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Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 10 and 108 (*continued*)

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/64/341)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/64/217)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/881)

Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea): Over the past three years, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has effectively carried out its mandate of catalyzing international efforts to assist countries emerging from conflict. The third annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/64/341), which we have before us, is a statement of the achievements of the Commission and the challenges that it has faced during its third session. This report was prepared with close consultation among Member States and the Peacebuilding Support Office. During this process, many lessons learned and challenges were identified and have been reflected in the report. My delegation is pleased to note this constructive process and believes that this report will prove to be a valuable asset in the 2010 review process.

The Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881) rightfully articulates the importance of the early engagement of international efforts in post-conflict situations. That report also concludes that the United Nations is increasingly expected to play a leadership role in that process, and I believe that the Peacebuilding Commission is well placed to assume

that critical role. How to strengthen and consolidate the role and capacity of the Commission throughout that process should be one of the priority subjects addressed in the 2010 review process. In this perspective, I should like to underline the following several points. First, as an advisory body to the Security Council, the Commission has a substantive role to play in strengthening the peacekeeping and peacebuilding architecture. As is often reiterated, peacekeepers are early peacebuilders, and more peacebuilding elements need to be integrated into peacekeeping activities. The Commission has much to contribute with the accumulated lessons and experiences from its country-specific activities. The success of quick-impact projects in Côte d'Ivoire indicates that they are an excellent case to build on in the effort to better align the links between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Secondly, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development should be pursued seamlessly and not sequentially. This point has been constantly reiterated by many colleagues; but as we see, there are still some cases where the peacebuilding process has been put on hold until very late in the game. This kind of approach often increases the possibility of missing the critical early window of opportunity. Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development should be pursued side by side to create synergies in order to help countries overcome post-conflict situations.

Thirdly, we believe that it is time to start discussing and developing entry and exit strategies for the Commission. As we witness encouraging progress

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in certain agenda countries, we need to think of ways to help those countries transfer to the next stage, namely, through sustainable economic growth. Meanwhile, my delegation understands that there are certain countries that wish to be put on the PBC agenda but their country-specific configurations have not yet been established. When to engage and when to help countries move on to the next stage is a subject that deserves our thorough analysis.

Fourthly, as the involvement of the Commission is increasingly called upon, we need to find a way to incorporate more countries within its agenda. Considering the Commission's limited capacity to engage multiple countries simultaneously, new and innovative working methods need to be developed. A "light engagement" model suggested by some delegations could work as one of the options, allowing the Commission to engage more countries simultaneously. The Peacebuilding Support Office discussion paper on this subject will serve as a good starting point, and we look forward to further discussion on this matter in the following months and in the 2010 review process.

Fifthly, in order to prevent post-conflict countries from relapsing into conflict situations, quick impact results should be delivered to the people in those countries. In other words, our peacebuilding efforts should be country-specific and field-oriented. Voices from the field should be further incorporated into the peacebuilding discussions in New York and field trip opportunities need to be expanded to allow Member States to see and hear from the field.

Sixthly, peacebuilding is not something that can be achieved by a single player but must be orchestrated among various players. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of linkages between United Nations partner organizations, including its funds and programmes, and cooperative relations with regional organizations and international financial institutions. The visit of the PBC Chairs' group to the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa two weeks ago was truly an important step to broaden and strengthen these relations. I hope that that initiative will expand to other regional organizations so as to provide them with the opportunity to broaden their relationship with the Commission.

My delegation is pleased to learn from the Secretary-General's report that the donor base of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been broadened to 45

donors and that the Fund's portfolio has been significantly increased during the reporting period. We believe that this represents the confidence and credit that Member States have in the Fund. With the revised terms of reference and the new window structures, the Fund is now better equipped to assume its role and perform its objectives. However, as the report indicates, the catalytic function of the Fund still needs to be improved. My delegation looks forward to more discussion on ways to enhance the catalytic role of the Fund in the next session.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): Let me begin by aligning my delegation with the statement of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. The Netherlands would like to use this occasion to make some additional remarks.

Today's debate is important and I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing it and for providing us with an opportunity to share our views on the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), three years after it became operational. Our discussion today, as we consider the experiences gained and the progress made by the Peacebuilding Commission over the past year, is also important for the 2010 review of the Commission. We look forward to this important exercise and, as active members of the Commission since it first became operational, we stand ready to contribute to this discussion.

The decision to set up the Commission around the time of the 2005 World Summit reflected the growing recognition by the international community of the need for comprehensive and integrated strategies in support of countries emerging from conflict. The Commission — this year under the spirited leadership of the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Muñoz — has developed into an intergovernmental body that stands at the forefront of new thinking on matters of peacebuilding, drawing on its practical experience in the field.

Through its country-specific meetings especially, the Commission has developed approaches that rightly focus on areas where gaps exist in terms of peacebuilding, and that seek to address those gaps through integrated and well-coordinated cooperation frameworks. At the same time, such a comprehensive and coherent approach is essential to mobilize the support of the international community and the engagement of all relevant actors.

The country-specific approach, which is a defining characteristic of the Commission's work, is at this moment focused on four countries: Sierra Leone, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic. While some common challenges exist, it is clear that the countries on the PBC agenda require tailored approaches that take into account the specific needs of each. This flexibility of the Commission is a major asset and, as future approaches are being considered, that key principle should, in our opinion, be preserved.

Let me also mention the important role of the individual Chairs — Canada, Sweden/Switzerland, Brazil and Belgium, respectively. It is their engagement in support of the efforts of the Governments concerned that has proved critical in advancing the peacebuilding agenda in these countries.

On a number of occasions the Commission has been instrumental in efforts to address specific critical issues as they emerged in countries on the PBC agenda. For example, the Commission has focused international attention on drug trafficking in West Africa, a regional security issue affecting Guinea-Bissau as well as several other countries in the region, such as Sierra Leone. It is on issues like these that the Commission can and must play a crucial role as an advocate for international engagement in support of the peacebuilding agendas in these countries. At the same time, experiences in one country can be useful in another country. For instance, the role of the PBC in monitoring the presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone sets a good example for a similar role in the context of the upcoming elections in Burundi.

We have always maintained that the PBC is the master of its own procedures and working methods, such as the tailored and country-specific approach. In the future, even more differentiated approaches could be considered that would enable the PBC to deliver added value on specific issues and within a shorter period of time. But in the end, the PBC will be able to significantly contribute to peacebuilding in countries on its agenda only if the full range of its membership, including the whole United Nations system, is fully committed to it. Similarly, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must be fully engaged. The peacebuilding cooperation frameworks that have been drawn up for the countries in which the PBC is engaged stand as critical benchmarks for measuring that commitment and its real impact on the ground.

If the PBC, Member States and the Peacebuilding Support Office, under the leadership of Assistant Secretary-General Cheng-Hopkins, do indeed draw on the valuable experiences that have now been gained and on the lessons learned, the PBC should be well placed to enter a new stage in its development — a stage in which it can be even more effective in furthering the international peacebuilding agenda and in which its activities are even better tailored to the needs of the post-conflict countries on its agenda.

Mr. Sumi (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, it is my great pleasure and honour to address the General Assembly under the presidency of Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki. My delegation would like to express its gratitude to Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for the in-depth report on the Commission (A/64/341). I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/64/217), and to express our appreciation and support for the achievements in the work of the Commission during the third session.

Ambassador Takasu acted as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission during its third session until handing over responsibility to the current Chair, Ambassador Muñoz, in January of this year. During his tenure, Ambassador Takasu actively held strategic discussions with high-level representatives from various organizations, including the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. We are pleased that this tradition was continued and strengthened by Ambassador Muñoz this year.

Three years after its creation, the PBC has deepened strategic discussions in both the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations. The PBC has helped to maintain the political momentum for the peace process in Burundi. The PBC sent a fact-finding mission to Sierra Leone after the onset of political instability in March, thereby helping to prevent further deterioration in the situation. It also organized a High-level Special Session on Sierra Leone in June to mobilize resources for its new development goals. On Guinea-Bissau, the PBC held a series of discussions and made recommendations to avoid a relapse into conflict after the assassinations of the President and others early this year. Those events show that the PBC has become an organ that is committed to making a difference in countries emerging from conflict. Japan acknowledges the

support given to the PBC by the General Assembly as its supervisory organ.

The Peacebuilding Fund has enjoyed continuous support. We welcome the increase in the number of commitments and the broadening of the donor base. The Peacebuilding Fund is supporting 12 countries in building durable peace. In the meanwhile, we hope that the Fund will strengthen its catalytic role to attract additional resources for countries in need.

Turning to the way forward, as envisaged in its founding resolutions, the PBC will soon undergo a review by building on the achievements of the past three sessions. Japan views the following points as essential for that review.

First, the review should focus on increasing the effectiveness of the PBC in bringing about positive results on the ground. It is important to reflect on past experiences and to examine what has worked well and what has not. The objective of the PBC is to produce tangible results on the ground. We therefore believe that the review should not turn into a philosophical debate, but instead focus on the pragmatic fine-tuning of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Secondly, it is necessary to discuss how to strengthen the advisory role of the PBC vis-à-vis the General Assembly and the Security Council as its parent organs. In that regard, it is also essential that the General Assembly and the Security Council make the best use of the PBC's advisory role and make concrete requests of the Commission. For instance, the substantive interaction between the PBC, the Assembly and the Council should be conducted more regularly. In turn, reflection and review by the Assembly and the Council should increase further.

Thirdly, the review should encompass the functions of the PBC, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as they constitute integral parts of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We need to explore how to maximize political leverage, financial support and the coordination capability of the United Nations in pursuing the peacebuilding agenda.

Fourthly, we need to discuss how the PBC can broaden its support to countries emerging from conflict. The essential objective is to maximize the added value of the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement, particularly in countries that are

experiencing the immediate aftermath of conflict. We also believe that extending the PBC's work to various parts of the world will also increase its credibility.

The relationship between peacekeeping missions and the PBC is not mutually exclusive, but complementary. In some cases, collaboration between peacekeeping missions and the Peacebuilding Commission can better address the needs of a country. In that connection, the review of the PBC should explore innovative ways for the Commission to deal with countries that are on its agenda.

Lastly, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881), as well as the efforts of the Secretariat to implement the recommendations contained in the report. It is a priority for the United Nations to be well equipped and harmonized to address the challenges of peacebuilding. The efforts of the Secretariat are of relevance to the work of the PBC. We therefore believe that the implementation of the Secretary-General's report should be duly linked to the review of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Japan is committed to contributing to the work of the PBC and to its upcoming review. As one of the founding members of the PBC and a current member of the Security Council, we believe that it is our obligation to contribute to discussions during the review in a constructive manner.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate, which provides a useful opportunity to take stock of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

I should like to align myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

I would first like to give particular thanks to Ambassador Muñoz for his dedicated efforts in chairing the Organizational Committee. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Canada, Belgium, Brazil, El Salvador and Switzerland, and their respective teams, for their chairing roles. I would also like to thank the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) for its support.

The Commission's annual report (A/64/341) describes many of the achievements made during the year. I would like to highlight a few of them. The PBC

has played an important role in maintaining the international spotlight on all of the countries on its agenda. Its biannual reviews have served to maintain pressure on all parties to live up to their commitments to deliver on agreed priorities.

In Sierra Leone, the PBC has helped to mobilize support for the Government's new Agenda for Change, which the PBC has appropriately taken up as its framework for action. In Burundi, the PBC has helped to support regional efforts to maintain momentum in the peace process, in which there have been many positive developments, and is now closely engaged in supporting the upcoming elections. In the Central African Republic, the PBC has assisted with the national dialogue and is helping to spur progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

But many challenges remain. We have seen continued fragility, for example in Guinea-Bissau, as evidenced by the many assassinations that have occurred over the past year. We need to make use of the current window of opportunity following the inauguration of the new Government there to help tackle some of the key peacebuilding challenges facing the country, notably security sector reform.

There are other examples of the PBC genuinely helping peacebuilding processes, but are those enough? In going forward, we need to pose some tough questions. Why have we not seen more post-conflict countries coming forward to be on the PBC's agenda? How effective has the PBC's advice been in shaping the work of its parent bodies? How solid a bridge has the PBC been in bringing together political, security, humanitarian and development actors? How much of a distinctive role has the PBC carved out with other country-related forums, such as groups of friends and contact groups? And to what extent have the business practices adopted by the PBC allowed for flexibility to respond to emerging needs?

The PBC review in 2010 will provide an important opportunity to take stock of those questions and, in so doing, to reinvigorate the PBC and clarify its added value. The review should result in there being much better linkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It should help us look at what are the incentives and disincentives for a country coming on to the PBC's agenda, and what is the optimum time for that to occur. It should see what role the PBC can play in helping to address the continued lack of progress in

some of the core peacebuilding areas, notably security sector reform, strengthening the rule of law, economic recovery and the restoration of core Government functions.

The review should help determine how the PBC's advice can have increased impact, and how the PBC can be encouraged to play a stronger role in addressing obstacles to a sustained, long-term and joined-up international approach to peacebuilding, while ensuring a coordinated effort among the United Nations, the World Bank and donors. And it should help in improving how additional partners and funds are mobilized behind a single nationally owned strategy.

Another key issue for 2010 is the implementation of the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (A/63/881). It is important for the next Secretary-General's report to be not just an update of New York-based discussions; rather, it should demonstrate real improvements and impacts on the ground. Of particular importance is getting real clarity on roles and responsibilities for the key peacebuilding sectors.

The Peacebuilding Fund also has an important part to play. We need to see evidence that its management arrangements allow it to provide rapid and flexible financing. The PBF's revised terms of reference, which we agreed to earlier this year, give it the framework to do that. What we now need to see is the PBSO implementing the new operational guidelines. But it is not just an issue for the PBSO. As we have seen in many countries to which PBF money has been disbursed, the very slow pace of delivery has been due to the limited capacity of implementing agencies. It is important that only those agencies with real capacities be tasked with delivery.

Those strands of work make 2010 a critical year for improving the way we support countries emerging from conflict. We need to seize this opportunity; otherwise, we will continue to see countries slide back into conflict. And when they do, they have a habit of spreading that conflict and destabilizing neighbouring regions. Countries affected by conflict and fragility account for a third of the people living in extreme poverty, half the children not in primary school and half the children who die before their fifth birthday. There is a real imperative to make sure that the new peacebuilding architecture put in place at the 2005

Summit really delivers real benefits for real people in real time.

Ms. Anderson (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made earlier today by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

Peacebuilding is at the nexus of maintaining peace and security, promoting and protecting human rights and ensuring sustainable development. It is at once one of the most complex and one of the most vital functions of the United Nations system. In Ireland, we have first-hand experience of the complexities of crafting sustainable peace. Our engagement in Northern Ireland has taught us the range and depth of the challenges involved. The long and painstaking work to build peace on our own island helps to inform and underpin our strong support for United Nations peacebuilding.

Beyond our financial commitment to the Peacebuilding Fund, we endeavour to maintain substantial engagement in policy terms. In May of this year, together with host country Egypt, we co-chaired a conference in Cairo on the theme “Post-conflict peacebuilding: contemporary challenges and the way forward”. The outcome of that conference, which included a range of specific recommendations, was presented to the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

The peacebuilding task is not only inherently complex, it also has to be undertaken at a time when a society is exhausted and traumatized. It requires forging strong national institutions and capacities, which quite often are either non-existent or nascent, emerging as products of fragile peace agreements or having been significantly weakened over years of conflict. In such a context, the international community is challenged to provide support that is skilful, sensitive and sustained.

The recently established United Nations peacebuilding architecture remains a work in progress. The initial years have been ones of learning as well as of achievement. The Secretary-General’s report of last June (A/63/881) sets out forthright recommendations, and the report of the Commission on its third session (A/64/341) also contains pertinent observations on the way forward. Those reports have commented on some of the principal lessons of the experience to date. There have also been remarks in that regard during today’s debate. Among them are the facts that national

ownership is critical and that the international community’s role is one of support. Its task is to strengthen and reinforce national efforts, not to substitute for them.

The example of Sierra Leone is worth mentioning. It is one of the PBC country-specific configurations that works well. Ireland participates actively in it. As a significant donor to Sierra Leone, we have committed to aligning all our future support with the Government’s Agenda for Change, the nationally owned development plan.

Secondly, the response must be timely and flexible. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, successful peacebuilding depends on seizing make-or-break moments and providing the right amount of support at the right time. That does not necessarily come easily to the United Nations. Except in emergency aid situations, we are not often fleet-footed. A conscious mode change may be required if those make-or-break moments are to be grasped. As donors, we need, at times, to be prepared to assume greater risk. Monies should be available to fund innovative and catalytic quick-impact projects. In exhausted and conflict-scarred communities, there must be a visible peace dividend to sustain the energy and commitment for the long haul.

Thirdly, with regard to continuity and coherence, rapid response has to be combined with longer-term vision. Fragility and instability will almost inevitably continue beyond the immediate aftermath of conflict. National Governments face the daunting task of moving their countries along the continuum from conflict and its aftermath to healthily functioning societies.

The PBC is there to help after the media spotlight has moved on. Long-term peacebuilding requires a series of integrated and appropriately sequenced steps. Those include action on democratic accountability, good governance, grievance mechanisms and human rights frameworks. The PBC could consider developing appropriate standards and guidance in those areas. The empowerment of women is another vital aspect of peacebuilding. The PBC should identify ways in which it can assist in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions.

Coherence is critical to effective peacebuilding. We need to establish strong linkages with other, directly relevant processes. For example, it makes no

sense, in either conceptual or practical terms, to compartmentalize peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Peacebuilding experiences and priorities must fully feed into the consultative exercise taking place in the context of the New Horizon paper of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. There is also the linkage to system-wide coherence. From the outset, Ireland has been a strong proponent of delivering as one. We believe that progress made in that area can usefully inform our work on peacebuilding.

The recent blue paper on peacebuilding by the International Peace Institute makes for interesting reading. While acknowledging the achievements, it considers that “the peacebuilding architecture has yet to stamp its authority” and that the Peacebuilding Support Office “has not yet been able to serve as the focal point of peacebuilding within the United Nations system as originally envisaged”. Those measured assessments are scarcely surprising, given that we are dealing with such new constructs in such a complex area.

Next year’s review of the PBC will be an opportunity to reflect on what is working well and where there is scope for adjustment or course correction. Especially since procedural issues initially took up a disproportionate amount of time and energy, it is our hope that the review will maintain a firm focus on what makes a difference in the field.

Given the importance that country-specific configurations have assumed in the PBC, the review will provide an opportunity to consider a number of relevant issues. Is there an overall appropriate number of those configurations? How do we ensure that countries that could potentially benefit see real added value in the process, and are thus incentivized to enter? How do we deal with exiting as well as entering, ideally in circumstances where a country has advanced along the spectrum but also if it has moved backwards to a point where the peacebuilding approach is no longer a fit?

There is, of course, a wider perspective. Since the number of country-specific configurations will always be limited, the PBC will want to consider how it can best make a contribution in the multiple conflict situations that are not encompassed by those configurations. The final observation of the PBC report — which emphasizes the need for reassessment

to ensure a more strategic role for the Organizational Committee — is relevant in that regard.

Ireland will continue to contribute fully to the work ahead. We know that building peace on our own island would not have been possible without the steadfast support of the international community. In giving back, we are determined that the endeavours of the United Nations in this field will have our unwavering support.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the holding of this debate on the third report of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) (A/64/341) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/64/217).

My country associates itself fully with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union.

The axiom that there can be no security without development and no development without security, and that both depend on respect for human rights, is especially true in post-conflict situations. That is the *raison d’être* for the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, which, almost four years since it was established, continues to be as relevant as ever.

Drawing on the lessons learned in its early years of operation, it seems to us clearer than ever that there is a role for the Commission in the institutional architecture of the United Nations and that the PBC fills an obvious gap in the system itself.

If peace is to be lasting, the peacebuilding and reconciliation effort in the aftermath of conflict should be undertaken in a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive manner. That entails marshalling all available resources and overcoming the customary structural and organizational limitations.

The Commission has endeavoured to play its coordinating role within and outside the Organization, and to strengthen the links between the various bodies of the United Nations, regional organizations and the international financial institutions. That coordination undertaking should be continued and further intensified, both on the ground and at Headquarters, by involving all stakeholders — political, economic, humanitarian, security and development — as well as civil society, in devising truly integrated strategies.

In that regard, we welcome the fact that the Security Council has taken on board the Peacebuilding Commission's recommendations and transformed the missions in Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic into integrated peacebuilding missions. The Commission's consultative role in the area of peacebuilding vis-à-vis the Council could — and should, in our view — be strengthened in the future, above all at the stage when the Security Council is developing mandates for peacekeeping operations. It seems to us that adhering to a strictly sequential approach to peacekeeping and peacebuilding is increasingly a contrived, if not counter-productive, way to address those matters.

There is also a need to strengthen the relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council, another principal organ of the United Nations. By virtue of its unique know-how and experience with respect to the problems associated with countries emerging from conflict, the Economic and Social Council can in many ways make a meaningful contribution to the Commission's efforts. That is why, in my capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council last year, I worked with Commission Chairperson Ambassador Muñoz to foster closer cooperation.

Those efforts have begun to produce results. Thus, the President participated in several debates within the Economic and Social Council on the specific challenges and needs of post-conflict countries. Furthermore, on 29 October, the Council and the Commission, in partnership with the World Food Programme, held their first joint meeting, in which they examined the impact of the food and economic crises on post-conflict countries. The Secretary-General also took part in that meeting. The Economic and Social Council, during its substantive session, called for enhanced engagement with the Commission, including its various country-specific configurations.

With regard to the implementation of the second part of the Commission's mandate — the mobilization of resources — the Commission should continue and enhance its awareness-raising activities both with traditional donors and non-traditional partners such as diasporas, private foundations and the private sector, in particular in this time of crisis.

The peace dividend should not remain a hollow concept. People in the countries affected should see a

specific improvement of their situation, even if it involves more risk-taking on the part of donors with regard to regular development financing. The Peacebuilding Commission should, in our opinion, also encourage donors in post-conflict countries to better coordinate and align their assistance with the priorities established in national development strategies, in close cooperation with the countries affected, which must shoulder their own responsibilities in peacebuilding.

In recent years, the country-specific configurations have played a growing role in shaping opinions and strategic recommendations on setting priorities for financing and the use of the Peacebuilding Fund. We commend that activity. The effectiveness of the Fund can certainly be improved, in particular by implementing the key principles laid out in the revised mandate, such as transparency, flexibility, rapid response, the catalyst effect and beneficiary ownership of programmes. However, the Fund can undoubtedly still play an important support role in terms of establishing lasting peace. Luxembourg therefore intends to maintain its financial support to the Fund and in more general terms to peacebuilding activities.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Commission's success will be broadly measured by its ability to ensure that countries on its agenda do not relapse into conflict and to produce concrete results for the people on the ground. It should, however, also be endowed with the means — more so than it is today — to advise other post-conflict countries. The Peacebuilding Commission should be relevant to a larger number of countries.

If peace is to be sustainable, short-term security goals should be targeted, while medium- and long-term development objectives are also pursued. Maintaining peace and security requires a lasting commitment from the international community, in terms of both prevention and of re-establishing peace and reconstruction. For this reason, it is crucial to invest simultaneously in mediation and conflict prevention efforts in order to ensure that violence does not recur.

While Luxembourg's membership in the Organizational Committee of the PBC is to expire on 31 December, I assure members that Luxembourg intends to remain fully engaged in the work of the

Commission, since we believe now more than ever that its work is crucial.

Mr. Sial (Pakistan): The institution of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) represents a collective recognition by the Member States of the inextricable relationship between peace and development and the need for a comprehensive approach to peace. As a founding member, Pakistan contributed to the work of the Commission in its formative phase. As the Commission diversifies its scope and area of work, we remain deeply committed to its success.

I thank Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz of Chile for skilfully guiding the work of the Commission as its Chair and for his introduction of the Commission's report (A/64/341). We are also thankful to the Chairs of country-specific configurations with respect to Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. We note that the various configurations of the PBC have met regularly and addressed important issues pertaining to their respective areas. I also take this opportunity to thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for its important contribution to our work.

During the Commission's third session, its main focus was on peacebuilding in the four situations on its agenda: Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic. In the case of the first two countries, this was the Commission's third year of engagement. We are happy to note the progress in terms of substantive work to ensure the durability of peace gains and that such gains respond to the socio-economic needs of the peoples. The framework for the Commission's engagement with those two countries prescribes integrated strategies leading to specific workplans with targeted objectives. This is a pragmatic approach that must be driven by national ownership, consultations and initiatives at the field level.

In the case of Sierra Leone, a realignment of the country's focus with the Commission's work was carried out to address particular priority issues in terms of governance, role of law and employment issues. The realignment points to the evolving nature of the Commission's work. We hope that important lessons will be learned in the process to the benefit of the future work of the Commission.

The Commission's engagement with Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic is relatively

recent. It is satisfying to note that the strategic frameworks for the Commission's engagement with these countries have been finalized and that work under both structures has started. The progress achieved thus far deserves our appreciation, particularly in the case of Guinea-Bissau, where the violent incidents of March and June posed a significant challenge to the Commission's work.

Apart from describing the Commission's work, the report offers observations on outstanding issues and enumerates a way forward. We suggest a three-layered strategy to further strengthen the structure and functioning of the Commission: first, build solid partnerships with the United Nations system, international financial institutions and individual donors with a view to expanding the Commission's resource base; secondly, seek pragmatic frameworks of operation with the countries on the agenda, targeting priority areas in an environment of national ownership; and thirdly, enhance the visibility of the Commission and its work through a robust outreach plan aimed at achieving a profile that is commensurate with its noble work.

While the Commission has made important progress over the past three years, it is barely out of its formative phase. Accordingly, it may be too early to pass judgment on its work in terms of success or failure. Considering the inherent difficulties presented by the complex situations on its agenda, the performance of the Peacebuilding Commission is by any measure commendable.

The provision of adequate resources is an essential requirement for comprehensive peacebuilding efforts. In this context, the Peacebuilding Fund is an indispensable component of the overall peacebuilding architecture. The Secretary-General's report (A/64/217) notes the initial success achieved by this funding instrument. It is gratifying to note the steady rise of the Fund's portfolio growth over the past three years. A robust accountability framework, as suggested by the Secretary-General, is essential to ensuring transparency and oversight. In terms of disbursements, it is equally important to keep the interests of the recipient countries paramount in designing the projects resourced from the Fund. At the same time, we hope that the Fund itself will be guided in its objectives and terms of reference by resolution 63/282. The Fund's capacity will increase if the Fund is flexible and responsive and complements the work of the Commission.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Peacebuilding Commission has shown great promise in addressing the complex challenges entailed in its mandate. The Commission can deliver only with our full support. The international community has the resources and the capability to offer a collective solution to the problems of poverty, hunger and disease generated by violence and conflict. The Peacebuilding Commission is a viable tool to offer such collective solutions.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/64/341) on its third session and the report (A/64/217) on the activities of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) submitted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for his diligent work over the past year.

The establishment of the PBC is an important accomplishment in the framework of United Nations reform undertaken since the 2005 World Summit. It marked a new and substantive step forward in United Nations peacebuilding endeavours. Over the past few years, pursuant to its mandates under General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the PBC has provided vigorous assistance of various kinds to the four countries on its agenda — Sierra Leone, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic — in the light of their respective national situations. The PBF has provided financial assistance to 12 countries, extending the exemplary role and influence of United Nations peacebuilding efforts.

The challenges facing United Nations peacebuilding endeavours deserve due attention. Ensuring that post-conflict countries embark on peaceful reconstruction and avoid relapsing into conflict and turbulence is a major task facing the international community. This has brought the importance of United Nations peacebuilding endeavours into sharper relief. I would like to make the following four points on how to improve and strengthen United Nations peacebuilding efforts.

First, the United Nations should adopt an integrated approach to coordinate peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. The United Nations needs to put more energy into preventive diplomacy, to avoid the outbreak of conflicts and reduce the global need for peacekeeping operations and

post-conflict reconstruction efforts. To ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, the Security Council should take peacebuilding into consideration when it deploys peacekeeping operations. At the same time, there should be a clear division of labour between peacekeeping and peacebuilding endeavours to avoid duplication of efforts.

Secondly, the PBC should strengthen its partnership with recipient countries. Recipient countries have the primary responsibility for their own peacebuilding efforts. Not only are they the recipients of assistance, but they should also become partners for dialogue on an equal footing and should be fully entitled to air their views on identifying the priority areas for assistance. The PBC should take full account of the priority development projects identified by recipient countries themselves and should establish peacebuilding strategies in accordance with these countries' specific conditions. In carrying out peacebuilding strategies, the PBC needs to focus on strengthening capacity-building and human resources training in recipient countries and should make full use of their domestic human resources and expertise.

Thirdly, the PBC should use the 2010 comprehensive review as an opportunity to make further progress on institutional development. We hope PBC members will increase consultation, accommodate one another's concerns and achieve a smooth transition between old and new members. We also hope the PBC will reduce the number of its meetings, improve their efficiency and ensure their quality. In identifying the priority areas for peacebuilding endeavours, we hope the PBC will not only focus on security sector reform, protection of human rights and promotion of the rule of law, but also put greater emphasis on the deep-seated problems that triggered the conflicts, including those having to do with economic and social development.

Fourthly, the fund-raising role of the PBF should be given full play. Sufficient financial input provides the basic underpinnings for the success of peacebuilding efforts. The PBF and multilateral and bilateral donors have invested a great deal of resources in peacebuilding endeavours and have played a positive role, but they still fall short of meeting every need. Further play must be given to the Fund's role as a catalyst in order not only to provide emergency financial assistance to the recipient countries, but also to attract long-term development assistance to the countries concerned. China supports improvement of

the work of the PBF to speed up financial disbursement and strengthen the performance evaluation and accountability of projects.

Ms. Dumont (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for having organized today's debate, which comes at a particularly opportune time. I fully endorse the statement made this morning by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add a few brief comments.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which is a significant institutional innovation, is aimed at improving the coherence of the international community's interventions in countries emerging from crisis in the immediate aftermath of conflict. This includes the entire United Nations family, international financial institutions, regional organizations and bilateral donors. The Commission's role is to draft integrated strategies for peacebuilding for the countries on its agenda, strategies adapted to each country and involving all of the different stakeholders engaged in managing the post-conflict situation. It does so by providing a road map for the affected countries and their partners.

The Peacebuilding Commission has already achieved some results in the four countries currently on its agenda. The country-specific configurations mean that coherence in international assistance can be ensured. Their effectiveness, however, needs further improvement.

With the review planned for 2010, we are arriving at a key stage. France hopes that through that review process, which was agreed on by the entire General Assembly and the Security Council in 2005, the PBC will be able to strengthen the role it plays in coordinating efforts and thus apply its added value to the key areas that will enable the establishment of lasting peace. The Peacebuilding Fund must be a useful tool at the disposal of the PBC. Through the PBF, the PBC must better monitor financial project, in order to ensure coherence in the financial measures taken by the international community. It would undoubtedly be beneficial to think about how to better focus the financial interventions of the Fund on the countries on the agenda of the Commission. We would also like the administrative management of the Fund to be improved. The new terms of reference allow for this and should be implemented.

We also commend the Peacebuilding Support Office and its new head, Ms. Cheng-Hopkins, and we encourage her to continue her work in support of the drawing up of peacebuilding strategies, the mobilizing of resources and the strengthening of international coordination.

It is crucial to take peacebuilding issues into account already during the first stages of dealing with a crisis and in planning a peacekeeping mission. We are in favour of strengthening the relations between the Commission and the Security Council, as the Secretary-General recommended in his report (A/63/881) on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

France fully supports the Peacebuilding Commission, and would like all Member States to do the same. France supports the renewal process of the Commission and encourages it to continue its work.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for the opportunity to speak today on this important topic.

Post-conflict peacebuilding is one of the fundamental challenges of our time. Collectively, we need to help prevent post-conflict societies from slipping once again into conflict. In 2005, our leaders emphasized the need for us to take a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding. With that end in mind, our leaders decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission.

We all know that the challenges of peacebuilding are not solely the remit of the Peacebuilding Commission, nor of the United Nations more broadly. The Secretary-General's report (A/63/881) on post-conflict peacebuilding from earlier this year provided a valuable assessment of the international community's engagement in peacebuilding activities and identified a number of areas in which the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund could contribute.

Today's consideration of the reports on the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund provides us with an opportunity to assess the respective contributions of these bodies to international peacebuilding efforts and to assess whether they have been meeting the expectations set for them by our leaders in 2005.

I would like to commend Ambassador Muñoz for his presentation of the third annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/64/341). The report clearly articulates the activities of the Commission, both through its Organizational Committee and, more concretely, through its country-specific configurations. In the years ahead, we should be increasingly looking to the Commission to deliver country-specific tangible results as a demonstration of its contribution to the broader peacebuilding effort.

We would encourage the Commission to continue to evaluate the contribution that it brings to the countries on its agenda and to engage in outreach to promote this contribution. We would further encourage the Commission to continue to refine and diversify its working methods to ensure that it remains responsive to the needs of those countries on its agenda, as well as those perhaps looking to be included on its agenda.

One issue that is raised in the Commission's report and in the Secretary-General's earlier report on post-conflict peacebuilding is the need to broaden and deepen the pool of civilian expertise and volunteers for peacebuilding. My country, Australia, has recently announced the establishment of a deployable civilian capacity to assist with stabilization and recovery efforts in post-conflict countries. We look forward to working closely with the United Nations and the Commission to ensure that our deployable civilian capacity fits well with others and contributes to broadening the pool of civilian expertise, including through mobilization of capacity from the global South.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/64/217). The report demonstrates that the Fund is filling a critical niche in the area of peacebuilding. The Fund has undergone significant improvement in the past 12 months. Australia welcomes the revision of the terms of reference for the Fund, which has strengthened its capacity to serve as a flexible, responsive and risk-taking resource for peacebuilding support. We continue to support the use of the Fund as a catalytic tool for key peacebuilding priorities.

When we established the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, we undertook to review it in 2010. That review will provide all Member States with an opportunity to reinvigorate their engagement with the Commission and to assess further its place in the broader international peacebuilding architecture. It will

also be an opportunity to listen to the experiences of post-conflict countries, to take stock of the Commission's successes and to demonstrate to Member States and other peacebuilding actors the valuable contribution the Commission can make to countries on its agenda.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express my delegation's gratitude for the initiative of holding this joint debate on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session (A/64/341) and the report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/64/217). We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for the documents and reports provided and for his valuable contribution to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission through the Peacebuilding Support Office. We also welcome his leadership at the head of the Peacebuilding Fund.

El Salvador has been committed from the outset to the very essence of the Commission, in the belief that the establishment of this body constitutes a crucial building block for the international peacebuilding architecture, as it assists countries in post-conflict situations to entrench lasting peace with sustainable development.

Today, the General Assembly is considering the report on the third session of the Commission. In chronological terms, we are about to close the first five-year cycle of the Commission, which, since its inception, has supported post-conflict countries.

At this point, my delegation does not intend to take stock of the achievements, obstacles and challenges the Peacebuilding Commission has faced in its first years of existence. The time for doing so will be during the review process to take place in 2010, in which my country wishes to participate actively. We would like to do so, as members are aware, based on our own experience as a post-conflict country. My country has demonstrated its political will without, however, forgetting that we must remain alert, as any post-conflict country, in order to prevent any new outbreaks of violence that could be generated by globalization and the new geopolitical context.

El Salvador believes that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission represented a turning point in the perception and management of the inherent links between peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding and the promotion of development in countries emerging from conflict.

Likewise, the Commission's work gives us the opportunity to focus afresh, and perhaps with a broader perspective, on the various components that contribute to propagating, maintaining and suppressing conflict in the countries on the Commission's agenda. It also enables us to recognize that each conflict has its own particular features that can be overcome only with a specific approach. Otherwise we run the risk of generalizing the particular causes and dynamics that led to conflict in each of the countries the Commission is currently working with.

El Salvador acknowledges the leadership demonstrated by Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, Permanent Representative of Chile, as Chair of the Commission, and of the other members of the Bureau. We wish to highlight particularly his commitment to strengthening the Commission's relationships with the principal organs of the United Nations. In particular, he has worked to strengthen the links with the Economic and Social Council. My delegation has frequently stated that the Commission must truly interact with the Economic and Social Council, and in particular has called on the PBC to make the most of the Council's accumulated experience in the area of operational development activities, as well as the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African countries emerging from conflict and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti.

In this context, we welcome the Economic and Social Council's invitation to the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in the substantive part of its session, as well as the special event on food and economic crises in post-conflict countries, jointly organized by the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the World Food Programme in Geneva. These activities are a positive step in the task of strengthening the Commission's relations with the principal organs of the United Nations. Similarly, we support the Chair's efforts towards improving public awareness and the visibility of the work of the Commission.

With regard to the work of the Commission on the country-specific configurations, El Salvador acknowledges the efforts made by the Permanent Representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Canada and Switzerland as Chairs of the country-specific configurations. We also note with a degree of optimism the major progress made in those countries in responding to the enormous challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding. We also acknowledge the importance

the Commission gives to the full application of the principle of national ownership, which constitutes the fundamental basis for directing international efforts towards the national priorities established by the Governments of the countries in question. Beyond this, our participation in the Addis Ababa meeting with the African Union compels us to stress the need to build better synergy for coordination and communication with regional organizations.

El Salvador remains convinced of the great importance of the role played by the Working Group on Lessons Learned, which we have been honoured to chair. In our opinion, this Working Group is an essential component, due to the broad role it has played in the PBC architecture as a discussion forum open both to Member States and to civil society. In this forum we can examine the various elements that come together to create or worsen conflict, as well as the actions undertaken to deal with them by various players. This is a forum for considering the medium- and long-term strategic issues that the international community should be focusing on in order to learn from the mistakes — or from the best practices that have made it possible to tackle successfully different situations in various countries — by incorporating such experience into the Commission's broad strategy and policies. It is also important to recognize the need to make more effective use of this valuable experience and incorporate it into specific actions implemented in the current country-specific configurations, so that we can contribute to a faster transition from conflict to peacebuilding and sustainable development.

Concerning the Peacebuilding Fund, El Salvador acknowledges the generosity and solidarity of the donor countries and highlights the contribution the Fund has made to the peacebuilding efforts in the four countries on the PBC agenda. We also consider it important that it has contributed to five additional countries, since it has been determined that they meet the requirements for being a part of the programme. Despite these important achievements, however, we are convinced that there is room for improvement, in order to continue increasing the Fund's effectiveness and catalytic effect, which in future should definitely take a degree of geographic balance into consideration. We also believe that coordination between the Fund and the PBC, and their shared strategic vision, can be further strengthened, in keeping with the spirit established in the Commission's founding resolutions.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that this issue and others we have mentioned will be considered in the review process planned for 2010. Allow me to reaffirm the willingness of the Government of El Salvador to continue to contribute its experience as a post-conflict country. I assure the international community that we know that, although almost 18 years have passed since our peace agreements were signed, many challenges, born of the post-conflict situation, remain. We must be on our guard to ensure that violence does not return again.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): I would like to thank the President for convening this joint debate on post-conflict peacebuilding and the Peacebuilding Fund. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the caucus of countries of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). In addition, however, I would like in my national capacity to highlight the following points.

We welcome the third annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission, contained in document A/64/341, reflecting the activities of the Commission from 23 June 2008 to 30 June 2009. We commend the work of the Commission in the third year since its founding, through country-specific configuration meetings, including utilizing the evolving integrated peacebuilding strategies as frameworks for advancing peacebuilding in ways that respond to the differing needs of the four countries now on its agenda.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the following notable outcomes of the Commission's work during the reporting period: first, the adoption of Strategic Frameworks for Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic; secondly, the adoption of conclusions on the second and third biannual reviews of the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi; and thirdly, approval of the Government of Sierra Leone's Agenda for Change as the core strategic document for guiding all future national and international development efforts.

The PBC has continued to strengthen its links with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. My delegation particularly welcomes its efforts to intensify its relationship with the Economic and Social Council on the important nexus among security, recovery from

conflict and development. My delegation fully endorses the Commission Chair's conclusion in presenting the report that

"The Commission combines a unique link to the three principal organs of the United Nations, a unique composition of membership and a unique degree of flexibility to engage non-United Nations and non-governmental actors. Thus, the Commission could, in particular, promote a seamless transition from humanitarian to early recovery assistance, synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates and national capacity development in critical peacebuilding priorities." (A/64/PV.49)

We further welcome the Commission's continued efforts towards expanding partnerships with different national, regional and international actors, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, international financial institutions, regional organizations, the private sector and civil society.

We are encouraged by the important discussions that the Committee convened on enhancing the capacity of the PBC to fulfil its resource mobilization mandate, employment and income generation and private sector development in post-conflict countries; on the implications of the financial crisis for countries emerging from conflict; and, most recently, on the prospects for the mandated 2010 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and on improving engagement with countries seeking the Commission's advice. We also take note of the Chair's tireless efforts in undertaking a number of activities in order to raise global awareness of the challenges that countries emerging from conflict face and to enhance the Commission's visibility on the ground.

My delegation would like to reiterate its principled position on the following issues. First, the Peacebuilding Commission should have the central role in post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. The PBC, in institutional harmony with the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, should act as the spearhead for a coordinated, coherent and integrated peacebuilding architecture as outlined in its founding resolutions, General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

Secondly, my delegation strongly emphasizes the principle that post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny. The work of the PBC should be

based on national ownership and national priorities. We recommend that, to further the work of the PBC, pluralist political institutions be built, peace constituencies be created, the root causes of conflict be identified, an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance be restored, a process of societal reconciliation and healing be established, justice and fair rule of law be allowed to take root and government machinery be overhauled to lead the process of democratization. We also emphasize the importance of governmental efforts being properly supported by the international financial institutions and other organizations, the private sector, civil society, development partners and all other stakeholders, both external and domestic.

Thirdly, we very much agree with the concept of a more rapid and flexible funding mechanism. Disbursement of the multi-donor trust funds and other funds should be rapid and immediate to ensure early stabilization of countries emerging from conflict. This is required for support to national and local authorities in delivering a peace dividend. However, we reiterate that one of the main purposes of the PBC, as depicted in its founding resolutions, is to marshal resources for reconstruction and institution-building in countries emerging from conflict. Therefore, the PBC should have a central role in any discussion regarding the creation of new rapid funding mechanisms.

Finally, for early recovery, our focus should be on identifying approaches that would offer a sustainable national political dialogue aimed at reconciliation among the parties to the conflict with participation from all stakeholders — local, national and regional — including international partners. Women's involvement would be key to that process. Integrated needs assessment, including prioritization, should be conducted in consultations with all stakeholders. Unity of vision should be maintained while designing a clear and coordinated mandate to define the leadership role of the United Nations agencies on the ground. This should be articulated in the early stages to avoid duplication of efforts and inefficient use of scarce resources.

We strongly feel that women's empowerment and the involvement of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in development activities at the local level could significantly contribute to the process of achieving sustainable economic growth leading to sustainable peace and development in post-conflict countries. Bangladesh offers to share its tested and

well-recognized practices in integrating civil society and development NGOs with public authorities in nation-building endeavours. In this context I am happy to note that a leading non-governmental organization based in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) — which is the largest NGO in Bangladesh and probably in the world, with its wide-ranging operations in poverty alleviation, empowerment of the poor, health, education, community development, agriculture and microfinance development projects — has recently begun to help residents of Kroo Bay and other communities in Sierra Leone and other countries in Africa.

We would further like to refer to our post-liberation experiences, whereby we have learned the importance of domestic initiatives such as home-grown ideas like microcredit to address poverty and non-formal primary education. In a similar vein, proven initiatives such as cooperative arrangements for agriculture development, establishment of targeted small and medium-sized enterprises through community-based organization and microfinancing projects could be pursued. These would provide invaluable opportunities for creating jobs, which, in effect, can re-engage young people, ex-combatants in particular. My delegation would be happy to share our experiences regarding cooperative arrangements in agriculture development as well as microfinancing projects in establishing and creating successful small enterprises.

Countries emerging from conflict at times need national digital identification cards, or IDs, that help the Government and election commissions to prepare non-controversial, transparent and accurate voter lists. Bangladesh has the experience and expertise, having issued nearly 90 million national IDs in recent years, and we can share our expertise with emerging countries.

Peacebuilding is an area that may contribute to further defining the image of the Organization in the coming years. The envisaged 2010 review of the Commission called for in its founding resolutions, in this context, will provide a good opportunity to further build on the experiences it has gained and lessons that have been learned, define its potential role in support of an expanding United Nations peacebuilding agenda and enhance its support to countries emerging from conflict. The 2010 review will be charting an important course for the future relevance of the United Nations in tackling post-conflict situations. My delegation looks

forward to working in close collaboration with all concerned.

A key element of the vision that led to the creation of the PBC was the need for a new twenty-first-century machinery that could energize all to actively integrate peacebuilding tools in order to allow peace processes to bear fruit. The efforts of the PBC to achieve coherence have attracted increased attention. Also, the recent decisions of the Security Council to set up integrated peacebuilding missions have been widely recognized. We welcome such successful steps in that regard.

The need for further coherence in peacebuilding efforts gradually seems to be beginning to take hold at the United Nations. The penultimate paragraph of the Security Council presidential statement of 5 August (S/PRST/2009/24) recognizes the importance of introducing peacebuilding elements into peacekeeping operations before they are transferred to the PBC. But that recognition remains to be translated in any country-specific context.

In conclusion, may I say that Bangladesh's commitment to peace and security in post-conflict countries has a deep emotional basis, given that Bangladeshi peacekeepers, while serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations in such countries, often under very difficult situations, have been able to establish strong bonds with ordinary local residents, thereby winning their confidence and, more important, their hearts. We would not, and therefore cannot, shy away from any effort aimed at the overall well-being of the people of post-conflict societies.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): It is a real pleasure to take the floor under your leadership, Sir. We commend your commitment and your very valuable contribution to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, of which both our countries are members.

At the outset, I should also like to thank Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, Permanent Representative of Chile, for his outstanding work as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and for his tireless efforts to improve the operation of the Commission and to inform the public and his potential partners of his mission.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Kingdom of Morocco naturally associates itself with the statement delivered this morning by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Movement.

The annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/64/341), which is now before us, allows us to assess the scope of the Commission's work and its progress in carrying out its mandate. It also allows us to take stock of the difficulties encountered by the Commission as it fulfils the tasks assigned to it. No one can deny that, as the cornerstone of the intergovernmental architecture of the United Nations, the Commission has made it possible to address the needs and priorities of countries emerging from conflict, to lay the foundations for the economic recovery of post-conflict countries, and to socially and economically reintegrate and rehabilitate former combatants.

We commend the Commission's country-specific configurations for Burundi, Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. Despite the challenges and obstacles they have encountered, those configurations have proven that they are able to help those countries to undertake a number of reforms in the areas of good governance, justice and the rule of law.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission's Organizational Committee, my delegation can attest to the many advances made by the Commission — in particular with regard to partnerships with other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — with the aim of improving the coherence of its strategies and improving its operations. For its part, the Working Group on Lessons Learned continues to serve as an informal mechanism to allow the Commission to gather the views of competent stakeholders from within and outside the United Nations system, including national specialists, with experience in post-conflict peacebuilding.

Despite the fact that it was established not long ago, the Commission has demonstrated the added value it brings to stabilizing post-conflict situations. Its contribution could be more effective and robust if it were to take the following points into consideration.

First, the partnership established between the Commission's Chair and the main organs of the United Nations should be expanded to include a larger number of Commission members, including the countries of the various country-specific configurations. Such an approach would make it possible to involve more countries in the partnership and create more visibility while improving interaction.

Secondly, in the same vein, my country believes that the Commission should update its rules, procedures and working methods with a view to improving the effectiveness, coherence and transparency of its work.

Thirdly and lastly, with regard to the country-specific configurations, great attention must be paid to education, training, infrastructure development, private sector reform and the promotion of investment.

Given its valuable contribution to the efforts made in the context of the country-specific configuration, the Peacebuilding Fund deserves our ongoing support. The Fund should endeavour to ensure greater transparency and flexibility in its operations. In that regard, the role played by the Peacebuilding Support Office in revising the Fund's mandate and acting as the conduit for information about the Fund's activities deserves to be highlighted, appreciated and supported.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a manifestation of the international community's desire to stabilize and bring peace to countries emerging from conflict. The success of its missions transcends the borders of the States concerned and has an impact on all neighbouring countries. It is up not only to the members of the Commission but to the entire international community to support the Commission as it carries out the noble tasks for which it was established.

For our part, on the basis of the ongoing commitment of His Majesty the King to South-South cooperation, my country remains ready to share its modest peacebuilding experience with African countries on the Commission's agenda, just as we have done with regard to peacekeeping.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank the President for convening this truly important debate to receive the report (A/64/341) of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on its third session as we prepare to begin the process of reviewing that body. Secondly, I congratulate our colleague Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, Permanent Representative of Chile, for his excellent work as Chair of the Commission. I also welcome Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins, who recently became the head of the very active Peacebuilding Support Office.

The report illustrates several relevant aspects of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and

examples of the success and tangible results of peacebuilding in several countries, several of which we have heard about today. Were it not for the action of the PBC, such progress would certainly not have been achieved. Beyond individual cases, we also believe it important to highlight that the Peacebuilding Commission has progressively provided another added value — the increasing awareness among Member States of the crucial importance of peacebuilding tasks to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the promotion of sustainable development, two core objectives of our Organization.

It is true that peacebuilding did not begin with the PBC. We are aware that this young body of the United Nations is one of many multilateral, regional and individual players, and not even the most influential in this area. However, the PBC has certain salient characteristics. It is probably the only intergovernmental forum that brings North and South together to discuss peacebuilding and reconstruction, that integrates political aspects with those of security and development, that is so intensely involved in specific countries and, above all, that enjoys unparalleled legitimacy. These features give the Peacebuilding Commission a privileged position in addressing one of the most egregious deficiencies of the system as a whole — the lack of coordination and coherence in peacebuilding actions worldwide.

We are therefore convinced that the Peacebuilding Commission is a fundamental tool for improving this situation. We hope that, during the review process in 2010, Member States will seize the opportunity to create greater space for the PBC to improve coordination both inside and outside the Organization.

But such coordination should begin at home. In that regard, while we highlight the progress that has been made, such as the creation of single national strategies and integrated peacebuilding missions, we understand that there is still much room for improvement, as for example with regard to the relationship between the PBC and the Peacebuilding Fund, and as is clearly revealed by the need to strengthen links between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Accordingly, the role of peacekeeping personnel as actors in early peacebuilding is essential and practically irreplaceable, given the Organization's

capacities on the ground and the difficult circumstances in which they work. The support that peacekeeping personnel can offer in such key areas as providing security and strengthening the rule of law — including in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, extending State authority and rapid-impact projects, *inter alia* — should be better exploited. There are more than 100,000 women and men deployed in 16 missions who can make a decisive contribution, especially to the stabilization of a country and in the first phases after stability returns.

With respect to the upcoming review process, my delegation believes it important to highlight two key aspects, bearing in mind that the objective is to use that opportunity to strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission must be made a more effective tool and its legitimacy enhanced.

When it comes to greater effectiveness, beyond what I have said about improving coordination and consistency, it would be useful to review its involvement with countries where peacebuilding efforts are made. The benefits of the Peacebuilding Commission's work should be extended to more countries and regions, certainly not by replicating the models of current configurations but perhaps through activities in specific work areas.

The second aspect is related to the legitimacy of the PBC, which is linked to a concept of great importance to our day-to-day work — that of ownership. We have already noted that, given the Commission's very nature, no other body devoted to this issue enjoys greater legitimacy. But we should ask ourselves frankly how we are doing internally. The PBC Organizational Committee and the members of the configurations are the most representative sampling of the whole that it was possible to obtain at the time. They personify the collective political will of the Organization in this field. However, we believe that we should all do more to effectively extend to all Member States the sense of ownership of peacebuilding efforts.

We therefore feel that it would be very positive to extend the basis of support for the United Nations peacebuilding efforts. In this regard, the Commission should actively encourage the participation of other countries in these efforts, for example, through triangular and South-South cooperation, which would have a very positive impact in terms of renewing

commitment to and increasing the real legitimacy of the PBC. The reference to this topic in the current report of the Peacebuilding Commission, and the stress placed in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/881) on the need for the United Nations to make better use of the capacities of the southern hemisphere, are encouraging precedents.

Finally, we reiterate our commitment to working constructively in the upcoming review process to strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission so that it can continue to contribute to the stabilization, institutional strengthening and economic and social development of societies affected by conflict.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): Poland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore limit myself only to a few points.

Poland remains a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Since its establishment in 2005, the PBC has made important contributions to post-conflict peacebuilding in countries on its agenda. It has provided input to the development of new partnerships and more holistic approaches that integrate peace processes and the development agenda.

The Commission has already proven its added value as a platform for policy coordination with respect to international support for post-conflict countries. It has also become a framework for mutual accountability on the part of host Governments and the international community. Its periodic reviews of the implementation of integrated peacebuilding strategies provide excellent opportunities to assess progress, identify obstacles and gaps, and decide on urgent actions to be taken.

Poland attaches great importance to the principle of national ownership and the involvement in peacebuilding processes not only of international stakeholders and Governments, but also of various groups from civil society and non-governmental organizations. There is also scope for a greater role for regional and subregional organizations.

Peacebuilding is not limited to peacekeeping and political peace processes. It also includes development activities and establishing the economic foundations for countries on the Commission's agenda.

I would like to pay tribute to Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz of Chile, Chair of the Commission, as well as to the Chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations, including you, Sir. We highly appreciate your chairmanship. We also recognize the important role of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. The invaluable personal involvement of all those persons sets the pace for the PBC's cooperation with the countries on its agenda. They have contributed to the further development of both the practice and concept of peacebuilding. I would like to thank them for their outstanding service and devotion.

Poland looks forward to the 2010 review, which will be another strategic opportunity to reflect on and further improve the work of the PBC. One of the areas that can be enhanced is the so-called instrument of engagement of the PBC with the countries concerned. The development of such an instrument should not put an additional burden on the Governments of the countries on the Commission's agenda. It could be based to a greater extent on existing national strategies and programmes and might be limited to only some areas of peacebuilding that require international support. It could also make use of existing local civilian capacity.

We also think that sharing experiences and building on previous activities is important. In that regard, it would be useful to keep records of the projects implemented with financing from the Peacebuilding Fund in order to make continued use of the capacities built at the country level.

Another issue involves providing adequate support to the Chairs of the various configurations of the PBC, in New York and in the field. There should be sufficient institutional memory to enable the continuation of the work of country-specific meetings in case of a change in chairmanship or membership.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins as head of the Peacebuilding Support Office. I wish her success in her work.

Mr. Scott (United States of America): The United States welcomes the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its third session (A/64/341) and commends the Commission for its work over the course of the past year. We thank Ambassador Muñoz for his dedicated chairmanship, and would also like to

express our appreciation for the committed efforts of the Chairs of the country-specific configurations.

The United States appreciates the Commission's growing track record. We particularly note the Commission's achievements in instituting more flexible methods of work, mobilizing resources from traditional and non-traditional donors to support national peacebuilding priorities and strategies, and facilitating coordination among all stakeholders in order to have a concrete impact.

As the report describes, the Commission has in that way contributed to the lives of ordinary citizens of the countries on its agenda. In Burundi, the Commission has added its voice to regional institutions and others in helping Burundi create the conditions for the resumption of the political process. In Sierra Leone, the Commission has helped to broaden the donor base. In Guinea-Bissau, the Peacebuilding Commission has supported the organization of legislative elections and helped to secure crucial funding. In the Central African Republic, the Commission has supported the national dialogue and is helping to bring coherence and coordination to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.

As those accomplishments show, the Commission is capable of bringing together all stakeholders to support countries emerging from conflict and to prevent fragmentation of effort. It can provide a unique forum for mobilizing our best collective efforts, helping us to stay focused on essential priorities and sending messages about the need for action.

As we look ahead to the Commission's future, we believe that we need to set our sights high to see the Commission react quickly and flexibly, to add value to countries on its agenda without adding burdens, to prioritize and to innovate, and to push all of us to raise the bar in our common efforts. We know the importance of the agenda: helping Governments restart critical services, generating jobs and reviving economies, restoring the rule of law, reforming the security sector, tackling crime and transborder causes of instability, and putting an end to sexual and gender-based violence. Whether in the Peacebuilding Commission or elsewhere, those issues are among the highest on our agenda at the United Nations, and we see a pressing need to strengthen ways of working together to address them successfully.

We look forward to the launch of the five-year review. Like others, we believe the first step is information-gathering, informal discussion and consensus-building about the scope and core elements of the review. The United States is committed to a serious process. The review should be ambitious, evidence-based and open-minded. It should also keep foremost in mind the views and experiences of post-conflict countries, both on and off the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

The Commission was created because of gaps in the international response that left too many countries vulnerable to the relapse of violence. The Peacebuilding Commission has already helped to shrink those gaps, but many remain. The review can help us in closing them if we stay focused on the imperative of helping post-conflict countries establish the foundations for peace and long-term development.

Mr. Midekssa (Ethiopia): My delegation would like to thank Ambassador Herald Muñoz of Chile, Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for presenting the third annual report of the Commission, as contained in document A/64/341, and also wishes to express its appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report (A/64/217) on the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of the PBC as it continues to implement its core mandates by adapting to the existing global conditions and by developing mechanisms that are vital to the priorities of peacebuilding. Ethiopia's involvement with United Nations peacekeeping and peacemaking since 1948 underpins our commitment to peacebuilding.

The report notes that the Commission has accomplished significant tasks over the past year in its efforts to rebuild nations emerging from conflict. My delegation believes that the international community's recognition that the fragility of States in the aftermath of a crisis signifies a development challenge and a potential risk to global stability is a measure of progress that should be strengthened. As the Peacebuilding Commission was established in the hope of bringing peace to people destabilized by conflicts, we are convinced that the PBC remains true to the international community that created it to deal with

challenges to peace, security and development in a practical and effective way.

Through the PBC, the international community is expected to provide the necessary assistance to all countries emerging from crisis by building partnerships with other stakeholders. The shared conviction that the PBC should work in partnership with other international actors and promote the ownership of the countries concerned should be given serious emphasis. The concerned parties need to participate in the process to make that endeavour successful.

My delegation is convinced that the PBC's Organizational Committee will continue to include new countries on its agenda. As the major conflicts in Africa account for over 60 per cent of the items on the Security Council's agenda, the focus of the Peacebuilding Commission's activities is on Africa. The PBC should work hand in hand with the African Union and give serious consideration to the prevailing conditions on the continent. The number of African nations benefiting from the Peacebuilding Fund is increasing and their performance reflects the Commission's achievements.

Even though the PBC has made some progress, challenges are still unfolding. The increasing number of conflicts in Africa calls for more engagement on the part of the international community substantively to address the early recovery of fragile States, which are at greater risk of relapsing into violence and could pose real threats to regional and international stability. In that regard, it is important to stress that, unless the international community is determined to bring lasting peace to our subregion, the situation will deteriorate in the future.

As a body, the PBC is, of course, in its early years and is expected to draw lessons from past activities and benefit from the experience of the Members of the United Nations. The Commission should coordinate with other United Nations bodies so as to increase its effectiveness. The PBC's strategic work in country-specific cases administered by country-specific configurations and the working methods employed in the integrated strategies need to be streamlined with the country teams. In order to respond to the needs of the different countries on its peacebuilding agenda, the PBC has to address the current managerial and operational challenges.

The PBC's readiness to improve its work assures us that it will vigorously strengthen its peacebuilding activities. The mandate review in the coming year will seek to improve various approaches to integrated peacebuilding strategies in terms of objective and scope, strengthening and diversifying the approach to resource mobilization, and calibrating responses to emerging situations in the field, all of which are important factors that need serious consideration. We believe that the PBF will continue to be of great importance in launching relevant peacebuilding programmes. The key role of the Fund as a channel for the effectiveness of the PBC's operations in recent years should not be overlooked.

We all acknowledge that peace is more precious than anything. Hence, the approach that we took in building peace through cooperation is a noble foundation. The PBC embodies our common goal of building the conditions for a peaceful life for those who are in crisis.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): We welcome the joint debate on today's agenda items, all of which have an underlying substantive connection. The work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) over the past three years has sought to draw on the synergies of the three principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — in handling post-conflict situations.

Let me begin by placing on record our appreciation for the good work done by Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, who brings to the Commission his rich experience in dealing with complex issues at the United Nations. We will gladly continue to cooperate with him in his efforts. I would also like to congratulate the new Chairs of the country-specific configurations, as well as the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, for their work. Furthermore, I would like to extend congratulations to Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins on her appointment as head of the Peacebuilding Support Office. My delegation looks forward to working with all of them in a spirit of constructive and positive cooperation.

India is a member of the Peacebuilding Commission and has contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund. We will continue our active association both with the Commission and with the Fund with a view to enabling those institutions to fulfil in their entirety the tasks assigned to them by the General Assembly and

the Security Council. We have always held the view that the setting up of the PBC filled an important institutional gap and that the Commission can and should make an important contribution to the recovery, reconstruction and development of countries emerging from conflict whenever it agrees to act upon a request for advice and assistance from any such Member State.

India has unique experience of nation-building in a large, complex and very diverse setting as we strive to give our people a better life. That has allowed us to develop multifaceted capacities relevant to peacebuilding and development. We have shared that experience and expertise with a number of countries transiting from conflict to peace. We are very happy to continue to make our capabilities in nation-building available to countries in post-conflict situations and to cooperate with the United Nations in its peacebuilding activities, including with regard to development, social sector reform, the rule of law and security.

We welcome the three reports under consideration, in particular the new one on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict (A/63/881). The report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict has as its central theme the imperative of national ownership and rightly notes that peacebuilding efforts must be anchored at the country level. We are hopeful that a sincere effort will follow during the implementation phase, so that the advisory function of the Peacebuilding Commission can be thoroughly exploited for the benefit of the countries and regions concerned and for the cause of international peace and security in general.

India co-sponsored General Assembly resolution 63/282 on the Peacebuilding Fund last spring. This reflects our determination to ensure that the Fund is so structured as to enable it to serve as a flexible, responsive and focused recourse for peacebuilding support. In this context, we are happy to note that the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/64/217) observes that the revised terms of reference, which essentially transformed the Fund's three-window architecture into two facilities, namely the Immediate Response Facility and the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility, has enabled the Fund "to serve as a fast-disbursing, agile, responsive and risk-taking peacebuilding instrument" (A/64/217, para. 55). Equally heartening is the fact that these improvements have been effected as a result, among other things, of introspection within the Commission on its working.

We are also happy to note that the Commission is taking a comprehensive approach to handling its tasks. Quite notable is the fact that it is trying to cooperate and coordinate with other United Nations agencies, as well as with other international institutions such as the World Bank. Equally praiseworthy are the efforts to expand the web of stakeholders as well as their involvement in the process of peacebuilding.

At the same time, I would be remiss if I did not stress two very important imperatives. First, we must always strive to ensure that there is effective two-way dialogue between countries on the PBC agenda and the Commission itself during all stages. This dialogue should help bring the requisite assistance at the appropriate time and should be flexible enough to allow for mid-course corrections where necessary. This dialogue will also ensure that relevant information is constantly relayed and absorbed within the peacebuilding architecture for the best results.

Secondly, we need to constantly improve the governance structures of the peacebuilding architecture. In our view, such improvements must seek to ensure that all available resources that are geared towards peacebuilding in post-conflict situations are properly harnessed in the shortest possible time. This, we believe, is the *sine qua non* of peacebuilding.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to the peacebuilding architecture. India will continue to be constructively engaged in the process of perfecting this architecture to the benefit of the countries concerned.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of items 10 and 108.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Mr. Sial (Pakistan): I would like to congratulate Mr. Jorge Argüello, Permanent Representative of Argentina, and Ms. Sanja Štiglic, Permanent Representative of Slovenia, for their appointment as co-facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly. We assure them of our full cooperation and support.

A first step on how best we can carry forward the process of revitalization of the General Assembly during the current session would be to deal with the issue of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, to see how far we have reached in this regard and to discuss why we could not achieve more. A thorough evaluation of the status of implementation of the General Assembly resolutions and identification of underlying causes for their lack of implementation should, therefore, be the main focus of the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-fourth session. Towards this end, an efficient follow-up mechanism could be useful. This could consist of a special unit in the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

It must also be borne in mind that rationalization of the General Assembly's agenda is essentially a political exercise. Therefore, the Assembly's agenda must remain open to the insertion of new issues in consultation with Member States interested in certain items, and any criteria utilized to guide these decisions will have to apply equitably to all. In this regard, we would like to emphasize that the notion of the sunset clause should be very carefully examined. We should examine ways and means to assess the extent to which the mandates approved by the intergovernmental bodies have been implemented and what should be done for their better implementation. We would not wish to see an exercise in the application of sunset clauses to United Nations mandates without prior approval of the Member States. Any such attempt would certainly undermine the intergovernmental mandates and cannot be accepted.

We should also be mindful of our commitment to further enhance the General Assembly's role in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter. Our discussions in this regard should be aimed at achieving a consensus rather than an open-ended process of deliberations.

It would be fitting that the Ad Hoc Working Group also focus on further strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly so as to enable the President to more effectively play a leadership role and take initiatives and decisions. Some of these encouraging trends include the holding of informal and formal meetings and thematic debates to discuss issues of critical importance to the international community. Steps in the right direction would include requesting

briefings by the Secretariat on issues pertaining to the mandates of the General Assembly, including on matters of peace and security, and convening press conferences to highlight particular issues discussed by or decisions adopted by the Assembly. As with any other institution, the Office of the President could function more effectively and efficiently if it were provided adequate human and financial resources to carry out its responsibilities. In every other area the Organization's budget has grown, whereas the budget of the President's Office has remained unchanged since 1998. Given the complexity and diversity of the issues and the time-consuming negotiations, which necessitate stronger secretariat support and a larger quantum of resources, the Office of the President of the Assembly should have dedicated resources, for example for conference servicing, in order to enable the Office to organize informal discussions and debates on issues of urgent importance without being bogged down by procedures.

We fully support the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. In this context, we believe that the Assembly President should have the flexibility to deploy human and financial resources as he deems appropriate for the session. Moreover, there is a need for better transitional arrangements for the President, perhaps by using a troika consisting of the past and future General Assembly Presidents.

We must sustain the progress achieved during the sixty-third session with the adoption of resolution 63/309 on this important agenda item. We expect that, through constructive dialogue and engagement, we will be able to build on all previous resolutions on this matter and identify further ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly. The delegation of Pakistan extends its full cooperation and support to the co-facilitators in achieving a successful outcome of our deliberations on this agenda item.

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Ecuadorian delegation associates itself with the statements of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Rio Group (see A/64/PV.48) and wishes to make the following additional comments.

We cannot discuss reform of the United Nations without a true revitalization of the General Assembly. And that does not consist just of ratifying its role as the

main deliberative and representative body of the United Nations when it comes to adopting policies; it also requires the political will to make its actions increasingly effective and democratic.

For Ecuador, it is essential that implementation of resolutions be an integral part of our discussions on revitalization so that the General Assembly will regain its central role in the Organization, as well as the public visibility that should distinguish it. Issues that belong to the Assembly should not for any reason be transferred to the purview of the Security Council. In that context, the simple logic of action is to proceed in accordance with the principles in the United Nations Charter, bearing especially in mind that the only body in charge of establishing the norms is the General Assembly.

In that order of things, it is important to define the Assembly's role and responsibility in the process of selecting the Secretary-General. Based on existing resolutions and the provisions of the Charter, the Assembly should have an active presence in the selection of the Secretary-General. Times change and the General Assembly should go along with those changes, which enable it to act in accordance with the new dynamics of international relations. That being the case, and considering its strengthened powers, it is important that the Assembly take on a direct role in the handling of issues related to international peace and security.

We are pleased to note that the General Assembly was able to act quickly and efficiently on topics of vital interest to the international community, such as the resolution in which it condemned the coup d'état in Honduras (resolution 63/301) and the conference on the financial and economic crisis. That is one of the dynamics that the Assembly should maintain. Ecuador is firmly committed to that task. We firmly believe that revitalization is on the right track, as demonstrated by the results achieved by resolution 63/309, which the Assembly adopted by consensus thanks to the political will shown by all Member States.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank all delegations and the President for the recognition of the work of Ecuador and Norway. We offer our support and congratulations to the Permanent Representatives of Argentina and Slovenia for their appointment as co-facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. It is also

important to highlight that analysis of the working methods should not focus only on the Assembly but also on each of its committees, especially those which have not made the expected progress on the Organization's priority topics.

Finally, my delegation reiterates its will to actively and constructively participate in this essential process, as it already has in coordinating the Ad Hoc Working Group. The most important thing is for Member States to express their commitment and political will.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Algerian representative on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Mexican representative on behalf of the Rio Group (see A/64/PV.48).

We meet in this historic Hall to discuss one of the most important topics on the agenda of this Organization: the revitalization of the General Assembly. If that reform, the cornerstone of a process of genuine reform of the United Nations, does not take place, the democratization of this forum, called for today by the peoples of the world, will not become a reality.

During the previous session this topic received an important boost. The effective work of the facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly — Ambassador Maria Fernanda Espinosa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador, and Ambassador Morten Wetland, Permanent Representative of Norway — encouraged the debate, which addressed substantive issues that should serve as a reference for this new session. We appreciate the work carried out by both representatives and their teams. We wish success to the new facilitators in carrying out their functions: Ambassador Jorge Argüello, Permanent Representative of Argentina, and Ambassador Sanja Štiglic, Permanent Representative of Slovenia.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is a central aspect of the process of changes and transformations that must take place within the United Nations. Today, the Organization does not meet the democratization expectations of the peoples of the world. The changes to the international system in recent years are expressed in a new political configuration. Inevitably a unipolar world will fall

apart. New national and social actors that nourish the configuration of a multipolar world have arisen. The struggles of the peoples of the South are being revitalized. Unilateralism and imperial pretensions of imposing a single model of democracy on the world are being questioned. Peace movements are gaining new strength. Those new realities must be reflected in the composition of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The political configuration resulting from the Second World War is maintained in this Organization. In that framework we are witnessing the progressive stripping of the functions of the General Assembly in issues of international peace and security, and many of its functions are absorbed by the Security Council. That undemocratic trend must be reversed.

The people are calling for the democratization of the United Nations. Thus a revitalization of the General Assembly that democratizes decision-making in this forum is a paradigmatic issue. In that sense, all countries should be able to genuinely influence the course of world affairs, and thus revitalization of the General Assembly has become a fundamental challenge in democratizing international relations.

Through the adoption of resolution 63/309 in September, Member States pledged to seek new ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly.

My delegation highlights the value of resolution 11 (I) of 24 January 1946 at this time. It sets out the procedures for selecting the Secretary-General and emphasizes the responsibility of the General Assembly on that important issue. Some proposals on the selection of the Secretary-General were considered during the previous session, including the possibility of amending the resolution. We suggest that those proposals be considered by the Ad Hoc Working Group during the current session.

Venezuela believes that the Security Council monopoly on selecting the Secretary-General is undemocratic. Selection should be the responsibility of all Member States making up the General Assembly. The selection process should be inclusive and transparent and have the full involvement of this body.

My country reiterates the need for the Secretary-General to act in accordance with the terms established in the Charter of the United Nations and in the rules of

procedure of the General Assembly and on the basis of requests from Member States. Going beyond those parameters reduces the credibility and legitimacy of his functions and, ultimately, of the Organization itself.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is not only a procedural issue. Some delegations try to focus discussions on improving working methods and on issues such as the modernization of the voting process. The importance of those issues should not be overlooked. But a true revitalization process should include questions of substance that require appropriate and timely responses and, by their nature, call for concerted actions that are discussed in a universal, transparent and inclusive manner.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela questions the intention to move to the Security Council issues that should be addressed by the General Assembly, or any initiative seeking to diminish the role of the Assembly, which by its nature is more inclusive and representative. The Charter is very clear on that point, and under no circumstances does it give the Security Council the authority to address issues that fall within the competence of the Assembly.

Strengthening the role of the General Assembly requires the full exercise of its powers in the field of peace and security, as provided in the provisions in Articles 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the Charter. Those issues should not be exclusively under the authority of the Security Council.

Venezuela believes that the Assembly must continue to be the Organization's principal forum for discussion, maintaining its independence from other bodies. The tendency of the Security Council to become involved in matters outside its jurisdiction must be reversed, as it weakens the Assembly's central role.

The negotiations to revitalize the Assembly are only beginning. Venezuela is committed to that end. The Assembly can depend on our support in boosting the debate which we will soon resume on the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President for convening this meeting on a topic of great importance.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia aligns itself with the statement by the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/64/PV.48).

Revitalization of the General Assembly is fundamental to strengthening its role as the main representative, deliberative and normative organ of the United Nations system. It is essential to re-establish the balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, ensuring that their mandates are respected and that they confine themselves to what is set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

If we carefully read Article 24 of the Charter, we will see that it does not give the Security Council the competence to consider topics that fall within the purview of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In order to re-establish the balance of powers in the United Nations system, it is essential that the Security Council confine itself to the functions assigned to it. My delegation firmly believes that re-establishing the balance among the principal organs of the Organization will ensure that the mandates given will be fully respected and legitimized.

To revitalize the General Assembly, the implementation of its resolutions must be strengthened through closer monitoring, promotion and assessment. For that, it is necessary to strengthen the Assembly presidency and provide it with greater means, and to promote periodic evaluation processes and transmission of institutional memory, seeking to deal with the new, emerging problems and not confining ourselves to repeating already agreed positions.

The role of the Assembly needs to be more visible in the media and in our own countries through actions that highlight its role as a main representative, deliberative and normative body of the United Nations.

When it comes to the election of the Secretary-General, we wish to state that the 1946 resolution (resolution 11 (I)) has to be modified. That resolution in actuality affected the Assembly's mandate to elect the Secretary-General. In the opinion of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Assembly should elect from a list of two or three candidates, and building a consensus around the Secretary-General to be elected should take place here, in the Assembly, where 192 Member States participate, and not in a body where there are only 15 States, five of which are permanent members with the right to veto. The Assembly has, in fact, lost its power to name the Secretary-General. For a true revitalization to happen, it must recover that mandate.

What my country expects of this process is not just changes in the Assembly's procedures to make it function in a more dynamic, effective manner. What we really wish for are changes in the very concept of what the role of the General Assembly should be, in the selection of topics, in the conduct of negotiations and in the election of its President — all that in order to strengthen this body and give its resolutions the political and moral authority that legitimizes its actions.

We have undoubtedly made progress in the process with some specific tasks. We all wish to improve the voting system, but we have to carefully reflect on establishing digital voting systems that imperil the integrity and confidentiality of voting. There is a series of other simple measures, such as cell phone access to the Journal or specific events on the agenda, which could be very easily implemented.

Mr. Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): First and foremost, I wish to thank the former Permanent Representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Maria Fernanda Espinosa, and the Permanent Representative of Norway, Ambassador Morten Wetland, for their work as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during its sixty-third session. I also seize this opportunity to warmly welcome Ambassador Jorge Argüello, the Permanent Representative of Argentina, and Ambassador Sanja Štiglic, the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, as the incoming Co-Chairs of the Working Group, and I pledge my delegation's full support for their endeavours.

The General Assembly is the most representative decision-making body of the United Nations. Its legitimacy is drawn from the universal nature of the membership, operating under a democratic statute, wherein all Member States are treated as equals and interact with each other as such. Ensuring the vitality, efficacy and significance of the work of the Assembly is therefore tantamount to protecting multilateralism in its purest form and highest expression. Strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly should always be at the heart of any process of reform of the multilateral system.

The General Assembly has several roles. It coordinates, oversees and instructs multiple bodies of the United Nations system subordinate to it. It is also a political forum for the consideration of all issues on the international agenda falling within its purview. Efforts aimed at revitalizing the Assembly should support the

full breadth of its role and responsibilities. The relationship among the principal organs of the United Nations should be mutually reinforcing. For the optimum functioning of the system, the main bodies must fulfil their respective duties and exercise their powers in the manner provided for by the Charter.

However, there are issues to be addressed. While the Security Council's agenda shows a distinct tendency to expand in new directions over time, we are witnessing a General Assembly overburdened by a proliferation of resolutions and agenda items, not all of them necessarily contributing to raising the standards of performance and relevance of the main body of the United Nations. The same could be said of the Economic and Social Council, which is seen by many as falling short of its original mandate. Of course, certain complaints about the so-called encroachment of the Security Council on the work of the Assembly could be mitigated if the Council were made more representative, transparent and accountable to a broader membership, including of the permanent kind.

The role of the Assembly as an interface between Member States and the United Nations Secretariat should also be reinforced, so that the policies and priorities set by Members are better reflected and accounted for from within the United Nations machinery. More frequent and direct dialogue between the Assembly and internal system-wide coordination mechanisms, such as the Chief Executives Board, would be an important step in that direction.

The renewed process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General deserves our full support and continued attention. In addition, we would welcome closer consideration of the procedures for selecting, appointing and confirming the heads of the major specialized agencies, funds and programmes with a view to ensuring transparency, legitimacy and a balanced representation.

We must also consider strengthening the role of the President of the General Assembly as part of our efforts towards revitalization. Initiatives taken by the President often allow the United Nations to respond better to particular needs and situations, such as the world financial and economic crisis. Brazil was an enthusiastic supporter of a stronger role for the United Nations in the debate about the crisis. Only in the General Assembly can countries without a voice in the existing financial governance structures put forward their views. It is often the case that special conferences

convened under the auspices of the Assembly require complex follow-up actions for which the President and his office are insufficiently equipped. That is a matter relevant to the revitalization of the Assembly, and we would support giving it further consideration.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): At this late hour, I will try to be as brief as possible.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to say that the revitalization of the General Assembly is not a slogan. First and foremost, it is the recognition that there are problems, there are difficulties, and that we need to make changes. That requires a great deal of attention, but it requires above all that we examine ourselves.

It has often been said that the General Assembly has lost the role assigned to it by the terms of the Charter of the United Nations. But who is responsible for that? That is the real question we need to ask ourselves here.

If we take a look at the Charter, we see that Article 7 establishes the principal organs of the United Nations system. There are six of them. There is, first, the General Assembly, and then the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council. Then you have the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat.

How is it that since the creation of the United Nations we have seen, voluntarily or sometimes against our will, this lessening of the importance of the General Assembly? We need to ask ourselves that question. And that self-examination that I mentioned earlier requires that we should be willing to practice a kind of self-criticism.

The General Assembly is very often reproached for having become a sort of automatic system where resolutions are voted on year after year, where Members ask the Secretariat to furnish report after report. It is often said, and rightly so, that we do not even take the care to examine the results and conclusions contained in those reports. And, automatically, at the end of every resolution, we ask the Secretary-General to present a report. Those are the criticisms directed at the Assembly — redundancy, duplication and the superficial nature of the resolutions that are adopted here.

Well, if we want to breathe new life into the General Assembly, let us do so, and if we need to make

a decision, let us display the will and determination, because things change. We must change our attitude. We must ensure that the role that is given to the Assembly is completely fulfilled.

We often hear criticisms here; we often hear certain distinguished colleagues say that the Assembly is a victim of encroachment by the Security Council. Why is that? It was the Assembly, under Article 24 of the Charter, that conferred on the Council the prerogative of handling security questions and international peace. But that same Article 24 also says that the Security Council must account to the General Assembly. Are we demanding enough? Are we adequately assuming our responsibilities when we discuss issues of international peace and security? Nowhere in the Charter of the United Nations does it say that the Security Council has the exclusive right to deal with issues of international peace and security. On the contrary, when we look at Article 10, it clearly says that the General Assembly, this Assembly — which, it has been correctly stated, is the plenary Assembly — is where power needs to be exercised.

Article 10 says that the General Assembly may discuss any questions related to international peace and security except, of course, for issues that fall under Article 12, but do we really do that? Change is good, but in order to change properly we need to be ready to take appropriate measures. There should be fewer documents here, fewer resolutions. We need to be seen as a serious body. There is work that needs to be done, and we can get a new image and breathe new life into the General Assembly, provided we decide to do so.

As regards documentation, for example, I would say that we produce too many documents, some of which at least are fairly useless. We live in an era of information technology, and each delegation is able to use the Internet, the United Nations website, for example, to find and to examine a document. I think that we could make an effort in that area. If we were to do so, we could decrease expenditures.

Now, we have been told that we need to shore up the role of the President of the General Assembly. My delegation agrees. We agree that an appropriate budget needs to be earmarked for that, but I think, as regards the choice of the President of the General Assembly, we could also ask the regional groups that have the task and responsibility of proposing the name of a person for that job to propose several names, since what we want to do is establish a degree of pluralism

here. These ideas relating to the choice of the President of the General Assembly need to be linked in with the choice of the Secretary-General. We should not ask the Security Council to propose several names for us, if we ourselves in the General Assembly do not do that. Others have said, and my delegation agrees, that that is not a correct reading of resolution 11 (I) of 1946 regarding the mechanism for appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I would just like to remind the Assembly that, according to the Charter, in particular Article 97, which says that the Secretary-General is appointed — not elected — by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. I would like us to think about the shade of difference between appointment and election. I have heard colleagues here say that we need to ask the Security Council to request that the General Assembly propose several names to the Council. I think it should be the opposite. I think we should ask the Security Council to recommend several names, but we basically cannot, in the humble opinion of my delegation, present names to the Security Council, given what Article 97 of the Charter says. That Article states that “The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council”. So, in my delegation’s opinion, the General Assembly should not be presenting names to the Security Council, but rather the opposite. We would like the Security Council to present various names to us, bearing specifically resolution 11 (I) of 1946 in mind. We should look to see what is written there, because the Assembly wanted to facilitate the process when it asked the Security Council at that time, in 1946, to submit only one name rather than several names. So we really need to decide what are the best mechanisms for achieving our purposes.

I would now like to say that we need to reach agreement on recognizing the fact that the functioning of the General Assembly does not meet the needs of the twenty-first century. We have talked about voting methods here, and it is true that sometimes we feel that we are using a rather archaic voting system. We should not be scared of technology. I am frankly convinced that if the Secretariat decides that it will propose to us a computerized system — once it has been checked, of course, to make sure that all security checks are in place — that would be good. I have to say that in many Member States of the United Nations, people vote using computerized systems, and I think that we could use such a system as well.

In conclusion, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to say that I thank my colleagues from Ecuador and Norway for the excellent work that they have carried out, and before them, their predecessors did exactly the same thing. I very much hope that our two colleagues from Argentina and Slovenia will be able to do the same. We are available to assist them in every possible way. Having heard many delegations here take the floor, I hope that everybody will do the same in order to ensure that we can breathe greater life into the General Assembly and deserve the confidence of the people who send us here to speak and act on their behalf.

I think it might be useful to remind delegates here that rather than working or acting in a spirit of confrontation with the Security Council, we need to find what the possibilities are for complementarity, so that we can work together, basing our work on the Charter of the United Nations. The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined there. I think that collectively we can shoulder the responsibilities that are ours.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): I would like to extend my gratitude to the President for convening this meeting today to discuss the revitalization of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank the previous Co-Chairs, the Ambassador of Ecuador and the Ambassador of Norway, for their excellent work.

Allow me to welcome the Ambassador of Slovenia and the Ambassador of Argentina, with whom I will be delighted to work together closely. Like many small States, San Marino is committed to having a vibrant and efficient General Assembly, and therefore, each year, we look forward to participating in the General Assembly revitalization process.

We are delighted that during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly we were able to have so many thematic debates, including those on the world financial crisis and the food crisis. We believe that over time, these debates will make the General Assembly even more relevant and will reinforce and re-establish the General Assembly’s role in global governance.

San Marino strongly believes in the fundamental role of the President of the General Assembly and welcomes any improvements that could be made to the selection process for the President of the General Assembly and any enhancements that might assist the President in carrying out his duties.

We are grateful to Security Council members for their increased openness to the members of the General Assembly and we believe strongly that an equitable reform of the Security Council will enhance the role of the General Assembly as well. Moreover, we are convinced that the General Assembly should work even more closely with the Secretariat to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the work of the entire United Nations, including special projects such as the one we are undertaking right now, the Capital Master Plan. I believe that under the leadership of President Treki much will be accomplished, and I look forward to working with Ambassadors Štiglic and Argüello on revitalizing our General Assembly even further.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statement of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is very important to El Salvador, as part of advancing the democratization of the United Nations as a whole. This is also an important basis for our future deliberations. We are especially pleased with the appointment of the Ambassadors of Slovenia and Argentina as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly, and we express our full support for them.

El Salvador supports the Assembly's timely action on political issues of enormous interest for the international community, such as the resolutions adopted on issues such as the situations in Honduras and the Middle East, among others. Allow me to point out, however, that despite progress in this area, my delegation considers it imperative that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the General Assembly continue its discussions of substantive issues.

These include the role and responsibility of the General Assembly in the selection process for the Secretary-General. Indeed, a transparent, inclusive process should be established in which the Assembly plays a more important part, in accordance with the Charter of the Organization.

Concerning the application of resolutions relating to the revitalization of the Assembly, we believe it appropriate to keep an updated chart of the implementation of resolutions, which would make it possible to rationalize the work of the Assembly and also to rely on the support of delegations that have proposed specific topics.

With regard to strengthening the General Assembly and the Office of the President of the Assembly, we should add that the more the Assembly is revitalized and fully realizing its deliberative, normative and policy-defining role, the more we will also be strengthening multilateralism. It is also important that other United Nations bodies' functions not overlap those of the General Assembly. However, it is appropriate to promote better interaction and coordination with the presidencies of other organs.

My delegation believes it is important to increase the public visibility of the General Assembly's activities, by using the web page on substantive areas of its agenda in all the official languages of the Organization. We also support the development of thematic debates, since these respond to issues of interest to the international community and that are a focus of concern and interest for the Organization as a whole. We also support an expansion of human and financial resources for the Office of the President.

Regarding the voting system, it is imperative that we modernize the system itself so that it is transparent, making it possible to guarantee the credibility, reliability and confidentiality of the voting process. It is also worth reconsidering the procedures for voting on candidatures, in order to make the process speedier and more effective.

On the question of documentation, I would like to point out once more the importance of getting documentation in time to review the necessary and specific points before the discussions take place and, especially, in all six official languages of the Organization.

In conclusion, I reiterate my country's full support for continuing to work actively during the current session on this issue, seeking a precise focus conducive to the genuine strengthening of this world forum, which all our countries need.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. One representative has requested permission to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements made in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and 5 minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats. I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Permit me, Sir, to take this opportunity to reiterate the congratulations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on Belgium's election to the presidency of the European Council.

(*spoke in English*)

I am taking the floor in my capacity as Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and in response to the statement made by the representative of Madagascar on 19 November concerning agenda item 118, "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". We have noted with concern the content of the statement in which the representative of Madagascar referred to an action by SADC during the general debate segment of the sixty-fourth session of the Assembly that prevented the leader of the High Transitional Authority of Madagascar from participating in the debate. We would like to offer the following points in response.

Madagascar has been suspended from SADC and the African Union (AU) since March of this year, owing to an unconstitutional change of Government in that country, following which the international community, led by SADC, the AU and the United Nations, among others, undertook a mediation process to restore constitutional governance.

In August, the main parties to the dispute agreed on a settlement and the establishment of a transitional Government representative of all parties to the dispute. However, the leader of the High Transitional Authority defied that agreement and appointed his own Government. This was the basis for the action SADC took during the general debate. It was not interference in the domestic affairs of a Member State of the United Nations, as the representative of Madagascar stated, but should rather be seen as part of the broader mediation efforts in that country aimed at ensuring Madagascar's return as a full member of the regional organizations to which it belongs.

With regard to the process in the United Nations, the Assembly should note that the members of SADC requested an urgent meeting of the Credentials Committee to review the credentials of the unconstitutional representative of Madagascar and his delegation. However, the Committee was unable to meet, and the President of the General Assembly ruled that he would allow the representative of Madagascar to speak in spite of the objections raised by SADC.

Based on that decision, SADC utilized rule 71 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly to challenge the decision of the President of the General Assembly. That rule states that:

"A representative may rise to a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the President in accordance with the rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting."

I repeat: "present and voting". I emphasize that the action undertaken by SADC was not aimed at undermining the person, office or stature of the President of the General Assembly as claimed by the representative of Madagascar in his statement.

I should like to assure the President of the General Assembly that it was a difficult decision for SADC, and one which we took reluctantly. However, that action was necessary in order to save the outcome of the mediation process, and it was based on firm principles.

Under this agenda item, we are discussing the revitalization of the General Assembly. Many delegations pointed out that the General Assembly is the representative legislative body of the world. Many also stated that it is essential for the General Assembly to become more responsive to matters of international peace and security. SADC has identified democratic, stable and constitutional governance as a priority for ensuring regional and international peace and security. It has worked tirelessly over the past years to achieve that, as the many elections in the region attest. There have been problems and difficulties, but it is our aim to address these through mediation and dialogue. It is essential for the General Assembly to do the same.

Finally, SADC has continued its mediation efforts in Madagascar and, as representatives of the region, we have noted with interest the recent developments in that process. We reiterate that it is important for Madagascar to continue implementing the agreements reached in order to ensure the return to constitutional governance in that country.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 118.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.