



General Assembly

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40th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 9 (continued)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1

The Acting President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 9, entitled “Report of the Economic and Social Council”, to take action on draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1. I now give the floor to the representative of Bhutan to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Dorji (Bhutan): On behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1, entitled “Graduation of Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Nepal from the least developed country category”. On behalf of the G-77 and China, and in submitting the draft resolution, I would first like to congratulate Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Nepal, and also to thank our partners for the productive negotiations we have had. We look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1, entitled “Graduation of Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Nepal from the least

developed country category”. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/76/L.6/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 76/8).

The Acting President: We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution.

Ms. Fatima (Bangladesh): I thank all Member States, especially our development partners, for their support and flexibility in reaching consensus on the unanimous adoption of resolution 76/8, entitled “Graduation of Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Nepal from the least developed country category”.

With today’s adoption of this resolution, we have reached yet another milestone in our graduation. We now have a specific road map for graduating from the least-developed-country (LDC) category by 2026. I thank Ms. Agnes Harm of Fiji, the facilitator of the resolution, and Mr. Namgyal Dorji of Bhutan, the coordinator for the Group of 77 and China, for their tireless efforts in that regard. I also thank the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) for their constant support throughout the process.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Nepal and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on achieving this important landmark with us. Graduation

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has long been a cherished national aspiration for us. It comes at an auspicious time, when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of our independence and the centenary of the birth of the father of our nation. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina envisioned the transformation of Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. She has led us from the front on this exciting journey, despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The resolution that we have adopted today includes some important elements. It affirms that graduation should not result in a disruption or reversal of development plans, programmes and projects in our countries. It also embeds the notion of continuous monitoring in order to ensure sustainable and irreversible graduation. It advises the CDP to further analyse at its 2024 triennial review whether the preparatory phase extended to the graduating countries will be adequate to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Those are welcome developments, especially now in our efforts to build back more strongly from the pandemic and develop further resilience against current and future shocks, including the overarching challenges of climate change.

We are at the final stage of our preparation for the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Doha in January 2022. As one of the co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, Bangladesh looks forward to a transformative programme of action for LDCs in the coming decade. The draft Doha Programme of Action has identified sustainable graduation as an important area of focus and has set a target of enabling 15 additional LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2031. We need enhanced support and solidarity from our development partners to ensure appropriate, predictable and additional incentives and supporting measures to achieve that ambitious target.

The graduation of an LDC is not only a success for the country itself but a testimony to the strength of multilateral partnership led by the United Nations. Graduation, however, comes with many challenges. The countries on the graduation track are concerned about the effects of the loss of LDC-specific support measures, now exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. They are also suffering from many pre-existing vulnerabilities, such as inadequate productive capacity, infrastructure challenges and sudden economic and climatic shocks.

It is therefore imperative to ensure that international support measures to graduating and graduated LDCs are continued and strengthened. The upcoming twelfth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference and the Conference on the Least Developed Countries will provide us with important opportunities to come up with new and innovative support measures for them. Let me highlight three specific thoughts in that regard.

First, we should aim to ensure an incentive-based international support structure for graduating and graduated LDCs. Graduation should not be a punishment but a reward. There should be tailored and clearly outlined support measures for addressing every aspect of graduation, including the loss of international support measures, access to non-LDC-specific support, smooth transitions and financing for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Secondly, it is imperative to enhance the monitoring of graduations so that it is responsive to crises, with adequate and timely support measures. Finally, graduation is essentially a demand-driven and politically led process. It is therefore imperative to put it high on the United Nations agenda, especially in order to bring transformative changes to the lives and livelihoods of the more than 1 billion people in the LDCs.

I thank the President for the opportunity to share these thoughts on what is a very special occasion for us.

Ms. Seneduangdeth (Lao People's Democratic Republic): It is my honour to speak on behalf of my Permanent Representative, Ambassador Anouparb Vongnorkeo, who is unable to be here owing to unforeseen circumstances.

At the outset, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all delegations for the constructive engagement and support that has led to the consensus adoption of this significant resolution, entitled "Graduation of Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal from the least developed country category" (resolution 76/8). My delegation thanks the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for its unwavering support and assistance in ensuring the resolution's smooth adoption.

Graduating from least-developed-country (LDC) status has always been a major goal for the Lao People's Democratic Republic. To that end, all of the five-year national socioeconomic development plans we have

developed since early 2000 have included specific targets for reaching that goal, taking into account the particular development situation in each period, so as to lay a strong foundation for a smooth graduation. In addition, we have periodically streamlined the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries into our national planning process.

In its 2021 triennial review, the Committee for Development Policy asserted that the Lao People's Democratic Republic had reached the threshold for LDC graduation for a second time by meeting all three criteria for graduation — gross national income, human assets index and economic vulnerability index. However, being recommended for graduation does not mean that all of a country's challenges will end. The Lao People's Democratic Republic will inevitably face more and many challenges after graduation. It is crucial to bear in mind that graduation from LDC status should not be the final goal. A smooth, high-quality graduation must be ensured so that a graduating country does not slip back into LDC status, especially during the current global health crisis. The adoption of this resolution is therefore just the beginning.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the Lao People's Democratic Republic's firm commitment to continuing to work closely with the international community, development partners, United Nations agencies and all the relevant stakeholders. We look forward to continued support and assistance in ensuring our sustainable and irreversible graduation from LDC status.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): At the outset, I would like to thank all delegates for our unanimous adoption of resolution 76/8, entitled "Graduation of Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal from the least developed country category". I want to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Agnes Harm of Fiji, the facilitator of the resolution, for her efforts in bringing the informal consultations to a successful and speedy conclusion. I would also like to thank Mr. Namgyal Dorji of Bhutan for his effective coordination of the resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Nepal's graduation is indeed unique in the sense that it is the first country to be recommended for graduation from the least-developed-country (LDC) category after meeting only two of the three criteria, the human assets and economic vulnerability indexes, without meeting the income criteria. Graduation from

the LDC category is therefore an important milestone in Nepal's development trajectory. However, it presents both challenges and opportunities. I want to extend our warm congratulations to our fellow graduating countries Bangladesh and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. We will make our graduation journey together, benefiting and learning from one another's experiences.

The unfolding coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with its far-reaching socioeconomic implications, has further exacerbated our pre-existing challenges and undermined our hard-earned development gains. We are confident that the upcoming Doha Programme of Action will include ambitious efforts to address LDCs' problems and enable them to graduate at the earliest possible time. In that context, a five-year preparatory period is crucial to enabling us to effectively prepare for a smooth transition and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to build back better. Minimizing the negative effects and optimizing the opportunities resulting from graduation are now our top priority. Nepal is committed to making an all-out effort to secure a smooth, sustainable and irreversible graduation, and we look forward to receiving enhanced international support for that during the transition period and afterwards. In fact, enhanced international support is crucial to all the LDCs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to enable us to build back better and ensure that as many LDCs as possible can graduate as soon as possible.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this item. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 9.

Agenda item 91 (continued)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (A/76/232)

Draft resolution (A/76/L.10)

Ms. Al Ali (United Arab Emirates) (spoke in Arabic): At the outset, I would like to express the thanks of the United Arab Emirates for the opportunity to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). I also want to express my thanks and appreciation to the Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, for his comprehensive briefing on the report

(A/76/232) of the Agency for the year 2020 (see A/76/PV.36).

The United Arab Emirates stresses the central role that the IAEA plays in supporting the peaceful use of nuclear technology and in helping Member States in their quest to benefit from nuclear applications and energy. My delegation commends the Agency's efforts and ability in responding to and addressing the emerging challenges related to the coronavirus disease pandemic. It provides a wide range of technical assistance and continued support for the responsible uses of nuclear technology by establishing important forums that support constructive international cooperation among Member States in the areas of safety, nuclear security and non-proliferation.

We greatly value the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, which is a vital mechanism for channelling support to Member States in their pursuit of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and thereby contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard I am grateful to the IAEA for the valuable support it has given the United Arab Emirates in developing its nuclear energy infrastructure and building the necessary capacity for its nuclear energy programme. The United Arab Emirates continues to consider it vital to maintain the highest nuclear safety standards in all national applications of nuclear technology, and we are pleased with our successful hosting of ConvEx-3 exercises at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant under the IAEA's supervision, reflecting our commitment to international transparency and to supporting and promoting international systems for responding to nuclear emergencies.

The United Arab Emirates has connected the first two units at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant to the main national power grid, making the Barakah Plant the first nuclear energy project in the region to include multiple operational units. That achievement will help to promote sustainable growth and complement our State's efforts to realize its goals and address issues of climate change. When all four units at the Barakah Plant are completed, we expect that it will have a total capacity of 5.6 gigawatts and provide 25 per cent of our country's power demands, reducing our carbon emissions by around 21 million tonnes annually. In that regard, I would like to focus on our national nuclear energy programme's commitment since its inception to implementing the IAEA guidelines and international

best practices in full compliance with the highest standards of transparency, operational safety, security and non-proliferation.

The United Arab Emirates underlines the importance of the IAEA's verification measures and the need for full compliance with its comprehensive safeguards system and additional protocol, which are important tools for promoting international confidence in the peaceful nature of nuclear programmes. The IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme remains an essential means of support to Member States so that they benefit from the peaceful application of nuclear technology. My country is continuing its close technical cooperation with the IAEA in developing the necessary infrastructure and building the capacities of our nuclear energy programme in all sectors. With the support of the IAEA, we have created programmes for advanced degrees in medical physics and enhanced the safety of the use of radiation in medical applications. We have also launched initiatives to educate our youth in nuclear science and its applications and to continue to promote women's participation in the nuclear field.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates stresses its commitment to a constructive and ongoing partnership with the IAEA through a responsible approach to developing a national nuclear energy programme and using peaceful nuclear applications. We appreciate the work of the IAEA secretariat and the achievements reflected in its 2020 annual report.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive presentation of the Agency's report (A/76/232). I would also like to thank the delegation of the Republic of Korea for introducing draft resolution A/76/L.10 (see A/76/PV.36), of which Argentina is a sponsor and through which the General Assembly has taken note of the report. We appreciate the enormous efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency, outlined in its report, to assist countries during the pandemic.

Argentina was among the first 20 countries to receive assistance from the Agency through the provision of personal protective equipment and reverse-transcription polymerase-chain-reaction equipment for rapid real-time detection of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We want to underscore the importance of the Agency's programmes, which

we believe will continue to be of great benefit to the international community in the current context. There is the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative, the primary goal of which is to create a global network to assist national laboratories in the oversight, monitoring, early detection and control of zoonotic and animal diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola, avian influenza and Zika. The Agency also has a project in Seibersdorf, in Austria, aimed at completing the modernization of eight laboratories for nuclear applications. Through its National Atomic Energy Commission, Argentina was one of 43 Member States that made an extrabudgetary contribution to the first phase of that project.

We welcome the renewal of the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has proved to be a valuable tool for improving the quality of life in countries in the region. We also commend the goal outlined in the report of achieving gender parity in all of the higher-level professional categories by 2025. As part of a cross-cutting public policy, Argentina supports increasing women's participation in the nuclear field and hopes that the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme will make a significant contribution in that regard.

Argentina made the choice early on to back the development of nuclear energy for exclusively peaceful purposes as an instrument for its national development. Along the way we have developed a strong nuclear programme for all the various stages of the nuclear fuel cycle. We have cemented a reputation as a reliable exporter supporting research, development and innovation in the field of nuclear technology, thanks to State policies that consistently champion the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and its applications. We firmly believe that nuclear energy is vital to a future of energy sustainability. With that in mind, it is important to ensure that the international community gives the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency its due value and weight.

Our nuclear sector, which is widely recognized internationally, gives special priority and significance to the implementation of the international safeguards system and close cooperation with the IAEA in that regard. We emphasize that activities for implementing safeguards must be efficient, effective and grounded on a solid technical foundation in order to ensure their non-discriminatory nature. Moreover, as the report

underscores, it is important that the implementation of the safeguards system has not been interrupted during the pandemic, especially as we are approaching the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which my country will preside over a few weeks from now, in January 2022. We believe that the strengthening of the IAEA as a forum for cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and a guarantor of the global non-proliferation system represents an important counterpoint when it comes to the evaluation of the implementation of the NPT, as well as an appropriate opportunity to work for the proper implementation of the NPT's three pillars.

Argentina insists on the importance of ensuring that the safeguards regime and its guarantees are strengthened in an atmosphere of dialogue and cooperation. In that regard, it is in the interests of all to underscore the importance of the quadripartite agreement to which Argentina, Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the IAEA are parties. As we commemorate its thirtieth anniversary, Argentina once again underscores the constructive role and relevance of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency, as well as of the bilateral inspection system, both in implementing safeguards and building trust. We should also underscore the importance of the First Committee's adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.56, on the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, and to thank the membership of the United Nations in that regard. The draft resolution is an example of the international community's recognition of the work of the Agency in strengthening regional and international security.

Lastly, I want to reiterate my country's commitment to the highest standards of nuclear safety, which remains one of the pillars of our nuclear policy. Our nuclear regulatory authority is an independent regulatory and technical body designated by law to oversee nuclear construction and safety. Argentina is set to expand its nuclear electricity generation system in compliance with the highest standards of safety and security, and we are currently working to host a mission from the Integrated Regulatory Review Service during 2022. The Argentine nuclear sector will continue working to prepare for the most relevant conferences in the field, which have been rescheduled for 2022 and 2023 respectively.

We reiterate once again our total and unwavering support for the IAEA as it seeks to strengthen nuclear safety and security at a global level, and we underscore the guidance provided in the ministerial declaration of the International Conference on Nuclear Safety. We also highlight the importance of the Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025 recently adopted by the Agency. We underscore the importance of the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and of the review process under way, which will culminate in the review conference scheduled to be held in March 2022.

Ms. Quintero Correa (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia thanks Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his presentation of the Agency's 2020 annual report (A/76/232) and the statement he made last week to the Assembly (see A/76/PV.36), in which he reported on the developments in the Agency's management following publication of the report. My delegation also thanks the Republic of Korea for introducing draft resolution A/76/L.10, which we support and sponsor.

The Agency plays a fundamental role in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the transfer of knowledge and nuclear technologies applicable in areas that are important for development. Its Technical Cooperation Programme is a vehicle for the transfer of knowledge and technologies, both of which aid in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Its work is essential in matters of nuclear technological and physical security, and in the establishment of standards and a culture of safety. Furthermore, as the only competent authority in the field, the Agency plays a primary role in verifying the exclusively peaceful nature of nuclear programmes through the application of safeguards. It therefore plays a fundamental role as an important component of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, thereby contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

We would like to highlight the work of the Agency in its three pillars, especially its work in 2020 and 2021, and its ability to meet the demands and challenges imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, adapting to the circumstances and responding innovatively to the needs of the Member States. We particularly want to acknowledge the technical cooperation efforts promoted by the Agency during 2020 and 2021 to strengthen national capacities

in the fight against the pandemic. In that context, Colombia is grateful for the technical cooperation project on Strengthening Capabilities of Member States in Building, Strengthening and Restoring Capacities and Services in Case of Outbreaks, Emergencies and Disasters, through which we received COVID-19 detection equipment. We are also grateful for the project on Supporting National and Regional Capacity in Integrated Action for Control of Zoonotic Diseases, within the framework of the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative, with the aim of strengthening the Zoonotic Laboratory Network and the scientific-technical approach to zoonotic agents.

The benefits of nuclear energy are becoming visible to the public specifically through its applications in areas that are essential to development. That is why it is important to strengthen the Technical Cooperation Programme and to stimulate and support initiatives and projects aimed at providing innovative, equitable and competitive solutions in fundamental areas, including the prevention and mitigation of future pandemics, the protection of the environment, the production of clean energy, water resource management, human health and applications for the agricultural sector. As a member of the Board of Governors and Vice-Chair for the period from 2021 to 2022, Colombia will support the strengthening of the Technical Cooperation Programme and of expanding its scope and the contribution it makes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and will also promote the greater inclusion of women in the area of nuclear science and technology. Colombia will also continue to support nuclear-safety efforts, as well as strengthening the verification system, universalizing safeguards and implementing the additional protocol. My country will continue working to strengthen IAEA capacities for nuclear surveillance and verification, as well as its quest for suitable diplomatic means and mechanisms to guarantee the continuity of those tasks.

Finally, my delegation would like to thank Mr. Grossi for his leadership and dedication, acknowledge the staff of the Agency and express its gratitude to all the States that have contributed to its work.

Ms. Wang Yingtong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the presentation of the report (A/76/232) by Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on the work of the Agency (see A/76/PV.36).

Over the past year the Agency, as mandated by its Statute, has been committed to promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy worldwide, safeguarding the nuclear non-proliferation regime, enhancing nuclear safety and actively assisting Member States using nuclear and nuclear-derived technologies to fight the pandemic, with positive results. China appreciates the fact that the work of the Agency can facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and help countries achieve green recovery and development. Nuclear energy is making steady strides globally. Nuclear energy and the application of nuclear technology are very important to ensuring energy security, addressing climate change and promoting socioeconomic development. They are also very helpful in responding to the pandemic, enabling work and production to resume and addressing challenges to livelihoods.

On the other hand, we are still seeing daunting challenges in the area of international nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear safety. The threat of nuclear terrorism cannot be ignored. The politicization of the peaceful use of nuclear energy is becoming increasingly pronounced. Next year will see the holding of the tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), strengthening the work of the Agency in these areas should be part and parcel of the NPT's implementation in service of peace and development in the modern era. China hopes that the Agency will focus on the following aspects.

First, the Agency should vigorously promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, adhering to the principles of shared benefits and inclusiveness in continuing its robust support and assistance to Member States, especially developing countries, in the development and use of nuclear energy and the wider application of nuclear technology. It should continue to promote global nuclear safety and security and actively lead international cooperation in those areas. The Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan was one of the most serious such incidents in human history. The disposal of nuclear-contaminated water is vital to the global marine ecological environment and the health of people everywhere. Japan should earnestly heed and respond to the calls of its neighbours and the international community. Pending consultations and agreements with interested countries and relevant

international organizations, it should not discharge its nuclear wastewater into the sea. The Agency should uphold the principle of objectivity and impartiality and a science-based approach in carrying out its assessment, monitoring and verification before, during and after disposal, in order to ensure absolute safety.

Secondly, the IAEA should strengthen its safeguards regime. While maintaining its objectivity and impartiality, the Agency should always strive to achieve universal application of the comprehensive safeguards agreement and its additional protocol and the greater effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards. Meanwhile, in strict accordance with its mandate, it should handle safeguards-related issues appropriately. The planned nuclear-submarine deal between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia violates the purposes and objectives of the NPT and poses a serious risk of nuclear proliferation. The Agency's existing safeguards regime cannot exercise effective safeguards regarding the naval nuclear-propulsion reactor and related nuclear material that the United States and the United Kingdom intend to transfer to Australia. Since this issue bears on the integrity and validity of the Treaty and concerns the interests of all the Agency's member States, it calls for a membership-wide discussion. To that end, China has proposed that the Agency establish a special committee, open to the participation of all member States, to discuss the political, legal and technical issues pertaining to the safeguards for the naval nuclear-propulsion reactor and to related nuclear materials of non-nuclear-weapon States, and to submit a report with recommendations to the Agency's Board of Governors and the General Conference. Until such a report is issued, the Agency's secretariat should not negotiate with the three countries on the safeguards arrangement for their nuclear-submarine deal.

Thirdly, the IAEA should promote the political and diplomatic settlement of nuclear hotspot issues. It should stay committed to objectivity and impartiality in performing its monitoring and verification functions in accordance with its mandate and play its due role in seeking political and diplomatic solutions to such regional hotspot problems as the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and the Iranian nuclear issue. China appreciates the Agency's monitoring and verification of Iran's implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, in line with Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). We support the Agency in engaging Iran in dialogue to address the relevant differences.

China greatly values and actively supports the vital role of the Agency and the Director General in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We steadfastly support the inalienable right of all countries, especially developing countries, to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. China submitted draft resolution A/C.1/76/L.55, entitled “Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security”, to the First Committee, reaffirming the international consensus on non-proliferation and underlining the importance of the right of all countries, especially developing countries, to nuclear energy’s peaceful uses.

China has always followed a rational, coordinated and balanced nuclear safety strategy and actively promoted the safe and efficient development of nuclear energy. We firmly support the Agency in exercising its safeguards functions and have engaged constructively in the political and diplomatic settlement of nuclear hotspot issues and in the maintenance of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. China stands ready to continue to deepen its cooperation with the Agency and to make new contributions to the development and peaceful uses of nuclear energy across the world.

Mr. Shevchenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has a generally positive view of the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during the reporting period and has supported and sponsored draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the report of the IAEA (A/76/232), to be adopted today. We are unfailingly committed to supporting the Agency’s efforts. It is a unique instrument for international cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy as well as a reliable mechanism for monitoring States’ fulfilment of their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. We wholeheartedly support its programmatic activities in the areas of nuclear and physical security, the safe transportation of nuclear and radioactive materials, safe radioactive waste management and emergency preparedness and response. The Russian Federation is ready to continue providing the IAEA with appropriate support, including through voluntary contributions.

We note the IAEA’s work in promoting nuclear energy, including in the context of combating climate change, as well as the importance of peaceful atomic technology in ensuring the stability of energy systems, particularly when they increasingly rely on renewable energy sources with variable electricity generation. We support the activities of the IAEA in promoting

nuclear technology applications in a number of areas of human activity.

We greatly value the steps that the Agency has taken to ensure the implementation of safeguards, especially in the difficult context of the pandemic. We believe that the IAEA’s monitoring mechanism should remain objective, unpoliticized, technically sound and based on safeguards agreements concluded between States and the Agency. The IAEA’s verification measures and activities in Iran are important, including in the interests of restoring the full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We hope that the Agency will continue to adhere to a proven technical approach on Iran within its existing mandate.

With regard to various comments by representatives of Ukraine regarding IAEA safeguards on its territory (see A/76/PV.36), it is up to Kyiv to resolve issues regarding the access of IAEA inspectors to certain areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in direct dialogue with the leadership of those regions. We firmly believe that the IAEA should remain a technical organization. It is important not to allow matters that fall outside its Statute to be artificially introduced into the agenda of the Agency’s governing bodies.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): We have all heard the famous words of Albert Einstein, who said,

“The release of atomic energy has not created a new problem. It has merely made more urgent the necessity of solving an existing one.”

Having considered the rationale of that message rather seriously, we have taken preventive measures to put in place supervisory oversight before the existing issues become real concerns.

Sri Lanka’s involvement with nuclear science and technology began in 1957 when it became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That was followed in 1962 by the establishment of the Radioisotope Centre of the University of Colombo and in 1969 by the enactment of a law establishing the Atomic Energy Authority. The law delegated two main responsibilities to the Atomic Energy Authority — the promotion of the utilization of nuclear technology for the benefit of the people of Sri Lanka, and the protection of the public and of workers engaged in using radiation and radioisotopes from the harmful effects of ionizing radiation.

Until 2014 the Atomic Energy Authority functioned as the national regulatory authority on the use of radiation and radioisotopes, the organization responsible for facilitating the use of nuclear technology in the medical, industrial and agricultural sectors and the focal point of the IAEA in Sri Lanka. As a result of the expansion of activities involving nuclear technologies, following Sri Lanka's construction of a new building for the IAEA with laboratory facilities, we realized the need for an independent regulatory authority. In 2014 we passed an act creating two new organizations, the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Regulatory Council and the Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Board. The law delegates to the Council the responsibility of developing and implementing a regulatory regime to ensure the protection of personnel and the environment in the use of nuclear technology for beneficial use and ensuring the security of radioactive resources, and to the Atomic Energy Board the responsibility of facilitating the use of nuclear technology. With the formation of the Council and the Board, the Atomic Energy Authority ceased to exist. The current state of affairs is that the Council, the regulatory body, came into existence on 1 January 2015. It has the responsibility of establishing and implementing a regulatory regime in order to ensure the protection of personnel and the environment from potential harm and the full effects of radiation and to ensure the security of radioactive resources.

Where our national policy on nuclear activity is concerned, we will conduct it with regard to a number of policy principles. All nuclear activities in Sri Lanka are to be conducted exclusively for peaceful purposes and in compliance with the relevant obligations. The Council is an independent regulatory authority that carries out its mandate without fear or favour. It should use its powers judiciously without unnecessarily burdening its customers, and among other things it should optimize the utilization of financial and other resources. Sri Lanka does not operate nuclear power plants, or any activity related to the production of nuclear material. Nor has the Government of Sri Lanka taken any policy decisions on establishing nuclear power plants. The uses of nuclear technology in Sri Lanka are limited to the fields of medicine, industry, agriculture, research and teaching.

It is noteworthy that the IAEA hosted a virtual national seminar on topical issues of nuclear law for Sri Lanka in January. The topics presented and discussed ranged from transparency in nuclear law and the legal

provisions for the safety and security of radioactive sources for the benefit of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its Amendment and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We are grateful to the IAEA for the fact that over the years Sri Lanka has benefited from its legislative assistance through various regional and national activities. The January seminar was the first major step Sri Lanka has taken to engage all stakeholders at the national level in starting the process of the implementation of legal instruments, an area of special interest and importance to us. The virtual seminar gave the participants an opportunity to discuss civil liability for nuclear damage and the benefits of modernized nuclear liability instruments such as the 1997 Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, which provides a framework for countries in South Asia, including those in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

In his concluding remarks at the seminar, Anthony Wetherall of the IAEA Office of Legal Affairs noted the importance of adhering to and implementing the relevant international legal instruments and reiterated the IAEA's readiness to continue to assist us in that regard and in developing and strengthening our national legal framework. We greatly appreciate the IAEA's support in that area. The seminar, implemented within the framework of the IAEA legislative assistance programme, is one of the many activities under the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme designed to support Member States in establishing and enhancing their legal frameworks. We would like to congratulate the IAEA and its Director General, Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, and his team of officials for maintaining the highest standards of supervisory oversight in this extraordinary year for the world, in which the IAEA has served its member States with resilience and commitment. Sri Lanka assures the IAEA of its full cooperation in our endeavour to ensure the safe and useful appropriation of nuclear material for the benefit of all humankind and world peace.

Mr. Jardali (Lebanon): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for the presentation of the Agency's annual report (A/76/232) last week (see A/76/PV.36). We commend the Agency for continuing its work while contributing to the global efforts to fight the coronavirus disease

pandemic. We also commend its activities in various areas highlighted in the report, notably its continued commitment to strengthening IAEA safety standards and assistance to States in their efforts to establish comprehensive national nuclear-security regimes through capacity-building and human resource development, despite the challenging circumstances resulting from the pandemic. The Agency plays an essential role in facilitating States' access to peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, while ensuring that the highest levels of nuclear safety, security and safeguards are maintained.

Lebanon looks forward to the Assembly's adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/76/L.10, on the IAEA's annual report. We also affirm the importance of achieving the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the comprehensive safeguards agreement in order to ensure the credibility of the international nuclear-disarmament regime. As we prepare to hold the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in January, we stress the IAEA's important role in maintaining a balance between the three pillars of the Treaty—nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In that respect, Lebanon would like to emphasize Member States' inalienable right to those peaceful uses, as laid down in article IV of the NPT.

In accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546, the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction was held in 2019 and presided over by Jordan. The second session of the Conference will be held next week under the presidency of Kuwait. In our view, the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East is urgently needed for fostering security and stability in our region of the world. We look forward to the day when it becomes a reality, like other, similar zones around the world.

In conclusion, Lebanon reiterates its continued support for the Agency's role in promoting the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Kuwait is keen to participate in this annual debate on the agenda item regarding the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (A/76/232), based on our belief in the important, pioneering and pivotal role

played by the IAEA in promoting and harnessing the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The State of Kuwait joined the IAEA 57 years ago and since then has strengthened its cooperation, through many of its national institutions and bodies, with the Agency's various departments, in order to benefit from its programmes and build Kuwait's institutions and capacities with a view to implementing vital socioeconomic development projects. We look forward to further strengthening that cooperation in reaching our desired goals. The work of the sixty-fifth session of the General Conference of the IAEA concluded in September, as did our 2019-2021 membership of the Board of Governors. Thanks to cooperation with our sister countries and other friendly nations, during those two years we were able to contribute to strengthening the work of the Agency. We pledge to continue our active participation in the Board's activities and promote the technical and operational work of the Agency so that Member States can achieve their aspirations, including those relating to the peaceful uses of atomic energy for peace, health and prosperity for the whole world.

My delegation has taken note of the Agency's annual report and emphasizes that the Agency's mandate requires cooperation from all of us. We once again underscore the need to strengthen cooperation with all parties in order to ensure the use of nuclear technology for peace and development. We are ready to support all initiatives and programmes that help to improve living standards and health, including the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action initiative, to which we have contributed \$300,000 because we believe in its importance, particularly when it comes to strengthening the global preparedness system for confronting pandemics that may emerge in the future. We have also contributed \$100,000 to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, which seeks to empower women and increase their participation in the nuclear field. That will undoubtedly contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and is in line with Kuwait's Vision 2035, which is particularly focused on women, who represent half of society. In the past few years Kuwait has also contributed \$500,000 to the modernization of the IAEA laboratories in Seibersdorf and \$1.5 million to the ReNuAL initiative.

Our participation as a member of the Agency is not limited to technical cooperation. We also attach great importance to the other pillars of the Agency's role and mandate. In emphasizing the right of all countries to

produce, develop and use atomic energy for peaceful purposes within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we also warn against the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which constitute a challenge to international peace and security.

My delegation has been following the Director General's periodic reports regarding the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), on Iran's nuclear programme. In that connection, Kuwait calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to recommit fully to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, adopted pursuant to resolution 2231 (2015). We also look forward to its ratification and implementation of its Additional Protocol so that the Agency can provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran and confirm its status as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Finally, we stress the importance of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which will contribute to the stability of the region and the maintenance of international peace and security. We also stress that Israel must accede to the NPT, especially as it is the only country in the region not party to the Treaty. We also insist that it subject all its facilities to the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards system. We welcomed the convening of the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, presided over by Jordan in November 2019. We look forward to presiding over the second session of the Conference when it starts, in just a few days. We are fully dedicated to achieving its goals and look forward to the participation of all States concerned.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/76/L.10: Albania, Algeria, Argentina,

Australia, Chile, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, France, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Vanuatu.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.10?

Draft resolution A/76/L.10 was adopted (resolution 76/9).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in the exercise of right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats. I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shibuya (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to respond to the statement that the representative of China made earlier. With respect to the treated water at Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, the Government of Japan will continue to take measures based on international standards and international practice. It should be noted that as mentioned at the beginning of last week's meeting (see A/76/PV.36) by Mr. Grossi, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the safety of the handling of the treated water will be reviewed by the IAEA, which has expertise and knowledge in the field of nuclear safety. I should also emphasize that the treated water mentioned is not contaminated; it is water that meets regulatory safety standards. The Government of Japan has been transparent in explaining the status of its efforts to the international community, based on scientific evidence. We want to assure the Assembly that we will continue to do so in close cooperation with the IAEA.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 91?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 123 (continued)**Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council**

Mr. Sabbagh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country, Syria, was among the first to call for and encourage a process of reform of the Security Council, 29 years ago. We participated actively in the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council in order to create a Council that would reflect the current status of international relations and keep up with the developments that our Organization has witnessed since it was established. My delegation affirms its continued support to the Working Group, and we appreciate the progress made within the intergovernmental negotiations on reaching an equitable and balanced representation within the Security Council and supporting it in its maintenance of international peace and security.

Today we live in a world dominated by new patterns of wars and conflicts, a world dominated by an increasing tendency to use force and in which some countries use their political and economic influence to try to make this Organization a tool for implementing their own agendas. We therefore believe that it is important to exclude any factors that increase the deep divisions among Member States regarding the principles of reform. The core issue of reforming the Security Council should start with ensuring equitable representation for developing countries, making their voices heard and enabling them to exercise their sovereign rights on an equal footing with others. We also underscore the need to refrain from imposing any non-consensus-based texts on Member States as a basis for any negotiation process. No artificial and unrealistic timelines should be imposed, since such actions fall outside the scope of the co-Chairs.

The Syrian Arab Republic underscores the need for the negotiations on all five reform pillars to take place simultaneously and in a balanced manner, without giving one pillar more attention than another or discussing one of them while ignoring the others. We still continue to see divergent opinions among Member States regarding the reform process. Some say that the Security Council must not infringe on the

prerogatives of the General Assembly, while others call for respect for the mandate of the Security Council and try to prevent the General Assembly from interfering in issues on the Council's agenda. We must therefore focus on the extremely important matter of ensuring the separation of the Security Council and the General Assembly's respective mandates and prerogatives while ensuring continued cooperation between all United Nations organs.

My country continues to believe that the intergovernmental negotiations should be the only platform for discussing the process of reforming the Council. We call for continuing deepened, democratic and comprehensive consultations without prejudice to fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations — non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States and ensuring that the Security Council is not used as a cover or a tool to justify military aggression against any Member State. We also encourage sufficient and thorough discussions on all five main points in order to reach the widest possible consensus without delay.

Genuine reform of the Security Council requires transparency, integrity, effectiveness and balance. It must be based on a genuine and honest application of multilateral and preventive diplomacy underpinned by the principles of justice, equality and the right of Member States to set their own national policy without external interference, in a manner that will guarantee security, prosperity and growth to all peoples of the world, without exception, discrimination or double standards. We also need to increase countries' representation on the Council, based on the intergovernmental negotiations process established pursuant to decision 62/557, which is considered the main reference document and the cornerstone of these negotiations.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): I thank the President for convening us to discuss reform of the Security Council. I would like to take this opportunity to join others in congratulating Ambassadors Alya Al-Thani and Martin Hermann on their appointment as the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. I also commend the valuable work done by Ms. Al-Thani and Ms. Joanna Wronecka during the previous session. My delegation assures the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process of its full cooperation and its support for their work.

As we debate the issue of reform of the Council, we do so in a world that is worlds apart from the one that existed when the Council was established. The Council's role has expanded and diversified, as has the membership of the United Nations, both in numbers and in geopolitical dynamics. We all agree that the Council's membership and structure is not in tune with the current realities on the ground and in the United Nations. The last time the Council underwent reform was 56 years ago. In order for it to be fully representative, relevant, effective and fit for purpose, it must be reformed. In fact, as the coronavirus disease pandemic revealed, and given the undeniable link between peace and development, it is truly a matter of urgency.

As we believe in comprehensive reform of the Security Council, let me reiterate our basic positions at the outset. On the question of representation, we agree with many other Member States that certain underrepresented regions, such as Africa, ought to have due representation in an enlarged Council. The Asia-Pacific and Latin American regions deserve the same. The representation of small and developing countries also warrants due consideration. With respect to categories of membership, we are of the view that while both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council should be enlarged, the expansion should not be such as to affect the Council's efficiency. With respect to the size of the Council and its working methods, any number in the mid-twenties range would perhaps do justice to the larger membership. As for the working methods, we want to see a more accessible, transparent, accountable, democratic and effective Security Council.

On the question of the veto, we will join the consensus that emerges. However, we would stress measures that ensure the judicious application of the veto by limiting its application only for certain compelling situations. Regarding the Council's relations with the General Assembly, the relationship between the two organs should be mutually reinforcing, with more scope for consultations drawing on their respective expertise and mandates.

Back in 1979, Bangladesh was one of the 10 countries that proposed that the Assembly include an agenda item entitled "The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council". Since then, many processes, initiatives, models and so forth for reform of the Council have been proposed, including through the

intergovernmental negotiations process. However, we see no progress. If that continues, the legitimacy of this entire exercise and our own relevance will be put into serious question. It is imperative that we show results, and I would like to share two points in that regard.

First, we feel that building on the important work done in the past sessions of the intergovernmental negotiations is essential if we are to work towards the objective of achieving genuine reform. In view of the call from a large number of Member States, we see merit in having text-based negotiations. At the same time, we also underscore the imperative of an inclusive approach that faithfully reflects all the positions expressed and that all Member States subscribe to, if we are to ensure its legitimacy and acceptance.

Secondly, on the modalities, we feel that it is imperative to step up cooperation among the key groups and members in order to move the process forward. We could exhaustively map the areas of convergence and agreed language — in other words, we can start with the low-hanging fruit and progressively move to the next steps. To start with, could we consider a decision on the various proposals through the exclusion method as well? There must be some order and method brought into this exercise, and not this ritual of repeating our positions year after year. Again, we want to underline the imperative for an inclusive and participatory process so that we can move forward.

We stand ready to contribute to the process of building consensus through a realistic and constructive approach, not to mention a fully participatory and inclusive process. The co-Chairs will have our full cooperation.

Ms. Kinyungu (Kenya): Let me begin by once again congratulating the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session and assuring him of Kenya's support. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, and Ms. Joanna Wronecka, former Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland, for their leadership of the intergovernmental negotiations process during the seventy-fifth session. I also congratulate Mr. Martin Bille Herman of Denmark and Ms. Al-Thani on their appointment and reappointment, respectively, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process during the seventy-sixth session. I want to assure them of Kenya's cooperation and support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/76/PV.33). We also support our colleagues speaking in support of the African Common Position on Security Council reform, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. I would now like to emphasize a few points in my national capacity.

Africa's goal in this area continues to be full representation in all the decision-making organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. Kenya's current membership on the Council has shown us how truly important it is to have the continent represented in the decisions made on the issues that have to do with us. The growing support for the African Common Position makes it clear that a majority agrees on the need for Africa, as the largest region in terms of United Nations membership and as the focus of the bulk of the United Nations agenda in the Security Council, to be adequately represented. As we note the overwhelming and increasing support that the African Common Position enjoys in this intergovernmental plenary, we reiterate the need for that support to be properly reflected in all intergovernmental negotiation documents. We also reiterate the call for referencing the 2015 framework document, which provides a rich, solid foundation for our current work.

We believe that the intergovernmental negotiation deliberations should produce a broad consensus that will enable the process to move forward and achieve the desired reforms so as to ensure a fit-for-purpose and responsive Security Council. To that end, Kenya urges all delegations to continue to muster the necessary political will and commitment to do so. Finally, my delegation will continue to constructively engage in the process.

Mrs. Pejic-glymph (Serbia): I am grateful to the President for the opportunity to deliver a statement on behalf of the Republic of Serbia.

Last year we marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in the unprecedented circumstances imposed by the pandemic. The catastrophe on a global scale that hit the world almost two years ago is still far from over. The health crisis that we have experienced has been like no other since the Second World War. It has exposed and exacerbated inequalities between countries and within societies and created political, economic and social instability in many regions. It

has also demonstrated how interconnected the world is, thereby putting more emphasis on the need for greater international cooperation and the importance of multilateralism and organizations like ours. We should take it as an opportunity to reflect on the results achieved so far within the United Nations, its achievements with respect to its goals, and also on its shortcomings and limitations. We should further discuss and examine how to improve our Organization so that it becomes more democratic and efficient.

Against that backdrop, today we are having our annual debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, and very soon we will engage in the next cycle of the intergovernmental negotiations. This is the right time to ask ourselves what we need in a Security Council. I think no one would dispute that we need a democratic, transparent and efficient body that is ready to act quickly in the face of threats to international peace and security, and able to rise to its responsibilities decisively and in a united manner. The question is, and this is where divergences come in, how do we achieve that goal? How do we reform the Council and make it better suited and equipped to face the challenges of our times, which have evolved over the decades and now span issues from armed conflicts to cybersecurity to climate change? Such reform takes time, patience, commitment to negotiations and the political will essential to compromise.

To repeat what many have said before me, we see that despite the drastic geopolitical changes in the past 75 years, the Security Council has changed very little. It needs to be more representative and equitable, and we all agree on that. The question is how far we should go with the increase, and in which categories of membership. We certainly do not want to jeopardize the Council's efficiency, but at the same time we want to right the historical wrongs and allow underrepresented continents and regions their rightful place at the table. That is why for many years we have been engaged in debates, sometimes heated, on the reform. Some delegations point to the lack of progress in the process, given the amount of time that has passed since our discussions began. However, the issues related to Security Council reform are not easy to address. There are still great divergences between Member States on some of the key issues. The increase in membership, which I just mentioned, is one of them. Others are just as important — the power of veto, methods of work,

the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, and so forth. On some of them, we have made progress in bridging gaps in our discussions, while on others our views are still very far apart. We all want successful and meaningful reform. My delegation is of the view that setting deadlines while consensus is still pending on many issues would be harmful to the process.

We believe that reform should make the Security Council more democratic and representative. Bearing in mind that today the majority of United Nations members are small and medium-sized countries like mine, my delegation believes that reform should increase the opportunities for those countries to serve on the Council and contribute to its work. Serbia will also continue to advocate for an additional non-permanent seat for the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Negotiations on such important issues need to be transparent, inclusive and membership-driven. They should allow for the equal participation of every Member State, regardless of its size, wealth or military might. With that in mind, my delegation reiterates that the intergovernmental negotiations, as established by decision 62/557, should remain the sole legitimate and appropriate setting for negotiations. Our discussions within that framework should be frank and open, with the aim of closing the gaps between different positions. It is Serbia's long-standing position that Security Council reform should be based on the broadest possible consensus of Member States on all five reform clusters. As for the character and the content of the co-Chairs' elements paper on convergences and divergences, it is a summary of our deliberations that should be comprehensive and reflective of the positions of all Member States. We call on all delegations to continue engaging in open, democratic and transparent discussions and to demonstrate the will to compromise and negotiate.

Ms. Seneduangdeth (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its sincere thanks to the President for convening this important meeting on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council. We would also like to congratulate Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Bille

Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, on their reappointment and appointment, respectively, as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on reform of the Security Council.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates that the United Nations needs to use the reform process to enable it to be more responsive and effective in addressing the emerging challenges that threaten international peace, security and sustainable development. We reaffirm our support for reform of the Security Council through the intergovernmental negotiations process, which we believe should remain the main mechanism for the discussions aimed at achieving our common objective. As we are all aware, Security Council reform is particularly important and should therefore be pursued in a comprehensive, balanced, inclusive, transparent manner based on consensus, in order to maintain unity and solidarity among its membership and serve the interest of all Member States.

My delegation is of the view that taking account of the interests of both developing and developed Member States, with equitable geographical representation, is a crucial foundation for finding a common formula for all groups of countries and Member States. We therefore reiterate our support for expanding the representation of both types of seats on the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent, with equitable and balanced representation of every region. I would like to conclude by affirming our full support for the intergovernmental negotiations process in our efforts to reform the Security Council.

Mr. Gueye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's thanks for this opportunity to begin the new session of intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council, despite the difficult circumstances surrounding the coronavirus disease pandemic. In that regard, Senegal would like to thank Ms. Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, and Ms. Wroniecka, the former Permanent Representative of Poland, for co-chairing the process during the Assembly's seventy-fifth session. In addition, we wish every success to Ms. Al-Thani and Mr. Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, for their leadership of the process during the seventy-sixth session.

My delegation is pleased to have another opportunity to discuss a long-standing and persistent desire of the Group of African States, which continue to believe that this debate will enable us both to examine the substance of the process itself and to affirm the urgent need to remedy the historical injustice done to Africa. In that regard, Senegal aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group by Mr. Alhaji Fanday Turay, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone and Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (see A/76/PV.33).

It is extremely regrettable that the Security Council has not adapted to the changing geopolitical realities of the world since the United Nations was first established. On several occasions, even in some of the most urgent humanitarian crises the world has seen, the Council has failed in its responsibility to maintain international peace and security, mainly owing to the competing interests of its members and the frequent use of the veto. That state of affairs is demonstration enough of the need to reform the Security Council in order to make it more democratic, efficient and prompt in dealing with global crises. That essential imperative requires a convergence of views on the principles and criteria for negotiations on the key questions of reform.

My delegation calls on Member States to reach a preliminary agreement on the scope of the reforms to be put in place as well as on the way forward, in order to move beyond the game of strategies and interests led by the various negotiating groups. It is therefore essential to act in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations while keeping in mind the basic precepts set out in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (resolution 60/1) — equity, transparency, accountability, democracy, efficiency and legitimacy. It will also be important to work together fairly and appropriately to achieve equitable geographical distribution and balanced regional representation in the future Security Council. In that regard, I want to stress that for Africa, equity and balance mean no more and no less than the granting of new seats in both categories, in accordance with the African Common Position on Security Council reform espoused in the 1999 Ezulwini Consensus and reinforced by the 2005 Sirte Declaration.

While bearing in mind that the Security Council was designed to ensure the speedy and effective maintenance of international peace and security, and was not created based on the principle of

representativeness, we believe that it is undeniable that its current composition no longer reflects the international order and the requirements of our modern world. We should also recall that when the United Nations was created, the African States were still under colonial domination, and their rights and interests were therefore not taken into appropriate consideration. Today the situation is quite different. With 54 Member States, Africa constitutes the largest membership group in the United Nations. That change in the international landscape has rendered the composition of the Council obsolete, and the fact that an entire continent lacks adequate representation remains a gap that as long as it exists will only compromise the legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

My delegation would like to point out that enlarging the Security Council would not undermine its effectiveness, which is a question of its methods of work. And where the African Common Position is concerned, regional representation is linked to the question of the veto. For Africa, any reform creating an intermediate category of members is neither viable nor acceptable. It is clear that any future changes in the Council must begin by addressing its present shortcomings. It is therefore our responsibility to design and put in place a dynamic institution that accurately reflects the realities of today's world, fully assuming its responsibilities and asserting its authority.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would like to thank the President for convening this meeting. The challenges that every country has been facing during the pandemic, and the multiplying impact of the pandemic on the risks of conflict and instability, leave no doubt that a more representative and effective Security Council is essential to the quest for coherent and sustainable multilateral solutions and for their implementation.

The discussions at the heart of the intergovernmental negotiations on more equitable representation in the Security Council have lost none of their urgency — on the contrary. At the opening of the General Assembly's seventy-sixth session, Switzerland presented the United Nations with an environmentally friendly fresco symbolizing our desire to strengthen international solidarity and serving as a reminder of the importance of ensuring the continued renewal of the multilateral system and the creation of structures adapted to meet our current challenges. Switzerland will engage constructively with all Member States during this

session. We fully support the co-Chairs, Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, and congratulate them warmly on their appointment.

Switzerland is generally in favour of enlarging the Security Council in a way that reflects the reality of the world we live in. It should give better representation to various groups of countries, especially the Group of African States. In view of the stalemate resulting from the evident differences within the context of the intergovernmental negotiations, Switzerland has argued in favour of a third, very limited category of non-permanent but renewable seats, which would enable the main regional actors to hold longer-term positions on the Council. Each term should be long enough to enable them to strengthen their institutional knowledge and avoid having to permanently campaign for re-election, meaning a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 years.

In line with our commitment to promoting, expanding and implementing the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group's code of conduct regarding Security Council action on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, Switzerland is against granting additional veto rights and advocates voluntary constraints on the existing right of veto, specifically in situations of genocide and other violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Switzerland will continue to work for the greater effectiveness of all United Nations bodies. We will support any progress in the discussions on reform of the Security Council, including in the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations. The role and authority of this process depends on the willingness of Member States to move forward and the determination they bring to finding common ground. As a candidate for a seat on the Security Council, Switzerland will remain committed to a strong and effective multilateral system. Together with our partners in the ACT group, we will continue our determined efforts to strengthen the Council's working methods in order to improve its transparency and accountability to all States Members of the United Nations.

Mrs. González López (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador is grateful for the convening of this general debate and for the opportunity to ensure that States can once again provide their points of view

on one of the issues that is most crucial and relevant to the Organization. The process of Security Council reform, as has frequently been reaffirmed, must be based on the premise that today's world is very different from that of 76 years ago, when the United Nations was created. The Organization has achieved a great deal, but the challenges that we are facing today are greater and more complex than ever.

From El Salvador's perspective, a multilateral system that is in sync with the circumstances and challenges facing us today will be impossible without a more transparent, representative and democratic Security Council. We therefore believe that we need a reform process that is founded on Member States' efforts to strengthen multilateralism, and that requires increasing the regional representation on the Security Council so that it reflects current geopolitical realities. Accordingly, we support expanding the non-permanent category by two years as one path — though to be clear, not the only one — to making the Council more democratic and more open to the equitable participation of all Member States and to recognizing the contributions that States make to international peace and security.

El Salvador firmly supports strengthening the Council's methods of work, just as we do a strengthened relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, in line with what is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. On that point, I would like to emphasize that one of the most important elements of the process of revitalizing the General Assembly, and one that is of particular relevance to El Salvador, is acknowledging the provisions of resolution 75/325 regarding the timely presentation of the Security Council's annual report and reiterating the importance of presenting the report in line with resolutions 51/193 and 58/126.

Regarding the issue of the veto, my country supported France and Mexico's initiative proposing a political declaration regarding the suspension of the veto in the case of mass atrocities. We also support the code of conduct regarding Security Council action on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. Both are in line with El Salvador's position on human rights.

We are pleased by the high level of participation of delegations in this debate, which reflects Member

States' interest in this important issue. We have every faith that this level of involvement can be translated into a genuine commitment to dialogue and constructive participation in the intergovernmental negotiations process. In that regard, my delegation congratulates Ms. Alya Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, on their appointment as co-Chairs of this process. We hope that progress will be made under their leadership in overcoming the divisions over this question. We also hope that we will make tangible progress in terms of upholding the commitment made during the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of this Organization to instilling new life into the debates on Security Council reform. The co-Chairs have El Salvador's full support in achieving that goal.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the convening of this meeting and to congratulate Mr. Martin Hermann of Denmark and Ms. Alya Al-Thani of Qatar, the newly appointed co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. We hope that we can move forward with this long-overdue process. We are committed to working with them and will support their efforts to the best of our ability.

Over the years during the intergovernmental negotiations, Member States have clarified and repeated their positions regarding the various aspects of reform. Where the reform itself is concerned, we have not made significant progress, but we have that chance now. It must be accomplished through carefully tailored consensus and comprehensive political approval. Our main task is to find political will among ourselves and to do our best to explore ways to bridge the gaps and narrow our differences.

The urgency of reforming the Security Council is gradually becoming more rather than less important, especially considering the growing gap between the Council's demanding agenda and its output. Now we are under even tighter time constraints due to the changing landscape of our new challenges. That said, we strongly believe that building on former discussions and the work already done in previous intergovernmental negotiations sessions is the way to go. As with all United Nations intergovernmental conferences, we should start text-based negotiations, focused on a single consolidated document reflecting everyone's positions, without further delay. We concur with those who have

said that there are plenty of things that we agree on. It is time for us to take a small but meaningful step, build on those agreements and instil new life into the process.

With regard to the issue of membership categories, Latvia reiterates that all regions should be adequately represented on the Council to ensure its legitimacy. Reform should ensure the equitable geographic distribution of both permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council. We strongly support increasing the representation of African and Latin American countries on the Council and allocating at least one additional non-permanent seat to the Group of Eastern European States. We also believe that due consideration should be given to the adequate representation on the Council of small and medium-sized Member States when non-permanent members are being nominated and elected.

As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, we stand by our position that enlargement of any sort must be supplemented by improving the working methods of the Security Council, examples of which would be that permanent members of the Council should refrain from using the veto in situations of mass atrocity crimes and work to increase transparency in the Council's work generally.

In conclusion, it is urgent that we move beyond merely reiterating positions and finally achieve some tangible results. Latvia will continue to work diligently to reach that goal.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. They have my delegation's full support. Viet Nam also greatly appreciates the efforts of the co-Chairs to move the intergovernmental negotiation process forward during the General Assembly's seventy-fifth session, despite the challenges of the coronavirus disease pandemic. Their effort to enhance the intergovernmental negotiations with a fourth meeting on the status of intergovernmental negotiation documents is particularly notable. We look forward to further work in that regard during this session.

Viet Nam reaffirms its strong support for all efforts to reform the Security Council with a view to making it more representative, democratic, transparent, effective

and efficient. Our position, as we have stated in previous sessions, remains unchanged. It includes support for enlarging both the permanent and non-permanent membership categories, with improved and equitable geographical representation for underrepresented and developing countries. The Council should use the veto only in discharging its duties under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to eventually eliminating that power altogether. The relationship between the Council and the General Assembly should be further enhanced in order to strengthen the work and delivery of both organs, with the Assembly as the most broadly representative body.

The next session will see the intergovernmental negotiations enter their fifteenth year, and Security Council reform is long overdue. The commitment by our Heads of State and Government during the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations to instilling new life into the discussions of reform of the Security Council is still unfulfilled. For this session of the intergovernmental negotiations, my delegation would like to stress the following points.

First, the discussions should be efficient, focused and result-oriented. Secondly, the process should continue to address all five clusters of Security Council reform, with their interlinkages. Member States' positions and contributions should continue to be updated and reflected in the two basic documents, the 2015 framework document and the paper on revised elements of commonality and issues for further consideration. Thirdly, we welcome all efforts to explore the best ways to promote the intergovernmental negotiations process, including through text-based negotiations. It is important to conduct exchanges in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, if we are to bridge differences and achieve tangible progress.

In conclusion, my delegation will continue to support the co-Chairs in their efforts to engage with Member States to find ways to move the intergovernmental negotiations forward. We stand ready to work with other delegations to contribute to the process of Security Council reform.

Mr. Sarufa (Papua New Guinea): My delegation welcomes this plenary dialogue on reforming the Security Council and is grateful to the President for facilitating it. In that spirit, Papua New Guinea subscribes fully to the statement made last week

on behalf of the L.69 group by its Chair (see A/76/PV.33), Ms. Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. I would also like to contribute our national perspective.

I would like to cite my Prime Minister, Mr. James Marape, in his call to the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.13), speaking on Security Council reform, like many other world leaders in September's general debate.

"I would like to reiterate our call on the General Assembly to do better in delivering on the reforms of the Security Council. That important organ, entrusted with the international community's peace and security, with its archaic representation and working methods, is in dire need of an overhaul to ensure that it meets with today's reality. We are concerned that it has been nearly 12 long years now since the first round of the intergovernmental negotiations for the reforms of the Security Council, and the costs keep escalating for countries such as ours. Despite all the extensive efforts on the five agreed elements of the intergovernmental negotiations package, it still does not have any formal status to date. For my delegation, a single consolidated document now, and not in the indeterminate future, is needed for real negotiations to pave the way for the reforms of the Security Council. The importance of that cannot be overstated, and we reiterate our call on this fundamental point."

The list of speakers and the deliberations over several days on this very topical agenda item attest yet again to the importance we all attach to the overwhelming aspiration of "we the peoples of the United Nations" to reform the Security Council in a constructive spirit and timely manner in order to ensure just and fairer representation. We want to ensure that the Council is not left behind because of the fact that it is dealing with today's realities using modalities of work that are based on a bygone era. We the peoples of the United Nations deserve better. It is from that standpoint that we are encouraged by the welcome dialogue that the President of the Assembly has promoted and urge him to better leverage it to kick-start the intergovernmental negotiations process at this seventy-sixth session early and allow adequate time for us to engage meaningfully on Security Council reform. At this meeting, therefore, rather than addressing the substantive issues relating to the five agreed elements of the intergovernmental negotiations package, we will

reserve that for the intergovernmental negotiations process itself and instead offer brief comments of a general nature and on procedural matters.

It is in that spirit that my delegation welcomes and congratulates the new co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process, Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, the Permanent Representative of Qatar, who is resuming the co-Chairship, and Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark. We also commend them for their willingness and dedicated commitment to helping guide and steer our collective work on this important agenda. We offer them our constructive support and pledge to work with all other delegations. In doing so, we encourage the co-Chairs to use their prerogative to make better use of this session and encourage Member States to be more bold, pragmatic, transparent and results-driven within their mandate to ensure that we not only build on the last session's elements paper on convergences and divergences but work in a spirit of compromise for the greater good of us all while avoiding the risk of jeopardizing this process by not delivering on decision 62/557.

We are interested in how the co-Chairs intend to arrange and facilitate our dialogue in the intergovernmental negotiations process and in that connection would welcome a programme of work as soon as possible. That should draw on the important lessons from the past sessions of intergovernmental negotiations and this round of dialogue. For us, the importance of transparency, inclusivity and a fair and balanced consultative process cannot be overstated.

My delegation would also like to pick up on the important points raised by a number of delegations, particularly that of the Permanent Representative of Singapore 10 days ago (see A/76/PV.33) on whether the current framework within which we are conducting our work on the intergovernmental negotiations process is a reason for the protracted delivery of the results we seek and how we might improve on it, perhaps by including a review. We have also heard other delegations advocating for maintaining the existing intergovernmental negotiations process as their preferred forum. Those are not mere rhetorical questions but critical issues that we need to collectively consider with the ultimate aim of helping us deliver on decision 62/557. We must better understand the root causes of the chasm that exists among Member States on reform of the Security

Council and address them in an objective, inclusive and timely way so that we can collectively move forward.

In conclusion, I join other delegations in paying tribute to Ambassador Al-Thani of Qatar and the former Ambassador of Poland, Ms. Joanna Wronecka, and their delegations for their leadership and important contributions as co-Chairs of the previous session of intergovernmental negotiations.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I would first like to congratulate Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We hope that their activity will be based on the principles of impartiality and the broadest possible consideration of the views of all States participating in the process. We also thank Ms. Al-Thani and the former Permanent Representative of Poland, Ms. Joanna Wronecka, for their skilful leadership of the negotiation process during the General Assembly's seventy-fifth session.

The issue of Security Council reform is not only one of the most important issues on the agenda of our global organization but one of the most challenging. That is because pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, the Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is no question that reform of the Council is long overdue. The ongoing negotiations demonstrate the sincere desire of an overwhelming majority of Member States to find an optimal model for such reform. At the same time, it is obvious that a universal solution that could satisfy everyone, or at least almost everyone, is not yet in sight. The approaches of the main actors on the reform playing field still differ substantially and are sometimes diametrically opposed. In that context, we see no alternative during the current session of the General Assembly to continuing the patient, incremental work of bringing the negotiating approaches closer together.

Our position is well known. As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia believes it is essential to improve the Council's representation of developing States in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In that regard, we support rectifying the historical injustice done to Africa, whose current representation on the Council corresponds neither to the total number

of States on the continent nor to its current role in international affairs.

However, the efforts to expand the Council should not affect its ability to effectively and promptly respond to emerging challenges. In that context, we are in favour of maintaining a compact Security Council that is fit for purpose. Its optimal membership should not exceed the low twenties. We consider any ideas that could result in the infringement of the prerogatives of the current permanent members of the Council, including the institution of the veto, to be unacceptable. We should remember that this instrument is an important factor in encouraging Council members to seek balanced solutions. The use or the threat of use of the veto has saved the United Nations from being drawn into dubious ventures more than once.

We would like to remind the Assembly that the process of reforming the Security Council belongs to all Member States, without exception, and its final formula should enjoy the broadest possible support. We firmly believe that the issue of Security Council reform cannot be resolved through mere arithmetic by putting one or another model to a vote in order to obtain the minimum votes required under the Charter of the United Nations. Any outcome achieved that way will hardly add to the Security Council's credibility and will certainly not improve our Organization's effectiveness and authority. At the same time, we are prepared to consider any reasonable option for expanding the composition of the Security Council, including the compromise-based so-called interim solution, if it is based on the broadest possible consensus within the United Nations.

We hope that the efforts of the President of the General Assembly and the co-Chairs of the negotiations will be focused specifically on facilitating the negotiations as much as possible, with the understanding that the final word on the process remains with Member States. We cannot make progress on Security Council reform by imposing negotiating documents or other initiatives on Member States that have not been agreed on by all the participants in the process. Previous General Assembly sessions have shown the futility and danger of attempts to force a solution to the reform issue without due care for the broad support of Member States. The negotiations should be conducted calmly, transparently and inclusively, without arbitrary timelines. It is important that we all bear in mind that there can be no place in this matter for artificial deadlines or attempts

to solve a complex problem by pressuring members or imposing approaches that suit some on the rest of us.

Our commitment to achieving results within the existing format of discussions remains unchanged. The platform of the intergovernmental negotiations possesses a legitimacy that is both unique and universal regarding the entire range of issues pertaining to reform. Deviating from it could lead to the collapse of the entire negotiating architecture, setting the process back many years. Moreover, given the current difficult circumstances, we certainly do not want the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform to create new divisions or worsen the existing ones among Member States. We hope we can avoid that and that the new round of discussions will make it possible to take full account of the views of all Member States.

Ms. Minale (Ethiopia): I would like to congratulate the President on his commendable leadership of this meeting. I also thank the delegations that have spoken before me for their insightful contributions and statements of position.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the long-held position of the Group of African States on the question of equitable representation on and increasing the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. I would like to add some brief remarks in my national capacity.

We believe that making the Security Council more democratic, representative and transparent is long overdue. Based on General Assembly decision 62/557, on Security Council reform on all five clusters, we need to chart a way for the comprehensive and fully owned reform of the Council. From the point of view of regional arrangements and the security architecture, the African Union region remains the only one not represented in the permanent membership of the Security Council, a fact that is beyond regrettable. We believe that rectifying that historical mistake and ensuring Africa's equal representation on the Council is a matter of necessity and justice that should concern us all. The importance of equal representation is not a matter of rhetoric, and the fact that Africa has been deprived of a seat at the table is a serious disservice that still continues. In the years of discussion we have had on this agenda item, the clearest common denominator in the positions we hear from the various groups and States is the need to step up and give Africa agency

on the Security Council. We believe that this area of overlap should not be taken for granted and get lost amid the other areas of controversy.

The African Common Position, as laid out in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, restates the best option for redressing Africa's alienation from our global security body. Taking into account the specific size of an enlarged Security Council, Africa must be fully represented on it, with no fewer than two permanent seats, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, and five non-permanent seats. Ethiopia supports that position fully. In addition, Africa must have the prerogative to decide the modality of its representation.

Where the Council's working methods are concerned, we believe that they should be governed by clear rules that ensure transparency and the full participation of every State affected by the Council's deliberations. The Security Council ought not to be a guardianship mechanism under which the main subject leaves its fate up to the decisions of others.

With regard to the veto, as long as our international system cannot eliminate the veto, all permanent members of the Security Council should have that right. In that regard, we do not support the creation of a third category of permanent members with no right of veto, at least as far as Africa's representation in the permanent category is concerned.

As many delegations have said before me, the discussions and negotiations on Security Council reform have indeed taken a long time. There is also a risk of fatigue and complacency in the discussions. We are fully aware that we are dealing with an untenable status quo. Nevertheless, the work we do to rationalize the Council's composition should be impeccable and should not require us to rescind our decisions or make frequent reviews. In that regard, it is clearly very important to take our time and muster the appropriate consensus.

Mr. Sautter (Germany): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Japan on behalf of the Group of Four (see A/76/PV.33), and I would like to add a few words in my national capacity.

The Group of Four statement and many other speakers here have already made this point, but it cannot be stressed enough. We need a representative Security Council that is credibly and effectively able to deal with

the complex challenges that we face regarding peace and security in the world today. For that to happen, we have to finally get the negotiations process going and turn the intergovernmental conference on Security Council reform into a body that truly deserves its name. That cannot simply mean that we continue to repeat our well-known positions. We believe that three points are vital if we are to truly instil new life.

First, we will need one consolidated document on which we work together, as we do on many other issues in the United Nations. Secondly, we should then proceed with text-based negotiations. Thirdly, that should happen according to General Assembly rules of procedure. It is simply unacceptable that after more than 10 years we have, frankly, not even inched towards the starting point of what will certainly be a negotiation marathon. We should be aware that the intergovernmental negotiations may be reaching the end of their credibility, which would be to the detriment of the United Nations as a whole. It would risk turning the process into a symbol of what is not working at the United Nations. We therefore ask everyone here to make a united push. We may need to reach out across the lines, and that is a good thing. We may also need to adopt positions that we have maintained in the past. The Group of Four has already done so. I am thinking about support for the African position. Ensuring that Africa's representation in the Security Council is adequate is simply crucial if we are to see justice done to the people of Africa. It is also a question of dignity.

Yes, compromise will be necessary. I think that goes for all of us. Our point is that we will be able to find compromise only if we embark on true and meaningful negotiations. We are fully confident that our highly capable and experienced co-facilitators, Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, will do their utmost to ensure progress, and we stand ready to support them in that important endeavour.

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the President for convening this relevant debate, which is taking on even greater significance during this seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly.

With decision 74/569 of 31 August 2020, the General Assembly reaffirmed its central role in the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other

matters related to the Security Council. Guatemala would like to congratulate Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani and Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the negotiations of this important intergovernmental process.

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Member States confer on the Security Council the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, recognizing that the Council acts on behalf of the membership as a whole and that its conduct is in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In fact, under Article 25 of the Charter, we have agreed to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. The decisions and resolutions adopted by the Council, as well as its representation and actions, therefore confer a great responsibility on Member States.

In this regard, Guatemala has highlighted during previous intergovernmental sessions the need to strengthen and improve the work of the Security Council based on a number of guidelines. They are, first, making the Security Council a more representative body; secondly, reconciling the criterion of representativeness with that of efficiency, which implies a modest increase in the number of its members; thirdly, seeking a greater rapprochement between the work of the Security Council and that of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission; and fourthly, making the work of the Security Council more transparent through its working methods.

Additionally, we support expanding the numbers of members in both categories by up to five permanent members and five additional elected members, which would result in a Council with 10 permanent and 15 elected members. We do not insist that the new permanent members should have all the prerogatives of the current permanent five, in particular the right to veto. Neither do we insist that the current five permanent members renounce their prerogatives under the Charter. We believe in the importance of Africa and Latin America having permanent representation on the Security Council, so as to reflect the times we live in today.

Guatemala was a non-permanent member of the Security Council during the 2012-2013 biennium. Our experience enabled us to contribute to one of the

noblest tasks of this Organization, the maintenance of peace. Since then, taking into account our experience, as well as the delicate responsibility that comes with being a member of the Security Council, permanent or non-permanent, we have tried to strengthen other General Assembly bodies, such as the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, with greater triangular interaction and cooperation among the members of the Security Council and the Special Committee and troop-contributing countries.

It is particularly important to maintain transparency in peacekeeping processes and in the working methods of the Security Council, with a view to making the Council more effective in hostile environments and ensuring that peacekeeping is effective and that peace can be consolidated in a sustainable manner. In that regard, we would like to highlight the importance of complying with the three main principles of peacekeeping operations — the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in legitimate self-defence and in defence of the mandate — in situations where the political peace processes established by the Organization are respected and the creation of peaceful societies is sought, encouraging the development of our populations and thereby increasing the effectiveness of the noble work of peacekeeping, which would be strengthened by the addition of new permanent and non-permanent members to the Security Council, speeding up decision-making in cases of international emergency.

With respect to the right of veto, we must reiterate the call for the Security Council to be consistent in its functions, including through the responsible use of the right to veto, in order to avoid worsening international crises. In that regard, Guatemala reiterates its support for the Franco-Mexican initiative on limiting the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities, based on the normative policy premise of the responsibility to protect. It is therefore extremely important that we continue our efforts to reform the Security Council and its referral of cases to the International Criminal Court.

Whatever the result of the current intergovernmental negotiations on this matter, it should be the sole responsibility of the Member States of the General Assembly. In that regard, we have no objection to the co-Chairs proposing a text that makes it possible to start direct negotiations based on shared elements that we have negotiated in previous years. We reiterate our appreciation to the co-Chairs, who can count on our

support during this exercise in advancing a process of singular relevance not only for our Organization, but also for the States that are represented here.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I thank the President for convening today's debate. At the outset, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Poland and Qatar for leading the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the previous session of the General Assembly. We congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Denmark on their appointment as co-Chairs of the current session of intergovernmental negotiations.

Estonia continues to deplore the lack of meaningful substantive progress on reform of the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We are still advocating for a meaningful, results-oriented process for reforming the Security Council. The main goal of the reform efforts should be a strengthened United Nations, greater ownership of the Security Council's work and accountability of the Council to the United Nations membership. There is a clear need for increasing the membership of the Security Council based on equitable representation. Estonia is grateful for being entrusted with serving as an elected member in the Council for the first time from 2020 until the end of this year. We continue to advocate for all States, particularly small States, to have an opportunity to serve on the Council.

We also continue to point out that with regard to enlarging the Council, the question of the veto must be carefully considered. The use or threat of use of the veto by some members of the Security Council has at times rendered it unable to react to situations where action is most needed. The failure of the Council to protect civilians from mass atrocity crimes severely damages its credibility. The permanent members of the Security Council should refrain from using the veto to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending situations that involve mass atrocity crimes. That vital commitment on the part of all the permanent members is already achievable on a voluntary basis, with no

amendments needed to the Charter of the United Nations. There are no excuses for not following through on that commitment to bolstering the protection of civilians and the moral standing of the Council. Furthermore, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, Estonia actively supports the 2015 code of conduct regarding Security Council action on genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Those two initiatives share a common goal and are complementary. We call on more States to join the ACT group's code of conduct and the political declaration on suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity launched by France and Mexico, also in 2015.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate the call for concrete and meaningful steps by the United Nations membership to advance our common goal of making the Security Council more representative, effective, transparent and accountable, and therefore more legitimate.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats. I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shibuya (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to respond to an earlier statement in which, regrettably, a delegation made a groundless statement about Japan. Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of the Second World War, has made innumerable contributions to the peace and prosperity of the world and will continue to make such contributions as a responsible member of the international community.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 123.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.