



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

## 9308

th meeting

Monday, 24 April 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

*President:* Mr. Vershinin . . . . . (Russian Federation)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Stastoli
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Tian Bingxu
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Fiallo Karolys
France . . . . .	Ms. Blachez-Eteneau
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Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Miftau Sulemana
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Hamamoto
Malta . . . . .	Ms. Galea
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Bambissa
Switzerland . . . . .	Mr. Hauri
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mr. Almahmoud
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. O'Kelly
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Mills

## Agenda

### Maintenance of international peace and security

Effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations

Letter dated 3 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/244)

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*The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.05 p.m.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

**Mr. Dang** (Viet Nam): At the outset, allow me to thank Russian Federation for convening this open debate.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Viet Nam strongly advocates and consistently underlines the importance of multilateralism, upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the role of the Organization to best serve the needs and interests of all Members. However, the pursuit of multilateralism is currently hindered by formidable challenges that threaten the spirit of cooperation and the international rules-based order, thereby intensifying existing tensions, eroding trust and destabilizing international peace and security.

In that context, Viet Nam is of the view that, first, multilateralism is effective only if it is based on respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Therefore, all Member States must adhere to Charter, in particular the principles of respect for State independence, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, non-interference, refraining from threats or the use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. All disputes should be resolved by peaceful means, with full respect for legal and diplomatic processes. All avenues and means should be exhausted to prevent conflict and attain solutions to peace and security issues.

Secondly, multilateralism is effective only if it is based on goodwill, mutual respect, mutual understanding and cooperation, in a spirit of openness, inclusiveness and equality. Imposition, intervention and unilateral acts have no place in the good conduct of international affairs. Major Powers are particularly looked upon to behave responsibly and work for the common good, and not their own selfish interests. Constructive dialogue and respect for the legitimate

rights and interests of all parties, in accordance with international law, are key in resolving differences and reducing tensions.

Thirdly, multilateralism is effective only when there are strong multilateral institutions in place. The United Nations and its main bodies must continue to play a central role in promoting cooperation, dialogue and solidarity for the sake of international peace and security through the rule of law and multilateralism. In that regard, we support the role of the Security Council in ensuring respect for the Charter and the rule of law, as reaffirmed in the Council's presidential statement of January 2020 (S/PRST/2020/1).

Strengthening collaboration and forging deeper partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations would also foster solutions to global and regional challenges. In that regard, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, through its mechanisms and constructive engagement with its external partners, has contributed to peace and prosperity in South-East Asia and beyond.

It is our duty to uphold the values enshrined in the Charter and to champion effective multilateralism as the most viable path to address the complex challenges of our time. By doing so, we can secure a safer, more prosperous and equitable world for generations to come.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

**Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia): We thank the Russian Federation for convening this open debate, as well as the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing.

Indonesia, aligns itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Charter of the United Nations laid the foundation for multilateral cooperation. Principles of multilateralism, such as inclusivity, solidarity, respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, have been the cornerstone of the United Nations and guided its work through many turbulent times.

It is therefore disheartening that, in recent times, we see a growing trend towards unilateralism or actions by a small group of nations in addressing global challenges, and not adhering to the United Nations Charter. While some might highlight such actions as being efficient and expeditious, we see it as eroding

multilateralism and the Charter. Indonesia believes in ensuring balance between adherence to the Charter and the speed of taking multilateral action as the best way to address global challenges and close the space for unilateralism.

In that context, allow me to highlight three points.

First, we must renew our commitment and our vows to the Charter of the United Nations as our collective guiding principles. The Charter embodies our collective determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. At the same time, the Charter provides a rules-based platform for multilateral dialogue and cooperation. By upholding the Charter, we unite our strength in maintaining international peace and security.

Secondly, we must have a new paradigm of multilateralism that is fit for purpose. We need a win-win paradigm, not one of zero sum. We also need a paradigm in which respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations is consistently upheld. The Security Council must also be well equipped and able to adapt to the new global realities. An inclusive, democratic and united Security Council is an important start. While we are currently deliberating on the New Agenda for Peace, we must also seize this moment to reshape the United Nations security architecture to ensure it is fit for current and future challenges. We therefore urge all members, particularly those in the Security Council, to push for clear timelines and practical and concrete targets on Security Council reform, including making use of the Summit of the Future.

Thirdly, strong partnerships with regional organizations would further strengthen multilateralism. The principle of neighbours know best brings regional perspectives and best practices to the peaceful settlement of dispute. That concept is clearly stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. We fully believe that a strong synergy between the United Nations and regional organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, is essential. That ensures multilateral and regional efforts are mutually reinforcing.

The Charter of the United Nations was written for the purpose of uniting our efforts to reach our collective goals through multilateralism. No nation or a small group of nations can effectively address global challenges on their own.

Indonesia will continue to call for collective work to strength multilateralism. We look forward to contributing to that endeavour.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

**Mr. Sabo** (Ethiopia): We wish to express our appreciation to the presidency of the Russian Federation for organizing this open debate on a timely and important topic. I would also like to thank His Excellency Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, for presiding over this open debate and thank the Secretary-General for his briefing this morning.

The principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations are timeless. No norm or consensus, grouping or alliance should be allowed to undermine the sovereignty and sovereign equality of States, the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, the prohibition of the use of force and the necessity of the peaceful resolution of disputes. Preserving those principles in all circumstances and aspects of international relations is incumbent upon all States.

Unfortunately, the prevailing unhealthy geopolitical competition is undermining multilateralism and the effectiveness of collective security. The current geopolitical landscape, underpinned by wars, an arms race, instability and global economic challenges, continues to pose unprecedented threat to humankind. In addition, the United Nations-led global partnership, encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to eradicate poverty, tackle the effects of climate change, ensure human development and address inequality, among other goals, is adversely affected. Because of the magnitude of the challenges and the absence of a meaningful solution, our multilateral order is rendered rhetorical and ineffective.

The United Nations is not unfamiliar with such kinds of global impediments. However, at this time, our multilateral order seems to have become entangled before it could adequately reform itself in a manner commensurate with the complexities of the challenges we are currently facing. That mainly relates to the inequitable representation of States, especially African countries, in the organs of the United Nations. Evidently, that inequity is posing greater difficulties for the Organization.

Overcoming those difficulties requires us to act with a great sense of urgency. We must translate into action all the declarations we have made in support of peace. We must ensure full respect for the Charter of the United Nations and live up to our commitments towards the implementation of the SDGs, climate action, disarmament and all other agreed undertakings. It is absolutely essential for Member States to ensure that the United Nations commands political and functional independence and neutrality, as well as a practical capability to manage global affairs in accordance with the Charter and earn the trust of the people of the world.

States continue, and rightfully so, to be at the centre of the United Nations-led multilateral order. We reaffirm our conviction that the United Nations-led multilateral system must centre on equal and effective participation of all States. That said, we also recognize non-State entities' increasing role in and influence on economic and trade issues, as well as the movement of wealth. Effective multilateralism can harness the capability to address inequality issues and the distortions of the international economic order. It is, however, critical to underscore the notion of the State as the primary unit of engagement under the United Nations-led multilateral system. Notwithstanding the vital role of non-State actors, any temptation to erode the intergovernmental nature of our current multilateral system would be immensely counterproductive.

Ethiopia, as a founding member of the United Nations and the African Union and a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and with its own robust experience with multilateralism and collective security, believes that it is within the capability of our community of States to unite towards reinvigorating our global order based on the Charter of the United Nations. We can be the bedrock of the United Nations, enabling it to play its rightful role and prevail over its challenges.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to multilateralism and collective security rooted in the Charter of the United Nations. But, in the same vein, I wish to reaffirm our conviction of the importance of equal representation in all organs of the United Nations, the accommodation of civilizational diversity, the promotion of solidarity, good faith cooperation and respect for national sovereignty.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

**Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia): We thank the Russian presidency of the Security Council for the opportunity to take part in this debate and to reflect on the meaning and message of effective multilateralism and the importance of defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We thank also the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing earlier today.

Today's date, 24 April, carries a special meaning for the Armenian people, as it marks the date of the commemoration of 1.5 million innocent lives lost as a result of a systematic campaign of violence against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. One of the darkest pages in history of the early twentieth century, the Armenian genocide is a stark reminder of the extent to which humankind can degrade under the conditions of a crisis of the international order. It also stands as a compelling case in point in promoting the prevention of such calamities to deliver on the promise of the Charter of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", which twice in the twentieth century brought untold sorrow to humankind.

The Armenian people, who experienced the horrors of the unspeakable atrocities committed during the First World War, demonstrated selfless courage and made enormous sacrifices during the Second World War, having paid, for a small nation, a disproportionately high human cost for victory and hence for the creation of the international Organization to be known as the United Nations.

The distinctive contribution of the Armenian people to ensuring victory in the Second World War is well known. Almost 600,000 Armenians participated in the war; more than half of them did not return from the battlefield. Four marshals, one admiral of the fleet and 60 generals were among the Armenians who fought in the Second World War. Thousands of our diaspora compatriots are known for their remarkable service in the Allied forces in various parts of the world, including those in the Resistance movement.

The calamities of the past have served to yield unambiguous lessons for the future of multilateralism, which effectively rests upon its capacity to protect the people, the owners of the Charter of the United Nations, from the tragic recurrence of extreme human suffering.

Adherence to the purposes and the principles of international law is indispensable to the maintenance of international peace and security; to the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and the suppression of

acts of aggression; and to the development of friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as prescribed in the Charter.

Time and again Armenia has consistently alerted the international community about instances of gross violations of international law in our part of the world. We have repeatedly brought to the attention of the Council the fact that Azerbaijan — Armenia's neighbour, which is many times larger in terms of size and quantity of resources — has been engaging in the illegal practice of the acquisition of territories by force.

In 2020 Azerbaijan launched a wave of deadly violence in the region in an attempt to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by force, contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The reality is that Azerbaijan exploited the vulnerabilities of the international order and the deficiencies of the multilateral system to launch a large-scale military aggression, conducted in gross violation of international humanitarian law, accompanied by numerous cases of atrocities, including against civilians. In September 2022, Azerbaijan launched yet another criminal attack targeting densely populated areas and civilian infrastructure in Armenia.

Since 12 December 2022, the 120,000 people in Nagorno-Karabakh have been held hostage in the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan, disrupting the only lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the outer world.

On 22 February, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a provisional measure according to which Azerbaijan shall

“take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions”.

To date, it has failed to implement the Court's legally binding order, engaging instead in manipulative interpretations, distortions and fabrications, which, as we have seen, have little value in a court of law.

Notwithstanding the presence of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation on the ground, as per the 9 November 2020 trilateral statement, not only has the corridor remained disrupted for more than four months now, but as of yesterday an Azerbaijani

checkpoint had been installed, in flagrant violation of the commitments under the trilateral statement and the order of the ICJ.

We have been warning the United Nations and the Council that the alarming situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is close to turning into a humanitarian catastrophe. Two and a half years after the establishment of the ceasefire, the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies are yet to render much-needed assistance to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

By now it should be beyond any reasonable doubt for anyone in the international community that Azerbaijan has steadily established itself as a serial violator whose record of aggressive, criminal actions in the region must be acknowledged for what they represent—premeditated, carefully planned and executed efforts that are demonstrative of an intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national and ethnic group as such.

The masterminds of such plans in Azerbaijan, as well as their enablers, must, however, bear in mind that no amount of distorted narrative, corruption or manipulation of energy resources can alter the fact that there is no statute of limitations for a certain category of crimes and that those committing such serious violations will have to be held responsible, including through international jurisdiction mechanisms, as justice and accountability must be at the core of effective multilateralism.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

**Mrs. Kamboj** (India): We thank the Russian Federation for having organized this timely open debate on a topic of growing relevance. I also thank the briefers for their insights.

There are two key aspects to the title of today's debate: promoting effective multilateralism and doing so, as the President terms it, through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Even as we debate this issue and would like effective multilateralism to prevail, we are collectively aware of the inadequacies of the multilateral system, which has failed to respond to contemporary challenges, whether it be the coronavirus disease pandemic or the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Moreover, significant global challenges such as terrorism, radicalism, climate justice and climate action, disruptive non-State actors, debt and several geopolitical contestations continue to undermine global peace and security.



Given that context, today's debate should address three pressing questions.

First, can we practice multilateralism effectively in the twenty-first century through a body that celebrates the principle of "to the victor belong the spoils", privileged more than three generations ago?

Secondly, can we actually promote effective multilateralism by defending a Charter of the United Nations where two of the permanent members have not been able to even get their names changed? As made clear in Article 109 of the Charter, the latter was never intended to be cast in stone for perpetuity, which is why it contains a recommendation that a general review conference of the Charter should be held before the tenth session of the General Assembly. Seventy-seven years later, we are no closer to making that a reality.

Thirdly, can we practice effective multilateralism by defending a Charter that makes five nations more equal than others and provides each of those five the power to ignore the collective will of the remaining 188 Member States?

How much longer will we keep embellishing the idea of effective multilateralism, with the intent of reforming multilateralism with only words and mere lip service?

Our starting premise must be widening the representation of this core institution, the Security Council, to more developing countries to ensure its effectiveness and credibility. If we continue to perpetuate the 1945 anachronistic mindset, we will continue to lose the faith that our people have in the United Nations.

India was a founding signatory to the Charter on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco. Seventy-seven years later, when we see the world's largest democracy, along with entire continents of Africa and Latin America, being kept out of global decision-making, we rightly call for a major course correction.

In that regard, I am happy to note that the recent report of the Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism has recognized the inevitability of reform of the Security Council and has called for renewed effort in that direction. To quote from the report,

"the Summit of the Future is an opportunity to reaffirm our common commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and announce a Charter review conference focused on Security Council reform".

This past September, the General Assembly heard a similar call for reform from more than 70 global leaders. As my Minister for External Affairs said during the Council's open debate held on 14 December 2022,

"*Our Common Agenda* and the Summit of the Future will deliver results only if they respond to the growing calls for reformed multilateralism. Reform is the need of the day, and I am confident that the Global South in particular shares India's determination to persevere". (S/PV.9220, p.6)

Multilateral institutions rarely die. They simply fade into irrelevance. Once upon a time there was a very long distance between the Model United Nations roleplay in colleges and universities and the real world. Is that distance shrinking?

Lastly, this forum has today heard some mischievous remarks by a Permanent Representative arising purely out of ignorance and lack of understanding about the basic facts of decolonization. I will not be wasting the time of the Council in responding to those remarks. Our advice to that delegation is to please refer to the numerous rights of reply that we have expressed in the past.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**Mr. Pérez Ayestarán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

At the outset, allow us to welcome you, Mr. President, and your whole team to New York and to convey our appreciation to the delegation of the Russian Federation, a fellow member of our Group of Friends, for having convened this open debate on such an important and critical theme, particularly at the current international juncture. We also express our appreciation to the Russian delegation for having prepared the concept note (see S/2023/244) that was previously circulated in order to guide today's deliberations.

Over the past 77 years, the United Nations has registered great achievements in various fields. Nevertheless, the fulfilment of the promise contained in the Charter of the United Nations remains elusive to humankind. The three pillars of our

Organization — international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights — are yet to be fully realized.

While the United Nations has indeed had many success stories to show — for instance, averting a conflagration on a global scale — today's world is not exactly a safer one from the perspective of security or at the economic, financial, environmental, energy or food-security level.

That reality, as we are aware, is the result of multiple factors. Nevertheless, several are worthy of mention here today in the light of the tremendous impact that they have had over the years on the international relations system. We are referring to attempts to ignore or even replace the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations with a new set of so-called rules that to date remain unknown, and to attempts to disregard the obligations and commitments arising from the international agreements and treaties to which members of the international community are party, including on the basis of claims to a non-existent exceptionalism. There are also attempts to divide our world into blocs and to adopt selective approaches to or accommodative interpretations of the norms of international law, as well as continued attacks against multilateralism, of which the United Nations is the main standard-bearer.

In parallel, there is also a growing resort to unilateralism, which can largely be seen in the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures against more than 30 countries worldwide, in flagrant violation of international law. There are efforts to ignore and even obscure that reality, which is negatively affecting the daily lives of more than one third of humankind.

Those so-called sanctions, whose number has exponentially increased over the years and which can be defined as a new form of attempted domination and neocolonialism, have become the preferred tool of certain Governments to apply pressure, especially on developing countries, in order to bend the sovereign will of another State in order to obtain from it advantages of various kinds while at the same time causing untold suffering to entire peoples.

Such illegal measures have not only created a systemic crisis in the entire system of international relations, which is continuing to erode multilateralism, but also deliberately exacerbated the multifaceted global crisis while increasing uncertainty, instability,

mistrust and tensions around the world. That is the reason why we cannot but continue to stress the pressing need for the complete, immediate and unconditional lifting of those measures.

It is in the light of that reality and in response to the increasing threats against the Charter of the United Nations, and therefore the urgent need to reaffirm and defend its purposes and principles, which are as relevant today as they were in 1945, that almost two years ago a cross-regional group of countries came together and decided to establish this Group of Friends as part of its firm commitment to preserving, promoting and defending the validity and relevance of the universal code of conduct that is given us by the Charter of the United Nations.

In that context, we stress the importance we attach to ensuring compliance with and strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the Organization and to the timeless principles contained therein, ranging from the sovereign equality of States to self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the need to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

We are certain that to proceed in any other manner would only divert us from our common aspiration of establishing a more peaceful and prosperous world — a truly just, democratic and equitable world order — while at the same time hindering our ability to provide for a dignified life and a future of peace and development for all our peoples, in line with our pledge to leave no one behind.

Multilateralism is collective action and a joint quest for solutions to common problems. That is why we concur with the statement contained in today's concept note that multilateralism indeed makes it possible to facilitate, *inter alia*, long-term stability, indivisible security and good-neighbourliness. We also believe in that regard that finding solutions to the new and complex challenges that we face today requires the strengthening and revitalization of a truly inclusive multilateralism in which all countries, large and small, are effectively engaged in a discussion, because each and every national contribution is essential to achieving the goals that motivated the establishment of the Organization in 1945.

Consequently, that also requires, on the one hand, achieving the democratization of international relations as well as consolidating a multipolar system that is

necessarily rooted in the Charter of the United Nations, and, on the other, the total elimination of unilateralism in all its forms and manifestations.

In the light of the aforementioned, the United Nations is called on to play a key and central role in addressing attempts to undermine multilateralism, mindful of the fact that that our Organization is the platform with the greatest legitimacy, convening power and normative capacity to, in an increasingly interdependent world, address jointly and in a coordinated and decisive manner — on the basis of dialogue, understanding and tolerance as well as mutual respect, solidarity and consensus-building — all issues related to international cooperation for economic development and social progress, peace and security, the peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights and the rule of law at the international level, as well as the pressing challenges and emerging threats that lie ahead of us, many of which are common to us all, without any kind of distinction.

We would therefore like to take this opportunity not only to reaffirm our commitment to the revitalization and strengthening of both the role and the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations in today's world but also to call on all members of the international community to put an end to zero-sum games; supremacist or cold-war mindsets; punitive, divisive or confrontational approaches; provocative, reckless actions and double standards; and the deepening of divisions and the imposition of visions and agendas of a dubious nature.

Instead, we should stake our bet once and for all on win-win cooperation, commitment, good-faith interaction and mutual accommodation, with a view to bridging positions and forging broad consensus. We believe that that is the best path to ensuring the effective implementation of the commitments and decisions that we adopt in this forum, achieving the goals and purposes envisioned in the Charter of the United Nations and giving free rein to the great power of multilateralism.

In conclusion, today, as we commemorate the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, we reaffirm that we are confident that multilateralism and diplomacy can strengthen progress on the three pillars of the United Nations and that we will spare no effort in upholding the Charter of the United Nations and its tenets, which all are vital to devising solutions to the major common challenges that humankind is facing today.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

**Mr. Mohammad** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important meeting on the topic of effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. I thank you also for your useful concept note (see S/2023/244) prepared for this meeting.

This meeting is taking place at a very delicate time. The world is facing unprecedented, interconnected and complex political, security, economic, humanitarian and environmental challenges that are putting the international multilateral system to the test — perhaps the most difficult and urgent test since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945

Given that historic test, the international community as a whole must act in a united and collective way. Member States must cooperate and stand shoulder to shoulder to overcome the deep divisions and deep-rooted challenges faced by the international community.

This meeting allows us to discuss and assess our collective responsibilities with regard to our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which represent the constitution for international multilateral action. That is the one of the most effective ways of addressing the threats facing the world today.

The Charter of the United Nations is an instrument of international law that provides a clear framework for maintaining relations among States. If we uphold its provisions, we can reduce threats to peace and security. We also stress that there is a need to apply that instrument in a collective and effective manner, in parallel with ensuring compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

We must work together collectively to stop violence and aggression. We must act to build up friendly inter-State relations and strengthen equality of rights and the right of peoples to self-determination. We must promote and encourage respect for human rights. To achieve those goals, there exist a set of principles that are equally important and can serve as pillars of international relations; they include the sovereignty of States and their independence and territorial integrity, as well as non-interference in their internal affairs. Those principles also include the peaceful settlement of disputes and refraining from the threat or use of force against other Member States.



Despite the existence of those purposes and principles, which must be upheld by all States Members of the United Nations, some States egregiously violate them. The Charter of the United Nations and its purposes and principles are the front line of defence for small States

We in the State of Kuwait are well aware of that fact. The liberation of the State of Kuwait in 1991 is a clear example of what can be accomplished when the efforts of the international community come together under the auspices of the United Nations and through resolutions of the Security Council. The goal is to ensure the primacy of law, right and justice.

The liberation of the State of Kuwait is a historic example of success that reflects the capabilities of the Security Council. It vividly reflected the aspirations of States with respect to the Charter and to addressing aggression and occupation, which violated the Charter and its noble purposes and principles. In addition to those purposes and principles, an entire set of tools is stipulated by the Charter that, if used correctly by the Security Council, could help to resolve many regional and international challenges.

Chapter VI of the Charter sets out very important instruments for conflict settlement that ought to be used more often by the Council — peaceful means, negotiations, mediation and arbitration. In that regard, we underscore the importance of prioritizing preventive measures by the Council to prevent conflicts from breaking out and to address crises at their incipient stages.

We categorically believe that regional and subregional organizations can play a constructive role and contribute to maintaining regional and international peace and security as laid out in Chapter VIII of the Charter. It is deplorable that the successful use of the tools set out in the Charter to maintain international peace and security is conditioned on the unity of and consensus within the Security Council.

For decades now, we have witnessed the Security Council's inability to resolve certain crises owing to the major differences of position of its members and the continued use of the veto. That is why we stress the importance of unity in the Security Council, so that it can fully assume its responsibilities under the Charter in the best possible way and make effective and final decisions in order to address all risks, challenges and threats.

In conclusion, since our meeting today coincides with the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, I would like to reaffirm the State of Kuwait's firm belief in the multilateral international system and to express our strong support for all of the noble efforts and good offices of the United Nations in the context of its three basic pillars of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

**Mr. Skoog**: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the potential candidate country Georgia and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, all align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by stating the obvious. By organizing this debate, Russia is trying to portray itself as a defender of the Charter of the United Nations and multilateralism. Nothing could be further from the truth. If Russia were truly interested in the topic on today's agenda, it would cease its violations of the United Nations Charter and international law and immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. It would respect the order of the International Court of Justice of 16 March 2022. It would stop abusing its veto power to cover up its consistent rule-breaking. And it would abide by the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly with an overwhelming majority. Russia's failure to do these things brings the Security Council into disrepute, and only more so during its presidency this month. Today is yet another deplorable example of Russian information-manipulation, disinformation and abuse of its membership in the Security Council.

I also underline at the outset that Russia's violations have come at a high cost. The Ukrainian people have paid the heaviest price, but the damaging impacts are felt across the world. In close dialogue with our partners, the EU has stepped up to address the global consequences of Russia's war. In this context, I want to reassure the members of the Security Council that every effort in support of Ukraine has come in addition to, and not instead of, our global commitments.

Despite the blatant hypocrisy of this initiative, effective multilateralism is too important to not be defended. As the EU High Representative Josep Borrell Fontelles recently stated in this Chamber (see S/PV.9268), our world is suffering from an immense deficit in multilateralism. Conflicts are proliferating, the climate crisis is spiralling out of control, democracy and human rights are under systematic attack, and global inequalities are deepening. There is no shortage of global challenges that need our urgent and full attention.

Upholding the rules-based order, a term Russia deliberately misinterprets, means respecting international law and the United Nations Charter, and ensuring that these rules apply to everyone — in a phrase, that might does not make right. It means engaging in multilateral diplomacy to work out new rules as necessary.

Like many other members of the United Nations, the EU and its member States are doing their part. For almost 80 years we have supported the United Nations and its three interlinked pillars: peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development. We do this both politically and financially, as the largest collective contributor to the United Nations budget. Our action is based on our deep conviction that there is no alternative to a strong United Nations as a catalyst of effective multilateralism.

It is no secret that the United Nations and our system of global governance, including the Security Council, are in need of reform. The Secretary-General has provided us with a dire analysis of its shortcomings in his report “Our Common Agenda”. He reiterated that this morning. He has also presented an urgent call for action to reinvigorate multilateralism, making it a more inclusive and more effective way of working, as a bulwark against uncertainty, as he said this morning. The EU stands fully behind this vision, and we are committed to delivering on it with an ambitious outcome at next year’s Summit of the Future. Last week’s recommendations by the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism serve as a contribution to our deliberations.

The EU and its member States are committed to engaging in a sincere and open exchange on an equal footing with other States Members of the United Nations to jointly address our common challenges, and we are convinced we have a lot to bring to the table. We have

a strong track record of cooperation with the United Nations on peace and security. At the moment, we have 21 civilian and military missions deploying over 5,000 women and men around the world, from the Niger to Armenia and from Mozambique to Ukraine. We are proud to partner closely with the United Nations in all our crisis-management operations. In Libya, Operation IRINI contributes to the implementation of the United Nations arms embargo, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation Althea assists the authorities in maintaining a secure environment for all citizens.

We support the Secretary-General’s call for a New Agenda for Peace and reiterate our commitment to adequate, predictable and sustainable financing of peace-support operations led by the African Union (AU). The EU supports the use of United Nations-assessed contributions for AU-led operations authorized by the Security Council and the implementation of the AU human rights compliance framework in this context.

Our efforts to maintain peace and security are closely linked with our ability to promote sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains our universal and indivisible road map, and we must accelerate its implementation. The Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September will be a crucial moment. As a sign of our commitment, the EU will submit its voluntary review at the High-Level Political Forum. The EU Global Gateway, mobilizing €300 billion in investments for sustainable and high-quality projects in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, will be a tool for progress.

We also need far more ambitious climate and biodiversity action by accelerating the green transition in a just way. The EU’s Green Deal puts us on track to meet our climate commitments, and we are the largest contributor of public finance worldwide for climate and biodiversity, with €24 billion per year.

Far too many people are left behind when it comes to the enjoyment of human rights. The EU will continue to vigorously promote and defend the universality and indivisibility of human rights within the United Nations system. Our joint commitment to human rights is contained in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary this year. We are strong advocates of the integrity, independence and functionality of the United Nations human rights mechanisms. We also support the Secretary-General’s

new vision of the rule of law that puts people at the centre of justice systems. We are committed to strengthening transitional justice and accountability for serious violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law. The international community must remain firmly committed to ensuring accountability for the crimes committed in and against Ukraine. The EU also remains a steadfast supporter of the International Criminal Court, and we continue to call for the universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

Effective multilateralism is making a difference. At the United Nations, we have often managed to find pragmatic and agile solutions or throw our support behind the lead of regional organizations such as the African Union. Let me share some recent concrete examples. On a daily basis, United Nations-led humanitarian assistance saves the lives of people affected by natural disasters and armed conflict. We call on new and non-traditional humanitarian donors to step up their contributions in line with the appeals of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered by the Secretary-General, has bolstered global food security and needs to be fully implemented and extended. The veto initiative to convene the General Assembly automatically every time a veto is cast increases transparency and accountability. The High Seas Treaty will ensure protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and the agreement on the Global Biodiversity Framework provides an action agenda for the next decade. The African Union's mediation proved invaluable in advancing peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia. And the United Nations is leading the removal of over a million barrels of oil from the decaying *FSO SAFER* tanker off Yemen's coast with a view to averting a humanitarian and environmental disaster.

Across the daunting spectrum of global challenges, the EU is proud to work with its partners around the world in leading the multilateral response. We pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of United Nations staff around the world dedicated to defending the United Nations Charter and protecting those most in need. And we will be relentless in our commitment to upholding international law and to working as a force for inclusive peace, sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights.

This cannot be said for everyone around this table. As we speak, Russia is violating the United Nations Charter with its war of aggression against Ukraine. On

23 February, the General Assembly reiterated its demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6). Some 141 Member States supported this demand. If Russia cares about effective multilateralism, that is the first way to prove it.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): I thank the Russian Federation for convening this important debate on the topic of effective multilateralism and the defence of the principles of the United Nations Charter. I thank His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and Secretary-General António Guterres, for their opening remarks.

We welcome the format of an open debate as it contributes to greater transparency and inclusive participation. It also allows Member States to convey their views directly to the members of the Security Council. Today Singapore would like to share its perspective as a small, independent and sovereign nation that is deeply committed to international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

If we want a serious discussion on multilateralism and the United Nations Charter, we cannot avoid the elephant in the room. Let me therefore reiterate Singapore's position at the outset: that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a serious and flagrant violation of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. There is no justification for Russia's illegal invasion and annexation of the territories of Ukraine, a sovereign and independent nation and a founding member of the United Nations.

There is a tragic and disturbing irony in the fact that Russia invaded its neighbour while holding the presidency of the Security Council in February 2022. The United Nations Charter gives Permanent Members of the Security Council a privileged position at the United Nations. With that special privilege also comes a special responsibility. Accordingly, much is expected of Permanent Members in terms of defending the principles of the Charter and upholding international law. That expectation applies to all the Permanent Members.

International law and the principles of the United Nations Charter are sacrosanct. For small States like Singapore, this is the first line of defence to protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity. The notion that might is right and the strong can do what they can and the weak suffer what they must is simply not acceptable.

For small States, multilateralism is not an option; it is a necessity. The United Nations and the multilateral system are now facing one of their greatest challenges since 1945. The impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the slowdown in the global economy have strained global solidarity. There is a trust deficit among the major Powers, and that has become both a symptom and cause of political differences, economic competition and geopolitical tensions.

The challenges we face are real, but the good news is that there remains strong political commitment to support the work of the United Nations. Last month, United Nations members concluded an agreement to conserve and protect the high seas. Also in March, the General Assembly convened a very successful United Nations Water Conference. Those examples offer some hope that United Nations members can work together and find compromises for the common good, even if they hold different political views. That is the foundation of multilateral cooperation.

We must continue the worthy work of the United Nations in a focused, pragmatic and non-ideological manner. It is also important that we mobilize to strengthen, reform and re-energize the multilateral system. As we navigate complex challenges, we must recall the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 75/1), in which our leaders agreed that

“the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law remain timeless, universal and an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world”.

I wish to make three points with regard to creating a strong and effective multilateral system.

First, the Security Council, which is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, must respond to global crises with a sense of unity and urgency. The Security Council must be an arena for building understanding and galvanizing

solutions, not an arena for vetoes and counter-vetoes that exacerbate the problem. The members of the Security Council, in particular the Permanent Members, must respect international law and uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter. Given their privileged status in the Security Council, the Permanent Members must find ways to reduce tensions with one another, manage their differences from spilling over and advance the goals and interests of the international community.

We call on all Security Council Members to respect the spirit of Article 27, paragraph 3 of the United Nations Charter and abstain from voting on matters in which they are a party to a dispute. The Security Council must also remain accountable to, and transparent with, the wider United Nations membership, whose interests it is supposed to represent and protect. That is why Singapore co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 76/262 on a standing mandate for a General Assembly debate whenever a veto is cast in the Security Council. More broadly, Singapore supports reform of the Security Council to reflect contemporary realities and not that of the world of 1945. Given the changing nature of security, the Security Council must also address non-traditional security challenges such as those arising from climate change and information and communication technologies security.

Secondly, General Assembly is the cornerstone of an effective multilateral system. As the universal organ of the United Nations, it has unparalleled legitimacy and credibility. The General Assembly has proven in recent months that it can respond to crises by taking decisions. The process of General Assembly revitalization is therefore important and urgent; the Office of the President of the General Assembly must be further strengthened. The annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, submitted in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, is fundamentally an exercise in accountability and inclusion. It is therefore important that the annual report is submitted to the General Assembly in a timely manner.

Thirdly, it is important to reform and adapt our multilateral institutions to the challenges of the future. If we do not make the United Nations future-ready, the United Nations will have no future. In that regard, the Secretary-General's report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and the report of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism are important and forward-looking documents that deserve the serious attention of all Member States. After



months of serious deliberations and engagement with stakeholders, the Advisory Board report put forward many actionable, practical and innovative ideas on how to achieve a more networked, inclusive and effective multilateralism. I urge all Member States to consider how we can follow up on some of those concrete ideas. Ultimately, an effective multilateral system must deliver concrete results for our people and our planet.

Let me conclude by thanking the Russian Federation for convening this open debate in the Security Council. It is our hope that this debate will represent the beginning of serious reflection within the Security Council on its critical role and responsibilities and lead to a collective effort to strengthen the United Nations and our multilateral institutions. That will require all nations, large and small, to work together on the basis of mutual respect and respect for international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

**Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand): Multilateralism, anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, is the first resort of many States and, at times, the last safeguard for many States.

Multilateralism enables States to do things better: to better pursue peaceful relations based on mutual interests, to better generate cooperation in addressing global issues, to better mobilize international assistance and relief, when needed, and to better address outstanding problems and disputes through peaceful means.

For those reasons, promoting effective multilateralism is our common priority. I therefore express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for organizing this important open debate so that the wider United Nations membership can voice its views on that issue. We also commend the Russian Federation for its achievements during its presidency of the Council.

Thailand aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and wishes to add the following four points.

First, renewed commitment to multilateralism requires renewed commitment to the principles in the United Nations Charter and to international law — from sovereign equality to the peaceful settlement of disputes, from non-use of force to respect for territorial integrity and the political independence of States, from

non-intervention to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Renewing those commitments requires us to ensure that these principles are applied universally, not selectively, in order to strengthen respect for these principles by all.

Secondly, the critical means for ensuring effective multilateralism is the strengthening of peaceful means. Effective multilateralism is principally about effective diplomacy, creative facilitation, impartial mediation and rules-based arbitration, among other things. We should seek ways to strengthen the instruments that advance peaceful means in the United Nations system. We should nurture a culture of peace among nations and civilizations. And we should strengthen the convening power of the United Nations to build bridges among disputing parties and foster trust and confidence among States, because polarization and confrontation benefit no one. With regard to United Nations institutions, the Security Council needs urgent reform to establish greater efficiency, transparency and equitable representation. The General Assembly needs to be revitalized to address the contemporary agenda. And the Peacebuilding Commission needs to be utilized more effectively. Those organs and other multilateral bodies need to work in greater synchronization.

Thirdly, the interconnectivity among peace, sustainable development and human security means that we must adopt complementary and multidimensional approaches to addressing global challenges. The current conflicts around the world serve to underscore the magnitude of their impacts on human security and sustainable development, from humanitarian and food and energy crises to the consequences for States' ability to address global challenges such as climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic. Effective multilateralism therefore requires addressing challenges to peace, sustainable development and human security in an integrated manner. The prevention of conflict, for example, is best achieved by encouraging sustainable development and human security and allowing it to take root through local, national, regional and international cooperation. We should therefore not lose sight of the importance of attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as an investment in peace and human security, and we should work towards a successful SDG Summit in September in order to turbo-charge efforts to rescue the SDGs and get us back on track to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Fourthly and lastly, more effective multilateralism would benefit from a stronger global-regional interface, involving closer coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. The voices of the region matter, as do the contributions and initiatives of regional and subregional organizations. Thailand looks forward to the United Nations continuing to strengthen its partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, especially as it seeks to strengthen multilateralism through the implementation of the various proposals set forth in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). Coming from South-East Asia, Thailand places great importance on the continued enhancement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United Nations comprehensive partnership and hopes that the views of our region on matters affecting it will always be heeded.

In conclusion, Thailand believes that more effective multilateralism should and can be achieved, which should be a major priority as we prepare for the Summit of the Future, to be held in 2024, bearing in mind that without sustainable development there is no future.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. The topic of today's open debate is timely, as we have been witness to various acts that are inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, while the Security Council, for its part, has not lived up to the world's expectations. It is a sad reality that today's topic has been proposed by those illegally using force against Ukraine's territorial integrity and political independence. No one could have expected total ignorance of the Charter of the United Nations from a permanent member of the Security Council.

The United Nations is the embodiment of multilateralism. The Republic of Korea believes that making our Organization well-functioning is the way to pursue effective multilateralism. In that regard, we need to first recall what we have agreed to. All United Nations Members agreed to the purposes and principles of the Charter and rendered their consent to be bound by it. Its purposes constitute the *raison d'être* of the Organization, in particular the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which is enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter, indicating that the ultimate goal of the United Nations is to suppress war, which needless to say includes wars

of aggression. In that sense, the principle of prohibiting the threat or use of force is at the heart of the United Nations Charter. As pointed out by the prominent Russia-born international lawyer Louis Henkin, no one can deny that the principles reflected in Article 2, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Charter are core values that all United Nations Member States must uphold all the time. The so-called legitimate security concerns mentioned in the concept note (see S/2023/244) cannot and will not justify any use of force incompatible with international law. Neither can they be excuses for any illegal act against binding Security Council resolutions, or for systematic, widespread and gross human rights abuses.

Speaking of the Council, it has frequently failed to fulfil the mandate conferred upon it by the Charter. For instance, the Security Council has remained silent on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's flagrant violations of multiple Council resolutions since the vetoes wielded by two permanent members last May. For its part, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has issued more than 10 official statements over the past year that reject the legitimate work of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. For example, last Monday, the Vice-Chairman of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Central Military Commission made a threatening remark to oppose the convening of a briefing to the Council on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Foreign Minister, Cheo Son-Hui, called the Secretary-General a puppet of the United States when he condemned its intercontinental ballistic missile launch last November. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's words and deeds run manifestly counter to the Charter of the United Nations. It is astounding that there exists a United Nations Member that is so outspokenly and consistently hostile to the main United Nations bodies and that completely ignores its basic obligations under the Charter. If the Council is really serious about effective multilateralism and the defence of the Charter, then it must first deal more seriously and more effectively with such cases of outright non-compliance.

The Government of the Republic of Korea is a staunch supporter of universal values such as freedom, human rights and the rule of law, which are inextricably connected with the Charter of the United Nations. We reaffirm our dedication to the Charter, a truly universal instrument that does not permit unilateral, arbitrary interpretations. The very existence of the Republic

of Korea, which barely survived an act of aggression 70 years ago and pursued economic development and democratization with the help of the United Nations, is a living testament to effective multilateralism. That makes us feel all the more responsible for the defence of the United Nations Charter. My Government will undertake to seriously engage in achieving such a noble goal.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

**Mr. Önal** (Türkiye): I would first like to thank the Russian Federation for organizing today's open debate. Multilateralism is in severe crisis, at a time when it is needed more than ever. Regional crises in different parts of the world continue to perpetuate themselves. The war in Ukraine is well into its second year, with little prospect of a diplomatic solution. The negative repercussions of climate change and disruptions in supply chains are being felt at the global scale, from increasing energy prices to the high cost of living and food insecurity.

Transnational threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking and irregular migration continue to be serious causes for concern. The failure of the concept of economic interdependence as a way to ensure continued peace and stability, as well as disillusionment with globalization, has also increased the strains on multilateralism. However, at a time when the interconnected nature of global challenges calls for stronger international engagement and cooperation, multilateralism is not a choice but a necessity. No one country can cope effectively with these interconnected transnational threats. Isolationism and unilateralism are concepts of the past and cannot be applied to overcome the challenges of the twenty-first century. Contrary to some arguments, multilateralism is not a threat to others' sovereignty. It is an effective way to safeguard national interests in an interdependent world. Indeed, multilateralism has been delivering results for decades. It has been instrumental in building institutions and codifying guidelines designed to help resolve conflicts peacefully. Such institutions enable us to establish norms and platforms for dealing with our global challenges, from addressing climate change and poverty reduction to combating terrorism and disarmament, among other things.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative, the global compacts on migration and refugees, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement

on Climate are some examples of how diplomacy and multilateralism produce results for the common good of humankind. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye, we have once again witnessed multilateralism at work first-hand through international cooperation in the form of disaster response and humanitarian action. What needs to be done is therefore to prioritize the peaceful resolution of conflicts through constructive engagement and creative diplomacy.

The success of multilateralism obviously depends on the effectiveness of its core institutions. The reality today, however, is that our multilateral institutions and rules are far from perfect. The United Nations in particular is the embodiment of multilateralism. Yet it is not immune to occasional moments of paralysis when its guidance on matters of global peace and security is most needed. The Organization should be more democratic, transparent, representative and inclusive. The Charter of the United Nations and its provisions should be unequivocally complied with by all Members, and first and foremost by the permanent members of the Security Council.

True multilateralism requires that all Member States, regardless of their size or power, have an equal opportunity to voice their views and expectations. That is why the General Assembly, as the most democratic and representative organ of the United Nations, is well positioned to play an increasingly important role in global matters. In order to strengthen multilateralism, we need a stronger General Assembly, and we fully support the intergovernmental process for its revitalization. As we commemorate the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace today, it is important to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Such a commitment also entails re-energizing multilateralism with a view to better addressing the increasingly global and interrelated challenges of our time.

In conclusion, I would like to categorically reject the baseless allegations made by the Armenian delegation with regard to events in 1915. We call on everybody to take into consideration our joint history commission proposal and regional peace and cooperation initiatives, rather than stoking historical animosity.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

**Mr. Turay** (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Sir, for convening this timely open debate at a time of global crises, uncertainties and challenges.

Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The seemingly unending cycles of conflict and violence, the destructive and devastating impacts of climate change, the spread of terrorism, as well as the refugee, migration and humanitarian crises of recent times, continue to challenge the effectiveness of our current international system, as well as our ability to promote peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet. We are challenged to generate innovative ideas and credible mechanisms that will bring all conflicts to a peaceful end, maintain peace and security, promote social progress, human rights and fundamental freedoms and secure better standards of living for humankind. We have limited options and no alternatives to multilateralism to address such challenges. In that regard, the Security Council should consider measures that will reinforce our collective obligation to uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

However, we cannot champion the causes of justice, equity, accountability and legitimacy when Africa, a continent on which two thirds of the discussions in the Security Council are focused, remains excluded and underrepresented in one of the most important decision-making organs of the United Nations. In that connection, we endorse the view of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism that the Security Council should be expanded to equitably reflect the regions of the world that are chronically underrepresented, including those such as Africa with large and growing young populations, and to ensure that voices from conflict-affected regions are more meaningfully included in the Council's decision-making.

We also support the Advisory Board's view that our systems should be able to shift focus and resources quickly to tackle new and emerging risks, positioning our Organization for more effective prevention. Ultimately, prevention should be seen as a universal obligation according to which every State has a role to play in prevention and peacebuilding. Sierra Leone aligns with the view that we must stop thinking of security within narrow nationalistic parameters and

accept the fact that our collective survival depends on greater investment in peace. That will require the United Nations to become a more effective body at the centre of the global security architecture. Looking ahead, we must not lose sight of our shared obligation to ensure a peaceful and secure world by resolving our differences, including national and international disputes, through constructive dialogue. We must respect and prioritize strengthening the existing mediation mechanisms provided for in the Charter.

Sierra Leone has indeed benefited from mediation efforts under the auspices of the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States at the subregional level. The role of regional organizations in partnership with the United Nations should be further strengthened to ensure a greater response at the regional level in implementing preventive measures such as early-warning mechanisms. As a small State, and given its experience, Sierra Leone recognizes the benefits of multilateralism and its significance in promoting peace, security and development at the national, regional and global levels. It is our firm belief that we should consistently uphold the principles of international law and fulfil our obligations as Member States in accordance with the Charter in order to maintain international peace and security. We have a binding commitment to building a global society that is more just, inclusive and equal than the one we live in today.

In that vein, we are committed to supporting effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its centre. Therefore, preserving and strengthening the values of the peaceful settlement of disputes, the dignity of humankind and meaningful, sustainable economic development, through international cooperation and multilateral efforts, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are all essential for promoting and supporting the three pillars of our Organization, namely, peace and security, development and human rights.

In conclusion, our collective resolve to recommit to multilateralism must be an immediate necessity. Our inaction will have a debilitating effect on the dignity of humankind. In that regard, Sierra Leone reiterates its commitment to the principles, ideals and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations — a commitment that we made when we joined the Organization as its 100th



member in 1961 and one that we prioritized in our bid for election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2024 to 2025.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

**Mr. Alrowaiei** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, for presiding over this Security Council meeting. I would also like to thank the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of April, for holding today's important debate on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace to reflect on how to enhance and ensure multilateralism by defending the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in the light of the various current challenges faced by the world. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable statement. The various challenges faced by the world in recent decades, in particular the coronavirus disease pandemic that has raged over the past few years, have proved that no State can manage and confront risks alone. We must all work together as an international community, including all stakeholders, for the good of humankind. Against that backdrop, multilateralism, diplomacy and international cooperation are the most important and effective tools for achieving the goal of maintaining international peace and security and achieving sustainable development.

Under the leadership of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and with the support of Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Bahrain has stressed in all its diplomatic positions and international actions the importance of cooperation and international partnership, on the basis of fraternity, understanding, good-neighbourliness, respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs, while prioritizing dialogue and diplomatic solutions in settling conflicts and calming regional and international tensions. We have also supported consolidating peaceful coexistence among religions, civilizations and cultures, based on the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has been committed to peace as a strategic choice. That is the premise of the various initiatives it has launched to enhance international

cooperation, stability and peace and prosperity, especially in the Middle East, which is experiencing various conflicts and disputes. The Kingdom of Bahrain has supported and enhanced the international order based on international law, international instruments and international human rights mechanisms and principles, as enshrined in the legislation and instruments of international organizations. We have also supported the building of the international capacity to provide assistance and ensure sustainable development throughout the world. We have promoted the values of peace, peaceful coexistence and dialogue through specific policies and initiatives, such as through the establishment of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence, which promotes peaceful coexistence among various religions and cultures.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses the critical role played by the United Nations as an embodiment of one of the best multilateral frameworks for maintaining international peace and security and achieving sustainable development goals while protecting and promoting human rights.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

**Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 120 member States of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

At the outset, I congratulate the Russian Federation on its successful presidency of the Security Council and express appreciation for the opportunity for the Movement to submit its position on today's topic. In that regard, we cannot forget that the theme of today's open debate coincides with the annual commemoration of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, a significant date that was promoted by the Non-Aligned Movement, in line with its historic commitment to the promotion and preservation of multilateralism and the facilitation of diplomacy, which, at the current international juncture, serves as an opportunity for promoting the values of the United Nations and reaffirming the faith of our peoples in the purposes and principles enshrined in its founding Charter.

The Non-Aligned Movement is committed to supporting multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. Preserving and strengthening the values of multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpin the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, is fundamental for promoting and supporting the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace and security, development and human rights. At their eighteenth Summit, held in Baku in October 2019, the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed the validity of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and norms of international law as indispensable for preserving and promoting peace and security, the rule of law, economic development and social progress and human rights for all.

The strict observance of the principles of international law and the fulfilment in good faith of the obligations assumed by States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Non-Aligned Movement is committed to supporting and promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and norms of international law, including those relating to the territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their international borders, the inadmissibility of the use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation and colonial or foreign domination.

Every State has the duty to refrain, in its international relations, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. Such a threat or use of force constitutes a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and shall never be recognized as a lawful means of settling international issues. The member States of the Movement greatly emphasize the importance of taking effective measures for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace, as well as to defend, promote and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered.

The Movement denounces and demands the repeal of unilateral coercive measures against Member States when such measures are not authorized by the Security Council in accordance with the Charter or that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter. That is due to their extraterritorial implications and illegal character and because they violate human rights and hinder the full economic and social development of the peoples subjected to them.

The Movement reaffirms and underscores its principled position and commitment with regard to the promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter, international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including those adopted by the Security Council. In that context, we want to emphasize the significant role played by the International Court of Justice — the principal judicial organ of the United Nations — in promoting and encouraging the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and the Statute of the Court. The Movement urges the Security Council, the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, as well as its duly authorized specialized agencies, to make greater use of the Court as a source of advisory opinions and interpretation of international law within the scope of their activities.

The Movement, faithful to its commitment to strengthening its role as an anti-war and peace-loving force, reaffirms its determination to work for the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world and a just and equitable world order. We also renew our determination to work for a multipolar world through the strengthening of the United Nations and multilateral processes, which are indispensable to our efforts to promote the interests of our nations and humankind as a whole.

I will now make a few remarks in my national capacity. The fundamentally flawed and false allegations made by the representative of Armenia earlier today in this meeting reveal the extent to which hatred, intolerance and falsehoods dominate Armenia's discourse and the serious threat that it poses to regional peace and security and stability. Its objective is clear. It is to conceal its own responsibility for the aggression against my country, Azerbaijan, including its 30-year occupation of sovereign territories of my country, mass atrocities, hate crimes and its undisguised racist policy.

Armenia's recurring claims about the large-scale military hostilities allegedly unleashed by Azerbaijan in 2020 are sheer fantasy. Azerbaijan used a counter-force to restore its territorial integrity and protect its people, acting exclusively on its sovereign soil in full conformity with the Charter, international law and Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993).

As for the clashes in September 2022, they occurred along the non-delimited Armenia-Azerbaijan border — not in Armenia — and were provoked by the armed forces of Armenia. That was properly documented and reported to the United Nations. Armenia's allegations about the Lachin-Khankendi road are equally false. Since the signing of the trilateral statement in November 2020, the regime governing the movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the road has remained unchanged, with Azerbaijan guaranteeing security in accordance with the statement. Residents, ambulances, humanitarian convoys and the International Committee of the Red Cross have used the road without restrictions. At the same time, Armenia itself has abused the Lachin road for illegal military purposes, including rotating armed forces personnel, transferring weapons and planting landmines in the area. It has also used the road for illicit trafficking in minerals and other resources and for moving third-country nationals. Azerbaijan's establishment of a border checkpoint at the entrance to the Lachin road on its sovereign territory is grounded in the foundational principles of the territorial sovereignty and integrity of States and their undeniable right, prerogative and exclusive competence and duty to ensure the security and protection of their borders and the rule of law.

Instead of wasting time distorting the facts, misinterpreting international documents, misleading the international community and inciting enmity and hatred, Armenia should abide by its international obligations, completely withdraw its armed forces and illegal armed formations from the territory of Azerbaijan and return the eight border villages still occupied to Azerbaijan. Armenia should cease and desist from territorial claims, illegal activities and disinformation, end its mine terrorism and shed light on the fate of the several thousand Azerbaijanis who went missing during the conflict. It should redress the harm caused to Azerbaijan and engage faithfully in negotiations on a peace treaty and the delimitation of the border between the two States.

No matter the number of falsehoods, insinuations and disinformation disseminated by Armenia, Azerbaijan is firm in its determination to rehabilitate, reconstruct and reintegrate its conflict-affected territories, ensure the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes, advance the normalization agenda and prevent and eliminate, by all legitimate means, any threat to the safety and well-being of its people and its State sovereignty and territorial integrity.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

**Ms. Joyini** (South Africa): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate to discuss the topic "Effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". We are deliberating on that important topic during a complex time of heightened political tension, which requires sober reflection on the multifaceted global challenges affecting all of us. We must devise effective approaches and innovative solutions to address those challenges as we work to fulfil the common United Nations agenda and strengthen our commitment to multilateralism.

The principles of the Charter, which embody core tenets to which we, as Member States, have pledged our commitment, are increasingly under threat. The precepts of the Charter were premised on the historic horrors of the Second World War, the lessons of which are still relevant to modern geopolitics. The prevailing global political climate reminds us that all Member States are bound by the Charter to settle disputes and conflicts by peaceful means and make every effort to pursue global peace and stability.

Despite the noble aspirations of the Charter of the United Nations and its positive impact, some Member States have violated and continue to violate some of its central tenets. Although the Charter maintains that the United Nations is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members, in reality we are faced with the Orwellian absurdity that some members are more equal than others. Of course, that is often expressed through unilateral actions and a blatant disregard for international law. It enables those with power to violate the Charter by, for example, settling their disputes by non-peaceful means or violating or supporting the infringement of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of others. However, this assumption of power does not exempt them from the adverse consequences we all have to bear if the principles enshrined in the Charter are flouted. These consequences are often uncontrollable and have an impact on the long-term security of all.

It remains vital for all Member States to be steadfast in their resolve to maintain the centrality of the United Nations in settling international conflicts within the provisions of international law and the United Nations Charter. The pursuit of global peace and security requires Member States to put aside their differences and prioritize the common goal of advancing the course of humanity's peace and development.

The relevance of the United Nations has been called into question with greater frequency in recent times. Even more stark is the quest for the legitimacy and integrity of the Security Council. This quest will persist for as long as the paralysis in the Security Council continues without resolution. This has brought to the fore the urgent need for Security Council reform, which requires fair representation and equality in the decision-making processes of the Council. Similarly, we impress on members of the Security Council to rise above their differences on some of the issues on its agenda and earnestly pursue unity and consensus, which we hope will inevitably enhance the effectiveness of the Council and therefore its legitimacy.

As we prepare in coming months for the deliberations on “Our Common Agenda” and the Summit of the Future, in particular the New Agenda for Peace, we ought to reflect on a global peace and security architecture that is responsive and effective in resolving emerging threats to peace and security, as well as outstanding and protracted conflicts. The New Agenda for Peace provides an opportunity in a complex geopolitical context to renew and strengthen our resolve to preserve and improve upon the gains made on global peace and stability in the past 77 years of existence of the United Nations.

Conflict prevention, dialogue and mediation must be at the centre of the endeavours of the United Nations in pursuit of global peace and security. This will require strong political will and utmost respect for and consistent application of international law and the United Nations Charter. It cannot be business as usual, if we, as Member States, and the Security Council, with the primary mandate to maintain international peace and security, are to succeed at providing effective management and resolution of global peace and security.

We wish to remind the Security Council and the States Members of the United Nations that one of the most serious impediments to the effective resolution of conflicts is the prevailing selective application of international law and the United Nations Charter. Accordingly, South Africa believes that effective multilateralism demands that unity, partnership and collaboration be pursued as a first step to strengthening collective action. Equally importantly, the Security Council’s responsibility in ensuring the implementation of its resolutions and fair and equal attention to the issues on its agenda remains vital.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming South Africa’s unwavering commitment and support for a rules-based multilateral system that is based on international law, and which is fair, equitable, representative and fit for purpose, with the United Nations at the helm and providing the platform for intergovernmental and collective solutions to common global challenges. The prevailing global economic, development, health, peace and security and other pressing challenges attest to the principle that no single country can alone resolve them. We therefore have to rebuild trust and redouble our efforts to work together towards addressing these challenges.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

**Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People’s Democratic Republic): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening today’s open debate, and I congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming presidency of the Security Council this month. My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing.

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement.

We have arrived at this very critical juncture where the international community is confronted with multifaceted challenges, including armed conflicts and economic, financial and environmental difficulties. Further, multilateralism, which has always been at the core of international cooperation, has been undermined, whereas unilateralism has been on the rise.

“We”, as stipulated in the Charter, are the peoples of the United Nations, and we gather at the United Nations to find the most appropriate solutions and take urgent actions in addressing the problems facing us all today. This cannot be done without firmly upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter and preserving multilateralism. The United Nations was founded to avert another global catastrophe. Our collective wisdom and political will to find the most pragmatic approach to tackling the increasing number of crises imperilling us today must be above all unilateral and political interests. In so doing, we must bolster our solidarity, address differences and avoid confrontation and division.



In this context, the United Nations, especially the Security Council, must effectively fulfil its mandate to maintain peace and security. It is our shared aspiration that the Council be transformed in order to respond to the current global security threats and needs. The international community must find peaceful and long-lasting solutions to ongoing conflicts and disputes. We believe that unilateral coercive measures contradict the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. They continue to impede the rights and prevent the full economic and social development of the innocent peoples subjected to them. To ensure lasting peace and prosperity, we must create opportunities for peaceful solutions and an environment conducive to diplomatic negotiations.

As an active and responsible member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Lao People's Democratic Republic has attached great importance to the promotion of regional peace and stability. Through the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone, we in ASEAN have firmly upheld the importance of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, which lays a solid foundation for maintaining regional peace and security. In this same vein, ASEAN's role in addressing regional security challenges by peaceful means, including the issue of Myanmar, remains essential. We must also do our utmost to ensure the continuation of humanitarian assistance to people in need, as well as to advance full and effective implementation of the five-point consensus agreed by the ASEAN leaders.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the Lao People's Democratic Republic's unwavering commitment to upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter. My country stands ready to continue working closely with all States Members of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

**Mr. Fifield** (Australia): Australia welcomes the opportunity to speak on this important topic.

Australia is a country that shares common ground with so many of the world's peoples. We are a land that is home to the oldest continuous culture on the planet and to people from more than 300 ancestries. We see ourselves reflected in the world, just as the world can see itself reflected in us. And we want to see the interests of all the world's peoples upheld along with our own.

Our interests lie in a world that operates by rules, standards and norms, where a larger country does not determine the fate of a smaller country and where each country can pursue its own aspirations and its own prosperity. We want to live according to our own laws and values, determined by our own citizens — respecting, but not deferring to others. In order to maintain those sovereign choices, the small and medium countries of the world, including Australia, must work together.

The purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are fundamental to our aspirations, and they are critical to the multilateral system being able to effectively address the global challenges we all face. We want to see all countries uphold the United Nations Charter.

Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine renders stark our interest in living in a world where no country dominates and no country is dominated. The attack on Ukraine is an attack on all small countries. It is an assertion that a larger country is entitled to subjugate a smaller neighbour — to decide whether another country can even exist.

We cannot accept a situation where large countries determine the fate of smaller countries. Aside from terrible damage and loss of life in Ukraine, Russia's invasion is compounding human suffering. It is propelling the global crisis in food and energy security that is having such a terrible impact on the populations of so many Member States. It reminds us all how much is at stake if we fail to protect the United Nations Charter. We cannot be passive when big Powers flout the rules. We must continue to work together to hold Russia to account.

Australia's vision is for a multilateral system that delivers security, stability and prosperity for Australia, our region and the world. Being genuinely committed to the United Nations means being genuinely committed to reforming the United Nations in order to keep it vital. We are committed to working with each other to that end.

The Security Council's inability to respond to Russia's attack on Ukraine has once again highlighted the importance of reform. Member States must have confidence that the Security Council can respond effectively to threats to, and breaches of, international peace and security. The Security Council veto power was never intended to be used to enable unchecked abuse of the United Nations Charter by the very countries that were given the veto.

The declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 75/1) and the *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) report demonstrate the broad political support for a multilateral system that is equitable, inclusive, efficient and effective. The Summit of the Future is an opportunity to consider whether the United Nations we have now is both the United Nations we want and the United Nations we need for the future. We look forward to engaging in this process with countries genuinely committed to reform.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

**Mr. Rai** (Nepal): I thank the presidency of the Russian Federation for convening this important debate.

Today's world has been marked by increasing geopolitical tensions among big Powers since the period of the Second World War. A trust deficit within and among nations is presenting a grave test to multilateralism. A strong sense has prevailed that the United Nations, particularly this very organ, the Security Council, is incapable of maintaining peace and solving the critical challenges confronted by humankind today. There is an urgent need to shelve off parochialism and muster political will to build understanding, cooperation and coordination in order to dispel geopolitical tensions and to chart a path for a peaceful and prosperous future for humankind.

Multilateralism is central to Nepal's foreign policy, with the United Nations at its core, to maintain international peace and security and to tackle global challenges. For small nations like ours, defending the Charter of the United Nations equates to defending sovereign equality, territorial integrity, dignity and justice for an inclusive and equitable world order.

We view the United Nations Charter as a foundation for the rules-based multilateral system in which all Member States participate with dignity, irrespective of their economic prowess or military might. All Member States must always respect the Charter provisions. Their selective application is a rejection of the values of rules-based multilateral order.

While we stand for unequivocal adherence to the United Nations Charter, we call for timely reform that promotes fairness, equality, inclusivity and justice for all Member States. Peace and security, human rights and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. We

emphasize the timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to prevent conflict and address their root causes.

There is a need for closer coordination among the General Assembly, Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission if we are to achieve lasting peace. As the Security Council carries the primary responsibility of maintaining peace and security, its membership must assume the vital responsibility of upholding the Charter's tenets and values. The Council's failure undermines the very credibility and legitimacy of the entire United Nations system. We therefore expect the Council's members, especially the Permanent Members, to work harder to reach a consensus in addressing the problems the world is facing today.

Throughout its 77 years, the United Nations has distinguished itself as the only credible multilateral Organization with universal membership. Its success was not an accident, but a result of the relentless commitment exhibited by its Member States. We cannot imagine or create yet another such institution with the same membership and credibility. But the time has come to take a historic step at this turning point in history to make the United Nations a capable institution that maintains peace and helps Member States secure sustained prosperity.

We must demonstrate a genuine intention to deliver through the United Nations system. Narrow national interests must therefore not prevent the United Nations from acting on common global threats. Member States must abide by the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of peace and stability in the world.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

**Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, for organizing and presiding over this open debate on the theme of effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations lays the foundation for the conduct of predictable international relations, based on a set of common values and principles. The latter, particularly respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, the peaceful resolution of disputes and international community,

are critical for facing global challenges. They represent a safety valve for multilateralism based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, international peace and security and development. The backbone of the founding text of the United Nations was and remains the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today, as in 1945, that objective continues to be at the heart of United Nations action. And it is precisely the Security Council, the guarantor of peace and security in the world, that has the primary responsibility in that regard. Today we need a more united, effective and pragmatic multilateralism. The coronavirus disease pandemic has clearly shown us that we depend on each other and that multilateralism is required. For Morocco, building a renewed, equitable multilateral system is fundamental to ensuring that international solidarity is adequately strengthened to meet the current multidimensional and multiform challenges. We also need to take a fresh look at multilateral action, develop renewed and innovative approaches and define consensus concepts that can give new impetus to facing immediate and future challenges and strengthening the effectiveness of international institutions.

In accordance with the guidelines provided by King Mohammed VI, Morocco actively contributes to the promotion of multilateralism based on peace, stability, mutual respect and sustainable development at the global and continental levels. Morocco has always believed that multilateral cooperation is the most effective way to respond to the global challenges facing humankind, especially in an interconnected and ever-changing world. In that regard, the Kingdom of Morocco is firmly committed to important multilateral initiatives, such as intercultural, intercivilizational and interreligious dialogues, combating terrorism and violent extremism, the humane and humanitarian management of migration, the promotion of sustainable development and the protection of the environment, to name but a few very important topics. Morocco has also made it a top priority to ensure the peace, security and sustainable development of our African continent, as well as to take multilateral action in favour of Africa, in accordance with the instructions of King Mohammed VI.

Morocco welcomes the efforts and initiatives of Secretary-General António Guterres, in particular his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and the New Agenda for Peace, which aim to strengthen the action of our Organization, equipping it to face the challenges of our times and ensuring a better future for succeeding

generations. Those initiatives, in addition to the reforms undertaken in the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council — with respect to which we reaffirm our full support for the African Common Position, as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration — contribute to strengthening the role of the United Nations and multilateralism in general by encouraging an inclusive, equitable approach to international cooperation.

In conclusion, we believe that a strong and equitable multilateralism is indispensable for addressing common challenges, finding collective solutions and building a better future for current and succeeding generations. To that end, the United Nations remains the most effective, efficient and appropriate framework for cooperation and the platform for multilateral action par excellence for achieving those new objectives.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

**Ms. Mrad** (Lebanon) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate Russia on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April, and I commend it for the convening today's open debate of the Security Council, presided over by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on a key issue, at a time when the rules-based multilateral system continues to be undermined.

Nevertheless, despite the imperfections of that system, it must remain our preferred framework, because none of us alone can deal with the multitude of global and often existential challenges we face, including armed conflicts, pandemics, food insecurity and the climate emergency, to name but a few. However, as the Secretary-General reminded us in 2020 at the height of the pandemic, it is not enough to proclaim the virtues of multilateralism; we must continue to show its added value, and international cooperation must adapt to changing times. That international cooperation must be more agile, effective and inclusive, so that we can be better prepared and respond to the global challenges that affect the peoples of the world and ultimately prevent many more from arising.

In that regard, the Charter of the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of multilateralism. Lebanon therefore supports any institutional reforms aimed at increasing the credibility of the United Nations and reducing the mistrust — which is often

justifiable — towards international institutions. In that regard, I would like to reaffirm Lebanon's support for the Secretary-General's efforts, as proposed in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), to adapt the United Nations to this new era. That is also reflected in the New Agenda for Peace.

As we are now in a multipolar world, governance institutions must be more representative and democratic, which of course applies to the Security Council. Lebanon therefore continues to support the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Council, on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and on other matters related to the Security Council, and we reaffirm the position of the Group of Arab States in that regard. Lebanon has also subscribed to several initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability with respect to the use of the veto. In that context, we support two complementary initiatives: the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct, regarding the Council not voting against any credible draft resolution aimed at preventing or deterring mass atrocity crimes; and the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in the case of mass atrocities. Last year, Lebanon also co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council".

Finally, it remains important to ensure the harmonious and coherent implementation of our international obligations and to abandon selective approaches. For Lebanon, a small State and a founding Member of the United Nations, multilateralism is a shield, and just as it was vital for my country when it went through its previous conflicts, it remains vital in the face of today's crises. An international order based on the rule of law and respect for it therefore cannot be optional and must act as a necessary vehicle for international peace, stability and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

**Mr. Rae** (Canada): Canada supports the theme chosen for today's open debate — "Effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". However, the concept note (see S/2023/244) prepared by the Russian Federation is what George Orwell would have called a deliberate exercise in doublethink. The Russian

Federation, in fact, holds two completely contradictory beliefs in its mind at the same time. It believes that it is a faithful defender of the principles of the Charter, and it also believes it is a guarantor of a new system built on those principles. At the same time, by its actions, it shows that it actually believes that it can tear those very principles to shreds wherever and whenever it pleases — whether in Ukraine, Syria or in Russia itself, against its very own people. The Russian Federation operates as if it is above the law. I cannot imagine anything more unilateral than that. But none of us are above the law. The arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court for the massive forced deportation of Ukrainian children are a clear demonstration of that fact. We are on several other paths now to hold Russia accountable for its violations of international law in Ukraine, and we will pursue them with great determination.

We believe that Russia must also be held accountable for peddling disinformation on a daily basis, and even lies here at the United Nations. In the concept note prepared for today's debate, Russia tells us that we are facing a

"steep deterioration of the situation in the area of global security caused by the desire to review the balance and ignore other States' security concerns." (S/2023/244, p. 3)

The concept note goes on to say that some countries are

"imposing the 'might is right' principle ... [and that any attempts to resolve conflicts] should proceed from the principles of equality [and that] [t]he principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter, remains crucial." (*ibid.*, pp.2,3)

What is the reality? The reality is quite different. The world would not be facing such a steep deterioration in global security had not Russia launched a full-scale invasion and war of aggression against its sovereign independent neighbour Ukraine. Russia protests the imposition of the "might is right" principle. Yet it is doing just that in Ukraine. What could more easily describe what is taking place in Ukraine than a decision by a powerful neighbour to attack its neighbour? Fortunately, Ukraine has continued to defend itself with the support of many partners, something that is in fact envisaged under Article 51 of the Charter, which specifically grants nations the right to defend themselves and other countries the right to help a nation



that is defending itself. Russia also calls on us all to “reject all neocolonial manifestations” (*ibid.*, p.3). But I would encourage Council members to actually read the speeches given by President Putin, in which he says that he sees no distinction between Ukraine and Russia and that in fact he refuses to recognize the sovereignty of Ukraine. Hence the illegal annexation of more Ukrainian territory, the pummelling of Ukrainian cities by daily bombardment and the rounding up, forcible deportation and “re-education” of tens of thousands of Ukrainian children.

(spoke in French)

Russia also accuses others of ignoring the security concerns of States as it pursues an expansionist and revisionist policy throughout the world. It has suspended or reneged on key disarmament agreements. It openly threatens to use nuclear weapons while undermining nuclear safety and security in Ukraine.

If there is a single country that is mainly responsible for ignoring the security concerns of other States, it is the Russian Federation. If there is one country that has most flagrantly violated the Charter, it is the Russian Federation. And if there is one country that has done the most to compromise the Security Council, it is the Russian Federation. Russia maintains that we must not undermine the Council’s prerogative or its central role in the maintenance of peace and security. The Charter does indeed clearly say that the Security Council’s role is central. But what the Russian Federation conveniently fails to mention is the fact that it has used its right of veto to block action to maintain international peace and security more often than any other permanent member. In essence, it is Russia’s abuse of this organ and its right of veto that has seriously undermined the credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council.

(spoke in English)

In addition to the staggering costs of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine for the country and its people, we need to understand — as many speakers have said today — that Russia’s actions are costing the wider world even more dearly. We all know that food and energy prices have spiked. Global markets have been rattled. Countries are facing deeper and greater debts. Those impacts have affected the most vulnerable in many countries around the world, many of whom were already struggling with the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. Of course, we all recognize that every one of us has do more to support countries that

are grappling with economic hardship, the effects of climate change, fragility, conflict and growing humanitarian and development needs. Many of those issues predate Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, even if they have been exacerbated and compounded by the invasion. They are also symptoms of deeper issues that require serious reform to make the multilateral system more equitable and effective.

But for heaven’s sake, we have to recognize that when we read the Charter, we must read the whole document. We cannot just selectively cite one paragraph or another. We must read every article and understand the document as a whole. Then, lo and behold, we will find that the Charter embraces human rights. It embraces gender equality. It especially embraces the need for social solidarity and economic development. The Charter is much, much more than a simple celebration of national sovereignty. We should never limit our ability to create new institutions to meet new threats and challenges, and that is exactly what we have all done since 1945. The Charter is not a straitjacket that is intended to stop us from addressing pressing issues. If I may borrow a phrase, Canada considers the Charter to be a living tree — a living document — whose principles are clear and whose vitality depends on our common and good-faith commitment to renewal.

In short, our sense of the Charter and multilateralism is very different from that of the Russian Federation as demonstrated by its conduct over the past year. We believe firmly in rules that apply to each and every one of us, including ourselves. We believe in human dignity and equality. We believe those values must be advanced by national, regional and international instruments and institutions. We do not think that the world stopped in 1945. We have no nostalgia for a world that is divided up into spheres of influence or power blocs. Above all, we want to keep building a United Nations that will deal with the challenges of today and tomorrow. And yes, we unabashedly believe that “We the peoples of the United Nations”, in the stirring words at the very beginning of the Charter, are every bit as important as States themselves.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

**Mr. Rybakov** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Russian presidency for convening this Security Council meeting on an extremely timely subject.

Today we are all witnessing a global political, social and economic transformation — a transition towards a multipolar world order. It is not easy to give up the privileges that we have assumed and accept current realities. In the struggle to preserve a unipolar world order and its structured monopoly, we are seeing an entire arsenal deployed of political, economic and security instruments such as sanctions, the incitement of political, social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural unrest and the intentional destabilization of entire regions' security. The unilateral coercive measures instituted against more than 30 sovereign States, whose implementation is in violation of all norms of international law, have negatively affected the quality of life of more than one third of humankind. Sanctions are a modern form of neocolonialism. Sanctions have essentially become an everyday tool used by Washington and its satellites to exert pressure on countries that have their own opinions and that they find unsatisfactory. Belarus has never initiated any restrictions to cooperation with the United States or the European Union. In violation of all norms of international law, political, trade, financial and other sanctions have been imposed on our country, which limits the development of ordinary people. Despite that unprecedented external pressure, Belarus is open to returning to normal relations with all countries in all areas, but not at the expense of its national interests and values.

Today the future of multilateral cooperation and the role of the United Nations are at stake. Throughout its history, the Organization has been successful in several areas. But now, more than ever before, the world needs a platform for true multilateral cooperation based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for all the legitimate concerns of States as they pertain to issues related to security and development.

Achieving the goals of the Charter of the United Nations remains difficult. Here are just a few of the reasons for that grim reality — the attempts of some countries to ignore the goals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, or even to replace them with a set of so-called rules that are unknown to the majority of States and imposed solely to serve their own interests; selective approaches to the implementation of the norms of international law or their arbitrary interpretation; the failure to comply with obligations under international agreements and treaties to which

the members of the international community are parties, including on the basis of claims of exclusivity; the revival of bloc mentality and the opposition to the emergence of a multipolar world. True multilateralism is not possible without dialogue and compromise that take into account the interests of all parties concerned. Therein lies the value of consensus-based decision-making.

In the light of the statements made by some partners about the need — and in some cases the demand — to reconsider traditional forms of seeking mutually acceptable solutions, the proposal issued a few days ago by the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism is particularly worrisome. It relates to the possibility of redefining or even abandoning the notion of consensus. According to the proposal,

“consensus is extremely ineffective and unjust, allowing a small number of States to block actions that are clearly needed to address issues of global concern”.

We strongly reject that approach. In that regard, we recall the principle of sovereign equality, on which the Organization was founded, whereby the voice of every State is equally important. It is that principle that enables us to avoid dictating and imposing unacceptable decisions. Only with the consent of all concerned will any initiative be effective and equitable.

Multilateralism means taking collective action and making joint efforts to resolve common issues. We believe that the United Nations plays a key role in combating efforts to undermine multilateralism. The United Nations is the universal platform with the greatest legitimacy and normative capacity in an interdependent world to respond to challenges and threats, on the basis of dialogue, mutual understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, solidarity and consensus, in the interests of political and economic development, social progress, peace and security, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

**Mr. Hossain** (Bangladesh): I warmly congratulate Russia on its presidency of the Security Council for the month of April and thank the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation for organizing today's timely debate on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. We express our appreciation

to Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, for presiding over today's debate, and we also thank the Secretary-General for his insightful statement.

The world today is confronted with multiple complex and multidimensional challenges, such as climate change, conflict, post-coronavirus disease recovery, the preservation of biodiversity and the prevention of environmental pollution and the food, energy and financial crises. We believe that effective multilateralism, with the participation of all Member States and other relevant stakeholders, is the best solution for overcoming those multiple and interconnected challenges, inter alia, through upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Allow me to highlight a few points in that regard.

First, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain at the centre of effective multilateralism in resolving global conflicts and crises and promoting peace and security. The Constitution of Bangladesh includes obligations that are similar to those of the United Nations Charter in its unwavering commitment to international peace and security, based on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for international law. The Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was also an ardent supporter of multilateralism and a defender of the principles of the United Nations Charter. In his maiden speech delivered at the United Nations in 1974 (see A/PV.2243), he said that the United Nations remains the centre of hope for the future of the people in this world of sadness, misery and conflict.

Secondly, since Bangladesh's membership of the United Nations in 1974, we have been at the forefront of activities at the United Nations, including with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, which is a core pillar of the Charter of the United Nations. Today Bangladesh is the largest troop-and-police-contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and we therefore play a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Bangladesh-led flagship resolution on a culture of peace (General Assembly resolution 53/243) was adopted at the General Assembly in 1999 and was followed up every year by the adoption of a resolution on that theme to promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts, mutual respect and understanding and

international cooperation. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, is a flagbearer of effective multilateralism and a defender of the Charter of the United Nations. The country's humanity and courage in hosting more than 1.2 million Rohingyas, which saved the region from potential destabilization, also stems from her abiding commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, effective multilateralism must be re-energized and reinvigorated, including through visionary guidelines and a strategy for resolving potential future crises through global solidarity and cooperation. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which looks ahead to the next 25 years and represents the Secretary-General's vision on the future of global cooperation.

Fourthly and lastly, we are passing through a critical time, when the very notion of multilateralism is in question. It is imperative now — perhaps more than ever before — for the entire United Nations membership to unite and engage in upholding the Charter in its true spirit in order to address global realities and fulfil the aspirations of current and future generations. We must explore the opportunities for the innovative application of the Charter's principles. The Security Council has the primary responsibility in that regard and for safeguarding the interests of humankind to remain in peace. Bangladesh stands ready to do its part.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

**Mr. Pieris** (Sri Lanka): It has been said that the well-being of humankind and its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established, which we believe can be achieved only through effective multilateralism, based on foundational principles such as consultation, inclusion and solidarity. Seventy-eight years ago, the world came together to sign the Charter of the United Nations and save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Today, as the world faces one of the greatest challenges we have seen to the global peace architecture, the Charter is more significant than ever. In our quest for effective multilateralism and diplomacy for peace, we, the global community, reaffirm our unwavering commitment to multilateralism, respect for the rule of law and global governance.

Just as the world was beginning to heal from the extraordinary challenges posed by the pandemic, new conflicts have confronted us, bringing even more uncertain times. The aggression we are witnessing is not only a humanitarian catastrophe for those directly affected, but it is also seriously affecting the global community, especially the developing world. The founding fathers of this Organization established it with the purpose of maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and taking other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. They also wished to achieve international cooperation in order to resolve economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems and promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The political, military, economic, ecological, social and cultural environment in which the United Nations operates has changed considerably over the years and continues to evolve.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a primary objective of the Security Council, the principal organ of the United Nations for such action. I was pleased to hear the Secretary-General state his steadfast position this morning (see S/PV.9308) on the serious situation in the Sudan and other conflicts that threaten world peace. I believe it is apt here to recall the words of Emperor Haile Selassie, who was pleased to observe that

“The Charter of the United Nations expresses the noblest aspirations of man: the abjuration of force in the settlement of disputes between States; the assurance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; the safeguarding of international peace and security.” (A/PV.1229, para.5)

In addition to those initial goals of safeguarding peace, protecting human rights, establishing the framework for international justice and promoting economic and social progress, in the almost eight decades since its creation the United Nations has tackled new challenges, such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, pandemics, big data and climate change. It was former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who said that the basic building block of peace and security for all peoples is economic and social security, anchored in sustainable development. It is a key to solving all problems, he said. Why? Because it allows us to address all the great issues — poverty, climate, environment and political stability — as parts of the whole.

The question has been asked as to whether the Security Council can do more to ensure world peace and security. We have to be sensitive to what is currently happening to the United Nations system, where the political objectives and priorities of many modern States are undergoing large-scale qualitative changes. The world is in transition from a “cold peace” structure of international relations towards a new system of survival even at the cost of human values, and one that is repugnant to the principles of multilateralism. We need to respond to such changes effectively if we are to give life to *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the Summit of the Future, the New Agenda for Peace and a declaration for future generations.

It has been said that the world is in need of an encompassing, just and humane order under which the rights of all are preserved and peace and security are safeguarded. It is in our interest and crucial to our survival that we not lose sight of that goal. We appeal to all parties to all hostilities to act with restraint and resort to best practices in diplomacy with the aid of their multilateral partners, as peace is well within our grasp if we have the will to know where to look for it. The developing world needs peace as a matter of the utmost urgency.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

**Mr. Muhamad** (Malaysia): At the outset, I would like to thank Russia, as President of the Security Council, for convening today’s open debate. Malaysia would also like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his briefing (see S/PV.9308).

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The convening of this open debate is timely, as the world continues to be bitterly divided. Conflicts have proliferated and peace efforts have witnessed multiple failures. Suffering continues in places such as Palestine, Myanmar and Ukraine, to name but a few. Around the world there is growing hatred and mistrust, an increasing threat of extremism and terrorism, and the continued proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The United Nations came into existence 78 years ago, envisioned as a guardian of international peace and security, a promoter of human rights, a protector of international law and an engineer for socioeconomic advancement. As the Charter of the United Nations



stipulates, the common denominator is world peace. Yet the prevailing crises that we are witnessing today only confirm that multilateralism is tremendously threatened. To preserve the centrality of the United Nations as the bedrock of international cooperation, we need to defend and strengthen it to make it fit to confront increasingly complex global challenges. For those reasons, Malaysia firmly believes that it is in our collective interest to work together to uphold that system, which is based on our shared universal values. All of us Member States must remain united in our collective effort to uphold and respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in its Charter. We must intensify our dialogue and cooperation for the purpose of safeguarding those principles and multilateralism. As prescribed in the Charter, the United Nations has been and remains at the forefront of various international and multilateral efforts to combat challenges and maintain international peace and security.

Malaysia also reiterates its full support for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Leaders' Declaration on Upholding Multilateralism,

adopted at the thirty-eighth ASEAN Summit in 2021, and reaffirms its belief that regionalism and multilateralism are vital means for global cooperation. The strength and value of such systems lie in their rules-based nature and their inclusivity, transparency and openness, based on mutual benefit and respect. In our view, the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and its recommendations set forth the right visions and strategies for ensuring that the multilateral system can work in a coordinated manner in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It presents an opportunity for Member States to cooperate more effectively through common global platforms.

Malaysia has always premised its foreign policy on constructive cooperation through multilateralism. In that regard, we will continue to work closely with all stakeholders through positive participation in various multilateral forums.

*The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.*