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Seventy-sixth session

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Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 121 and 122

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: I thank everyone for joining today's joint debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

No other intergovernmental body in the world enjoys a universal membership while covering such a broad spectrum of issues as the General Assembly. The Assembly deals with critical issues, many of them interlinked, related to development, disarmament, education, the environment, health crises, humanitarian assistance, human rights and counter-terrorism, among many others. Effective policymaking in all of those areas by the General Assembly is obviously of crucial importance to the peoples of the world. As the chief policy and deliberative organ of the United Nations, it is incumbent on the General Assembly to examine itself, to look at its own working methods in order to ensure it is responding to the most urgent issues that affect humankind and our daily lives. That is the reason why revitalizing the United Nations is one of my top priorities, the fifth ray of hope under my presidency. I believe that a stronger United Nations is necessary to build a resilient world, and that for a stronger United Nations, we need a stronger General Assembly.

At its seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly decided to biennialize the General Assembly revitalization resolution (resolution 75/325) and asked the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly to focus on the implementation of the resolution during the seventy-sixth session. That will allow more time and, we hope, greater political will for the recommendations to be fully implemented. For this session, the Ad Hoc Working Group will concentrate on two of its regular topics — the role and authority of the General Assembly, and its working methods. I would therefore like to focus on two action points to guide the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

First, the disparity of power between the Assembly and the Security Council has certainly been a key motivating factor in the General Assembly revitalization debate. While the drafters of the Charter of the United Nations had envisioned separate yet equally important roles for the Assembly and the Council, the role and authority of the General Assembly is mostly shaped by opposing priorities between Member States, an unwieldy agenda that does not necessarily deal with the most urgent issues on a priority basis, repetitive and lengthy debates and a slow decision-making process.

The General Assembly is what Member States make of it. While its recommendations are not binding, let us not forget the role that the Assembly has played in setting standards in the codification of international law. For example, it was in the General Assembly that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. In that regard, I appeal sincerely to Member

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States to explore innovations in the Assembly that could reaffirm both its unparalleled convening power and its pre-eminence as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

Secondly, on working methods, I cannot overemphasize the need to further streamline the General Assembly's agenda. We are all aware that many opaque and recycled resolutions are adopted year after year with few substantive updates, mostly without mechanisms to ensure or even assess their implementation. We must continue to identify where we can biennialize and triennialize resolutions and dedicate more time to dialogue as well as to the implementation of the adopted resolutions.

I would like to thank Her Excellency Mrs. Egriselda González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, for accepting her reappointment as co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, for accepting his role as co-Chair. I urge members to give them their full support. Our shared aspiration is to continue to make the General Assembly more effective, efficient and relevant in twenty-first-century international diplomacy. I simply request one thing for this session. Let us all have frank and constructive discussions on the revitalization agenda to truly empower the General Assembly not only as the pre-eminent deliberative body in the United Nations system, but also for its normative impact in strengthening multilateralism. I wish the Ad Hoc Working Group every success for this session.

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the outset, ASEAN would like to thank Ambassadors Egriselda González López and Michal Mlynár for their leadership as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. We also congratulate Ambassadors Mitchell Fifield and González López on their appointments as co-Chairs for the seventy-sixth session. We look forward to productive discussions under their able leadership, and would like to assure the Working Group of ASEAN's full support and cooperation to that end.

ASEAN welcomed resolution 75/325, which was adopted by consensus on 10 September. We want to express our appreciation to the previous co-Chairs for

their transparent and inclusive approach to conducting the negotiations during the last session. We commend the action-oriented resolution, which makes progress on a range of revitalization issues, including working methods, the biennialization of the revitalization process and the improvement of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads. We also commend the decision of all Member States to agree on adjusting the opening date of the regular session of the General Assembly, effective from the opening of the seventy-eighth session, in order to allow more time for the incoming President of the General Assembly and his or her Office to prepare for the high-level week.

We also welcome the decision that the Ad Hoc Working Group should have a more focused discussion on two clusters during this session and the remaining clusters in the seventy-seventh session, with a view to building on the progress achieved in past sessions, as well as on previous resolutions, including evaluating the status of their implementation. In that connection, ASEAN would like to highlight the following points regarding the two clusters slated for discussion in the Ad Hoc Working Group this session.

First, on the role and authority of the General Assembly, ASEAN reaffirms the fundamental role and credibility of the Assembly as the most representative organ of the United Nations. We reiterate the importance of ensuring that all Member States preserve the character, primacy and credibility of the General Assembly and that it remains fit for purpose. We also continue to call for greater synergy, coherence and coordination between the work of the Assembly and other United Nations organs in accordance with their respective mandates.

Secondly, on the working methods of the General Assembly, we continue to call for rationalizing the Assembly's agenda by addressing gaps, overlaps and duplication of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that respect, we call for more regular and closer consultation among the Chairs of the Main Committees to address those problems. ASEAN urges Member States to consider innovative and practical measures to make the Committees' debates more focused and interactive.

ASEAN also applauds the successful conclusion of the first transition workshop for the Offices of the President of the General Assembly in September, aimed

at strengthening institutional memory, preserving best practices and working methods and supporting the smooth transition between presidencies. We also commend the dedicated briefing by the previous co-Chairs on the revitalization process for the members of the Office of the President during the workshop.

The universal and inclusive features of the revitalization process of the General Assembly provide genuine scope for innovation. We have seen that from the good progress we made in the past session, but we also know that we can go further. Let me conclude by reaffirming ASEAN's commitment to engaging constructively with all delegations in the revitalization process.

Mr. Fepuleai (New Zealand): I am pleased to deliver this statement today on behalf of Canada, Australia and my own country, New Zealand (CANZ).

On behalf of CANZ, I would like to congratulate the co-Chairs on their appointment to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. The CANZ countries warmly acknowledge Ambassador González López of El Salvador on her reappointment, and we welcome the experience and continuity she will bring to the role. We are pleased at the recent appointment of Ambassador Fifield of Australia, who has ably represented CANZ at General Assembly revitalization negotiations. The Working Group will undoubtedly benefit from his fresh insights and enthusiasm for the role.

The Working Group's efforts to improve the General Assembly's efficiency and effectiveness, including streamlining and rationalizing its agenda, are more relevant than ever. CANZ welcomes the practical and concrete progress made by the Working Group in the last session. That includes the decision to biennialize the resolution so the General Assembly can focus on implementation the following year. We also welcome the decision to bring forward the start of the next General Assembly session to allow more time for the incoming President of the Assembly to prepare for the busiest event of the session. Finally, our delegations welcome the new commitments to increasing women's representation in high-level meetings of the General Assembly, including achieving gender parity among invited speakers and panellists.

While we made significant progress in the revitalization agenda for the past session, it is now incumbent on all delegations to ensure that during this

session of the Working Group we focus on implementing these measures effectively and without delay. Australia, Canada and New Zealand look forward to working with all delegations in this session to advance the ambitious commitments contained in resolution 75/325, the most recent revitalization, as well as to build on the work of previous texts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Pieper (European Union): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this plenary meeting on the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, North 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 would like to start by thanking the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, Ambassadors Egriselda Aracely González López and Michal Mlynár, the Permanent Representatives of El Salvador and Slovakia, for their excellent work in steering the group to a successful conclusion, with the adoption of the very substantial resolution 75/325, which delivered progress on all four main building blocks. I congratulate them on a job very well done. That outcome would not have been possible without the constructive spirit and flexibility shown by every single member. It was a very strong display of what we can achieve collectively when working closely together in a spirit of trust, with a view to enhancing the General Assembly's effectiveness and efficiency. The outcome was a tangible contribution to the overall United Nations reform efforts and to strengthening multilateralism — two essential elements of *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which the Secretary-General presented to us in September and which we are now following up on. One of the most tangible and concrete achievements of last year's Ad Hoc Working Group was the decision to biennialize the resolution, allowing us to use the in-between year to focus on implementing what has been agreed — a practice that should enable us to free up resources and

will hopefully serve as inspiration for other General Assembly processes.

We warmly welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representative of Australia, Ambassador Mitchell Fifield, and the reappointment of the Permanent Representative of El Salvador, Ambassador Egriselda González López, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the seventy-sixth session, and look forward to working closely with both of them and all Member States in implementing the concrete outcomes on what was agreed during the last session, with a special focus on the two chapters relating to the role and authority of the General Assembly and its working methods. The following are some of the issues that the EU considers particularly important under those two headings.

First, further efforts should be made to streamline the General Assembly's work and agenda and reinforce synergies, coherence and complementarity among the agendas of the Assembly and its Main Committees and the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, including further concrete proposals for the further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items, taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Secondly, we should prioritize measures aimed at effectively and efficiently supporting the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including by further aligning the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with the 2030 Agenda so as to identify and simultaneously address gaps, overlaps and duplications.

Thirdly, we look forward to the briefing by the Secretariat on lessons learned from the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the General Assembly's work, with a view to ensuring better preparedness and avoiding situations such as we experienced in the early months of the pandemic when we were not able to meet in any way.

Fourthly, we should make a reality of the commitment to achieving gender parity, including by ensuring that women are equally represented at high-level and other General Assembly meetings. We should also strengthen multilingualism as a core value of the Organization. And lastly, but certainly not least important, space should be created for better engaging civil society, young people and other external stakeholders in United

Nations processes, to speak truth to the notion of an inclusive and networked multilateralism.

The EU stands ready to engage constructively and looks forward to your guidance and leadership, Mr. President, in ensuring that the revitalization of the General Assembly remains one of the top priorities during this session and providing the necessary space for frank exchanges aimed at enhancing its relevance. Let us maintain the momentum we built during the last session and focus on implementing an ambitious outcome.

Mr. Tsend (Mongolia): Mongolia fully associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and would like to add a few brief remarks in its national capacity.

First, my delegation thanks all the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, both past and present. It is an important, difficult and onerous task, and we thank them all for undertaking it on our behalf. Our special thanks go to Ambassadors Egriselda González López and Michal Mlynár for their skilful stewardship of the Working Group during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, which culminated in the unanimous adoption of resolution 75/325. It is a testimony to their dedication, as well as the political will of the general membership of the United Nations, that we were able to translate the momentum for the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reinvigoration of multilateralism generated during the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations into tangible progress in the form of the resolution. And to do that in the challenging times of the coronavirus disease pandemic, with the operation and working methods of the Organization severely hampered, is indeed no small feat. Needless to say, Mongolia fully endorses the resolution in its entirety, including the call to Member States to bear in mind that it is probably time for our Organization to have a woman as its Secretary-General. We also want to express our gratitude to the Presidents of the General Assembly and the dedicated staff of the Secretariat for ensuring the continuity of business in these difficult times.

Secondly, we believe that addressing overlaps and duplication in the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees and the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies should be our

priority. In our opinion, it will yield more results in a shorter period of time and enable us to free up time and create space on the agendas to address pressing issues, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have limited or no coverage. In that regard, we noted with interest the pilot analysis on SDG 2 carried out during the seventy-fifth session to examine the coverage of Goal 2 (zero hunger) in depth.

In our opinion, the goal is to find and zero in on tackling topics that can have direct and lasting impact on a possibly larger number of important issues. Our limited national experience, as well as that of many other developing countries, demonstrates that effective and universal programmes to feed children at schools, for example, have a direct and beneficial impact on achieving SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 5 (gender equality), and indirectly influence all the other SDGs. We could, for example, make this issue a subject of one of our thematic debates on current issues and thereby help intergovernmental bodies to assess how their respective work relates to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and contribute to streamlining their agendas.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize one more time the critical importance that Mongolia attaches to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly in the overall efforts to reform the United Nations and reinvigorate multilateralism in international affairs. My delegation pledges its full support and collaboration to the current co-Chairs of the Working Group Ambassadors González López and Fifield, and we wish them every success in their important work.

Ms. Ighil (Algeria): At the outset, let me congratulate Mr. Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, and Ms. Egriselda González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. I would also like to express our appreciation to the outgoing co-Chair, Mr. Michal Mlynár, for his able leadership and dedication to the process of revitalization during the previous session of the Assembly.

Recalling the declaration made during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in which we affirmed our commitment to multilateralism and to continuing to work to revitalize the Assembly, the

Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) considers it important to sustain momentum on this issue, which remains a crucial priority. It is also an occasion to uphold the universal values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to ensure that our Organization is fit for purpose. The revitalization of the General Assembly is indeed a critical component of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. A revitalized Assembly significantly contributes to strengthening the wider United Nations system, improving global governance and reinvigorating multilateralism. In that respect, NAM considers it important to acknowledge that building on previous achievements and resolutions of the General Assembly on the revitalization of its work helps to enhance its role, authority, efficiency and effectiveness.

We believe that there have been sustained efforts and important progress in making the General Assembly's work more focused and relevant. Those efforts should be continued with the support and political will of all Member States in order to achieve even greater progress and overcome the persistent differences regarding the various issues relating to the four clusters on the agenda of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. A full evaluation of the status of the implementation of the Assembly's resolutions and clear identification of the underlying causes behind any lack in that regard remain important if we are to gradually eliminate the continuing constraints preventing the process of revitalizing the General Assembly from living up to its potential.

In that connection, we look forward to focusing the discussions during the current session on the role and authority of the General Assembly and its working methods, as outlined in resolution 75/325, adopted by consensus during the seventy-fifth session. NAM welcomed the progress made in the resolution, which reflects Member States' commitment to a more efficient and revitalized General Assembly by taking forward a number of important issues in support of a stronger Organization and a reinvigorated multilateralism. We appreciate that concrete steps could be agreed and the action-oriented approach adopted in the resolution, as well as the shift towards its biennialization. That approach offers an opportunity to focus more on implementation and advance the goals of efficiency and effectiveness goals that we are all aiming for.

We acknowledge the important elements in the resolution, including those pertaining to the improvement of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, the rationalization of side events and high-level meetings held on the margins of the general debate, the initiatives to strengthen the work of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the enhancement of the General Assembly's role in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General.

With regard to the role and authority of the General Assembly, NAM reaffirms the importance of preserving the intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic nature of the United Nations, as well as the need for strict respect for the Charter-based prerogatives of the Organization's principal organs, particularly the Assembly. We also continue to call for improving the relationship and interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council, which are mutually reinforcing and complementary. NAM is of the view that working methods are only one step in making more substantive improvements aimed at restoring and enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly. We continue to stress the need to rationalize its work. The number of high-level and side events organized in parallel with the general debate should therefore be kept to a critical minimum in order to preserve and strengthen the sanctity of the general debate.

In recognizing the role of the use of information and communication technologies in the work of the Organization under exceptional circumstances, we want to once again underscore the exceptional nature of the working methods adopted by the General Assembly during the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as the need to maintain strict compliance with the Assembly's rules of procedure, which must continue to guide its work.

We appreciate the fact that the resolution consolidates the achievements that have been made regarding the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, including through the circulation of a joint letter, as well as the holding of informal dialogues guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness. We also welcome the reference to the fact that we have still not seen a woman Secretary-General. NAM continues to find it equally important to firmly support the further enhancement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and recognizes the necessity of conducting an in-depth

review of the Office's functioning during the seventy-seventh session.

Finally, NAM remains convinced that we should all collectively continue to build on what has already been achieved and identify areas where we could achieve further tangible progress so that we can improve the overall work and role of the General Assembly. NAM remains fully engaged in contributing to that common endeavour. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to participating constructively in the process of revitalizing the General Assembly's work during the current session with the aim of strengthening its role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

Mr. Abdul Ghafoor (Maldives): Let me begin by expressing our gratitude to the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, Ambassadors Egriselda González López and Michal Mlynár, the Permanent Representatives of El Salvador and Slovakia, for their invaluable efforts and leadership in steering our work. I also congratulate Ambassador Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, on his appointment as co-Chair for the current session. The Maldives remains fully committed to the revitalization process and will continue to extend its complete support and cooperation to the Ad Hoc Working Group.

It was 30 years ago, in 1991, that the revitalization of the General Assembly was first included as an item on our Assembly's agenda. The Maldives welcomes the progress that has been made since then, including through changes to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Notwithstanding those improvements, the pace of change in the world has been rapid, and we must ensure that the United Nations, and in particular the General Assembly, keeps up with it. That includes strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly through stable funding and staffing continuity. The United Nations stands at the centre of our multilateral system. It must be strengthened if it is to become more efficient, relevant and approachable. In today's world, robust and responsive multilateralism is vital to effectively addressing the global challenges we face, whether environmental, social or economic. We are all too aware that to effectively address those issues we

need to have both robust multilateral institutions in place and a unity of purpose and commitment.

The world is at an inflection point in history, as noted by the Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), a point at which humankind has the technologies and wealth to shift the trajectory of history for the better. We are capable of generating clean power, feeding and housing everyone and ensuring that everyone has a quality education, health care and a dignified life. Yet peace, prosperity and a decent standard of living remain elusive for billions of people, a situation exacerbated by mounting and multiplying transboundary challenges such as pandemics, pollution and climate change. As the only organ with universal representation, the General Assembly must be at the centre of our efforts to tackle those challenges. That is why, Mr. President, the Maldives strongly supports your efforts to revitalize the United Nations as one of your presidency's five rays of hope.

The ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic is a stark reminder that in our globalized world, the international community is only as strong as its weakest link, and that drives home the need to leave no one and no country behind. We must not allow the current vaccine inequality to persist, whereby billions of people have yet to receive a single dose of vaccine, while others have started to receive third booster shots. The General Assembly's future relevance depends on leading the way in protecting those left furthest behind. In that respect, we welcome the convening of the high-level meeting on the theme "Universal vaccination: from hope to action" scheduled for January 2022. That event will rightly place the General Assembly at the centre of the discussions in order to deliver concrete results and build the collective political will needed to ensure that we all move through the pandemic with solidarity.

The meeting held in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations revealed that the general public expects us to change and innovate so as to be more inclusive. We must take steps to bring the voices of women and girls, young people and other vital stakeholders into our deliberations at the Organization. The General Assembly must show leadership on that issue. In that regard, I thank you, Mr. President, for your pledge to refrain from sitting on panels that are not gender balanced and for your various efforts to both strengthen gender parity and increase the transparency and inclusivity of our work.

My delegation fully supports the suggested changes to our working methods and direction of work outlined in resolution 75/325, adopted on 10 September, on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. The work of the Assembly and its committees needs to be rationalized, streamlined and geared to achieving the targets set forth in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In conclusion, my delegation is pleased with the renewed focus on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, particularly in the wake of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. If we can maintain that momentum, we can ensure an efficient and effective Assembly that can shape a bright and a common future for all of us and for generations to come.

Ms. Martina (Ukraine): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to once again assure you of my delegation's full support for the able manner in which you conduct the affairs of the General Assembly. I would also like to join others in expressing our sincere gratitude to the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of El Salvador and Slovakia, for their work. We commend the outcomes of the Working Group's activity during the session, including the biennialization of the resolution. I also wish the Permanent Representative of El Salvador and the new co-Chair, the Permanent Representative of Australia, every success and continuing progress in this session's work.

All of us at the United Nations are now working in unprecedented times and difficult circumstances in view of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has dramatically affected every aspect of our lives and further aggravated existing threats. It is nevertheless high time for the Organization to review its working methods in order to be able to respond appropriately to our current challenges. Once the immediate crisis is over, the United Nations must develop immunity to such threats. We commend the Secretary-General's efforts to prevent the spread of the pandemic at United Nations Headquarters and mobilize appropriate international assistance to combat it. In the General Assembly, Member States demonstrated their ability to temporarily adapt the Assembly's working methods in order for it to function in the pandemic

conditions. Our joint efforts enabled the Assembly to continue its work and advance its important agenda on overcoming the pandemic and dealing with its effects. In unpredictable situations such as the pandemic, I believe that the General Assembly should do what it can to revise its working methods. In that context, the General Assembly and its organs should more actively utilize information technologies in order to curb the potential spread of the disease.

We fully share the vision outlined in the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union on the issues under consideration today, and Ukraine aligns itself with that statement. In my national capacity, I would like to highlight two points that we consider significant.

First, we must strengthen the authority of the General Assembly. We believe that as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is obliged by the Charter of the United Nations to discuss all questions related to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that context, at the very beginning of the current session, we witnessed an unprecedented attempt to block the Assembly's special authority to consider all issues brought to it by any Member State and to undermine the General Committee's credibility. I am referring to the three successive votes initiated by the Russian Federation on a single question — Ukraine's initiative to keep the item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" on the Assembly's agenda. On 9 September, at the request of the Russian Federation, the General Assembly held a recorded vote on the decision to retain the item on the agenda of the current session (see A/75/PV.102). Subsequently, the General Committee, at its inaugural meeting of the seventy-sixth session, held on 15 September, also adopted a decision to recommend the inclusion of the aforementioned item on the agenda (see A/76/PV.1). Incidentally, during the Committee's meeting, the Russian delegation predictably received only two votes in support of its challenge.

We deplore the Russian delegation's consistently disrespectful attitude to Member States and the General Assembly. During a meeting held on 17 September (see A/76/PV.2), the General Assembly, at the request of the Russian Federation, again confirmed the same decision for the second time in two weeks. That does not even include the General Committee vote held between the two Assembly meetings — a vote that challenged a decision adopted by the main organ of the United

Nations, made up of 193 Member States. Those actions of the Russian Federation sought to undermine the Assembly's authority on issues of particular importance to certain Member States.

I would like to reiterate our deep gratitude to all delegations that supported the decisions I have just cited. It is important to counter such politically motivated and unconstructive actions, which could undermine the Assembly's authority. I call on all Member States to participate actively in ensuring that the General Assembly considers the situation in the occupied territories of Ukraine at the beginning of the resumed session. I am confident that open, comprehensive and substantive discussion of the issue by the United Nations membership will facilitate the efforts to end the occupation of the sovereign territories of Ukraine and contribute to upholding the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as foster a genuine revitalization of the Assembly.

Secondly, we must ensure the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations. The scope for implementing the resolutions adopted remains limited by certain countries' unwillingness to comply. That selective approach to implementation undermines the Organization's ability to make a real difference in various situations on the ground. As I have already noted, there is one State that pretends that resolutions adopted by the Member States do not exist or do not apply to it.

In 2014, the General Assembly, in resolution 68/262, affirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Since then, in a number of subsequent resolutions on the situation on the Crimean peninsula, the General Assembly has condemned the ongoing temporary occupation of that part of the territory of Ukraine. We will present updated draft resolutions this year, including those based on the relevant reports of the Secretary-General. All these resolutions, supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States, send a clear message to the aggressor State from the United Nations membership to the effect that the Organization is ready to defend its values.

Nevertheless, those resolutions have yet to be fully implemented. We continue to witness brutal violations of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations along with acts of aggression

by a foreign military against Ukraine and the ongoing temporary occupation of parts of its territory.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that our joint work aimed at revitalizing the General Assembly has already yielded tangible results, but there is broad room for improvement in order to make the Assembly and its decisions effective, thereby solidifying the legacy of the Organization.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for your sustained leadership of the General Assembly. Your presidency of hope rightly directs the vision of the Assembly at goals that are greater than we have achieved previously. That is critically important as we chart a future beyond the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and do the hard work of harnessing the lessons that we have all learned from it. Foremost among those lessons, my delegation would argue, is that with collegiality and ingenuity, we can make the United Nations and the Assembly ever more relevant in the lives of people around the world.

The goal of our revitalization of the work of the General Assembly should be to increase the Assembly's efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility and transparency. Our joint commitment is needed to address the perennial challenge of how to make the work of the General Assembly relevant. We believe that requires us to do the hard work of streamlining the agenda so that we can focus our collective energy on the pressing issues that need our attention the most. It is our duty as part of the revitalization effort to appropriately biennialize, triennialize, cluster and eliminate items and resolutions as we make room for the critical issues before us while ensuring the alignment of our efforts within their proper organs. We must focus our efforts on tangible, achievable improvements to our working methods.

To start with, we must ensure that all stakeholders have a seat at the table. The time has come for the United Nations to be accessible to all. In 2021, far too many barriers remain to the equal and active participation of all members of our delegations, including those with physical disabilities, as well as the many stakeholders who join our meetings annually. While commendable progress has been made, undue physical barriers continue to impede the participation of some of our representatives. We must prioritize the ability of persons with disabilities to enter and exit United Nations Headquarters on an equal basis. So, too,

must we make the reasonable accommodation process itself accessible and efficient. The documents produced by the United Nations are intended to be universally accessible and it is time that they included universal design. Accessing a resolution, meeting record or other basic documentation should not require delegations to convert or manipulate documents in order for their staff to read them. Universal design would address those simple matters during the drafting and publication of documents, reducing the need for extra effort.

We urge delegations to allocate resources to matters that strengthen the United Nations and address global crises, including ending fraught practices that, frankly, unduly tarnish the Assembly's reputation. To that end, the United States maintains its call for a code of ethics in United Nations elections and appointments.

Efforts are also needed to improve the efficiency of the accreditation and registration processes of the General Assembly. We must build on the e-registration advancements of recent years and harness common technology for improved productivity. The ability to upload registration information in bulk through comma-separated files alone could save thousands of staff hours and greatly improve our working methods. Reforms are also needed to align the honorifics used with the titles of our representatives so that we can properly accredit and register them. COVID-19 could not stop the Assembly's critical work. We adopted and adapted practices to keep us safe during this public health emergency. As we have done in the past, we must reflect and make necessary changes to prepare now for future emergencies. As we are all doing at home, we must develop and strengthen our contingency plans at Headquarters to ensure the continuity of operations. We must remain nimble and prepared to respond to the realities before us. Let me end by quoting President Biden at the start of this session:

"As a global community, we are challenged by urgent and looming crises, wherein lie enormous opportunities if we can summon the will and resolve to seize these opportunities." (*see A/76/PV.3*)

As we seize those opportunities, we need the strongest possible foundation, grounded in effective working methods, multilateral engagement and a resilient United Nations system. There are simply too many great challenges before all of us on matters of climate, pandemic response and preparedness, peace and security, human dignity and human

rights — challenges that in turn require us to rise to the challenge of revitalizing the General Assembly. The United States look forward to working with you, Mr. President, on this effort, as well as your appointed co-Chairs.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I would like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for presiding over this important debate today and for your leadership and activism in guiding the General Assembly, especially during your recent visit to Glasgow for the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Your presidency of hope is indeed making an impact globally, and we thank you for that.

With regard to agenda items 21 and 22, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, I would like to thank Ambassadors Egriselda Aracely González López of El Salvador and Michal Mlynár of Slovakia for their work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the seventy-fifth session, especially given the topic's pertinence during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We look forward to the continued stewardship of Ambassador González Lopez and congratulate Ambassador Mitchell Fifield of Australia on his appointment as co-Chair for the coming session.

Singapore aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Malaysia and Algeria on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively. I would like to add some points in our national capacity.

From previous debates on this topic and from what speakers today have said, it is clear that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is an important issue for many States, including my own. The Assembly is the main deliberative policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, where all Member States, big or small, have an equal voice. In that regard, Singapore has always been a strong supporter of a more efficient, effective and accountable General Assembly. As we face global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, we must further strengthen our efforts to reinforce the role of the United Nations, with the General Assembly as a key player.

We are glad to see that the revitalization process has produced some concrete results, first among them

the rationalization of work and streamlining of the General Assembly agenda, including biennializing the resolution on revitalization of the work of the Assembly, an idea that Singapore has long advocated and supported. The second example is the regular dialogues between the Permanent Missions and the Secretariat, which we believe are worthwhile and hope will be continued. The third is the discussions on maintaining business continuity in the United Nations through information and communications technologies despite the restrictions resulting from COVID-19. These positive outcomes of the revitalization process have given us a good foundation to build on during this session after work on the revitalization process. My delegation has some suggestions to share with our colleagues about this.

First, we think it is important to continue to focus on how we can preserve the primacy of the general debate during high-level week by rationalizing the number of high-level meetings and side events taking place in parallel with the general debate. The high-level week is undoubtedly demanding on all delegations, but it is particularly taxing for small countries with limited resources and personnel.

We note that resolution 75/325, on the revitalization of the General Assembly, encourages Member States and the United Nations to consult one another in order to limit the number of side events and minimize overlap. But we think we can go further than mere encouragement. For all Member States to productively participate in and benefit from high-level week, we think it is important to take a more structured and predictable approach whereby all the proposed high-level meetings during that week are collated and shared in an open meeting of the General Committee under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly. That would give all of us an overview of the entire programme of high-level meetings and side events taking place in parallel to the general debate. We would also like to encourage the President to consider the idea of drafting guidelines for the overall management of activities during high-level week for further consideration in the General Committee or the General Assembly. The idea of guidelines for high-level week has been around for some time, and we hope that we can make some concrete progress in that area during this session.

Secondly, we think that we should continue to support the rationalization and streamlining of the General Assembly agenda, including by biennializing

or even triennializing resolutions, clustering items and resolutions and introducing sunset clauses where possible. While there are many pertinent issues and the final decision to reduce the frequency of resolutions or introduce a sunset clause is the prerogative of the text's main sponsors, we should also take into account the fact that the proliferation of agenda items and resolutions will simply lead to an unsustainable volume of work that will end up diluting the Assembly's focus.

Thirdly, as the COVID-19 situation stabilizes, we would like to encourage the President and the Secretariat to explore resuming more in-person meetings and meetings held in a single conference room rather than in multiple conference rooms joined electronically, which separates all delegations and is not conducive to effective discussion and working together. There is no long-term replacement for face-to-face diplomacy and the interpersonal relationships that can be forged only through in-person meetings, which are essential to helping Member States achieve consensus and find solutions on a range of issues. We think it is also important to have regular General Assembly meetings on business continuity, as that gives all members a chance to discuss meeting arrangements and safety measures, as well as share opinions in an open-ended and inclusive manner.

Those are some of Singapore's views on this issue. We reiterate our full support and commitment to working with all our colleagues and delegations to help revitalize the work of the General Assembly. We will continue to work with other Member States and the Secretariat to build on the recommendations in resolution 75/325 in order to produce concrete and meaningful outcomes that will effectively revitalize the United Nations and multilateralism, with the General Assembly at the forefront of the process.

Mr. Misra (India): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening a meeting on this important issue.

I want to take this opportunity to affirm that India supports the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and El Salvador, the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session for steering the work of the Group. We congratulate the Permanent

Representatives of Australia and El Salvador on their appointment as co-Chairs for the seventy-sixth session and wish them success. My delegation will give them its full support in achieving a productive outcome.

At the outset, I would like to emphasize that the General Assembly is the foremost global gathering of nations. Its primacy and legitimacy flow from the inclusive nature of its membership and the principle of sovereign equality of all of its constituents. The Assembly's universal character, and the moral weight of its decisions and opinions, cannot be overemphasized. However, over a period of time, some of the members have started to feel that the General Assembly has gradually lost touch with its foundational responsibilities and has become overwhelmed with procedures. The role and the authority of the General Assembly has also been progressively undermined by the role and activism of the Security Council, which is infringing on issues that generally belong to the mandate of the General Assembly. We must admit that some of the blame lies with the Assembly itself and its member States for allowing its relevance to be diluted, despite the fact that it is the definitive voice of the Permanent Missions. That surely undermines the overall effectiveness and relevance of the United Nations.

India has always believed that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the primary deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is restricted in letter and spirit. Any discussion of the revitalization of the General Assembly leads us to the foundational objective that the Charter of the United Nations gives the General Assembly — a distinct leadership role. Article 10 of the Charter mandates the Assembly to discuss any question or matter within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter, except as provided in Article 12. The General Assembly must therefore take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the primacy of the United Nations in adopting a multilateral approach to resolving existing and emerging global challenges.

For a revitalized General Assembly that is in tune with the challenges of our times we need to draw inspiration from the high standards the Assembly set for itself right at the beginning of its journey. Over time, there have been several occasions when the General Assembly has led from the front while setting a global agenda and facing challenges. The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development

agenda, followed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Ocean Conference in 2017, the recent Climate Action Summit, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the high-level meeting on universal health coverage are examples of how the General Assembly can set the global agenda and galvanize the global community in order to solve its common problems and challenges. It is therefore incumbent on us to remain vigilant in ensuring that the General Assembly retains its leadership role and strengthens its ability to address global challenges.

The process of revitalization of the General Assembly is an urgent obligation. While we have made some progress, we must not forget that we have a long way to go. The revitalization must also be seen in the wider context of the overall reform of the United Nations. It is our firm belief that comprehensive United Nations reform, including of the Security Council, is urgent if we are to ensure that the Organization reflects current geopolitical realities and enhances its capability to meet the increasingly complex challenges of our time.

The efficacy, relevance and durability of any institution lie in its dynamic character and its willingness to adapt itself to changing times so that it not only upholds time-tested values but addresses the emerging challenges of the day. The challenges confronting the world related to sustainable development, security, migration, health and climate change, among others, cannot be addressed in isolation. Let us take this opportunity to renew our resolve to strengthen the role of the General Assembly in setting the global agenda, making policy and finding solutions to global challenges and problems. The success of multilateralism depends principally on the success of the Assembly.

The General Assembly will soon be deliberating on the draft procedural resolution on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). In order to ensure that *Our Common Agenda* succeeds, it should be truly shared and owned by all of us. A Member State-driven process will ensure that and will be fair to all developing countries. We need to have greater trust in ourselves to do the right thing. We hope that the draft resolution will therefore be purely procedural and lucid if we have to take it further. We need to guard against attempts to rush into implementation without clarity and discussion. India will be a constructive and active participant in any process that enables Member States to consider this important report. I assure you, Mr. President, that

you can count on my delegation's positive support and participation in these efforts.

Ms. Benziane (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): First of all, my delegation thanks you, Sir, for convening this joint debate on the agenda items entitled "Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations" and "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". We also want to take this opportunity to express our warm congratulations on the reappointment of Mrs. Egriselda Aracely González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, and the appointment of Mr. Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its current session. We also commend the outstanding work of the outgoing co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the previous session, Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, who demonstrated his professionalism, determination and leadership. The co-Chairs for the seventy-fifth session ably led the complex debates and negotiations that resulted in the adoption of resolution 75/325, which is action-oriented, contains many practical and concrete measures for improving the Assembly's efficiency and effectiveness and made significant progress on a wide range of important reform issues.

The decision to review the revitalization process itself every two years is an important one, as it will enable us to better focus our efforts on the more detailed implementation of decisions and reflect in depth on future actions. We hope that this biennial pace will enable the further streamlining of other Assembly processes. We also welcome the decision to amend rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which will be effective from the opening of the seventy-eighth session and will enable the Assembly to meet in regular session commencing on the Tuesday of the second week in September — one week earlier than currently is the case — in order to give the new presidency and its Office more time to prepare for the general debate and the high-level week. While the coronavirus disease pandemic has had an impact on the work of the General Assembly and the United Nations in general, it has also given us an opportunity to reflect on how effectively the Assembly is adapting its working methods so that it can continue to address global challenges as they evolve.

The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations guide the conduct of international

relations. In that context, we reiterate the importance of the implementation of Article 12 of the Charter, which states that

“[w]hile 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”,

in order to avoid any interference between and encroachment on the respective functions and powers of each principal organ.

A revitalized General Assembly would contribute significantly to strengthening both multilateralism and the United Nations system as a whole. The revitalization of the Assembly, the main deliberative and decision-making body of the United Nations, plays an essential role in the overall reform of the Organization and strengthening multilateralism. Today it is more important than ever that multilateralism is reinforced so that we can meet the challenges facing humankind in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world.

In that regard, we reiterate our support for the important reforms proposed by the Secretary-General, whose positive results are already enabling the United Nations to address our world's complex and multidimensional developments more effectively. We also thank him for his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which we support, and which covers a wide range of challenges that demand our attention and a series of recommendations that deserve serious and thoughtful follow-up. In that framework, Morocco has sponsored a procedural draft resolution presented by a group of countries to initiate a follow-up process for the many recommendations in the report. I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm my delegation's resolve to work with the group and all Member States for the speedy adoption of the draft resolution so that we can implement *Our Common Agenda*.

We also welcome the tangible and constructive progress made in recent years in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly thanks to our joint efforts and the successful completion of initiatives emanating from the Ad Hoc Working Group. We call on all Member States to continue in the same spirit in order to build on the achievements of previous sessions. We note with satisfaction the measures taken by the Secretariat, in particular the Department for General Assembly and

Conference Management, to implement the Assembly's decisions concerning its revitalization and ensure the smooth running of our meetings and other activities within the Organization.

With regard to the financial and liquidity crisis still facing our Organization, the Secretary-General has taken commendably prompt and effective concrete measures. In our shared goal of revitalizing the General Assembly and ensuring the proper functioning of the United Nations, it is incumbent on all of us to ensure that the Organization has the financial and administrative means it needs. In that regard, we commend the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance for its outstanding work regarding balancing the budgets necessary for the Organization's proper functioning.

We must continue working to increase synergies and coherence among the items on the agenda of the various committees and ensure that the agenda of the General Assembly is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With regard to the Assembly's working methods, we support the efforts to increase gender parity within the United Nations, and we welcome the Secretary-General's commitment and the outstanding progress he has made in ensuring gender equality, which has already been achieved at the senior level, as well as for all staff members of the Organization. Morocco welcomes the efforts to make the selection process for the appointment of the Secretary-General and other senior United Nations officials inclusive, transparent and effective.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that the process of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly requires the commitment of all Member States and genuine political will in order to implement its noble objectives. In that regard, Morocco reaffirms its commitment to continuing to contribute effectively and constructively to the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on revitalizing the work of the Assembly.

Ms. Fatima (Bangladesh): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's joint debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations, under agenda items 122 and 121, respectively.

At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate Ambassadors Egriselda González López and Mitchell Fifield on their reappointment and appointment, respectively, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working

Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. They will have my delegation's full support as they take forward their important work. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Michal Mlynár of Slovakia, the previous co-Chair, with Mrs. González López, for their excellent work together and the progress made on this important exercise.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

As we meet in the middle of the pandemic, we recognize the critical need for making the United Nations fit for purpose amid the changing realities of today's world, to ensure that it is seen as relevant, purposeful and able to deliver results. In that regard, the work on the revitalization of the General Assembly has assumed renewed urgency. Bangladesh recognizes the importance of continuing to review the status of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

At the seventy-fifth session, Bangladesh, together with Slovenia, co-facilitated the alignment of the agendas of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The outcome of the process produced agreement on some common principles and concrete recommendations to reduce gaps, overlaps and duplications in the agendas of the intergovernmental bodies. Those recommendations have a significant bearing on the efficiency and purpose of the work of the General Assembly, and it will be important to follow up on them in the overall exercise involving the revitalization of the Assembly.

We are well aware of the necessity of strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly and have welcomed the efforts deployed by current and past Presidents to reinforce the role and functions of the President and his or her Office. In recognition of the importance of that, this year Bangladesh has seconded one of its diplomats to the Office.

Bangladesh welcomes the interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council, including the regular consultations between their Presidents. I firmly hope that the Assembly's relationship and coordination with the other principal bodies of the United Nations will be further strengthened and improved as the process continues to be implemented.

Bangladesh also welcomed the active discussion in both the General Assembly and the Security Council on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as it further contributes to reinforcing the linkage between the two main bodies of the United Nations.

Bangladesh believes that the most critical means to enhance the visibility of the General Assembly is for it to work effectively to address the world's challenges, including the current recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease pandemic. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). It is timely and ambitious, and rightly so. The mandate given to him by the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations to advance its 12 commitments required an objective diagnosis of the problems of our time and an ambitious way forward. We look forward to broad-based, constructive consultations and engagement on how we can take forward some of the key deliverables and recommendations, while recognizing the primacy of a Member State-led process.

The General Assembly should continue holding inclusive and interactive thematic debates on current issues of critical importance to the international community. It should also further increase its interaction on relevant issues with non-State actors, including civil society, young people, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, which will contribute positively to increasing the Assembly's visibility and public awareness of it. In that regard, we believe that the Verified campaign on trusted factual COVID-19 information of the Department of Global Communications is doing good work. We also believe that in order to raise the profile of the work of the General Assembly there should be vigorous media and public outreach programmes not only by the President of the General Assembly but also the Chairs of the Main Committees and other relevant interlocutors. The public needs a better understanding of our work, and only that can lead to better appreciation and support for it. In conclusion, we will continue to actively engage in the work of the revitalization exercise, and my delegation will continue to support all efforts in that regard.

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the convening of this meeting. I would like to congratulate Ambassador Egriselda González López, the Permanent Representative of El Salvador, on her reappointment as co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work

of the General Assembly, which achieved a number of the milestones it had aimed for during the seventy-fifth session. We congratulate Ambassador Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, on his appointment as co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group. I am sure that we will be able to meet the principal goals of the process during the seventy-sixth session. I also acknowledge the work of the outgoing co-Chair, Ambassador Michal Mlynár, who together with his co-Chair, Mrs. González López, revitalized the process of revitalization, as I indicated on 10 September (see A/75/PV.103) when resolution 75/325 was adopted by consensus.

I reiterate today what I said in that statement, in which I underlined various fundamental aspects, such as those related to working methods and the relationship of the General Assembly with the other principal United Nations bodies, including the Security Council. I am therefore not going to repeat those points, which remain valid. On this occasion, I will address very briefly what the process should see as part of its main focus, which is its implementation. You can count on the support of Ecuador, Mr. President, to proceed decisively in the implementation of resolution 75/325. It is the responsibility of all of us to implement its provisions, which we agreed on during negotiations, and the same applies to all aspects of General Assembly resolutions. My delegation is convinced that the best way to reflect the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly is by implementing its own recommendations.

Lastly, my delegation would like to highlight the approach of the Secretary-General in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), understanding it in terms of the need for States to make decisions concerning the main intergovernmental bodies that will enable us to overcome our most urgent international challenges. During this session, let us also improve our working methods and make the best use of them so that the process of revitalization can continue to be a major example of the modernization of our work.

Ms. Jiang Hua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China congratulates Ambassadors Mitchell Fifield and Egriselda González López, Permanent Representatives of Australia and El Salvador, respectively, on their appointments as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its current session. We also appreciate the

contribution made by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia during the previous session.

The General Assembly is a Charter-based organ of the United Nations made up of all of its States Members, and the effectiveness of its work has a bearing on the vital interests of all Member States and on the authoritative status of the United Nations. In recent years we have worked together on the issue and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly has continued to achieve positive results, especially in areas such as the election of the Secretary-General and the Assembly's working methods. Where substantive progress has been made, China supports the continuing improvement of the authority and efficiency of the General Assembly and has three proposals.

First, the Assembly should effectively perform its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, embody true multilateralism and promote the values of peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom, which are common to humankind. All countries should uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order, based on international law, and the basic norms of international relations, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Solidarity in the fight against the pandemic, along with economic recovery, is the current top priority of the work of the General Assembly. We hope that the General Assembly will promote greater international solidarity to overcome the pandemic and its impact on global development, accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, jointly address the challenges of climate change, adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, help countries fulfil their obligations to reduce emissions and assist developing countries in transforming their economies.

Secondly, the General Assembly's work should be improved in terms of the quality, efficiency and focus of the implementation of existing resolutions. In recent years the number of items on the Assembly's agenda has increased, and Member States are all in favour of streamlining it and improving its efficiency. We believe that consideration could be given to merging related items or biennializing or triennializing them. In order to strengthen the role of the high-level week, the status of the general debate should be prioritized over other high-level events, and the side events during the high-

level week should be appropriately limited. China is ready to work with all other parties to strengthen the role and authority of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies established under the Charter have their own clear divisions of labour and should do their respective jobs, take advantage of their strengths, strengthen core collaboration rather than competition and create synergies rather than erode Charter mandates. The effective functioning of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is an important part of the smooth running of the work of the General Assembly. In view of the Assembly's increasingly heavy workload, China supports increasing human resources and the financial budget for the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 75/325, adopted during the previous session of the General Assembly, the Ad Hoc Working Group at the current session will focus on the issue of the role and authority of the Assembly and its working methods. At the next session, we will discuss the remaining issues and adopt the relevant draft resolutions. That will contribute to the rational planning of discussions on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which Member States have unanimously welcomed. China will strongly support the work of the co-Chairs, actively participate in the relevant discussions and promote more substantive outcomes on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Evseenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Australia and El Salvador on their appointment and reappointment, respectively, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session. We also commend the Permanent Representative of Slovakia for his valuable work on the issue. We believe firmly that under its current leadership, the Ad Hoc Working Group will again be able to achieve significant results.

Belarus has consistently advocated for the revitalization of the General Assembly and its greater involvement in dealing with the urgent challenges facing the Organization and the international community as a whole. We will be able to achieve that goal only

by increasing the impact of our work, improving the working methods of the General Assembly and modernizing our approaches to address the realities of today.

The decision to biennialize the adoption of the General Assembly resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly will greatly increase our ability to focus on implementing it more effectively, thereby ensuring its proper execution and oversight. We clearly need to review the working methods of the Organization. Our workload has grown tremendously, and faced with stacks of reports, resolutions and speeches, we fail to see that we sometimes do the same tasks over and over. Belarus has repeatedly raised the issue of eliminating duplication in the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees and that of the Economic and Social Council. For all practical purposes, the Assembly's agenda has not been reviewed since the founding of the Organization. It simply adds new items and is no longer responding to today's demands. It is time to revise the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and end duplication.

Belarus will continue to support the proposals aimed at democratizing the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General and restoring geographical balance in the process of selecting candidates to the position in accordance with the principle of multilateralism, which is an essential condition for achieving the United Nations goals. We believe that the participation of all Member States, each in accordance with its own terms of reference and capacity, will enable us to strengthen the Organization as a whole within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations. The steps being taken to optimize the working methods of the General Assembly and its interaction with other United Nations bodies should serve the same purpose.

Ms. Fatima (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the same time, we believe that the key to any transformation at the United Nations lies not in the text of resolutions but in our collaboration, based not merely on the desire to persuade our partners that we are right, but above all on our ability to listen to others. A results-oriented approach, an active search for compromise without undermining our impartiality, and serious analytical support for negotiations will

enable us to achieve the outcome that we all seek. We hope that the positive momentum and results-oriented approach will not be limited to the adoption of the most important documents, but will also actively support the direct implementation of the revitalization process of the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): I would like to thank the President for holding this important debate today. At the outset, let me congratulate Ambassadors González López of El Salvador and Mlynár of Slovakia on their commendable leadership in steering the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session. I also congratulate Mrs. González López and Ambassador Fifield of Australia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group this year. We look forward to working with them.

Indonesia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Algeria and Malaysia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively, and I would like to share a few points in my national capacity as well.

The General Assembly represents international solidarity and a practical manifestation of multilateralism. It has continued to play its role as an inclusive, deliberating, policy- and decision-making body of the United Nations, with the representation of all Member States. There is no better platform for developing solutions to global challenges than the Assembly, where all nations, large and small, interact on a basis of equality to address their concerns and foster shared peace and prosperity. In that regard, Indonesia acknowledges the ongoing efforts to strengthen the role, authority, efficiency and effectiveness of the General Assembly in addressing our ever-evolving and multifaceted global challenges. Furthermore, we reiterate our commitment to supporting multilateralism and the implementation of revitalization resolutions, as the culmination of our work and the cornerstone of the ongoing process of United Nations reform.

The work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly last year was fruitful and productive, particularly with the adoption of resolution 75/325, pertaining to actionable ways forward for us to pursue a more efficient, effective and revitalized Assembly. Indonesia also appreciates its reference encouraging greater openness in the

selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General, as well as the promotion of gender balance and geographical representation of the executive heads of the United Nations system. We welcome the convening of interactive dialogue between Member States and the candidates to ensure accountability and inclusiveness in the appointment of that very important position, as well as efforts and initiatives to strengthen the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

We believe that our achievements related to the revitalization of the role of the General Assembly so far have resulted from the renewed political will and spirit of international cooperation demonstrated by all representatives. Finally, for its part, Indonesia is determined to continue playing its role in strengthening the work of the General Assembly in the Ad Hoc Working Group and other forums, so that we can make further meaningful progress this year.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): We associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier today by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We welcome the convening of today's joint debate on a topic essential to upgrading the United Nations. That is in keeping with the commitment made by our leaders in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations.

We would first like to commend both Ambassador Egriselda Aracely González López and Ambassador Michal Mlynár, who co-chaired the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the seventy-fifth session, for producing a consensus outcome that made significant and actionable gains towards revitalizing the Assembly's work. We would also like to congratulate Ambassadors Mitchell Fifield and González López on their appointment and reappointment, respectively, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the seventy-sixth session. We pledge our support to them in that endeavour and look forward to being actively engaged in the process, focusing on the role and authority of the General Assembly, as well as its working methods. South Africa would therefore like to make three points today.

First, it is important to emphasize the centrality of the authority of the General Assembly as the most representative of the principal organs of the United

Nations. Of course, the Assembly's role and authority must be understood in relation to the other principal organs as outlined in Article 7 of the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore believe that interaction and coordination among those organs are essential to the effective conduct of the work of the United Nations. Their work in relation to the three pillars should be enhanced in accordance with their respective mandates. Human rights, peace and security and development are interrelated and mutually dependent. That must be reflected in the work of the United Nations.

Secondly, we are of the view that the authority of the General Assembly must find expression in the implementation of its numerous resolutions. The leadership provided by the outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group is therefore vital, specifically in allowing the space for implementation. That also applies to clear and effective communication about the work of the United Nations, in order to make the broader public aware of the critical role that the Organization plays in improving their lives and delivering on the various global challenges that we all face. In that regard, we support both rationalizing the outcomes of the General Assembly, with a possibility of the biennialization or triennialization of some resolutions, as well as limiting the number of side events and meetings during the high-level debate.

Thirdly, South Africa views the effectiveness of the General Assembly as strongly dependent on the resources needed to pursue its objectives. In order to preserve institutional memory, we encourage the outgoing Chairs of the Main Committees to continue to brief incoming Chairs on the best practices and lessons learned from previous sessions. It is also essential that each Main Committee further consider how to streamline its work and seek innovative ways of structuring its general and thematic debates. Through having to respond to the constraints imposed on us by the coronavirus disease, we have realized that we can make more efficient use of our time, while still maintaining and even improving our effectiveness. We have also learned that while we have had to adapt to constraints by taking extraordinary measures, we cannot replace the in-person interactions on which multilateral diplomacy has been built over the decades. South Africa therefore looks forward to resuming those interactions in full, ahead of important mandated meetings and other high-level events.

In conclusion, as we embark on pursuing our common agenda, we must not forget the long-standing commitments we have made to delivering on sustainable development, ensuring peace and security and safeguarding human rights. The General Assembly's role should be that of a rudder, steering our collective multilateral efforts to respond to the numerous challenges we all face. We once again appreciate today's timely debate and look forward to the stewardship of the President and the co-Chairs in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly and safeguarding the centrality of the United Nations in strengthening multilateralism.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President for convening today's meeting to address a high-priority issue for the Organization, the affirmation of the indispensable role of the General Assembly as the universal forum par excellence, in which we assert the legal equality of States and the validity of multilateralism.

Mexico challenges the voices of those who criticize or underestimate the decisions of the General Assembly because they are not legally binding, or who disparage the work of delegations as having little impact on the ground. The political commitments outlined in Assembly resolutions guide public policy decisions and measure our collective thought and consensus on specific issues at any given time. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of States to honour their commitments pursuant to the resolutions of the General Assembly, and efforts to continue to empower this principal organ will be effective only as far as its own members give weight to its decisions. The value of multilateralism depends on our compliance with the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly. In that regard, I would like to draw members' attention to one of Mexico's concerns about a procedure that is contrary to efforts to revitalize and democratize the General Assembly.

We often hear that there are some who consider that resolutions or decisions adopted by a vote in the General Assembly are not legitimate and only those adopted unanimously are valid. We would like to reiterate that while consensus is desirable, the Assembly's rules of procedure allow for legitimate decisions to be taken by a vote, which is essential to the functioning of any democratic process. We echo the Secretary-General's call in his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) for uniting our efforts and making multilateralism in the twenty-first century more interconnected, inclusive

and effective in addressing current challenges. The Secretary-General encourages us to bring together our existing institutional capacities, overcome divisions, avoid working in silos and improve coordination among regional and global entities and activities. The adequate functioning of the Assembly is a prerequisite for robust and democratic global governance, which will enable us to have better models for the development of the international community and our peoples.

The Assembly must respond effectively to our current global challenges and, ultimately, ensure that the results of this principal deliberative organ and its policymaking and representation translate into improvements in the well-being of our countries' citizens. That is why the General Assembly must continue to improve in order to become a stronger and more functional body that encourages, not hinders, decision-making processes that reach agreements and foster trust among all its members.

We welcome the successful outcome of the 2021 negotiations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and the very able co-chairing of Ambassador Egriselda Aracely González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, and Ambassador Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia. We thank them for their work and dedication. We are encouraged by the agreements reached within the Working Group in areas of particular relevance to Mexico, such as the urgent need to preserve the primacy and relevance of the general debate in the light of the proliferation of side events that are organized during the high-level week; the importance of promoting dialogue among delegations in order to prevent the duplication of items; and the continued consolidation of the agenda of the General Assembly, starting with the resolution on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which has been biennialized.

Other substantive agreements reached relate to the change to rule 1 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly concerning an earlier start to the work of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, as well as the request to the Security Council to continue efforts to introduce its report to the General Assembly in a timely manner so as to ensure its consideration prior to the annual general debate. Some of the most important points agreed on pertain to the inclusion of lessons learned and recommendations for subsequent clarification concerning the process of nominating

candidates and the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General this year, including consultations between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as interactive dialogues and the participation of civil society. In that regard, we welcome the references to gender parity in posts in the Senior Management Group and the recommendation that States appoint more women candidates to posts at all levels, including to the Office of Secretary-General.

We thank the President of the General Assembly for appointing Ambassador Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, and again thank Ambassador Egriselda Aracely González López. They will serve as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are certain that under their leadership, the Group will continue to work on implementing the agreements reached, as well as on its outstanding issues, in order to continue to improve the General Assembly and its working methods.

Mr. Nayan (Philippines): The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Malaysia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the representative of Algeria, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We congratulate Ambassadors Egriselda Aracely González López of El Salvador and Mitchell Fifield of Australia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. We also thank the outgoing co-Chair, Ambassador Michal Mlynár of Slovakia, for his leadership and contributions to the revitalization process during the past two sessions of the General Assembly. We appreciate today's joint debate on the issue of revitalization, an important platform that both reaffirms the General Assembly's pre-eminence in the United Nations system and provides a focus on how to improve its work, especially in extraordinary circumstances.

The Philippines has been actively engaged since 2015 in the dialogue on revitalization within the context of the United Nations reform agenda. For this session, we welcome the focus on two themes — the role and authority of the General Assembly, and working methods.

With regard to the role and authority of the General Assembly, the Philippines reiterates its support for the view that the General Assembly is the chief

deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is therefore imperative that Member States galvanize their efforts to reinforce the role and authority of the General Assembly and enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as its transparency and inclusiveness. Mindful of the primacy of the Assembly, we also support the calls for greater coherence in the work of the various principal organs, including the rationalization of their agendas and greater institutional coordination among them through regular meetings of their Presidents, among other things.

With regard to working methods, given its comprehensive impact on efficiency, effectiveness and transparency, the review of the General Assembly's working methods should strengthen policy coherence and institutional leadership and enhance results. We are pleased to note that the biennialization of the revitalization resolution, starting after the seventy-seventh session, will provide more time to focus on the implementation of its recommendations. A major achievement of last year's resolution 75/325 and a key focus of the Philippines' advocacy in the past six years is the rationalization of the convening of side events and high-level meetings on the margins of the high-level week, which will ensure the integrity of the general debate. We hope to reaffirm our collective commitment on that principle for this session.

With greater political will and the stronger collaborative action of Member States, we hope to achieve a more ambitious, innovative and action-oriented resolution for the seventy-sixth session. The Philippines stands ready to help ensure the success of the Ad Hoc Working Group in its important task of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): First of all, Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union, and I would like to make a few additional observations in my national capacity.

First, I would like to sincerely congratulate my colleague and friend Ambassador Egriselda Aracely González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, on her reappointment and Ambassador Mitch Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia, on his appointment, as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly for the seventy-sixth session. We have two

strong and experienced diplomats at the helm of this important process and they deserve our full confidence and support throughout this session in their demanding roles. I would also like to thank my colleagues and delegations for the kind words addressed to Ambassador González López and me concerning the work that we conducted during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I decided to take the floor from the rostrum because, based on the previous three sessions during which I have had the privilege and honour to co-chair this important process, I believe that it is crucial to highlight the relevance and important role of this particular process in the General Assembly. It is often regarded or referred to as a technical one. Let me very clearly emphasize that nothing could be further from the truth. It is a very important political process that deserves our political attention and political engagement, including at the level of Permanent Representatives. I would like to encourage all my Permanent Representative colleagues to continue paying significant and sufficient attention to this important process as we embark on it during the seventy-sixth session. In addition, in my former capacity as a co-Chair, I emphasized many times that the revitalization of the General Assembly should be seen as a continuous process — a living and developing organism that deserves Member States' full attention and contribution. As one of the most relevant mandated processes, it requires the determination and constructive approach of every individual Member State if our common goal is to make the General Assembly a more prepared and more effective United Nations body for new challenges.

Today we are opening a new chapter in the process, at least with regard to abandoning long-used stereotypes and repetitions of the same patterns. Ambassador González López and I are extremely proud, together with all the delegations that worked with us, of the biennialization of this resolution as one of the most tangible results of the previous session. Now the question is how to make it materialize — how do we turn this relatively unimportant but significant and still technical issue into something that will also have the necessary and expected political implications? It should give us more time to focus on the implementation of previously agreed measures. Let me remind my colleagues that there is a long list of such measures and tasks to which we have already committed. Yet we have not always been successful or diligent in their

implementation. Let us therefore use this session to do better on implementation and, of course, on the two important clusters that we will primarily address during this session — the role and authority of the General Assembly and its working methods.

Every year so far, we have been driven by the necessity to reach a consensus-based text on the revitalization process, which took a very significant amount of our time. But we often failed to realize that the various glitches lay somewhere else — in the success or failure of the implementation of existing tasks. This is therefore a new opportunity for us. Instead of focusing on yet another draft resolution and not necessarily having enough time to actually read the previous one and make sure that we have been able to implement it, we can use the time that we have saved or made available to do just that. Further streamlining of the work of the General Assembly is and must be the top priority for all of us in this important process.

It is significant to see the revitalization process leading by example. I hope that that will truly inspire other processes and facilitations and, indeed, our six Main Committees as well. However, as I said, that is not sufficient. It is our mindset and our political will that need to change. We need to adopt a broader approach to be more successful. Why? It is very simple. We owe it to our customers, the people we serve. Let us not lose sight of the people's perspective on our radar screen as we continue our work in the revitalization context. We also potentially need to shift into a higher gear with regard to lessons learned from the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and understanding how to transform that challenging experience into a unique chance to modernize the work of the General Assembly. Do we owe it to our customers, as I said? Do we owe it to the people we serve? Yes, we do. Despite spreading the thematic clusters over two years, as I mentioned, having an interactive dialogue with the Secretariat every year only underlines the importance of the tasks that I have mentioned.

Our collective commitments need to be translated into collective action, with direct impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of this body, the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Let us collectively focus on making it more of what we strive for it to be, which is, to repeat myself, the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It can function properly only if we look in the mirror and

realize that there are some important and often not very difficult improvements and reforms to be made. We often also refer to it as the world's parliament. Let us continue focusing on its working methods and on our own way of using the tools and platforms we have available to us to achieve just that.

As a member of the European Union, Slovakia is ready to continue engaging constructively to contribute to the process and support the role of the current co-Chairs in using the momentum we have now. It is a good one, and how we translate it into tangible results is up to us. We sincerely hope that this year we will be able to focus on the implementation of the ambitious collective commitments that we have already agreed on.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the President for convening today's important debate on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. As was the case during the seventy-fifth session, we are holding today's debate in an extremely complex context, in which our collective commitment to multilateralism as a response to the challenges we face is more important than ever before.

In that connection, I would like to take this opportunity to join others in expressing my appreciation and gratitude to my colleague and friend Ambassador Michal Mlynár, who has made an invaluable contribution to the process through his work as co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during three consecutive sessions. I am also grateful for the important contributions of the harmonization process led by you yourself, Madam Vice-President, and the former Permanent Representative of Slovenia, Ambassador Darja Bavdaž Kuret. I would like to add that it is my honour to have been reappointed as co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the seventy-sixth session, this time alongside my colleague and friend Ambassador Mitchell Fifield, Permanent Representative of Australia. I want to express my sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly for the trust that he has placed in both of us. It will be a great honour to work with all members and delegations on the revitalization of the Assembly.

In the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, the Member States that make up the General Assembly recognized that multilateralism is not optional but is

rather essential to our shared commitment to build back better for a world that is more egalitarian, resilient and sustainable. Moreover, our commitment to modernizing the United Nations and ensuring that we revitalize the Assembly is more than ever an essential component of our progress towards a strengthened multilateralism. Faithful to that belief, the Ad Hoc Working Group made significant efforts in the seventy-fifth session to promote concrete, action-oriented results. As some delegations have mentioned, it is clear that the Working Group led by example in the efforts it undertook and the results it achieved.

The revitalization of the Assembly's own revitalization process, through the biennialization of the resolution on that agenda item, will make it possible to strengthen the implementation of Member States' commitments in order to advance an in-depth debate on thematic items. During this session we will evaluate the function and authority of the Assembly and its working methods. During the next session, we will be focusing on strengthening the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, as well as the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads. That change of direction in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group, as well as other important agreements laid out in resolution 75/325, which the Assembly adopted in September, could not have been achieved without the remarkable commitment and effort of all delegations in the negotiations on that text.

Among the matters discussed, we want to highlight the strengthening of the relationships between the principal organs of the United Nations, as well as measures to preserve the primacy and significance of the annual general debate, as other delegations have mentioned. The use and potential of information and communications technologies in our work, as well as aspects relating to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads based on transparency and inclusivity, including the fact that we still have not had a woman Secretary-General, were also recognized. It was also agreed that steps should be taken to carry out an in-depth examination of the Office of the President of the General Assembly in order to continue strengthening it.

In a context where multilateralism continues to be subject to debate and questioning, El Salvador believes that much remains to be done and that the impact of our decisions, as well as the potential measures to be

discussed and adopted as part of the revitalization process of the General Assembly, lies in the hands of Member States and depends to a great extent on the active participation and contributions of the delegations within the Ad Hoc Working Group. From El Salvador's perspective, the central questions in this process therefore continue to be whether we are satisfied with the way in which the General Assembly is currently functioning; whether the work of the General Assembly is capable of facing up to the current challenges that we face; and whether we are prepared to take steps in a direction that will make it possible to strengthen its function, authority and efficiency.

I believe that our deliberations on the two thematic topics for the present session will enable us to carefully assess the agreements we have arrived at in order to strengthen the functioning and authority of the General Assembly and its working methods with a view to progressing towards a revitalized multilateralism. I would therefore like to highlight the fact that a critical component in this debate has always been the promotion of an inclusive dialogue aimed at building consensus. That is why my delegation welcomes the President's initiative to promote Holhuashi dialogues, for example.

I sincerely hope that during this session, Member States will continue to participate decisively and constructively in the debates of the Ad Hoc Working Group. It is up to us, the Member States and delegations, to use this forum to continue to strengthen the function, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly with a renewed and action-oriented focus so that, above all, we meet the expectations of our populations — the people who live outside United Nations Headquarters. I look forward to members' active participation in and commitment to that process.

Mr. Chaudhary (Pakistan): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and we would like to express a few points in our national capacity as well.

Let me begin by congratulating the Permanent Representatives of Australia and El Salvador on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Slovakia, Ambassador Michal Mlynár, for his excellent leadership of the revitalization process during the past two sessions.

The process of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly is challenging but an indispensable task that requires collective, committed and consistent effort. Revitalizing the Assembly means reinvigorating multilateralism. It also means strengthening democratic values and promoting the concept of equality. While there can be no doubt that it is important to improve the Assembly's procedures and working methods, demonstrating the political will to revitalize it is even more pressing. To reiterate what other speakers have already said, the General Assembly is the only universally representative organ of the United Nations. No other intergovernmental body in the world enjoys a universal membership and also covers such a broad spectrum of issues as the Assembly. Even under the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly occupies a central position as the Organization's chief deliberative and policymaking organ. We must harness its true potential in building norms and codifying international law. A reinvigorated General Assembly will make the United Nations more inclusive, effective and responsive, thereby enhancing its ability to simultaneously address complex global issues on the one hand and the unique challenges of individual members on the other.

During the seventy-fifth session, Member States took a landmark decision (resolution 75/325) to biennialize the resolution on the revitalization process. That development should serve as an opportunity to place greater focus on the implementation aspect of the revitalization agenda. In fact, that holds true for every resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Our commitment to turning ambition into action must be raised. There is also a pressing need for improving the coordination, information-sharing and synergies between the principal organs of the United Nations. That could be especially valuable in forging a coherent and effective response to global challenges such as vaccinating populations against the coronavirus disease. Resolution 75/325 also reinforces the sovereign right of every Member State to introduce any new agenda, item or resolution in the Assembly. That provision has a special value for most Member States. Preserving it in future resolutions should be a priority. Rationalization should not mean restricting the prerogatives of the General Assembly membership.

The Charter of the United Nations delineates the functions of the General Assembly, among other things in the area of international peace and security,

including disarmament, international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is vitally important to strengthen the Assembly's role in those areas. The Charter also envisions separate but vitally important roles for both the General Assembly and the Security Council. For example, in line with paragraph 3 of Article 24 of the Charter, the Assembly could invite the Security Council to provide subject-oriented special reports on issues of current international concern. The need for such special reports is felt even more whenever the Council takes a decision under Chapter VII of the Charter. It is also important to ensure that such reports provide a substantive, analytical and material account of the Council's work.

Resolution 75/325 made significant progress in institutionalizing the crucial gains that have been made since 2015 and 2016 in the selection process of the Secretary-General. That momentum must continue. We also commend the resolution's reaffirmation that no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State and that the Secretary-General should ensure that this principle is applied in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the General Assembly of my delegation's commitment to engaging constructively in deliberations to achieve a productive outcome during the current session, that is, strengthening the role, authority and efficiency of the Assembly.

Mr. Fifield (Australia): Australia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of New Zealand on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ), and I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words in my national capacity.

Let me begin by joining others in expressing my sincere thanks to Ambassador Mlynár of Slovakia for his leadership of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the seventy-fifth session. I would also like to congratulate my friend and colleague Ambassador González López of El Salvador on her reappointment as co-Chair for the seventy-sixth session. Together, Ambassadors Mlynár and González López steered one of the most productive sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group in recent years. I commend both of them for their hard work and leadership, as well as for the progress that they have made together with Member States. It is an honour to be appointed co-Chair of the

Ad Hoc Working Group for the seventy-sixth session, and my sincere thanks go to the President and the membership for entrusting me with that important task. On a personal note, I would like to say how much I am looking forward to working with Ambassador González López, learning from her and furthering the good work that she has already done.

As other delegations have noted, our mandate this session is clear. The decision to biennialize the revitalization resolution (resolution 75/325) means that this session of the Ad Hoc Working Group will look different from that of previous years. In the absence of any negotiations, we will bring a special focus to two thematic issues under the banner of revitalization — the role and authority of the General Assembly, and its working methods. Those are two very important pillars and we must use the space provided by the new format to take stock of the many actions agreed under those themes and direct our focus at implementation. We have a real opportunity this session to implement a range of measures that will deliver a more representative, inclusive, efficient and effective Assembly. By reforming the Assembly, we can ensure that it is fit for the future and better equipped to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the commitments of the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations and many of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

It is my hope and that of Ambassador González López that the constructive and collaborative spirit shown by all delegations during the seventy-fifth session will prevail this year as well. We look forward to the important briefings that will take place this session, including on lessons learned from the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the General Assembly's work.

As a member of CANZ, Australia has a long track record of engaging transparently and constructively in the Assembly's revitalization. As co-Chair, I commit to maintaining that approach, building on the consultative and inclusive approach of the previous session. Once again, I thank the President for appointing me to co-chair the process, and I look forward to working with Ambassador González López and all delegations in advancing the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): Like others, I want to start by thanking the Permanent Representatives of

Slovakia and El Salvador for their commitment over the past session, and particularly Ambassador Mlynár for all of his work in this area. The fact that he could speak with such passion and clarity today on the subject shows his real commitment. I thought his final point, exhorting us to turn our commitments into action, is the biggest takeaway for the United Kingdom from today's meeting. I am also very grateful to Ambassador Fifield for joining Ambassador González López in co-chairing that work. I think we have two brilliant stewards this year for the process. As Ambassador Fifield said, the biennialization of the revitalization resolution (resolution 75/325) gives us a real opportunity to make progress on the commitments that Ambassador Mlynár referred to.

The United Kingdom is absolutely committed to the revitalization process, because we know that revitalization is the key to making the General Assembly and its Committees more effective and efficient and in turn making our multilateralism more efficient. We have seen that we can make progress, because we did so during the seventy-fifth-anniversary session, when we took stock of our achievements and cast a clear vision for the future of the United Nations. We did that through the revitalization process, but also through the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). *Our Common Agenda* was a very important element for revitalization, because it enabled us to engage outside United Nations Headquarters and beyond the membership to ask real people what they think about us and what they believe success looks like. We see the answer in *Our Common Agenda*, but we also see the answer in the need that people express for the United Nations to tackle the real issues that truly matter to them. I think that, when we discuss revitalization, we must genuinely consider whether the General Assembly is focused on real issues that matter to real people.

My colleague from Pakistan rightly reminded us just now that any Member State can bring a draft resolution to the General Assembly, but we should ask ourselves whether it is one that is going to make a real difference in people's lives. Is it going to drive forward our work on the Sustainable Development Goals, on climate or on tackling the coronavirus disease? I think that is the critical question for revitalization.

The United Kingdom is very pleased that we managed to make progress on the biennialization of the revitalization resolution in the past year. We pushed back the General Assembly's annual start date to give

the President more time to think about the Office's agenda. We managed to protect the primacy of the high-level week general debate and strengthen the language on gender parity and on civil-society engagement, which are two really critical issues for us.

However, we must not kid ourselves. Frankly, as we have heard again and again today — including from my colleague from Belarus, with whom I do not always agree, but did entirely today — the General Assembly and its Committees try to do too much. Year in and year out, we continue to consider draft resolutions that are no longer at the core of our agenda — and we know what that agenda is, because people have told us in the consultations on *Our Common Agenda*. As we embark on that progress, as we think about our working methods and about revitalization over the next two years, let us therefore really try to think about how we can make the work we do more relevant and more focused on the issues that really matter. I fear that, if we do not do that, we will end up reading too many reports that are irrelevant and, critically, failing to focus on implementation and on driving forward the work of the United Nations and the Secretariat on the issues that really matter.

I thank the President and our co-Chairs and co-facilitators and wish them the best of luck. They have set out a bold vision today for the work that we need to do. The United Kingdom remains committed to revitalization and to that bold vision.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the convening of today's General Assembly meeting on the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We want to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Australia and El Salvador, Mr. Mitchell Fifield and Mrs. Egriselda González López, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, and we wish them every success. We have noted the high level of professionalism shown by the previous co-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of Slovakia and El Salvador, during the Assembly's seventy-fifth session. Their creative and innovative approach and, importantly, their focus on achieving consensus, enabled new and crucial elements to be introduced into the revitalization process of the General Assembly that will allow us to concentrate on implementing specific

provisions of the relevant resolution, rather than conducting annual reviews.

This year there are two key issues on the agenda of the Ad Hoc Working Group — the role and authority of the General Assembly, and its working methods. We believe that our efforts in those areas must be depoliticized and primarily focused on improving the Assembly's effectiveness. To a large extent, that can be achieved by further refining its working methods and streamlining its still overburdened agenda. In particular, we must continue to work on biennializing or triennializing certain agenda items and removing those that are no longer relevant.

We support the initiative to decrease the level of activity during high-level week in terms of general political discussion. The relevant events could then be equally spread out over the entire session. However, it is important to ensure that those changes take into account the interests of all Member States. We believe that any initiatives should be based on strict adherence to the distribution of prerogatives among the principal organs of the Organization, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council is often criticized for allegedly encroaching on the authority of other United Nations bodies, and we share that concern. Our colleagues on the Council are aware that we are not enthusiastic about seeing it address general topics, and the number of such subjects has recently been growing, through no fault of ours. We therefore once again urge those making such initiatives to align them with what the Council can actually accomplish in such areas.

Regarding the issue of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, in our view the problem is not simply one of a lack of political will. One of the most important factors is the degree to which the resolutions we adopt can be implemented. Before proposing draft texts, it is important to ask how implementable they would be if they were adopted. We urge everyone to refrain from politicized and manifestly impractical initiatives that lead to divisions rather than unity among Member States. There is no question that resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority of votes, or ideally by consensus, have the best chance of being put into practice. That obviously requires work, diplomacy and a willingness to compromise. Unfortunately, in the past year we have seen that not all agree with that approach. We should therefore not expect to see decisions that divide the General

Assembly and are aimed at gaining self-serving and immediate advantages implemented.

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

Mr. Al Khalil (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I want to thank the President for convening this meeting.

My delegation endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I would now like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

The Syrian Arab Republic has been following the work of the General Assembly with great interest, and we hope that its activities will actively contribute to addressing the challenges facing the United Nations and enable it to maintain its credibility.

My country's delegation believes that the General Assembly, which is the principal and most representative body of the United Nations, plays an indispensable role in promoting and implementing the purposes and principles of the United Nations, based on its prerogatives outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Articles 10 to 14. On the other hand, the importance of the role played by the General Assembly should accord with its mandate and prerogatives pursuant to the Charter.

In that connection, my delegation regrets that during previous sessions of the General Assembly, and under the influence of certain well-known and influential States in the United Nations, the Assembly discussed certain disputes that the Security Council remains seized of and are still on its agenda, which runs counter to Article 12 of the Charter. It also adopted a double-standard policy for implementing its resolutions, with controversial concepts such as universal jurisdiction and the responsibility to protect as an excuse to interfere in the domestic affairs of States.

My delegation underscores its rejection of certain States exploiting the General Assembly to serve their agenda of intervention in the internal affairs of others. We reaffirm more than ever our commitment to the United Nations Charter, to the principles of international law and to working seriously to reform the United Nations and the General Assembly in order to implement the principles of the Charter and prevent any potential violations of it, or of the principles of international law.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 121 and 122.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.