Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

### Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

#### (a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

#### Report of the Fifth Committee (A/78/558)

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has before it a recommendation by the Committee contained in paragraph 6 of its report (A/78/558). We will now take a decision on the recommendation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint or reappoint Surendra Kumar Adhana (India), Abdallah Bachar Bong (Chad), Feliksas Bakanauskas (Lithuania), Ali Ben Said (Tunisia), Simon Horner (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Evgeny Kalugin (Russian Federation), Julia Maciel (Paraguay), Caroline Nalwanga (Uganda), Juliana Gaspar Ruas (Brazil) and Stephani Laura Scheer (United States of America) as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2024?

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*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/78/559)**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has before it a recommendation by the Committee contained in paragraph 7 of its report (A/78/559). We will now take a decision on the recommendation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint or reappoint the following persons as members of the Committee on Contributions: for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2024 and ending on 31 December 2024, Suzuki Yoriko (Japan); and, for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2024: Michael Holtsch (Germany), Vadim Laputin (Russian Federation), Lin Shan (China), Hae-yun Park (Republic of Korea), Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto (Brazil) and Cihan Terzi (Türkiye)?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**(c) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/78/560)**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has before it a recommendation by the Committee contained in paragraph 4 of its report (A/58/560). We will now take a decision on the recommendation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to confirm the appointment and reappointment by the Secretary-General of Yasir O. Al-Rumayyan (Saudi Arabia), Sarah Omotunde Alade (Nigeria), Natalia Khanjenkova (Russian Federation), Shan Li (China) and Patricia Parise (Argentina) as regular members of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2024; and confirm the reappointment by the Secretary-General of Macky Tall (Mali) as an ad hoc member of the Investments

Committee for a one-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2024?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**(d) Appointment of a member of the Board of Auditors**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/78/561)**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has before it a recommendation by the Committee contained in paragraph 4 of its report (A/78/561). We will now take a decision on the recommendation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the Chair of the Federal Court of Accounts of Brazil as a member of the Board of Auditors for a six-year term of office beginning on 1 July 2024?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**(e) Appointment of members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/78/562)**

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has before it a recommendation by the Committee contained in paragraph 4 of its report (A/78/562). We will now take a decision on the recommendation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint or reappoint the following persons as members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2024: Jeanette Franzel (United States of America) and Imran Vanker (South Africa)?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 115?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the reports of the Fifth Committee before it today.

**Agenda item 121** (*continued*)

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

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): We thank you, Madam, for convening today's debate. Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/78/PV.34) and would like to complement by adding our national observations.

We congratulate Austria and Kuwait on their re-appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process. We are confident that under their skilful and experienced leadership, our collective efforts towards reform of the Security Council will bear fruition.

We expect that the intergovernmental negotiations process at this 78th session shall lead us closer to consensus. It is imperative that we look towards a reformed Security Council in a constructive spirit and with an open mind and the resolve to move forward based on compromise, transparency and cooperation. The international community needs and deserves a reformed Security Council that is truly representative, democratic, transparent and, above all, accountable and effective; a reformed Council that is owned by all United Nations Member States.

The starting point of reform should be agreement among all Member States on the underlying principles that are to guide the reform process. We have already seen some degree of progress within the intergovernmental negotiations, and I trust that on this basis we will move forward in our discussions. Echoing the representative of Italy's words, we look forward to further discussing the five clusters in line with decision 62/557 in a comprehensive and focused manner. Various convergences have already emerged among the negotiating groups represented here today, and I believe that those should be used as a further stepping-stone in our collective pursuit of reform.

The positions of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group on each of the clusters of reform are clear

and known. Our proposal upholds the principles of democracy, transparency and equality.

To conclude, it is imperative that the intergovernmental negotiations remain the sole process whereby Security Council reform is discussed and agreed upon. We advise against reinventing the wheel or creating parallel tracks that could adversely impact our goals. A functioning Member State-driven process is already set up and we should lead all our efforts through it. We look forward to an open and constructive discussion based on a commitment to serving and representing, and the Assembly can count on the UfC towards that purpose.

**Mr. Malovrh** (Slovenia): I thank you, Madam, for convening this debate. Let me congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Austria and the State of Kuwait for their re-appointment as the Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-eighth session and thank them for their work and contribution to the debate at the previous session. They have our full support.

Ensuring the preservation of peace and security remains as crucial today as it was at the inception of the United Nations. At the same time, the evolving global landscape and geopolitical realities require changes and adjustments within our institutions. The ability of an organization to embrace change is a sign of its vibrant and democratic functioning and nature. Regrettably, the inability of the Security Council to take decisions in response to grave crises, threats to peace and armed conflicts sends an exceedingly pessimistic message to the international community.

Today I would like to mention the following three issues.

First, on the intergovernmental negotiations process, after almost 20 years, Slovenia, along with many other Member States, expects the process to be effective and goal-oriented and to produce concrete results. This primarily means that Member States must negotiate genuinely and that negotiations be based on proposed texts, with attribution. We welcome the achievements made during the intergovernmental negotiations through the seventy-seventh session, including the co-Chairs' revised elements paper on convergences and divergences, for which we express special thanks to the co-Chairs. The development of those elements indicates the sincere interest of States to move the discussion forward. The establishment of

a website, serving as a repository for all documents is a significant contribution to the transparency and inclusivity of the process. We also appreciate the letter sent by the co-Chairs to the Chair of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. It seems important for the Security Council to know what the general membership wants and expects.

Secondly, I will address the questions of representation, categories of membership and working methods. Some groups are underrepresented in the Security Council. Slovenia supports the demands for more seats for the Group of African States. On the one hand, historical injustices need to be addressed; on the other, the growing number of Member States should be reflected in the Council. That also goes for my own Group of Eastern European States. In the past three decades, the number of States in our Group has more than doubled; therefore, we advocate for at least one additional non-permanent member.

As the Charter provides for two categories of membership, we believe that the way to reflect the current realities is the expansion of membership in both categories; at the same time, we also welcome discussion on other possible solutions.

We see the letter by the co-Chairs to the Chair of the Informal Working Group as reflecting the sincere wish of the wider membership to contribute to the evolution and improvement of the Council's working methods. As an incoming member of the Security Council in 2024-2025, Slovenia will do its utmost to contribute to the discussion. Two issues need particular attention — first, how to ensure more transparency in the work of the Council, including through the participation of non-member States of the Council; and secondly, its efficiency and effectiveness at the same time.

For my third point, I shall touch very briefly on the use of the veto. I wish to repeat that holders of the right to veto should exercise that right responsibly and restrictively and refrain from misusing it. As a member of the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency (ACT) group, Slovenia advocates for the ACT code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. We encourage every country that has not yet done so to endorse it.

Slovenia also supports the French-Mexican initiative on the suspension of veto powers in cases of

mass atrocity. We also co-sponsored resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative, as an important step towards more accountability. This year's discussions in the General Assembly based on that resolution clearly show how often the Security Council is unable to reach a decision, including when the world clearly expects and needs it.

The Summit of the Future will be an additional opportunity for a significant and concrete step forward. We fully endorse the plea of the new agenda for peace for urgent progress in the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. It is imperative that we collectively determine a clear direction and break free from the prolonged deadlock. While we acknowledge the complexities and differing perspectives surrounding that issue, it is crucial that we find common ground and move forward towards a more inclusive and effective Security Council. It is only through decisive action that we can overcome the long-standing impasse and ensure a more representative global governance system. We sincerely hope that its outcome document of the Summit of the Future will include a strong message towards an early reform of the Security Council.

Slovenia will continue to engage actively and constructively on this issue, including through the intergovernmental negotiations.

**Mr. Moretti** (Brazil): Brazil fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group and the representative of Germany on behalf of the Group of Four (see A/78/PV.34).

I commend the firm commitment of the President of the General Assembly to reinvigorating discussions on Security Council reform and for the early confirmation of the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. My delegation extends them our full support and appreciation for the work they did in the IGN's last cycle. Webcasting and the repository were a long-standing demand of the L.69 and many developing countries.

On substance, however, and despite the dedication of the co-facilitators, progress has again been elusive, at best. The long stagnation of the IGN stands in stark contrast to a rapidly transforming geopolitical reality and escalating tensions that further threaten global stability. The insufficient representativeness in the Security Council has become ever more evident and significant, thereby seriously undermining its legitimacy and effectiveness. At a time when the world



needs it most, the Security Council has shown itself to be incapable of or had great difficulty in meeting its primary responsibility in key conflicts, situations and regions. Such difficulty has already negatively impacted our collective security framework, multilateralism and adherence to international law. Without reform, the crisis will only deepen.

Obviously, lack of reform is not the only reason behind the paralysis or ineffectiveness of the Council. Deep divisions among the permanent members and increased geopolitical disputes do play a major role. However, the current negative political dynamic would be mitigated in a larger and more representative Council. The Security Council cannot be fully legitimate and effective as long as the developing world is sidelined and entire regions, such as Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, are not represented in the permanent category. Any reform that does not address that major flaw would be mere window dressing and, worse, aggravate current imbalances in the composition of the Council.

In terms of process, the intergovernmental negotiations need to change significantly. The current approach has repeatedly failed to promote the convergence of positions. Rather, it has often allowed a few to avoid real discussion and compromise. We support the Co-Chairs' proposal for a structured dialogue on models proposed by individual States and groups of States. Such a discussion, based on written proposals, will, we hope, deepen our understanding of each other's positions and facilitate finding convergences.

As we have reiterated for years now, we need to move towards text-based discussions. Only through that approach can we begin to earnestly seek common ground and engage in a genuine give-and-take exercise. We must harness the momentum created by a record number of leaders recognizing the need for reform at the previous general debate. In addition, pivotal events, such as the upcoming Summit of the Future and the United Nations eightieth anniversary, will give us a unique opportunity to achieve tangible results in our work.

Under the able guidance of President Francis and the co-facilitators, we will finally not merely pass the baton of inaction to the next Session of the General Assembly, but take a decisive step towards the reform that is so desperately needed and so widely supported.

**Mr. Ishikane (Japan):** Japan fully aligns itself with Germany's statement on behalf of the Group of Four (see A/78/PV.34). Please allow me to make additional remarks in my national capacity.

First of all, our heartfelt congratulations go once again to President Francis on his unanimous election by the Member States. We also commend his decision to reappoint the trusted co-Chairs, Ambassador Alexander Marschik and Ambassador Tareq M. A. M. Albanai, the Permanent Representatives of Austria and the State of Kuwait, respectively. They have our full support.

During last year's session, thanks to the initiatives taken by the co-Chairs, we made notable advances, including by introducing a webcast and establishing a repository website. Building upon those, we welcome another proposal by the co-Chairs to conduct a structured dialogue on individual proposals at the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. That new initiative could lead to comprehensive and concrete discussions, which the majority of the Member States have long requested. We are determined to engage constructively in the discussions in the next cycle of the intergovernmental negotiations.

In the intergovernmental negotiations, we never deny the importance of open and active discussion, but we also have to be committed to making tangible outcomes at every single session. To do so, a Member State-driven process is necessary. We encourage all Member States and groups to be the penholders and submit their own models for reform. Let us write what we believe is right, then clarify, question and debate what others believe is right. Interactive discussions on each model would serve that purpose and lead us to concrete achievements. Japan is more than willing to actively participate in that process.

During the high-level week in September, the representatives of more than 80 Member States made statements calling for Security Council reform. That is an even greater number than last year, which shows a growing sense of urgency for a more representative, efficient and effective Council.

We have all witnessed the challenges the Council is facing and its inability to meet the expectations of the international community on some of the most pressing issues of our day, including the situations in Ukraine and the Middle East. That should only strengthen our will for reform and for creating a Council that is more representative and reflects the reality of the twenty-

first century. Looking ahead to next year's Summit of the Future and the subsequent eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must make our best effort to move towards concrete action.

Nelson Mandela said, "it always seems impossible until it is done". We believe that nothing is impossible in the United Nations if we, the Member States, do everything we can. We still have lots of work to do. Let us do it together.

**Mrs. Kamboj** (India): We welcome President Francis's leadership in steering us towards tangible outcomes during this session. He may rest assured that we stand ready to wholeheartedly support him and the co-Chairs in that endeavour.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the L.69 group and the Group of Four today (see A/78/PV.34).

Several aspects of the United Nations system urgently require reform — a sentiment unanimously echoed by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Among those, the reform of the Security Council was identified as a critical and immediate priority. In spite of that collective call, we have no results to show so far. Why?

First is the nature of the process of the intergovernmental negotiations themselves. Fifteen years since their inception, our dialogue remains largely confined to exchanging statements, speaking at rather than with each other; no negotiating text, no time frame and no defined end goal. We turn up each year, make statements and go back to the drawing board.

Then there is the argument, pushed by the naysayers of consensus, that even before we begin text-based negotiations we must all agree on everything. Surely, we could not have a more extreme case than this of putting the cart before the horse. In a recent joint ministerial statement, signed by more than 35 United Nations Member States, the L.69 voiced concerns over the lack of openness and transparency in the intergovernmental negotiations. They stressed the urgent need for improved working methods and a clear set of procedural rules to guide the process.

Thirdly, as a member of the global South, we share its collective angst that, on issues of core concern to the South, we have no voice at the high table. It will be recalled that 164 Member States joined in calling for a concrete text to serve as the foundation for negotiations, as laid out in document A/72/510/Rev.1, conveyed in

the letter dated 2 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. That resounding support emphasizes that any further delay in Security Council reform will exacerbate its representational deficit. Representation stands as the unassailable prerequisite for both legitimacy and effectiveness.

Under India's presidency of the Group of 20, a significant stride was made by securing Africa a permanent seat at the table, proving that with political determination change is indeed achievable. That example serves as a compelling call to action. We must resolutely align the Council with its Charter mandate to represent the interests of all Member States. Such alignment is crucial for adeptly navigating the intricate global challenges and conflicts we face today.

In our interconnected world, a more equitable Council is essential. That should be clearly reflected in the 2024 pact for the future document, particularly in the section on transforming global governance. Any diluted language in this context would amount to mere lip service, failing to address the crucial need for reforms.

India has consistently championed a cooperative, inclusive and consultative approach to international relations. We firmly believe that the calls for reformed multilateralism, with Security Council reforms at its core, is supported by the overwhelming majority of the membership. If we fail to address that long-standing cause in the United Nations roadmap during its Summit of the Future, that would signify our failure to fulfil a pivotal commitment to ourselves and the Organization's roadmap. Members of the General Assembly may rest assured that the Indian delegation is committed to working collaboratively with the President and the co-Chairs to steer that process toward results, in line with the General Assembly's mandate. Let this year be the turning point when we seize the opportunity we have long awaited.

**Mr. Kadyautumbe** (Zimbabwe): I thank President Francis for convening this annual debate on a fundamental matter that is at the core of global governance.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, and Chair of the Committee of 10, on behalf

of the Group of African States (see A/78/PV.34). I will make the following remarks in my national capacity.

This decades-long debate continues to prove that the composition of the Security Council, forged in the aftermath of the Second World War, no longer aligns with our contemporary world. It is therefore imperative to review the membership of the Security Council and promote a more equitable and balanced representation of the United Nations Member States that reflects the geopolitical and other realities of the twenty-first century. That realization will contribute towards the redress of historical injustices against a continent of 1.4 billion people that does not have a single permanent seat in an important body of the United Nations that is supposed to represent all of us. Africa legitimately feels left behind.

The current realities should see Africa occupying two permanent seats in the Security Council, with all the rights and prerogatives of the current permanent members, including the right to veto as long as it is available for permanent members; and five non-permanent seats, as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. My delegation joins other African delegations in stressing that Africa opposes the veto in principle. If, however, the veto right subsists in the renewed Council, such a right should be extended to all permanent members, new and old, without prejudice. The lack of veto rights for some members would be an infringement of the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

The increase in membership cannot be considered in isolation. The working methods of the Security Council must continue to be reviewed in order to strengthen the Council's accountability, capacity, efficiency, effectiveness, inclusivity and transparency. In that regard, my delegation joins others in advocating for increased collaboration between the Security Council and troop- and police-contributing countries, as well as regional groups; the extension of penholdership to include countries from affected regions; and the convening of more open, formal and informal meetings of the Security Council.

Members may count on my delegation's commitment to the principles, purposes and ideals of the United Nations and in contributing to solutions that seek to promote a more balanced and effective Security Council.

**Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia): Allow me to begin by expressing my gratitude to you, Madam President, for convening this important debate on the pressing issue of Security Council reform.

I wish to congratulate Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. I would like to express Mongolia's support to the co-Chairs as they lead our collaborative endeavours in the crucial pursuit of Security Council reform.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the L.69 group (see A/78/PV.34). Allow me to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The world is undergoing a period of turbulence marked by a rise in geopolitical tensions and the intensification of worldwide challenges. The Security Council, entrusted with the primary responsibility for upholding international peace and security, currently lacks the capacity to effectively address those challenges. It is evident that there is a clear and urgent need for a robust and effective Security Council. Therefore, it is crucial to accelerate the reform process to ensure that the Security Council can effectively tackle the increasing complexity of interconnected global challenges.

In that regard, we reiterate our position on the need to commence negotiations based on a single, consolidated text, with the aim of achieving tangible results within a specified timeframe. We are of the view that initiating text-based negotiations aligns with decision 62/557, which explicitly emphasizes the necessity for this process to be Member State-driven, based on Member States' proposals, conducted in good faith and with mutual respect.

My delegation believes that the Summit of the Future, scheduled to be held in September 2024 under the theme "Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow," can serve as a pivotal occasion to accelerate our work towards Security Council reform. It presents an opportunity to reinforce our commitment.

Mongolia's long-standing principled position on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council is well

known. We support the enlargement of both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership in the Security Council. We consistently prioritize the principle of fair geographical distribution, with a particular focus on addressing the underrepresented and unrepresented regions and groups.

My delegation is pleased with some concrete advancements achieved during the seventy-seventh session. We are thankful to the co-Chairs for their efforts to enhance the transparency, openness and inclusivity of the in by implementing webcasting and recordkeeping. They are also indispensable for smaller missions like ours. We hope that the constructive atmosphere witnessed in the seventy-seventh session will persist throughout the seventy-eighth session.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its commitment to promptly reform the Security Council to align with the evolving realities of the world.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): I wish to thank you for convening this important debate and President Francis for his leadership and commitment to a more representative, democratic, transparent, effective and accountable Security Council.

We also thank him for reappointing Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process and congratulate them on their appointment. They made well-balanced and significant contributions during the previous intergovernmental negotiations cycle. We are confident that the co-Chairs will make a substantive and path-breaking contribution this year.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/78/PV.34), and we would like to add a few points in our national capacity.

For more than a month now, a brutal war has raged in Gaza, with blatant war crimes and genocide being perpetrated by Israel against innocent Palestinian women and children. Unfortunately, the Security Council has failed so far to stop the slaughter, even following the adoption yesterday, after five weeks, of resolution 2712 (2023). It is now more evident than ever that the primary reason for the Security Council's frequent failure to respond effectively to conflicts and threats to peace and security is the inability of

its permanent members to agree on decisive action. Adding new permanent members will statistically multiply the prospects of paralysis in the Council. The problem cannot be the solution.

The Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group remains staunchly opposed to any proposals for the creation of additional permanent seats for individual Member States. There is no justification for the creation of new centres of privilege within the United Nations, contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of Member States. Any country seeking a more frequent presence on the Security Council should do so by subjecting itself to the democratic process of periodic election by the General Assembly.

The intergovernmental negotiations held constructive discussions in the previous cycle on all five interlinked clusters of issues on Security Council reform identified in decision 62/557. As evident from the co-Chairs' revised elements paper, the areas of convergence have been broadened and divergences have been further reduced through the IGN process. However, despite the encouraging progress made in the intergovernmental negotiations last year, there remain wide divergences among Member States on several key issues within each cluster.

On the categories of membership, it is essential to recall that the discussions involved not two but several categories of membership: two-year non-permanent seats; longer-term non-permanent seats; re-electable non-permanent membership; permanent seats representing regions or individual States; and permanent membership with or without a veto. Similarly, there are proposals on the prohibition of the veto, its restriction, its suspension, its expansion and its deferment.

On regional representation, the UfC and the Group of African States have proposed specific models. In our view, the historic injustice against Africa, as well as Asia, Latin America and the small island developing States, must be redressed and the unequal advantage accorded to Europe rectified.

The UfC's proposal to add 11 or 12 new non-permanent members would offer greater representation to the vast majority of small and medium-sized States, 59 of which have never served on the Security Council. Besides ensuring equitable geopolitical representation, a larger number of non-permanent members could balance the inordinate influence of the five permanent members. On the



other hand, the addition of four or six new permanent members would statistically reduce the prospects for representation for the rest of the 182 Member States. Moreover, the periodic election of the non-permanent members would ensure both the requirements of accountability of Security Council members as well as the democratization of the United Nations.

We consider the African demand for two permanent seats for the continent as being very different from the quest of four individual States for permanent membership. The two African seats would, we understand, be filled by States selected by Africa, accountable to Africa and potentially replaced by Africa. The four individual aspirants would be accountable to no one and seek to advance their own national interests and ambitions. In any case, there are more than four or six States — over 20 — that can, based on their size, defence capability, economic status, peacekeeping role and contributions to peace and security, claim the mantle of more frequent representation on the Security Council. The UfC's offer of longer-term or re-electable seats could accommodate that consideration and do so equitably. Lastly, while considerable progress has been made in promoting convergence on the Council's working methods, there are several additional and innovative proposals that need to be further discussed and agreed.

It is therefore evident that we will require a substantive — not perfunctory — discussion on each of the five clusters, which are all closely interrelated. No model of Security Council reform can be developed, nor can text-based negotiations start, until we have reconciled the key divergences within and between the five clusters. The UfC expects that one meeting of the intergovernmental negotiations will be devoted, as in the past, to each of the five clusters and, thereafter, to their interlinkages across clusters.

We have all agreed that the Summit of the Future, to be held next September, should seek to promote the invigoration of the United Nations principal organs, including reform of the Security Council and the revitalization of the General Assembly, as well as reform of the international financial architecture. My delegation will seek balanced progress on those objectives. Our first priority is the reform of the unequal and historically unjust international financial institutions.

Decision 77/568, adopted by the General Assembly at its previous session on the scope of the Summit of the Future, stipulated in paragraph (e) that in the

preparations for the pact of the future there would be no "duplication" of existing processes. The consideration of Security Council reform must remain exclusively within the intergovernmental negotiations process and observe all the decisions relating to its procedures, including the provisions of resolution 53/30 and decision 62/557. No initiative or proposal on Security Council reform outside the intergovernmental negotiations process will be entertained by our delegation.

The UfC is a pro-reform group. We remain open to a frank and detailed discussion on ways and means of accommodating the aspirations of all Member States; the African, Asian and Latin American groups; as well as other groups such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Group of Arab States and the small island developing States, within an equitable and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. We are convinced that the UfC's proposal can serve as a framework for such an inclusive and equitable reform of the Council.

**Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia): I thank you, Madam for convening this important debate.

I congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We look forward to making further progress.

Finally, a glimpse of humanity prevailed in the Security Council yesterday. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2712 (2023), calling for humanitarian pauses in Gaza. It is a first step by the Council towards a cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire to address the suffering of Palestinians. We commend Malta for its leadership and applaud elected members of the Council for showing commitment and accountability.

However, the journey for the Council to effectively discharge its mandate is a long one. The Council's taking over a month to finally act, while more than 11,000 lives have been lost in Gaza, including thousands of women and children, raises questions on the very being of the Council itself. We must therefore rigorously pursue progress on a long overdue Security Council reform. Against that backdrop, allow me to make three points.

First, stronger political commitment at the highest level is needed for reform. We must get off the intergovernmental negotiations merry-go-round discussion on Security Council reform. While through the intergovernmental negotiations we are seeking

an orderly evolution of the Council, at the present pace people outside this house will soon be seeking a revolution for the Council — a situation that we must avoid. We should use every opportunity to wage war against the stagnation of progress, including through the Summit of the Future for a reinvigorated political commitment to moving forward the reform discussion and strengthening the intergovernmental negotiations process.

Secondly, we need to build a process in the intergovernmental negotiations that allow for substantive progress. We welcome the co-Chairs' initiatives for webcasting the first segments of the intergovernmental negotiations and for the establishment of a repository for the recordings. We need to build a discussion format that allows us to bridge gaps and find convergences, including through the possibility of having targets for progress.

Thirdly, we should make progress on working methods — progress that the Council can provisionally take up to make it more effective, efficient, transparent and reinforcing its relations with the General Assembly. We recognize the issue of recalibrating the Council's representation and the size will in the end require a political decision at the highest levels. Progress on working method should therefore not be held back.

Consensus and mutually agreed solutions are essentials to our work. We urge all Members to show political wisdom, mutual respect and flexibility in discussing the reform under the intergovernmental negotiations. We must avoid a situation where reference to future challenges in our discussions becomes a present challenge as we conclude our work on reform, because we simply take too long in our work.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt endorses the statements made by the representative of Sierra Leone, on behalf of the Group of African States, and the representative of Bahrain, on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see A/78/PV.34).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Tariq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, and Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, on their reappointment as co-Chairs for the second time in a row of the intergovernmental negotiations on reforming and enlarging the Security Council. I thank them for their efforts at the previous session and commend them on the positive results they have achieved.

Our dialogue today comes at a crucial moment. The Organization and all its organs, particularly the Security Council which is the main organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, are facing a real test. For more than a month, the brutal Israeli war machine has continued its systematic bombing and deliberate targeting of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. It continues to commit crime after crime, massacre after massacre, while bombing hospitals and health and educational facilities. It kills journalists; deprives the citizens of the Gaza Strip of all their basic needs for living, including food, water and fuel; and forcibly displaces more than 1.5 million Palestinian citizens. Those acts amount to war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocide that have to date claimed the lives of more than 11,000 Palestinian civilians, most of them women and children, in addition to the tens of thousands of injured and people who have lost their entire families.

Israel has committed and continues to commit such despicable acts as the Council has remained totally paralysed for over a month due to the insistence of certain permanent members on providing Israel with political support for its ongoing crimes. When, after a long wait, the Council finally managed to adopt resolution 2712 (2023), on the situation in Gaza, it failed to call for a complete ceasefire, despite the clear support of more than 120 States for resolution ES-10/22, adopted at the tenth emergency special session on the Palestinian question. The Council's resolution refers merely to extended humanitarian pauses, which, unfortunately, were also rejected by Israel. If we really want to be sincere, we must recognize that the Security Council, in its current situation, is not able to assume its functions.

It is now clearer than ever that the Security Council no longer reflects the balance of forces in our contemporary world and does not represent the voices of millions of people throughout the world whose interests, future and very lives are impacted by the Council's decisions. It is clear that the Security Council now represents only a bygone historical moment. We must overcome that hurdle if we really hope to achieve a Council that is more representative, more democratic and more expressive of the aspirations of the Member States of the Organization. As we are on the threshold of a new round of intergovernmental negotiations for reforming and enlarging the Security Council, I would like to raise the following pivotal issues that Egypt deems necessary if we want to achieve genuine Council reform that restores its importance and effectiveness.

First, it is no longer possible or acceptable for the implementation of Council resolutions to be limited to certain countries at a time when Israel persists in ignoring dozens of Council resolutions, the latest being resolution 2712 (2023), adopted yesterday. Israel indeed announced before the end of the meeting that it did not feel obligated to implement the resolution and that it would pursue its relentless war on civilians in Gaza. The confidence of the international community in the Council is directly linked to its ability to impose the implementation of its own resolutions to maintain international peace and security for all, without distinction or discrimination. No State is above international law. No State enjoys immunity or a special situation allowing it to ignore Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, Egypt believes that the reform of the Security Council will be achieved only through consensus. This is the essential guarantee for achieving an expanded Council that represents the visions of all. That is why we reiterate the importance of decision 62/557, which established the intergovernmental negotiations, and the need to base our work on the five key issues. We call on all States to work to achieve a solution that enjoys maximal political acceptance.

Thirdly, the right of the veto remains the cornerstone of Security Council reform. Indeed, we cannot talk of serious reform unless we resolve the structural failure that grants certain States the exclusive right to block the Council's work. Unless we address that failure there will be no meaningful reform. If we were to retain the right of veto, it would have to be granted to other States. That is the basis of the logical and fair African Common Position, set out in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Africa must obtain two permanent seats with all their prerogatives, including the veto. If we do not resolve the issue of the right of veto, the will of a single permanent member will unfortunately prevail over the will and opinions of an entire continent. The leaders of our African continent have clearly addressed that issue in the decisions taken by consecutive African Summits, most recently in February 2023. Africa will continue to champion this position through the Committee of Ten African States, of which Sierra Leone is coordinator and enjoys our full support as Africans.

Fourthly, we should be cautious in addressing the occasional calls to proceed with practical steps without considering their consequences that threaten to collapse

the negotiations and set them back to where they started. We therefore categorically reject all calls to begin negotiations on a text without consensus on the five key issues. The paradox perhaps lies in the fact that the States that are strongly calling for negotiations on a text are the same States that have been unable to date to present a global model of reform that would rise above their own quest to obtain a permanent seat without providing realistic answers to any of the five questions up for discussion. That is why I say to those States in particular that our ultimate objective is to achieve a more credible, fairer and more effective Council that meets the peoples' aspirations in a United Nations capable of addressing the challenges of our time. The race for permanent seats should not be an objective in itself, especially because some of those States have not presented us with justification of their worthiness for such seats.

Now that the final stages of negotiations have begun on the Summit of the Future, to be held in 2024 to consider the future of our multilateral global system, the United Nations and the Security Council, Egypt will launch discussions within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations as the sole forum for discussing Security Council reform and expansion. We hope that those efforts will resolve the current situation towards a better future for generations to come — a future in which innocent people, including children and women, will not be killed for a crime they did not commit, and where the great Powers or some of them will not be complicit with the perpetrators of those crimes and will not grant them political cover to pursue their crimes. I am talking of a future where all will be equal in rights and obligations, without double standards or discrimination on the basis of religion or ethnicity; a future where the Security Council can truly play its role, above and beyond slogans, speeches and resolutions that are not implemented.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/78/PV.34) and would now like to deliver the following statement in our national capacity.

While some may express regret over the slow progress on reform, the gridlock is not in the format of discussion; rather, it is in the substance. In fact, we have managed to make gradual progress at the intergovernmental negotiations, and the General Assembly has made a consensual decision at the end of

every session to continue discussions in that legitimate forum. Along with several consensus points, such as enhancing the representation of underrepresented regions, we have identified critical areas of divergence at the intergovernmental negotiations. Those include whether to increase permanent members, whether to expand veto powers, and whether to accept a new concept of a Council member representing its region rather than itself, among others. There is no doubt that we need to respond to the urgent and growing calls for Security Council reform, especially ahead of the Summit of the Future. And the only means to achieve that goal are in-depth considerations of those divergences and maximum flexibility from all delegations at the intergovernmental negotiations.

We must not forget that this is a critical issue in which both the future of the United Nations and long-term national interests of Member States are at stake. Attempts to push for a premature or piecemeal conclusion on this matter will only risk deeper divisions among Member States, and even create new ruptures now that the United Nations *raison d'être* is more relevant than ever as it faces intensifying geopolitical tensions and interconnected global crises.

The Republic of Korea's bottom line on Security Council reform is that we cannot accept any expansion of permanent membership, with or without veto power. However, we support the enlargement of elected membership to a reasonable and manageable size, reflecting the increase in the United Nations membership by 80 countries since 1963. Especially in light of the constantly evolving international reality, any fixed composition of new permanent members that we may pick to capture the current realities will only end up being a "still life" of one brief moment of our history.

The bigger problem is the perpetuation of that still life, no matter how much time has passed and how much things have changed after the "snapshot". Indeed, we have already witnessed what happens when we ascribe particular country names to Article 23 of the Charter and give them a forever term. Given the difficulties involved with Charter amendment, we were confronted with an anomaly where we could not even update the correct country names of two of the five permanent members in Article 23. Up to today, the text still reads "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" and "the Republic of China" instead of "the Russian Federation" and the "People's Republic of China".

An increase in only the elected, non-permanent members has been our consistent position over the past 30 years, and we are even more convinced now than we were before. As my President Yoon Suk Yeol mentioned in his speech to the General Assembly in September (see A/78/PV.6), we have reached a paradoxical point where a permanent member is waging war by invading another sovereign nation and receiving arms and ammunition from a regime that has blatantly and persistently violated Security Council resolutions over many years.

We have seen enough of how things can go wrong with a system of permanent or forever membership. As far as I know, there is no teaching in any civilization that says adding problems to problems can lead to a magical solution. When we figure out a problem, a rational course would be to contain it and keep it to a minimum, and not to further proliferate it. We also have to bear in mind that the more permanent members we have, the fewer opportunities there will be for the rest of the United Nations membership to serve on the Council. Meanwhile, my delegation remains flexible on the specific modalities for expanded non-permanent membership.

However, one thing is clear when we read the Charter carefully. The principle of equitable geographical distribution enshrined in Article 23 is the main guidance to the modalities for non-permanent membership. That principle applies only to non-permanent membership for election purposes and was actually put into use when the latest reform of the Security Council took place in 1963. At that time, the General Assembly decided to allocate a total of 10 non-permanent seats across 5 regional groups, in accordance with the principle. As a result, the Group of African States, with 35 member States, got 3 elected seats. The 23 countries of the Asia-Pacific Group of States, the 22 countries of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States and the 19 countries of the Group of Western European and Other States each got 2 seats. The 9 States members of the Group of Eastern European States received 1 seat. In other words, 1 non-permanent seat on the Security Council was given to roughly every 11 Member States — the same ratio for all regional groups. That obvious and objective equation was reactivated when we established the Human Rights Council in 2006. Under resolution 60/251, it was decided that the membership of the Human Rights Council should be based on equitable geographical distribution among five regional groups.



There are 80 more United Nations Member States today than there were in 1963. That includes 31 Asia-Pacific States, 20 African and 11 Latin American and Caribbean countries. In other words, in today's Security Council composition, Asia-Pacific is the most underrepresented among the five regional groups. This is a sound fact that should be duly reflected to achieve equitable geographical distribution in the next reform.

Before concluding, I take this opportunity to thank President Francis for reappointing the excellent co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Tareq Albanai of Kuwait and Ambassador Alexander Marschik of Austria, who are capable of managing this important and sensitive process in good faith. My delegation looks forward to the start of the intergovernmental negotiations, at which we wish to achieve more convergences through frank and constructive exchanges.

**Mr. Vidal (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile thanks you, Madam, for convening this important deliberation today on the reform of the Security Council, in line with the desire to revitalize the Organization.

We wish the greatest success to Ambassadors Alexander Marschik of Austria and Tareq Albanai of Kuwait in their role as co-facilitators of the process of intergovernmental negotiations for the reform of the Security Council at the seventy-eighth session. We also highlight the work of both Ambassadors at the last session; they led substantive discussions on the five key issues set out in decision 62/557, including informal meetings and thematic debates. Other recognized progress achieved at the previous session included the implementation of the public broadcasting of the intergovernmental negotiations proceedings, their recording and the creation of a website to access the documents issued, including the statements made in the room. We trust that this momentum will be maintained at the meetings that will be scheduled soon, and especially that they will continue to be analytical, constructive and directed to the substance of the matter.

We dare to say that the co-facilitators were able to revitalize the intergovernmental negotiations process. We call on all to avoid rhetoric, emphasize convergence over differences and thereby achieve reform with the objective of updating the Security Council and thus curbing the existing inequalities between States.

For Chile, the defence and strengthening of multilateralism will continue to be a priority in which the reform of the Security Council is critical not only

to legitimizing decisions on international peace and security, but also to the capacity of the United Nations to arrive on time on the ground and carry out its principal function — the effective protection of civilians and those who are disproportionately impacted by conflicts and new threats, including women and children.

We highlight the greater commitment to and participation of the Member States in achieving a reform of the Security Council and its working methods within a reasonable time frame. This cannot continue to be postponed.

Regarding the Summit of the Future, we trust that the intergovernmental negotiations co-facilitators will make substantial contributions to the process. It is clear that the process is different, parallel to and separate from *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), but they should reinforce each other and avoid any duplication.

I have already commented on some of the concrete achievements made at the seventy-seventh session. I would like to focus on two initiatives that could pave the way for Security Council reform: first, establishing a framework to improve communication between the Chair of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the intergovernmental negotiations co-facilitators; and secondly, encourage interaction between civil society and Member States to generate ideas about the intergovernmental negotiations process.

In that sense, we also highlight the latest version of the co-facilitators' revised elements paper on convergences and divergences on the issue of equitable representation in the Security Council and the increase in the number of its members and other related matters. As stated in the letter, we seek an exchange of opinions to be generated on the proposals that the States and groups present. Discussions should be held in which the different models are considered in depth, which would allow a better understanding of the concepts used, their repercussions and consequences. In that regard, we take this opportunity to thank Mexico and Liechtenstein for their contributions.

We observe a growing number of conflicts and threats to international peace and security, with open crises on several fronts. It is therefore essential that the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, fulfil their responsibility. We advocate for a rational, more representative, participatory, democratic, transparent, efficient and effective Security Council,

with a known and accountable work methodology. We emphasize that the use of any veto to prevent the action of the Security Council and hinder its function is unacceptable. In the past 2 years, the right of veto has been exercised 10 times.

Chile believes that the reform of the Security Council should seek to grant equitable representation to said organ so that it reflects current geopolitical realities. We support the expansion of its membership; this could be done in its two categories, but without extending the use of the veto to any and without predetermining the exact number of the new members. We must always keep in mind that any increase should favour developing countries.

In conclusion, we reiterate that if this reform is to be successful, substantive and lasting, broad and significant support from the membership is necessary. It is evident that its result will impact the entire United Nations system and multilateralism.

**Mr. Zhang Jun (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Madam, for convening today's meeting.

I congratulate Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, on assuming once again the co-chairmanship of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. During their co-chairmanship of the negotiations at the previous session, they made positive contributions to promoting consensus-building and narrowing differences among Member States, and won the trust and support of the broad membership. China appreciates this. We stand ready to continue to communicate and cooperate with the two co-Chairs in full support of the discharge of their duties, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The world today is turbulent. The cause of peace and development is facing myriad challenges. The broad membership strongly expects the Security Council to demonstrate responsibility, fulfil its mandate and duties, and play its due role in maintaining international peace and security. Regrettably, the functioning of the Council is currently deeply affected by geopolitical confrontation, power politics and double standards, among others. The atmosphere of unity and cooperation is severely impacted and its cohesion and ability to act are seriously undermined.

This has also spurred more in-depth reflection on the part of the international community on the institutional design and reform orientation of the Security Council, and more profound understanding of the complexity and sensitivity of Security Council reform. China, like other Member States, calls for and supports the comprehensive, meaningful and systematic reform of the Council to ensure that it will effectively fulfil its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, respond in a timely manner to the expectations of the international community and strongly uphold international peace and security. Here, I wish to reiterate the following four principles of reform.

First, the reform should be anchored in fundamental issues. Over the 78 years since its inception, the Security Council has played an irreplaceable role in ending conflicts and preventing war. Meanwhile, the Council's problems must be faced squarely. The most fundamental of those is its unjust composition, inadequate representation and unreasonable structure, where a single block has long dominated the Council's affairs. Only by grasping the root causes will we be able to have effective solutions and targeted reform.

Secondly, the reform must follow the right direction. The Security Council is the core of the collective security mechanism. It must reflect reality and future trends of international politics and embody the world's historical trends of multipolarity, the democratization of international relations, and the collective rise of the global South. The only right direction for Security Council reform is to effectively increase the representation and voice of developing countries, which is the common aspiration of the vast majority of Member States. Any reform deviating from this direction is unacceptable.

Thirdly, a systematic approach should be followed in the reform. The Security Council is an integral part of the United Nations-centred multilateral system. The problems in the Council are to a certain extent the concentrated manifestations of an ineffective global governance system and ever-growing governance deficits. If Council reform is to make meaningful progress, it must be advanced in an integrated manner within the general framework of the overall reform of the United Nations and the global governance system, and it is imperative to pursue a packaged solution based on the five clusters of key issues related to the reform.

Fourthly, broad consensus must be pursued in the reform. Council reform concerns the fundamental interests of Member States and the adjustment of the global governance system; a change to any part will affect the whole. There are no simple solutions to complex problems. Any reform proposal must balance the concerns of all parties and be able to stand the test of time and history. We stress the importance of constantly building consensus and oppose artificially forcing through reform proposals, undermining unity among Member States and creating new antagonism and problems.

*Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

For years, the intergovernmental negotiations have played an irreplaceable role in facilitating in-depth exchanges of views among Member States on Council reform and the gradual building of consensus. China supports Member States in continuing to use the intergovernmental negotiations platform for further discussions on reform ideas and proposals, and looks forward to greater consensus and new outcomes under the leadership of the co-Chairs. In light of the work ahead, I wish to make the following observations.

First, the role of the intergovernmental negotiations as the main channel for discussing Security Council reform should be firmly upheld. Despite complaints from some Member States on the slow progress of the intergovernmental negotiations, it is undeniable that the negotiations remain the only General Assembly-mandated platform enjoying the wide recognition of the Member States. Any joint action concerning Security Council reform under the United Nations framework should be discussed and decided through the channel of the intergovernmental negotiations. We must refrain from starting a new process. Whether the Summit of the Future will include Security Council reform in its agenda and whether consensus language will be reached must also be decided by the intergovernmental negotiations.

Secondly, parties still have major differences on the overall direction and basic principles of the reform. Most Member States share the view that conditions are not yet ripe for launching text-based negotiations. I note that the co-Chairs have encouraged major interest groups to submit written proposals for reform and plan to discuss them one by one. Such a practice is an attempt at innovation in the ways discussions are held within the intergovernmental negotiations, but that does not imply the formulation of a single negotiation text; still less does it launch text-based negotiations.

Thirdly, the five clusters are the key issues for Security Council reform clearly provided for by decision 62/557 and are the core agenda for reform. Member States have many concerns on the five clusters. The major interest groups are entrenched in their positions. The intergovernmental negotiations need sufficient time for in-depth discussions. The five clusters are closely interrelated. China firmly opposes a piecemeal approach of separate steps and attempts by a small number of countries to force through resolutions on expanding the two categories in the General Assembly.

Fourthly, Security Council reform must truly embody international fairness and justice. In its coming period, the intergovernmental negotiations should focus on how to increase the representation and voice of developing countries; how to redress as a priority the historical injustices suffered by Africa; and how to bring more countries with independent foreign policies and justice positions into the Council, among others. China has already announced that it supports special arrangements for prioritizing the aspirations of Africa. I wish to stress that this fully demonstrates China's strong support for redressing the historical injustices suffered by Africa.

Fifth, Security Council reform should both focus on top design on the intergovernmental negotiations platform and constantly improve the role and efficiency of the Council, based on the current situation. Council members have made many attempts to improve the Council's working methods and reached much consensus. China, as a member of the Council and its President this month, will actively work for the Council to make continued efforts in that regard, develop good practices and inject new momentum into the relevant discussions within the intergovernmental negotiations. China stands ready to join hands with all parties to engage constructively in the intergovernmental negotiations at this session and to continue to work for reform ideas that enjoy broad support and will make the Council more democratic, authoritative and efficient, so as to contribute positively to building a just and equitable global governance system.

**Mr. Önal (Türkiye):** We appreciate the engagement of the President of the General Assembly in the process and welcome the reappointment of the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait as the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations process. They have our full support in discharging their crucial task of seeking convergences on this important matter.

Türkiye aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/78/PV.34). I would also like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The need for Security Council reform is undeniable and undeferrable. What has recently transpired in the Security Council attests to that fact. Due to its inherent paralysis, the Security Council has failed to deliver in terms of establishing a ceasefire and stopping the unspeakable human suffering in Gaza. The reform process needs to address and eliminate the current shortcomings of the Security Council. It must reconcile the objectives of equitable and democratic representation with those of effectiveness and efficiency without sacrificing one objective for the sake of the other. That entails a comprehensive and inclusive approach that would benefit all Member States and gain their support and that would emphasize and prioritize the common good over individual national interests.

As we have come to emphasize, we believe that permanent membership status, with or without the veto power, is undemocratic and that the expansion of the Council should be envisaged only in elected membership, based on a just system of rotation and regional representation. Ideally, the right of veto should also be lifted; at the minimum, its use should be limited. In that connection, coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be strengthened.

If the reform process is to advance, the constructive engagement of all members is needed. That can be achieved through the intergovernmental negotiations, the sole legitimate platform to handle this delicate matter. We welcome the decision that the discussions in the intergovernmental negotiations will be webcast. This will ensure that international public opinion can be informed about the positions of all groups, and it will certainly have a positive effect on our deliberations.

In view of the urgency and critical importance of the reform of the Security Council, Türkiye will be actively engaged in the intergovernmental negotiations process and will try to bring added value to efforts aimed at creating compromises and convergences.

**Mr. Lagdameo** (Philippines): I thank you, Madam, for convening this important debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council.

The Philippines joins other Member States in commending Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Mr. Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, for their excellent stewardship as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. The Philippines reiterates its support for this process and to the co-facilitators as we continue to engage on Security Council reform, which is a fundamental pillar in strengthening multilateralism.

In the last round of the intergovernmental negotiations process, we welcomed the introduction of webcasting and the beginning of a digital repository for the intergovernmental negotiations process, which contributed to strengthening transparency in this endeavour. For the steps towards more progress in the intergovernmental negotiations, the Philippines would like to reiterate the following as we start another round of intergovernmental negotiations on issues related to Security Council reform.

First, the enlargement of the Security Council, with due regard for equitable and balanced geographical distribution, is long overdue. The Security Council has been in its present form since 1966. An expanded and more representative Security Council should be realized to make it more responsive to the rapidly evolving global security architecture and twenty-first century geopolitical realities. The Philippines reiterates its position that the most crucial issue is determining the size of an enlarged Security Council and balancing the same with promoting efficiency in its working methods.

Secondly, a new Security Council structure with a balanced increase in non-permanent members, potentially 27, reflecting the needs of underrepresented regions, should be explored. That approach would ensure inclusivity while maintaining the Council's effectiveness in decision-making. The Philippines is open to participating in discussions concerning the composition of permanent members on the Security Council. The new Security Council should address existing deficiencies in the equitable representation of regions not adequately represented in the Security Council, including Africa, Latin America and the Asia-Pacific. The increase in membership should allow for the fair and equitable representation of all regional groups.

As we consider various formulations, the expanded Security Council should ensure a balance between its representativeness and effectiveness in dealing with



global issues and concerns. The new Security Council should not just improve representation, but should be able to act swiftly and decisively, with the highest standards of accountability, coherence, transparency and fidelity to the trust accorded to it by the greater United Nations membership.

Thirdly, the veto power in its current form often hinders the Council's ability to act swiftly on critical issues. The Security Council's difficulties in handling crises such as those in Myanmar in 2021, Russia-Ukraine in 2022 and Israel-Hamas in 2023 reflect a more polarized world and the conflicting interests of its permanent members. That highlights the urgent need for reforms, especially in the veto process, to better address global conflicts. The veto should not paralyse the Security Council in dealing with issues concerning peace and war. No Member State should be granted the special privilege to exercise the veto power, as it is in direct contravention of the principle of the sovereign equality of all United Nations Member States, as enshrined in the Charter.

While it will be a challenge to remove the veto privileges of the permanent members, we should consider the need to curtail its exercise or use. We reiterate our support to the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct and the French-Mexican initiative, which spell out exceptions to the use of the veto power. However, so long as the exercise of the veto power is not curtailed, the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council are under threat. The exercise of the veto power will be fundamental in reforming the working methods and ensuring the effectiveness of an expanded Security Council.

Fourthly, as part of improving the working methods of the Security Council, the Council should aim at ensuring more participation by non-members in the Security Council's decision-making process. There should be more transparency and accountability of the Security Council to non-members. The Security Council's rules of procedure remain provisional. We need the rules to be more predictable and transparent, which means specific actions are to be taken under specific circumstances.

Fifthly, we note the proposal to move towards text-based negotiations in the next round of engagements on Security Council reform. In 2021, the Philippines took the position that while some Member States remained reluctant to negotiate a single text offering

a package of possible agreements on Security Council reform, having one document to look at would help bring a sense of movement and progress after years of discussions over the same clusters of Security Council reform topics. What may be considered as an option at this point is adopting a time-bound, flexible approach to negotiations. That could include informal dialogues and thematic debates, progressing to non-binding brainstorming sessions, and eventually to more formal methods as consensus builds, ensuring a dynamic and responsive negotiation process.

In the spirit of advancing discussions on Security Council reform, we recognize the differing perspectives regarding attribution and recordkeeping in our deliberations. We propose that the records of those discussions, while not attributing specific statements to individual nations or groups, should be sufficiently detailed to reflect the breadth and depth of the conversations, ensuring that all perspectives are represented and acknowledged. That method is aimed fostering an environment of trust and mutual respect, crucial for meaningful progress in our negotiations.

Finally, the Philippines reiterates its position that Security Council reform should be pursued in conjunction with the ongoing efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, especially with respect to enhancing the role of the Assembly in terms of decision-making on matters affecting international peace and security. A reformed and expanded Security Council and a revitalized General Assembly are strategic pillars of a more effective and efficient multilateralism.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): In a turbulent international context, it remains our responsibility to continue to build the conditions for peace in the service of the objectives pursued by the United Nations. That is why we need Security Council reform. It is time to give the new impetus to that imperative. The Secretary-General has supported this commitment in his joint programme. The Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, also offers us an opportunity to work to that end. Members may rest assured that France remains fully committed to that objective.

Reform of the Security Council is essential to its authority and representativeness; it must preserve the Council's executive and decision-making nature. The co-facilitators have spared no effort to enable the adoption of useful documents. We welcome their

decision to retransmit the part relating to interventions online in order to allow as many delegations as possible to participate in the process and in complete transparency.

This new round of intergovernmental negotiations must lead to tangible and substantial results. France, like a large majority of delegations, believes that negotiations must be launched on the basis of a draft text. The objective now is to arrive at a single document. We welcome the early appointment of co-facilitators, and we congratulate Ambassadors Marschik and Albanai on their appointment. They should now be given a clear mandate.

France's position is constant and well known. We want the Council to be more representative of today's world, in a way that further strengthens its authority, legitimacy and effectiveness. We must take into account the emergence of new Powers that have the will and the capacity to assume the responsibility of a permanent presence in the Security Council and which are, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, able to make an important contribution to the action of the Council.

In order to preserve its executive and operational nature, an enlarged Council could therefore have up to 25 members, including new permanent and non-permanent members. France supports the candidacy of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan as permanent members. We also want a strengthened presence of African countries, including among the permanent members. The remaining seats must be allocated in order to obtain equitable geographical representation.

The objective is twofold. We must, on the one hand, consolidate the legitimacy of the Security Council and, on the other, strengthen its capacity to fully assume its responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security. It was in that spirit that several years ago France proposed that the five permanent members of the Council voluntarily and collectively suspend the use of the veto in the event of mass atrocities. That voluntary approach requires not a revision of the Charter but a political commitment from permanent members.

Today that initiative, which we are carrying out jointly with Mexico, is supported by 106 countries. We call on all Member States that have not done so to support the initiative in order to quickly reach the symbolic two-thirds mark of the General Assembly. We also renew our desire to continue the discussion on this proposal with the other permanent members of the Council.

**Mr. Abd Karim (Malaysia):** Please allow me to thank the co-Chairs — Ambassador Tareq Albanai of Kuwait Ambassador Alexander Marschik of Austria — for their commitment and leadership in steering the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the seventy-seventh session. Malaysia looks forward to continuing our cooperation with the co-Chairs throughout the seventy-eighth session.

Malaysia welcomes the co-Chairs' revised elements paper on convergences and divergences on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. My delegation wishes to highlight our views on the elements paper, as follows.

First, we note that the elements paper presented a faithful reflection of Member States' positions, with a clear distinction between convergences and divergences. We believe that this approach provides clarity and serves as a useful guide for delegations to undertake negotiations next year. Malaysia also sees the elements paper as a cogent reference point that could be considered for subsequent discussions on the important subject of United Nations reform.

Secondly, Malaysia notes that the co-Chairs have invited think tanks and held informal meetings with present and former Chairs of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We welcome those engagements. They add value to our deliberations while maintaining the intergovernmental nature of this process.

Thirdly, Malaysia particularly supports the introduction of webcasting the intergovernmental negotiations sessions. That is essential in promoting openness and transparency in the reform process.

Fourthly, we also commend the strong emphasis on participation, transparency and accountability that we have seen throughout the process led by the co-Chairs. Malaysia hopes that those important principles will be embraced by all delegations throughout our negotiations in the current session.

The Security Council carries on its shoulder a most important responsibility, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security. Its decisions, omissions, successes and failures reverberate beyond the walls of the Security Council Chamber. The carnage and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza are an example of those omissions and failures. Over the past month,

over 11,000 Palestinians have been killed. More than 4,600 children have been inhumanely murdered. Over a million Palestinians in Gaza have been displaced from their homes. They are being denied food, water, shelter and their fundamental human rights. Regrettably, all this had to happen before the Council could act, and it continues to happen.

That is why Malaysia joins other Member States in consistently calling for reform of the Security Council. We want to ensure that its members are able to effectively fulfil their role as custodians of international peace and security. We want to see a Security Council that could better respond to current and future challenges. Malaysia supports a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, in terms of both its working methods and the expansion of its membership. My delegation maintains its call for the veto to be regulated, if not abolished, because it is ineffective and undemocratic. We see the veto in its current form as an obstacle to greater accountability and transparency in how the Security Council conducts its business. It is morally indefensible for one permanent member of the Security Council to overrule the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Member States. Unfortunately, we see that happen time and time again.

We support an equitable and fair regional representation in a reformed Security Council. The world has changed since 1945, when the United Nations was formed and the Charter was signed. There were 51 State Member of the United Nations at the time, while currently there are 193. The Security Council should be more representative if it is to remain effective, legitimate and relevant in the future.

Malaysia's approach to the reform process has always been pragmatic and objective. We have been consistent in advocating for an inclusive and transparent reform process that is guided by consultation and dialogue among Member States. We remain convinced that a reformed Council will enjoy the widest possible acceptance among Member States.

Reforming the Council today will have a consequential impact on the future generations. There are voices demanding an effective and efficient Security Council to better respond to the needs of today's world. In that regard, we urge all Member States to demonstrate openness, flexibility, and greater political will to work towards a mutually acceptable conclusion in the interest of international peace, security and prosperity.

Let me conclude by assuring Members of Malaysia's commitment to moving this process forward.

**Mr. Bendjama** (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank President Francis for convening the annual debate on this important topic. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, and Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process at the seventy-eighth session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement of the Group of African States, as delivered by our colleague Ambassador Kpukumu, and the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States by our colleague Ambassador Alrowaiei (see A/78/PV.34). I would also like to make the following comments in my national capacity.

First, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the key principle of the sovereign equality of States must remain our watchword and the foundation for our discussions so that we can bring about a genuine, comprehensive and inclusive reform of the Security Council.

Second, the intergovernmental negotiations must remain the only body for discussions on Security Council reform, in line with decision 62/557.

Third, Security Council reform must include all substantive issues, in particular its composition, its regional representation, its programme of work, its methods of work and its decision-making process, including the critical issue of the right of veto.

Fourth, the link between the five negotiating clusters requires us to respect the balance between the different themes pertaining to an overall reform of the Security Council, and to not prioritize one issue or theme at the expense of others. Unfortunately, the revised paper that has been put forward by the co-Chairs on the elements of convergence and divergence does not fully take into account all of the proposals and positions of Member States. As a result, it cannot validly be considered as a document for our negotiations.

Fifth, we believe that the framework document of 2015 should remain the only main document of reference for our discussions within the intergovernmental negotiations, because it incorporates the positions and proposals made by some 120 Member States, including the African Common Position.

Sixth, any hasty initiative that would require Member States — on the pretext of energizing the

intergovernmental negotiations process — to undertake discussions on the basis of texts that have not been agreed upon by consensus could be counterproductive and exacerbate the ambitions and differences in opinion at the forthcoming negotiation.

Seventh, the previous discussions on Security Council reform highlighted the need to swiftly meet the legitimate expectations of Member States, in particular African countries, so as to repair the historic injustice inflicted upon Africa. It is unjust and unacceptable that Africa remains excluded from the decision-making processes that often intimately concern our continent.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country's commitment to the African Common Position, as laid out in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. Acting in line with this is the only way to end the historic injustice inflicted upon Africa. Today Africa must be able to play its full role on the international stage, notably through African representation in the category of permanent membership, with all rights and prerogatives enjoyed by the current members, including the right of the veto, if the latter is preserved, and a tangible strengthening of that representation in the category of non-permanent membership as well.

**Mr. Diome** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sierra Leone, Coordinator of the Committee of Ten (C-10), on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/78/PV.34), and would like to say a few words in its national capacity.

“Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all”, the theme of the current session of the General Assembly, could not be more evocative of the reasons that make the reform of the Security Council necessary in view of the multifaceted crises that we have experienced in recent years.

Added to this is the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which has reached unsustainable levels and led to the deaths of more than 11,000 people, including 5,000 children, and some 100 United Nations humanitarian personnel. This underlines the full relevance of resolution ES-10/21 of 27 October, adopted by an overwhelming majority at the tenth special emergency session on the illegal measures taken by the Israeli authorities in East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

By adopting, in turn, resolution 2712 (2023) yesterday, after four unsuccessful attempts, the Council removed a major obstacle to the manifestation of international solidarity with the Gazan population. Let us hope that the resolution can be implemented diligently to allow immediate, complete, sustainable, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip. However, the planned humanitarian pauses can never replace a ceasefire, which remains more necessary than ever.

The worrisome increase in tensions observed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has brought to the forefront an issue that should never have been set aside and that, above all, should never have remained pending for so long. Seventy-five years ago, the Security Council adopted its first resolution on the Palestinian question (resolution 42 (1948). Until yesterday, the last resolution it had adopted on this issue was in 2016 (resolution 2334 (2016)), having remained silent until then, while the two-State solution was undermined a little more every day in the same time frame. That is why this question, so emblematic of international relations, illustrates in many respects the need to reform a Council that can embody collective security only by guaranteeing in particular the rights of peoples to self-determination, and their own States. That is why my delegation endorses the call of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism to make the Security Council a fairer and more representative organ, within the framework of the new agenda for peace. In the context of the Summit of the Future, it is also important that the pact for the future reflect the importance of this process.

We are meeting again to discuss a reform that is not making sufficient progress, to the dissatisfaction of all. However, my delegation remains convinced that the intergovernmental negotiations are the ideal forum to achieve our supposedly common ambition. Senegal would therefore like to welcome the reappointment of Ambassador Alexander Marschik and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait, respectively, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations for the seventy-eighth session. My delegation would like to praise the dynamic and innovative approach of the co-Chairs, who have sought to create complementary spaces for discussion, while introducing formal innovations contributing to the accessibility and publicity of our debates. They can once again count on the constructive support of Senegal for this session.



Ahead of our upcoming discussions, my delegation would like to share a few messages:

First, Senegal welcomes the growing support for African demands, as illustrated by the outgoing co-Chairs' paper. My delegation is grateful to the States and interest groups that have spoken out in favour of the African Common Position and urges other stakeholders to do the same. In that respect, Africa's inclusion in the permanent category would contribute to the repair of a historical injustice. In addition to the two additional non-permanent seats, the continent must be granted two permanent seats to be selected by the African Union, with a view to their election by the General Assembly.

Secondly, it therefore follows that for my delegation, the only valid reform model is one that includes an expansion of the permanent category and strengthens the principle of regional representation. My delegation believes that those two elements are compatible. This is the orientation of the Common African Position, enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Thirdly, viewing the veto issue as a matter of privilege does not do justice to those who are concerned that within the Council, States may sit stripped of the attributes that should be theirs by right. As long as the veto exists, the new permanent members must be able to assume all of their responsibilities. That being said, my delegation continues to support, including as a member of the C-10, the general abolition of the veto. It is in this vein that Senegal supports the Franco-Mexican initiative to limit the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

Fourthly, the interconnections between the five aspects of reform require overall and decompartmentalized negotiation. Our work must at the same time benefit the working methods of the Council and the deepening of its relationship with the General Assembly, while respecting their shared and respective skills. In that regard, the Assembly cannot be a vain sounding board for the Council's dissonances. As the main deliberative body of the United Nations, it must be able to better guide and support the action of the Council.

In that vein, it is also important to correct, through a review of the Council's working methods, the asymmetries between permanent and non-permanent members, particularly in terms of initiative, institutional memory and decision-making. In that regard, my delegation would like to make special mention of Malta and the nine other members of the group of elected

members of the Council, whose efforts illustrate the invaluable contribution of non-permanent members to the work of the Council.

Finally, an agreement in principle on the elements of reform would facilitate any textual negotiation. It is therefore important to support efforts aimed at better understanding the positions of the various stakeholders. On this point, the 2015 framework document remains an excellent reference on which any negotiation should be based.

**Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino): I wish to thank President Francis for convening this important debate. We appreciate his commitment to advancing the Security Council reform process and we thank him for reappointing competent and skilful permanent representatives early on in the process. San Marino stands ready to constructively support his actions and looks forward to cooperating with them in full transparency and willingness to make progress.

San Marino endorses the statement previously made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group (see A/78/PV.34), and now I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

We all know that a credible reform of the Security Council requires a comprehensive approach, and that Member States must drive the negotiations. We believe that the intergovernmental negotiations are the right forum for negotiations, as they allow a membership-driven process. In accordance with decision 62/557, the intergovernmental negotiations have so far ensured an open, transparent and inclusive process and the participation of all United Nations Member States. San Marino believes that the intergovernmental negotiations constitute the most legitimate and appropriate setting for the discussion on the reform of the Security Council.

In our view, the difficulties in achieving a credible reform are dependent not on the format of the intergovernmental negotiations but on the substantial divergences of the positions on the table. We will engage in a new session of the intergovernmental negotiations in a constructive manner, committing ourselves to integrating the principle of democracy, accountability and transparency in a new reformed Security Council.

My country strongly supports the principle that all geographical groups must be fairly represented. San Marino believes that we need to correct the unjust underrepresentation of different regional groups on the Security Council. In fact, a more democratic,

representative, accountable and inclusive Security Council would be a powerful tool for the entire membership and would thus reinforce multilateralism. A fairer representation in the Council of the African continent, Arab countries, small island States, developing States and other groups of countries that are underrepresented would also represent a great opportunity to advance multilateralism in the maintenance of peace and security.

It is our understanding that the UfC proposal pertaining to the creation of long-term, re-electable seats would not only be an opportunity for promoting a more equitable representation of the Security Council among regional groups, but also could serve as a compromise solution by meeting the aspirations of those countries that wish to serve longer in the Council. At the same time, through the periodic election of its new members, the Security Council would certainly be more democratic and accountable.

In conclusion, I believe that it is more important than ever to continue to work together and try to find commonalities among us, and thus forge a stronger political consensus on this vital reform.

**Ms. Bryant** (Australia): We live in challenging times, with rising conflicts and instability putting pressure on the multilateral system. It is at these times that we look to the Security Council to effectively respond. However, without urgent reform, the Council risks failing to deliver on its mandate to uphold international peace and security. It is our responsibility as Member States to advocate for a Council that is fit for purpose and able to manage complex, multifaceted challenges.

Australia reiterates its calls for reform based on equitable representation, transparency and accountability. The Security Council must reflect the diverse world we live in and would benefit from views of a greater proportion of the world's population. We must secure greater permanent and non-permanent representation for Africa, Latin America and Asia. Similarly, the Council must be more accountable to Member States. We want to see greater engagement between Council members and the broader United Nations architecture to inform Council discussions on significant challenges facing all of us. Australia looks forward to strengthening ties between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) when we take up a seat on the PBC in 2025. Finally, better standards need to be developed on the use of the veto so that its use is more transparent and limited.

We commend the work of Member States such as Mexico, France and Liechtenstein, which have brought

forward tangible proposals that bring us closer to our shared goal of Security Council reform. Australia stands ready to engage proactively on new proposals and urges Members to move to text-based negotiations to maintain momentum. Text-based negotiations help to build consensus by allowing delegations to engage openly, improving understanding of various positions and the prospects of finding a common ground, which so many Member States expressly and urgently want. We must reaffirm our commitment to building a more effective and capable Security Council; our future security and prosperity depend on it.

**Mr. Nguyen** (Viet Nam): I would like to thank President Francis for convening this important meeting at a very critical juncture. Yesterday, the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2712 (2023), its first on the current situation in Gaza, brought some sense of hope for the delivery of more humanitarian relief into the conflict zone. That overdue outcome, while welcomed by the international community, falls short of our expectations of the Council's capacity to address the situation in its entirety. It remains inexplicable to many why it took that most exclusive and powerful organ more than five weeks, and after more than 10,000 innocent lives had been lost, to finally reach an agreement of limited scope on the current crisis.

What we have witnessed over the past 40 days more than ever underscores the urgent need to reform the Security Council. In order to be more effective in discharging its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council needs to be more representative, accountable and responsive. To that end, my delegation would like to highlight the following points:

First, the Security Council should be transformed to adapt and ensure its relevance to today's realities. Since the last and only time the Council underwent major reform nearly six decades ago, the United Nations membership has grown by almost 80 countries. We are convinced that the Council should be expanded in both categories, permanent and non-permanent membership, to ensure enhanced representativeness. More seats should be allocated to the most under-represented regions, especially developing countries in Africa and the Asia-Pacific.

Secondly, the Security Council's expansion should be coupled with improvements in its working methods with a view to ensuring greater democracy, transparency and efficiency to better execute the Council's mandate.

We renew our long-standing call for more substantive consultations both within the Council and with relevant external bodies. The Council should conduct more public meetings. Closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum and as exceptions.

Coordination between the Council and other principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, must be further strengthened, including through more regular consultations and reports, especially on matters that concern the majority of the wider United Nations membership. The Council should also consult more with the troop- and police-contributing countries on issues related to the United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as further strengthen cooperation with regional organizations when addressing issues related to them. And drawing from recent events, the use of the veto should be restrained and limited to only measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, Viet Nam supports all meaningful measures to advance the work of the intergovernmental negotiations as a Member State-driven process, including the introduction of additional features present in the other United Nations negotiation processes. In that regard, we highly appreciate the initiatives that have been brought into practice over the past year, including the webcasting of meetings and the repository website dedicated to the intergovernmental negotiations. We also welcome the convening of numerous “unformals” and open-house meetings to facilitate candid discussions and instil fresh ideas into the process.

My delegation takes this opportunity congratulate Ambassador Alexander Marschik of Austria and Ambassador Tareq Albanai of Kuwait for their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations at the seventy-eighth session. We are confident that under their able leadership and hard work, the intergovernmental negotiations will be able to carry the momentum gained from their successful chairmanship last year into the new session.

To conclude, let me reaffirm Viet Nam’s full support and unwavering commitment to engage constructively to this very important process.

**Mr. Karimi Magham** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to express my delegation’s gratitude for the convening of this meeting to allow for a comprehensive debate on our way towards deliberate discussions on Security Council reform. We would also wish to congratulate Ambassador Alexander Marschik,

Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, on their reappointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations.

We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the United Nations system. My delegation considers Security Council reform to be a crucial component of the wider ambitions for reforming the United Nations system, improving global governance and reinvigorating multilateralism. It is also a means of strengthening democratic values and promoting the concept of equality among nations. It is an occasion to uphold the universal values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to ensure that our Organization is fit for its purpose.

This critical reform is based on the assumption that the Security Council has failed to keep up with global developments. It is a well-known fact that the current structure of the Council does not reflect the realities of the international community. Safeguarding the credibility of the Security Council necessitates the unequivocal rejection of any attempts to manipulate it as a means to pursue national political interests and agendas. Indeed, the current unfortunate status of the international community and, most notably, the Security Council’s massive failure to address and respond to the ongoing war crimes of the Israeli regime against the Palestinian people are a clear indication of the necessity for material change in that organ.

Deliberate attacks on civilians are reprehensible crimes. Nothing can justify war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Regrettably, however, none of those atrocities has received any concrete reaction from the Security Council. It is ultimately shameful that, despite the concrete demands of the international community, one permanent member of the Security Council has been impeding and continues to impede the establishment of a durable ceasefire, including by exercising the veto power. Indeed, that privilege, which was supposed to contribute to the maintenance of peace, has now enabled the Israeli regime to continue its war crimes in Gaza. The Israeli regime commits those atrocities in full view of the international community, knowing well that it will not face any consequences.

Security Council resolution 2712 (2023), adopted just yesterday, underscores the need for unhindered humanitarian access for Palestinians. However, we contend that the resolution falls short and does not adequately address the dire humanitarian crisis resulting from the egregious crimes committed by the Israeli

regime against the Palestinian people. The resolution lacks a crucial element necessary to halt Israel's ongoing atrocities against innocent individuals in the Gaza Strip. In our view, the Council should have adopted a more robust resolution urging the Israeli regime to immediately cease hostilities and establish a durable and urgent ceasefire. The Council could have determined that the unprecedented humanitarian crisis provoked by the Israeli regime constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and we need a binding leverage to facilitate the enforcement of its resolutions.

That is why most of the Member States have persistently urged the Council's comprehensive reform and why the Council's current deficiencies and existing inequalities must be properly addressed if and only if it is to serve and protect the international community. Against that backdrop, my delegation would like to emphasize the work of the intergovernmental negotiations and that the objective of reform is to reconstruct the Security Council into a truly representative, effective and, above all, rules-based and accountable organ that serves the common interest of the Organization's entire membership.

Towards those aims, Iran supports Council enlargement as a means of rectifying existing inequalities in regional representation. The existing inequalities must be addressed both among and within the regions, as they are both necessary and complementary. Further, we fully support addressing historical injustices towards the developing world, particularly in Africa. The five clusters of Security Council reform are interconnected and cannot be examined in isolation. Emphasizing the expansion of permanent and non-permanent membership without considering the broader context of the five reform clusters risks oversimplifying and misrepresenting the positions of Member States.

The veto authority, which has also consistently drawn criticism from a large majority of Member States, should continue to be a key topic of discussion. Iran supports the calls for a revision of the Council's working methods to ensure that it acts in strict line with international law, particularly the United Nations Charter. The Security Council's Chapter VII powers must not be used disproportionately, prematurely, excessively or rapidly. The process must remain inclusive and transparent, with the members taking the lead. Meanwhile, the United Nations bodies should refrain from interfering in each other's competencies and responsibilities. Let us not forget that the United Nations Charter is deemed to be a yardstick in that regard.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its support for the continuation of open, transparent, inclusive and membership-driven deliberations within the intergovernmental negotiations. Meanwhile, we believe that ideas for setting artificial deadlines for its work are counterproductive. We insist that any possible decision, procedural or substantive, at any stage must be adopted only by consensus. My Government also does not support text-based negotiations at this stage, as we believe that for now they are both impractical and premature. My delegation looks forward to contributing actively and constructively to the work of the intergovernmental negotiations.

**Mr. Molla** (Bangladesh): I thank President Francis for convening this annual debate, especially at a time when we have, to our collective dismay, revealed the Security Council's glaring ineffectiveness in maintaining international peace and security.

Allow me to begin by commending Ambassador Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Ambassador Tareq Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, for their excellent stewardship of the intergovernmental negotiations at the previous session. I also congratulate them on their reappointment as the co-Chairs of that important process. We are confident that under their able leadership, we will be able to instil new life into the process.

The Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has not lived up to expectations. The persistent inaction of the Security Council in the face of the ongoing atrocities in Gaza is a stark reminder of the need for immediate and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The Security Council's utter failure to fulfil its primary responsibility has had devastating consequences for the Palestinian people, who have endured years of violence and oppression.

The Security Council's inaction in Gaza is not an isolated incident. It is a pattern that has been repeated time and again in conflicts around the world. The Council's failure to act decisively to prevent the tragic loss of innocent lives, particularly those of children and women, is a blatant affront to the very principles upon which the Organization was founded. The Council's current structure, rooted in the post-Second World War era, no longer reflects the realities of the twenty-first century.

Almost 18 years have passed since world leaders expressed their support for early reform of the Council as an essential element in the overall reform of the



Organization, and 14 years since the launch of the intergovernmental negotiations process. Our mandate is to deliver a solution on the Council's reform, not to just continue our annual repetition of well-known positions. We need to reform the Security Council to make it more transparent, inclusive, representative, accountable and effective to take on the challenges of the twenty-first century. We cannot and should not wait indefinitely for the reform of the Council. We must do something now, and something that is concrete. Allow me to highlight few points in that regard:

First, there is no debate on the need for Security Council reform. We all agree that the Council's membership and structure are not in tune with the current realities on the ground. In order to be fully representative, relevant, effective, democratic, transparent and fit for purpose, it must be reformed. We reiterate that an expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories is indispensable to making that organ more representative, legitimate and effective. In that context, we wish to underscore the significance of ensuring that new permanent members remain committed to upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the intergovernmental negotiations process should play a vital role in achieving that assurance.

Secondly, an enlarged Council must allow for the fair and equitable representation of all regional groups, as well as cross-regional balances. The historical injustice done to certain regions need to be redressed as a matter of priority. We must ensure that certain underrepresented regions, such as Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America, have due representation in the enlarged Council. Furthermore, due consideration must also be given to ensuring that the developing countries, including small island developing States, have an opportunity to serve in the Council.

Thirdly, a comprehensive reform of the Council's working methods, particularly the use of the veto, is required, taking into account the current geopolitical realities. My delegation will join the consensus that emerges on the veto question, however, required measures should be taken to ensure its judicious application so long as it exists by limiting its application in certain compelling situations, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. My delegation supports resolution 76/262, which has created more accountability over the use of the veto. In that regard, we also reiterate the necessity of inclusivity and in-depth dialogue among Member States.

Improving the Council's working methods will also make our efforts more synergized and efficient. The intergovernmental negotiations process must explore additional avenues to enhance the accountability of an enlarged Security Council to the United Nations membership.

Finally, there cannot be more significant reasons than the current global realities that dictate the urgency of the reform of the United Nations. We recall that the intergovernmental negotiations' work should also be linked to other processes for United Nations reform, such as the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

While there is divergence on some key reform issues, there is also a strong convergence among Member States that the Council must fulfil its responsibilities, as outlined in the co-Chairs' elements paper. My delegation will continue to promote approaches for a meaningful Council reform that enjoy widest possible political acceptance. To that end, the forthcoming Summit of the Future presents us with an opportunity to, among other things, attain tangible outcomes regarding Security Council reform. Let us seize this opportunity during the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations cycle to formulate precise language for incorporation into the pact of the future.

Let me conclude by reminding that if we fail to do the most needed reforms now, we may not need to do it ever.

**Mr. Oddone** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group (see A/78/PV.34). At the same time, we would like to highlight some considerations in our national capacity.

We all agree that the Council's membership and working methods reflect the outdated geopolitical realities of the world of 1945. Today, in the face of a reality that requires it to undertake functions that it has not played in the past, its failures are more evident and its reform more urgent than ever. For my country, a true reform of the Security Council must be one that helps alleviate current global problems and reflects the progress that the world has experienced over the past 78 years. Such reform must be pragmatic and, above all, realistic.

Throughout the process of reforming the Council, we have seen some move towards a reform that, instead of remedying the ills suffered by the Security Council, would simply extend and deepen them. One of the Council's

main problems is its inaction in the face of certain crises, as a consequence of the use of the veto. That is why we do not understand those who call for a more efficient Council, yet at the same time demand a permanent seat and the right to veto. Efficiency and veto are mutually exclusive, as realities within the Council have already made manifest. If the elimination of permanent members is not realistic, we must at least not add new ones.

The expansion of the Council is necessary, but only an increase in non-permanent members could make the Council a more effective, democratic and representative organ. An expansion in the category of non-permanent membership could foster a new working dynamic, giving elected members greater influence within the Security Council and greater participation in the decision-making process. That is what we mean when we call for a modern reform of the Security Council that is focused on elective positions and increases rather than reduces the democratic character, accountability and effectiveness of the Council. For that reason, we stress that the reform proposal for the Security Council promoted by the Uniting for Consensus group is rational, fair and realistic, since it seeks to avoid the defects in the functioning of the Security Council and update its working methods.

My delegation is ready to participate in the next round of intergovernmental negotiations in the same constructive spirit as the previous session, confident that we can build on the positive achievements made. Our goal at the upcoming session should be to further reduce the major gaps separating the negotiating groups. Argentina is ready to continue working in that direction; our group proposes a flexible approach and will continue to demonstrate its willingness to compromise.

Finally, in relation to next year's Summit of the Future, we hope to make our contribution to the document that will begin to be negotiated shortly, on the understanding that duplication with existing processes must be avoided, as clearly expressed earlier by the representative of Pakistan. In that sense, contributions on the issue of Security Council reform can come only from the intergovernmental negotiations, which is the appropriate forum where this matter is discussed.

**Mr. Pérez Ayestarán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we should like to thank President Francis for convening this plenary debate to discuss a matter to which our country attaches particular importance. We also take this opportunity to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait on their appointment as co-Chairs of the

intergovernmental negotiations on the issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. They have the strong support of our delegation, which is committed to continuing to participate actively and constructively in all efforts geared towards achieving the so desired and necessary reform of the Security Council.

The intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council play a key role as the essential forum for the search for the necessary balance to achieve consensus on this important matter. Venezuela is convinced that discussions in this framework, provided that they are based on an inclusive and transparent dialogue, can facilitate a holistic approach to this issue, thereby guaranteeing the creation of the conditions necessary to reach consensus, which will enable us to move towards strengthening equitable representation on the Security Council, increasing the number of its members, improving its methods of work and optimizing the relations between the Council and the General Assembly.

In that regard, my country believes that, in spite of the efforts that have been made in a complex discussion — which requires not just agreement but a spirit of compromise — there is still no general agreement and consensus among Member States to move towards discussions on more specific issues. That is why trying to impose text-based negotiations or negotiations with artificial timelines could be counterproductive and could even undermine the progress that has been made to date.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms that, in line with decision 62/557, it is the positions and proposals made by Member States that are the foundation for discussions in the intergovernmental negotiations. We reiterate the need to continue to integrate the principles of inclusion and legal equality among States as key parts of multilateralism that must guide the negotiating process. We also need to redouble our efforts to correct the historic inequalities that we have inherited from colonialism and that persist to this day, including the very composition of the Security Council, which has implications for the Council's effectiveness.

Our country therefore supports the legitimate aspiration of African countries to enjoy appropriate representation in that important organ, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Africa encompasses more than one fourth of the Members of the United Nations and over the years has been the subject of 70 per cent of the Council's work. African countries

are those most affected by the conflicts addressed by the Council, and that is why they must have appropriate representation therein, particularly if we really believe in the premise of African solutions to African problems and do not treat it as empty sloganeering.

Finally, we wish to reiterate our belief in the need to make effective headway in the work of the intergovernmental negotiations to make the Council more representative, endowing it with a renewed ability to respond to the pressing challenges that the international community is facing today in the domain of international peace and security and that would allow it to fully assume its responsibilities, in line with its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations, including to put an end to situations of genocide such as that which the brotherly Palestinian people is facing today after years of Israeli occupation and aggression. It is time to make headway in the reform of the Security Council.

**Mr. Mythen** (Ireland): At the outset, I wish to welcome resolution 2712 (2023), adopted by the Security Council last night, calling for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses in connection with the catastrophic humanitarian situation unfolding in the Gaza Strip. Ireland pays tribute in particular to Malta and the other elected members of the Council for their efforts to drive that initiative forward, demonstrating yet again the indispensable role of the 10 elected members in the work of the Council. The resolution is a necessary but belated first step in the Council's response to the conflict, and we urge all Member States to ensure its full implementation.

However, we regret that for nearly six weeks the Security Council was unable to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, owing in part to the exercise of the veto by some permanent members. We welcome the fact that the General Assembly stepped up where the Council failed, but that only reinforces the need for reform. As Ireland has said before, the veto is an anachronism that should be abolished. When it is used to obstruct or politicize humanitarian action, it not only hampers the Council's effectiveness but also erodes its credibility. It is precisely for that reason that we encourage all Member States to support the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct and the Franco-Mexican initiative on the use of the veto.

When Member States last debated this item in November 2022, Ireland and many others warned that the legitimacy of the Security Council and indeed of the Charter of the United Nations were being severely undermined by the Russian Federation's illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine and flagrant violations of international law. Since then, the Council has continued to face new and recurring challenges to its legitimacy. From the failure to reauthorize the Syria cross-border aid mechanism to the orchestrated collapse of the Mali sanctions regime, increasingly the Council has seen its work stymied from within, while those outside the United Nations are coming to the conclusion that it is simply not fit for purpose.

In our view, many of those issues arise from the same underlying problem — the need to update and expand the composition of the Security Council. The existing structure was put in place almost 60 years ago and has simply not kept pace with the changing realities of the world we live in today. That needs to change. However, an enlarged Security Council cannot be a goal in and of itself. The aim of expansion must be to create a Council that truly reflects the diversity of the United Nations membership. That means rectifying the historic and unjust representation of Africa on the Council. It also means ensuring that smaller States, which make up the majority of the United Nations membership, have their right to serve on the Council protected and that the most vulnerable States enjoy adequate representation.

For progress to occur, we need to move beyond the repetition of talking points and begin shaping an outcome that works for the entire membership. The tried and tested way to do this, in our view, is with substantive, text-based negotiations. In the meantime, we should take real inspiration from the veto initiative that many improvements can also be made within current structures and rules of procedure. But if we fail to act, if we neglect the imperative for reform, the price we pay will be the legitimacy not just of the Security Council, but of the United Nations itself.

We believe that now is the time for bold and decisive action and we believe that millions of people around the world are relying on us to do just that.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*