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Fifty-eighth session

23rd plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 16

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(d) Election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Note by the Secretary-General (A/58/396)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/58/396, containing a note by the Secretary-General, under sub-item (d) of agenda item 16, relating to the election of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

By its decision 55/310 of 26 October 2000, the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General (A/55/519), elected Mr. Ruud Lubbers as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2001.

By its resolution 57/186 of 18 December 2002, the General Assembly decided to continue the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a further period of five years from 1 January 2004.

In conformity with the procedure established by paragraph 13 of the statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Secretary-General proposes to the General Assembly

that the term of office of Mr. Ruud Lubbers as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees be extended for a period of two years, beginning on 1 January 2004 and ending on 31 December 2005.

May I therefore consider that the General Assembly approves the proposals contained in document A/58/396 and decides to extend the term of office of Mr. Ruud Lubbers as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of two years, beginning on 1 January 2004 and ending on 31 December 2005?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like, on behalf of the Assembly, to congratulate Mr. Ruud Lubbers on the extension of his appointment as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

I give the floor to the representative of China, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Xie Bohua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Allow me to speak on behalf of the Asian Group.

The Asian Group supports the proposal made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to extend the term of office of Mr. Ruud Lubbers for a period of two years. Since Mr. Lubbers came into office in 2001, he has done a great deal to address the problem of refugees throughout the world, and great progress has been

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made. We wish to express our appreciation for his efforts.

The Asian Group is ready to work closely with Mr. Ruud Lubbers, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and will continue its efforts to find a solution to the question of refugees worldwide.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Lithuania, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): Lithuania, as Chairman of the regional Group of Eastern European States for the month of October, has the honour to speak on behalf of our delegations.

Twenty-one Eastern European States fully support the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the term of office of Mr. Ruud Lubbers as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the next two years.

It is a great pleasure for me to congratulate, on behalf of the Group, Mr. Ruud Lubbers on the extension of his appointment.

I should like to express the Group's full satisfaction at his confirmation by the General Assembly in this very important post and to assure Mr. Ruud Lubbers of our continuous support for the efforts of the High Commissioner.

I should like also to express the appreciation of my Group of States to the High Commissioner and to his staff for their constant attention to the fundamental principles of refugee protection — principles we all must strive to implement and to safeguard.

Over the past three years, Mr. Ruud Lubbers has been fully dedicated to the implementation of the common goals of the United Nations in the area of human rights and the rights of refugees. That period was marked by a real transformation in the area of the protection of human rights and by a shared vision and concern on the part of the entire international community.

We are pleased to underscore that Mr. Ruud Lubbers always stands for the rights of the weakest and most vulnerable, sometimes confronting the interests of the strong and powerful.

In our struggle against the new threat of terrorism, we can always hear Mr. Lubbers' voice — a strong request to observe human rights and protect human beings. The High Commissioner always guards against overly restrictive procedures and practices that are not consistent with international refugee law. He works within a framework comprising international refugee, human rights and humanitarian law, and internationally accepted standards for the treatment of refugees and other persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The success of the humanitarian operations carried out by UNHCR in order to save the lives of millions of refugees and displaced persons has become a matter of critical importance as a prerequisite for peace and stability.

We are convinced that, under his leadership, the work of UNHCR will continue to be enhanced. The High Commissioner's initiatives — to strengthen UNHCR as a multinational institution; the "4-R" proposal in post-conflict situations — namely repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction; new approaches to development through local integration; a new agenda for protection; and UNHCR 2004, or Convention Plus — deserve to be implemented.

Protecting refugees and searching for durable solutions to their plight is a humanitarian imperative, but it is also fundamentally about contributing to international peace and security. Persecution and conflict produce refugees. At the same time, unresolved refugee problems can themselves be a cause of conflict and instability. It is vital, therefore, that the international community support UNHCR in its efforts to find durable solutions for refugees and other persons of concern.

Finally, I wish to reiterate our full support and cooperation to Mr. Ruud Lubbers and to wish him success in his renewed role as High Commissioner for Refugees.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Spain, who will make a statement on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be speaking on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, which I am chairing this month.

We would like to express our gratification at the two-year extension of the mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers.

Mr. Lubbers' term of office began on 1 January 2001, and, for almost three years now, he has deployed, with dedication and effectiveness, very commendable efforts at the head of that United Nations agency, whose work is of crucial importance. For this reason, we welcome the decision of the Secretary-General and we commend him for it. We would convey to Mr. Ruud Lubbers that he can rely on the full cooperation of our group.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to lend our support to the extension Mr. Ruud Lubbers' term of office as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of two more years.

This being the first time that I have taken the floor before this Assembly, I wish to convey to you and to the other members of the Bureau our congratulations on your election. We are certain that your known record and experience will make it possible for the work of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly to conclude successfully.

Our region regards the purely humanitarian and apolitical nature of the work of the Office of the High Commissioner as of crucial importance, as it gives international protection to refugees and tries to find permanent solutions to their problems. We would recall that such a solution would involve, first and foremost, voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution. We know that there needs to be concerted international action to help refugees. In this regard, we would assert that international protection is a dynamic function, which is action-oriented, carried out in cooperation with States and other partners, so as to, among other things, promote and facilitate the admission, reception and treatment of refugees and finding lasting solutions for their protection.

This challenge has been tackled in recent years thanks to the guiding skills of Mr. Lubbers as he has carried out his work, and for this reason we support the extension of his term in office so that he may continue his work concerning international protection and material assistance to refugees, as well as the quest for permanent solutions to their problems. The Latin American and Caribbean Group will continue to follow attentively the activities of Mr. Lubbers in his second term of office, and we will continue to support him in his work.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Rwanda on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the African Group, which we are honoured to chair for the month of October, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ruud Lubbers on the extension of his mandate by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the next two years to head the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. No one doubts that Mr. Ruud Lubbers will continue to exercise his skills and his personal commitment in the service of the international community to resolve the difficult problems of refugees who, on our continent, unfortunately, number in the thousands. We wish him every success and we assure him of the total support of Africa.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 60 and agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit: report of the Secretary-General (A/58/323)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/58/1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his report on the work of the Organization to the General Assembly at the 7th plenary meeting, on 23 September 2003.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor at the opening of this crucial debate being held at the fifty-eighth session on questions of development, in

particular the implementation of the Millennium Summit. We, in the Group of 77 and China, know that you attach great importance to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Before I get to the substance of this debate, I would like to convey our sincere thanks to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for his well-structured and very important report presented to us at the beginning of this session, which presents the progress achieved so far in the implementation of the Millennium Goals and what still needs to be done to meet its objectives.

At a time when the international community was expecting an accelerated implementation of the respective commitments of Member States in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals, new threats have emerged, unfortunately, which jeopardize the international climate of cooperation and consensus that is essential for the attainment of durable peace and sustainable development.

Restoring this atmosphere of international cooperation and consensus remains, in our view, the main objective, and it should guide our collective multilateral action in order to preserve the credibility and increase the effectiveness of our universal Organization.

A responsible unreserved commitment on the part of the international community, particularly of the most developed countries, within a context of solid and fruitful cooperation towards sustainable development for the benefits of all, remains the vital element that can only further strengthen confidence in our United Nations system in these difficult times.

We have taken note of the considerable progress made in the implementation of the Development Goals enshrined in the Millennium Declaration and by the major United Nations conferences and meetings held since the year 2000.

However, the prospects for Africa, unfortunately, remain a source of concern. Indeed, the number of people living in extreme poverty is expected to decrease in all regions of the world except in Africa, where projected growth rates will not stem the spread of poverty and thus not attain the objectives of sustainable development. This development is a process that depends on a number of factors, in particular on increased financing for development

through debt relief and an increase in official development assistance, as well as on the success of trade negotiations undertaken by the World Trade Organization.

We agree with Mr. Kofi Annan that strengthened, balanced and equitable international trade is one way to help the poorest countries combat hunger and poverty and to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

The Doha Declaration underscored that development and the interests of the poorest should be central to trade negotiations. Unfortunately, the subsequent discussions at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva did not ensure concrete follow-up to the Doha Declaration. The failure of the Cancún negotiations should encourage us to redouble our efforts, in order to achieve in the near future satisfactory results to restore the confidence of developing countries and to send a positive message to the world economy. I talked about the failure at Cancún, but others have also said that the developing countries showed great solidarity at Cancún, which made it possible not to accept any compromise proposed.

The high-level dialogue on financing for development, to be held at the end of this month, should, as a global mechanism for coordination and follow-up, enable us to carry out a coherent examination of the implementation of the Monterrey commitments and to assess progress made.

The work done by the United Nations to accelerate the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus must be accompanied by increased cooperation of other stakeholders, including the Bretton Woods financial institutions, the WTO, the private sector and civil society. Sustainable development also requires that food security be guaranteed, as well as adequate health and education services.

We are pleased that the United Nations has made every effort to improve access to food and medical care by encouraging increased international cooperation, supported, inter alia, by bilateral and multilateral donors, to help the developing countries elaborate, adapt and strengthen their food security and agricultural development strategies.

The endorsement by the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system of a

substantive strategy to attain the Millennium Development Goals is a commitment that should help the developing countries attain their national priorities.

As we have said since the beginning of this year, throughout our chairmanship of the Group of 77, we need to have national and international indicators in order to assess progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We are in the process of establishing those indicators now.

Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation are a set of commitments for sustainable development. Practical steps clearly need to be taken to implement them. That is why this year, during the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, a multi-year programme was drafted, covering the period 2004 to 2017, to preserve the momentum created in Johannesburg. The Group of 77 made a very decisive contribution to the elaboration of this multi-year programme. We hope that that programme will strengthen the implementation process and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Within the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development, a multi-year programme of work will make it possible to assess all cross-cutting issues and questions identified by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, in order to identify gaps in its implementation and to take the steps necessary to remedy them. During the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Group of 77 saw to it that that programme of work maintained the integrity of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and ensured equal treatment of all thematic modules identified. By adopting this multi-year programme of work, the international community has what we could call a road map for the implementation of sustainable development goals.

Allow me to also recall that water, sanitation and housing matters will be examined in depth by the Commission. We hope that the launching of this multi-year programme, through consideration of those matters, will be a success, inspire confidence and demonstrate the real will to achieve sustainable development goals.

As Members know, United Nations reform has probably been and will be the overriding theme of this session. Our group is convinced that reform of the multilateral institutions is essential now more than

ever, so that our Organization can adapt to new problems and situations in the world. Reform is not an end in itself. The point is to increase international cooperation, and particularly to implement the commitments undertaken at the various United Nations conferences and summits, to enable the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, to attain the Millennium Development Goals for the economic and social well-being of their peoples.

In June 2003, the Assembly adopted a very important resolution, to which we, together with other groups, contributed greatly, to ensure that it would be adopted. I am referring to the resolution on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits. That text reaffirmed the determination to implement and comply with commitments made and to place implementation of development goals set by the United Nations at the very core of development and cooperation policies. As Members know, goal number eight, on means of implementation, was recognized as being central to the implementation of the first seven goals. With that resolution we now have a framework at our disposal, and we must all work together to give it specific contents.

The second essential aspect of the resolution — which was adopted in June — is to provide for the holding of a world summit on development in 2005. I think it is time to begin preparing for the summit right now. The Assembly will find total support in the Group of 77 and China for such preparation. We hope that that meeting, which will be very important for billions of people, is crowned with success.

In conclusion, on behalf of our Group, I would recall that the United Nations is the bearer of a universal ethical message contained in the purposes and principles of the Charter that any institutional reform must maintain and strengthen in order to be more effective. That is the challenge we must meet together through concerted, collective action in which all nations, large and small, must bear their share of responsibility so that future generations are saved from the scourge of war and the horrors of poverty and illiteracy.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries — Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia,

Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Secretary-General for his important and comprehensive report and for his statement in the general debate. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) remains central in setting the agenda for our work. The European Union is wholeheartedly committed to the principles and objectives it sets out. We attach equal importance to all its parts, on, inter alia, peace and security; development and human rights; democracy and good governance. The Secretary-General's report sets out the progress we have made in implementing the Declaration and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It highlights new challenges and areas where progress is insufficient. It lays down fundamental questions that we must address.

The foundation of the European Union's approach is our strong commitment to effective multilateralism and collective action to address shared global challenges. The European security strategy on which we are working emphasizes that commitment to effective multilateralism. We are convinced that the United Nations is, and must remain, the central forum for international cooperation and the vital instrument for common action at a global level. We therefore accept our common responsibility to ensure that the United Nations is as effective as it needs to be for the pursuit of those goals. The initiative launched by the Secretary-General to reform and strengthen the Organization is a shared interest and a commitment for all Member States of the United Nations.

We call upon all Member States to show political will, pragmatism and imagination in this endeavour. We must address the crucial challenges that the Secretary-General has set out and the wider questions they raise for the international system. For example, we recognize the case for reform of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the other principal United Nations organs and mechanisms.

We know that these issues are complex. Finding the right answers calls for intensified and more focused action. In that respect, we also support the Secretary-General's proposal to invite eminent personalities to review the challenges we face and to consider further steps that may be needed to meet them. We look

forward to receiving recommendations from the Secretary-General in 2004, based on the panel's work on all aspects of the Millennium Declaration, which he mentioned in his recent status report.

But we must not put off until tomorrow what we can do today. We must push ahead with action on reform this year, at the current session of the Assembly. During this session, the General Assembly should address in particular the issue of establishing a single-stage budget review for the United Nations regular budget as a follow-up to last year's reform resolution.

We strongly applaud the progress already made, under the Secretary-General's leadership, to reform the Secretariat, United Nations agencies and the operational activities of the United Nations system. But there is still more to do. We will continue to support this work. We stand ready to engage actively in the reform process.

Indeed, Member States themselves must do more to reform, strengthen and make more effective the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations. We welcome the initiatives launched by the President to revitalize the Assembly. We will strongly support his efforts. Like him, we want the work of the Assembly to be more focused and action-oriented and to achieve greater political impact in global debate. As the President has said, it is in our best interests

“to demonstrate by our action that the General Assembly has not only the capacity but also the political will to constructively address and resolve the complex problems of the world and to close the gap between our agreed objectives and the resources needed to implement them.... As advocate, supervisor and policy-making body, [the Assembly] must give the direction necessary to ensure coherence in the system”... (A/58/PV.7, p. 1)

While we welcome recent improvements in the working methods of the Security Council — which should be further developed — there is a need for a comprehensive reform that makes it more representative, more effective and more democratic. In the same spirit, we must strengthen the Economic and Social Council's coordinating role across the United Nations system. To that end, we must act now on the conclusions of the General Assembly to implement and follow up major United Nations conferences and summits in an integrated manner. In that regard, I fully

agree with what was said earlier by the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We must further reflect on the proposals and ideas of the President of the Economic and Social Council. We must consider, among other issues, how to improve cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, building further on recent initiatives, so as to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the United Nations system.

As we engage in follow-up to the full spectrum of the Millennium Declaration, we must recognize that these are inter-linked strands of a single agenda. For example, development cannot flourish without peace and security, and vice versa. Indeed, the development agenda must be better interrelated with conflict prevention — as well as linked to peace-building — to sustain economic and social development. Our task is not whether to tackle so-called hard or soft threats to security, but to deal with all of them as effectively as possible.

In the sphere of peace and security, the European Union will play its full part in achieving more effective conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. We will work to that end in the United Nations, with other organizations and with all our partners. We will act to build upon the Joint Declaration that the European Union and the United Nations recently signed on crisis management.

We must also address new threats. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism are fundamental threats to international peace and security. We fully share the Secretary-General's view on the importance of international instruments to address that issue, and the necessity of ensuring universal adherence to, and full compliance with, those instruments. In this regard, we will continue to implement the European Union Action Plan against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Millennium Declaration provides a clear agenda for development, which was reinforced through the Millennium Development Goals and the major United Nations Summits of Monterrey and Johannesburg. We must continue, in a spirit of partnership, our common drive to implement the goals and targets set out therein, and to meet the clear timetables which we have agreed. The European Union remains absolutely committed to delivering on its undertaking in order to achieve the Millennium

Development Goals. This will require renewed efforts — for example, to deal with the terrible scourge of HIV/AIDS and environmental sustainability, as well as to reach a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Round. In this context, Africa will remain at the heart of the European Union commitment. We strongly support the principles and objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The European Union remains fully engaged in its efforts to fulfil the commitments on financing for development made at Monterrey with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We look forward to the high-level dialogue on that issue, scheduled to take place later this month.

We must continue with equal vigour to strengthen democracy and the rule of law and to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. These values are best guaranteed through effective multilateralism. The European Union considers that rule-of-law elements should be included, as appropriate, in United Nations peace operations. To this end, we support the strengthening of United Nations capacities in the area of the rule of law. We must make the work of the United Nations as effective as possible by supporting and strengthening the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Commission on Human Rights. On behalf of the European Union, I take this opportunity to pay tribute once again to the service and sacrifice of Sergio Vieira de Mello and the other United Nations staff members who were killed. We must strengthen the focus of all the organs of the United Nations system on the protection of civilians and children affected by armed conflict and on the rights of women.

In conclusion, the matters that I have set out represent an enormous set of challenges to the United Nations and its Member States. Work will proceed on many fronts. The European Union will contribute actively.

We welcome the concept of a major event in 2005 to review progress and make further decisions. Such an event must provide new political impetus to achieve the goals set in the Millennium Declaration and at the major United Nations summits. We look to the Secretary-General to make further proposals to the Assembly next year on the structure of such an event.

In the meantime, let us push ahead with further action and reform where there is common ground on which it is possible to build with an incremental approach. Let us focus on implementing the commitments we have all made. Let us stay united in pursuing the ambitious aspirations set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like first to convey to you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We have every confidence that, thanks to your experience, skill and dedication, you will successfully carry out your difficult task. You will certainly be able to count on the full cooperation of my delegation as you guide our work to a successful outcome.

I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent reports on the work of the Organization and on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, which was adopted in December 2000.

I associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Morocco, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This joint debate gives us the opportunity to assess what has been done in the Organization's various areas of activity during the past year and to consider the progress made and problems encountered over the past three years in implementing the commitments made under the various headings of the Millennium Declaration.

A close reading of the two reports and a lucid analysis of what has been done and what remains to be done lead us to conclude that the need for a strong and effective Organization is more urgent than ever, as it is clear that we will not be able to attain the Millennium Development Goals unless we manage to conclude the radical reform that our Organization so sorely needs.

The scope and diversity of the activities of the Organization, exhaustively covered in the two reports, and the limited time available for this discussion, mean that we cannot, of course, cover all those activities in depth. We will have an opportunity in the coming weeks to discuss here in detail some very important items, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the reform of the United Nations, the coordination of humanitarian assistance, the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children and

other questions relating to development and to international peace and security. I will therefore confine myself to making several preliminary comments on one of the most salient aspects of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration — those relating to his initiative for radical institutional reform and to his appeal to each Member State to try to reach agreement on this question as a matter of national priority. That appeal was reiterated in his statement immediately before the general debate.

The work undertaken by the United Nations to meet the challenges of globalization and attain the Millennium Development Goals raises the important question of whether its means are commensurate with its ambitions, and whether its structures, mechanisms and methods are appropriate for the nature of the challenges that the United Nations faces today. That is an enormous and complex task, because we need to control the effects of globalization; reduce poverty; remove inequalities; eradicate diseases, in particular AIDS; promote economic and social development; avert threats, both old and new, to international peace and security, in particular terrorism; and resolve other humanitarian, environmental and human rights problems.

In this respect, my delegation welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General, in his report on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, stated that terrorism constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights and must be combated as such. Meeting that challenge will require strengthening the international community's collective capacity for action. The United Nations, as the only universal global organization, provides an ideal, irreplaceable framework for collective unified action by the international community as a whole. Nevertheless, more than ever before, it is required to turn over a new leaf to adapt to the new requirements of a world in constant change and to finalize in a resolute and determined manner the process of reform under way.

During the general debate over the last two weeks, the overwhelming majority of Member States renewed their commitment to multilateralism and forcefully stressed the need to follow up on the commitments contained in section VIII of the Millennium Declaration covering the strengthening of the United Nations.

The effective implementation of reforms is essential if we want the United Nations to become a more efficient, consistent, dynamic organization that will continue to play the role of catalyst for change and serve as a forum for dialogue and specific action.

The climate of cooperation and consensus that prevailed following the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 has unfortunately been gravely jeopardized by the crisis experienced by our Organization at the beginning of this year. Profound divisions within the international community have indeed been created, which have cast doubt on the effectiveness, usefulness and credibility of the collective security system as defined by the Charter. However, we have every hope, now that the Security Council seems to have regained its unanimity and unity of vision and that the central role of the United Nations in post-war Iraq is not merely recognized but desired by everyone, that the United Nations will emerge strengthened from the trial that it has endured.

Accordingly, we agree with the idea put forward by the Secretary-General in his report on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration that the great strength of the Organization lies in its legitimacy, anchored in the fundamental principles of international law accepted by all States and expressed by the international community as a whole.

Multilateralism, of which the United Nations system is the basis, must be preserved and strengthened if we want international affairs to be effectively and credibly managed. Accordingly, we believe that the decisions of the Security Council would enjoy greater support if the organ were perceived as being more representative. An expanded and reformed Security Council would be in a better position to increase confidence between it and other members of the international community, which would see that their interests were duly represented by the members of the Council, and its decisions would thus be more rigorously complied with. After the long repetitive debates that we have heard for the last 10 years about the reform of the Security Council, which, unfortunately, have been inconclusive, the time has come, as the Secretary-General has suggested, to place this debate within the context of radical reform that would also encompass the revitalization of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, or, better still, of the role of the United Nations as a whole in the area of economic and social affairs and its relationship

with the Bretton Woods institutions, and take a new look at the role of the Trusteeship Council in the light of new types of responsibility conferred on the United Nations by Member States in recent years.

We share the analysis and understand the motives behind that approach and my delegation can only welcome this initiative at this stage. It is, however, important to stress that the mechanism proposed to establish a panel of eminent personalities to study this important and sensitive question and make recommendations for radical institutional reforms should meet a number of conditions so that this panel may enjoy the trust and support of all Member States. First of all, the choice of these eminent personalities must reflect the broadest possible geographical representation and meet the necessary conditions of integrity, competence and neutrality.

In this vein, an in-depth knowledge of the Organization and the way it functions is an essential requirement that should not be minimized or ignored. In one way or another, Member States should also be involved in defining the mandate and consulted and invited by members of the panel to give their views, on the understanding that, in any case, the report of the Secretary-General containing the conclusions and recommendations of the panel will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration and decision.

These are essential conditions if we wish to abide by the procedures in force and the relevant established practices of the Organization. These conditions would only strengthen the credibility of the panel and help it to enjoy support from Member States.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): As coordinator of the Rio Group, I would like to make this statement on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela, which are all member States of the principal mechanism of political coordination in Latin America.

We would like to congratulate the Secretary-General for his candid report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The Rio Group shares his diagnosis, concerns and proposals.

The Rio Group is firmly convinced that the international order, which must prevail in the world,

needs to be based on multilateralism and respect for the international law. It is imperative to strengthen the United Nations system and to consolidate clear and consistent legal norms that allow us to act with vigour, efficiency and legitimacy to confront the threats and challenges in the areas of peace, international security and development.

In this regard, we are in complete agreement with the Secretary-General's report. First, there is a need for prompt and urgent reform of the Organization. This reform must be based on the universal values of the San Francisco Charter, which are still in force, and must be focused principally on the main organs of the Organization and their interrelationships. The reform of the Security Council must be based on its composition, process of decision-making and working methods.

The General Assembly requires an immediate reorganization of its working methods and work programme. In this manner, as the most democratic organ of the system, it can restore its central role as a universal and political forum for addressing the important issues and concerns of the international community, in relation to either international peace and security or economic and social development. Furthermore, we must ensure that its decisions are complied with.

The Economic and Social Council requires rationalization and greater scope of activity to work effectively to promote development and inclusive globalization. As the Secretary-General has said, this requires us to rethink the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as to attain greater participation of the developing countries in the international economic decision-making process. The Secretariat must continue to improve its management, accountability and its relationships with Member States. Along with all of this, we need to insure better coordination among the various organs.

Secondly, the Rio Group also subscribes to the proposal that greater interaction should be achieved between the United Nations and civil society, and especially non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The United Nations cannot turn its back on these new actors which are increasingly important in the international system and which have an ever weightier influence on the development of our countries. We therefore look forward with interest to

the recommendations of the high level panel set up by the Secretary-General to review relations between the United Nations and civil society.

Thirdly, the Rio Group notes with concern the point made by the Secretary-General in his report, to the effect that in the area of human rights and democracy, there is a danger that we may lose sight of some of the important achievements of the last decade. The Rio Group would appeal to all States to work harder to promote democracy and unreserved respect for human rights.

Fourthly, the Rio Group believes that the agenda and concerns in the area of international peace and security should not overshadow the great challenges that we face in the area of sustainable development, or relegate them to a secondary level.

The international community has not just the responsibility, but also the obligation to act with determination in response to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, terrorism, international crime and drug trafficking and in striving to overcome the inequities that have been emerging in the struggle to combat these and other contemporary threats.

Nevertheless, the international community has also the political and moral obligation to firmly tackle poverty, whether in the form of deprivation, social exclusion or unemployment. We must not forget that destitution, hunger and poverty are the cause of many of the current crises.

The Rio Group is committed to fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. Nevertheless, it is concerned that there has been scant progress or even a step backwards in the area of such crucial objectives as the reduction of poverty. The industrialized countries as well as the developing countries have the responsibility to fulfil our commitment to attain these goals and we need to renew our efforts towards this purpose.

The industrialized countries must fulfil their commitments in the area of cooperation for development, as well as those regarding higher levels of national or foreign public and private investment, so that Latin American and other developing countries may achieve sustained growth sufficient to reduce poverty and create employment. It is indispensable towards that goal and in the advance towards fulfilment

of the Doha agenda, to liberalize the mechanisms of technology transfer and to give effect to the Monterrey consensus.

In May of this year in Cuzco, the Presidents of the States members of the Rio Group agreed that the time had come to introduce innovative financial mechanisms to support the efforts of our countries in the strengthening of democratic governance and reduction of poverty, paying immediate attention to the social demands of employment and better incomes, while making it possible to achieve sustainable economic and social growth.

Experts from the Rio Group have provided specific proposals that will be reviewed shortly by our ministers of economy and finance. These initiatives include, among others, the creation of regional authorities to govern investment in infrastructure, better fiscal management through the reformulation of the fiscal goals, the reduction of debt cost by designing new debt instruments such as indexed bonds, and the creation of a regional trusteeship in Latin America for private investment in the development of public infrastructure.

The Rio Group believes that the establishment of such innovative financial mechanisms deserves the most serious attention on the part of the international community, in particular by the industrialized countries, as well as the United Nations Development Programme and the regional and international financial institutions.

Allow me to conclude by stating that the Rio Group accepts the challenge of the Secretary-General to achieve by 2005 a radical reform of the United Nations and to proceed to evaluate at the highest political level, the progress made, the ground lost, and the inadequacies that we see in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Hosseinian (Iran): I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his reports on the items and his address in the general debate.

Allow me to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General for his firm leadership of the Organization and his continuing interest in the search for practical and innovative solutions. In this context, we welcome his proposal to invite a group of eminent persons to study the challenges before the Organization and propose

innovative responses to them. We are confident that the composition and leadership of the group will truly reflect the membership of the Organization.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General that in the area of peace and security, last year was a trying year for the United Nations; the war in Iraq severely tested the principle of collective security and the resilience of the Organization. Indeed, maybe never since its creation has the relevance of the United Nations been so openly challenged and its usefulness questioned. The challenge, in turn, even gave rise to dire forecasts depicting the Organization as moribund and about to suffer the same fate as that of the League of Nations.

Later developments in Iraq have clearly demonstrated that the United Nations was right in resisting and opposing the unilateral and unsanctioned invasion of a Member State. In his opening statement to the General Assembly last month, the Secretary-General was more explicit in pointing to the unilateral and pre-emptive use of force as a fundamental challenge to the principles on which, however imperfectly, world peace and stability have rested for the last 58 years.

Now there is an absolute need to remedy the damage done to the integrity of the rule of law at the international level. Recognition of the central role of the United Nations in the rapid transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqi people would constitute the first necessary step.

We agree with the Secretary-General that, "Whatever view each of us may take of the events of recent months, it is vital to all of us that the outcome is a stable and democratic Iraq at peace with itself and with its neighbours, and contributing to stability in the region." (A/58/PV.7, p. 2)

My delegation has noted the reference of the Secretary-General to terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as issues that remained of great concern during the past year. Regarding terrorism, we are pleased that he emphasized in his report the need for taking into account root causes such as poverty and grievances over injustice in strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of terrorist acts. We fully agree that, to maintain together a genuinely global coalition against terrorism, the world will need to see progress on other fronts of the struggle for a humane and just world.

Regarding weapons of mass destruction, the Secretary-General rightly refers to the concern of the international community on the risks of the development of weapons of mass destruction and their possible use by State or non-State actors. As suggested, the only powerful and legitimate tool continues to be universal adherence to, and effective compliance with, negotiated multilateral agreements. In that respect, universality of instruments on the elimination and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and, particularly, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is yet to be achieved.

Our collective views on the follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit have already been presented by the Permanent Representative of Morocco, who spoke on behalf of the G-77 and China. Allow me to simply highlight a couple of points.

The momentum that was generated after the International Conference on Financing for Development for at least partial fulfilment of the commitments by the international community seems to be dying down. That will shatter the prospects for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in general and building a global partnership for development in particular. The recent Cancún Conference, that dealt with one of the most important components of that partnership, with its inability to produce the favourable result, as well as lack of progress on reform of international financial institutions, once again requires us to pay urgent and critical attention to the insufficient voice of developing countries in trade, financial and monetary institutions, as well as the imperative that their structures should be reformed in favour of democratic participation of those countries. The United Nations should continue to lead the efforts towards achieving that objective.

Finally, my delegation has noted the efforts cited in the report towards achieving greater consistency of practices on common support services, improving human resource management, including the expansion of learning and career support programmes, sustaining positive financial trends of the last two years and enhancing accountability, monitoring, evaluation and audit. Such collective endeavours are expected to increase efficiency within the Organization.

Moreover, the report on the agenda for further change submitted by the Secretary-General provided Member States with the opportunity to review results of the reform process so far and to examine the new proposals.

While reaffirming that strengthening the efficiency of the United Nations and its centrality in the international arena is essential to respond to current and future challenges and opportunities, we believe that further constructive debate among all Member States is imperative to ensure that their demands, concerns and priorities, particularly those of developing countries, are duly addressed.

Mr. Aboul-Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish, at the outset, to sincerely congratulate the President on his election to preside over the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I wish him every success as he conducts the work of this session of the Assembly at this important time.

The Secretary-General was absolutely right when he stated in the introduction of his report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) for the past year that there were dim prospects and predictions for the future of this international Organization, a prognosis stemming from the crises facing the world in 2003. Hence, there is a need to examine closely ways that would help this Organization tackle existing challenges. Notwithstanding the numerous points that the Egyptian delegation would like to address and comment on, I wish to raise the point made in the two reports submitted by the Secretary-General. We believe that the vision of the Secretary-General, contained in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and the main elements of proposed reform that make up that vision, merit our attention.

The United Nations is an Organization for all States, large or small. It must meet the needs of the international community and tackle existing challenges, while taking into consideration the diversity factor inherent in the United Nations system at all levels; hence the need for sufficient flexibility in the system to take all differences into account.

The general debate of the fifty-eighth session reflected a broad consensus on the need to reform the United Nations system in all its aspects, be that from an institutional or administrative perspective. The call to reform is based on an important assumption, which is that the United Nations has never faced a challenge

like the one it faces today. It is a challenge to the core principles of the Organization. As the Secretary-General himself said in his statement on 23 September 2003, it is a challenge that relates to the unilateral right to use force preventively or pre-emptively, even at the risk of going beyond the legal framework of the international Organization.

Accordingly, this new concept and approach advanced by some and pointed to by others regarding the need to introduce modifications to the multilateral international system so that the system can take preventive or pre-emptive measures, is a philosophical idea that the whole international community should carefully consider in depth before embarking on any type of reform or change. The Secretary-General, in his address on 23 September, proposed setting up a high-level panel of eminent personalities to be entrusted with four tasks. That panel would then submit a report to the Secretary-General before the beginning of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General would present his recommendations to the General Assembly at that session.

Egypt supports the Secretary-General's proposal and reaffirms a number of points: first, the panel needs to represent a broad gamut of opinion that would reflect the diversity of international multilateral systems, from the standpoint of culture, needs and geographical diversity. Secondly, the terms of reference and jurisdiction of the panel should reflect the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations. Thirdly, there are already initiatives in existence that have presented various ideas about the need to make institutional reforms in the United Nations — I am thinking in particular of the ideas of the Secretary-General himself presented in 1997 and 1999 concerning what is called humanitarian intervention, namely the right of the international community to provide protection in the case of human rights violations. Given the link between the concepts of State sovereignty and stability and these previous initiatives, it seems important that the proposed panel should take into consideration the efforts already made in this area. It should also be guided by the conclusions that have emerged from international committees that have already examined in depth these concepts, possibilities for applying them and their potential shortcomings. Fourthly, we must not prevent States, geographical groups or various negotiating group from presenting their proposals on this vital subject.

Therefore, right from the start of this panel's work, there must be communication between the panel and the General Assembly so that the results of the discussion held at the current session can be conveyed to that panel, thus supplementing and crystallizing their ideas and preventing an undue waste of time. Of course, the President of the General Assembly could play a vital and crucial role in this respect. Thus I propose that the General Assembly, at this session, adopt a brief resolution that would support the Secretary-General's proposal to create this panel, while restating the vision and the consensus of this Assembly concerning the need for reform.

We have before us now a large number of proposed reforms — proposals that have already been put forward and that have not been sufficiently debated. There are also proposals that will come before us in the course of this session. The issue of reform is important and is a matter of concern for all of us. Consequently, this issue needs to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion, in the form of proposals in all areas and with the participation of everyone in discussing, endorsing or adopting some of these proposals. We have a single objective here: we must promote, develop and adapt the international multilateral system so as to enable it to tackle all challenges, not just some of them. Reform does not necessarily mean change, just as change does not necessarily mean reform. We need to be fully aware of that.

In conclusion, we have great hopes that this discussion will bring about results acceptable to all. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal of convening a high-level dialogue in 2005 regarding the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and we hope that everyone will fully participate on the subject of this reform.

Mr. Akinsanya (Nigeria): I wish to express the appreciation of the Nigerian delegation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report on the work of the Organization, as contained in document A/58/1. We also commend the statement that the Secretary-General made at the beginning of this session, a statement that was thought-provoking and in which he has made forward-looking proposals for the reform of our Organization.

My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of

the Kingdom of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Secretary-General's report discusses some of the most pressing issues confronting humanity — issues of terrorism, conflict situation, natural disasters, human rights, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty and sustainable development. The report not only reviews the considerable efforts of our Organization to seek constructive and lasting solutions to these fundamental problems, but also recognizes the complexities of the task confronting the international community.

It is a matter of great concern that, in spite of continued efforts towards the achievement of international peace and security, conflicts and wars still remain some of the greatest challenges facing our Organization. Nigeria commends the efforts of the United Nations, through the Security Council, in the maintenance of international peace and security. While some remarkable successes have been made in this regard, a lot still needs to be done to usher in durable peace and stability to conflict ravaged areas of the world.

We commend the continued efforts of the Secretary-General in his use of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building in the discharge of his responsibilities. To some extent, we can say that the objectives of our Millennium Declaration related to conflict resolution have been met. For instance, there has been a decline in the number of conflicts and a significant increase in the number of peace agreements, especially in Africa. We therefore commend the adoption by the United Nations of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach at conflict prevention and resolution.

In compliance with the Millennium Declaration and consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, regional organizations, with the assistance of the United Nations, are becoming more focused and proactive in the maintenance of international peace and security through the establishment of institutional cooperation for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In West Africa, for example, the establishment by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, as well as such complimentary institutions as the ECOWAS Parliament, Council of Elders and the Mano River

Women's Peace Network, are all efforts aimed at institutionalizing our conflict prevention strategy. In that regard, the United Nations — in active collaboration with ECOWAS and Mano River Union countries — is continuing to participate in addressing the complex humanitarian, political and security situations affecting Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and, recently, Guinea-Bissau.

We commend the continued support of the United Nations for the ECOWAS initiative to promote peace, particularly in Liberia and other countries of the Mano River Union, in the belief that without such dialogue, efforts to address the root causes of the subregion's problems will not yield the desired results. Specifically, with the deployment of its vanguard force, ECOWAS has taken the lead role in the restoration of normalcy in Liberia. We also commend the efforts of the United Nations in adopting resolution 1509 (2003). We pledge our support for that resolution, which effectively establishes the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and urge the international community to extend financial resources and logistical support to ECOWAS in order to enhance peace efforts. We also note with satisfaction the United Nations active involvement in peace operations in many parts of the world, including Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste.

As the world marks the second anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, Nigeria reaffirms its condemnation of international terrorism. While we support the Secretary-General's view that human rights must not be sacrificed in the struggle against international terrorism, we also believe that poverty and grievances over injustices are also intrinsically linked to terrorism. We pledge our cooperation with other members of the international community, through bilateral and multilateral efforts, to combat that menace in all its forms.

As the President of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, said in his statement to the General Assembly on 23 September, Nigeria condemns the recent terrorist attack on the office of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq. We also stress our support for Security Council resolution 1502 (2003), on the protection of civilians and United Nations and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones. We also condemn all acts of terrorism in the strongest terms, and urge firm action by all members of the

international community to deny support of any kind to terrorists and their cohorts.

The illicit trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons continues to be a cause of concern to the international community, and to developing countries in particular, as it contributes to conflicts and political instability. The excessive accumulation and easy availability of small arms and light weapons hinders peace-building and development efforts and threaten human security. In that regard, the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa has been a useful mechanism for a coordinated and sustainable regional approach in controlling that menace.

Nigeria reaffirms its commitment to the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations first Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2003. We urge the international community to control the movement of those weapons, especially to non-State actors. We also call for the elaboration of a legally binding international instrument to combat illegal trafficking.

While we note the progressive decrease in the production and transfer of landmines, it is regrettable that landmines continue to impede the development and security of populations, especially in some African States emerging from conflict. We should therefore strengthen our support for the United Nations mine action, as it is the only way to curb the menace of landmines.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose a grave challenge to our efforts at development. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the contribution of the international community in combating the HIV/AIDS scourge, particularly in Africa. We also endorse the African Union's plan of action, adopted at its special summit of African leaders, to intensify their efforts and mobilize resources for the prevention of the disease and for the care and treatment of people infected by it.

Nigeria commends the Secretary-General for the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which is aimed at mobilizing the necessary finances to address the AIDS epidemic.

We call on the international community to demonstrate firm commitment to contribute generously to the Fund.

The Millennium Declaration resolved to eliminate poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for all. In order to reduce poverty and promote development, it is essential to achieve sustained and broad-based economic growth. The Millennium Development Goals highlighted priority areas that must be addressed, including commitments made by developed nations, such as increased official development assistance, flows of foreign direct investment and improved market access for exports from developing countries. We therefore believe that if the international community is to meet its development and poverty-eradication goals, deliberate efforts should be made to accelerate economic growth in developing countries.

In addition, given the breakdown of the negotiations of the World Trade Organization at Cancún, Nigeria believes that practical efforts must also be made to put the Cancún process back on track, with renewed commitments from capitals and political will to break the deadlock.

Through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African countries have accepted responsibility for their own social and economic development. We acknowledge the importance of sound national policies and good governance as prerequisites for poverty reduction and sustained socio-economic development. We therefore welcome the fulsome support for NEPAD, contained in General Assembly resolution 57/300, of 2002. We also urge that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which was created to ensure a coherent and integrated approach by the United Nations, be adequately funded to enable it to discharge its responsibility credibly.

The Charter of the United Nations and other sources of international law have established conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties can be maintained. The rule of law is becoming more widely accepted, and States are increasingly employing treaties to regulate their relations.

In conclusion, Nigeria is pleased to note that the Secretary-General has made commendable efforts towards strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization. We are satisfied with the various initiatives that have been put in place, and pledge our

continued cooperation in his efforts to strengthen the Organization.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Let me begin by associating myself with the statement made by the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

When the bomb went off at the United Nations offices in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, it not only shattered the lives of our dear colleagues, it also marked the end of innocence for the Organization, which for nearly six decades had regarded itself as a universally accepted and neutral actor. The Secretary-General described the attack as “a direct challenge to the vision of global solidarity and collective security rooted in the Charter of the United Nations and articulated in the Millennium Declaration.” (A/58/323, para. 2). That makes the debate on the report (A/58/323) on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration perhaps one of the most important debates to be held in a long time. We thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for presenting us with such a bold, candid and challenging report that allows us to engage the urgent issues that face the Organization.

It is also heartening that the heads of State and Government, ministers and other high-level officials who participated in the general debate overwhelmingly spoke of the challenge that the United Nations faces at the dawn of the twenty-first century, and that they supported the Secretary-General’s intention to focus on the reform of the United Nations.

In his statement during the general debate, President Mbeki said that recent dramatic events have

“raised important and disturbing questions about the very future of the United Nations. Central among them is the question, does the United Nations have a future as a strong and effective multilateral organization enjoying the confidence of the peoples of the world and capable of addressing the matters that are of concern to all humanity?” (A/58/PV.7, p. 23)

President Mbeki also stated that

“there is no way in which we could advance the interests of the people, the majority of whom are poor, outside the context of a strong, effective and popularly accepted United Nations”. (*ibid*, p. 24)

My Government welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint a panel of eminent persons to formulate recommendations aimed at improving the overall effectiveness and eventual transformation of the United Nations. We agree with the Secretary-General that the panel should look at the relationship among the major bodies of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. In that process the importance of the General Assembly as the main decision-making body of the United Nations, in which all Member States participate equally, needs to be enhanced. It is equally important that the relationship between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations should form part of that review.

Everything we do in the United Nations is premised on the common values that were reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration, namely, freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. While we continue to work on the implementation of our socio-economic goals, respect for human dignity remains central to our common objectives. As an institution we have to embody the highest aspirations of human rights, democracy and good governance.

While South Africa remains fully committed to combating terrorism in all its manifestations, we believe that human rights should not be sacrificed for short-term goals in the fight against terrorism. We have to take into consideration the unintended consequences the fight against terrorism may have. In referring to terrorism, the Secretary-General has noted that

“in fighting *against* it, we run the risk of sacrificing a great deal in terms of human rights, democracy and good governance. Tolerance is too often the first casualty of a ‘war on terror’, which is widely perceived, especially by Muslims, as a war against Islam. To go down that path would hand the terrorists a victory beyond their dreams”. (A/58/323, para. 75)

In the Millennium Declaration heads of State and Government stated that

“the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world’s people”. (*resolution 55/2, para. 5*)

The United Nations has done its best to try to mitigate the effects of globalization. Two of the most recent United Nations meetings have provided the international community with a platform to address those global challenges. The International Conference on Financing for Development led to the Monterrey Consensus, which presented the international community with a new framework for cooperation. The World Summit on Sustainable Development resulted in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which addresses fundamental issues of underdevelopment, such as clean water, basic sanitation and protection of the environment. The outcomes of those conferences form part of the broader effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. However, as the Secretary-General states in his report, the progress towards achieving the overarching goal of halving poverty by 2015 will require greater commitment from the international community.

The march towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be a long and arduous one, with numerous obstacles. Developing countries will need the support of, and partnership with, developed countries, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system. The New Partnership for Africa's Development is already in place to promote such partnerships. In the Millennium Declaration the special needs of Africa were highlighted for that particular reason. We hope that the concerns of Africa will continue to be considered integral to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The outcome of the Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization held recently in Cancún, Mexico, underlined the need for an open, fair and rules-based multilateral trading system. It is now evident that the inability of the international community to address the concerns of developing countries will lead to increased poverty and make it even harder to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria pandemic continues to devastate the African continent. As a country and as a region, our heads of State and Government have on numerous occasions expressed and reaffirmed their commitment to combating those communicable diseases in all their manifestations. During the recent high-level meetings devoted to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on

HIV/AIDS, numerous States, including South Africa, reported significant examples of real implementation of the targets agreed to in the outcome document.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has rapidly developed into an effective multilateral institution able to allocate large additional resources to projects directed to fight against those diseases of poverty. Thus far, the Fund has managed to disburse funds to public and private partners, particularly in developing countries, in support of prevention and treatment programmes. However, while contributions by major foundations, private and Government donors have been forthcoming, the Global Fund remains insufficiently funded. We therefore wish to urge all Member States to show their commitment through increased contributions to the Fund.

The past 12 months have indeed presented tremendous challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security. The war against Iraq and the escalation of the conflicts in Liberia and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have placed the role of the Organization under sharp, and sometimes negative, public scrutiny.

While welcoming the deployment of ad hoc multinational forces to provide stability and a smooth entry for eventual peacekeeping missions in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we nevertheless concur with the Secretary-General that they raise important questions about the kind of resources required to ensure the success of peacekeeping. In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we believe that an honest assessment of the situation would have revealed to the Security Council the need to mandate, from the beginning, the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) under Chapter VII of the Charter, backed up with the necessary robust capabilities to ensure its credibility. Robust peacekeeping requires the strong and sustained support of all Member States, both developed and developing. Developing countries should not be the only ones shouldering what is a key United Nations responsibility.

We, as Member States, are continuously engaged in several negotiations where we review and, at times, establish additional mandates for the United Nations. It is imperative that we provide the Organization with the necessary resources to fulfil those mandated activities.

The success of the Organization depends not only on our political support but also on the extent to which we ensure that it receives adequate financial and administrative resources to support it in the completion of its task without having to resort to extrabudgetary funding. We therefore support a more realistic budget in which the priorities of the Organization will determine the resources needed, and not vice-versa.

At this time, we are passing through a period when the credibility and effectiveness of the entire United Nations is being questioned. The General Assembly is seen as an organ that has lost its focus and that concentrates on statements and resolutions that are often ignored. The Economic and Social Council is seen as being out of step with the rapidly changing socio-economic challenges. The Security Council is not representative of the current United Nations membership, and its decisions are viewed increasingly as lacking credibility.

The threat to international security posed by all weapons of mass destruction remains a critical concern. Equally, the unrestrained build-up of conventional weapons beyond a level which can be considered legitimate for self-defence purposes poses a daily threat to the physical safety of people in many countries around the world. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons disrupts the normal functions of society.

The United Nations is uniquely placed to project global assurance in a time of uncertainty. The survival of the multilateral system demands that the United Nations address equally the concerns of peace and security as well as underdevelopment, as a way to ensure that the interests of powerful States, as well as those of smaller States, are pursued as a collective global effort. We must avoid a situation in which either the powerful or the disempowered States do not have their particular interests addressed. The United Nations was founded nearly 60 years ago to collectively address the needs of the world. We cannot afford to fail now.

Mr. Lovald (Norway): We have a thought-provoking and challenging report before us on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his introduction to the report and for pointing out the challenges to our common security agenda so clearly.

The report takes a frank and focused approach to our shortcomings — both the shortcomings of Member countries in living up to the obligations set out in the United Nations Charter and the shortcomings of the Organization itself in fulfilling its mandates. The Norwegian Government agrees with the Secretary-General that the time has come for a hard look at fundamental policy issues and for a review of the structural changes that may be needed to deal with them.

We have seen how international terrorism is trying to undermine our common security agenda. The vicious attacks on United Nations headquarters in Baghdad were, in the Secretary-General's own words, proof of a direct challenge to the vision of global security, rooted in the United Nations Charter.

This is a challenge to us all, and one that we must face with determination and resolve. It must be treated like any other serious threat to international peace and security. But that resolve must result in much more than swift retribution. It is essential to eliminate the root causes of terrorism.

The Norwegian Government is firmly convinced that there are clear links between peace and security, sustainable development in the broader sense, and good governance and respect for human rights. Every country bears the main responsibility for its own development, and this includes the responsibility for creating and fine-tuning national mechanisms for sharing political, social and economic resources and ensuring the protection of civil liberties, gender equality and human rights — in other words, the responsibility for building a democratic society.

In our endeavours to improve on, and, when necessary, change the structure and functions of the United Nations and of other international institutions, we must build on those democratic principles and create a common, revitalized security agenda that will enable us to meet new challenges.

The Secretary-General's report on these interconnected issues makes it very clear that what is needed is change, both in the way we deal with our common challenges and in the institutions we have established to deal with them. The Norwegian Government agrees that we must return to the vision of global solidarity and collective security expressed in the Millennium Declaration. Norway's views on reform of the United Nations and its institutions and processes

are well known. We can assure the Assembly that we share the Secretary-General's vision in this respect. We applaud his proposal to establish a high-level panel to review these issues and make recommendations, including recommendations on ways of strengthening the United Nations. We are looking forward to participating in such discussions.

I would now like to turn to development and the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals. We are pleased to note the emphasis on the eighth Millennium Development Goal — the commitment to develop a global partnership for development — in the Secretary-General's report. This is the glue that binds all the Millennium Development Goals together into a comprehensive development strategy. Thus we must achieve the eighth Millennium Development Goal in order to be able to achieve the others. There can be no compromise or holding back in this endeavour. It must be followed up just as rigorously as the other seven.

The Norwegian Government endorses the Secretary-General's suggestion that donor countries should agree among themselves on time-bound deadlines for the pledges contained in the eighth Millennium Development Goal, similar to those for the other seven. In our view, it is particularly important to set ambitious deadlines for trade, debt relief and official development assistance. Norway will work towards agreement on such deadlines in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other forums. This would also make it necessary to set up a universal reporting system for donor countries on progress towards achieving the eighth goal. The Nordic countries are already in the process of implementing such a system on a voluntary basis.

But time-bound targets are not enough in and of themselves. I would also like to stress the importance of policy coherence. This is the responsibility of donor countries, and we must ensure the coordination, consistency and coherence of all policies relating to global poverty and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Policy coherence also entails the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing actions by national and international decision-makers, which will create synergies in our efforts to fight poverty.

If we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and win the war on poverty, we must make

changes and mobilize resources in at least four areas simultaneously.

First, international framework conditions for debt reduction, trade and investment must be improved and angled more towards the Millennium Development Goals. We must continue to build on the positive trends and decisions emanating from Monterrey, Johannesburg and Doha.

Secondly, the developing countries themselves need to assign priorities, draw up strategies, invest in human resources and implement poverty-oriented policies based on good governance and respect for human rights. Again, as agreed at Monterrey, such efforts need to be matched with stronger support from developed countries.

Thirdly, official development assistance should be increased considerably. The necessity for this cannot be overemphasized. We think that a clear and concrete plan, with time limits, should be set for the necessary increases in official development assistance. Official development assistance is an essential development tool for achieving the hard targets such as halving poverty, achieving universal primary education and reversing the spread of killer diseases.

Fourthly, we must make a concerted effort to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals are the focus of both global and national action. We must build new coalitions for action to achieve them in both developed and developing countries. To do that, we must also mobilize the private sector and the enormous resources of civil society. New partnerships must be explored that can unleash unexploited potential in these sectors.

In conclusion, I would like to mention a fifth area where progress is essential if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. That is meeting the special needs of Africa. It is a challenge that, in one way or another, involves practically all eight goals. We must be aware of the real magnitude of this challenge and deal with it accordingly. That applies both to the international community and to the African countries themselves. We commend the African leaders on the initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's development and on their willingness to tackle the continent's diverse and difficult problems.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): You and your team, Sir, have been displaying a spirit of remarkable

collegial leadership. It is worthy of our admiration and our support.

Both the reports of the Secretary-General, the one on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) and the other on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit (A/58/323) are products that represent a high order of professionalism. They underscore the geopolitical realities that have provided the matrix for United Nations activities over the past year. They reaffirm the sobering facts and serious challenges that need to be faced and overcome, if lasting peace and unfettered development, as envisioned in the Millennium Declaration, are to be achieved.

We find this joint debate on both reports most worthwhile. We would have liked, however, to see the report on the work of the Organization issued six weeks prior to the session's commencement. We would also endorse the idea that several closely linked reports be combined into a single document.

The Secretary-General is both profound and wise when he cautions that, "In the area of peace and security, in particular, consensus expressed or implied in the Declaration now looks less solid than it did three years ago". (A/58/323/para. 3)

When he expresses concern about the deep division within the international community and refers to the accusation of double agendas and preferences for narrow national gains over broader collective interests, it confirms our apprehension that we do not learn from history. In concluding, the Secretary-General reaffirms his strong resolve to conduct reviews and reform of the world body to render it greater flexibility and more credibility. Such determination is reassuring.

Bangladesh strongly supports the Secretary-General's call for strengthening the multilateral institutions through effective reforms in order to adapt to the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century. We must work together seriously to respond to his appeals to focus on the principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Security Council. But reforms must be truly representative of the aspirations and concerns of all Member States. They must not perpetuate current imbalances, nor respond only to transitory phases. Anything that purports to lock the international community into situations for all times cannot be stabilizing.

We share the Secretary-General's concerns over the serious setbacks and threats to international peace and security during the past year. The war in Iraq, in varying intensity, continues to test the credibility of the United Nations and the principle of collective security, as enshrined in the Charter and reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration. The central and effective United Nations role in facilitating the post-war economic and political reconstruction in Iraq is critical to the resolution of the current impasse.

The situation in Palestine worsens by the day. The spiralling violence continues unabated. The attack on Syria yesterday, which has been condemned by my Government, cannot, and will not, advance the cause of peace; indeed, on the contrary, it has contributed to exacerbating the already volatile situation. The United Nations must use the totality of its capacity in all its organs to resume the peace process and realize the two-State solution.

My delegation has noted the reference made by the Secretary-General to proliferation and weapons of mass destruction as issues of great concern. On terrorism, he has emphasized the need to take into account root causes such as poverty and grievances over injustices. We cannot agree more. We believe that, to keep a genuine global coalition against terrorism together, there will be need for tangible progress on other fronts of the struggle for a humane and just world.

Bangladesh has never failed to respond effectively and promptly to the Secretary-General's call for peacekeeping and peace-building. Over the past two years, we have participated in 28 United Nations peacekeeping operations, across four continents, with over 50,000 military and police personnel. Most recently, we have answered the call for participation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and are poised to do so in Liberia. We do so not just because we see this as advancing our constructive role as an active and stabilizing international actor, but also because we want to spread across the troubled parts of the world the lesson and axiom we have learned from our own experience that, for development to take place, conflicts must first cease. Hence, also, our interest in the United Nations conflict prevention exercises, in which we have played the role of facilitator.

For billions around the world, non-military threats to security remain the highest priority. These

include extreme poverty, environmental degradation, HIV/AIDS and malaria. The Secretary-General has done well to apply special focus on the socio-economic agenda in both his reports. The Millennium Development Goals are the best hope for the world's poor. Unfortunately, the Secretary-General's assessment of its progress is sobering. It falls short of our expectations. For most developing nations, the road to the year 2015 is far too long and the destination far too elusive.

We agree with the analysis that the success of the first seven goals hinges on the fulfilment of the commitments of goal eight, dealing with equitable trade, greater debt relief and larger official development assistance flows to developing countries. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals, words must be translated into deeds and commitments made must be kept. It is not enough just to set targets. It is far more important to create the wherewithal to achieve them. Horrendous experiences have already warned us that failure in development is not an option.

The disappointment at Cancún must not overpower us, but instead, must spur us to greater action. Continued failures to advance in trade negotiations will be to the detriment of all; there will be no advance unless it is based on equity and fair play. Unhindered market access and special and preferential treatment for products of developing countries should be at the heart of multilateral negotiations. Trade is an instrument of development, and must be treated as such.

Africa deserves special attention. We applaud African leaders for the New Partnership for Africa's Development, for we believe it will place Africa in the driver's seat. Also the needs of the least developed countries must be addressed and the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries implemented.

I am pleased to be able to say that in recent times, we in Bangladesh have achieved considerable progress with regard to our development achievements. We have cut our population growth by half, curbed child mortality by a third, achieved food self-sufficiency, improved sanitation standards with indigenous methods and reduced emission of ozone-depleting substances and vehicular pollution. Free schooling for girl children, gender mainstreaming and empowerment of

women have been the major policy thrusts of the Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia.

We believe our successes are owed not just to appropriate use of external assistance, though that is a factor, but, more important, to the prevalence of a culture of pluralism, the creation of strong and accountable democratic institutions and the emergence of a powerful middleclass and a vibrant civil society. The World Bank has called Bangladesh's experience a silent revolution. Many see this as a paradigm worth emulating. We want to share our experience with others of comparable milieu. We would like the United Nations to be a conduit for making that possible. The United Nations will be most relevant to developing countries when it enhances its role as a locator, collator and transmitter of best practices. It will pass the litmus test of relevance not in drafts and declarations, but in operations and implementation.

Bangladesh firmly believes that poverty alleviation is best achieved, and development is most possible, through a mix of democracy, pluralism, moderate and progressive social ethos, greater gender balance and women's empowerment, human rights and accountable governance. We would encourage the United Nations to examine, through appropriate consultations, the possibilities of instituting peer reviews of development policies of partners and Members States that volunteer themselves for the purpose. This could result in rewarding performance, show-casing achievements and guiding investments to more fruitful destinations.

The Secretary-General has called for a greater voice and presence of developing countries in the decision-making process of key international bodies, including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and international financial institutions. Their policies impact on our societies most profoundly. As the current chairperson of the Second Committee, Bangladesh will work closely with Members States, global institutions and civil society to join efforts to realize this goal.

Our leaders, during the past two weeks, have reaffirmed that nations, big and small, weak and powerful, need the United Nations as much as the United Nations needs them. It is only through combining our endeavours that we shall be able to achieve our shared objectives of peace, security, development and harmony. The power of humanity

does not lie in the size of its armies, but rather in the strength of its ideas; not in its ability to destroy, but in its capacity to build; not in its tendencies to despair, but in its propensity to hope. Let humanity tap its power for its own benefit.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor since you, Sir, have become President, I wish to sincerely congratulate you on your election to preside over our work and to assure you of my fullest cooperation. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General for the documents he has made available to us, A/58/1 and A/58/323, which constitute a very clear foundation for our debates.

Allow me first to endorse the remarks made by the Permanent Representatives of Morocco and Peru, who spoke today in the debate on behalf of the Group of 77 and the Rio Group respectively, groups to which Guatemala belongs.

We wanted to supplement those statements with some additional thoughts, because today we have an opportunity to review the current status of and prospects for the United Nations, a very important issue, on which we wish to clearly state our position for the record. Secondly, by way of a general statement, we concur with the Secretary-General when he states, in the last three paragraphs of his report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1), that, despite its imperfections, the United Nations continues to embody the hopes of peoples and that its work is having a positive impact on the lives of many people throughout the world. I can attest to the fact that this is true in Guatemala, where the Organization has had and continues to have a significant impact.

At the same time, we recognize the vital need to adapt the Organization to the world's changing circumstances. In that regard, we also concur with what the Secretary-General states in his report as well as in his address in this very Hall on 23 September 2003, when he indicated that the events of the past few months were so traumatic for us all and that they have led us to dispassionately re-think the kind of Organization we want and to take action in the area of reform.

Thirdly, we have read with interest the report submitted by the Secretary-General by way of follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Declaration. As is true of any complex project, it provides a mixed picture

in which achievements and failures, steps forward and backward, grounds for hope and causes for disappointment are intermingled. Perhaps what remains freshest in our memory are the marked disagreements in the Security Council on the disarmament of Iraq and the deep divisions in the international community concerning the war and its aftermath.

We also have in mind the far from impressive performance of the world economy recently, which is jeopardizing the fulfilment of several key Millennium Development Goals, as well as the less than positive outcome of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held in Cancún. But none of these shortcomings can cancel out our Organization's significant achievements, including the process that culminated in the independence of Timor-Leste, the collective response of the membership to the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in combating terrorism, the adoption of that unique manifesto — the Monterrey Consensus — and the strengthening of the Secretariat's peacekeeping and peace-building capacity.

Above and beyond this purely illustrative list of achievements, we believe that the success of greatest import was the very holding of the Millennium Summit and the adoption of the Declaration which was its outcome. We believe that that Declaration is in itself an important inherent asset because, among other reasons, it provides a road map or a shared vision for all Members. It is a tool for raising public awareness. It facilitates the task of making the work of the United Nations system more coherent, coordinated and cooperative by providing a set of common objectives.

It also should also be a source of improvement in our system of programming and of setting budgetary priorities. It gives quantitative indicators, which make it easier to gauge progress. It represents a foundation on which we can continue to build, at the international level as well as within each country. In particular, it is an implicit justification of the need to preserve and strengthen multilateralism and the United Nations.

For all these reasons, in addition to the accounting that the Secretary-General has given us in each of the areas covered by the report — peace and security, development, human rights and democracy — our own assessment of the work of the Organization this year — a year that has been so traumatic for the United Nations, when we are still mourning the victims of August 19 last — in no way alters our feeling that

the United Nations remains an indispensable tool for humankind. It must be protected, improved, modernized and strengthened.

That is also why we are ready to heed the appeal made by the Secretary-General on 23 September that together we reach agreement on ways of improving the United Nations, so that it may serve the purpose of its founders:

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights ... to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained ... [and] to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): We thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the work of the Organization and on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, respectively. We are equally grateful for his statement during the inaugural session of the General Assembly on 23 September. These reports and statements will contribute greatly to our discussions about the relevance and the role of the United Nations in our fast-changing world.

We agree with the Secretary-General that this has been a trying year for the United Nations. The crisis over Iraq has severely tested the principles of collective security. The Security Council's refusal to authorize the use of force led some to unfair judgements about the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council as the primary instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council did not fail; in accordance with the Charter, it set the bar high for the use of force.

The framers of our Charter, emerging from a devastating World War, authorized the use of force by States only in self-defence or collectively, if explicitly authorized by the Security Council. That principle must remain sacrosanct. Attempting to develop criteria for an early authorization of coercive measures to address certain types of threats is fraught with danger for the world order. We fear that reopening the issue of the use of force, apart from requiring Charter revision, may open the door to more frequent resort to unilateral or pre-emptive use of force by certain States.

The United Nations has continued to grapple with what are now referred to as the old and new threats to international peace and security. The international legal framework to fight terrorism more effectively is growing, and so is the capacity of States acting cooperatively to counter terrorism.

We agree that terrorists must be prevented from ever acquiring weapons of mass destruction. States which possess such weapons, or sensitive materials or technology, should exercise effective controls over them. At the same time, we must not allow exaggeration of this threat. There has been only one incident in Japan where a terrorist group — a non-State actor — actually resorted to the use of chemical weapons. Otherwise, weapons of mass destruction have been used only by States and in the context of State terrorism. Our attention must not be diverted from the fact that there are two separate dangers — terrorism and weapons of mass destruction — and both must be dealt with effectively and largely separately.

Pakistan believes that while strengthening State capacities to fight terrorism, we must address terrorism more comprehensively. A legal definition of terrorism must be evolved which also includes State terrorism and which rejects attempts to de-legitimize the struggles of peoples for self-determination and foreign occupation. The fight against terrorism must be waged without sacrificing human rights. We must evolve strategies that aim at reducing the resort to terrorism — especially by promoting solutions to longstanding disputes and measures to reduce poverty and address political and economic injustice.

In the arena of disarmament, the Secretary-General has rightly called attention to the risks of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and stressed the need to strengthen existing weapons of mass destruction regimes. We agree that applying double standards could have adverse consequences. The most effective way to address the danger of weapons of mass destruction is through sincere efforts to achieve disarmament — of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The Secretary-General is of the view — as he stated in paragraph 20 of his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration — that weak enforcement measures are the major weakness of the existing nuclear, chemical and biological regimes, as they “essentially leave the penalties for non-

compliance unspecified.” We believe that this is not necessarily so. The major weakness is that the non-proliferation and disarmament bargain is being unequally implemented. Both horizontal and vertical proliferation must be halted. The suggestion for possible action through the United Nations, including the Security Council, could, in fact, be counterproductive, as is being discovered in the case of Korea. Pakistan has consistently held that existing treaty regimes should be strengthened to equitably address all disarmament and non-proliferation issues, including non-compliance. Any effort to complement the treaty regimes outside the treaty bodies would not only undermine those regimes but also set back efforts for disarmament at the global level. They may indeed increase the dangers of the use of force, including the use of weapons of mass destruction.

In South Asia, the Secretary-General has referred to the exchange of High Commissioners between India and Pakistan and announcements on intended restoration of rail, road and air links and other confidence-building measures. He has expressed the hope that those measures will lead to the resumption of sustained dialogue and to real progress towards a peaceful settlement of the outstanding problems between these two neighbours, including over Jammu and Kashmir.

Unfortunately, such hopes have not been realized, due to India’s refusal to resume dialogue with Pakistan, especially on the core issue of Kashmir.

On 24 September, President Musharraf proposed from this rostrum an action plan for peace between India and Pakistan — including the opening of bilateral dialogue, a reciprocal ceasefire along the Line of Control in Kashmir, cessation of violence within Indian-occupied Kashmir by Indian forces and Kashmiri freedom fighters, enhanced monitoring of the Line of Control on both sides, and the maintenance of an arms balance, both conventional and non-conventional, between the two countries.

India lost an opportunity for peace when it summarily rejected Pakistan’s action plan. We hope India will yet reflect and respond positively. This world body, and the Secretary-General, have a direct responsibility, flowing from the resolutions of the Security Council, to promote and support all measures for a just and lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute, rightly described as the most dangerous in the world.

The pledge of the United Nations — and of India and Pakistan — to the people of Jammu and Kashmir must be honoured.

The Secretary-General’s report illustrates how the challenge of security in Afghanistan casts a shadow over every aspect of rebuilding that war-ravaged country. Pakistan believes that the international community has an obligation to ensure the successful implementation of the Bonn process.

Iraq remains an urgent challenge for the international community. Member States must be guided in this situation by the objective of restoring Iraq’s sovereignty and political independence; ensuring its unity and territorial integrity; upholding the right of the Iraqi people to determine their own future and control their natural resources; and respecting their religious and cultural traditions and the sanctity of the holy places.

The political and stabilization processes in Iraq should involve, and should be owned by, the Iraqi people, under the auspices of the United Nations. We trust that consensus will be reached on such a framework for Iraq’s political, security and economic transition in a new Security Council resolution, acceptable to the Iraqi people and enjoying the support of the regional States.

The hopes for peace in the Middle East, revived by the Quartet’s road map, have now been all but extinguished. The unacceptable Israeli aggression against Syrian territory is a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter and all relevant Security Council resolutions. Besides threatening a larger conflagration, it undermines endeavours for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). The world must reject Israel’s aggressive actions and revive the hopes for a just peace where two States — Palestine and Israel — can exist side by side within viable and recognized boundaries.

Human rights remain an essential part of United Nations work. Human rights bodies, however, must not be allowed to serve the national or partisan political agendas of some States. Nor should the United Nations tolerate selectivity and double standards in human rights, practices that erode the credibility of our institutions. It is bizarre that our Organization should ignore the premeditated massacre of 2,000 Muslims at

Gujarat, while castigating isolated misdemeanours in so many other countries.

There is a growing recognition that development is humanity's shared agenda. Regrettably, the international community is falling well short of realizing most of the Millennium Development Goals. The developing countries must, of course, undertake the necessary structural reforms at the national level. But the developed countries must honour their commitments, particularly in areas of official development assistance and equitable trade.

For its part, Pakistan has embarked upon an ambitious reform programme to mobilize domestic resources and build up national capacity to meet the challenges of development. We are also engaged in the process of preparing our national Millennium Development Goals report.

Pakistan believes that the objectives of sustainable development can be fully realized only when we pursue an integrated approach whereby commitments relating to all three pillars of sustainable development — economic growth, social development and environmental protection — are honoured and implemented by all parties.

We agree with the Secretary-General that international trade can be the most important tool to generate development. The inequities in the international trading system must be eliminated. Development should become the gravamen of trade negotiations and globalization. The Doha Round must genuinely become a development round. The special programmes for Africa, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and for the least developed and low income countries must be vigorously supported.

We commend the Secretary-General for his consistent efforts since 1997 to streamline the Secretariat. Pakistan has made its modest contribution to advance these reforms and will continue with those efforts.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the Organization must adapt to the realities of today's world. However, it is extremely important that the prospective institutional reforms do not change the intergovernmental, multilateral and representative nature of this Organization and that such reforms are in consonance with the principles of the Charter,

especially the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

The General Assembly's procedures and processes can, of course, be improved to enhance efficiency. However, the weakness of the General Assembly has been caused by those who have transferred the real responsibility for addressing the major issues — even those not primarily relating to the maintenance of international peace and security — to the Security Council and other organs and entities, some of which are outside the United Nations system.

We are not convinced that creating an executive committee, steering committee, select body or any other privileged group within the General Assembly would make it more effective. On the contrary, it would undermine the representative character of the Assembly and erode the legitimacy of its decisions. We must try not to import into the Assembly the culture of unequal relationships that afflict some other bodies of the United Nations system.

We can all agree that the Security Council is in need of reform. It needs to become more representative and more transparent. Pakistan supports the expansion of the Security Council. At the same time, we will continue to resist the proliferation of centres of privilege in the Security Council. It is clear that, for the present, consensus within the United Nations would favour the expansion of only the non-permanent elected members of the Security Council, and we will support that.

The Economic and Social Council cannot be empowered to play the central role in economic and social cooperation merely by changing its name. The real problem is the unwillingness of major Member States to allow the Economic and Social Council to consider and decide on central issues relating to the management of international economic and social relations. The Monterrey Conference and the endeavour to build an integrated mechanism for follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences offers a unique opportunity to enable the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations as a whole to play a central coordinating role in achieving universal development and the socio-economic goals endorsed by the international community, especially the Millennium Development Goals.

Pakistan has also proposed the setting up of ad hoc composite committees of the General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council to address complex crises and conflict situations in their political, economic and social dimensions.

We support the presentation of the United Nations budget in a shorter, more strategic and results-based format. Pakistan believes that all mandated activities of the United Nations should be provided with adequate resources. While we support efforts to align resources to the priorities of the Organization, we believe that resource allocation should not be used as an instrument of policy for priority-setting. We fully support budget discipline and an efficient use of resources.

Pakistan would welcome the establishment of a high-level panel of eminent personalities to examine the current challenges and recommend ways of strengthening the United Nations through reform of its institutions and processes. Such a panel should be broadly representative, interact with Member States, including smaller States, and formulate its recommendations for action and decision by the General Assembly.

Mr. Djumala (Indonesia): The delegation of Indonesia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/58/1), his annual summary of how the United Nations has responded to the issues before it in the previous year, as well as his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). We are proud of this opportunity to make a contribution to this discussion, in view of the fact that the past year proved to be one of the most intriguing that our esteemed Organization has ever seen.

Speaking in the general debate on 23 September, President Megawati Soekarnoputri of Indonesia drew the attention of the General Assembly to the need to tackle the scourge of terrorism by ensuring that its root causes are adequately addressed. As Indonesia, a nation that has twice in the past year seen the worst of terrorism, has always stressed here in the United Nations, nothing is an admissible excuse for terrorism. While adequate international effort must be mobilized against it, therefore, attention must also be paid to addressing those issues that might, in a roundabout way, provide justification to those who might want to engage in it. Of key concern here, as President

Megawati indicated, is the pursuit of social and political justice.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that, in his report, the Secretary-General observes that indirect causes of terrorism, such as poverty and grievances borne from injustice, must be taken into consideration in fashioning strategies aimed at addressing terrorism. We in Indonesia strongly believe that, by genuinely addressing these fundamental issues, we will make it more and more difficult for terrorists to find adherents or strong support.

This approach is based on the relationship between peace and development. While underdevelopment should never be used as an excuse for disturbance of the peace, it unfortunately is always a ready excuse or natural scapegoat. That is why development is the natural answer to the problem of how to resolve conflict, in the same way that addressing issues of poverty and injustice proves a useful tool for combating terrorism.

Indonesia notes with concern the chronic shortfalls in funding for dealing with humanitarian crises internationally. Whereas the United Nations produced, in all, 27 consolidated appeals for \$5.8 billion for humanitarian assistance, the international response yielded only 52 per cent of the amount requested. The 48 per cent shortfall means that many millions of lives, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, may have been placed in great peril during the reporting period. In this regard, we need to re-emphasize that international security is put at risk when individual security is put at risk. The gap in funding must therefore be closed for peace to prevail and for development to take place.

The present situation in Iraq, where the humanitarian crisis intensifies almost daily, embodies this challenge. We are pleased to note the accomplishments of the United Nations system in that country, despite the highly volatile scenario there. Not the least of these accomplishments is the courage and determination of the system to respond to the needs of millions of ordinary Iraqis, whose only desire is for peace and the opportunity to live life in greater freedom.

Indonesia is in full agreement with the Secretary-General's identification of the elements critical to the global enhancement of the process of development. There is agreement on the need for new and increased

financing for development, as mandated by the Monterrey Consensus. Likewise, there is agreement on the fact that cooperation from the private sector also facilitates financing of the development process and helps to mobilize societies towards attaining national development goals.

While the role of the private sector is not to be ignored, it is equally important that Governments live up to their responsibility to create an environment conducive to development. Through Governments' coherently organized policies and programmes, sustainable development must be placed well within the reach of individuals, groups and institutions in their societies.

However, without international cooperation to achieve internationally accepted development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration, national efforts will be seriously handicapped. To aim for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals within the specific timeframes is not impractical or utopian, as some might be tempted to believe. In paragraph 49 of his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General made the point very clearly:

“Rapid advances in some areas have shown that the Millennium Development Goals, while ambitious, can be reached at the global level. They are still achievable at the national level for nearly every country.” (A/58/323)

But success in meeting global challenges, he observes, hinges upon a demonstration of the necessary political will at the global level.

Apart from concessions for poor countries to access cheaply produced generic drugs to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, nothing else of note has occurred. It was estimated that if the summit in Cancún had negotiated solid free trade agreements, it would have generated some \$530 billion in income gains for both rich and poor countries and reduced the number of the world's poor by as many as 144 million people by 2015.

To promote South-South cooperation, Indonesia hosted, last July, the two-day Asian-African Sub-regional Organizations Conference in Bandung. That Conference was held to establish a New Strategic Partnership between Asia and Africa, the foundation for which was laid in 1955. Using their differences as strengths to complement each other, Asia and Africa will draw lessons from their experiences in overcoming

problems related to political, social, economic and development issues, as part of their development processes.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the outcomes of the recently held Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which emphasizes support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development as one of its basic themes.

Indonesia strongly urges that the reforms necessary to make the United Nations system more effective and efficient not be delayed any further. We cannot agree more with the Secretary-General's observation that the Security Council needs to be reformed in order to regain the confidence of States, in particular those of the developing world, by showing itself to be truly representative of their views and interests. The Council's composition must also reflect current geopolitical realities. The truth is, we all want a better, stronger, more capable United Nations that represents the best hope for multilateralism in a highly interdependent world. For that to happen, the Organization must prove itself to be flexible and adaptable.

With regard to paragraph 74 of the report — concerning the situation in Aceh — my delegation would like to set the record straight. There has been no resumption of military activity against the separatist movement. What we have is a combined operation, which contains a humanitarian aspect that has borne fruit. The Acehnese, who had been the victims of extortion, killings and other acts of terrorism perpetrated by the armed separatist movement, have shown their full support for the integrated or combined operation without fear of retaliation from the armed separatists.

Besides the humanitarian aspect, another aspect of the combined operation is the revitalization of the civil administration and the implementation of the rule of law. In the five months since the combined operation began, on 19 May 2003, the situation in Aceh has improved considerably. Another positive development is that hundreds of members of the armed separatist movement have voluntarily surrendered. The Government has accepted them and provided them with vocational training so that they will have appropriate skills when they are returned to the community.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items for this meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.