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Official Records

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)

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

Agenda item 102 (continued)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his tenth, and final, annual report to the General Assembly at the 10th plenary meeting on 19 September 2006. The report presents the Organization's activities over the past 12 months in the areas of development, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian affairs and the strengthening of the United Nations. This year, the report also includes a section on global constituencies, including civil society and the business community, in order to cover an area that, according to the Secretary-General, has not previously been classified as a central to the Organization's work but has become increasingly important. It is, therefore, important that Member States also address that issue in their statements.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries of Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries of Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area — Norway — as well as Ukraine and

the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/61/1) on the work of the Organization. It is very fitting that, for the first time, the report combines the progress made in implementing the Millennium Declaration with a review of the work of the Organization. My comments will follow the outline presented by the Secretary-General in his excellent report, starting with development.

As the 2005 World Summit emphasized, development must be based on global partnership. The EU remains firmly committed to supporting country-led sustainable development through actions on aid volume, aid effectiveness, debt relief, innovative finance mechanisms, trade and the international institutions. The Summit reaffirmed the Millennium Development Goals, together with the development goals and objectives agreed upon at major United Nations conferences and summits, as the framework for development.

The EU has set a timetable to reach new levels of official development assistance. By 2010 that will account for 0.56 per cent of the EU's gross national income — an additional €20 billion annually. By 2015, it will reach 0.7 per cent.

In the global response to HIV/AIDS, the majority of the work to be done must be in achieving a substantial scaling-up of preventive action and in

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achieving social change. Inclusive country-led strategies are a key element in that regard. We must constantly combat stigmatization and discrimination. We must also pay special attention to human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, to sexual and reproductive health rights and to the rights of women and young people, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized, Africa is in need of urgent and concerted action in all areas. The EU will continue to strengthen its relations with Africa within the framework of the comprehensive EU Strategy for Africa, which was approved by the European Council in 2005. In the course of next year, that unilateral agreement will be transformed into a joint African strategy, in close cooperation with African partners.

The EU remains firmly committed to joint international efforts to protect the natural resource base, achieve sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and safeguard the Earth's biodiversity. To deal with environmental issues in an effective manner, more coherence is urgently needed in the United Nations system. I therefore call for an early resumption of the discussions on environmental governance, in line with paragraph 169 of the World Summit Outcome document.

The EU welcomes the results of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which initiated an important dialogue aimed at exchanging experiences and analyzing strategic approaches for long-term cooperative action to address climate change. The EU is committed to participating actively in that dialogue.

With regard to peace and security, the EU fully shares the view of the Secretary-General on the importance of conflict prevention and protecting people from violence. While the development agenda itself is powerful in addressing the root causes of conflicts, the United Nations must have additional tools for conflict prevention. Much has been done, but more steps are still needed to interconnect security and development, as well as with regard to the resolution of disputes by peaceful means. The EU also attaches great importance to promoting the concept of the responsibility to protect.

The EU views the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, along with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process launched by the World Summit. The EU has for many years provided considerable input for peacebuilding activities all over the world and is ready to continue its commitments by actively supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The continuing terrorist attacks remind us that terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to all States and peoples. The EU applauds the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as an important step in combating terrorism. The General Assembly should keep up the momentum and make every effort to reach an agreement on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

This summer, the Conference to Review Progress Made in 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 followed the path of both the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the World Summit, and did not yield any substantial results. It is high time that we tackle the deadlock in multilateral negotiations in this important field of the work of the United Nations in the area of for peace and security. We believe that the developments in revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva represent a positive example in that regard.

We welcome the inclusion of rule of law at the national and international levels in the agenda of the General Assembly. The European Union also looks forward to the early establishment of the rule of law assistance unit, as anticipated by the Secretary-General and endorsed by world leaders at the 2005 Summit.

The International Criminal Court is of the utmost importance for ending impunity and establishing the rule of law in post-conflict situations. Furthermore, bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes contributes significantly to preventing the recurrence of those crimes, as well as to promoting the prevention of conflicts at their early stages.

The European Union is strongly committed to ensuring that the Human Rights Council will be able to meet the objectives set by our leaders at the World

Summit and the needs and expectations of rights holders, namely, the people of the world. The active participation of non-governmental organizations is a central element of the work of the human rights machinery of the United Nations, and should be further strengthened on the basis of the practices established under the Commission for Human Rights.

Another important decision taken at the World Summit was the doubling of the resources of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The EU is pleased to note that the plan of action presented by the High Commissioner in May 2005 has been complemented by the first biennial programme plan for the years 2008 and 2009.

We welcome the recent improvements in the area of humanitarian action, including the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund. The current deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is particularly alarming. Gender-based violence is a grave concern that deserves urgent attention. The provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons needs to be strengthened further. In addition, the predictability of humanitarian funding needs to be improved, as some emergencies remain chronically under-funded or even neglected.

In accordance with the overall efforts for more efficiency and coherence, the EU welcomes the creation of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. It is vital that the Organization continue to move towards enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, as agreed by our heads of State and Government at the World Summit.

The European Union is committed to the work of the ad hoc informal working group on mandate review and remains fully dedicated to the process of strengthening and renewing the Organization. We also welcome the progress already made in the area of management reform, including the establishment of an ethics office, the implementation of whistle-blower protection and the agreement to reform the current unwieldy information and communication technology systems. However, much remains to be done. Only through strengthened accountability and better management will the United Nations become stronger and more effective. Strengthening oversight in the United Nations is one of the EU's priorities.

There are almost 90,000 personnel serving in 18 United Nations peacekeeping operations, directly impacting the lives of hundreds of millions of people. We therefore recognize the need for a more integrated and mobile global workforce, and we look forward to discussing that and other proposals in the context of human resources management reform.

The protection and security of staff in the field and at Headquarters is of the utmost importance.

Given the need for urgent renovations in order to make the United Nations Headquarters in New York safe and more functional, we need an agreement on funding of the Capital Master Plan during this session.

Before I conclude, I would like to comment on Chapter VI of the report of the Secretary-General, which deals with global constituencies. The EU fully shares the views of the Secretary-General on these issues: security is not a matter for Governments alone, and development needs are human needs.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Secretary-General and the staff of the United Nations for work well done, both at Headquarters and in the field. The European Union applauds the Secretary-General for his numerous ideas and changes made in the past 10 years to bring the United Nations up to best international practices.

Mr. Gaisenak (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus has studied the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1) with great attention.

The general debate at the current session has shown that the United Nations has not yet managed to realize its full potential in the areas of peacebuilding and having a constructive and organizing influence. At the moment, the Organization is unable to have a decisive impact on building an atmosphere of trust between States, preventing military conflicts and combating terrorism and poverty. The root causes of the failures and missed opportunities should be sought in a complex international situation that is determined by a unipolar world order. So long as that order persists — in which the way to solve problems is dictated by a single party — progress will be unattainable.

Global challenges and threats can be overcome only if we act together, pooling all our strengths and resources. We must support existing focal points of

consolidation and development and encourage the creation of new ones that can resist external pressure and become sources of regional and global stability. It is important that we adopt new approaches to the problems related to security and development. Such approaches should be based on multipolarity and an acknowledgement of the diversity of ways in which the progressive development of countries and peoples can be achieved.

We have noted with regret and sadness that, as many world leaders have stated, the global partnership for development has remained only a concept on paper. We have taken that to heart, because the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) affect the fate of billions of people: their lives, their health and their prosperity. Who other than the United Nations will care for them?

Our support for the principles of true partnership inspired Belarus to seek to become a member of the Economic and Social Council. We come to the Council with a clear intention to utilize the full potential of the United Nations and its social and economic institutions by providing practical support for the efforts by the Governments of least developed countries to implement their national development strategies. The Economic and Social Council should become an international forum in which the most important international decisions on development assistance are taken. That approach was reflected in our proposals for reform of the Economic and Social Council, which were submitted to the General Assembly for consideration in February.

We have often stressed the need to improve United Nations activities in the area of human rights. We oppose double standards and the use of the issue of human rights as a pretext for applying political pressure on sovereign States. We support equitable dialogue aimed at truly protecting human rights.

It is because of the need to genuinely promote human rights that Belarus has prepared and will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons. Today, a quarter of all victims of human trafficking come from the regions of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The time has come to take robust and coordinated action to protect those who are weak and vulnerable, particularly women and children. It is also high time to speak out regarding the

responsibility borne by those who exploit the victims of such trafficking. We believe that the elaboration of a viable United Nations strategy against trafficking in persons should be the ultimate objective of our efforts in this area.

My country, the Republic of Belarus, is located in a unique geographic region that is experiencing profound economic, political and social transformations. That region, Eastern Europe, has enjoyed very high economic growth rates for several years. Does that give the United Nations the right to exclude from its agenda the problems of countries with economies in transition? The answer is obvious if we address the differences in the levels of socio-economic development among the subregions of Eastern Europe. Members should judge for themselves: there are 125 million people — including 25 million children — living below the poverty line. In many small and vulnerable countries with transitional economies, there has been both progress and painful movement backwards in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in the areas of education and health care. Eastern Europe and the CIS countries are falling behind Latin America and Asia in achieving some of the MDGs.

Therefore, together with our partners, we are preparing and will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on integration of countries with economies in transition into the world economy. The draft resolution's key objective is to ensure the provision of targeted international financial and technical assistance to the countries that truly need it. We ask delegations to support the draft resolution.

Belarus, as one of the few countries that have voluntarily renounced the possession of nuclear weapons, is deeply concerned about the lack of progress in bringing about the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) undoubtedly remains the basis of the current international security system. We believe that it is essential to implement all three elements of the NPT: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We emphasize that placing restrictions on the inalienable right of all non-nuclear-weapon States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes directly undermines the Treaty.

The lack of results in disarmament forums in recent years is a direct consequence of the rising level of confrontation in the modern world and of the tendency to seek to solve problems from a position of strength. Progress on disarmament is essential. It is important not only that we preserve the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, but also that we make it function properly.

Here, we are pleased to welcome one positive example: the establishment of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Four Central Asian States are our partners in a regional initiative, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Belarus, in its capacity as Chair of the CSTO, has circulated a statement of support for that initiative.

Belarus attaches great importance not only to the implementation of international treaties banning existing types of weapons of mass destruction or imposing control measures on them, but also to the adoption of measures to prevent the development of new types of such weapons. Belarus was a sponsor of the relevant draft resolution. The fact that that draft resolution was not adopted by consensus during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is alarming. Let me ask those who did not support the draft whether they really intend to create new types of weapons of mass destruction.

Certainly, a significant event was the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and plan of action (resolution 60/288). We welcome that important event, because, for the first time in United Nations history, all 192 Member States agreed on common principles and approaches for combating terrorism at the global level.

It is understandable, in our view, when the permanent members of the Security Council have differing opinions on ways to resolve international crises. More often than not, the most balanced and wisest decisions are taken as a result. However, we should like to note that more coordinated action and swifter decision-making by Council members could help the Council to respond more effectively to present-day threats and challenges and to make the lives of people in the world's hot spots a little safer.

I now turn to the subject of reform. United Nations reform is not proceeding smoothly. On the one hand, important new bodies were established at

the sixtieth session, although their effectiveness has yet to be assessed.

On the other hand, revitalization of the General Assembly is moving slowly and does not encompass some important spheres. Yet, we feel confident that a step-by-step, balanced approach that takes into account the interests of all Member States is much better and more viable than the intention to create a system of management that suits only a narrow circle of influential States.

We should recall that the goal of reform is not the cost-cutting, or even the improvement, of management. Reform is being carried out in order that every human being on this planet might be aware of the concern felt by the international community and be able to believe in his or her own better future.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General on the presentation of his annual report on the work of the Organization. We note the changed format of the report, covering the four main areas of the 2005 Summit Declaration. In this process, however, the in-depth review of some of the important political issues with which the United Nations is involved, such as the Middle East conflict, Palestine, South Asian relations and Kashmir, have not been adequately covered. In future, it would be advisable for the report to be assembled into the 12 thematic clusters of the United Nations General Assembly's agenda.

The United Nations is an indispensable instrument for the promotion of humanity's shared goals. The present and emerging challenges of the twenty-first century can only be overcome through multilateral cooperation. If the United Nations did not already exist, we would need to create it.

It has been aptly and repeatedly stated that the United Nations must adapt and be equipped to address these new challenges and circumstances of our times. The reform initiatives of the Secretary-General, the 2005 Summit decisions and the implementation process pursued this year were all guided by this preoccupation. The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Emergency Response Fund are all cause for modest satisfaction. Of course, there are several issues where implementation of the Summit's decisions remain outstanding, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council and the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The reform exercise has been plagued not only by the multiple objectives that are sought to be simultaneously promoted, but also by the absence of agreement on the strategic objectives of these reforms. During its 60-year history, the United Nations has passed from the bipolar structures of the cold war through a period of unipolarity. It is now at the prelude to a multipolar world. We have entered an era of globalization and interdependence, but also one of huge asymmetries in power, wealth and knowledge. Despite the 2005 Summit, we, the United Nations, have yet to establish a new paradigm under which world affairs and global challenges will be managed.

Our deliberations in these halls confront conflicting pulls and pressures. They have been marked by sharp suspicions between the North and the South. Some would wish our Organization to mirror the unequal asymmetries of the “real” world. Others, the more numerous developing countries, wish to utilize the United Nations as the principal instrument to change and democratize the unequal realities of our globalized, yet divided, world.

Some wish to utilize the United Nations as an instrument for collective enforcement of “good behaviour”; others, the more numerous, wish to use it to promote collective and cooperative solutions to political, economic, social and environmental problems. In our view, the strategic objectives, political parameters and modus operandi of the United Nations must be consistent with the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter — principles and purposes whose lofty vision is as relevant today as it was 60 years ago.

One important manifestation of this tension between equity and the status quo is the breakdown of the consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The 2005 Summit was unable to agree on any provisions on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Conference on Disarmament remains paralyzed. Major Powers have resiled from the commitment to nuclear disarmament. An arms race may be soon under way in outer space. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime is riven by doubts and double standards regarding, for instance, rights, obligations and scope of peaceful nuclear cooperation. A la carte solutions to proliferation

problems are sought to be prescribed in restrictive regimes or through the Security Council. The three nuclear-weapon States not in the NPT remain outside international non-proliferation arrangements. Instead of evolving agreed arrangements to integrate them as partners in the non-proliferation regime, discrimination is now being introduced among the three as well, with possibly negative effects for non-proliferation and international security.

Pakistan believes it is time to re-build the international consensus on both disarmament and non-proliferation and to agree on effective and non-discriminatory processes to promote both. A special conference should be convened, under the aegis of the United Nations, to promote such an international consensus.

A few weeks ago, the General Assembly adopted a United Nations strategy against terrorism. We hope this will enhance international cooperation. Yet, the strategy will remain incomplete and, finally, fruitless, so long as it does not fully and frontally address the root causes of terrorism, State terrorism and the misuse of terrorism to justify foreign occupation and the suppression of the right of peoples to self-determination. In the process of its prescribed periodic review, the strategy should be revised to address these issues. The General Assembly should create the intergovernmental mechanism it requires to assume principal responsibility for overseeing the United Nations activities relating to terrorism.

Under the rubric of peace and security, the Secretary-General’s report outlines the myriad actions of the United Nations to manage conflicts and their consequences. These are the invaluable intercessions of this Organization in the service of peace. Yet, some observations are essential.

The United Nations, including the Security Council, is preoccupied today with intra-State or internal conflicts, rather than with the existential threats posed by inter-State disputes.

Conflicts such as those in the Middle East, in South Asia, on the Korean peninsula and elsewhere are being managed largely in other formats and forums rather than the United Nations, which should be actively involved in order to promote equitable solutions to such conflicts and disputes, in accordance with the resolutions of this Organization. It possesses the mechanisms and the authority, under Chapters VI

and VII, as well as through the International Court of Justice, to promote that objective.

Secondly, even in the case of internal conflicts, the attention of the international community is mostly aroused only after the breakdown of peace. No doubt, the intercessions of the United Nations — especially in peacekeeping operations — have proved indispensable in restoring peace. Pakistan hosts the oldest United Nations peacekeeping mission — the United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan — which is deployed on the Line of Control in disputed Jammu and Kashmir. We have also been, over the past three years, the largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping. Peacekeeping missions are now much more numerous, more complex and more dangerous. But the world community's combined forces are now perhaps reaching the limits of their capacity for collective intervention. The most recent Mission, for Lebanon, is proving difficult to organize. Another on the anvil, for Darfur, raises serious questions about the advisability and possible consequences of a United Nations-authorized intervention against the wishes of a country's Government.

The fundamental question, however, is: Why is the United Nations not more actively engaged in the prevention of such internal problems, before they turn into full-fledged civil wars requiring expensive and difficult peacekeeping operations? Any analysis of these conflicts would reveal that, at their root, they are the result of what I call the "politics of scarcity". The secret to their prevention is rapid economic and social development and, in Africa's case at least, an end to the illegal exploitation of the vast natural resources of these developing countries.

The report's review of the Organization's development activities, especially the follow-up to 2005 Summit, reflects a fair review of ongoing activities. However, the report fails to offer a full analysis of the development picture and the enormous challenges confronting the developing countries. Globalization has enabled several developing countries to break through the barrier of poverty, mostly as a result of their own endeavours, but it has further marginalized the most vulnerable States and communities. The promises of higher official development assistance and debt cancellation made at the 2005 Summit have not yet materialized. The

so-called Doha Development Agenda is on life support, if not already deceased.

If the promise of a North-South partnership for development is to become a reality, it is essential to ensure the full and timely implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the internationally agreed development goals. Developing countries that so request should be assisted in formulating their national development strategies. Development partners — the industrialized and richer countries and international institutions — must fulfil their commitments to support the success of these strategies, including through higher official development assistance, debt relief, trade and investment. To that end, a politically and technically empowered monitoring mechanism should be established, under the Economic and Social Council, and specific indicators developed to enable an objective monitoring of the implementation of the MDGs and the internationally agreed development goals by all concerned. The resolution adopted on the follow-up to the development provisions of the 2005 Summit outlines the steps that should be taken for this purpose.

While development was proclaimed to be the first priority of the 2005 Summit, it is telling and sad that, of all the institutional reform decisions, the one relating to the empowerment and revival of the Economic and Social Council is the one that could not be adopted prior to the conclusion of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, despite the broad agreement on this issue at the 2005 Summit. That resolution must be approved without further delay.

It is also evident that the entire United Nations development cooperation system needs to be strengthened and streamlined, at both the country and intergovernmental levels and in both the policy and operational areas. In that context, the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence will require close and urgent attention by the General Assembly.

As in peacekeeping, the role of the United Nations in coordinating the response to humanitarian emergencies has been indispensable and outstanding. This was witnessed in the response to both the tsunami and to the massive earthquake which devastated the northern regions of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir a year ago. We welcome the establishment of the \$500

million Central Emergency Response Fund. We believe that United Nations humanitarian activities would benefit from closer intergovernmental engagement and oversight under the Economic and Social Council.

The first meetings of the Human Rights Council, while constructively directed, have confirmed the different dispositions of various countries and groups regarding its agenda, structures and working methods. In our view, the main issues are the promotion of a cooperative rather than a coercive approach to human rights; the need for full integration of the right to development into the framework of the human rights matrix; the avoidance of double standards and political targeting of developing and especially Muslim countries; the composition and role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; the rationalization of special mechanisms and procedures; and the streamlining of the role of civil — and sometimes uncivil — society in the Human Rights Council and related forums.

Another important outstanding issue is the reform of the Security Council. This is of vital interest to every Member State. A solution to Security Council reform would need to accommodate the interests of all and would have to be resolved by consensus or the widest possible agreement. While Security Council reform has been discussed and debated for a decade, compromise has not been explored through negotiations. A negotiating process, pursued with political flexibility and diplomatic creativity, could evolve an agreement that accommodates the interests of all Member States and regions. This general desire for a negotiated and agreed solution was evident at the dinner meeting on 20 September hosted by the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Italy. We trust, Madam President, that you will lead this effort to open negotiations with a view to evolving an agreed solution for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The endeavour to introduce reforms in the United Nations management and Secretariat and to review old mandates has proved to be extensive. I was honoured to co-chair that enterprise, first with my former Canadian colleague and now with Ambassador David Cooney of Ireland.

The mandate review exercise has produced extensive information on the almost 10,000 five-year-old mandates approved by the principal United Nations

organs. However, we have not been able in the Assembly to proceed beyond the consideration of 400 five-year-old non-renewed mandates. The co-Chairs had conveyed to your predecessor, Madam, that the guidelines they had circulated offered the best possibility of continuing this exercise, which will be laborious and time-consuming. We will need to decide by year-end whether and how the mandate review should be conducted.

Similarly, the Secretariat and management reforms will need to be pursued objectively and carefully, bearing in mind the interests of all Member States. Efficiency and effectiveness are desirable and endorsed by all. But any effort to further erode the financial and budgetary authority of the General Assembly will be resisted by the majority of Member States.

The performance and effectiveness of the United Nations depends on the following crucial factors: first, the quality of its human resources; secondly, the financial resources provided to support its activities; thirdly, the authority vested in the Organization by the Member States; and fourthly, the political will to support the mandated programmes and activities of the Organization. All efforts to achieve United Nations reform must ensure that these prerequisites are available to our Organization and our new Secretary-General.

Those of us who have endeavoured to carve out a central role for the United Nations in world affairs have often been obliged to temper our idealism in the face of power realities. However, this should not shake our belief that sustainable peace and universal prosperity can be secured once principles have primacy over power. The world needs a United Nations which does not always mirror the harsh and unequal power realities. The world needs a United Nations which acts with moral authority and credibility. The world needs a United Nations which can stand up for the weak and the powerless and which is a force for objectivity, fairness, equality and justice in the management of international relations.

Mr. Sen (India): We congratulate you on your election, Madam, and on the efficient manner in which you have been conducting the work of the sixty-first session. We assure you of our constructive cooperation. We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive

overview of the Organization's main achievements and challenges during the past 12 months.

As the report highlights, the Secretary-General has overseen the Organization's many achievements during the past 10 years. The Millennium Summit, which led to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), was followed up last year with the five-year review and the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. The MDGs embody a quantifiable vision of certain important economic and social rights and, in this sense, they carry forward the right to development. The global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration and reaffirmed by the 2005 World Summit, is primarily a commitment to make the right to development a reality for all, and we should reach broad agreement in fulfilling the promise.

The report reminds us of the imperative of implementing the global partnership for development; the need for enhanced focus on peacebuilding; and the necessity of increased attention to the special needs of Africa. Here, I would like to say that, until there is a sharp decrease in vulnerability and a sharp increase in welfare throughout the African continent and in the small island developing States, we cannot really pride ourselves on any significant measure of success. We also need to focus on health issues, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and on the need to strengthen the United Nations and make it a robust and vibrant Organization, responsive to the needs of the time and, by implication, to the needs of developing countries, which constitute the vast majority of the Organization.

It is worth remembering that what was achieved at the 2005 World Summit was the result of the solidarity of the developing countries. This remains important in the implementation of the commitments set out in the World Summit Outcome; agreement reached in the context of development follow-up is indicative.

For developing countries, the centrepiece is development. Poverty and conflicts are not only the legacy of the colonial past, but also the epiphenomena of the structural policies of the international financial institutions. The present international system takes from the poor: net transfers from developing countries have continued to rise for the twelfth consecutive year,

reaching over \$450 billion. Without addressing the development problems faced by the vast majority of the United Nations membership, security in its full sense cannot be achieved. The report of the Secretary-General notes that, since the Millennium Summit in 2000, the progress has been uneven and the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering. Implementing the global partnership for development — MDG 8 — is a categorical imperative.

The MDGs cannot be achieved without implementing the 0.7 per cent official development assistance (ODA) target in a time-bound manner or without innovative financing, deeper debt relief, enhanced market access and improved global economic governance. Even though aggregate ODA reached a record high of \$106 billion in 2005, only a small fraction of that nominal increase actually represented additional finance to support real investments in countries that need them most.

We welcome the agreement reached to monitor the fulfilment of commitments made to provide development assistance. India is supportive of all initiatives in support of the low-income countries, including those in Africa, where debt burdens impose serious constraints on the attainment of the MDGs. It is also important that debt stock cancellation is complemented by sharp increases in ODA.

Addressing systemic issues is an urgent practical necessity. As reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit and subsequently agreed in the context of the development follow-up this July, there is an overwhelming logic for the United Nations to give direction to the comprehensive reform of the international financial, monetary and trading systems. The democratic deficit in the international financial architecture can be addressed only through a fundamental reform of the quota structure, which is an absolute necessity for the credibility and legitimacy of international financial institutions.

The United Nations should encourage further effective, time-bound steps for the second stage of International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota reform without delay, involving a basic revision of the formula and subsequent quota increases for all underrepresented countries, as well as the revision of the articles of the IMF.

The suspension of the Doha round of trade negotiations is a cause for concern. The realization of

the development imperatives of the Doha Development Agenda, the July framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is crucial for developing countries. The overarching principle of special and differential treatment remains a categorical imperative. A demonstration of political will by the developed countries will be required if negotiations are to be saved.

Giving clear political direction to the WTO, which was not possible in the 2005 World Summit, in spite of broad political support, remains necessary. Here I would like to say that the problems of the developing countries, which are sometimes attributed to inadequate liberalization or corruption are, in fact, a result of the fact that the developed countries have gone back on the promises that they made.

In fact, the history of trade negotiations is a history of broken promises and silenced consciences. In the Uruguay round, in return for the acceptance by developing countries of lower tariffs and new regimes such as the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the developed countries undertook to phase out the textile quotas and to abolish agricultural subsidies. The first took 10 years; the second — the removal of agricultural subsidies — has not yet happened. That really amounts to burying the Punta del Este Declaration. The Doha round, therefore, needs some kind of an impetus from the United Nations if the balance is to be redressed. It is here that the role of the United Nations in standing firm on the reform and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council — an issue to which I shall turn soon — becomes an extreme imperative.

The primacy of development on the global agenda can be achieved only if the United Nations takes a lead in setting the international economic agenda. The problem is the reform of the United Nations system — the reinstatement of the United Nations-driven and development-oriented approach. What is needed is United Nations oversight of the international economic agenda and promotion of the reform of international economic institutions through a revitalized General Assembly and a strengthened Economic and Social Council, as well as a comprehensively reformed Security Council. Only if we remain actively engaged can we correct the imbalance and ensure that no country is too weak to influence the United Nations, that the economic agenda

is truly development-oriented and that laws are made by the General Assembly.

Here, I would like to say that, in the case of the Economic and Social Council, the recent book by Joseph E. Stiglitz, on making globalization work, recommends specifically that the United Nations — and here the Economic and Social Council is the appropriate body — should undertake a regular audit of international economic institutions, carrying out a regular assessment of the performance of those institutions. In fact, he also says that the Economic and Social Council should play a critical, central role, in shaping the global economic agenda. And here, the development forums that have been set up under the Economic and Social Council could, in our view, play an important role.

The 2005 World Summit emphasized the need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council in order to enable it to play a critical role in promoting international cooperation for development, as well as in enhancing policy coherence and coordination among agencies. An early conclusion of negotiations on this issue is needed, as is a demonstration of political will to enable the Economic and Social Council to fulfil its mandate as envisaged in the Charter, and to contribute to peacebuilding and peace consolidation efforts in countries emerging from conflict, in accordance with the agreements reached at the time of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Similarly, in the context of strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, early consultations on the re-establishment of the ad hoc working group on General Assembly revitalization is called for.

The General Assembly is best placed to ensure that the candidate proposed for the post of Secretary-General is sensitive to the needs of the developing countries.

Here I may mention that, like the Security Council, the international economic institutions were set up in 1945 and bear the stigmata of 1945. They are really clubs for the rich and powerful, and they play by the rules of the old school tie. This is evident from the fact that the richest countries have — in fact, one rich country effectively has — a veto in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as we saw recently at the Singapore conference. In fact, a single powerful country is able to appoint the head of the World Bank

and shares with Western Europe the top two IMF posts. Are the use of the veto and the appointments in the Security Council any different?

In the Security Council, again, we find exactly the same procedure at work, so this is not an accident or a coincidence, but part of an established pattern. The General Assembly was not able to revitalize the General Assembly itself, through this year's resolution 60/286, which in fact remains as much a dead letter as resolution 51/241 of 1997. This is a matter of some concern to the developing countries, which are the vast majority to which the Organization should actually be responsive. If the developing countries are not able to eschew the prospect of immediate gains, which are by their very nature evanescent, then this Organization is likely to pass out of their hands, and we are likely to be reduced to occupying the margins, or a limbo where the Assembly, through continual adaptation to continually lowered expectations, would be reduced to the role of an irrelevant spectator.

Hence the crucial importance, which I reiterate, of revitalizing the General Assembly, of setting up once again the working group on the revitalization of the Assembly and of standing firm on the reform of the Economic and Social Council in terms of its linkage with peacebuilding in conflict-prone countries and those emerging from conflict, as well as its central role in the reform and accountability of international economic, monetary and trading institutions.

The recent tragic events in Lebanon and the stasis in the peace process in the Middle East have highlighted the growing failure of the Security Council, which is designated by the Charter as having primary responsibility for issues relating to peace and security. The main problems that beset peacekeeping are not a lack of resources, or even personnel, but an unrepresentative Security Council which lacks the political will to act and which, when it does, does so in a manner that is entirely inadequate. The Council also needs to shore up its participation in peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General's report states that an overwhelming number of troops in United Nations peacekeeping operations are contributed by developing countries. This is a distressing reflection on the Security Council's willingness to share the burden of maintaining international peace and security.

It is no accident that the Secretary-General's report refers to the enhancement of legitimacy and the urgent need for reform to ensure the relevance and credibility of the Security Council. We agree with the Secretary-General that the Council should be more representative of today's geopolitical realities and more efficient and transparent in its working methods. There is widespread acknowledgement that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The Security Council must not only be more representative but also more effective if it is to be able to satisfactorily perform the role mandated to it by the Charter.

The recent General Assembly debate on Security Council reform, held on 20 and 21 July 2006 (see A/60/PV.94-96), gave a clear signal that the momentum for reform remains intact, and that maintaining the status quo is unacceptable. Developing countries remain grossly underrepresented in the Council, even though most decisions taken by the Security Council directly affect them. Thus, developing countries continue to face the same underlying systemic challenges that brought them together in the 1960s; indeed, today, in many respects, the environment is harsher. The voice of developing countries and their further empowerment in the international arena is vital for levelling the so-called playing field.

It is, therefore, imperative that any expansion and restructuring of the Security Council include developing countries both as permanent members and in the non-permanent category. We are committed to undertaking intensive consultations with other developing countries, in a spirit of solidarity, and to embark on a South initiative for the reform of the Organization in a manner that is reflective of the aspirations of the developing countries and that ensures that the reformed structures are responsive to their needs in areas ranging from development to peace and security, strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, revitalization of the General Assembly and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I must say that in the case of Lebanon and the stasis in the Middle East peace process we saw the ineffectiveness of the Security Council. In fact, it reminded me of the ancient Roman emperor Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned. Incidentally, this is not a reference to the Uniting for Consensus group. This phenomenon is not accidental. It is simply inherent in

the composition of the Security Council, because some of the permanent five suffer from the same thing, a "virtue" that they share, in fact, with the Russian tsars, the French Bourbons and the English Stuarts: they suffer from a reification of the present, a belief that human institutions cannot change. And unless such fundamental change is effected, we will be unable to overcome the basic problems that are confronting this Organization in field after field — including in peacebuilding and even in the setting up of the Peacebuilding Commission, as we saw.

Also, some have recently spoken of an interim solution. Interim to what? Certainly not to a long-term solution. It seems that the deliberate intention is for such an interim solution to actually prevent a long-term solution, to prevent the introduction of balance, to prevent the introduction of genuine, comprehensive reform in the Security Council, and to ensure that we go on as we are. In fact, an interim solution is not really required, and the reason is simple: because we already have an interim solution. The interim solution is very clear. Given today's political necessities and under the efficient provisions of the United Nations Charter, we are empowered to elect non-permanent members. We have to elect non-permanent members that will be responsive to the needs of the vast majority of the developing countries and responsive to the cry of the vulnerable, of the small, of the developing and of the marginalized, and to the blood of the slain and the voices of the captive and the innumerable lost souls. It is only such members that would be able to introduce a certain measure of balance and open the charmed circle to a very minimal extent, but at least make a beginning, in the Security Council. So, electing such non-permanent members is already, in fact, what constitutes an interim solution.

What we need to work towards, therefore is, in fact, a long-term solution, a solution that would make this Organization responsive to the developing countries, which can be done only through an initiative of the South; we know, for instance, how the spending cap was imposed. The spending cap was imposed by consensus. But how were the deeply damaging governance and flexibility proposals halted in May in the first place? They were halted by the resolute action and solidarity of the developing countries. Therefore, the lesson is very clear: it is only through an organic initiative from below — a Southern initiative — that we will undertake real United Nations reform that is in

the interests of the South: reform of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Only such reform has any real possibility of changing the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report speaks of the increased recourse to the United Nations for peacekeeping and the prevention of armed conflict. That highlights the need for the Organization to develop capabilities in the sphere of peacebuilding, not merely in the cause of peacekeeping, which is underlined most starkly in the vicious circle of violence that continues to plague the Middle East. It also highlights the fact that conflict resolution needs to go well beyond its current limited role of keeping belligerents apart.

In that sense, the Peacebuilding Commission is a welcome effort. Our pledge of \$2 million to that body reflects our perception that there is a grave need for a shift of focus from just peacekeeping to peacebuilding and peace consolidation. The Commission must establish its credibility. As a member of the Organizing Committee, we are committed to contribute in that direction.

The surge in peacekeeping reported by the Secretary-General has brought new challenges and more demands, although earlier problems persist. The issues of effective planning, congruity among mandates, resources allocated and objectives to be achieved, and the safety and security of peacekeepers are other areas of particular concern. Those questions should be the subjects of constant dialogue and interaction among the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat if peacekeeping is to be effective.

India remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting world peace and security. Our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping is part of that broader commitment. We have been one of the most consistent contributors of troops to the United Nations and shall continue to uphold that tradition. We shall continue to work with the Secretariat and other Member States in order to make peacekeeping the effective instrument that we all wish it to be.

Nothing can justify terrorism. The adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a step in the right direction, to the extent that the Strategy signals the will of the international

community to tolerate no longer the actions of the sponsors of terrorism or the actions of those who wilfully fail to prevent terrorists from utilizing their territories for moral or material shelter. In fact, we understand State terrorism to mean a State's patronizing and sponsoring of terrorists to disturb the peace of other States.

Notwithstanding the setback of failing to meet the timeline set at the 2005 World Summit for concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, we believe that agreement on a draft convention is attainable. We must now work together for the early finalization and adoption of such a convention. We believe that a formulation that would not affect the legal status of the entities involved in terms of international humanitarian law is one possible approach through which an agreement could be reached. Here, we are open to compromise.

The 2005 World Summit, while recognizing that peace and security, development and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, underscored the centrality of development. The seventh session of the Working Group on the Right to Development, which was held in Geneva in January 2006, adopted a set of criteria for evaluating the fulfilment of commitments aimed at a global partnership for development — MDG 8 — from the perspective of the right to development. It also said that the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions have to be corrected in terms of their deficiencies from the perspective of the right to development.

Thus, there is broad agreement that straddles the divisions; there is no fundamental contradiction. The efforts to mainstream all human rights — including the right to development — by strengthening linkages between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system need to proceed in a measured manner, taking into account the specific needs and requirements of the Member States concerned.

We welcome the establishment of the Human Rights Council, whose focus should be the promotion of human rights through international cooperation and genuine dialogue among Member States, including capacity-building and mutual assistance. We believe that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should extend technical assistance in the area of human rights to Member States and enhance their capacity-building in

that regard at their request. It is in that spirit that India supported the strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner, including an increase in its resources from the regular budget of the United Nations.

We agree that there is a need for further steps aimed at enhancing the speed and effectiveness of United Nations responses to humanitarian emergencies. India will continue to play a constructive role in that regard, bearing in mind the lessons learned from experiences in the field. India was constructively engaged in the setting up of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). India's contribution of \$2 million to CERF at its launch in March 2006 is a reflection of our solidarity with other developing countries in the aftermath of disasters. We will remain actively engaged in the process of improving the functioning of the Fund.

Our Organization needs to reform to keep up with today's complex challenges. We welcome the reforms that have been implemented in the Secretariat since 1997 and look forward to constructive discussions during the sixty-first session on important issues such as governance and oversight. The declared objectives of those reform proposals cannot be repudiated. Nevertheless, the process often becomes as important as the goal itself. We would therefore stress the importance of discussions on these issues, to be undertaken in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. We are ready to engage on these issues with an open mind.

On the issue of governance, we reiterate the importance of the existing structure of administrative and budgetary decision-making in the United Nations, based on the primacy of the General Assembly and its Fifth Committee. Improvement is a continual process, and we could discuss ways to make administrative and budgetary decision-making in the Organization more efficient and effective. Altering the unique, all-inclusive character of the Fifth Committee, which is being proposed by some, has already been rejected by Member States and remains unacceptable. We strongly support strengthening the oversight role of the General Assembly, maintaining the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations and respecting the sovereign equality of all Member States with regard to participation in United Nations decision-making processes.

We need to strengthen oversight in the United Nations system by making the oversight bodies independent. We seek greater accountability to Member States on the part of the Secretariat. We believe that the United Nations should have a fair, transparent and rules-based selection process that is based on equitable geographical representation and has due regard for gender balance. We call for administration of justice in the United Nations based on due process of law that is fair, consistent, non-discriminatory and speedy. We look forward to comprehensive procurement reforms in the Organization.

There is a broad realization of the need to work urgently towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Yet the goal of nuclear disarmament remains elusive. We believe that the best non-proliferation measure is universal disarmament and that the international community needs to take immediate steps to eliminate the threat of use of nuclear weapons. At this session of the General Assembly, India will be presenting a working paper on the issue of nuclear disarmament, on which we look forward to working with other Member States. We shall provide more detailed comments during discussions of the respective agenda items in the General Assembly and in its main Committees.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1). That document is more than just an internal assessment of the management of an organization; indeed, it is a report that reflects the state of the world and outlines ways in which the Organization and Member States can tackle a broad range of global challenges. The General Assembly has a central role to play in that regard. Therefore, I would like to outline our assessment as to how this organ should, over the next few months, contribute to the success of the Organization.

While the issue of development in all its aspects continues to figure very high on the agenda of the General Assembly, there is only so much that the Assembly can add to its past work, including the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). We agree with the Secretary-General's statement that, if history judges 2005 in terms of promises, then 2006 must be judged in terms of implementation. Rather than adding more words to the already very impressive existing repertoire of commitments and declarations, the sixty-

first session of the General Assembly should set the stage for implementation and its evaluation. That is a very difficult task, particularly in light of the fact that many important decisions affecting the development agenda are being taken outside the framework of the Assembly. In this respect, we note with particular concern the suspension of negotiations of the Doha Development Round.

Regarding the issue of environmental protection and system-wide coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian affairs and the environment, we hope that this session will bring steady progress and thereby contribute to structural changes that will be beneficial in the long term. We must find ways of simplifying and streamlining the existing institutional framework, in order to allow for more effective use of resources, optimize synergies and make the system more transparent and more accessible. The area of conflict prevention also falls into the category of topics where we have seen many words, but are still awaiting real action. We recently received the Secretary-General's report on this matter and adopted a landmark resolution on conflict prevention at the fifty-seventh session. This session should, therefore, focus on how to strengthen the tools available to the United Nations in the area of conflict prevention. We congratulate the Department of Political Affairs for its groundbreaking work aimed at supporting mediation efforts more systematically. This is a core task of this Organization to which the General Assembly must devote more resources from its regular budget.

Liechtenstein welcomes the recent adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. That document underlines our resolve to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, and it represents another example of real General Assembly revitalization, which would evidence itself in the adoption of important decisions. We hope that Member States will now be ready to take the next step on this matter and overcome the remaining disagreement on the draft comprehensive convention. The outstanding issues have to do less with the words proposed and their legal effect than with their political interpretation. Only a concerted effort at the highest levels will, therefore, bring us closer to success. On the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, it is time to pick up the pieces and start anew.

The spirit of cooperation that has prevailed in our efforts aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction should also inspire the multilateral negotiations on disarmament. The previous session brought uneven promises in these areas, let alone implementation.

Liechtenstein is very pleased that the initiative to consider the agenda item on the rule of law at the international and national levels has been received very favourably by other Member States. This new item closes a gap in the agenda of the Assembly, which was rather surprising, given the importance that Member States and the Secretary-General have placed on this topic in the past. We expect that the Assembly's debate of that item will in the long run lead to stronger United Nations action in this area, in particular in capacity-building for the improved incorporation of international law into domestic law. Furthermore, we expect that this session will continue to strengthen the cooperative relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. Much remains to be done to improve the mutual understanding of the respective roles of these two organizations, which can lead to great synergy. These should yield concrete results in the area of investigation and prosecution, including on the matter referred to the Prosecutor by the Security Council.

Human rights have for long been declared to have entered the era of implementation, which remains true, but United Nations work in this area is also subject to intensive reform efforts. This session provides us with an opportunity to continue strengthening the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to further develop our thinking about the reform of the human rights treaty body system. The work of the Human Rights Council needs to find the correct relationship with the General Assembly, and we trust that this will reflect the great expectations that we all have placed on this new body.

While we have made a lot of progress in the humanitarian area in 2005, in particular through the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), great challenges remain. This session should devote strong efforts to furthering a more even-handed approach in the delivery of humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians. Progress in this area would certainly be easier to achieve if the Assembly could streamline the consideration of agenda items concerning humanitarian affairs.

On Security Council reform, we note that there is at least a minimal consensus: something must be done about it. While we are satisfied that the initiative we have undertaken together with the other members of the group of five small countries is showing some positive effects, we believe that the Assembly should also resume serious debate on the issue of enlargement. This will only be possible if some of the entrenched positions from the past are abandoned in favour of new and more pragmatic thinking. Past experience has shown that this is an area that needs strong leadership, and we look forward to working with you on this matter.

Management reform, mandate review and other administrative matters affecting the Secretariat must be tackled in a manner that avoids micromanagement and which takes into account that this Organization is no longer just a conference-servicing facility. Progress is also needed on the question of the financing of the Capital Master Plan.

General Assembly revitalization is more than a technical matter; it is a matter of political will. Nevertheless, implementation of past resolutions on General Assembly revitalization requires institutional knowledge and should be coordinated by a focal point in the Office of the President of the General Assembly. As for the non-technical matters, it is up to the Member States to make good use of our meeting time at the sixty-first session in order to come up with decisions and resolutions of real relevance. The topics just outlined provide us with more than enough material to do so.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you for the fine manner in which you are conducting this Assembly's debates. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the work of the Organization.

My delegation recognizes that progress has been made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The annexes to the Secretary-General's report show that progress has occurred in all regions of the world, even if it has been at different speeds. Nonetheless, there is still much to be done. Greater political will is needed to move from commitments to action, particularly in the mobilization of official development assistance and in the liberalization of international markets to allow broad equitable access to them. In

Colombia, as was mentioned recently by President Uribe in this forum,

“Social cohesion, overcoming poverty and building equity are essential aspirations of our democracy. In 2002, poverty reached almost 60 per cent of the population; in 2005 it was down to 49 per cent. We will do everything possible for it not to exceed 35 per cent by 2010 and to reach the goal of 15 per cent by 2019 ...” (A/61/PV.14)

Over the next four years, we are determined to reach full coverage in basic education and health care, as well as making progress in basic sanitation by massively broadening housing programmes for low-income populations in rural and urban areas. Five million families will be able to benefit from microcredit programmes.

Such efforts in Colombia and other developing countries require a favourable international environment and technical and financial assistance in a number of priority areas. Therefore, it is essential that the international community tackle Millennium Development Goal 8 and all its targets with greater decisiveness and commitment. We reiterate the importance of creating the conditions necessary to relaunch and conclude the Doha round of negotiations.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission represents an important step to prevent countries from falling back into conflict, among other objectives. We hope that the work of the Commission will fulfil the promise of more effective and trustworthy results in that area.

Colombia acknowledges the progress made in the fight against terrorism since the 2005 World Summit, when terrorism was condemned in all its forms and manifestations, by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose committed. Colombia participated actively in the establishment of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and we will continue to contribute to its follow-up and implementation. We welcome the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, referred to in the report of the Secretary-General. We also support the initiative to establish a focal point in the Secretariat to coordinate a civil society campaign to fight terrorism.

Colombia emphasizes the need to attack the sources terrorism financing. Therefore, we are pleased that the Counter-Terrorism Strategy calls for stepped up cooperation to deal with crimes that could be related to terrorism, such as the trafficking in illicit drugs and the illicit trade in small arms, among other manifestations of transnational organized crime.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the proliferation of small arms remains a threat in many regions of the world. Unfortunately, the results of the recent meeting held to review the implementation of the Programme of Action in this area were discouraging. Colombia will continue to insist on such implementation, which we will propose once again during the substantive session of the First Committee.

Colombia values the role of the United Nations in the area of humanitarian assistance. We acknowledge the results achieved in recent years — including the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a contribution to timely responses to sudden emergency situations. The new cluster approach must be studied by Member States, which are awaiting a detailed report on the proposal from the Secretariat. In any case, the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs must be guided by the needs of the States with which it is cooperating and must always have their consent.

Humanitarian assistance, if it is to be efficient and effective, must be governed by the guiding principles of impartiality, neutrality and humanity. There must be accountability to Member States through the General Assembly. In this area, Colombia accords special recognition to the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, from which the United Nations system can draw important lessons.

In that connection, Colombia attaches vital importance to timely consultation between the system's agencies and the Governments of countries where they maintain a presence, so as to ensure that United Nations humanitarian programmes and activities are in keeping with national plans and policies. The same criterion must be applied to conflict prevention activities. Dialogue and close coordination with States ensure the sustainability of humanitarian assistance, to the benefit of affected populations.

The strengthening of United Nations intergovernmental mechanisms is an objective to which

Colombia is fully committed. My country will continue to take an active part in the various reform processes and will strive to ensure that they result in a more transparent, representative, effective and efficient Organization.

We await with interest the report on system-wide coherence. We trust that it will contain specific recommendations that will make it possible to correct the system's fragmentation and improve its functioning, while maintaining the autonomy and integrity of each of its main components: the environment, humanitarian assistance and development. Particular emphasis should be given to the Organization's capacity to support the attainment of development objectives, including the Millennium Goals.

In the section in his report on global constituencies, the Secretary-General stresses the importance of civil society in the international arena. In Colombia, civil society participates actively in various processes and debates, and all points of view are guaranteed a voice within a framework of broad and democratic representation. Therefore, we also support the participation of civil society in its role of complementing and supporting United Nations processes, in accordance with the procedures and requirements established by the Economic and Social Council.

To conclude, I should like to express the gratitude of the Government of Colombia for the efforts of the Secretary-General. His work has not been easy. His accomplishments have been many during his tenure, which is an important legacy, given the many challenges that we must still face.

Mr. Choisureen (Mongolia): Today, at this plenary meeting, we have an opportunity to examine the tenth annual report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), submitted by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. Let me join those who have paid tribute to Mr. Annan for his far-sighted vision, his courage, his strength and his tireless efforts to transform the United Nations for the twenty-first century. Under his wise leadership, we have made much progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration and its road map, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

As we are making the United Nations a truly global service provider, we need to do our utmost to

meet the challenges of a changing world. My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for organizing his report around four core areas corresponding to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in addition to a fifth, "global constituencies".

Mongolia attaches great significance to the development pillar of the United Nations system. During the general debate, my Prime Minister discussed our national efforts and measures aimed at more comprehensive implementation of our commitments under the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

I would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations country team in Mongolia for its partnership in our endeavour to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Next year, we will begin to implement the new five-year United Nations development assistance framework, which was prepared through a very close consultative process on the basis of the Mongolian Government's socio-economic action plan, with the focused aim of achieving the MDGs.

We support the proposal, made by the Secretary-General in his report, to introduce new targets under Goals 1 and 5. Ensuring full and productive employment of the population is one of my Government's top priorities.

The role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security has expanded significantly during the past year. The crisis in Lebanon, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missile test, the issue of Iran's nuclear programme — the international community has continued to rely on the United Nations to resolve all these challenges.

The peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities of the United Nations have grown to represent a truly global service in the past decade. It is also heartening to note that Blue Helmets from developing countries are shouldering most of the responsibilities of that service in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Mongolia is also actively participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Earlier this year, 250 Mongolian peacekeepers took part, for the first time, in a United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operation. Although Mongolia is a newcomer, last May my

country's peacekeeping contribution ranked it 39th out of 109 troop-contributing Member States.

As United Nations peacekeeping operations become more efficient, effective and complex, we are doing our best to be ready to provide not only troops but other personnel necessary for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General and the Advisory Board for having recently approved financing from the United Nations Democracy Fund for Mongolia's proposed project. The project will contribute towards the achievement at the national level of additional Millennium Development Goal 9 on strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance. Since democratic and sound governance is the overarching framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we strongly believe that the incorporation of MDG 9 into the set of global targets would be very practical. Mongolia's MDG 9 actions have related goals, including ensuring respect for human rights, democratic governance and zero tolerance for corruption. We have recently contributed our modest share to the United Nations Democracy Fund.

The Secretary-General's observation in his report that the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies is a forum for supporting democracy among 120 countries is a valid assessment of the work Mongolia has done over the past three years in its capacity as chair of the Fifth Conference. Mongolia will continue its endeavours to promote democratic values at the international level through its active participation in the Community of Democracies and in other forums. My country will report on its activities and hand over the Conference's chairmanship to Qatar, which will be hosting the Sixth Conference in less than one month's time and will be chairing the movement.

The sixtieth session of the General Assembly will be regarded as a memorable one, for it saw the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund and the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In that regard, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Jan Eliasson, former President of the General Assembly, for his able leadership.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's reports — "A Programme for Reform", in 1997; "Strengthening the United Nations: An Agenda for Further Change", in

2002; "In Larger Freedom", in 2005; and "Investing in the United Nations", in 2006 — were crucial reform documents in the process of strengthening the Organization. His sweeping reform package, contained in those reports, has helped the United Nations and its Secretariat to be prepared to meet the requirements of the twenty-first century and address new challenges. It is commendable that administrative and organizational reform measures falling under the authority of the Secretary-General have been largely implemented or set in motion. My delegation is confident that the next Secretary-General will bring the United Nations reform process to new levels.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document outlined the need for a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing United Nations country presence. Mongolia is very interested in initiatives that strengthen the United Nations country presence through such innovative ideas as "one United Nations, one programme and one team." In that regard, we look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations on system-wide coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

In the context of the strengthening of the United Nations, we support the Secretary-General's call for recognizing the voices of civil society and the private sector as responsible global constituencies. If their contribution is well channelled, they can constitute a valuable asset in our work that can contribute towards bringing about a more secure, prosperous and just world.

Mongolia supports a stronger and more structured relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations. Mongolia is endeavouring to play a broader and more active role in such regional organizations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Cooperation Dialogue. We have also reached out, for the first time, to the European regional structure, and we recently became the fifth Asian partner of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Furthermore, let me extend our gratitude to those Member States that have supported us in joining the Asia-Europe Meeting this year. We hope that our long-

time aspiration to become a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation will be fulfilled next year, with the help of the countries of the region.

Mongolia cannot but worry about the security uncertainties prevailing in North-East Asia. The subregion lacks a mechanism to ensure security and stability at the governmental level. It may be time to start thinking about the possibility of engaging in a dialogue at the track 1 level, starting with a free exchange of views within the framework of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, let me note that the general debate held by our leaders has shown that a global partnership is needed more than ever today. A global partnership on development, security and human rights is the only means of achieving the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and of implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome, as well as of making progress in the noble work of our Organization.

Mongolia is doing its best to fulfil its duties and responsibilities and expects the global partners to do the same.

Mr. Shinyo: Madam President, I wish to thank you for having convened this meeting to discuss the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. The sixtieth session of the General Assembly was the first year of the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. We saw some progress, with the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, and the continued efforts for Secretariat and management reform.

The one item on our agenda that stands out as unfinished is reform of the Security Council. Madam President, it is essential that, guided by your able leadership, we move forward on all items of the agreement reached by our leaders during the sixtieth session and elucidated in the Outcome Document.

The Secretary-General has asserted on more than one occasion that no reform of the United Nations will be complete without reform of the Security Council. Japan is determined to continue to take the initiative on this issue during this session. What Member States need now is a new proposal — one that is both creative and persuasive — in order to reach an early decision on Council reform during the current session of the General Assembly.

Since its accession to the United Nations 50 years ago, Japan has had an exemplary record with regard to the fulfilment of its duties as a Member State, including assessed contributions. Nevertheless, Japan strongly believes that the United Nations needs a reformed scale of assessments structure, one that is more equitable and fair and that duly takes into account the status and responsibilities of each Member State. Japan will work together with other Member States to formulate such a structure, which will bring financial stability to the Organization.

Over the past several years, Japan has been promoting the importance of human security as a concept that stresses the protection of individuals from threats to their life and dignity, as well as the value of their individual empowerment. In partnership with other interested countries, we will continue to promote human security and an approach based on it during this session of the General Assembly. It is now widely acknowledged that peace, development and human rights are interlinked and serve to complement one another. We hold high expectations for the newly created Human Rights Council beginning a new page in the promotion of respect for human rights; as a Council member, Japan will play a constructive role in the Council's activities to that end.

Japan is also committed to implementing the arrangements outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and continues to make efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In this connection, we, together with like-minded countries, will propose a draft resolution on an international year of sanitation to promote progress in the area of water and sanitation. We also have dedicated ourselves to realizing reforms aimed at enabling the United Nations development system to contribute to providing more effective service to the people and the communities that are the final beneficiaries of the system. We believe that the proposals by the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence will give us important guidance in that regard.

Our common task for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly is to continue our earnest efforts to translate into reality the decisions on reform made at the 2005 World Summit. You have our assurance, Madam President, that you can count on Japan's proactive support on our continuing journey towards a more efficient and effective United Nations.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Cuban delegation, Madam President, I would like once again to congratulate you upon your election and to offer you our support. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the submission of his annual report (A/61/1), the tenth and last one of his term of office. This document is a very useful guideline for an open and frank exchange on the current work and the prospects of the United Nations.

We are convinced that defending the United Nations is more critical than ever. We defend the need both for its existence and for in-depth reform and democratization. But we must do this with respect for the Charter, not by rewriting it or distorting its purposes and principles. The challenge is to reform the United Nations so that it can serve equally the interests of all nations. We cannot allow the reform to fail ignominiously in a bureaucratic process of adapting what remains of the United Nations to the interests and whims of a few rich and powerful countries. The primacy, absolute validity and inviolability of the Charter, which is not one among many sources of law but the cornerstone of this Organization and of the precarious current international order, must be re-established.

The current unjust and tremendously inequitable international order must not be succeeded by a more primitive order based on a unilateral reinterpretation of the Charter and of international law. We completely agree with the Secretary-General about the importance of strengthening the work of the United Nations in conflict prevention. History unequivocally proves that peace cannot be imposed by force or by war and that military operations do not yield lasting solutions. History has also demonstrated that it is impossible to establish an effective conflict prevention strategy without taking steps to fight poverty, underdevelopment and economic and social inequality.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) committed us to work towards modest — and insufficient — goals. Nevertheless, more than five years after their adoption, those goals are far from being met. Reality cannot be concealed by arithmetical juggling acts. The world's serious economic and social problems, particularly in developing countries, continue growing at an alarming rate.

Every year, 11 million children die before their first birthday and 19 million children under five years of age die from curable diseases and malnutrition. Another 325 million children do not attend school, while more than \$1 trillion are spent every year on commercial publicity. The number of hungry people is already 852 million, while every year the developed countries spend \$17 billion on pet food. If the underdevelopment and poverty in which four fifths of humanity live are not rectified, if more than 1.1 billion people are not brought out of extreme poverty, if the 39 million AIDS patients are not cured and if 900 million human beings are not taught how to read and write, there will be no sustainable development and conflicts will continue. If the negative effects of the imposition of a neoliberal model on a globalized world are not duly tackled and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to increase, we will inevitably witness increased crises and conflicts.

Although the report does not say it, the truth is that for every dollar of official development assistance, six dollars are taken from our countries to service a debt that we have paid many times over but which is always multiplying. The external debt, which last year reached a record \$2.8 trillion, must be eliminated. The promise of 0.7 per cent of gross national product in official development assistance must be kept. The intellectual property monopoly on pharmaceuticals that are indispensable for life must end. Unfortunately, the industrialized world has apparently not become aware of all this, and the lack of political will continues. The failure of the Doha development round is a telling case in point.

Let us hope that the unjust, unsustainable and tyrannical world order that we, the countries of the South, suffer can be redesigned by negotiating in one of this building's conference rooms. But let us not harbour false hopes. In fact, we have had many experiences in this Hall of unfulfilled agreements, empty promises and broken hopes. The current international economic system is not only tremendously unjust but also absolutely unsustainable. An economic system that destroys the environment cannot be sustained. The Secretary-General's report provides a very distressing figure: 60 per cent of the world's ecosystems are degrading or are being used in an unsustainable manner. The availability of drinking water is currently 60 per cent of what it was in 1970, and today we are 2.3 billion human beings more than

then. The same is happening to the forests. Environmental degradation related to the irrational consumption by the industrialized countries has a common fate in store for us, poor or rich.

Despite the proclaimed end of the cold war, military expenditures are on the rise. There are still about 33,000 nuclear weapons in the world, over 13,000 of which are ready to be used immediately with the power to destroy the planet several times over.

With just 10 per cent of the more than \$1 trillion allocated to military expenditures, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved. Cuba reiterates its proposal to devote at least half of current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development, through a fund managed by the United Nations.

As we see in the report of the Secretary-General, over 70 per cent of the United Nations annual budget of \$10 billion is currently devoted to peacekeeping operations. Just 10 years ago, only 50 per cent of a budget less than half of the current one was devoted to peacekeeping.

The establishment of peacekeeping operations should not overlook the analysis and solution of the root causes of conflicts. Otherwise, we will not be able to break the vicious cycle of new conflicts and operations, with the high human and material costs that they incur.

In the next few months we will analyze a new set of reform-related proposals presented by the Secretary-General; Cuba will actively participate in this process. Be warned that we will not endorse proposals that run counter to the mandates given by the General Assembly and other organs.

We are struck that the annual report fails to mention the difficulties faced by the Secretariat in recent years owing to the lack of resources to implement its mandates. It also fails to mention the negative impact of the establishment of a cap on expenditures.

With respect to the mandate review process, Cuba's position will follow the tenets agreed to in the Final Document of the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was held with great success last September in Havana.

The United Nations should be democratized urgently. We have to strengthen the governing role of the General Assembly, the only United Nations organ with no place for hegemonies, where we all have a right to vote and where there is no obsolete and unjust right of veto. We cannot talk about a true reform when the Assembly does not fully exercise the powers vested in it by the Charter, including the ones related to keeping international peace and security.

The Security Council must be rescued from discredit and doubts that burden it today and with good reason. It must be transformed in a truly representative and democratic organ — it should have proper representation from the Third World and become truly democratic. It must eliminate the veto and other anti-democratic practices. It should also become a transparent organ by putting an end to the secret meetings and decisions made behind the scenes by a few and imposed on the rest of us. Unfortunately we must be blunt — the Security Council reform seems as remote today as in the beginning.

The functions and prerogatives that the Charter confers respectively to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council must be respected. We must put an end to the growing meddling of the Security Council in areas that are not part of its mandate. Regarding system-wide coherence, we support a greater coordination and coherence between the bodies so as to avoid duplications or unnecessary overlapping, thus maximizing their efficiency, without this necessarily meaning common frameworks of management or programming at the field level.

We do not agree with the idea of the possible merger of funds and programmes. We feel that it is necessary to preserve the separation of the two identities. The funds and programmes should answer, first of all, to the national development priorities and should respect the mandates given to them by the Member States.

We are pleased with the General Assembly's adoption on 8 September of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We hope that from now on this Strategy will be a guideline for our actions against this scourge in an atmosphere of cooperation.

We agree with the Secretary-General in acknowledging how instrumental the United Nations can be in supporting the efforts of all countries to

strengthen and consolidate democracy, but this can be done only on the basis of unqualified respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter and international law. The existence of common elements in the diversity of forms of democracy does not justify the attempts by some to foster exclusive and anti-democratic movements and organizations to impose new instruments of domination.

The political manipulation of human rights — the selectivity, partiality and double standards in the imposition of sectarian models — must cease. We have a sacred duty to work to protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, given the attempts of some to mutilate, rewrite and reinterpret those rights and freedoms, adapting them to fit the unipolar order and hegemonic interests of the few.

Hence, in the Human Rights Council and other intergovernmental forums, we will carefully review the different proposals on the reform of the human rights machinery, including the plan of action of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Action 2 Initiative of the Secretary-General, in order to ensure their ability to resist political manipulation and to maintain objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity and the universality of human rights.

I would like to conclude with a note of hope and optimism. There are very serious challenges ahead of us, but in working together our chances to achieve progress are endless. The United Nations needs us and we need the United Nations. As the Secretary-General expressed in his report,

“The effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument of its members’ collective will is one that is of vital importance for people around the world.” (A/61/1, para. 160)

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Annan for his report on the work of the Organization. The report provides an overview of the work of the United Nations during the past year and contains an array of views and recommendations on ways to address the challenges facing us today. As the last report on the work of the Organization before the expiration of Secretary-General Annan’s term of office, it also evaluates the major developments in the work of the United Nations over the past ten years. Please allow me to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to

Secretary-General Annan for his assiduous efforts and his outstanding actions.

In this statement, I would like to focus on three points in connection with the recently concluded general debate.

First, on the reform of the United Nations and implementation of the World Summit Outcome Document, the United Nations underwent, during the past year, an important reform process. Efforts are now under way at the national level to implement the commitments made in the Summit Outcome Document. As is stated in the report of the Secretary-General,

“If history judges 2005 for its promises, then 2006 must be judged on implementation.” (A/61/1, para. 27)

Various results were achieved during the past year: the establishment of the Peace Building Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund; efforts to revitalize the General Assembly; and the adoption of a resolution on a global counter-terrorism strategy. These all testify to the commitment of Member States to broad consensus and unity in the reform process in order to meet the ever-increasing challenges.

China has consistently supported necessary United Nations reforms so as to strengthen the Organization’s role in the new era. The reform should be conducive to safeguarding the purposes and principles of the Charter and to promoting unity and cooperation among Member States and the overall interests of the United Nations membership. United Nations reform should proceed steadily on all fronts and lead to results in all fields, especially in the area of development.

It is clear that developing countries expect United Nations reforms to lead to greater achievements in the field of development. Reforms in that field will affect the future of the United Nations. China believes that the reform effort should next focus on development so as to fully respond to developing countries’ concerns and promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

All Member States must strive for consensus on issues through consultations and a democratic approach. They should exercise caution when addressing controversial major issues and avoid forceful actions which will lead only to greater division

and undermine hard-won reform results. Reform is a long-term undertaking. We hope that all sides will fulfil the commitments set out in the Summit Outcome Document and push the reform process in the right direction.

Secondly, with regard to peace and security, peace, development and cooperation have become the main preoccupation of our times. However, numerous recent events have shown that the world is far from peaceful. Regional conflicts occur frequently and problems relating to certain regional hot spots are on the rise. United Nations peace efforts have achieved remarkable success in Burundi and Sierra Leone, and peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Liberia have also yielded positive results. Mediation efforts relating to the questions of Cyprus and Kosovo in Serbia, are under way. However, the Iranian nuclear issue, the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula, and the Lebanese-Israeli conflict in the Middle East swiftly draw wide attention, testing the ability and the unity of the United Nations and the international community. China believes, as always, that it is necessary to resolve these disputes by peaceful means through negotiation, consultation and other diplomatic approaches, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The Middle East peace process is at an impasse and is a source of concern. The Palestinian-Israeli question, the Lebanese-Israeli question, the Syrian-Lebanese question and the question of Iraq are interwoven and threaten world peace and security and the role and authority of the United Nations. The United Nations must act. As the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East question, the peace process must be relaunched, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, with a view to arriving at a comprehensive solution of the Middle East question, including the Palestinian-Israeli question, as soon as possible, and to enabling the parties involved to coexist in harmony and lasting peace in the region.

The question of Darfur, the Sudan, involves many complex factors. The international community must take a responsible attitude. The Darfur Peace Agreement provides a historic opportunity; the international community should take advantage of that opportunity to promote a return to peace and stability in Darfur. It is imperative to urge the parties concerned to promptly ratify and fully implement the Peace

Agreement. China supports the handover to the United Nations of the African Union Mission in the Sudan in the Darfur region, but in order to ensure the success of the peacekeeping operation, the prior consent of the Sudanese Government must be obtained.

The fields of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation present opportunities as well as challenges. Under the new circumstances, the international community should adopt a new security concept, advocate multilateralism and address new security challenges through multilateral cooperation. China favours maintaining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the legitimate rights of countries in the context of the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be fully respected, as long as they fulfil their relevant international obligations.

The General Assembly recently launched the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), thereby sending an important and positive political signal to the world that the United Nations is united and active on the question of counter-terrorism. However, rampant terrorist attacks remain a formidable challenge to the international community. Combating terrorism remains a long, uphill journey. The United Nations should play a major role in this field. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be a living strategy, to be further developed and refined as the situation evolves.

Thirdly, with regard to development, in the Millennium Declaration of 2000, world leaders set forth a bold and inclusive new vision for human development. The World Summit last year made important commitments in the context of a global development agenda and a global partnership for development. However, progress in terms of implementation is falling short of expectations, and humankind is still plagued by problems such as abject poverty, a development imbalance between the North and the South, the spread of HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation.

The international community, especially the developed countries, should increase its aid, promote international trade, technology transfers and investment, provide more debt relief and greater assistance to developing countries and respect developing countries' ownership with regard to issues

concerning their own development. The United Nations should play a fuller role in development and create an environment in which developing countries in general, as well as those with special needs, can benefit.

The Doha round of negotiations is at an impasse — a situation that is highly detrimental to the steady growth of the world economy and the orderly development of international trade. Negotiations should resume as soon as possible. The major developed countries should demonstrate political will and push for the early resumption of the talks in a more flexible spirit. The Doha round is a development round, and should therefore give full prominence to the theme of development and ensure special and differentiated treatment for developing countries so that they can fully benefit from the multilateral trading system and achieve their development goals.

The United Nations will soon elect a new chief administrative officer. China firmly supports the idea that the next Secretary-General should come from Asia. We are confident that Asia is capable of producing a competent candidate who enjoys high standing and is acceptable to all.

China stands ready to participate in the forthcoming negotiations on the scale of assessments in a constructive spirit based on the principle of capacity to pay. We hope that a fair and reasonable formula will be arrived at through extensive consultations.

Broad consensus has already been achieved on the need to strengthen multilateralism and enhance the role of the United Nations. This is also the approach chosen by the international community in order to effectively meet existing challenges.

The United Nations has gone through more than 60 years of trials and tribulations; its important role in various fields is all too obvious. In future, it will be only through collective efforts to maintain multilateral machinery, with the United Nations at its core, that the leading role of the Organization in international affairs can be enhanced and that its ability to address all manner of threats and challenges can be consolidated.

Mr. Hill (Australia): First, I want to thank the Secretary-General, not only for his report but also for his outstanding contribution to the international community over the last 10 years, particularly to the weak and disadvantaged, those who most need the support of this international body.

On development, the Millennium Declaration sets goals, and goals and reference points are important, but the real test is implementation and outcomes. I am pleased that the emphasis has moved, and the United Nations, as a truly global service provider, as described by the Secretary-General, is an important player. But progress in achieving our goals depends on the commitment of States and, beyond States, civil society.

The Secretary-General can be pleased that there is renewed determination to improve the lot of the poor and those who are suffering. He can also be pleased by the partnerships between international bodies, States, business and the community, which are now tackling these issues. He should also be pleased at the new emphasis on longer-term, sustainable benefit. New institutions, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, also can contribute to meeting those goals.

Peacemaking and peacekeeping have expanded rapidly under this Secretary-General — and that is good — but, as we have learned, the benefits will soon be lost unless they are entrenched through nation-building, economic growth, an improved standard of living for the peoples affected and a respect for human rights.

Globalization might be the phenomenon of our age, and it has particularly marked the tenure of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has noted the irony. The United Nations was designed as a body to assist in the relationship between States. But, as States have been joined by so many other players in international affairs, the role of the United Nations has become more, rather than less, important.

In this complex international environment, with all its threats and opportunities, the international community has looked to the United Nations to find the answers. The development of the principle of “responsibility to protect”, which crosses State boundaries in circumstances where the international community demands action, is a contemporary response to that changing world. The Secretary-General correctly reminds us that,

“States, in short, are the servants and instruments of human beings, and not the other way round.”
(A/61/1, para. 10)

It could also be said that with sovereignty comes responsibility. And, as the Secretary-General says,

development, security and human rights are indissolubly interconnected, and it is the responsibility of the State to deliver on all three. The United Nations can help States meet their responsibilities to their peoples. It can set standards, it can demand adherence and it can also provide practical support.

The challenge to do so in this globalized world is as great as ever. I was pleased that the Secretary-General recognized again that in order to maximize its contribution to these goals the United Nations must be updated, renewed and reinvigorated. That is not only the responsibility of the staff of the United Nations, to whom the Secretary-General has paid justifiable credit, but also of us, the Member States. Without an efficient and effective United Nations system, including a sharpening of mandates and coherent structure, the United Nations will fall short of what is achievable.

I wanted to conclude with mention of the two great contemporary challenges, namely, countering terrorism and responding to the proliferation of weapons and weapon systems. On terrorism, more can and must be done, as the Secretary-General's recent report, "Uniting against terrorism", makes clear. Australia supports his recommendations. In particular, every effort must be made to ensure that terrorists are not able to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

On non-proliferation, we must also make greater efforts. In recent times, the international community has seen many opportunities to make our world more secure through multilateral action on non-proliferation and disarmament. But, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, we have all but squandered these opportunities. We failed to reach an outcome at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There was no outcome at all on non-proliferation and disarmament at the World Summit. And this year's Small Arms Review Conference could not agree on any follow-up process for the Programme of Action.

Australia continues to support multilateral approaches to non-proliferation and disarmament, including a firmer and more active role for the Security Council in respect of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation. Treaties such as the NPT and measures such as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) are fundamental to the forms of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament.

We must also focus again on the practical efforts we can make to strengthen international security. Australia is a strong supporter of the Proliferation Security Initiative and has long advocated measures such as the Additional Protocol, a fissile material cut-off treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct as practical steps against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We also support proposals for a global arms trade treaty.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General has ably led this Organization in difficult times. We must now accept and meet the challenges he has set for us in this, his tenth and last annual report. We thank him for the values and application he has always brought to his work.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, I would like to thank you for convening this meeting and for your excellent stewardship of this session of General Assembly.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General for the work he has achieved since 1997 at the helm of our Organization. The period that Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened at the end of the 1990s has been marked by social and economic changes and events that have highlighted the urgent need to adapt the United Nations to a new global reality. The Secretary-General has interpreted this to mean that we must have a United Nations reform that would identify major themes and paths in order to meet this need.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, like all the other countries of this Organization, is committed to social justice, peace and security and to the overall process of reform of the United Nations. We must establish priorities for the urgent reform of the Security Council, which should take place without delay. The actions of that body in recent years have made that imperative, as on repeated occasions powerful unilateralism has prevented that body from acting in accordance with the functions granted to it by the United Nations Charter. The Secretary-General himself commented on the delay in decision-making during the Middle East crisis, saying that credibility of the United Nations was at stake.

This unilateralism in Security Council decision-making makes the Organization a mere spectator of

death and despair. It makes all of us accomplices of terror. Both large and small countries took the decision of a single country. Of course, Security Council reform is required with a view to ensuring that this important body becomes more effective, more legitimate, more democratic, achieving equality among its members. A more democratic and participatory Security Council is required in order to comply in a more effective and timely fashion with the main objective given to it by the Charter: to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of nations.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its position that the search for peaceful solutions to disputes affecting international peace and security must be found within the framework of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, namely non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, the sovereign equality of States, refraining from using threats or force against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any State and respect for sovereignty. We have affirmed and emphasized the need to strengthen the powers of the General Assembly, given its status as the main deliberative body that adopts policies and that represents our Organization. This is another necessary requirement stated in the Millennium Declaration.

We would like to highlight the interest with which this Organization has been working on recognizing the special needs of Africa in establishing policies to attack HIV/AIDS and to protect the environment. This will undoubtedly be a historic legacy of the Secretary-General's stewardship. These questions were tackled with interest by the Member States, and that is proof that political differences can be overcome when the objective is to achieve improvement in the well-being of mankind. The twenty-first century requires from the world a greater and better commitment to a just and comprehensive development of all the peoples of the South with special attention given to those who face greater needs and difficulties. The struggle for development is the true covenant of peace and its achievement is the death of war and terror.

Terrorism is a challenge that requires joint action. Our delegation believes that the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is an important first step towards bringing together in the future more robust and coordinated actions to tackle

this phenomenon at the global level. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be the start of a much broader negotiation to make possible the achievement of a concept of terrorism with which all the Member States can fully identify, as well as the recognition and all-out struggle against the social, economic and political causes that foster terrorism and its development.

Reform of the Economic and Social Council must be based on the right to development as that would make it possible to establish machinery aimed at guaranteeing compatibility with the Council's programmes and activities through concrete actions to overcome marginalization, hunger and poverty for millions of people.

The United Nations must design and implement measures that would oblige the main economic and financial bodies to exert greater efforts to formulate better policies to help curb the broadening gap between developed and developing countries, as well as permit the establishment of effective machinery related to the debt problem, trade preferences, technical cooperation and the promotion of national capacities.

Concerning the Organization's budget, higher-income countries that have not complied with their responsibilities to the Organization in this respect must assume their commitment to honour their debt, thus making it possible to improve the operation of our Organization and promote the objectives of the Charter.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has honoured all its commitments related to contributions to the Organization's regular budget, its peacekeeping operations budget, the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations Capital Master Plan and United Nations funds and programmes.

With respect to the mandate review, we would like to reiterate that this exercise should be limited to mandates that have not been renewed for over five years. This review should be completed this year as agreed. We should not allow the exercise to weaken our capacity, taking up the time of our delegates, while parallel negotiations are being carried out on other matters that are of vital importance.

It is crucial that we not weaken the ability of the General Assembly to decide on administrative and

budgetary matters of the Organization. Likewise, the Secretary-General's report on the broad review of the management and supervision of funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations should be submitted to the Fifth Committee, following the usual procedures.

We will not be able to comply with the Charter while within our Organization positions still persist that deny the right to development. This is an inalienable human right by which every human being is empowered to take part in political, cultural, social and economic development and by which they can fully enjoy their fundamental freedoms and contribute to this development and enjoy it. In this context, our delegation shares the view expressed by the Secretary-General about the need to strengthen the United Nations, which is not simply a question of accountability, but rather an imperative for all Member States, which should devote more urgent attention to it than they have so far.

Lastly, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to reiterate its congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his stewardship of our Organization and the legacy that he has left it.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1) that is before us illustrates the challenges and tasks facing this Organization.

As outlined by its Charter, the main purpose of the Organization is the maintenance of international peace and security. By and large, this has been achieved. However, in the Middle East the problems, in particular the Palestinian question, remain unresolved. The devastation wrought on Gaza, Baghdad and Lebanon has left an indelible impression on Muslims worldwide of the complicity of the West to humiliate them. This fans the feelings of outrage and anger, which often erupt into violence.

It is imperative that a comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis be found. No one party or country can determine how the Middle East is to be redrawn and reshaped. The views of all those concerned have to be addressed. In this regard, my delegation feels that the United Nations could play a more pronounced and decisive role, as envisioned by its Charter, by bringing together all parties concerned to the negotiating table.

As the bastion of multilateralism, the United Nations has to rise to the challenge of safeguarding the interests of developing countries. Millions of the poor, the hungry and the destitute in the South expect the United Nations to play its role in galvanizing support and political will that will bring the benefits of development and globalization to them. In this regard, Madam President, you were prescient in choosing the theme for the Assembly to focus its general debate on last week, namely, "Implementing a global partnership for development".

During the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, we were not able to conclude work on strengthening the Economic and Social Council. This endeavour should now be our priority, and an early outcome should be reached at the current session. We should not forget that at the 2005 World Summit our leaders had reaffirmed the importance of an effective Economic and Social Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. A strengthened Economic and Social Council is in our interest, so that it can be a pillar in the United Nations system for maintaining economic and social justice, just as the Security Council is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Another area in which work is still unfinished is reforming the Security Council to make it more representative in terms of its composition and to make it better reflect the world we live in today. It is crucial that we attain those objectives because it would lend legitimacy to the Security Council and to the decisions it takes, which affect the vast majority of us in this Hall who are not represented in the Council.

The sixtieth session of the General Assembly agreed on a resolution on General Assembly revitalization (resolution 60/286). It is my delegation's hope that, at the current session, an ad hoc working group on General Assembly revitalization will meet as a follow-up to that resolution. The Assembly has been deliberating on resolutions relating to General Assembly revitalization for the past 15 years, and it is high time that we concretized, through the ad hoc working group, what we have agreed on, namely, to strengthen the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, and to

strengthen its role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law.

Our task in reforming the United Nations is not a one-off process, but a continuous process. To reform the principal organs of the Organization and strengthen the Organization's capacity to handle the many challenges facing it in such fields as human rights, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance, it is essential that this House be kept in order. The United Nations must become more efficient and more effective.

In that regard, my delegation reiterates that it is vital for the Organization to secure a healthy and stable financial position in order to ensure that all operations are carried out within the expected time frames and in an efficient manner. We hope that the Member States concerned will honour their assessed contributions and settle their arrears, without any conditions attached.

My delegation will continue to work and cooperate with other delegations on management and Secretariat reform. This process should be all-inclusive, involving all parties, who themselves should be actively engaged, should possess political will, and should be guided by the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

My delegation also acknowledges civil society's positive contributions to the Organization, which have been particularly helpful during the current reform process. We welcome civil society's continued participation in various forums. However, the United Nations is an intergovernmental body, and the participation of civil society should be guided by Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

One issue that we failed to agree upon at the 2005 World Summit is disarmament and non-proliferation. That failure is very disappointing to my delegation since weapons of mass destruction present the greatest threat to all mankind. The situation is further complicated by the failure of the 2005 Review Conference Treaty of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as well as the inability of the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms to find a consensus. In the case of the latter, the weapons involved may be small, but we are well aware of their devastating impact on societies. In this sense, they too could be regarded as *de facto* weapons of mass

destruction. We can ill afford another failure at this session to act on these issues.

In conclusion, Madam President, I wish you well as you lead us in our deliberations on the various issues facing the sixty-first session.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Once again we have assembled here to review the work of the United Nations over the past year in furtherance of the objectives of the Charter and the decisions of world leaders. Before I continue, I want to express the appreciation of my delegation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, not only for providing us with the in-depth examination on the work of the Organization before us, but also for his exemplary service to the United Nations in his 10 years at the helm of the Secretariat.

It is unrealistic, indeed almost impossible, to undertake a review of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/61/1, without according due attention to the strides made by the United Nations in the last 10 years. This is because the history of the United Nations in the past year exists only within the context of the past decade.

During that period, under Mr. Annan, the Organization has carried out some of the most fundamental and far-reaching work since the adoption of the Charter. For example, we began a most comprehensive reform process that was designed to ensure that the United Nations is able to respond to the challenges before it and to meet the expectation of the entire membership.

It will be recalled that, in December 1998, by resolution 53/202, the General Assembly designated the fifty-fifth session as the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. In 2000, that led to the most important single gathering of Member States since the inception of the United Nations: the Millennium Assembly, the follow-up of which was held here just one year ago.

In the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), 189 heads of State or Government made the historic commitment to free their fellow citizens from poverty by 2015, nine years from now. Last year's World Summit, which examined the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs), as well as recent United Nations conferences, reiterated this commitment.

In view of the increased upheavals in global geopolitics, and the uneven progress in the international economic and social fields, the question of the effectiveness of the United Nations looms large. My delegation believes that it is within this context, and in the light of the efforts of Mr. Annan in the past year and throughout his years in office, that we must look at the United Nations and the future. The report before us is a further reminder of what the important issues are and of how far we have gone in addressing them.

We share the view stated by the Secretary-General in this report that the one issue that has dominated the past 10 years must surely be globalization. Economically, globalization is an opportunity that promises improved living conditions for people everywhere. Regrettably, it has yet to fulfil that promise. Indeed, it seems to have continued to favour the developed economies and to amplify the disparity between the haves and the have-nots.

Regrettably, the World Summit not only revealed stunning differences the world over in the implementation of the MDGs, but also gave sober indications that some parts of the world, notably Africa, might not come close to full implementation by the 2015 target date. Indeed, while the report of the Secretary-General observes some positive signs in the reduction of global poverty, it sums up the situation for the majority by noting that the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering.

My delegation notes the Secretary-General's proposal to introduce a new set of targets in the follow-up of the Millennium Declaration and shares his concerns in this regard.

However, we are of the view that having more goals per se does not necessarily lead to development. The key is that agreed commitments and actions be honoured by all relevant entities. We agree with the Secretary-General that 2006, the year following the World Summit, must be judged on its ability to implement the MDGs.

We hope that resolution 60/265, on the follow-up to the development outcome of the World Summit and other internationally agreed development goals, will be acted upon without delay, particularly in our common

endeavour to eradicate poverty. My delegation also looks forward to an action-oriented draft resolution on the reform of the Economic and Social Council that will make the Council robust and truly central in its policy coordination and dialogue roles with all relevant international actors, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. In this connection, Indonesia supports the holding of the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial reviews.

Ultimately, the commitment to development can only be translated into action if developing countries have requisite funds and possess sufficient capacities. Fundamentally, international financial commitments remain inadequate in terms of timing, volume and quality for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Official development assistance, along with debt relief, are important. However, foreign direct investment can greatly help to spur private sector formation. There is a need for higher investment flows to the developing countries. Indonesia agrees with the report's conclusion about good governance and accountability, and fully shares the view that they should be in evidence at both the national and international levels.

Globalization has also contributed to the redefinition of our political and economic realities in terms of the critical issues of security, development and human rights, as well as the links between them.

Unfortunately, various conflicts continue to simmer in different parts of the globe, hampering the path to a stable and prosperous world. It is a travesty that, on the one hand, we face a paucity in financing for development, while on the other, we deal with the reality that the total budget of United Nations peacekeeping is just 0.5 per cent of international military spending. To find peaceful ways out of conflict situations, the role of the United Nations needs to be strengthened, and its mediation capacities made more effective.

We share the concern of the Secretary-General over a series of setbacks in multilateral disarmament in recent years. The lack of progress in pursuing disarmament and non-proliferation objectives is a cause for great distress to all those who aspire to a peaceful and stable world. We believe that it is now high time for renewed efforts to break the impasse in multilateral negotiations and to bring disarmament

issues back into the limelight of the international agenda.

Indonesia, as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, seeks to work actively with others in trying to fill the lacunae in the international peacebuilding system. We need to undertake cohesive and integrated peacebuilding strategies, with maximum local ownership, which lead to the resolution of conflicts in their entirety.

We look forward to the full functioning of the newly established Human Rights Council. We firmly believe that the principles agreed upon and contained in the founding resolution (resolution 60/251) should govern every aspect of the Council's work. This is of the utmost importance if the Human Rights Council is to be an effective forum for the promotion and protection of human rights and if it is to benefit the entire membership of the United Nations.

My delegation is hopeful that our recent agreement on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will provide an effective operational framework for international cooperation in combating terrorism. We urge Member States to intensify their efforts towards finalizing a comprehensive convention against international terrorism. Our efforts against the scourge of international terrorism need to be comprehensive, taking into account the need to address root causes, and in full compliance with international laws and the principles of respect for human rights.

We also attach great importance to the role of regional organizations in their contribution to many

issues, including development, peacemaking and peacekeeping. We hope that the United Nations will make greater and timely utilization of these valuable resources in its various programmes and strategies.

Globalization has also revealed other realities, including the emergence and the growing importance of civil society's role in the work of the United Nations. While the Organization remains an intergovernmental one where decisions are taken by Member States, it has benefited from its engagement with civil society, both in strengthening the institution and enriching the intergovernmental debate. In the report prepared by the Ambassador of Norway and myself as co-advisers to the President of sixtieth session of the General Assembly, while we acknowledged the need to address the existing "confidence deficit" among Member States and civil society, we stressed that there was sufficient ground to explore better interaction between the two groups and as well as a more meaningful engagement of civil society in the work of the Organization in general and of the General Assembly in particular.

In conclusion, Indonesia reiterates its full support and commitment to all those who endeavour to take concrete steps in promoting multilateralism in line with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. There is no greater challenge today than to bring about a democratic and strengthened United Nations for the benefit of all our peoples.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.