



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

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

Thursday, 15 November 2018, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

## Agenda item 117

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

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

##### Report of the Fifth Committee (A/73/481)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In paragraph 6 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019: Mr. Yves Éric Ahoussoubemey (Benin), Mr. Amjad Qaid Al Kumaim (Yemen), Mr. Makiese Kinkela Augusto (Angola), Mr Ihor Humennyi (Ukraine) and Mr. Conrod Hunte (Antigua and Barbuda).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint those persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019?

*It was so decided.*

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

##### Report of the Fifth Committee (A/73/483)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In paragraph 4 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019: Mr. Syed Yawar Ali (Pakistan), Mr. Robert Ngei Mule (Kenya), Mr. Toshiro Ozawa (Japan), Mr. Tõnis Saar (Estonia) and Mr. Brett Dennis Schaefer (United States of America).

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint those persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019?

*It was so decided.*

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

##### Report of the Fifth Committee (A/73/484)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In paragraph 4 of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General of Ms. Keiko Honda (Japan) as a regular member of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General

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of Ms. Keiko Honda as a regular member of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019?

*It was so decided.*

**(d) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/73/485)**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In paragraph 8 (a) of its report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly appoint the following persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019: Mr. Andrew Gbebay Bangali (Sierra Leone), Ms. Marie-Françoise Bechtel (France), Ms. Carleen Gardner (Jamaica), Mr. Ali Kurer (Libya) and Mr. Bogusław Winid of Poland.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint those persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In paragraph 8 (b) of the same report, the Fifth Committee also recommends that the General Assembly designate Mr. Larbi Djacta (Algeria) as Chair of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to designate Mr. Larbi Djacta as Chair of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2019?

*It was so decided.*

**(f) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/479 and A/73/479/Corr.1)**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): As indicated in document A/73/479, the General Assembly is required, during its current session, to appoint one member of the Joint Inspection Unit to fill the vacancy that will result from the expiration of the term of office on 31 December 2019 of Ms. Keiko Kamioka (Japan).

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the

General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of countries, or in this case one country, which will be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit. As further indicated in document A/73/479, the General Assembly, by its resolution 61/238 of 22 December 2006, decided that, beginning on 1 January 2008, the President of the General Assembly, when drawing up a list of countries that will be requested to propose candidates, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, will invite Member States to submit the names of the countries and their respective candidates simultaneously, on the understanding that the candidates submitted are the candidates that the respective Member States intend to propose, to the extent possible, for appointment by the General Assembly, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute.

After holding the necessary consultations, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the information received from the Chair of the Group of Asia-Pacific States that the Group has endorsed Japan to propose a candidate for the vacancy from among the Asia-Pacific States. In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit and in accordance with resolution 61/238, Japan will be requested to submit the name of a candidate and the curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate's relevant qualifications for the task.

I would like to remind Members that, in accordance with Assembly resolution 59/267 of 23 December 2004, the candidate should have experience in at least one of the following fields: oversight, audit, inspection, investigation, evaluation, finance, project evaluation, programme evaluation, human-resources management, management, public administration, monitoring and/or programme performance, as well as knowledge of the United Nations system and its role in international relations.

After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the President of the General Assembly will submit the name of the candidate to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-items (a), (b), (c), (d) and (f) of agenda item 117.

*The President took the Chair.*

## **Agenda items 122 and 123**

### **Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations**

#### **Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly**

**The President:** It is an honour for me to preside over the opening of the Assembly's discussion of its agenda item relating to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. Throughout almost three decades of deliberations, that process has sought to strengthen the authority, role and effectiveness of the Assembly and improve its methods of work. Today's debate comes at a very critical moment for multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. There is no question that for several reasons, doubts are being raised about the ability of the multilateral system to find solutions to the global challenges that confront us. While the challenges that we face are becoming more and more global, requiring multilateral solutions, we are witnessing trends towards unilateralism and isolation. However, it is also encouraging that those trends have led to some statements reaffirming multilateralism that are the strongest we have heard in decades.

I returned last night from the commemoration activities for the 1918 Armistice in Paris, at which the representation of the General Assembly as the parliament of the world was of symbolic importance. I bring messages of peace and reinforced support for multilateralism, as well as high expectations for the work of the Assembly, from Heads of State and Government who participated in the commemoration. The strong call by world leaders for a world order based on multilateralism during the general debate of the Assembly also signalled a reassuring commitment to reversing the negative tide. The record-breaking level of participation in that debate is further evidence of the renewed importance that world leaders attach to the centrality of the United Nations to multilateralism. With 126 delegations represented at the level of Heads of State and Government, it was the largest high-level event at United Nations Headquarters since the 2005 World Summit. For my part, I have taken it as a personal responsibility to uphold the values and importance of

the General Assembly, not only here in New York but in every one of my official engagements.

If we needed a new mandate for the serious revitalization of the General Assembly, the message could not have been stronger. The need to revitalize the Assembly — the most representative body and the chief deliberative authority of our Organization — is essential to our efforts to respond effectively to global challenges, and to leave no one behind in the quest to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The good news for us is that we do not have to start from scratch when it comes to revitalizing the work of the Assembly. Indeed, we have adopted many resolutions in previous sessions that have contributed to significant progress on the issue. We must build on the many achievements realized so far, including — and to mention only a few — the establishment of more transparent selection and appointment processes for both the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly; the introduction of an oath of office and code of ethics and other matters relating to the President's Office; the initiation of morning dialogues as a space for genuine and constructive debate among Permanent Representatives, for which I commend my immediate predecessor in the presidency of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák; the establishment of a clear time frame for electing members of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council; and the improvement of methods of work.

In that context I want to say that I am honoured to be the first President of the General Assembly to go through an interactive dialogue with Member States and other stakeholders that introduced further transparency and inclusivity into the selection process. I look forward to improving the informal dialogue for the selection of my successor, as already mandated by resolution 72/313, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", including through the establishment of guidelines for informal interactive dialogue. We also look forward to seeing more female candidates for the position of President, as I am only the fourth woman to occupy that prestigious position out of the 73 Presidents we have had since the establishment of the United Nations.

These achievements have been made possible thanks to the constructive engagement of Member States and the commitment of the co-Chairs of the process. I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Ambassadors Drobnjak of Croatia and Mejía Vélez

of Colombia for their dedicated work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during its seventy-second session. I am confident that the Assembly will give its full support to the newly appointed co-Chairs, Ambassadors Bahous of Jordan and Mlynár of Slovakia. However, despite the progress that has been made, we still have room for further improvements in the way we do business in the Assembly. I would like to point out some areas of possible progress.

First, the general debate must preserve its primacy and pre-eminence as a unique forum for world leaders to discuss the world's most pressing issues. In that regard, we have to make sure that parallel activities do not overshadow the debate itself. Member States have expressed concern about the huge number of events that were held during this most recent general debate. Six high-level meetings and some 560 other meetings were convened by regional and other political groups, individual Member States and the United Nations system itself, which is a record, totalling more than 600 events. But we have to ask ourselves if that really is productive and fulfils the role of the General Assembly as a space for dialogue and deliberation on world affairs at the highest level. For the seventy-fourth session, we are already struggling with the dates and organizational arrangements for the already extremely busy first week, with many parallel mandated events. We must address that issue collectively within a specified time frame, as part of the revitalization process.

Secondly, we should look at the possibilities for further streamlining our agenda so that we can dedicate more time for holding genuine dialogue, reviewing the implementation of resolutions and strengthening their quality and effectiveness. Addressing the issue of the growing number of agenda items and resolutions, as well as their length and the consequent lengthening of negotiation processes, must be part of that dialogue and engagement. In that context, I would like to applaud Guyana's leadership in taking the decision to remove item 16 as a stand-alone item from this session's agenda, which should inspire us all and generate momentum towards further streamlining our work.

The problem of our multiple and overlapping events and issues must be addressed through a process of aligning the agendas of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly's subsidiary bodies, especially the Second and Third Committees, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. I call on Member States to work hard on that process in order to address the gaps and duplications in our various agendas and make sure that we deliver effectively and efficiently for the people we are here to serve.

Thirdly, in the context of strengthening the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of my Office, I would like to reiterate my commitment to ensuring the continuity of the best practices of my predecessors, including in terms of disclosure relating to financing, staffing and the travel details of my Office. I am building on the practice of coordinating closely with the main bodies of the United Nations, including through meetings and sharing summaries of the monthly discussions with the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. I am also working to ensure close and regular collaboration with the Secretary-General.

Furthermore, I am committed to making better use of the General Committee's potential in our efforts to further improve our agenda and the way we deliver on it. The Office of the President has already had a distinct impact on the way we communicate, and we plan to further strengthen communication so as to ensure that the people of the world understand and support our work and outcomes. As far as my convening power is concerned, I will strive to contribute to further rationalizing the number of high-level meetings and thematic debates. I will therefore focus on meetings and events that are already mandated in order to contribute in the areas that are defined in my priorities for the session, while limiting the number of new initiatives.

I trust that during the current session, Member States will continue their consideration of possible ways to further strengthen the institutional memory of the Office of the President. We will have the opportunity to provide the necessary information for the Assembly's consideration in order to address the challenges related to the lack of preparation time for the new President, who assumes the presidency only a few days before the beginning of the general debate, as well as issues such as staffing and the mobilization of the funding needed to ensure that the growing numbers of mandates have the sustainable and predictable resources that accomplishing them requires.

Let me conclude with a call for a stronger political commitment on the part of all Member States so that we can come up with bold and creative ways to make the



General Assembly relevant to all people. We have no choice if we want to safeguard the values, institutions and practices that are our only guarantee for a safe, secure and prosperous world.

**Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), one of the largest cross-regional groups, consisting of 120 member States. At the outset, let me say that all ceremonial protocol, including expressions of appreciation to the co-Chairs and the President of the General Assembly, is hereby respected.

We would like to reiterate that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. A reinvigorated Assembly will contribute significantly to strengthening the wider United Nations system, improving international governance and enhancing multilateralism. A thorough evaluation of the status of General Assembly resolutions and the ability to clearly identify the causes underlying anything lacking in their implementation are crucial to ensuring that we can make progress in eliminating the constraints that still prevent the process of revitalizing the Assembly from realizing its full potential.

We agree fully with the letter and spirit of the consensus resolutions 69/321, 70/305, 71/323 and 72/313, which form the cornerstones of the ongoing United Nations reform process. In that regard, the Movement would like to recall the decision in paragraph 4 of resolution 68/307, as well as in the four resolutions just mentioned, on continuing the comprehensive review of the inventory of resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the status of their implementation. Today we want to underline the following points.

First, with regard to the Secretary-General's selection and appointment, the process should continue to be transparent, democratic and inclusive of all Member States so as to enable the General Assembly to participate in it effectively and efficiently. NAM is proud to recall the role played by the Assembly under Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations and our consensus resolutions 69/321, 70/305, 71/323 and 72/313. While we welcome the signing of the joint letter by which the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council formally launch the beginning of the process, it is NAM's clear understanding that regardless of the stage that has been reached in the presentation

of the candidates, the new procedure, as outlined in that joint letter, will remain the main framework to be strictly adhered to in future selection and appointment processes. We call on the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to continue to hold timely informal meetings for an exchange of views with the candidates presented by Member States.

In that regard, NAM emphasizes the importance of providing the selection and appointment process for the position of Secretary-General with clear timelines, based on resolution 69/321, that include the issuing of the aforementioned joint letter covering the submission of candidates, the completion of the General Assembly's hearings for all candidates, and the Security Council's selection process, followed by the Assembly's adoption of a resolution on the appointment. NAM calls on the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to work in close consultation with Member States on those timelines. We strongly believe that in order to ensure a smooth and efficient transition, the Secretary-General should be appointed as early as possible, preferably no later than a month before the date on which the term of the outgoing Secretary-General expires. We welcome further discussion in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly of all the options regarding the duration of the appointment and renewability of the term of office of the Secretary-General.

NAM would like to highlight the discussion that was held in the Ad Hoc Working Group emphasizing the desirability of having the Security Council consider providing a plurality of candidates to the General Assembly for future appointments of the Secretary-General, and we emphasize the need to continue that discussion on the appointment process. We encourage increased openness during that selection and appointment process and invite the President of the Security Council to announce the results of straw polls in a timely manner, while giving priority to Member States. NAM stresses once again that it has no intention of calling into question the confidentiality of the straw-poll process because it deals with the results. We also believe, as suggested in the 2011 report (A/66/234) of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), that prevailing practices followed in the election of executive heads in other United Nations system organizations might also be suitable for the appointment of the Secretary-General. We therefore recommend considering existing practices. NAM also calls on the Joint Inspection Unit

to include in its work programme the preparation of analyses and recommendations on the selection and appointment of executive heads and senior managers in the United Nations system. We would also like to draw attention to the issue of promises being made by candidates in exchange for the support of the permanent members of the Security Council, which is also described in the 2011 JIU report.

We welcome the significant number of women proposed as candidates to subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly in its efforts to promote gender balance, as stipulated in paragraph 44 of resolution 71/323 and paragraph 32 of resolution 72/313, and we encourage Member States to continue to propose women candidates. We reiterate that the process of the General Assembly's appointment of the Secretary-General should be carried out in full compliance with the Assembly's mandate. That includes the timely submission of the relevant draft resolution, which should be preceded by wide and extensive consultations with all Member States, as well as ensuring that the action of the General Assembly on the recommendation made by the Security Council is in full and strict conformity with rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, including voting by secret ballot.

NAM welcomes the collaboration between the General Assembly and the Security Council — on the launch of the process and the circulation of information on the candidates nominated — that emerged during the selection of our present Secretary-General, and encourages the Security Council and the General Assembly to improve their interaction at every stage of the process so as to further enhance transparency. Bearing in mind the importance of the best practices and lessons learned from the latest selection and appointment process, NAM is of the view that the Ad Hoc Working Group should consider compiling a compendium of best practices for future reference. We have noted the request sent by the Secretariat to all Member States encouraging them to nominate candidates in order to supplement the search for the new Secretary-General and to ensure a wide pool of candidates for positions at the Under-Secretary-General level, as well as welcoming the nomination of women candidates. In that regard, NAM stresses the need to ensure that information on positions available at the level of Under-Secretary-General and other senior posts is circulated earlier and more broadly to the wider membership. Due regard should continue to be given

to regional and geographical rotation and to gender equality, as stipulated in paragraph 59 of resolutions 51/241, 69/321, 70/305 and 71/323. NAM encourages efforts to improve the selection of executive heads and enhance the transparency, inclusivity and credibility of the process, including by conducting interactive meetings with candidates running for those posts, where applicable.

Secondly, with regard to strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, NAM finds it encouraging that an oath of office and a code of ethics for the President of the General Assembly have been adopted for the first time in the Assembly's history. The expansion of the Assembly's activities has made the President's presence and active participation essential all year long. We also reiterate the need to assign additional permanent posts to the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and we appreciate the concrete support that some Member States have given the Office of the President of the General Assembly by seconding staffers to it from their own Missions. NAM also considers it very important to ensure successful annual transitions between the outgoing and incoming Presidents of the Assembly, and supports the process whereby outgoing Presidents brief their successors on lessons learned and best practices. NAM supports an effective and genuine strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, as well as the allocation of sufficient human and financial resources to the Office from the regular budget of the United Nations.

Thirdly, with regard to the role and authority of the General Assembly, NAM reaffirms that working methods are only one step on the way to more substantive improvements aimed at restoring and enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly. We also affirm the importance of preserving the intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic nature of the United Nations and of ensuring that Member States consult with the Organization. NAM emphasizes the need for strict respect on the part of Member States for the Charter-based prerogatives of the United Nations principal organs, particularly the General Assembly. We also support the initiative aimed at ensuring proper implementation of the Charter with respect to the functional relationship between its main organs, especially the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We welcome the

establishment of a standing mechanism for dialogue between the Permanent Missions and the Secretariat within the framework of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and look forward to continuing discussions within that framework.

Lastly, concerning the working methods of the General Assembly, we welcome paragraph 58 of resolution 72/313, which notes with appreciation the changes to the format, production and editing of the *Journal of the United Nations*, and requests the Secretariat to continue improving the *Journal* in accordance with the requirements provided in paragraph 51 of resolution 71/323. We also welcome paragraph 52 of resolution 72/313 and paragraphs 47 and 48 of resolution 71/323, on the subject of communicating the names of candidates for election to the Secretariat, where possible, at least 48 hours prior to an election, as well as printing their names on the ballot papers, and the decision that on election day, the campaign materials in the General Assembly Hall or the Committee meeting room should be limited to a single page of information about the candidates.

In seeking to further improve the efficiency of the work of the General Assembly, we strongly believe that certain draft resolutions should be considered on a biennial or triennial cycle, with the clear consent of the sponsoring State or States, while bearing in mind the relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group, as stipulated in paragraph 27 of resolution 72/313. NAM would like to recall here that the Assembly has encouraged the Main Committees to continue considering and making proposals on their working methods during the current session. In that connection, NAM reiterates the intergovernmental and inclusive nature of those discussions on working methods, which must engage all delegations. NAM continues to stress that more time should be devoted to negotiations on the draft resolution on the topic. Last year's resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (resolution 72/313) was adopted by consensus, as we know. However, we continue to insist that greater flexibility should be the rule for all Member States during the next round of negotiations, because consensus means compromise on the part of all Member States.

The Non-Aligned Movement calls for appropriate measures aimed at enhancing public awareness of the role and activities of the General Assembly and

encouraging the media to report on the Assembly's work. We welcomed paragraph 40 of resolution 72/313, which decided to continue to consider ways to rationalize the number of side events held during the high-level segment of the general debate. That involves strengthening the coordination of the revitalization process with the work of the Committee on Conferences. We should also take a closer look at the arrangements for holding debates in the General Assembly and the Security Council and their follow-up, given the number of participating delegations. We also propose holding briefings, as necessary, with the Chairs of the Main Committees, as well as a meeting with the Secretary-General. And NAM calls for better monitoring of the implementation of past resolutions.

Before concluding, we would like to emphasize once more the need to review rule 155 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, on the composition of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), taking into consideration the principles of efficiency and equitable geographical representation. In that context, NAM made an initial proposal, amended by the co-Chairs, which NAM accepted as an alternative proposal. Its objective is a review of ACABQ's composition, which is not currently in accord with the principle of equitable geographical representation. We would like to emphasize that its composition has been reviewed three times in an effort to compensate for an evolving situation. The main criterion that is involved in achieving that objective is the growing number of Member States in the United Nations, given the fact that 46 new Member States have joined the United Nations since the most recent decision was taken on the issue, in 1977 (resolution 32/103). That proposal was unfortunately rejected by certain Member States during negotiations on resolution 72/313. In the light of that, and given the political nature of the issue, in the next few weeks NAM has decided to submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution similar to resolutions adopted in 1961 (1659 (XVI)), 1971 (2798 (XXVI)) and 1977 (32/103), whose main objective is ensuring adherence to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its commitment to continuing to contribute effectively and constructively to the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We hope to see a similar approach from other delegations and would like to remind the

Assembly that we speak on behalf of 120 United Nations Member States. In addition, NAM stands ready to cooperate with the co-Chairs, whom we congratulate on their new appointment, as well as with you, Madam President, and Secretary-General António Guterres, with a view to strengthening the role of the General Assembly as our chief deliberative policymaking organ. We will continue to provide support to efforts to achieve inclusiveness, transparency and efficiency in the United Nations.

**Ms. Tang** (Singapore): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement just delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We would like to express our appreciation to the previous session's co-Chairs, Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnyak of Croatia and María Emma Mejía Vélez of Colombia. We particularly thank Ambassador Drobnyak for his contributions to the revitalization process over the past five years. ASEAN would also like to congratulate Ambassadors Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan and Michal Mlynár of Slovakia on their appointment as co-Chairs for the present session. We are confident that they will successfully steer the process forward.

ASEAN has been a strong supporter of multilateralism and the United Nations. We have consistently championed a more efficient, effective and accountable Organization. The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, is a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. It is imperative that the United Nations and the General Assembly remain nimble and responsive so as to be able to effectively address evolving challenges. ASEAN recognizes the significant progress that has been made in recent years and welcomes the adoption of resolution 72/313. Nevertheless, the revitalization of the Assembly is an ongoing process. We cannot afford to lose momentum, especially as the pace of work in the United Nations speeds up. In that connection ASEAN would like to make the following points.

First, we welcome the improvements in the selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General, which have brought about a new standard of openness and transparency aimed at ensuring the selection of

the best candidate for that very important position. But more can be done. In addition, we reiterate that the improvements to the selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General must also extend to all other senior appointments within the United Nations. ASEAN calls on the Secretary-General to make appointments based on merit while taking into account gender and geographical balance.

Secondly, ASEAN appreciates the efforts to strengthen the Office of the President of the General Assembly. One particularly useful improvement in its institutional memory has been the outgoing President's handover reports, which provide a useful summary of the Office's accomplishments and offer the incoming President pragmatic recommendations. ASEAN notes that one recommendation in resolution 72/313 is that the process of the election of the President of the General Assembly should be further clarified. We are glad that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly will consider that question during its current session.

Thirdly, as a regional grouping that greatly values consensus and dialogue, ASEAN appreciates the morning-dialogues initiative launched by the President of the Assembly at its previous session. The dialogues provided a setting that enabled Permanent Representatives to exchange views candidly, contributing significantly to the Assembly's work. We encourage their continuation and welcome your intention, Madam President, to convene "morning *mingas*".

Fourthly, ASEAN welcomes the improvements made in the working methods of the General Assembly, including in the election process, such as improvements to ballot papers that have significantly reduced the number of invalid ballot papers. We are also pleased that campaign materials distributed on the day of elections have generally conformed to the Assembly's decisions. ASEAN supports further work on the potential concept and scope of guidelines for election campaigns. Such guidelines should not disadvantage any Member State but should rather focus on enhancing transparency and equity, as well as providing a collectively agreed set of parameters designed to ensure that campaigning does not turn into a race to the bottom.

I would now like to add a few points in my national capacity. First, Singapore supports efforts to utilize the General Committee more effectively. We note that resolution 72/313 contains several references to the role



of the General Committee, including the consideration of ways to decrease the number of high-level events held during the general debate. The President's synopsis of the recent high-level week notes that the primacy of the general debate cannot be preserved without making sure that parallel activities are managed rationally. In our view, that is a matter that the General Committee should consider seriously.

Secondly, Singapore is of the view that more consideration should be invested in scheduling the meetings of the General Assembly. Two concrete examples come to mind. One is the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. The debate on that report is regularly scheduled for early October. Since at that point the general debate has only just taken place, the debate in the Assembly on the report must inevitably be duplicative. My second point concerns the report of the Security Council, which is mandated under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. This year the Security Council adopted its annual report (S/2018/797) on 30 August (see S/PV.8335). The report was formally circulated to Member States on 11 September, and the debate in the General Assembly was scheduled on 12 September. The timing of these debates should be reconsidered so that discussions of those important reports are not conducted in a perfunctory and rushed manner. We think that the General Committee may also be a suitable platform for discussing that issue.

Finally, Singapore welcomes the continuing discussion on the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly. That is important, as the continued proliferation of agenda items and high-level meetings can only lead to an unsustainable volume of work. On that note, we welcome Guyana's voluntary decision to remove agenda item 16 from the agenda of the Assembly at its seventy-third session. We hope that action will generate momentum towards further streamlining of the agenda. Quality must take precedence over quantity so that we can ensure the continued credibility and relevance of the United Nations.

**Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): In my national capacity, I share the pleasure that you expressed this morning, Madam President, about the fact that you are presiding over this meeting on the progress in the revitalization process of the work of the General Assembly.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group (ACT), a cross-regional group made up of the following 25 small and mid-sized countries seeking to improve the working methods of the Security Council: Austria, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and my own country, Costa Rica.

We would first like to thank you, Madam President, for convening today's plenary meeting. We welcomed the adoption of resolution 72/313, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, and would like to thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and Ms. Maria Emma Mejía Vélez, former Permanent Representative of Colombia, for their excellent work, creativity and dedication. We would also like to welcome the newly appointed co-Chairs, Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan, and Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, and wish them luck in their deliberations. The ACT group remains committed to strengthening the revitalization process and looks forward to working with you, Madam President, during the Ad Hoc Working Group's session next year. In that context, we would like to offer a few comments on the various subjects that the Working Group will be addressing.

Our first comment concerns the cluster dealing with the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General and other executive heads, as addressed in resolution 72/313. After the Ad Hoc Working Group's consensus agreement on resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, which dramatically improved the level of transparency in the process of selecting the Secretary-General, the natural next step would be to consolidate those achievements without delay. In that regard, the ACT group regrets that in the case of resolution 72/313, the Working Group was not able to reach a consensus on the wording with regard to the lessons-learned process following the most recent and genuinely historic selection of the Secretary-General. Nonetheless, we welcome the resolution's inclusion of language on regional rotation and gender balance in the

course of the identification and appointment of the best candidate for the post of Secretary-General. Moreover, we note with appreciation the language on the timeline for the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, based on resolution 69/321 and other relevant resolutions, since that represents a step towards a more inclusive and transparent selection process.

Secondly, with regard to the cluster dealing with the strengthening of the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, the ACT group reiterates the importance of empowering the President's Office, given the fact that the Assembly is the most inclusive and democratic organ of the Organization and that it is therefore crucial to provide the Office of its President with the independence and financial means it needs to carry out its responsibilities.

Thirdly, the ACT group also welcomes the fact that resolution 72/313 affirmed the principle that the *Journal of the United Nations* should provide an overview of all of the meetings taking place at the United Nations and outlined a number of benchmarks in that regard. That serves as a reminder, considering many States' perception that the *Journal* has become a less reliable and user-friendly source of information over time. In our view, that provision still needs to be better implemented, and we look forward to working closely with the Secretariat to further improve the *Journal*.

Lastly, as a group composed of small and medium-sized States, we welcome efforts aimed at helping to level the playing field in competitive elections, while at the same time we are realistic about the limitations of that exercise. The main challenge is undoubtedly the elections to the Security Council. The Assembly should offer platforms so that States can base their decision-making primarily on the track record and commitment of candidates.

With respect to the Security Council, the Charter of the United Nations defines the ability to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security as a criterion for membership. Of course, there are various ways to make such contributions. For example, some ACT members have decided to support only candidates that have subscribed to the ACT code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. A total of 118 States, both large and small and from all regions of the world, already subscribe to the code. That means that

nearly two thirds of Member States expect the Council to act to end and prevent atrocities, a testament to the power of the Assembly when it puts its political weight behind a cause. The ACT group encourages all States, members and non-members of the Security Council alike, to adhere to the ACT code of conduct and to implement it.

In conclusion, the ACT group is looking forward to the negotiations next year, and to participating constructively in the meetings of the Working Group and continuing to exchange views with other groups and delegations with a view to improving the functioning of the United Nations.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Christiane** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I thank you, Madam President, for convening today's plenary meeting. I would first like to congratulate Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan, and Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during its seventy-third session. We wish them the very best and express our support for the Group's upcoming work, with the hope that it will continue the progress made in the past sessions. We also express our sincere gratitude to the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and Ms. Maria Emma Mejía Vélez, former Permanent Representative of Colombia.

The recent resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly have made a significant contribution to a more efficient and effective Assembly. The adoption in September of resolution 72/313, however, also made it clear that consensus was unfortunately not possible on a number of issues, such as civil-society participation, the rationalization of the Assembly's agenda and the discussion of a code of conduct for all elections. On those and other issues

the European Union will continue to be guided by the language agreed on in previous resolutions. However, we are also concerned about the stalemate that we faced during the previous session on many important issues, and we certainly hope that this session's negotiations will be more constructive.

A strong General Assembly is now more essential than ever. Support for multilateralism and the global rules-based world order is not a given. An unceasing effort to find new and creative ways to work is vital if the international community is to achieve a more effective delivery of mandates and more sustainable use of resources. The revitalization of the work of the Assembly is therefore clearly fundamental to the overall reform of the United Nations. Focusing on the negotiations ahead of us, we believe that the emphasis of this session's draft resolution should be on consolidating the work achieved so far, and we remain committed to working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the working methods of the General Assembly, with a special focus on reducing overlap and duplication. I would like to assure the Assembly that the European Union and its member States will continue to engage in a constructive manner in the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

**Mr. Rybakov** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to say that all ceremonial protocol is hereby observed.

First of all, we align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Slovakia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We firmly believe that under their leadership the Working Group will once again be able to achieve substantive results in its work. We would also like to thank the representatives of Colombia and Croatia for their successful work in that regard.

Belarus has been a consistent advocate for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and its greater involvement in resolving the most pressing issues facing both the Organization and the international community as a whole. Every year we draw attention to the importance of optimizing the Assembly's agenda, something that is in fact provided for in the Assembly's

rules of procedure. In the past few decades the volume of work in our Organization has grown massively, which in turn has increased the number of items on the Assembly's agenda, the number of resolutions and therefore of instructions to the Secretary-General to prepare reports in accordance with those resolutions. Our delegations, especially those that do not have large human resources and capacities, are simply not in a position to process the volume of information, and therefore run the risk of missing aspects that are important to them merely because of a simple lack of time and manpower.

In that connection, and in line with the guidelines for rationalizing the General Assembly's agenda, we propose that the agenda be reviewed and the possibility considered of reducing the number of agenda items by eliminating those that are outdated, along with a move to biennial or triennial cycles for resolutions. Such optimization must be implemented with a view to avoiding duplication in the work of the organs of the United Nations and the Assembly's Main Committees, ensuring a shift to a more extended work cycle and taking account of the views of all interested States as much as possible. Given the elements involved that task might seem unattainable, but the Working Group has already frequently demonstrated its ability to make unusual and groundbreaking decisions.

The issue of the enormous workload that delegations deal with during the high-level segment of the General Assembly has become ever more problematic. We end up with a situation — and it gets worse every year — where Heads of delegations are literally running from one event to another and sometimes still do not manage to speak at them. That diminishes the attendance at such events, reduces their practical value and has a negative impact on our ability to hold traditional bilateral meetings on the margins of the session. This situation is not acceptable, particularly considering the Assembly's shift towards a year-round working format, which has been going on for a long time now. In this situation, if we are to have a more balanced schedule for the high-level meetings throughout the year and adequate time for delegations, particularly where they involve high-level representatives, to plan their participation in them, including preparing their programmes, we believe it is essential to ensure that the General Assembly's requirements for conducting such events are fully met, which presupposes adopting resolutions on the modalities and formats for the holding of high-

level meetings. If not, we will be obliged to continue working in unpredictable conditions.

Another important area in the Working Group's activity is the modernization of the Secretariat's standard administrative procedures at United Nations Headquarters. To that end, two years ago we established a mechanism for informal cooperation between Permanent Missions of Member States and the Secretariat. Last year we decided that the mechanism should switch to operating on a regular basis. Regrettably, both this year and last, that dialogue was held only once. Holding such an informal dialogue once a year cannot be called regular. The experience with such dialogues demonstrates the huge interest in them on the part of delegations and clearly points to the deficiencies in the work of the Secretariat, most of which could be addressed without Member States having to resort to so-called emergency tools in the form of General Assembly resolutions.

A ton of questions have accumulated, starting with technical issues such as the institution of a ban on Member States parking in front of the Secretariat building without telling them and limiting the time for protocol services to receive visitors, and ending with the more serious problem in recent years represented by the Secretariat's practice of permitting and supporting the holding of events at United Nations Headquarters that clearly target other Member States without their consent. This kind of thing completely undermines the spirit of unity and cooperation at the United Nations and provokes animosity and confrontation.

We would also like to point out that as a founding Member State of the United Nations, Belarus has been a consistent advocate for multilateralism in international affairs. However, there is now a noticeable negative trend towards funding various areas of the work of the United Nations solely from extrabudgetary resources, which raises concerns about impartiality in financing the Organization's work and is a threat to that fundamental principle. The fact that nearly 90 per cent of the funding for some United Nations departments comes from Member States' voluntary contributions and not from the regular budget of the Organization raises even more concerns. For example, that applies to the Office of Counter-Terrorism, whose work Belarus is perfectly happy with in principle, but for which the percentage of voluntary funding is as high as 93 per cent. The United Nations should function based on its

regular budget with contributions from United Nations Member States and should not depend on sponsorship.

The General Assembly is the most representative body of the United Nations. For it to be able to work for the benefit of nations, it must be able to adapt to new world realities, eliminating red tape and improving creativity and trust. In that connection, we express the hope that the newly appointed co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group will make more active use of its own existing mechanism to address the tasks involved in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Suzil** (Maldives): My delegation would like to congratulate Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan, and Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We also want to thank Ambassadors María Emma Mejía Vélez, former Permanent Representative of Colombia, and Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, for their dedication and leadership in co-chairing the revitalization process at the previous session.

The General Assembly remains the only universal body and the most important forum for discussing the most pressing challenges facing the international community. The work of revitalization must therefore lead incrementally to the enhancement of the Assembly's ability to make a meaningful and positive difference in the lives of people in our countries. To that end, we noted with appreciation the steps that were taken during the previous session. We saw significant improvements in the work of the President of the General Assembly, and we are now seeing more transparency and accountability, including in the Office of the President. We hope to see a reinvigorated series of the dialogues held by the President last year that brought together small groups of Permanent Representatives and made space for genuine dialogue on important issues of relevance to the General Assembly. We also encourage the regular meetings between the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council aimed at helping the Assembly to make more informed decisions and necessary adjustments in shaping the work of the Assembly.

During the ongoing seventy-third session, we would like to see the issue of election campaigns in the Assembly on the agenda of the Working Group. As we



all know, campaigns have become more competitive and intense with each passing year. We have to find ways to ensure that elections are free and fair. We therefore believe that the same standards of transparency, fairness and accountability that we expect in our domestic elections must be observed here at the United Nations.

The other aspect that the Working Group should look into is the number of resolutions that the Assembly adopts and their implementation. Questions must be asked about the usefulness of adopting the same resolutions every year or every other year, and the usefulness of adopting more than one resolution on the same subject. There is room there for the Assembly to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

The Maldives believes in the promise of the United Nations and the beauty of multilateralism. We are making strides, but we can and should do more. We must ensure that every Member State in this Hall has an equal opportunity for its voice to be heard. We can and should do all we can to make the Organization more effective and efficient, so that the work we do here has a real impact at home. We can and should look at the various means and the many ways in which we, the international community, can make a difference.

**Mrs. Harqoos** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we should like to thank you, Madam President, for holding this meeting aimed at promoting the role of the General Assembly and rendering it more effective and efficient, in accordance with resolution 72/313, adopted by consensus in September. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Colombia for their efforts as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during its previous session. We also wish the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Slovakia every success as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the Assembly's current session.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and would like to make the following statement in our national capacity.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the decision of the President of the General Assembly to make the topic of revitalizing the United Nations, including the work of the General Assembly, a high priority, one

of the seven priorities defined for the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

In view of the significant increase in the activities of the President of the General Assembly in recent years, and because the United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of providing the necessary support to the Office of the President of the General Assembly so that the President can effectively carry out the mandate entrusted to her, my country has provided such support, including by seconding one of our Mission staff members to contribute to the work of the Office during this session. We look forward to further discussions on additional steps to be taken to support the Office during this session.

We were pleased to see that many important resolutions adopted at previous sessions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly have been translated into concrete action, including the holding for the first time of informal interactive dialogues with candidates for the position of President of the General Assembly. That contributed to the selection of the fourth woman to occupy that post. We look forward to similar practices in upcoming sessions.

We also commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure gender equality across the United Nations system. Gender equality was achieved for the first time in the Secretary-General's Senior Management Group, and we encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure equitable geographical distribution and gender balance across the United Nations system.

In view of that significant progress, the United Arab Emirates underscores the need to continuously promote the role, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly by streamlining the agenda of its Main Committees, improving their working methods and promoting the role of the President of the General Assembly and the President's Office. That includes strengthening the role of the General Assembly in the selection process of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, my delegation underscores that it is ready to cooperate and participate effectively in all efforts aimed at enhancing and revitalizing the role of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Hunter** (United States of America): The United States appreciates the leadership that Ambassador Drobnjak and Ambassador Mejía Vélez exhibited

as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. They facilitated a series of important discussions on a range of issues, including the General Assembly's working methods, the authority of the General Assembly, and the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Over the past 10 months they led the Working Group with an eye towards results, and because of that we find ourselves in a stronger position heading into 2019.

During the seventy-second session, the Ad Hoc Working Group continued to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the General Assembly. We look forward to future discussions on the conduct of election campaigns with the goal of improving the standards of transparency and equity, especially for smaller States without the resources to run robust campaigns. We believe that that will also improve the quality of elected members. We take that position as we note the success of the interactive dialogues of the candidates for the post of Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, and we welcome the expansion of that practice into other election forums, such as the Human Rights Council.

During the past year, the Secretary-General announced a number of key reforms across the United Nations system that the General Assembly has since unanimously endorsed, including the restructuring of the peace and security pillar of the United Nations, a new management architecture focused on greater effectiveness and accountability, and United Nations development system improvements. Those reforms aim to contribute to greater efficiency, transparency and the responsible use of resources. In that regard, the Secretary-General has set an example for our delegations as we contribute now to the General Assembly revitalization project. Indeed, many of the goals that the Secretary-General has been advancing are directly relevant to our work. Resolution 72/313, adopted by the General Assembly on 17 September, endorses the goal of improving the General Assembly's efficiency, streamlining its agenda and reducing overlap across the six Main Committees.

As a means of further increasing efficiency, the United States continues to support the move towards a biennial process for considering General Assembly resolutions. We think that rather than devoting so many hours to negotiating a draft resolution, we should instead be actually implementing it. That shift would

bring us closer to our goal of achieving a more effective and efficient General Assembly. We urge the Working Group to seriously consider that proposal.

We will continue to watch for suggestions or recommendations that contain financial implications as well. The United States remains opposed to any moves that increase budgetary costs to the United Nations and ultimately to Member States. That is informed by our strong commitment to the responsible stewardship of United States taxpayer dollars and a desire to maintain zero nominal growth in United Nations budgets.

We would also reiterate that the Working Group must remain focused on the main objective that the General Assembly has entrusted to us, namely, to strengthen the work of the General Assembly. We will continue to oppose efforts to redirect or markedly expand the scope of the Group's work.

The United States thanks all delegates who contributed to this past year's efforts and accomplishments, and we look forward to working with the Ad Hoc Working Group during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Akbaruddin (India):** I thank you, Madam President, for being here today and for setting the tone for the debate on the important issue of revitalizing the General Assembly.

India aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We would like to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Colombia for ably steering the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at the seventy-second session, and to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and the Slovak Republic on their appointment as co-Chairs for the current session. My delegation will give them its full support for a productive outcome.

The legitimacy of the General Assembly stems from its universality. It is our most inclusive forum, where States can come together on a basis of sovereign equality to share burdens, address common problems and take advantage of common opportunities. The principal purpose of the General Assembly is not to usurp the role of sovereign States but to enable all States to serve their peoples better by working together. No other global institution can match the Assembly's

representative character and the credibility that it derives from such representativeness.

Let us not forget that at the outset, the General Assembly demonstrated leadership in setting the global agenda while dealing with complex challenges. The first issue that the General Assembly addressed at its first session in January 1946 was related to the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy. The first resolution that the General Assembly adopted (resolution 1(I)), Madam President, on the basis of the report submitted by your compatriot, Mr. Viteri Lafronte of Ecuador, called for a commission to make recommendations, among other things, for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.

That same year, 1946, the General Assembly, acting on the basis of an initiative put forward by my country, India, started addressing the global struggle for the equality of opportunity for all races in order to counter the doctrine of racial discrimination then germinating in South Africa. Those examples testify to the ambition and far-sighted nature of the deliberations of the General Assembly, years before any other organ of the United Nations started tackling them. Since that formative period, the General Assembly can count many agenda-setting achievements on issues ranging from sustainable development to climate change, oceans, global health and migration.

However, we have to acknowledge that our collective record as the General Assembly is mixed. Just as generals too often refight their previous wars, we diplomats find ourselves struggling to overcome our legacy issues, even as the variety and intricacy of new demands for international cooperation have expanded. Today there is a proliferation of new transnational threats, such as terrorism, which requires comprehensive cooperation; accelerating technological change, which requires broad norm-setting; and worsening environmental degradation, which requires immediate climate action. The challenges we face have become stark. Yet we have tended to muddle along, holding meetings, taking some minor stabs at enhancing international cooperation at the margins and becoming guardians of the status quo. Our inertia is considerable, even when it is clear that collective action is required. We steer clear of action, pleading that consensus is required in order for change to occur.

Global cooperation and integration have been critical to the impressive expansion of well-being and opportunities that we have witnessed over the past 70 years. Proliferating global problems demand new narratives. If the General Assembly is not delivering all that we want, the solution is not to give up on it. Rather we must make it deliver results for today.

The General Assembly is empowered to discuss any matter within the scope of the Charter of the United Nations, thus assuming the role of the global conscience, where public opinion is focused as an effective force. That opens a vast range of opportunities for all of us. The General Assembly provides venues for addressing issues. It provides platforms for agreeing on the common rules of the game, and channels for exchanging ideas, experiences and practices so that countries can learn from one another. Decision-making in the General Assembly is not a threat to sovereignty. It is an expression of sovereign equality and an opportunity for all to influence global problem-solving.

The world is awash in new challenges. However, in order to make an effective difference, we must undertake a new journey that should begin soon. Less than two years from now, we will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. Perhaps that will provide all of us with an opportunity that can catalyse our efforts to rejuvenate and revitalize the Organization. The agenda for that revitalization must be broad and inclusive, as well as transformative and imbued with the objective of breathing new life into the United Nations. The General Assembly, with its universal membership, can be a precious asset in that effort for change. As one of modern India's leading figures, Swami Vivekananda, once said,

“We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. The wind is blowing; those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch it, and go forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled do not catch the wind.”

The revitalization agenda represents a challenge for diplomacy. However, it is a challenge worth taking up if we want to maximize our prospects for a peaceful and prosperous twenty-first century. In that effort, India stands ready to provide constructive support.

**Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnyak of Croatia and María Emma Mejía Vélez of Colombia, who served as co-Chairs of the negotiation process on revitalization during the seventy-second session. We also welcome the appointment of the Ambassadors of Jordan and Slovakia as co-Chairs of the process for the 2019 period. We wish them success in their work and pledge to them the full support of the Cuban delegation.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a critical process within the broader reform of the United Nations. It must consolidate the democratic and participatory character of the Assembly through the full exercise of the powers enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Ensuring full respect for the Charter and the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and other organs is a priority for Cuba. In accordance with those governing documents, our country has therefore participated in the work of the Organization since its founding on 24 October 1945.

Ensuring the sustainability of the international community's trust in the United Nations and the sustainability of its legitimacy also requires the Organization to truly respond to the collective interests of its Members, especially the great majority of its Member States. The international community has witnessed the non-implementation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on numerous occasions, as well as a lack of consensus on decisions on issues that have long afflicted our people. Cuba calls on all Member States to demonstrate their political will and commitment to multilateralism.

It is an obligation both for Member States and for the Secretariat itself to respect the mandates established in our resolutions, as well as the regulations and guidelines that govern the functioning of the Organization, to whose budget we all contribute based on the principle of the capacity to pay. We emphatically reject the manipulation, blackmail and pressure that some have exerted on the Secretariat, in violation of United Nations procedures.

In that regard, we note that in recent years, the annual resolution on the planning of conferences, adopted by consensus in the General Assembly, has called on the Secretary-General and Member States to comply with the guidelines and procedures set forth in Administrative Instruction ST/AI/416 of April 1996, which regulates the authorization of the use of United

Nations premises for meetings, conferences, special events and exhibits. The resolution also provides that such meetings, conferences, special events and exhibits must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

We firmly reject the use of the Organization's premises to generate and promote campaigns against its own Member States, which constitutes an flagrant violation not only of the resolutions and norms of the United Nations but also of the purposes and principles of the Charter. We reiterate that it is the duty of the Secretariat to ensure that the working procedures and rules contained in resolutions, regulations and administrative guidelines are fully respected. That endeavour must be marked by impartiality, professionalism and responsibility, regardless of any pressure to do otherwise. We hope that that issue will be discussed next year during the revitalization process and that appropriate measures will be taken within that framework to prevent such violations.

Discussions on certain proposals within the framework of the revitalization process sometimes undermine previous debates and results from other forums that are more appropriate and relevant venues for holding such discussions. In that regard, we reiterate that the revitalization process should not change the procedure for selecting candidates. Those procedures are outlined in the resolutions that gave rise to the various bodies concerned and in the rules of the General Assembly. Nor does it fall to the revitalization process to pre-empt Member support for a particular candidate or to question or hinder the nomination of a candidate through selective and discriminatory criteria.

Cuba stresses the importance of striking the right balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter, and of stopping the growing and dangerous tendency of the Security Council to encroach on the Assembly's scope of work, which is a violation of the Organization's procedures.

We hope that as a result of the revitalization process, the interaction between the Secretariat and the General Assembly will be strengthened so that the Secretariat can respond more effectively to mandates set by Member States. It is impossible to have an Organization that responds effectively to the modern system of international relations without reforming the Security Council and making the General Assembly the centre of multilateral debate and work.



Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation's readiness to continue to support the process of revitalizing the General Assembly so as to bolster its democratic and participatory character.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the convening of today's General Assembly meeting on the implementation of United Nations resolutions and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

We would like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Slovakia on their appointment to co-chair the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly and wish them every success. We note the work of the previous co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Colombia, during the seventy-second session. The negotiations that eventually culminated in the General Assembly's adoption on 17 September of resolution 72/313 were not easy. They demonstrated once again that the successful revitalization of the Assembly's work, which is a job shared by all Member States, is possible only when the process enjoys full consensus-based support. Our understanding of that enabled us to arrive at a thoughtful and balanced text. The results of the upcoming round of negotiations will also depend on States' willingness to listen to one another.

The Russian delegation is ready to continue to participate constructively in the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly. However, those efforts must be depoliticized and primarily focused on increasing the Assembly's effectiveness. That aim can to a great extent be achieved by further refining the Assembly's working methods and streamlining its still overburdened agenda. In particular, it is essential to continue efforts to move some of the Assembly's agenda items to consideration on a biennial or triennial basis and remove outdated ones.

We also support initiatives to lighten the load of the high-level week of the general debate. While they are in New York, the Heads of State and Government and Foreign Ministers already have a tight schedule. It makes sense to limit the number of high-level events during that time. They can be evenly distributed throughout the work of the entire session. However, it is certainly important to ensure that such changes take the interests of all Member States into account. We also believe that any initiatives should be based

on strict compliance with the system for distributing prerogatives among the main United Nations bodies, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council is often criticized for being seen as infringing on the authority of other United Nations organs, and we share that concern. Our colleagues on the Council know that we are cautious about considering thematic topics in the Council. And recently the numbers of such meetings have increased, through no fault of ours. In that regard, we again call on those who generate such initiatives to consider what the Council can actually achieve on such issues. The importance of one or another topic should not be based on whether or not it is discussed in the Council. That is the wrong approach.

In the past few years, much attention has been paid to questions of increasing the transparency and democracy of the process for selecting and electing the Secretary-General. We are willing to continue working on a sensible optimization of the existing system. However, we believe that ideas in this area require careful study, and particularly with regard to strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, in accordance with which the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. We should also not forget that the main task is to elect the best candidate for the position of Secretary-General. Excessive efforts to codify the procedure are fraught with undesirable consequences.

As for the issue of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, the problem here seems to be not so much a lack of political will. One of the most important factors is the feasibility level of those resolutions. Before proposing a draft resolution, it is important to ask how implementable it would be if it were adopted. We urge everyone to refrain from politicized, clearly unrealizable initiatives that could divide rather than unite the United Nations membership. There is no doubt that resolutions that are adopted by an overwhelming majority of votes, and ideally by consensus, have a better chance of becoming reality. Needless to say, that demands work, diplomatic artistry and a willingness to compromise. Unfortunately, the past year has shown that not everyone shares such sober approaches. We therefore of course should not expect the implementation of resolutions that are focused on dubious and short-term gains.

We wish the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group every success and are ready to work closely with them.

**Mr. Kyslytsya** (Ukraine) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Madam President, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's full support to your comprehensive approach to conducting the business of the Assembly. I would also like to join others in expressing our sincere thanks to the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Mr. Vladimir Drobnyak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, former Permanent Representative of Colombia, for the work they accomplished. I wish the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Slovakia, Ms. Sima Sami Bahous and Mr. Michal Mlynár, every success as the new co-Chairs and continued progress in the work of this session.

We fully share the vision outlined in the statement by the observer of the European Union on the issues under consideration today. In my national capacity, I would like to highlight two points that we consider significant.

The first is strengthening the authority of the General Assembly. As Members have stated on numerous occasions, we believe that as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is bound by the Charter of the United Nations to discuss any matter relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

However, at the beginning of the current session, we witnessed an attempt to prevent the Assembly from considering a problem raised by a Member under its special authority. I am referring to Ukraine's initiative with regard to a new agenda item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine". The recorded vote on incorporating the topic into the agenda clearly showed the existence of a marginal group that attempted to undermine the specific responsibility of the General Assembly under pressure from Russia. I express my sincere thanks to all those who supported the introduction of the item on the agenda.

It is not surprising that the same controversy that arose in connection with the inclusion of the item on the Assembly's agenda was also seen in connection with the responsibility-to-protect initiative, which Ukraine also supports. How can the Assembly and the Organization of

which it is a constituent part be considered effective and capable of dealing with today's challenges in the face of persistent ongoing attempts to block the consideration of pressing problems, as opposed to the many static situations that are considered almost automatically year after year, with no significant change in the outcome?

Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, constantly abuses its powers there. In fact, it was trying to replicate its destructive Council practices in the Assembly and in the General Committee on the pretext of defending the practice of consensus, which is non-existent. That permanent member follows the same pattern of behaviour in the Security Council, where it cares nothing for the credibility of the Organization and only for its ambitions for revenge.

At the end of October, Council members expressed their deep concern about the illegal preparations for the so-called elections in the temporarily occupied territory of Donbas in Ukraine (see S/PV.8386). And what did we see less than two weeks later? In violation of the Minsk agreements and of Security Council resolution 2202 (2015), the so-called elections, orchestrated by the occupying Power, took place last Sunday. As was to be expected, Russia seemed to be the only one that recognized the results, thereby demonstrating its true objective of masking the crimes committed in Ukraine.

My second point is about the implementation of United Nations resolutions. The scope of their implementation remains constrained by the degree to which countries are willing to comply with them. That selective mode of implementation undermines the ability of the United Nations to make a real difference in various situations on the ground.

Through its adoption in 2014 of resolution 68/262, the General Assembly affirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Since then, in two subsequent resolutions — 71/205 in 2016 and 72/190 in 2017 — on the human rights situation in Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, the Assembly has condemned the temporary occupation of that part of Ukraine's territory.

All those resolutions, supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States, sent a clear message from the United Nations membership to the aggressor State that the Organization is ready to defend its values. However, those decisions have yet to be implemented. The world continues to witness brutal violations of the

purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, since the foreign military aggression against Ukraine and the temporary occupation of parts of its territory persist.

It is also indisputable that the Secretariat and all of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system must comply with the letter and spirit of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly in their daily practice, despite the pressure and manipulations on the part of the aggressor State.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that although our joint efforts for the revitalization of the General Assembly have already produced tangible results, there is still ample room for this body and its decisions to become more effective and for the United Nations to become more relevant for everyone.

**Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks you, Madam President, for convening today's debate on this topic.

Over the more than 70 years of its history, the United Nations has made an outstanding contribution to international peace and stability and the progress of human society. The purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations have become the basic norms governing international relations and multilateralism, in terms of both ideology and practice, and have brought tangible benefits to the peoples of the world. Now, however, the world is confronted with new and emerging challenges. Traditional and non-traditional security issues are intertwined in a complex conundrum. The international security situation is of great concern. International rules are under attack, and multilateral mechanisms are being challenged. More than ever, our world needs multilateralism and a stronger United Nations.

The international community generally looks to the United Nations to play a greater role in safeguarding world peace, promoting common development, advancing international cooperation and upholding multilateralism. On 9 November, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, China convened an open debate on this theme entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security: strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations" (see S/PV.8395). Representatives of more than 70 countries and international organizations took the floor and voiced a strong message about the importance of strengthening multilateralism and the role of the

United Nations, reaffirming our obligation to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, steadfastly embrace multilateralism, maintain the rules-based international order and jointly respond to global challenges.

The General Assembly is the principal organ of the United Nations under the Charter. It is also the primary deliberative organ when it comes to policies. Its revitalization is a matter where the vital interests of all Member States are at stake and that has important and far-reaching implications for enhancing the authority and credibility of the United Nations. It is the desire of the general membership, especially the developing countries, that the General Assembly should improve its work on an ongoing basis and fully meet its responsibilities under the Charter.

In the light of the evolving international situation, as well as the significant challenges facing the United Nations on various fronts, the Assembly should focus on reviewing and responding to major issues of general concern to Member States, especially those that affect the vital interests of developing countries. It should strengthen its focus and input on development issues and play a greater role in promoting international development cooperation. It should also strengthen its collaboration with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies, with a proper division of labour that enables them to fully leverage their respective advantages. On issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security, coordination and cooperation between the Assembly and the Security Council should be strengthened, in accordance with the Charter.

China appreciates the initiative of Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, to prioritize, among other things, the revitalization of the United Nations, the rights of persons with disabilities, gender equality, migrants and refugees, the environment, decent work and youth and peace and security. The revitalization of the work of the Assembly is an important dimension of that priority agenda. We encourage the general membership of the United Nations to work as one in order to advance the revitalization of the General Assembly's work.

China supports the General Assembly in its efforts to improve its working methods, streamline decision-making processes and increase efficiency.

Efforts should be focused on improving the quality of documents and reports by making their content more concise and their analyses and recommendations better targeted so that they are more practical and action-oriented. Member States should respect the sanctity of Assembly resolutions and ensure their effective implementation so as to safeguard the Assembly's authority. A well-functioning Office of the President of the General Assembly is an important enabler for the smooth running of the General Assembly. China supports increasing the Office's human and financial resources so that it can more effectively discharge its mandated functions.

The broad membership of the Organization has high expectations for the revitalization of the General Assembly's work. All Member States should make concrete efforts to implement the resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly and make steady progress with the revitalization of the General Assembly under the framework of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, guided by the principles of democratic consultations, step-by-step progress and tackling the easiest tasks first.

China welcomes the appointment by the President of the General Assembly of the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Slovakia to the United Nations as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We are ready to lend them our active support to help achieve progress on this important agenda item during this session and make fresh contributions to the protection of multilateralism and our common pursuit of peace and development.

**Mr. Djani** (Indonesia): My delegation joins other delegations in thanking you, Madam President, for convening this important joint debate, as well as for the many important points that you made in your opening statement. Needless to say, we would also like to congratulate the incoming co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, our colleagues from Jordan and Slovakia. We want to assure them of Indonesia's continued and active contribution to efforts to obtain productive results in the Working Group. I also thank their predecessors, our colleagues from Croatia and Colombia, for their important stewardship.

Indonesia would like to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement

of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Since the revitalization of the General Assembly became a distinct agenda item in 1991, and following the 2005 World Summit, when the Ad Hoc Working Group was formed, there has been progress on numerous fronts. But much remains to be done if we are to ensure that our work is relevant. From streamlining the agenda to structuring the four clusters in the Ad Hoc Working Group and convening high-level deliberations on crucial global peace, security and development challenges, the General Assembly has gained increasing prominence and effect.

Many of the challenges confronting our world today are of a multidimensional and interconnected nature and require an integrated response. Those challenges can be addressed only if States are willing to work together and solve those issues accordingly. The United Nations is the ultimate global institution for multilateralism, where nations large and small interact with each other on a basis of sovereign equality. Indonesia urges all to play their role fully in order to ensure that the Assembly and other United Nations entities can successfully comply with their mandates.

There is no better platform to deal with the gamut of global issues than the General Assembly, for it is unique in representing the entirety of the United Nations membership with its rich insights and collective wisdom. When we say that we are committed to multilateralism, we have an obligation to revitalize and make this organ efficient, effective and adapted to the challenges of the new millennium. Indonesia supports practical efforts that can revitalize the Assembly as the chief United Nations deliberative, policymaking and representative organ, properly geared and enabled to meet the expectations of global citizens today.

I will not go into detail on Indonesia's position on the four thematic clusters, as my delegation will present its views in the various cluster meetings ahead. For now, we would like to suggest the following additional points on the way forward as we seek to strengthen our common endeavour to make the Assembly more robust.

First, we must all ensure the full implementation of resolution 69/321. In that context, we must do our part to ensure that the General Assembly continues to play a leading role in the selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General. The practices and lessons from the previous experience, while they are fresh in



our memory, should be recorded in a lessons-learned document, which would be a good reference source for future selection processes and appointments of the Secretary-General.

Furthermore, the resolution enabled the election processes for the non-permanent Security Council seats and the members of the Economic and Social Council to begin six months in advance. New ground was also broken regarding transparency and accountability in the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We all look forward to strengthening that Office.

Secondly, with regard to the Assembly's working methods, Indonesia recommends that the General Assembly and its Main Committees streamline their agendas and focus on making a reality of commitments for meaningful results on the ground. We salute Guyana for taking the lead. We should also streamline the numbers of high-level meetings and focus more on the implementation of commitments already made. Indonesia further recommends that the General Assembly should introduce appropriate measures to enhance public awareness of its roles and activities, and we encourage improved media reporting of the Assembly's work.

Thirdly, the General Assembly should strengthen its collaboration with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies. On issues of common interest, such as peace and security, human rights and economic development, consultations between the General Assembly and the regional organizations should be strengthened. Regional organizations can contribute positively to the work of the Assembly and the United Nations at large.

Indonesia recommends that the numerous resolutions that fall under agenda item 128, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations", could more appropriately include discussion of those issues of common interest. Furthermore, such resolutions should be implementable, action-oriented and aim for concrete results on the ground.

Before coming here today, I looked at the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Chapter IV on the General Assembly, because I wanted to find out how the situations in 1945 and today differ. What is clear is in Article 9, paragraph 2, which says that "Each Member shall have not more than five representatives in the General Assembly". We have made progress so

far, at least by having an extra seat in this Hall for each delegation, thereby making it six for each country. Now my question is: Is that enough? Should we not do more to revitalize the work of the Assembly? I say more has to be done. We are approaching 75 years of the existence of the United Nations, and if we could revitalize the General Assembly and other organs so as to better respond to the wishes of their constituents, the peoples of the world, that would be a good target date and birthday present for the United Nations.

Indonesia, for its part, is determined to continue playing its role in the Working Group and other forums to bolster the General Assembly so that the Assembly can fully demonstrate that it is the true universal parliament of nations.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to congratulate Ambassadors Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan, and Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We would like to assure them of our full support and our willingness to work with them during the Working Group meetings to come. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the previous co-Chairs and the Secretariat, especially the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, for their tireless efforts and professional and rigorous support throughout our work.

My delegation takes note of the tangible progress made in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. We welcome the positive developments in the efforts of the Working Group during the previous session and call for continuing and consolidating what we have achieved. Despite the progress made, the process to revitalize the work of the General Assembly requires the commitment of all Member States, as well as real political will, so that multilateralism can bear fruit and achieve its noble goals.

In that regard, we want to emphasize the importance of dialogue in a spirit of compromise so that we can contribute jointly to improving our work within the General Assembly, and the Organization more broadly. With the tangible progress that we have made, we welcome the laudable efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to achieve gender equality and the equitable geographical representation of high-ranking positions, and we especially welcome the

implementation of his strategy on gender equality, which is applicable to the entire United Nation system.

The revitalization process of the work of the General Assembly is a key part of the reform of the Organization. We believe that the important reforms that the Secretary-General has introduced since he assumed the leadership of our Organization will contribute broadly to our efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly. Preserving an institutional balance between the General Assembly and the other bodies of the United Nations is vital if we want to improve its effectiveness and efficiency and enable it to fulfil the mandate it has been assigned.

We also want to recall the importance of respect by both the General Assembly and the Security Council for the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations on their respective functions and powers. As such, we must fully implement Article 12, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which states,

“While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation”.

We also reiterate the need for a balanced revitalization of the work of the Main Committees in order to achieve long-term outcomes for the process as a whole. In past years we have seen an exponential increase in the number of draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly. In that regard, we believe that greater efforts should be made to ensure that multiple resolutions are consolidated and encourage their submission only every two or even three years, where possible. It is equally important to continue to work to improve synergies and coherence between the various Committees' agenda items. Similarly, we should ensure that the Assembly's agenda is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That is an absolute necessity that must be promoted.

Finally, in order for the role of the President of the General Assembly, as mandated under the Charter, to be carried out effectively and efficiently and for the majority of the expenses incurred by the President to no longer be borne by his or her country of origin, the President must be provided with the necessary resources, which must come not only in the form of trust funds and voluntary contributions from Member

States, but also, in particular, as adequate funding from the regular budget.

**Mr. Amayo (Kenya):** Let me begin by commending you, Madam President, for the able manner in which you have been conducting the work of the General Assembly since your election. My delegation also acknowledges with appreciation the great work carried out during the seventy-second session by the co-Chairs from Croatia and Colombia of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We also take this opportunity to warmly congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the Slovak Republic and the Kingdom of Jordan on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Working Group for this session and wish them every success.

Kenya aligns itself with the statement on the Working Group delivered by the representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

My delegation also notes that this exchange of action-oriented ideas pertaining to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is timely and in line with the strategic priorities of this session, that is, strengthening multilateralism and achieving the well-being of all persons and a sustainable planet. We welcome the adoption without a vote of resolution 72/313 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. While significant progress has been made, we note that the negotiations leading to the resolution's adoption were lengthy and fraught with various contentious issues, most of which had been carried over from previous sessions.

Even as we speak of the revitalization of the work of this body, we should recognize that the underlying causes of the lack of consensus on various issues are much broader and require further discussions, with a focus on implementation. We call for political willingness and indeed goodwill on the part of all Member States to overcome those persistent challenges and divergences of views. My delegation therefore welcomes the decision to renew for this session the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, which will be open to all Member States. It is our hope that some of the contentious issues outlined in detail in the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement will be addressed in order to further improve the effectiveness, efficiency and

working methods of the Assembly. Let me highlight three areas for further consideration.

First, regarding the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads, we believe that a healthy balance must be sought between transparency and confidentiality. Member States should be well informed about the process and able to fully understand the working methods of the Security Council. The Assembly and the Council should work, or appear to work, in a complementary rather than a competitive manner. Strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly will enhance such complementarity.

Secondly, regarding the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative Budgetary Questions, a review of the membership aimed at ensuring equitable geographical representation will add value to the work of the Committee by broadening the scope of its expertise from the various regions.

Finally, regarding streamlining the Assembly's agenda, with a focus on implementation, adequate time needs to be given to the consideration of items that are important to developing countries, such as financing for development and the Agenda 21 Programme of Action for Sustainable Development and their connections to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In conclusion, Kenya reaffirms its commitment to remaining engaged and contributing constructively to the efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly, the chief deliberative policymaking organ of the United Nations.

**Mr. Gad** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, we welcome the convening of this annual meeting on two important agenda items, 122 and 123, one dealing with the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations and the other with the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Slovakia on co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the current session.

The Egyptian delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Given the central role played by the General Assembly within the United Nations as the principal organ with universal representation and the most

representative at the international and multilateral levels, we believe that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly forms an essential part of efforts to consolidate the role of the United Nations as a whole. Improving the performance and efficiency of the General Assembly is therefore the first step towards realizing a United Nations that is more democratic, global and capable of fulfilling its international functions and the tremendous duties conferred on it by the Charter.

We all recognize that the General Assembly plays various vital roles under Article 10 of Chapter IV of the Charter. It has the authority to discuss any question or matter pertaining to the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organ stipulated in the Charter. It can also make recommendations to Members of the United Nations and to members of the Security Council, except as provided in Article 12 of the Charter. Paragraph 3 of Article 11 of the Charter also authorizes the Assembly to call the attention of the Security Council to issues likely to endanger international peace and security. Moreover, in accordance with Article 15, the Assembly receives and studies annual and special reports from the Council. Those reports include an account of the measures that the Council has decided on or taken in the maintenance of international peace and security. In addition, the General Assembly receives and considers reports from other organs of the Organization.

The Assembly's recent adoption by consensus in September of resolution 72/313 gives further impetus to efforts aimed at strengthening the role and the authority of the General Assembly. Accordingly, we hope for its full implementation, as it has become increasingly necessary to strengthen the role and the authority of the General Assembly and improve its working methods at the administrative, organizational, technical and substantive levels. We also want to recall the importance of improving the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The United Nations today faces significant challenges and dangerous international threats, including in relation to the fight against terrorism, the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of sustainable development, as well as addressing the root causes of crises and conflicts throughout the world. It is therefore imperative to

intensify cooperation among the principal United Nations organs so as to ensure that their efforts are concerted and coordinated, as well as to achieve the complementarity of international endeavours. We also want to highlight the importance of striking a delicate balance between the prerogatives and mandates of those organs in accordance with the Charter. We therefore hope for improved coordination, cooperation and interaction among the main organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, in order to better address international issues in a more effective way, especially those related to international peace and security.

Let me highlight some priority issues for Egypt under agenda item 123, on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

First, we need to revitalize the role of the General Assembly and improve its mechanisms in dealing with urgent international issues in cooperation with the other relevant United Nations bodies. Secondly, we must ensure the necessary financial and human resources for the easy flow of the Organization's work. Accordingly, we recall the point made in the statement on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the importance of reforming rule 155 of the Assembly's rules of procedure in order to enlarge the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and improve its geographical and equitable representation, especially given the fact that the Group of African States, like the Asian and Latin American States, suffers from a lack of significant representation on the Advisory Committee by comparison with other regional groups.

In conclusion, we look forward to the implementation of the Secretary-General's recently unveiled new reforms aimed at strengthening the Organization's architecture and role in the areas of peace and security and development, and on administrative and financial issues. We also look forward to continuing to cooperate with all Member States to achieve those objectives and purposes, so that we can meet the aspirations of the States and peoples who place their hope in this international Organization.

I would like once again to express to you, Madam President, our deep gratitude and appreciation for the tireless efforts that you are undertaking in collaboration with the staff of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We thank the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session for sharing her insights and for linking the question of the revitalization of the General Assembly to the primacy of upholding the values and principles of multilateralism. We appreciate her commitment to promoting equity, fairness and transparency in the work of the United Nations. We reaffirm our confidence in her able stewardship of the chief deliberative policymaking organ of the United Nations. Bangladesh continues to stress that functional relations among the principal organs can be further strengthened by upholding their respective competencies and responsibilities. The efficiency of the respective organs can be further improved through collective efforts to build synergy and complementarities and avoid duplication and overlapping. We commend the regular dialogue held by the President of the General Assembly with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In that context, we take particular note of the joint meeting convened this month to reaffirm Member States' commitment to multilateralism through the further strengthening and energizing of the United Nations.

Bangladesh welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 72/313 earlier this year and looks forward to constructive engagement among delegations in the coming year. We advocate for the need to demonstrate flexibility with regard to addressing certain outstanding critical issues. We take note of the incremental changes being made but stress the need for a much bolder and more decisive approach in order to reinforce the role and authority of the General Assembly. We have witnessed some notable changes in the appointment process of the Secretary-General, the conduct of elections to various bodies, the further strengthening of the transparency, effectiveness and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and the promotion of gender parity at the level of senior management.

We underscore the importance of sustaining those trends in the paramount interest of making the United Nations more fit for purpose. We see ample justification for assigning additional permanent posts to the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Among other issues, we reiterate support for reviewing



the composition of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions with a view to its possible expansion, considering the increase in United Nations membership since 1977.

Bangladesh appreciates the initiatives taken by the Main Committees to introduce further efficiency into their respective working methods. We see merit in harmonizing some of those efficiency measures across all the Committees, wherever possible. The issue of time management, especially in relation to group and national statements, is a particular case in point. It is critical that the consensus-based approach, which is germane to any given Committee's work, be maintained in the shared interest of all Member States. We have noted the drastic reduction in the percentage of resolutions adopted by consensus in the First Committee during this session compared to last year.

The need for further streamlining the number of items on the General Assembly's agenda is widely acknowledged. A similar approach is also warranted in the case of the number of resolutions adopted by the Assembly. It merits our collective consideration to study whether it is actually in our long-term national and shared interests to have a proliferation of resolutions on issues that could be conveniently addressed in the framework of a number of other existing resolutions. Any national or regional initiative to highlight or advance certain issues does not necessarily need to be translated into an altogether new resolution. We see ample merit in the notion of biennializing and triennializing certain resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. That should also be approached in a spirit of flexibility and accommodation among all delegations concerned, preferably based on an objective set of criteria for determining the relevance and frequency of various resolutions.

The issue of decluttering the general debate, or the high-level segment, of the annual General Assembly session is also becoming a subject of high importance for many delegations. It is perhaps necessary at this juncture to set some clear criteria for organizing events during the high-level week, especially with regard to issues that have relevance to the main focus of the general debate and other United Nations high-level events taking place during the high-level week. Bangladesh acknowledges the user-friendly changes made to the format, production and editing of the *Journal of the United Nations*. We appreciate the opportunity for the Permanent Missions to engage in

dialogue with the Secretariat in order to help address issues of mutual interest and concern in an interactive and transparent manner.

In conclusion, Bangladesh looks forward to engaging constructively in the thematic debates and negotiations on the draft resolution on this item under the aegis of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly next year.

**Ms. Bahous** (Jordan): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important debate on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly, which is the world's largest multilateral and most democratic organ. I have the honour to speak today on behalf of Slovakia and Jordan, the two co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

The world is facing formidable challenges that are threatening the very values of our humanity and the very foundations of the Charter of the United Nations — increasing inequalities, unemployment, exclusion, difficult economic conditions, armed conflict, terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, refugee issues, migration, climate change and efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. We are all being challenged to ensure that the ways and methods of working at the United Nations reflect positively on the way we address those challenges and how we work to improve the lives of the people on this planet.

It is here at the General Assembly that we can and should find acceptable answers and solutions, all of which are anchored in multilateralism. Like you, Madam President, we believe that we must adapt and revitalize the work of the General Assembly so as to achieve our goals in the best way possible. Difficult as it may seem, that is possible and doable, provided that we have the strong political will to pursue it. The General Assembly must function as smoothly and as efficiently as possible.

In your letter of 30 October, Madam, you appointed my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Slovakia, and me, the Permanent Representative of Jordan, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We co-Chairs would like to express our deep appreciation for the confidence that you have placed in us and look forward to a smooth, comprehensive and transparent process. In that regard,

I would also like to thank the previous co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Colombia, for their tireless work to move the revitalization agenda forward.

I also want to thank everyone who spoke this morning. Their statements confirmed their readiness to engage in a comprehensive and objective manner in the many issues involved in improving and enriching the work of this great body, the General Assembly. As co-Chairs, we will soon start conducting informal

consultations with delegations and groups wishing to engage in the process so as to identify the views and concerns that we need to address early on. We, the co-Chairs, look forward to working together towards a solid consensus document and to our joint success in that endeavour.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda items 122 and 123.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*