



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

9410th meeting

Tuesday, 5 September 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

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| <i>President:</i> | Mr. Hoxha | (Albania) |
| <i>Members:</i> | Brazil | Mr. França Danese |
| | China | Mr. Zhang Jun |
| | Ecuador | Mr. Pérez Loose |
| | France | Mr. De Rivière |
| | Gabon | Mrs. Koumba Pambo |
| | Ghana | Mr. Boateng |
| | Japan | Mr. Ishikane |
| | Malta | Mr. Camilleri |
| | Mozambique | Mr. Fernandes |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzia |
| | Switzerland | Mrs. Baeriswyl |
| | United Arab Emirates | Ms. Shaheen |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Dame Barbara Woodward |
| | United States of America | Mr. Wood |

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

Working methods of the Security Council

Letter dated 28 August 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/630)

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

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States, for her service as President of the Council for the month of August 2023. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and her team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

Working methods of the Security Council

Letter dated 28 August 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/630)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/630, which contains the text of a letter dated 28 August 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions.

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide the briefing today as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions at this annual open debate on working methods. Annual open debates on working methods have served to collectively engage in a reflection with the wider membership on the working methods used by the Council to deliver on its important responsibility to maintain international peace and security. This has been a constant of the Council since 2010, to assess the implementation of the measures set out in note by the President S/2017/507 and in subsequently adopted notes by the President.

Since 2017, 15 new notes by the President on its working methods have been adopted under the auspices of the Informal Working Group, the last two of which were adopted in August during my tenure as Chair. Those new 15 notes add to the normative acquis set out in note 507 to enhance the efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the Council. Many of the notes were issued in response to demands from the wider membership in the context of these debates and elsewhere.

We find ourselves here today at a particularly critical juncture, and today's open debate could not be more relevant. While the worst effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic are now behind us, other critical challenges remain. The persistence of multifaceted crises and armed conflicts in different parts of the world, adverse effects of climate change, terrorism and the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes are only a few examples. Against that backdrop, and consistent with its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the Security Council is expected to act — and to do so efficiently, transparently and effectively on behalf of the rest of the membership.

However, challenging political dynamics worldwide as well as divisions within the Council have prevailed, turning division into an obstacle for action, critically affecting the Council's ability to deliver on its responsibilities as established in the Charter of the United Nations. In 2022 and 2023, this Chamber has been a venue of old and new rifts inhibiting its action in connection with some of the world's most pressing

problems. At stake is not only the Council's reputation, but also the overall reputation of the United Nations.

For all the criticism, however, the Council has maintained its level of activity of last year, being actively seized of 41 items on its agenda so far, fully resumed open debates with high levels of participation and adopted decisions regularly to maintain the operations of the United Nations worldwide. The workload is ever-growing, and the stakes could not be greater. In that context, the importance of the working methods cannot be overstated.

Since assuming my role as Chair of the Informal Working Group, in January 2022, I have had the privilege of building on the significant achievements of my predecessors in advancing the Security Council's working methods. Over the past two years, I have strived to steer discussions at the Informal Working Group towards making the Council not only more efficient and effective in its work and decision-making, but also more transparent and inclusive of the viewpoints of all of its members, the wider United Nations membership and those affected by its decisions.

I would like to highlight a few major milestones that the Informal Working Group has achieved in the past 18 months.

First, at the outset of 2022, the Informal Working Group adopted a programme of work setting out the main priorities and planned actions for the upcoming year, allowing all Council members to comment and make proposals. Again, that happened at the beginning of 2023, rendering the work of the Group more predictable and results oriented. In addition, as an important step towards greater transparency, the Informal Working Group adopted its first annual report in 2022 (see S/2022/1032), thereby aligning itself with the practice of the rest of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council. The annual report includes summaries of its activities as well as a set of selected indicators, in a first attempt at tracking the implementation of note 507 and subsequently adopted presidential notes. Those indicators are crucial to get a better overview of how the Council is performing and what gaps remain. In that regard, I would welcome the comments and feedback of Member States to further enhance the indicators and identify new areas of work for their reflection, if possible, in the Group's 2023 annual report.

As I mentioned at the outset, under the auspices of the Informal Working Group, the Council adopted

two additional notes by the President of the Security Council on working methods. The first note by the President (S/2023/612) lays out the procedure for the observance of minutes of silence and aims to ensure that it is conducted in an orderly manner. It reflects the consensus of all members of the Council to ensure that those solemn occasions are conducted smoothly, respectfully and devoid of any politicization. The second note (S/2023/615) reaffirms the Council's commitment to making every effort to agree provisionally on the appointment of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies for the following year no later than 1 October and includes an interim contingency measure in case the provisional agreement is not reached on time during the month of January.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Council members for the cooperation demonstrated in the framework of the Informal Working Group in achieving those important outcome documents. Contrary to the narrative of division that I mentioned earlier, the Informal Working Group proves that productive engagement is possible in the Council and that the search for common ground should always be pursued. Indeed, the Informal Working Group has proven that working methods can aid in facilitating the Council's work and reduce polarization by discussing topics that present clear obstacles to the functioning of the Council and identifying possible solutions.

For example, the Informal Working Group has maintained on its agenda, as standing items, regular reporting by presidencies of the Council and penholders in exercising their responsibilities. Building on the work of previous Chairs, the reporting on the work of each presidency has made those members holding that responsibility more aware of their fundamental role in implementing the working methods agreed upon by the Council. It has also facilitated the sharing of best practices among Council presidencies. Similarly, the regular reporting by penholders on the way in which they held the pen was aimed at enhancing their accountability in doing so, and additional efforts should be considered on that track.

In the past 18 months, the Informal Working Group addressed many other topics, including how to improve the selection of Chairs of subsidiary bodies and ensure a more equitable distribution of labour among Council members, the access of elected members to confidential documentation of the Council predating their membership, the practice of monthly assessments,

the cooperation with other United Nations principal organs, the mainstreaming of gender into the work of the Council and the participation of civil society in Council meetings and ensuring their protection against reprisals.

Discussions in the Informal Working Group have also led to practical outcomes. In April 2023, emulating a practice well-established in the General Assembly, the Council rolled out a live list of speakers for open debates, which will help the wider membership to be better informed and engaged in the work of the Council.

Lastly, I would like to highlight that, in the true spirit of Informal Working Group cooperation, former Informal Working Group Chairs Kuwait and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as myself as current Chair, joined Japan in collaborating towards the successful launching of the Interactive Handbook of the Working Methods of the Council. Easily accessible through the website of the Security Council, the handbook serves as a practical guide to the rules, practices and procedures of the Council and is intended for its members and the wider membership to better understand and implement the working methods. We are grateful to Japan for spearheading such an initiative. It is a timely innovation for the incoming elected members, who will commence observing proceedings next month.

Before I conclude, I would like to stress that, rather than an obscure and merely technical area of expertise, the working methods of the Council are a critical tool for the effective functioning of the Council and for the discharge of its mandate. It is therefore crucial for everyone in the Chamber to be collectively invested in advancing this agenda and proactively contribute to its enhancement. While not in and of themselves the solution to the conflicts on the Council's agenda, the working methods are a means to an end and can build the path towards finding solutions. I look forward to hearing the proposals from the wider membership as we collectively strive towards enhancing the Council's effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. Proposals put forward today will help shape future discussions of the Informal Working Group under my remaining months as Chair and will be critical for future Chairs to consider.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom):

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency and by wishing you a very productive month of September. Let me also start by thanking you for your role as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and for your team's excellent stewardship of this important topic.

On 17 January 1946, the Security Council held its first meeting — in Church House, in Westminster in the United Kingdom (see S/PV.1). In the 77 years since, the Council has worked to discharge its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Dag Hammarskjöld, of course, said it best: "The United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell". For all its faults, fractures and inefficiencies, the Council continues to play a vital role. It has outlasted the League of Nations by 51 years, and it has helped to prevent third world war.

Our vision remains for a Council that is able to solve problems through interactive debate, building consensus, responsible and inclusive penholdership and decisions that have real impact on the ground. Realizing that vision means looking ahead to forthcoming threats to peace and security and being proactive in preventing conflict or deterring escalation, while using all the tools at the Council's disposal. It means tackling issues head-on, even where they are uncomfortable for some. It means hearing from genuine experts, including civil society, who can enrich our deliberations. It also means striking a balance between transparency and confidentiality. Sometimes the Council is most effective when it holds frank discussions in private; when it does so, we should strive to agree press elements in the interest of transparency. And it means, most important, that all Council members have a responsibility to uphold the Charter of the United Nations.

It is 50 years since the United Kingdom last unilaterally vetoed a Council draft resolution (see S/PV.2902). We are glad that General Assembly resolution 76/262 has helped ensure transparency and accountability when a permanent member blocks action to maintain international peace and security.

By invading its sovereign neighbour and engaging in a brutal war of aggression, one permanent member has shown flagrant disregard for the Charter. In attempting to defend the indefensible, Russia has increasingly used the Council as a platform for propaganda and disinformation. It has requested briefers on the

basis of their willingness to defend or distract from Russia's aggression, and it has allowed its narrative to seep into other important issues on the Council's agenda. It is incumbent on all of us to maintain the Council's authority, integrity and legitimacy — all the more so when the actions of one permanent member threaten them.

We will continue to work with you, Mr. President, in your capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group, and collectively with our colleagues around this table to maximize the Council's effectiveness and uphold the Charter.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): As this is the first meeting of the month, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency and wish you a very productive September. And I also thank you for convening this important open debate.

The United States welcomes this annual opportunity to hear the views of members of the United Nations about what aspects of the Security Council's working methods serve us well and where there are areas for improvement. It is vitally important that the Council's work, both substantive and procedural, serves the interests of all Member States. In carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council is acting on behalf of all Members of the United Nations.

The United States expresses its deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for ably chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions with a smooth and deft guidance that has produced concrete results. In particular, we wish to congratulate you, Sir, on the recent adoption of two notes by the President (S/2023/612 and S/2023/615) that will improve the Council's working methods. Significantly, the latter note came about because the Council was unable to reach a consensus decision on the appointment of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies by the end of last year. The result was that all those important bodies were unable to function for several weeks in January of this year. The Informal Working Group, under the Chair's leadership, negotiated and adopted presidential note S/2023/615, deciding that the Member State that holds the rotating presidency in January would function as the Chair of all the subsidiary bodies if the impasse continued into January. That recent exercise shows that when the Council works

in unison toward a common goal to address specific practical issues regarding its working methods, it can expeditiously take action.

Regarding penholding, there have also been positive developments. In particular, there has been a welcome expansion of the practice of co-penholding, with increasing positive and valuable contributions by elected members of the Security Council. In our case, we worked collaboratively with Mexico during its Council tenure and then subsequently with Ecuador on the situation in Haiti. Most recently, in collaboration with Ecuador as co-penholder, we achieved the unanimous adoption of resolution 2692 (2023), on Haiti. Our successful co-penholding benefited the negotiation process and has produced excellent outcomes. The United States also worked together with Ireland as co-penholder on an important and innovative resolution establishing a humanitarian carveout across United Nations sanctions regimes (resolution 2664 (2022)). And we work closely with Albania on draft resolutions on Ukraine. We are also happy to see that the African members on the Council jointly co-penned an important press statement on the situation in the Niger. The United States supports the prior notes the Council has adopted on penholding, currently codified as part of note by the President S/2017/507, and continues to favour a flexible approach to penholding. We stand ready to continue discussions of penholding issues among Council members as we strive to improve the practice of penholding in the Council.

I would like to make one final comment on an unfortunate practice by the Russian Federation, as exhibited most recently in draft resolution S/2023/638, on the Mali sanctions regime. The penholders painstakingly facilitated the negotiations of the draft resolution for a month with all Council members, and the discussions made clear how isolated Russia was in its demands. The penholders put into blue a well-crafted compromise proposal that had the overwhelming support of Council members. At the very last minute, without consulting at all with Council members, the Russian Federation put into blue a competing draft (draft resolution (S/2023/639)). Russia then brazenly vetoed the penholders' draft resolution, which received 13 votes in favour. And Russia's draft resolution received only one vote in favour: that of the Russian Federation. Therefore, in defiance of the Council's usual working methods, Russia singlehandedly killed the Mali sanctions regime. Russia's actions were in bad faith and disrespectful of all the other members of the Security

Council. Russia's approach to working methods in that manner undermines the unity of the Council, and we urge it to alter its behaviour so that the Council can work towards the fulfilment of its vital mandate.

Finally, we wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Security Council Affairs Division, including its Director, Claudia Banz, and all of its staff. Having just served as the President of the Council in August, we were reminded of the essential role that the Security Council Affairs Division plays in making sure the Council's work goes smoothly. From its preparations for the circulation of the formal documents of the Council to its assistance in preparing the President prior to each Council meeting and all its other unseen, unheralded and behind-the-scenes work, the Council could not function without the superb efforts of the Division.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and I assure you of France's full support throughout the month of September. I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's open debate and for your work in your capacity as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The Security Council and the multilateral system as a whole are facing major challenges, in particular the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. To respond to those challenges, we need an action- and results-oriented Council. For the Security Council to be effective, it must first and foremost undergo reform to make it more authoritative and representative. France's position on that is well-known. We support the candidacies of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan as permanent members, as well as an increased representation of Africa, including among the permanent members. An enlarged Council could include up to 25 members. It is time to make progress on this issue. The discussions have been ongoing for years — now it is time to act.

Secondly, we need to strike the right balance between public diplomacy and working behind closed doors. The current balance is not the right one. Public meetings are useful because they allow greater openness and transparency. The voice of women is also increasingly present, which we of course welcome. However, we must be careful to preserve sufficient space for consultations among permanent representatives, as those are the discussions that enable us to tackle the

most difficult issues head-on and reach compromises. Our goal must not be to continue as a juxtaposition of 15 national positions, but rather to ensure that the Council can work united in determining its decisions and actions. Similarly, while the informal Arria Formula meetings are valuable, there are too many of them, and there is often a perverse use of them. We need to find a way of controlling how many such meetings are held, as well as how they are conducted.

Thirdly, we must improve our collective work and together propose concrete solutions to all the threats to international peace and security that need to be addressed. France continues to shoulder its responsibilities by coordinating the Council's work on a number of issues. We closely involve all Council members in that work and even regularly suggest that they draft texts jointly.

The best working methods will never replace the spirit of responsibility and compromise, which remains essential to finding solutions to crises. Nevertheless, the Security Council has been used on several occasions in recent months and years as a platform for disinformation, with speakers delivering excessively long statements to put forward arguable or even fantastical positions. That misuse of the Council is dangerously weakening its authority and must stop. The Council's time must be used in a spirit of responsibility. The strategies aimed at saturating the Council's agenda are problematic because they hinder our capacity to respond. Showing proof of our responsibility also means making necessary compromises so that the Council can deliberate and make decisions in the service of international peace and security, as the Charter of the United Nations demands. None of us can hope to achieve 100 per cent of our goals. Multilateral negotiations do not work that way.

And for the permanent members, showing proof of our responsibility means a reasonable use of the veto. Together with Mexico, France has put forth an initiative proposing the voluntary and collective suspension of the use of veto in cases of mass atrocities. We call on all Member States, especially permanent members of the Council, to join the initiative, which has already been formally supported by 106 States. Guided by the goal of effectiveness and the spirit of compromise, which France has always embraced, we will continue to work as a responsible member of the Security Council.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on the beginning of your country's presidency of the Council

for the month of September. We hope that its working methods will not disappoint you — and vice versa. We thank you for your briefing, your leadership of the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and for organizing today's meeting.

For a number of years now the Security Council has been discussing its working methods in an open format, with the participation of a wide range of Member States. We believe that periodically reviewing the Council's arsenal is a useful practice that makes it possible to identify areas that can be further improved. We are confident that today's discussion, along with the external assessment of the current state of affairs, can make a tangible contribution to the work of the Group and help to enrich it with new ideas. Of course, that is in the understanding that the working methods themselves and any steps taken to modify them are and will continue to be owned by the members of the Council.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the Security Council's comprehensive discussion of the subject in an open format with the participation of all interested Member States. We believe in the practical significance of the discussion, which now dates back many years, to the extent that it provides an opportunity to strengthen the Security Council's coordination with the Member States more broadly. We welcome the results achieved over the years, as many of the ideas expressed in the Council Chamber later went on to form the basis of the note by the President S/2017/507, which is particularly important as a compendium of the working practices of the Security Council and is actively used by the non-permanent members as an important primary source. At the same time, given the sensitive nature of the issue of the Council's working methods, we believe that any reforms must be aimed at genuinely improving the Council's effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling its main tasks of maintaining international peace and security. Using populist rhetoric in this area, including in the context of the never-ending aim of increasing the level of transparency in the Council's work, not only does not get results but on the contrary often harms the cause.

We note the efforts of the delegation of Albania to improve the working methods of the Security Council and the introduction of the practice of preparing an annual report of the Informal Working Group (see S/2022/1032). We welcome the Council's adoption of the presidential notes prepared by Albania (S/2023/612

and S/2023/615) aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Security Council's work, including that of its subsidiary bodies. We see that the non-permanent members are taking an active interest in the procedural aspects of the work of the Security Council, which unquestionably advances the collective development of the Council's best practices.

Regrettably, the Council has recently been encountering increasingly substantive problems in its activities. We have consistently emphasized that cosmetic fixes in this area are not enough. We need a serious, comprehensive discussion. The practice whereby various members are using the Council to pursue their own narrow national interests has taken on threatening proportions. Thanks to their deliberate pressure, the Security Council's agenda is constantly expanding to include issues of domestic politics, human rights, climate and other matters, all of it done, needless to say, on the most plausible pretexts. However, they deliberately ignore the fact that in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council should not address such issues, not to mention the fact that it cannot help to resolve them. Such actions once again demonstrate that the true goal is to put pressure on objectionable countries.

The real reasons that led to a particular conflict are often deliberately ignored or glossed over. As a result, some United Nations missions, including peacekeeping operations, receive vague mandates with inappropriate functions that they simply cannot fulfil. That leads only to increased distrust in their impartiality and effectiveness. One example is the situation with the agreement on the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We also see attempts to shift responsibility for emerging crises onto others, as happened with the Council's consideration of the Afghanistan issue, when some members of the Council kept trying to limit comprehensive discussion of it to the issue of respect for human rights.

We continue to believe that it is unacceptable to ignore the views of a country hosting a United Nations peacekeeping contingent on its territory. For example, the Lebanese authorities have repeatedly sent the Council an unambiguous message about the importance of strengthening the coordination between the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Government and the army of Lebanon, including in order to ensure the protection and safety of the United Nations personnel along the Blue Line. However, the

informal penholders on the Lebanese file prefer to simply ignore Lebanon's views.

It is noticeable that our Western colleagues have a policy of changing the focus of the discussion if the issue raised does not correspond to their narrow national interests. An obvious example of that is the discussion on reviewing or lifting sanctions affecting countries where restrictive measures have ceased to respond to the current situation. It is no secret to anybody that sanctions regimes are used by some States to exert political pressure under the cover of an international and United Nations umbrella, an approach that can hardly be called constructive, including in ensuring the effectiveness of sanctions regimes. Despite the fact that the reasons for which the sanctions were introduced are no longer actually relevant, new reasons keep on being found to leave them in force. We should also point out that the penholders on sanctions files are often guided by the nature of their own interactions with countries on the Security Council's agenda. The Council has once again been witnessing persistent attempts to extend restrictions on the Central African Republic and Mali for the sole purpose of maintaining external pressure on them. The sovereign opinions of those countries on the Council's agenda, which have made significant progress in stabilizing the situation on their territories, have been blatantly ignored, as have their legitimate concerns. And we have always been respectful in our actions regarding Mali.

We note with regret the gradual decline in the Council's capacity for constructive discussion and negotiation. Instead of seeking solutions to complex issues, which does indeed demand both time and a willingness to compromise, Western countries often deliberately choose the easiest path, which leads to the use of the veto or abstentions on resolutions. Again, a recent example is the situation regarding the sanctions on Mali, when our repeated calls to the authors of the draft resolution to take a constructive approach and show some sense were simply ignored. And we certainly do not need to hear from anyone about the painstaking efforts they made to agree on resolution 2690 (2023) on Mali, which wound up completely ignoring the country's concerns. Here is a little secret. One of the permanent members of the Council said in closed consultations that we are the Security Council, and we do what we want, not what the country we are considering wants. Is that not a neocolonial approach?

I would like to emphasize one more thing. The issue of the right of the veto does not fall under the umbrella of the Council's working methods but is rather a cornerstone of the entire Security Council architecture and a pledge to ensure the Council's ability to arrive at balanced decisions. However, it does not obviate the need for working methods and approaches that could help to reach compromise. The desire to negotiate, demonstrate wisdom and pragmatism and to hear out and listen to other colleagues on the shop floor is essential.

Some permanent members of the Council are quick to criticize the use of the veto while they conveniently fail to mention the fact that they have no need for the right to the veto, as they have eight votes ready in their pocket, which is essentially a *de facto* veto that spares them from resorting to its actual use. That is why the Security Council does not stand in need of being expanded through the addition of new like-minded Western members. In-absentia accusations, labelling, sabotage, diktat and manipulation have become some of our Western colleagues' preferred tactics. With regard to some items, such as Ukraine, the Security Council has long been a platform for voicing the most absurd fabrications and propagandistic rhetoric by Western States. Moreover, the opinion of the West is categorically presented as the only correct one. Does such a destructive approach contribute to Council unity? Hardly.

Against that background, the issue of informal penholdership on certain dossiers is becoming increasingly critical. The situation in which only three delegations continue to act as penholders on most issues continues. Despite their long-lost status as colonial empires, they are convinced of their own exceptionalism and consider themselves regional experts and condescendingly lecture other States, and even regions. The views of the host country and regional stakeholders, which are often more knowledgeable of the situation on the ground, and sometimes even representatives of the Secretariat, are ignored altogether.

Another example — that is still relevant — of misuse of the penholder role is the procedure for negotiating Security Council draft resolutions. The work is often carried out under time pressure that is artificially created and that does not allow for a comprehensive expert review of the documents. In addition, in order to obtain the desired voting outcome, our Western colleagues have begun to favour the method of putting

unprecedented pressure on any country that disagrees with this approach with the principle of “if you are not with us, you are against us”.

What are we left with at the end of the day? We are left with more half-baked documents that fail to address the key concerns of Council members, provide the Secretariat with unclear instructions and are often unrealistic in their goals and objectives. Such an approach is not conducive to effective conflict resolution. Worse still, it undermines the authority of the Security Council. We have consistently advocated expanding the pool of informal penholders, primarily by including non-permanent members. To that end, we are guided by the premise enshrined in the note by the President of the Security Council S/2017/507 that any member of the Council may be a penholder and more than one Council member may act as co-penholders. We attach particular attention, in that regard, to taking into account the views of African States. We are convinced that revisiting the issue of informal penholdership will contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of the work of the Council. In that connection, we welcome the launch, in which we actively participated, of an ongoing discussion on the issue in the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We will continue to engage constructively with interested colleagues to negotiate a draft note on informal penholdership.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the backlog in the Council's documentation flow. The Council produces several hundred documents every year. Unfortunately, the value added of some of them is questionable. The excessive micromanagement of draft resolutions regularly observed is not helpful either. We have consistently maintained that the final products of the Council should be concise, clear, understandable and, most important, action-oriented. The issue of the optimal ratio of open to closed Council meetings remains a hot topic. Russia has consistently advocated a balance between the two. However, we see that some members of the Council who ostensibly advocate for maximum transparency in discussions on individual country-specific issues in fact use them solely for propaganda shows, while still preferring to consider sensitive and awkward issues behind closed doors.

In conclusion, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the issue of inviting briefers to Council meetings to speak on specific topics, which has become a sore point. The persistent attempts of Western

colleagues to censor the participation of briefers who, in their opinion, do not meet certain Western criteria, which simply means that they are not ready to sing to their tune and have an alternative view of various international problems simply do not stand up to scrutiny. Unfortunately, we have also noted cases involving insults and personal attacks directed at briefers voicing non-Western positions. Such actions are unacceptable and do not contribute to fostering an objective and balanced discussion.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I would like to congratulate Albania on its presidency of the Security Council. I also thank the United States for serving as President of the Council in August. With regard to the agenda item for today, I would like to thank Ambassador Hoxha for his briefing.

Since 2010, the Security Council has held an annual open debate to discuss how to improve its working methods, which is a valuable exercise. China welcomes the participation of non-Council members at this meeting today. Working methods as a reflection of thinking methods have never been, and never will be, mere technicalities. The work of the Security Council is highly political, and its working methods therefore will have to be approached from a political perspective.

In connection with the major issues related to the Security Council, I would like to make the following points.

First, the Council should focus on its core mandate. The world is facing rapidly emerging crises and challenges. The Council must carry out its mandate, but it cannot take on too much. Hence the need to focus its resources on addressing major issues that threaten peace and security. We do not support thematic issues, which take up excessive resources, or overlapping and redundancy between the Council and other United Nations bodies. Furthermore, we oppose certain members' politically motivated practice of promoting the discussion of country-specific human rights issues in the Council.

Secondly, the Security Council should be results-oriented and committed to resolving practical issues. The meetings, statements and documents of the Council are the means to an end, not an end in and of themselves. Holding a meeting does not translate into resolving an issue. The same holds true for convening multiple meetings on the same topic, which sometimes turn out to be counterproductive. We could begin by taking

small steps towards improving the Council's efficiency and effectiveness. The documents that we adopt should be understandable and practical. Resolutions should normally not be allowed to exceed 10 pages. The Council currently meets on the Syrian issue two to three times a month, with most members repeating their established positions. We could effectively decrease the frequency of deliberations by streamlining and combining them. The practice of the African members of the Council of making joint statements both is time-saving and helps to increase their impact. The practice is commendable and could be emulated by other Council members.

Thirdly, concerning the dynamics among Council members, at the centre of the Council's myriad working methods lies the core principle of solidarity and unity. Council members should show mutual respect, consult one another as equals and take into account one another's concerns. Instead of paying attention only to public effect and talking to the camera, we should listen attentively to one another, enhance mutual understanding and make an effort to seek consensus. China is in favour of holding more informal consultations. We also support the Security Council strengthening its engagement and communication with the countries concerned, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and non-Council members.

Fourthly, the Security Council should demonstrate inclusiveness in its work. We support the Council in continuing to invite civil society briefers. Nevertheless, recent experiences have brought to light the need to improve quality control concerning the briefings themselves in order to deliver genuine added value. Presidencies should shoulder the responsibility in that regard. As things stand today, we are concerned about the fact that some members seem to care only about bringing different voices to the Council without considering how to reach consensus. They seem to care only about responding to issues raised by non-governmental organizations or individuals and to deliberately neglect the concerns of the Governments of the countries involved.

Fifthly, on sanctions, China has always maintained that the Council should approach sanctions prudently and responsibly, carefully controlling their intensity and scope and adjusting or lifting them to reflect changes on the ground. It is regrettable that during the past 20 years or so, sanctions once established tend to be prolonged and expanded, making their reversal nearly impossible. Sanctions cannot replace diplomacy

or serve as a tool for certain countries to exert political pressure. The Council's sanctions on countries such as the Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, as well as those imposed under resolution 1988 (2011), have become obsolete, and the process of lifting them should be initiated as soon as possible.

In addition to those points, I want to highlight penholdership, an issue that has become so controversial that its reform cannot wait any longer. Penholdership derives from practice and is not regulated by the Council's rules of procedure. The reality is that a small number of permanent Council members have long monopolized the penholderships on the majority of issues, with individual penholders sometimes placing their national positions above those of our collective organ. That has become the root cause of many issues. Penholderships must be adjusted to ensure equity, equality and openness. We therefore need more African members serving as penholders on African issues. The fact that African members cannot serve as penholders on those matters is unjustifiable. We should also allow more non-permanent members to serve as penholders, as they are fully capable of doing so. In a great example, over the past two years the United Arab Emirates, a non-permanent member, has patiently consulted with all members and facilitated the Council's consensus adoption of many important documents on the issue of Afghanistan.

Existing penholders should discharge their responsibilities honestly. As a voluntary service, penholdership is a responsibility, not a prerogative. Serving as a penholder requires objectivity and impartiality. It comes with a duty to prioritize the maintenance of solidarity and the forging of consensus. At the same time, we need to seriously study penholdership arrangements and undertake appropriate reforms. Considering what the job actually is, the term "penholder" is extremely misleading. In Security Council practices, the role a penholder plays goes far beyond taking notes or drafting documents. The General Assembly has co-facilitators for its major processes. The Security Council could learn from the Assembly and consider having three coordinators for each agenda item from among both permanent and non-permanent members. Chairs of the subsidiary bodies should also be involved in this process, which would be a true demonstration of joint responsibility and participation. In short, the issue of penholdership deserves serious attention and treatment. We are

aware that the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions is already engaged in relevant discussions, and we hope that its current and incoming Chairs will prioritize reforming penholdership arrangements and expediting substantive improvements.

Improving the Security Council's working methods is integral to its reform. China has consistently supported reasonable and necessary reform of the Council, prioritizing increased representation for developing countries and paying heed to their voices, and in particular making special arrangements to meet the needs of African States. We are willing to work with Member States to keep intergovernmental negotiations in the General Assembly as the principal channel in that regard and to seek a packaged solution through patient and democratic consultations. The ultimate goal of reform is for the Council to be better, not worse, to move forward, not backwards, and for the entire general membership, not just a few countries, to benefit.

It should be noted that the use of the veto is closely related to the imbalance in the Council's composition. Many of its members belong to the same political grouping and often take advantage of its numerical strength to dominate the Council's agenda and push for votes by skipping extensive consultations, which can ultimately result in the use of the veto. If we look only at the use of the veto and ignore the unfairness and irrationality of the Council's composition and working methods, we will not be able to grasp and address the root causes of the problem correctly.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that China stands ready to work with all parties to draw lessons from our past experience, develop new ideas and take practical action to promote continued improvement in the work of the Security Council so as to better safeguard international peace and security.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 elected members of the Security Council (E10).

We commend Albania for organizing today's debate and Ambassador Ferit Hoxha for his briefing in his capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Under his leadership, the Informal Working Group adopted its first annual report and programme of work (see S/2022/1032) last year, facilitating its activities in

the execution of its mandate guided by the principles of openness, dialogue and inclusivity.

The Informal Working Group also adopted its first set of selected indicators with the goal of enhancing awareness and improving the implementation of existing working methods — one of the E10's primary goals for making the implementation of the note by the President S/2017/507 measurable. We commend the digitalization of presidential note 507 in the Interactive Handbook of the Working Methods of the Council, sponsored by Japan. The note is a living document that requires continued revision. In that regard, the drafting of new notes by the President as necessary, in response to current needs, is crucial to the Council's effectiveness. At the same time, it is equally important for the Council to review, update and streamline notes that are no longer relevant to current reality in the interests of a more efficient and effective Council.

As elected members, we take seriously the responsibilities and obligations entrusted to us through our election by the General Assembly. We aspire and are committed to a Council that lives up to its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations and is able to address the complex and interconnected threats to peace and security that we collectively face.

There is widespread recognition of the need to encourage more meaningful and effective participation of elected members in the drafting of the Council's outcome documents. The legitimacy and effectiveness of the Council has much to gain from a more inclusive and transparent penholdership practice. The E10 have consistently demonstrated the added value they can bring as penholders and co-penholders.

There is a need to further improve working methods to ensure equal opportunities for all Council members and to ensure that all interested elected members act as penholders or co-penholders to ensure inclusive, fair and timely drafting processes. To that end, the E10 put forward a proposal in the form of a note by the President of the Security Council that encourages a more equitable role for elected members and recognizes that added values may include, but are not limited to, experience, contributions, regional perspectives, the chairmanship of relevant subsidiary bodies and special interests. We hope that this proposal can be swiftly adopted, as it represents a shared view and the aspiration of the United Nations membership as a whole.

We will also continue to support efforts to improve the best practices of penholders, with regular reflections in the Informal Working Group on specific Council products, and we will continue to support the negotiations and the adoption of a note by the President aimed at enhancing those practices. We stress that it is paramount to ensure that all Council members have adequate opportunities to participate, fully engage, discuss, contribute to negotiations and influence the decisions of the Security Council. In that regard, sufficient time, and not less than 24 hours, should be provided for the consideration of products under silence procedure, and the sending of drafts over the weekend should be avoided as far as possible.

We reaffirm the statement by the President of the Security Council S/PRST/2021/23 and reiterate that the Council should strengthen its engagement with the wider United Nations membership and cooperation and interaction with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). That also means more opportunities for all States Members on whose behalf the Council acts, in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, to interact with the Council.

The Council should actively seek the valuable advice that the PBC can provide, including on preventive diplomacy and cooperation with local actors and regional and subregional organizations, on country-specific, regional and thematic files. The PBC is in a unique position to enrich the discussion on mandates and provide valuable advice and cross-cutting perspectives. The PBC's working methods should be strengthened and improved. We welcome the relevant recommendation made in the New Agenda for Peace. Similarly, Security Council missions to the field have proven to be a valuable tool for the Council to understand, assess and prevent the escalation of specific conflicts or situations.

We commit and call on all Council Presidents to disseminate and implement their working methods commitments. We underscore the joint commitments on working methods of the three African members of the Security Council as a reflection of how elected members bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. Furthermore, we seek to promote interactive discussions during consultations and commend the efforts of the Council Presidents, on the initiative of Japan, to revitalize discussion in consultations. We also

commend the United Arab Emirates for the inclusion of International Sign interpretation in its presidency in June. In addition, we thank the Security Council Affairs Division for the live list of speakers made available at open debates as requested by the E10, and we commend Mozambique for initiating the practice of circulating it.

The Council needs to strike a healthy balance between public and private meetings to both enhance the transparency and the visibility of its work and to encourage greater interactivity of discussions and consensus-building. To that end, we support efforts to agree on elements to be communicated by the President following closed consultations.

We value the Arria Formula meetings as a means for Council members to engage informally with various stakeholders and the broader membership. In that regard, in principle and in practice, the streaming of Arria Formula meetings by United Nations Web TV should not face objections when requested by the organizers.

We also believe that the transparency and accountability of the Council should be enhanced regarding the documentation addressed to it by Member States. The provision and the accessibility of Council information and documentation, including from previous years, to elected members needs to improve.

The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the work of the Council remains a priority. We insist on the need to integrate a gender perspective into all working methods. The shared commitments on women and peace and security adopted by the majority of its members demonstrate important progress, and we encourage the continuation of those efforts. We also encourage briefers to integrate those issues into their briefings.

We strongly believe that the perspectives of civil society add value to the Council's deliberations and should be supported and sustained. We stress the importance of the Council striving for consensus when inviting civil society speakers. The Council must take responsibility for their suitability and safety and must condemn all cases of reprisals. To that end, the E10 encourages discussions, including on how to promote best practices, in particular the possibility of discussing guidelines.

Targeted sanctions by the Council are an important tool for addressing threats to international peace and security. They are therefore critical to the execution of

the Council's mandate. We underscore the importance of accountability and transparency in the work of the subsidiary bodies. Those working methods should align with international due process standards and be continually improved.

We strongly believe in the need to strengthen the fairness and the clarity of United Nations sanctions procedures, thereby increasing the effectiveness of its sanctions regimes. The listing and delisting of individuals and entities under United Nations sanctions regimes should be objective and evidence-based. We recognize the contribution of the Office of the Ombudsperson to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities in providing an independent review mechanism for delisting requests in the 1267 Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions regime and underline the need to continue its efforts to improve its work. The E10 reiterates its conviction that the establishment and improvement of independent review mechanisms would strengthen the rule of law in United Nations sanctions regimes, taking into account the unique context of sanctions.

Expert groups can provide valuable reports on the implementation, evasion and circumvention of United Nations sanctions. The Council should work to ensure that the panels of experts have full access to their important investigations and are not restricted in fulfilling their mandate.

As conflicts evolve, so must our collective responses. The Council should take into account the effectiveness of sanctions through the evolving phases of conflicts. It should also ensure that sanctions do not have adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population or adversely affect humanitarian activities carried out by humanitarian organizations. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2664 (2022), which introduced cross-cutting humanitarian exemptions for United Nations sanctions regimes, and we underline the need for its implementation at the national level. The provisions introduced by paragraph 1 of resolution 2664 (2022) should continue to apply to the sanctions regime.

We note the importance of the role of the sanctions committees in the effective implementation of resolution 2664 (2022) in assisting States in their understanding and monitoring of the implementation of the resolution.

On the appointment of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, we underline the need for more transparent consultations with each of the E10 members, individually, so as to facilitate sufficient time for due consideration.

The E10 members underline the critical and urgent need for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council to reflect contemporary realities. While the Council needs to be more effective, representative, legitimate, transparent, accountable and democratic, it still lacks a truly representative composition.

Improving the Council's working methods is a prerequisite for a more effective Council. Working methods are also an issue in the process of intergovernmental negotiations on Council reform. We welcome the letters addressed this year by the co-Chairs of that process to the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the Assembly's recommendations to the Council, including on issues relating to its working methods, in particular those contained in the Assembly resolutions on revitalization.

Since the most recent debate on working methods (see S/PV.9079), the Council has been unable to adopt four resolutions due to the use of the veto. The use or threat of use of the veto can prevent the Council from acting on vital issues. The E10 calls for restraint on the use of the veto, especially in actions aimed at preventing mass atrocities. The E10 also calls for restraint on other forms of veto in subsidiary organs and urges openness to compromise, in particular in cases where unnecessary objections may impede the work of organs or expert groups or panels and related processes.

The recent adoption by the Informal Working Group of two Chair's notes on the minute of silence and the distribution of Chairs of subsidiary organs is very encouraging. The latter's contingency measure should never be interpreted as meaning that we have time until the end of January. On the contrary, we should do our utmost to provisionally agree on the appointment of next year's Chairs by 1 October, at the latest. We deeply regret that the lack of appointments considerably delayed the work of the subsidiary organs. Protracted negotiation creates unnecessary difficulties for incoming members, which must prepare themselves for the responsibilities they are assuming.

Most important, we believe that due respect should be given to any proposals agreed by the elected

members. We stress the importance of completing the process on time. We underline the role of the E10 in the distribution of the 2023 Chairs.

We reiterate the letter circulated by Ecuador on behalf of E10 on 27 January 2023 (S/2023/68), unanimously supporting Japan as Chair of the Informal Working Group for 2024.

In conclusion, the 10 elected members of the Security Council speak with one voice to reaffirm our commitment to live up to the responsibilities conferred upon us by the United Nations membership through our election — to work together for a more transparent, inclusive and representative and more effective Council, with a view to contributing to international peace and security.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Peñalver Portal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council must be reformed in order to effectively fulfil its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Closed meetings continue to prevail. Annual reports on the Council's work contain only basic descriptive information; decisions that do not address the concerns of non-members of the Council predominate, and forced action is often taken on draft resolutions where considerable differences persist as to their content and scope.

The lack of special reports on measures to maintain international peace and security, as required by Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, is another shortcoming to be overcome. The tendency of the Security Council to address issues beyond its mandate, in particular those falling within the remit of the General Assembly, is increasing.

We reiterate our support for a comprehensive and thorough reform of the Security Council, including its working methods, in order to make it a transparent, democratic and representative organ. The transparency of informal consultations should be ensured and minutes of informal consultations of the organ should be issued.

Informal closed meetings should be the exception rather than the rule. The Security Council's annual reports should be comprehensive and analytical. The Security Council should adhere to its mandate, without

usurping the functions of other United Nations organs or broadening the scope of the definition of international peace and security, to the detriment of the roles and responsibilities of the General Assembly.

It is essential to adopt the Council's rules of procedure and to put an end to the provisional status that its rules have had since the creation of this organ.

With regard to the mechanism in place since 2022 on the explanation of the veto in the General Assembly, the legitimate concerns expressed by various countries, including ours, must be taken into account. We must ensure genuine participation in the Security Council and the democratization of its work. The Council should be enlarged in both of its membership categories with the aim of rectifying the inadequate representation of developing countries. The veto power must be abolished, and if any new permanent member seats are created before that happens, those members should have the same prerogatives and rights as the current ones, including the power of the veto.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by commending your determined efforts, Mr. President, in organizing this important annual debate. The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions also introduced its first-ever annual report (see S/2022/1032) and monitoring mechanism to track the implementation of the note by the President S/2017/507 last year, which has added an extra layer of transparency to the working methods of the Security Council. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the adoption of two presidential notes (S/2023/612 and S/2023/615) under your chairmanship of the Informal Working Group, Mr. President, which exemplifies your excellent leadership of the Group.

As duly noted in the concept note (S/2023/630, annex), the objective of this open debate is to envisage working methods that enable the Council to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Its duty to address such responsibilities and current geopolitical challenges compels the Council to be more pertinent than ever, but its ever-increasing workload hinders that vital role. Against that backdrop, the Council needs to focus on being responsive to more pressing threats, and I would like to briefly underscore three points in that regard.

First, the Council must take measures to ensure that the power of veto is not exercised in a way that contradicts its previous decisions, which are usually the result of extensive, meticulous negotiations designed to address threats to international peace and security. Ensuring their consistent and effective implementation is a fundamental duty that the Council must meet if it is to fulfil its primary responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. The exercise of the veto in May 2022, which led to the first formal debate in General Assembly history under the item entitled “Use of the veto” (see A/77/PV.68), was a clear example of a self-contradictory veto. Some five years ago, the Council unanimously decided to take specific measures in the event of a further intercontinental ballistic-missile launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. However, later, when the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea actually launched another such missile, some permanent members refused to take any action in the Council and exercised their veto. That was literally self-contradictory in that they were the exact same members that had approved the Council’s taking further action in such a situation. My delegation urges that permanent members refrain from using the veto in such situations in order to maintain the public’s trust in the Council’s ability to discharge its primary responsibility. Korea would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate its support for initiatives such as that of France and Mexico that call for refraining from the use of the veto in certain circumstances.

Secondly, penholders should engage with the relevant non-members of the Council in a more systematic manner. In practice, non-members that are invited to participate in the Council’s discussions in accordance with rule 37 are also permitted to sponsor proposals and draft resolutions and propose amendments. That helps the Council in two ways. Non-members’ input can assist the Council in having a clearer picture of the situation at hand, and their input can also prevent the Council from inadvertently acting against their legitimate interests. I believe the penholders can also benefit from such advantages by allowing non-members to be engaged as soon as they begin drafting documents. Encouraging penholders to hold consultations with non-members that are likely to be affected from the beginning will help the Council’s work become more effective and efficient.

Thirdly, the Council should adopt inclusive methods of work in order to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. A good example would be strengthening

the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission to the Council, accompanied by broad consultation with diverse partners, including regional organizations, the private sector and civil society. In addition, the Council should ensure women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in its line of work. In that regard, the Council should continue its efforts to facilitate the discussion on the women and peace and security agenda and its implementation.

It is never easy to keep the Council effective and efficient while maintaining inclusive and transparent methods of work. Efforts should be made to strike a balance between the two. We need to streamline its programme of work and focus on more pressing issues, on the one hand, and encourage communication with the wider United Nations membership, on the other. My delegation remains committed to actively engaging with the work of the Informal Working Group as an incoming member of the Council and looks forward to working with members soon.

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

Mr. Pretterhofer (Austria): I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to speak at today’s annual open debate on the working methods of the Security Council.

We align ourselves with the statements to be delivered by the representatives of Norway, on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, and Ireland, on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions.

As a staunch supporter of multilateralism and a member of the ACT group, Austria has consistently advocated for a more transparent, accountable and inclusive Security Council. We are guided by the belief that the Council should better reflect the realities of the twenty-first century in order to address today’s challenges, tackle the interconnected nature of peace and security and acknowledge the link between climate and security, poverty, human rights and development and peace. Let me therefore touch on some points in our national capacity.

First of all, the credibility of the entire United Nations hinges on a functioning and effective Security Council, able to deliver on its mandate for the maintenance of peace and security. We would therefore like to welcome your efforts, Mr. President, as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and

Other Procedural Questions, to enhance the working methods of the Council. We would especially like to thank you for the meeting that took place between you and the Permanent Representatives of Kuwait and my own country, Austria, in their capacity as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform during the seventy-seventh session.

During the intergovernmental negotiation meetings, delegations often raise issues pertaining not only to the working methods of a future reformed and enlarged Council, but also issues that relate to improvements of the working methods in the current set-up of the Council. Those issues have included questions related to reviewing the current system of penholdership, enhancing the opportunities for non-members of the Security Council to participate in and contribute to the work of the Council and increasing interaction between the Security Council and the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly, including the Peacebuilding Commission. On 27 April, in order to draw the attention of the current Chair of the Informal Working Group to the issues discussed in the intergovernmental negotiations, the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Kuwait, in their capacity as co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations, sent you a letter, Mr. President, outlining the main issues raised by delegations. We hope that the letter has contributed substantially to the discussions of the Informal Working Group and will be taken into account in the future deliberations of that body. We also hope that this exchange will be continued in the future.

Secondly, Austria has consistently advocated for a Security Council that acts in recognition of the fact that it draws its legitimacy from the wider membership of the United Nations. Whether elected or permanently mandated through the Charter of the United Nations, Council members shoulder their responsibilities on behalf of all Member States. All members around the table serve on the Council for all of us.

That recognition entails the obligation to carry out the work of the Council in an inclusive and transparent manner. Besides the many important points contained in the ACT group's statement to be delivered, let me emphasize that Austria advocates for a more consistent consultation with affected Member States, such as countries concerned and regional neighbours, as well as troop- and police-contributing States.

In addition, an important moment to engage with the wider membership of the United Nations is also at the monthly wrap-up meetings of presidencies. In

order to make them more inclusive and interactive, we encourage presidencies to organize them in a Toledo-style format, inviting other members of the Council to engage with the wider membership alongside the outgoing presidency. In addition, we encourage presidencies to consistently advertise those meetings and send out invitations to all Member States.

Finally, it is hard to over-emphasize the Security Council's role in defending and upholding the rule of law and the primacy of international law over unilateral acts. It is our strong conviction that the Council, in carrying out its mandate to maintain international peace and security, has to step up to defend the Charter and support compliance with international law. That may seem obvious in view of the Council's clear mandate. However, over the past year and a half, we have seen how the Council has been unable to act in the face of a blatant breach of the Charter by one of its permanent members.

We therefore support addressing the use of the veto, particularly when it is used to halt action against a member that violates the Charter. We welcome the positive impact of the veto initiative on the work of the Council and encourage additional countries to support the ACT code of conduct. Moreover, we call on Council members to explore opportunities for a consistent and full implementation of the provisions of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter, as they relate to the obligatory abstention of Council members when they are party to a dispute.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Brattested (Norway): We commend Albania for convening today's important debate and also for its work as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the 27 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group.

The ACT group promotes a more transparent, effective and inclusive Security Council and we would like to set out a few concrete suggestions relating to three themes — the Security Council's reporting, its efforts to promote transparency and its commitment to inclusion.

First, on reporting, the ACT group believes the Council should ensure the timely completion of monthly assessments by all Security Council presidencies. As that is undertaken in a national capacity, assessments

can be more analytical and do not require unanimity among Council members. We welcome that the introduction of the annual report of the Council draws from monthly assessments. We encourage a more analytical report and the full implementation by the Council of its agreed presidential notes, including holding interactive informal exchanges of views with the wider United Nations membership during drafting.

We also recall the group's position on the addition of a dedicated chapter on the veto in the annual report (see S/2022/1032), where special reports could be prominently featured. We encourage that addition in the 2023 report. We welcome the Council's consistent production of special reports, in line with General Assembly resolution 76/262, and expect that to continue. We also welcome the steps taken by the current President of the General Assembly to transmit summaries of General Assembly discussions on the Council's annual report and veto initiative meetings, a practice we hope will continue and would be strengthened should the Council give due consideration to those summaries and take action on their recommendations.

Finally, on reporting, the ACT group supports verbal reporting and dialogue with the broader membership, including through monthly wrap-up sessions. We support a consistent practice of Council Presidents issuing formal invitations and publishing meeting announcements in *The Journal of the United Nations* and on the Council's programme of work. While those issues may seem somewhat administrative or technical in nature, they are important elements of the Council's accountability to the broader United Nations membership and the public and we ask for their consistent implementation.

Secondly, the ACT group supports a range of improvements to ensure greater transparency by the Council. We support the early and broad circulation of live lists of speakers, no later than on the day before open debates and, similarly, we welcome the use by presidencies of digital programmes of work and the public distribution of monthly working methods commitments. We would also like to see more detail included on the Council's programme of work, including all foreseen meetings, wrap-up sessions, Arria Formula meetings and informal interactive dialogues.

Furthermore, we underscore that the early distribution of concept notes for open debates helps to promote better understanding and engagement in Council discussions. We commend the recent

publication of the Interactive Handbook of the Working Methods of the Council. The ACT group also supports a return to the former agreed practice, which has fallen out of implementation, whereby all draft resolutions of the Security Council are shared with the wider membership as soon as they are placed in blue and before adoption.

We emphasize that the Council should commit to returning to the once usual practice, lost during the coronavirus disease pandemic, of agreeing press elements from closed consultations. That is the bare minimum of transparency we expect from closed meetings of the Council. We believe that those important and concrete improvements will bring greater transparency to, and trust in, the Security Council's work.

Thirdly, on the issue of inclusion among members of the Council with the broader membership and briefers to the Council, we wish to point to the important recommendations made by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in his New Agenda for Peace, particularly on the need to democratize its procedures. We could not agree more with his three recommendations for the Council to ensure first, more burden-sharing or penholdership among all Council members, where ACT would like to see co-penholdership become the norm on all files; secondly, systematic consultations with affected countries, such as host countries or troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries, and, thirdly, promoting greater accountability of permanent members for the use of the veto. Here, ACT would also add the consistent implementation of Article 27, paragraph 3, in line with the objectives and purpose of the Charter of the United Nations.

We also echo recommendations made by the Secretary-General on elevating the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), not only integrating the PBC more in the work of the Council, including perhaps in missions to the field, but for the Council to ask for and use its advice better. To further improve inclusion in the Council's work, we also urge a more consistent and broader approach to the acceptance of rule 37 requests in all applicable meeting formats and encourage a standardized approach to prioritizing and encouraging group statements in open debates, which we believe will improve efficiency.

Furthermore, we welcome efforts undertaken through women and peace and security commitments to ensure a greater number and diversity of female civil

society briefers, particularly their safe participation and greater attention to the deeply concerning issue of reprisals.

Just briefly on the annual distribution of Council subsidiary body chairs, we cannot help but point to the deterioration of the Council meeting its own deadlines for that process. The Council must do better. Late distribution is to the significant detriment of incoming elected members, affecting their ability to be fully included and active in shaping the work of the Council.

In conclusion, please be assured that the ACT group remains a steadfast supporter of a transparent, effective, efficient and inclusive Security Council. We appreciate this opportunity to engage with the Council today and will continue to do so. We welcome that under your leadership, President, the Informal Working Group continues to work on new presidential notes. We hope the recommendations made today by the broader United Nations membership will be taken into account in that work, but we also underscore the importance of continuous efforts by all members of the Council to implement what has already been agreed.

As the Council faces ever-increasing pressures on its work, it is vital to ensure that it has the trust and confidence of the broader membership, and of course of the billions of people on whose behalf it acts. Nothing could be a better signal than the faithful implementation of its own commitments.

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

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic States — Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

I would first like to commend Albania for convening this annual debate and for its efforts as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. As the past year has shown, it is vital for the Security Council to engage with all Member States on how to deliver on its mandate and become more transparent, effective, and inclusive. The recent engagement with the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations process is a small step in that direction. It is the Council's working methods, and their continuing innovation, that enable the Council to function. But we have also seen that they can be used to render it paralysed on the most important matters of international peace and security. With a

view to improving the performance of the Council and strengthening its working methods at this juncture, the Nordic and Baltic States would like to highlight three priority areas that demand our collective attention.

First, opportunities for the wider membership to engage meaningfully in the work of the Council remain key to ensuring that the Council can draw on their perspectives, knowledge and capacity, in line with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the Peacebuilding Commission can offer valuable advice and cross-cutting perspectives in support of the Council's work. In addition to providing written advice, its Chairs should be invited to brief the Council whenever possible, and there is room for the Council to make better use of that advice. We also urge for a more inclusive approach on the acceptance of rule 37 requests. We welcome the presidencies' regular interactive wrap-in and wrap-up sessions. We also welcome efforts to include more female briefers from civil society. Continued attention to ensuring their safe participation and the deeply concerning issue of reprisals is critical to that end.

Secondly, elected members continue to bring invaluable innovation to the Council. Their ability to participate meaningfully in the Council's work is indispensable, and we commend Ireland and the United Arab Emirates for their recent publication of the Interactive Handbook of the Working Methods of the Council for its elected members. In that regard, we align ourselves with the important recommendations made by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in his New Agenda for Peace, particularly on the need to democratize its procedures. That includes more burden-sharing among all Council members in terms of penholderships, systematic consultations with countries affected by Council decisions, such as host and troop- and police-contributing countries, and promoting greater accountability for permanent members in their use of the veto.

Thirdly, with regard to the right of the veto, the Nordic and Baltic States are of the view that the use of the veto should come with transparency and accountability. Permanent members should refrain from using it in cases of mass atrocities, including the crime of aggression. By adopting the veto initiative through its resolution 76/262, the General Assembly introduced an important accountability mechanism. We would encourage the formal adoption of the special reports produced to ensure their appropriate reflection in the

Council's annual report. Going forward, we would also like to see the Council consistently implement Article 27, paragraph 3, in line with the Charter's overall objectives, particularly Article 2, paragraph 4. We would also welcome a chapter dedicated to the veto in the Council's annual report.

In conclusion, we encourage Council members to continue to innovate and engage through the Working Group to create a more transparent, inclusive, accountable and therefore more effective Council, and we want to see its working methods implemented consistently. We also hope that the recommendations made today by the broader United Nations membership will be taken into account in the Council's future work through adapting and improving its working methods.

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

Mr. Ruidíaz Pérez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile thanks Albania for convening this open debate. We have taken note of the briefings and statements that we have heard today and wish Albania every success during its presidency of the Security Council for September.

Chile aligns itself with the statements made today by the representatives of Norway, on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, and Ireland, on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions.

We would like to reiterate the importance of promoting transparency in the decision-making process of the Security Council and accountability for its decisions. We commend the Council for reaching consensus on two issues of working methods last month, that is, ensuring the orderly observance of a minute of silence and the continued work of the Sanctions Committees. We are certain that they will contribute to improving and fostering orderly discussions.

We believe that the progress made in reforming the Security Council to achieve greater inclusiveness in its decision-making and work and expand its membership has inevitably become more critical than ever to ensuring the authority and effectiveness of the universal multilateral system, and especially to ensuring trust in it, as it has become weakened and besieged. We urge everyone to bear in mind that in today's global situation it is urgent that we show greater political will for achieving Security Council reform. Armed with that political will and an awareness of the

Security Council's current deficiencies, we must bring about a more democratic and representative Council, while correcting the inequities and inefficiencies that are affecting its work. We underscore the importance of the participation of civil-society representatives in Security Council briefings, as they bring us additional information based on their experiences on the ground, and in that regard we also encourage greater participation by women.

The Security Council plays a key and tactical role in providing greater security to civilian and uniformed personnel during the implementation of its mandates, which is why it must be provided with accurate and timely information so that it can act quickly. For Chile, defending and strengthening multilateralism will continue to be a priority in which Security Council reform plays a fundamental role in legitimizing not only decisions on international peace and security, including at the upcoming Summit of the Future, but also on the Organization's ability to arrive on the ground in time and to fulfil its main task — the protection of civilians and those who are disproportionately affected by conflict and emerging threats.

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

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): I would first like to thank Albania for providing the wider membership with an opportunity to assess developments related to the working methods of the Security Council over the past year.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Norway on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. In addition, we would like to make some remarks from our national perspective.

Slovenia commends the decision of Albania, as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, to follow the practice of other Security Council subsidiary bodies by issuing an annual report on the activities of the Working Group, as it did for the first time last year (see S/2022/1032). While the results of the Working Group's discussions have been published in its notes by the President (S/2023/612 and S/2023/615), an annual report with additional insight into its deliberations is a welcome step towards greater transparency in the Council's work. We also welcome annex II to the report with the indicators on the implementation of presidential note S/2017/507

and hope for the possibility of adopting additional ones if the need arises. Furthermore, we thank Albania and Japan for the launch of the Interactive Handbook of the Working Methods of the Council, which will make our work much easier and presidential note 507 more accessible. I would now like to address three further points.

Global challenges demand that we work together and seek collective and sustainable solutions. In deliberations on those solutions, it is essential to maintain a dialogue with the States and regions concerned, which can enable us to reach a fully informed decision on the matter. We do not always need to agree, but we should always listen to one another. That pertains to the issue of open debates. In the majority of cases, they are the only opportunity that the wider membership has to communicate their positions directly to the Security Council, which results in a greater number of speakers and consequently longer meetings. We agree with presidential note 507 on the need to focus such debates in order to make them more efficient. That could be done by explicitly identifying the goals of debates in which insight into the positions of the wider membership on topical issues would provide some guidance for the Council's future considerations and create a wider context with regard to issues of peace and security.

To that end, we would like to see concept papers provide guiding questions that are as specific as possible, and most importantly that are issued before the debate in a timely manner. We also support a return to the practice of Council missions to the field. While new technologies can facilitate and expedite flows of information and should be used regularly, visiting the field and gathering first-hand impressions and experience can never truly be substituted.

As an incoming member of the Security Council, we consider the shared thematic commitments on the women and peace and security agenda an important step towards mainstreaming that agenda into the work of the Security Council. Slovenia intends to join that initiative once we take our seat here in the Council.

In conclusion, we appreciate the progress achieved under Albania's leadership and welcome the fact that two additional notes — on the orderly conduct of minutes of silence (S/2023/612) and on the continuous functioning of subsidiary bodies (S/2023/615) — have been agreed upon. We look forward to engaging in the

work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in the next two years.

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

Mr. Massari (Italy): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate on the Security Council's working methods. A more transparent and functional Security Council is an absolute necessity in order to regain the trust of public opinion in the capacity of the United Nations in the area of international peace and security. The most recent developments, with important processes blocked by the use of the veto, add to that narrative and make today's open debate even more timely and necessary. We also commend your endeavours, Sir, in your capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

The revised note by the President S/2017/507 addresses the demand for the Council's enhanced transparency, inclusiveness and interaction with the rest of the United Nations membership. Much has been done in that regard to date, but we can all agree that there are margins for improvement. We are convinced that, within the Council, permanent and non-permanent members should work on an equal footing as far as possible, with the exception of what is currently contemplated by the Charter of the United Nations in terms of the veto power. More generally, the 10 elected members of the Council should be allowed to play a greater role in the work of the Security Council. The distribution of duties among Council members should be fairer and more balanced when it comes both to the chairpersonship of subsidiary bodies and the practice of penholdership and co-penholdership, including for African members on African issues.

Moreover, it is essential that the views and interests of the Member States affected by or concerned with any matter on the Council's agenda be heard and taken into account in its work. It is essential to increase cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and we look forward to seeing the Council regularly request, deliberate on and draw upon the PBC's specific, strategic and targeted advice.

We also strongly support the practice of inviting briefers from civil society to Council meetings, ensuring the adequate participation of women and greater gender inclusivity and equality in order to allow Council members to hear different voices and points of

view before deliberating. It is disappointing that fewer women than usual were invited to brief the Council in 2023. We commend the Albanian presidency for its attention and dedication to the women and peace and security agenda, as well as its commitment to the greater involvement of women civil society representatives in the programmed briefings during the current month of September.

We believe it is important to hold public meetings of the Security Council whenever possible, while keeping closed meetings and informal consultations to a minimum, in accordance with the fact that they were originally intended to be the exception. We also appreciate the organization by the Albanian presidency of three open debates, which will allow non-members of the Security Council to express their voices on issues of concern.

The improvement of working methods is also part of a broader discussion on the comprehensive and effective reform of the Security Council, which should be aimed at a more transparent, accountable, efficient and, in our view, more democratic Council. The Council must also be more inclusive, particularly with regard to Africa and the global South.

In that regard, keeping in mind that the reform of the Security Council is dealt with within the intergovernmental negotiations, in order to promote a more practical and concrete discussion in that framework, we very much welcome and support the idea put forward by the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. On 27 April, in a letter addressed to the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, they asked to convene annual meetings between the Chair of the Informal Working Group and the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations. Such exchanges of views could help identify ways for the two processes to complement each other for the benefit of improving the Security Council's working methods, both now and once it is reformed.

It is hard to speak of working methods without reflecting at the same time on the root causes of the Council's inaction, which are directly and closely linked to the veto power, regardless of whether it is actually used or simply threatened. The vetoes cast in the Council over the years, including recently, have provided further confirmation of the paralysing effect of the veto power on the Council's ability to act. That

is why Italy supports all initiatives aimed at self-restraint with regard to the exercise of the veto, such as the Franco-Mexican initiative and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct. Italy was also among the co-sponsors of the innovative General Assembly resolution 76/262. It is also the reason that we do not support the expansion of the Security Council in the category of permanent members, as that would generate additional veto powers and further discrimination among permanent and non-permanent members.

Finally, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Council, Italy would welcome the proper application of the provisions of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, according to which any member of the Council involved in a dispute — including permanent members — should abstain from voting on decisions related to that dispute.

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

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on Albania's presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also commend your leadership of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and welcome your valuable briefing today, as well as your commitment to bringing this issue forward for discussion on an ongoing basis between the Council and the wider United Nations membership. That is indeed a practical contribution to improving the Council's working methods.

Egypt welcomes note S/2017/507 by the President of the Security Council and other proposals that would contribute to improving the working methods of the Council and enhancing its efficiency. In that connection, Egypt proposes the following points and suggestions to improve the working methods of the Council and its subsidiary organs.

First, the number of Council briefings to all Members must be increased, taking into account their views on the Council's programme of work. The Council must also present its activities and visits, while the Chairs of the subsidiary organs and their relevant committees should provide periodic briefings to the Members at large.

Secondly, the number of open meetings, in whatever form — whether in the Council, its subsidiary organs or sanctions committees — must also be increased. We

would like to recall that the Security Council represents the United Nations membership as a whole and works on their behalf. Therefore, as a general rule, its meetings and work should be accessible to all Members.

Thirdly, there must be genuine and serious engagement between the Council and the general membership. States Members should be informed of the draft resolutions and presidential statements to be adopted by the Council, and of the consultations in that regard. All Members must have the opportunity to express their opinions and proposals to the Security Council concerning those draft resolutions and presidential statements.

In that regard, I would specifically like to mention the issue of penholdership. We welcome the broadening of the scope of non-permanent members as penholders for various draft resolutions and statements. We reaffirm the need to apply that practice to all topics before the Security Council to ensure that the issue of penholdership does not become the exclusive right of a handful of permanent members on the basis of their own interests, while ignoring the views and priorities of other States, particularly those that play important and influential role in addressing the topics under consideration and are directly affected by them.

Fourthly, there is a need for greater coordination among the Security Council, neighbouring States and regional organizations concerned by the conflict situations on the Council's agenda, particularly the African Union and the League of Arab States. It is inconceivable that the Council takes decisions on specific issues without the involvement of the regional mechanisms responsible for monitoring those issues. The Council could benefit from their naturally accumulated expertise, making its decisions more relevant with regard to the situation on the ground.

Fifthly, it is necessary to step up consultations between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries to peacekeeping operations, as stipulated in paragraph 91 of the valuable note S/2017/507.

Sixthly, the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, in particular Sanctions Committees and panels of experts, must consult with relevant countries in preparing reports dealing with those countries.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that those proposals are not new. Their implementation with the other proposals that we have heard remains contingent on genuine political will and on the conviction that, if

the Security Council is more transparent and inclusive in its work, it will be better able to carry out the tasks entrusted to it and to respond to the challenges of today's world. Otherwise, the general membership will have less trust in the Council's abilities and its importance and credibility within the entire international system.

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

Mr. Nasir (Indonesia): I congratulate Albania on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate.

Just hours ago, President Joko Widodo officially opened the forty-third Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Jakarta. He spoke of how ASEAN is a large ship that is responsible for the millions of people that sail together and how, through stormy weather, ASEAN leaders must ensure the ship continue to sail and be the captain of its own ship in bringing about peace, stability and prosperity.

Similarly, the Security Council is also a large ship bestowed with the responsibility to maintain peace and stability for all Members of the United Nations. Despite the rocky waters and great turbulence it faces, this great ship must also continue to sail on. Its working methods are the screws and bolts that keep the ship together and allow it to continue its course.

Against this backdrop, allow me to highlight three points.

First, promoting greater participation by the wider United Nations Member States and relevant United Nations entities is important. That will enable the Council to gain broader perspectives and, at the same time, promote transparency. The participation of other relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, would also offer perspectives in bridging security and development in post-conflict settings.

Secondly, better and more effective coordination by the Council and related United Nations mechanisms with regional organizations is needed. Regional organizations could offer their first-hand knowledge, cultural nuances and localized solutions that are often overlooked in broader discussions. Incorporating the perspectives of regional and subregional entities helps the Council fortify its mandate and amplifies its capacity to cultivate peace and stability.

Thirdly, the Council should refrain from politicizing established rules and working methods. Any attempt to politicize the working methods could create a setback to the integrity of the Council. We urge the Council members to act responsibly and work towards a more united Council.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is a continuous process. Council members should set aside individual differences and reaffirm their collective commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Through that, a common vision for the Security Council that is more effective, inclusive, transparent and representative will materialize.

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

Ms. Oehri (Liechtenstein): Especially in these times of major threats to international peace and security and attacks against the Charter of the United Nations, the overall effectiveness of the Security Council remains of great concern. Liechtenstein will continue to support efforts to improve the Council's working methods, both in its national capacity and through the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, whose statement today we fully endorse.

The flow of communication between the Security Council and the United Nations membership as a whole is critical to the fulfilment of obligations stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations, notably, in Articles 24 and 25. Those articles encourage the Council to be transparent in its deliberations to the membership it represents. Consultations on situations of grave concern to the whole United Nations membership, such as on Myanmar, as we saw last month, should be open to the membership. If need be, a procedural vote must be employed.

Open debates of the Council must also be truly open to the membership. The added value of such debates lies in their inclusivity and transparency, enabling contributions by all United Nations Member States on equal terms to Council members. With its occasional practice of inviting select non-Council members only, the Council risks creating a two-tier system, which defeats the very purpose of the format. For factual accounts and informed assessments of situations of concern to the Council, it is important to hear relevant experts, including women and civil society briefers and briefers who may not speak in an official United

Nations language as long as interpretation is provided. If the standard of relevant expertise is not being met, members should be willing to employ a procedural vote.

The increased use of Arria Formula meetings by members of the Council is only desirable as long as the format's original purpose is honoured, bringing the Council's attention to understudied topics and voices and not distracting from its work or creating a negative atmosphere. We welcome the well-established practice of the Council presidency of holding wrap-up sessions at the end of each month and encourage States to make use of that opportunity for interactive exchange with the Council.

The Council has engaged with the veto initiative mechanism created in General Assembly resolution 76/262 and has produced special reports on each of those occasions. Liechtenstein believes that those exchanges of ideas and perspectives are crucial when the Council cannot act owing to the veto of one or more permanent members. We hope for a strong response by the General Assembly following last week's use of the veto (see S/PV.9409), including by considering a possible outcome.

The timely submission of the Council's annual report this year (A/77/2) is laudable. While we continue to encourage a more analytical and substantive report, we also welcome the use of the word "veto" this year and suggest that the Council create a separate section in the annual report to discuss special reports. It is likewise encouraged that all United Nations Member States, including Council members, attend and participate in the General Assembly debate on the annual report. We further hope to see continued improvements to the system of co-penholdership and to more equitable burden-sharing between the 10 elected members and the five permanent members.

Despite a multitude of crises, the Council continues to be paralysed and unable to act on many of the core threats to international peace and security today. Liechtenstein sees a variety of areas where the immediate functioning and working methods of the Council can contribute to overcoming blockages. We remind all Council members of their obligations under Article 27, paragraph 3, which stipulates that a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting in decisions taken under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. That provision has not been applied accordingly, and we hope to see it better reflected in Council practice going forward.

Furthermore, we remind all States that have signed the ACT code of conduct of their responsibilities and commitments. Signatories of the code regularly constitute a procedural majority of Council members. As such, the Council should be able to hold meetings aimed at preventing or ending the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes through timely and decisive Council action, and there should be no doubts when it comes to the votes on products addressing situations of atrocity crimes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Nguyen (Viet Nam): I would like to congratulate Albania on assuming the Council's presidency for the month of September and thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important open debate.

In the evolving global context characterized by increasing complexities and challenges, the Security Council has proven its continued relevance in maintaining international peace and security. However, despite its commendable efforts to ensure continued functioning through difficult times, including during the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Security Council has not always been able to effectively discharge its primary responsibility. Deliberation on its working methods can serve as an important tool to improve the Council's functioning. And this timely debate could add further momentum to the renewed interest this year in reforming the Security Council.

In line with Viet Nam's consistent policy of support for a comprehensive reform to make the Security Council more representative, democratic, transparent and efficient, I wish to highlight following points.

First, Viet Nam calls for greater unity and responsibility among Council members in addressing issues of high urgency related to international peace and security. There are countries and regions in conflict or at risk of conflict that deserve greater attention from the Security Council, which could be better secured through reinforcement of its solidarity.

Secondly, we urge the Council members to set themselves as leading examples of compliance with international law, particularly respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the principles of non-interference and resolving disputes through peaceful means.

Thirdly, the Council needs to foster greater transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency. It should

conduct more public meetings, which facilitate interactive exchange and consensus-building. Closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum and as exceptions.

We urge the Council to engage and interact more with non-Council members and relevant regional organizations when addressing issues related to them. In addition, the Council need to consult more with the troop- and police-contributing countries on issues concerning the United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Along the same lines, the Council needs to strengthen its coordination with the General Assembly and other United Nations entities, including through more regular consultations and reports. Non-Council members need to be given more access and be allowed to participate in the preparation of the Council's documents, including its annual reports to the General Assembly.

As a country that has served twice in the Security Council, Viet Nam hopes that the discussion on this important topic will bring about concrete outcomes towards making the Council more efficient and effective in carrying out its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

To that end, we will continue to contribute meaningfully to joint efforts to improve the Council's working methods, which need to be addressed as part of the comprehensive Security Council reform agenda, alongside other issues such as more equitable representation among its membership.

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

Mr. Geisler (Germany): Germany welcomes Albania's initiative to discuss the working methods of the Security Council.

The transparency, efficiency and accountability of the Security Council's working methods are not a question of style, but of substance. We have always believed that the Security Council must undergo a profound reform to fulfil its mandate in a rapidly changing world. That includes the Council's composition as well as how the Council is conducting business. The reform of the Security Council has become even more urgent since the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which is not only a blatant breach of the Charter of the United Nations, but also a blatant refusal of a permanent member to fulfil its obligation to ensure the effective functioning of the Council.

Simply put, the question is whether the Security Council can fulfil its primary responsibility — the maintenance of international peace and security. We need a Council that facilitates constructive debate and is able to take the necessary and bold decisions to address the issues we are currently facing.

Please allow me to make four points in that regard.

First, time and again non-members of the Council are directly affected by situations that are discussed in the Council. Those Member States have a legitimate interest in making their voice heard. Therefore, Security Council presidencies should, whenever possible, give those countries the possibility to participate in discussions, in accordance with rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Secondly, the Council has increasingly coordinated with, and sought the advice of, other United Nations organs. We welcome the increase in written advice from the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), as well as briefings by its Chair to the Council. We see a major improvement in the quality and relevance of the advice provided under the guidance of Kenya, and now Brazil. We should foster an even stronger focus on the PBC's advice on matters pertaining to conflict prevention, as well as transition planning during or in the immediate aftermath of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Thirdly, we continue to be very supportive of having civil society briefers in the Council, as they contribute valuable insight. But it is also our task to protect them. Pressure and intimidation of civil society representatives who brief the Council are inexcusable and simply unacceptable. We urge the Council and its members to actively promote the meaningful participation of civil society briefers in Council meetings and, at the same time, their active protection.

Fourthly, Germany supports all initiatives to limit the use of the veto.

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

Mr. Arrocha Olabuenaga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we reiterated during our tenure as an elected member of the Council, the area of working methods is one in which there is real room for improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council. The work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which you chair, Mr. President, is therefore critical.

This work can also benefit from the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) report. That, in turn, will strengthen collaboration among the principal organs of the United Nations, in line with presidential statement S/PRST/2021/23.

Another recent element that has contributed to the accountability of the Security Council and strengthened its relationship with the General Assembly is the adoption of resolution 76/262, on the veto initiative, already mentioned by many delegations. While it is regrettable that this mechanism has already been activated so many times despite its short lifespan, including the veto exercised as recently as last week (see S/PV.9408), its relevance lies in the empowerment it offers to the membership, as a whole, to speak out on Council inaction on international peace and security issues that matter to all, thus furthering the transparency and representativeness obligation that the Charter of the United Nations imposes on the Council in Article 24, paragraph 1.

We have said it before, and we will say it again: the veto does not foster unity or promote the search for mutual understanding. It is an act of power that is a clear example of the abuse of a working method.

As a complementary effort to Assembly resolution 76/262, we continue to promote, alongside France, the Franco-Mexican initiative to voluntarily restrict the veto in cases of mass atrocities. The initiative now has 106 signatories. As it is directly related to their working methods, we invite the Security Council members, especially those elected members that have not yet done so, to join this important initiative and thus show their commitment to a more effective Council.

Finally, we reiterate the importance of the Council responding in a relevant and effective manner to communications sent to it by any United Nations Member State regarding any dispute that may threaten international peace and security. In particular, there is a need to develop a practice of efficient handling of situations falling under Article 35, paragraph 1, as well as communications under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. It remains unacceptable that the Council does not respond to or discuss cases in which a State resorts to the use of force in self-defence in matters where peace and security are clearly at stake. That is particularly dangerous in cases where such a provision is invoked to use force against non-State

actors, including in the context of combating terrorism, in contravention of the United Nations Charter. Given that any breach of international peace and security is of concern to the international community as a whole, transparency and prompt access by all Member States to such communications should be ensured.

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

Mrs. Kamboj (India): I extend my warm congratulations to Albania on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

The topic we are discussing today is an issue of interest and importance to the entire membership of the United Nations, particularly during the current extraordinary circumstances, when the world is looking to the Council for solutions and leadership. Given the paucity of time, I will restrict my intervention to five issues of key concern to India.

First, the selection of the Chairs of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies and the distribution of penholderships must be made through a process that is open, transparent and based on exhaustive consultations, and with a more integrated perspective. The five permanent members of the Council must honour the consensus of the 10 elected members of the Council (E10) on the Chairs of subsidiary bodies to be assumed by the E10 themselves. For the Council's five permanent members to decide, even in the twenty-first century, as to what roles should go eventually to the E10 reflects a continuation of the mindset of the post-1945 era in which the spoils belong to the victors. That is simply unacceptable.

Secondly, the working methods of the Security Council's sanctions committees continue to dent the credibility of the Council. The blocking of genuine, evidence-based listing proposals for globally sanctioned terrorists without giving any due justification is uncalled for and smacks of double-speak when it comes to the Council's commitment in tackling the challenge of terrorism. The working methods of the sanctions committees must emphasize transparency and objectivity in listing and delisting and should not be based on political considerations.

Thirdly, some of the Security Council's agenda items are obsolete or irrelevant. There are items on the Council's agenda on which discussions have not taken place since the establishment of the United Nations. There is therefore a case for beginning a discussion into

the review of items on which the Council is seized in a realistic and forward-looking manner, and note by the President S/2017/507, on procedural matters, provides ample guidance on that.

Fourthly, and most important,, merely fixing the working methods of the Security Council will never be good enough to rectify its fundamental flaw: its lack of representative character. To continue to deny the Member States of the global South a voice and role in the Council's decision-making only lowers the Council's credibility.

Fifthly, General Assembly decision 62/557, subscribed to by all Member States, identifies five pillars of comprehensive reform of the Security Council — and improving its working methods is just one of them. Therefore, unless we address the issue in its entirety, we will continue to be accused of adopting a piecemeal approach to a systemic flaw. What we therefore need is a Council that better reflects the geographical and development diversity of the United Nations today — a Council in which the voices of developing countries and non-represented regions, including Africa, Latin America and the vast majority of Asia and the Pacific, find their due place at this horseshoe table. And for that, an expansion of the Council in both categories of membership is absolutely essential. It is the only way to bring the Council's composition and decision-making dynamics in line with contemporary geopolitical realities.

We can no longer hide behind the smokescreen of the intergovernmental negotiations in the General Assembly and continue to pay lip service by delivering statements in a process that has no time frame, no text and no defined goal to achieve. If countries are truly interested in making the Council more accountable and more credible, we call on them to come out openly and support a clear pathway to achieve this reform in a time-bound manner, through the only established process in the United Nations — which is by engaging in negotiations based on text and not through speaking at each other or over each other, as we have done for the past three decades.

As the threats to international peace and security evolve, so indeed must the Council. We ask those blocking progress on this vital issue to heed the calls for genuine reform and to contribute to making the Council truly fit for purpose for the twenty-first century.

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

Ms. Zacarias (Portugal): Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Norway on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

All Member States share the belief that the Security Council must be reformed, even if we do not yet agree on what a reform should specifically entail. In the meantime, the only way to improve the Council's functioning and legitimacy — a concern that underpins almost all calls for its reform — is through measures that are feasible under the current rules. The veto initiative and the continued consolidation of the provisions of note by the President S/2017/507 are two laudable examples of that. In any event, the Council itself should strive continuously to boost its legitimacy, transparency and accountability. That would make its work easier, not harder. A more transparent and accountable Council would benefit from greater trust from its stakeholders, and therefore be better positioned to carry out its mandate.

The Secretary-General's policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace is clear in that regard, affirming that should the Security Council democratize its procedures, the results of its decisions would be more durable. We fully agree with the recommendations made in the policy brief: first, that Council members that are not a party to a situation in their region should have a more active role on draft resolutions to address it; secondly, that before renewing a given mandate, the Council should more systematically consult the parties interested, such as host States, regional organizations and troop- and police-contributing countries; and thirdly, that greater accountability for the use of the veto should be ensured. In that regard, it would be important to include in the Council's annual report further details on the draft resolutions the Council fails to adopt, describing their purposes and main provisions and indicating the procedural grounds for their rejection, which, when applicable, should naturally include an analysis on the use of the veto.

To further strengthen its coherence, the Council would also benefit from cooperating more closely with the Peacebuilding Commission. That could, for instance, be ensured through joint visits to United Nations missions in the field, which should take place more frequently.

In conclusion, we echo the suggestion made by the ACT group calling on the Council to maintain the good practice of making statements to the press following closed-door meetings. We further commend the convening of a first annual meeting between the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations to consider the recommendations made by Member States during the intergovernmental negotiations. It is now time to follow-up on those recommendations within the Informal Working Group, together with those included in the summary of the General Assembly debate on the annual report of the Security Council. The outcome of those considerations could then be included in the newly issued annual report of the Informal Working Group, a new practice for which we compliment you and your team, Mr. President, in your capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group. I also wish you every success in your presidency of the Council, Sir.

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

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): I would like to congratulate Albania on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September and to thank you, Mr. President, for prioritizing the issue of improving the working methods of the Council in its very first meeting of this month. Our congratulations also go to the United States for its successful presidency of the Council in August.

As the international community contemplates how best to overcome the challenges of this generation and how best to chart the direction of multilateralism for future generations, it cannot overlook its foremost instrument to attain all of that, which is the Security Council. At the best of times a united and effective Council can avert humanitarian disasters resulting from conflict and indeed even prevent or resolve conflict. It is therefore always beneficial to work for an effective and united Security Council because that Council is at the heart of the United Nations core mission — the maintenance of international peace, security and stability — and is a vital pillar of effective multilateralism.

Although reform of the Security Council will involve many aspects, improving its working methods can generate potential quick wins, wins that will help ensure greater effectiveness, promote greater transparency and endow the Council's actions with greater legitimacy. And that is a win for everyone.

Thailand therefore welcomes the Council's efforts to implement measures contained in note by the President S/2017/507. We support the ongoing efforts of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions to ensure full implementation of presidential note 507 and other subsequent documents and welcome its first annual report (see S/2022/1032), released earlier this year under the chairmanship of Albania. It is our hope that the views expressed in today's debate will help further enhance the work of the Council in carrying out its mandate. In that connection, there are five points that I want to underscore.

First, it is essential for the wider membership of the United Nations to be involved in the process and to be informed about the Council's work and related developments as much and as soon as possible. Partnerships with countries in the regions affected and relevant regional organizations are crucial to peace across the entire continuum — from preventing, responding to and resolving conflicts to peacebuilding and sustainable development aimed at cementing sustainable peace. In that regard, the voices and wisdom of the region affected must always be taken into account.

Secondly, as a majority of the Council's agenda involves situations in developing countries, their viewpoints and perspectives should be a high priority in the Council's deliberations. That should be complemented by inclusive and timely information-sharing on the work of the Council to enable non-members of the Council to express their views and take part effectively in considering it.

Thirdly, the United Nations and its relevant bodies should work in synergy to face our current geopolitical tensions and interlocking challenges. As sustaining peace must be anchored in the promotion of human security and sustainable development, the Council should aim at increasing its coordination, cooperation and interaction with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council should also take forward the views and recommendations of the Assembly on the Council's working methods. Among other things, Member States have called for greater interaction between the two bodies, including by requesting a substantive and analytical annual report from the Council enabling increased transparency and accountability to the General Assembly, a request that has yet to be implemented.

Fourthly, we welcome the initiative of the co-Chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in conveying Member States' inputs on improving the Council's working methods through the co-Chairs' note and regular dialogue with the Chair of the Informal Working Group. We hope that the Council pays due attention to implementing them.

Fifthly and finally, while presidential note 507 and the relevant processes are attempting to consolidate the Council's working methods and allowing flexibility for further adjustment, the Council should continue to work to adopt permanent rules of procedure, for greater predictability and transparency in its work.

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that the wins created by improving the working methods of the Council will pave the way for a more effective, reformed and united Council in future and therefore a more effective multilateralism, which is in all of our interests.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I commend Albania for organizing today's open debate. Let me further thank you, Mr. President, for your briefing in your capacity as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We also thank the United States for its presidency of the Security Council in the month of August.

As an incoming member of the Security Council, Sierra Leone commends the work of the Informal Working Group in adopting a first set of selected indicators, with the goal of enhancing awareness and improving the implementation of the Council's existing working methods. That will surely assist in efforts by previous and current elected members to make the implementation of note by the President S/2017/507 measurable.

Regarding the question of the Council's working methods, I would like to reiterate Africa's position, which was endorsed by the African Union Assembly and reflected in the continent's submission in 2009 to the then-Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council, reflected in the

document and its annex of July 2015, also referred to as the Framework Document.

The African position therefore proposes, especially in an expanded format, an accessible, accountable, democratic, representative and more effective Security Council, responding to the demands of our times. We acknowledge the important efforts to improve the Council's working methods, especially the increase in the number of public meetings, briefings and open debates, and consultations between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the increase in penholderships and co-penholderships for elected members of the Council. In that regard, my delegation was pleased to note the digitalization of presidential note 507 in the Interactive Handbook of the Working Methods of the Council, sponsored by Japan, and available online, which is helping to increase awareness of the working methods of the Council. That said, however, we are of the view that more needs to be done to improve those working methods in the following areas.

First, the Security Council should enhance its relationship with the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and police-contributing countries, including through sustained, regular and timely interaction. Meetings with TCCs should be held not only when mandates are being drawn up but also in their implementation, when the Council is considering changes in the renewal and completion of a mission's mandate or when there is a rapid deterioration of the situation on the ground. In that context, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should involve TCCs more frequently and intensively in its deliberations, particularly in the very early stages of mission planning and subsequently throughout the whole process of implementation.

Secondly, the Security Council should uphold the primacy of and respect for the Charter of the United Nations in relation to its functions and powers, and to that end, refrain from the practice of engaging and initiating formal or informal discussions on situations in any Member State of the United Nations or on any issue that does not constitute a threat to international peace and security, which is contrary to the provisions of Article 24 of the Charter.

Thirdly, the Security Council should establish its subsidiary organs in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter, and those organs should function in a manner that ensures that they can provide adequate

and timely information on their activities to the general United Nations membership.

Fourthly, the Security Council should not be used to pursue national political agendas and should ensure the principles of non-selectivity and impartiality in its work. It should keep strictly within the powers and functions accorded to it by Member States under the Charter.

Fifthly, the Security Council should give serious and appropriate consideration in applying its Chapter VII powers, and as a measure of last resort.

Sixthly, the Security Council should use sanctions regimes appropriately and in line with the Council's overall mandate. Accordingly, sanctions must not be employed on a pretext or with the aim of achieving the political objectives of an individual State or a few States rather than the interests of the international community as a whole.

Finally, the Security Council, especially in an enlarged format, should formalize its rules of procedure, which have remained provisional for more than 60 years, in order to improve its transparency and accountability.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone notes that some reassuring actions have been taken, as the Informal Working Group recently adopted two presidential notes on the conduct of minutes of silence (S/2023/612) and on the distribution of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of subsidiary bodies (S/2023/615). It is our fervent hope that those actions signal a willingness on the part of all members of the Council to adopt working methods that will enable it to be more representative, effective, efficient, transparent and inclusive.

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

Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines): The Philippines thanks Albania for organizing this open debate during its presidency of the Security Council.

Enhancing the efficiency of the Council's working methods will enable it to fulfil its primary responsibility effectively and competently for the maintenance of international peace and security.

First, the initial step towards improving its working methods is to correct one fundamental problem — the lack of representativeness in the Council. The Council therefore should aim at increased participation by

non-members in the Council's decision-making process, thereby fostering greater transparency and accountability on the part of the Council vis-à-vis non-members. We recognize that reaching agreement on enlarging the composition of the Council poses challenges, not to mention amending the Charter of the United Nations. However, that does not have to be the case if we dedicate careful attention to reforming and improving the Council's working methods.

Secondly, reform of the Security Council's working methods is essential to facilitate a more efficient and effective functioning of the Council, particularly in the context of an enlarged and more representative Council. Such reform should enhance accountability, predictability, coherence and transparency in the Council's work. The improvement of the Council's working methods, particularly with respect to greater transparency and participation in its decision-making processes by the wider membership, must be part of an overall agreement on Security Council reform. Decisions in that regard should not rest solely with the Council. Specific measures or procedures should be identified for implementation.

While the Security Council remains the master of its procedures, it is important that those measures become more predictable and transparent, especially with respect to the Council's decision-making processes. That is crucial given that the Security Council operates under provisional rules of procedure. It is imperative that the broader membership actively engage in those processes in a meaningful way, not just in a token or perfunctory manner, as outlined in Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, which emphasizes the Council's duty to act on behalf of the wider membership.

While the Security Council's annual report demonstrates its commitment to transparency by sharing its activities, initiatives and decisions with the General Assembly, there is room for improvement. More open debates, for instance, should be encouraged to facilitate the inclusion of diverse views and suggestions from the United Nations membership. While the Security Council's comprehensive annual report enhances the accountability of the Security Council, there is still much to be done to ensure that the inputs of Member States are duly considered and taken on board. The Security Council's decisions are binding on all United Nations States Members, and they require compliance under the rule of law.

Thirdly, with regard to the use of the veto, the Philippines reiterates its view that the veto power has no place in a twenty-first-century Security Council. The use, or threat of use, of the veto, can constrain the Council from acting on vital issues related to international peace and security. The exercise of the veto power could still be part of a reformed Security Council's working methods. It would be a challenge to remove it. However, we should exert every effort and find ways to curtail its use. Otherwise, the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council would always be under threat, especially at times of great geopolitical rivalries. The exercise of the right of the veto carries an extraordinary level of responsibility and should not be employed without due accountability. It must be judiciously used to avoid undue constraints on the Security Council's primary mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Lastly, it is important that Security Council reform be undertaken in conjunction with the ongoing efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, especially with respect to enhancing the role of Member States on matters affecting international peace and security.

As we address the multifaceted challenges of Security Council reform, let us remain resolute in our commitment to enhance its working methods, improve accountability and foster inclusivity. For those actions are essential to equipping the Council so that it can fulfil its paramount duty of upholding global peace and security effectively and responsibly.

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

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I would like to thank Albania, as current President of the Security Council, as well as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, for convening this important open debate.

This statement is being delivered on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions, namely, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council includes the strengthening of fair and clear procedures and due process for United Nations sanctions regimes. The Group is strongly committed to the effective implementation of Security Council sanctions regimes. Targeted

sanctions are an important tool to address threats to international peace and security. To effectively use the tool, the Group considers that efforts to improve due process standards must continue. The importance of due process is threefold. It safeguards the human rights of the targeted individuals. It safeguards the legitimacy of United Nations sanctions. And it is fundamental to Member States' ability to implement the sanctions. The effectiveness of United Nations sanctions goes hand in hand with respect for international due process standards, including safeguards for individual human rights. Due process does not weaken sanctions. On the contrary, it strengthens them.

The Security Council responded to due process concerns by establishing the Ombudsperson for the sanctions regime of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. But the Ombudsperson is mandated only to review cases from the ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list. The Group welcomes the inclusion of a reference to the Ombudsperson in resolution 2653 (2022), the framework of the Haiti sanctions regime, and the expression of intent to consider authorizing the Ombudsperson to receive delisting requests in relation to that sanctions regime, as well.

However the Group is of the view that the Ombudsperson should have been mandated from the outset to receive and examine petitions so as to contribute to a process of review that safeguards due process. In the absence of an effective and independent review of Security Council listings at the United Nations level, other than by the Ombudsperson, it is likely that national and regional courts will continue to review national implementation of listing decisions. That already leads to situations where United Nations States Members and other authorities face difficulty in giving effect to such listings, as the legal basis for doing so is found to be wanting. For example, in its judgment of 20 April in the case of *Council v. El-Qaddafi*, the Court of Justice of the European Union (EU) upheld the decision of the General Court regarding the partial annulment of EU sanctions against one individual, which gave effect to her listing under United Nations sanctions. That follows a number of other cases against United Nations sanctions implementation in courts around the world.

The Group urges the Security Council to continue efforts to improve the Council's working methods in this area, including through the expansion of the mandate of the Ombudsperson to all sanctions regimes. The Group reiterates that the Office of the Ombudsperson should be able to carry out its mandate in an independent, impartial and effective manner, as set out in resolution 2368 (2017). The Group remains concerned that the independence of the Office is being undermined by the current contractual status and institutional arrangements of the Office of the Ombudsperson within the Secretariat.

We must continue to improve the relevant mechanisms in order to safeguard the integrity of Security Council decisions and ensure that the effective and universal implementation of United Nations sanctions is not disrupted. The Group stands ready to support those efforts and welcomes the opportunity presented by today's open debate to discuss the various ways in which the Council's working methods and due process can be improved.

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

Mr. Chatrnúch (Slovakia): At the outset, I would like to thank Albania for organizing this important open debate and to express Slovakia's appreciation for your apt leadership, Mr. President, of the deliberations of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions for the second year in your capacity as Chair.

As you rightly pointed out in the concept note (S/2023/630, annex), Sir, there is an alarming contrast between the expectations regarding the Council's ability to react effectively to the current plethora of wars and existential challenges to humankind, on the one hand, and the growing mistrust, division and abuse of the Charter of the United Nations that are preventing the Council from meeting those expectations, on the other. We have seen that fragmentation mostly in a decrease in the unanimity of the Council's decisions and an overall increase in vetoes cast, which has impeded the action of the Council on matters that continue to fundamentally challenge international peace and security. We must turn that worrisome trend into a much-needed impetus to reform the Council. In the meantime, we would like to remind everyone of the extreme importance of the accountability mechanism for the use of the veto adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 76/262 and urge all Security Council members to join

and implement the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency code of conduct and the Franco-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in cases of mass atrocities.

Regardless of specific matters that have arisen due to geopolitical challenges, my delegation would like to underline the need to fully implement the existing measures and commitments set out in the updated note by the President S/2017/507 and the subsequent 13 notes. The work of improving the Council's working methods must remain a continuing process in the pursuit of greater transparency, inclusiveness, representation and accountability.

More specifically, first of all, we encourage further strengthening of the substantive engagement and information-sharing by the Council with troop- and police-contributing countries in order to disseminate information on the Council's decision-making and incentivize the general membership to support peacekeeping operations.

Secondly, the further development of more active and meaningful relationships with the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and other relevant bodies, as well as the International Criminal Court, as appropriate, could increase the Security Council's effectiveness in responding to conflicts and strengthen its role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Thirdly, the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council is crucial to the implementation of Council decisions. Their working methods should therefore be further improved, especially in instances that can affect the human rights of the people concerned and their right to due process. That is particularly relevant for the Sanctions Committees, considering, among other things, the judicial review that sanctions decisions have been subject to in various jurisdictions.

Fourthly, interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and other Member States, particularly those directly concerned and affected, should be enhanced. We appreciate the recent improved application of rule 37 and encourage the continuation of that practice.

Fifthly, visiting missions can bring the benefit of a first-hand view of fragile settings on the ground and the possibility of delivering messages directly to key stakeholders. With travel restrictions now largely lifted, and considering that there was not a single

mission visit in 2022, we urge Council members to revisit that practice.

Sixthly, the practice of monthly working-methods assessments is a step in the right direction. For greater transparency, that commitment could be further formalized, and the implementation of working methods could be duly assessed by each presidency. We regret the decrease in monthly assessments in 2022, but on the other hand we commend Albania for the first annual report on the work of the Informal Working Group covering 2022 (see S/2022/1032) and encourage the continuation of that practice.

Lastly, my delegation encourages drawing on good practices developed during the pandemic in relation to two specific working methods — the virtual participation of briefers, where circumstances require it, and the submission of written statements by non-members of the Council during open debates.

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

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina thanks Albania for convening this open debate on a subject that has always been of particular interest to us.

Given the increasing demands on the Security Council and the associated expectations, there is a growing need for clarity on the Council's procedure and working methods. In that regard, the note by the President S/2017/507 and subsequent notes have broken new ground in addressing the Council's working methods, as they are valuable instruments that embody best practices and contribute to increasing the Council's transparency, inclusiveness and efficiency. Argentina has historically supported all efforts to improve transparency, inclusiveness, openness, democratization and efficiency in the work of the Security Council. In that regard, we are guided by the conviction that the Council can and should be more transparent and democratic in its relationship with the States Members of the United Nations without affecting the effectiveness of its decision-making. There can be no doubt about the improvements that have been made in recent years to the working methods of this organ thanks to the endeavours and initiative of its non-permanent members, who with patience and commitment have been and continue to be the architects of those achievements.

It is worth pointing out that during its presidency of the Security Council in February 2000, Argentina

urged the adoption of a note by the President by which newly elected members of the Council would be invited to participate as observers in informal consultations during the month prior to the beginning of their term as elected members. During Argentina's chairship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions in 2013 and 2014, numerous presidential notes were adopted on topics such as consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries, dialogue with non-members of the Council and the participation of Council members in the drafting of Council products and their broader drafting responsibility, among other things.

With regard to the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly in particular, Argentina advocates that it should be less descriptive and more analytical in order to enable a broader consideration of the Council's work. Only then will the Security Council be able to demonstrate its willingness to do its work more efficiently, transparently and democratically while improving the relationship between the two organs.

Argentina supports regular evaluations of the implementation of presidential note 507 and subsequent notes, and the identification of successful practices and possible shortcomings, as well as the consideration of necessary adjustments. In that regard, we call for the Informal Working Group to continue working on a single comprehensive document in order to consolidate and streamline all decisions on working methods. Beyond that, the Council's dialogue with other bodies, whether within the United Nations system or elsewhere, is essential to the fulfilment of its functions. Among the bodies that we consider crucial to the Council's fulfilment of its mandate are the Peacebuilding Commission, the International Criminal Court and humanitarian assistance organizations. The Security Council has a multiplicity of responsibilities and effective coordination with other actors is essential if it is to fulfil them. However, that does not imply that the Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, should take over the functions of other organs.

While we recognize the efforts undertaken by various States Members of the Organization in recent years to improve working methods, much remains to be done. Along those lines, we believe that progress could be made in the following areas: improving due process in the Sanctions Committees, improving the quality of the contents of the annual report submitted

to the General Assembly, convening frequent briefings for non-members of the Council on the issues discussed in the Council's informal consultations, minimizing closed meetings and informal consultations in favour of meetings in an open format, making draft resolutions and presidential statements available to non-members in a timely manner.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that what is at stake in improving the Council's working methods is its decision-making culture and the effectiveness of its performance. That is why Argentina welcomes the constructive discussions that have taken place on this matter within the framework of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important annual open debate. And we extend our appreciation for the insightful briefing.

Today's open debate offers yet another opportunity for the Security Council to do a bit of introspection and reflect on its methods of work by delving deeper into developments concerning the implementation of note S/2017/507 and its subsequent presidential notes. It furthermore provides all Member States an opportunity to contribute on how to improve the working methods, which is pertinent, especially as the evolution of dynamics in the Council requires adaptation and repositioning to make it fit for purpose, effective, agile and responsive in addressing protracted and emerging threats to international peace and security.

Geopolitical challenges among Council members have created a heightened level of fragmentation and placed the Council under intense scrutiny. The lack of unity on some of the agenda items discussed in the Council has had a detrimental effect on its integrity and the effectiveness of its decisions, especially when it fails to act in fulfilment of its mandate. That has laid bare the urgent need for the reform of the Security Council. South Africa reiterates its view on the need for comprehensive reform of the Security Council, which is necessary to ensure a more representative and equitable Council.

South Africa is encouraged by the positive developments pertaining to burden-sharing in the context of co-penholdership. We welcome the consideration given to the elected members who wish

to share Council dossiers, especially those that have both the knowledge of the issues as chairs of subsidiary bodies, as well as the region concerned. In that context, we reiterate that the automatic assumption by the chairs of subsidiary bodies of the role of co-penholders on related dossiers is necessary, should they prefer to do so. Those arrangements are valuable for an exchange of perspectives towards effective solutions and actions, which attest to the need for formalization of such arrangements.

We emphasize that equitable burden-sharing of dossiers among all Council members is vital for the effectiveness, transparency, accountability and inclusivity of the Security Council. We regret that, despite numerous attempts, the Council has not been able to reach consensus on penholdership. Notwithstanding that, we commend the unrelenting efforts of elected members on that issue, which we hope will result in a positive outcome flowing from the ongoing negotiations of the elected members and the entire Council.

As part of the broader membership of the United Nations with a vested interest in global stability and security, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Council's deliberations and offer concrete solutions to matters of peace and security. We have noted the upward trajectory in the number of open meetings in recent years. However, the Council needs to consider convening more open meetings on its country-specific situations to allow all United Nations members, specifically those with interest, to contribute to finding a solution to the conflict. It is necessary that there be consideration of both country-specific and thematic issues by the broader United Nations membership without selectivity or politicization.

Furthermore, the Council may wish to consider the establishment of an interactive engagement of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and experts of the wider United Nations membership on working methods. That would create an additional platform for an in-depth discussion and input beyond the annual open debates.

The calls for the promotion and inclusive participation of women and youth in the discussions of the Council are valid, as the sharing of information and knowledge of the security situation on the ground has proven to be useful in Council resolutions. Additionally, the Council should consider the participation of youth briefers not only during the annual youth, peace and security open debates but also in country-specific situations to benefit from their perspectives of the situations that affect them in conflict settings.

In conclusion, it has become evident that, while the Security Council is considered the master of its own procedures and has the latitude to determine its own practices, as provided for by Article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations, the working methods of the Security Council are essential in ensuring that it is able to conduct its daily engagements in an efficient, transparent, inclusive and effective manner, particularly as its decisions have a direct bearing on the wider United Nations membership.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.