



General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

70th plenary meeting

Thursday, 1 December 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar)

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

Agenda items 120 and 121 (continued)

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Revitalization of the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Our meeting today holds special significance. More than ever before, events and challenges around the world necessitate a strong and responsive General Assembly. To meet the current global challenges and to fulfil its central role as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly must be revitalized and empowered. Through our joint efforts, we can ensure that it remains efficient, competent and viable.

In that context, I thank His Excellency Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, and His Excellency Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for their able stewardship of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly at the sixty-fifth session. Under their guidance, the Working Group's report (A/65/909) and resolution 65/315 were adopted in an optimal and timely manner. Those two documents will guide our discussion today.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, and His Excellency Mr. Ombeni Y. Sefue, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of

Tanzania, for agreeing to chair the Ad Hoc Working Group during the current session. I look forward to working with them, and I wish them every success as they carry out their important responsibilities.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is not a new issue. It has been on the Assembly's agenda since the 1990s. Discussions to date have encompassed various views. Some have placed greater focus on technical and administrative dimensions, including improving the Assembly's working methods and rationalizing its agenda in order to strengthen efficiency. Others have highlighted the urgent need to revitalize the political role of the Assembly and its authority as defined by the Charter of the United Nations. Concerns have also been expressed on the importance of each principal organ strictly undertaking its mandate according to the Charter, with possible coordination among the General Assembly and the other main organs of the United Nations.

In my view, as we embark on our discussions in this meeting, some legitimate questions will emerge. How can we translate our decisions into action? Too many decisions and resolutions adopted by the Assembly are yet to be implemented. The General Assembly should not be limited to being a forum for deliberation only. Rather, it must be a forum for finding solutions, responding to challenges and building global consensus on issues and views of shared concern.

To date, we have seen notable developments on a number of fronts. The practise of electing the President

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of the General Assembly at least three months before he or she takes office now enables Presidents-elect to better prepare for the coming session. Similarly, supporting the prerogative of the President to organize informal thematic debates has brought the Assembly closer to contemporary pressing issues in matters of global debate.

While there has been consensus on the need to support the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, I believe that this support should extend to further strengthening the political role of the President of the Assembly in the global arena, with particular attention to the President's potential role as a mediator.

Progress has yet to be achieved, unfortunately, in areas such as the procedures for appointing a Secretary-General, the working methods of the Assembly and the implementation of Assembly resolutions. It is also worth mentioning here that the process of revitalizing the General Assembly is interlinked with other important processes that come under the wider umbrella of United Nations reform. That becomes very clear when we discuss, for example, the need for further enhancement of cooperation among the principal organs of the United Nations.

We are also reminded of the need to address every element of the reform process with equal attention and to consider where the issue of General Assembly revitalization lies in that process. I would say that Assembly revitalization lies at the core of today's discussion on the reform of the Organization. The existence of an able, determined and efficient General Assembly is a means as well as a goal at the same time.

As one of my four key pillars for this session, United Nations reform and revitalization reflects our shared goal of a stronger United Nations and our deep commitment to an Organization that is better able to shoulder its global mandate. I mentioned in my first address to the Assembly (see A/66/PV.1) that I intended to build on the remarkable achievements of the sixty-fifth session to strengthen the global governance architecture. I would reaffirm here the central role of the General Assembly in global governance.

Since assuming my responsibilities as President, I have also stressed the importance of cooperation and

coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations. I have held regular consultations with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and I have been working very closely and cooperatively with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to bring together the Secretariat and the Assembly on key issues of shared concern. I believe that such coordination will further strengthen the ability of the Organization to fulfil its tasks. In that regard, we conducted a timely and a successful visit to Libya earlier this month. I am determined, through my presidency, to continue that constructive practice.

In conclusion, I would urge Member States to maintain the necessary strong political momentum for achieving progress and for the revitalization of the General Assembly. I expect today's debate to illustrate a clear willingness to move forward on the major initiatives before us. I encourage representatives at this session to approach our annual draft resolution on the revitalization of the role of the General Assembly with a spirit of innovation. I wish them a productive meeting.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your important statement. I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the members of NAM in implementing whatever ideas can be implemented during this session in restoring the central role of the General Assembly.

Allow me to express the gratitude of the members of NAM to His Excellency Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and to His Excellency Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, for their tireless efforts and excellent work in co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-fifth session. The members of NAM also congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Ombeni Y. Sefue, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, and His Excellency Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, on their appointment as co-facilitators for the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-sixth session.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates the importance of the revitalization of the General Assembly and the validity and relevance of its

principled position with regard to that process. The Movement underlines that the revitalization process is of a political nature aiming mainly to strengthen the role of the Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations and its position in the wider United Nations system. It should therefore be conducted in an inclusive, transparent and efficient manner.

NAM welcomes the adoption of resolution 65/315 in September, by which the General Assembly, *inter alia*, established the Working Group to discuss, during the current session, the issues related to the revitalization of the General Assembly and to continue in particular the assessment of the status of implementation of its previous resolutions on the matter. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms its willingness to contribute effectively and constructively to the activities of the Working Group in order to identify ways and means of strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly. The continued evaluation of the status of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions, undertaken during the previous session, and the clear identification of the underlining causes behind any lack of implementation are of the utmost importance if we are to progressively eliminate the constraints that still prevent the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly from fulfilling its potential.

NAM emphasizes the need to fully respect the functions and powers of each principal body of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, and to maintain a balance among those bodies in accordance with their respective Charter-based functions and powers. In that regard, the Security Council must fully observe all Charter provisions, as well as all General Assembly resolutions that clarify those bodies' relationships with each other and with the other principal organs.

NAM again expresses its concern, raised during previous sessions, about the continuous attempt from the Security Council to encroach on the powers and prerogatives of the General Assembly. Article 24 of the Charter does not endow the Security Council with the competence to address issues falling within the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In the same vein, NAM calls on the Security Council to submit to the General Assembly a more explanatory, comprehensive and analytical annual report assessing the Council's work.

The General Assembly, as the policymaking body of the United Nations, plays the essential role of creating the framework, setting the principles and identifying the objectives for the wider United Nations system and its numerous bodies, agencies and programmes, and has the authority to do so. Furthermore, the General Assembly should remain the principal organ for reviewing the work of all of the Organization's subsidiary bodies.

The General Assembly should maintain its role and mandate in setting the priorities of the United Nations when it considers budgetary and administrative issues and reforms and use its absolute authority to allocate and reallocate financial and human resources and to appoint senior officials of the Secretariat, in accordance with the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions. In that regard, the prerogatives of the General Assembly, as the chief oversight body of the Organization, including with regard to management and procurement for peacekeeping operations, must be respected.

NAM, while expressing its readiness to continue to support all ongoing efforts to strengthen the central role and authority of the Assembly, wishes to state that it will oppose any approach that seeks to undermine or minimize the achievements of the General Assembly, diminish its current role and functioning or raise questions about its relevance and credibility.

It is clear that, while the prerogatives of the President of the General Assembly have not changed, his role and activities have evolved in recent years in terms of adapting to the growing number of activities, conferences and initiatives of the Assembly, performing official protocol functions, representing the Assembly across the world and making the work of the General Assembly more known and more visible.

Indeed, the activities of the Office of the President of the General Assembly have increased dramatically over the years. The agenda of the Assembly, as well as that of its President, now includes a tremendous number of issues. The expansion of the activities of the General Assembly, including the yearly adoption of more than 300 resolutions and decisions, the establishment of working groups and the facilitation of meetings and consultations convened throughout the year, has made the presence and active participation of the President necessary during the entire session.

The workload of the General Assembly is no longer limited to its main session; rather, it covers the entire period from the opening of the session, in September, to its closing. This tremendous and increasing level of activity should of course be matched by the necessary resources, both human and financial.

In that regard, the Movement recalls that resolutions 65/315 and 64/301 request the Secretary-General to submit proposals in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. We look forward to seeing those proposals from the Secretariat and to the debate in the Fifth Committee to be held during the current session to review the budgetary allocations to the Office of the President of the General Assembly. NAM also wishes to emphasize the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Office of the President, including through the strengthening of its institutional memory.

While noting with appreciation the progress already achieved in that regard, we are of the view that a particular effort should be devoted to the implementation of the existing resolutions on this matter, as well as to identifying, during the upcoming discussions, ways and means to pursue that objective progressively and with determination.

Among other prerogatives and mandates of the General Assembly, the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations is of the utmost importance. In that regard, I would like, on behalf of NAM, to congratulate Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on his reappointment to a second term and for the work done during his first term.

As for future Secretary-General appointments, NAM reaffirms the need for the selection process to be more transparent and inclusive of all Member States, and therefore emphasizes the necessity for the General Assembly's selection and appointment of the Secretary-General to be more active, effective and efficient, in conformity with the United Nations Charter and in accordance with the provisions of resolutions 51/241, 60/286, 64/301 and 65/315. In that regard, NAM stresses the importance of fully implementing those resolutions in the context of the next selection and appointment of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, NAM reaffirms that a reinvigorated General Assembly, fully exercising its

role and authority in a more responsive environment, would significantly contribute to strengthening the wider United Nations system, improving international governance and enhancing multilateralism. NAM stands ready to cooperate and engage with other delegations in fruitful and constructive discussions on such an agenda in a comprehensive, thorough and transparent manner.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Iceland, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, and Norway, member of the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude to the two previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of Lithuania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for the excellent work they did. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for his appointment of the Permanent Representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Georgia to serve as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group established by resolution 65/315.

The European Union and its member States are strongly attached to the principle of effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its core. Our top priorities are to strengthen the United Nations through effective and sustainable funding, in line with the real capacity to pay, and to increase its efficiency where there is scope to do more. In that context, we continue to be committed to revitalization and to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions.

We hope that the General Assembly, given its status as the only intergovernmental body with universal membership, as well as its broad mandate and far-reaching responsibilities, will be able to take up the challenge of promoting legitimacy and

efficiency in a context of emerging global challenges. We believe that revitalization can be ensured only when the Assembly takes relevant action on issues of common concern to the international community. By doing so, it lives up to its role as one of the principal organs of the United Nations.

The European Union and its member States welcome the adoption of resolution 65/315. We would like to stress the importance of the implementation of all General Assembly resolutions, including those on the revitalization of its work, and note the impact of their implementation on the authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly. The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is clearly interlinked with the overall reform of the United Nations. We therefore look forward to the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 65/315, and its continued review of the inventory of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization.

The General Assembly revitalization process has already led to positive developments. One of our most valuable achievements is the holding of thematic debates, which facilitate more in-depth discussions on current issues of critical importance to the international community. The European Union and its member States especially value the interactive nature of thematic debates, which facilitates the closer engagement of the General Assembly with other stakeholders, including civil society, other international and regional organizations and groups outside the United Nations system. We look forward to the continuation of that practice and invite the President of the General Assembly to consult with Member States on the possibilities of achieving, where appropriate, results-oriented outcomes in such debates. We also recognize the importance of the interaction between the General Assembly and international or regional forums and organizations dealing with global matters of concern to the international community, as well as the benefits to be drawn from such interaction.

We appreciate the continued practice of the holding of periodic informal briefings by the Secretary-General on his priorities, travel and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations. We encourage him to continue with that practice.

As to the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations, the European Union and its member States believe that improving transparency and cooperation remains an important goal. The General Assembly should be able to benefit from information about the meetings between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the chairs of subsidiary bodies. Periodic briefings by the President of the General Assembly on his recent activities, including official travel, continue to be an appreciated practice and are a valuable source of information.

On the issue of working methods, we would like to stress the need to further rationalize and streamline the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. We believe that it would be appropriate to examine the further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of agenda items. In that regard, the leadership of the chairs and bureaux of the Main Committees is of particular importance. We look forward to the briefings by the chairs of the Main Committees on their working methods to the Ad Hoc Working Group. Although each Main Committee has authority over its own rules of procedure, we believe that streamlining and standardizing some of the rules would boost the efficiency of the work of the Committees.

We look forward to the active roles to be undertaken by the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, including in his capacity as Chair of the General Committee, and the chairs of the Main Committees, in consultation with Member States, to enhance coordination in the scheduling of high-level meetings, with a view to optimizing the number and distribution of such events throughout the year, while bearing in mind the need to preserve the integrity of the general debate.

We also await the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on the staffing and funding of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

We welcome the initiative of the Permanent Mission of Finland to organize a high-level retreat, entitled "Towards a stronger General Assembly", which was held on 16 and 17 June in Tarrytown, New York, with the aim of contributing to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. The retreat brought together the respective Presidents of the sixty-

second, sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth sessions of the General Assembly, elected members of the General Committee and senior representatives of the Secretariat. The informal setting led to a stimulating exchange of views, and several important and useful ideas and suggestions were put forward that could facilitate the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Finally, allow me to emphasize the important role of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. I would like to assure the Assembly that the European Union and its member States will continue to engage in a pragmatic manner in the work of the Group. We look forward to receiving a workplan soon.

Mr. Delgado Sánchez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Cuban delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which represents the positions of 120 Member States. We would like to add a few comments in our national capacity.

First, the Cuban delegation wishes to commend the Permanent Representatives of Lithuania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on their outstanding work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-fifth session. We also thank them for the preparation of the report contained in document A/65/909, which facilitated the adoption of resolution 65/315. Those documents reflect the efforts that have been made to make progress in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly, including its pending tasks.

We also congratulate the Ambassadors of Georgia and the United Republic of Tanzania on having assumed the co-chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-sixth session. We trust that, under their leadership, the Ad Hoc Working Group will continue to assist in the strengthening of the primary role of the General Assembly in the system of international relations and within the Organization. We assure them of our full cooperation and assistance to that end.

The General Assembly is the principal deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Its broadly representative and democratic nature grants it legitimacy and prestige as the highest expression of the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The revitalization of its work is a matter of the utmost importance.

The main obstacle to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly is the lack of political will shown by some States that seek to assert their narrow political interests over the views of the majority. That is why the revitalization of the Assembly is not a technical matter, as some would have us believe, but an essentially political one.

The non-implementation of many General Assembly resolutions is unacceptable. Although those resolutions collectively represent a significant body of laws, they have become dead letters. This situation also applies to the numerous resolutions on the revitalization of the Assembly, whose implementation has been unacceptably inadequate in spite of the fact that they were adopted by consensus. As we have stated on other occasions, the work of revitalizing the General Assembly cannot be confined to speeches. The Assembly has all the legal prerogatives it needs in order to act, which is why we hope that this year the Ad Hoc Working Group will adopt a broad and flexible programme of work that will enable us to achieve some ambitious goals.

It is essential that we achieve the right balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, in keeping with the Charter. My delegation wishes to reiterate its concern regarding the efforts of the Security Council to establish legal standards and definitions, ignoring the fact that, as stated in Article 13 of the Charter, the progressive development of international law and its codification is the exclusive responsibility of the General Assembly. Such dangerous tendencies and the growing reach of the Security Council's agenda, far beyond its purview, must cease immediately, since they are clear violations of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and limit the amount of debate and transparency and the democratic manner with which the current problems of today's world are tackled. We take this opportunity to urge once again that Member States undertake a radical reform of the Security Council that will transform it into the transparent, participatory and democratic organ that the international community needs in its efforts to strengthen the rule of law at the international level.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is essential if genuine reform of the United Nations is to be achieved. Until the Assembly fully exercises all its functions and powers, we will not be able to do our work. We cannot call ourselves an Organization that is

responsive to today's system of international relations without putting the Assembly at the heart of our debate and multilateral efforts. Only a universal and democratic organ such as the General Assembly can tackle our current global problems. Finding solutions to them exceeds the limited capacity of one country or group of countries, however powerful they may consider themselves.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): The United States would like to thank last year's co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of Lithuania and Saint Vincent and Grenadines, for their excellent work. Their efforts and leadership culminated in the resolution that we adopted at the previous session (resolution 65/315), which serves as a strong basis for our discussions and the continued work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on this topic.

We welcome the new co-Chairs, Ambassador Sefue of Tanzania and Ambassador Lomaia of Georgia, and offer them our full support. We also look forward to working with fellow Member States as we consider the best options for revitalizing the General Assembly.

The United States is committed to multilateral engagement and a strong United Nations system. We recognize the important contributions of the General Assembly to fulfilling the mission of the United Nations. We hope that our discussions and the efforts of the Working Group will be constructive in allowing us to consider how we can improve working methods so as to better enable the Assembly to carry out its work. I would suggest that we concentrate our attention on streamlining and prioritizing the General Assembly's agenda, which would allow us to better focus on priority issues. To that end, Member States should consider reviewing existing resolutions biennially or triennially, rather than annually, and should exercise greater discipline in their submission of draft resolutions. Furthermore, adopting resolutions on outdated or obscure topics not only takes our attention away from more pressing matters but also diminishes the credibility of this body.

As part of our efforts to ensure that the General Assembly remains relevant, we should also encourage more timely publication of General Assembly resolutions, soon after their adoption. Informing others of our work will highlight the important issues we

cover and encourage more expeditious implementation of Assembly resolutions by Member States.

Just as providing information to the world outside New York is important, the General Assembly would be better served by increased interaction between the heads of the principal organs of the United Nations and between the Chairs of the Main Committees and the President of the General Assembly. That could perhaps be accomplished by exchanging views and priorities at the start of each new Assembly session. Greater cooperation and increased coordination among the organs of the United Nations are critical to enabling us to achieve our goal of streamlining agendas and reducing wasteful overlap.

The United States is in favour of the membership's gaining a better understanding of the views of potential nominees for the post of Secretary-General. It is our view, however, that the formal process for the appointment of the Secretary-General must follow the procedure set forth in the Charter and should not be altered. The Security Council and the General Assembly are co-equal principal organs of the United Nations, as set forth in Article 7, and each has its own defined role in the selection of the Secretary-General. That is a process that has served the Organization well and will continue to do so.

The United States believes that the areas of streamlining and prioritizing the agenda and increasing interaction among the various United Nations organs provide opportunities where concrete steps can be taken to revitalize the work of the Assembly, allowing it to be more focused, relevant and better able to address global issues. We look forward to continued constructive dialogue with the Working Group and our fellow Member States on revitalizing the Assembly.

Mr. Le Hoai Trung (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We endorse the many important views in your statement.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are witnessing dramatic changes in the world, with many challenges in the fields of peace and security, socio-economic development, climate change, food security, scarce natural and energy resources and

epidemic diseases. We cannot cope with such challenges individually. At this very critical moment, when the United Nations should take the leading and central role, international coordination and cooperation are therefore necessary. As a result, it is essential that the United Nations reform itself to meet the changing world. Those reforms should benefit all Member States.

A democratic and comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, will make the Organization more effective and efficient in the areas of work mandated by the Charter. The revitalization of the Assembly must enhance its central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, both in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international laws and in the selection and appointment of the Organization's senior officials. The Assembly should become the main forum for global debate, where Member States can discuss, exchange views, hold dialogues with one another and make decisions on issues of common concern, especially those relating to peace, security and development — including, inter alia, peaceful solutions to disputes and conflicts, responsible behaviour and respect for international law in the interests of each and every Member State.

As such, the revitalization of the General Assembly should be a political process involving intergovernmental negotiations, with full commitment and goodwill on the part of all Member States. To enhance effectiveness and efficiency, we should discuss the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including its institutional memory and working methods. The revitalization of the General Assembly should also go hand in hand with reforms in other United Nations organs and agencies — for example, reforms to enhance the Economic and Social Council's overarching role in the development sphere, to expand the Security Council's membership and improve its working methods and to deal with the role of the Secretary-General. The relationship between the principal organs of the United Nations must be strengthened, especially given the importance of ensuring cooperation, coordination and exchange of information between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

In that regard, Viet Nam highly appreciates the efforts of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the

Revitalization of the General Assembly in preparing document A/65/909 of 1 August 2011. Viet Nam is committed to supporting the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-sixth session. With a view to improving the Working Group's efficiency, Viet Nam suggests that the co-facilitators might assume the role of coordinators as well, in order to bridge the differences between Member States, and that they organize separate meetings with different groups of Member States to promote mutual understanding among these groups. At the same time, Viet Nam calls upon Member States to work in a cooperative manner in order to get closer to a breakthrough and achieve concrete results during this important sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Rafael Archondo (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation for the President's decision to include the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly as one of his main priority topics during the sixty-sixth session, and for his pledge to intensify efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, so that it can maintain its rightful institutional role and so as to render it more efficient and able in responding to emerging situations and common concerns.

I seize this opportunity to thank His Excellency Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, and His Excellency Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for their strong leadership in co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-fifth session. I would also like to pledge our full support to the newly appointed co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the current session, His Excellency Ambassador Ombeni Y. Sefue, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, and His Excellency Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, as we work to advance the process of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly in the quest for tangible results.

I would like also to associate Egypt's statement with the statement made by His Excellency Ambassador Mourad Benmehidi, Permanent Representative of Algeria, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and to add some points that Egypt deems relevant to the success of the revitalization process of the General Assembly.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the overall reform of the United Nations, including, of course, the reform of the Security Council. For almost two decades, more specifically since 1993, Member States have adopted by consensus more than 17 consecutive resolutions containing specific measures aimed at revitalizing and enhancing the work of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. Unfortunately, those measures agreed by consensus have not been fully implemented, owing mainly to the lack of political will to ensure that the General Assembly plays its leading role in global governance, in strict observance of the delicate balance of competences established by the Charter among all principal organs, in particular between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Egypt believes, therefore, that the first and crucial step towards achieving progress in the revitalization of the General Assembly would be to ensure the honest implementation and translation into action of all previous resolutions adopted on the issue, in addition to the new measures that may be adopted in the current session. In that regard, the Ad Hoc Working Group should continue its thorough evaluation of the status of implementation of previous resolutions, and should proceed with the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to clearly identify constraints behind gaps in implementation and to approve ways and means of addressing those constraints and gaps.

The main challenge facing the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is the continuous encroachment by the Security Council on the role and functions of the General Assembly. The Security Council is constantly attempting to redefine its scope of competence by expanding the list of issues that, in its view, constitute a threat to international peace and security, including issues that are already under consideration in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as we saw in the Council meetings earlier this year on issues like development, climate change, diseases, trafficking in drugs and persons, just to mention a few. In its upcoming deliberations, the Ad Hoc Working Group could identify those areas of encroachment, in order to start addressing the overlap in activities and the waste of resources to which that leads.

In the meantime, the General Assembly should assume a more proactive role and should respond in a timely manner to emerging challenges and evolving events and crises, including those that pose threats to international peace and security. Moreover, the General Assembly should remain vigilant and should take proper action when the Security Council fails to address situations involving genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, grave violations of international humanitarian law and the cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties, in fulfilment of its primary responsibilities under Articles 10 to 14 and Article 35 of the United Nations Charter.

In that regard, Egypt commends the President for choosing “The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means” as the theme for the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, which confirms the role of the Assembly in areas of international peace and security, including mediation as a vital tool for conflict prevention and resolution.

On the other hand, the General Assembly should continue holding inclusive and interactive thematic debates on current issues of critical importance to the international community, and should increase its interaction with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector on relevant issues, which will contribute positively in increasing the visibility and public awareness of the General Assembly. In that context, Egypt appreciates and welcomes the President’s initiative in convening a meeting for a dialogue with civil society on 4 October, in order to explore areas of further cooperation and interaction between the General Assembly and civil society.

Strengthening the effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is also essential for improving the role and authority of the Assembly, including enhancing the institutional memory of the Office. Furthermore, we should maintain the practice of electing the President of the General Assembly at least three months before the opening of the new session of the General Assembly in September, in order to allow the President to properly prepare for his or her new responsibilities. It is also necessary and practical for the outgoing President to submit a brief report to the President-elect, reflecting best practices and lessons learned, as well as specific recommendations as appropriate.

In that connection and in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 64/301, I wish to remind members that the Fifth Committee is supposed to review the budget allocation to the President's Office in the context of the proposed programme budget for the 2012-2013 biennium. We believe that the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should include specific language on that important issue in order to start strengthening the Office of the President immediately.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary-General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. Special attention should be paid to the implementation of the relevant previous General Assembly resolutions on this issue, including resolutions 51/241 and 60/286, and to the identification of practical measures to ensure the implementation of their provisions. Since the United Nations Charter provides distinct roles and responsibilities for the General Assembly and the Security Council in that regard, we should focus on the role of the General Assembly in order to ensure the transparency, accountability and competitiveness of the process and to ensure that the Assembly is more involved at an early stage in the selection process when identifying candidates for that key post.

Coordination between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be improved in the process of admitting new Members to the United Nations, in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Charter. Coordination is also important in the elections that are held in parallel in both organs, such as the elections to appoint the members of the International Court of Justice. On that matter, I believe that we have, at this session, a case in point.

In conclusion, the General Assembly is, and will remain, the most representative and democratic principal organ of the United Nations, where the 193 countries are all permanent Members, on equal footing, with equal voices, without any veto. For that reason, the wider membership should renew its collective commitment and exert the needed political will in order to enable the General Assembly to play its leading role in an increasingly complex world, with escalating, pressing issues, and to meet the long-standing and emerging challenges it faces.

Egypt is confident that under the leadership of the current President of the Assembly, Ambassador Al-Nasser, and the guidance of the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group we will make strides towards achieving maximum progress in the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Yang Tao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The General Assembly is the major United Nations organ for policy deliberation and one of the most important organs under the Charter. At the present time many and diverse new global challenges and threats are continually emerging. Member States, especially developing countries, expect the General Assembly to further strengthen its authority and effectiveness and to better fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter. Its revitalization is an important component of reform and was the subject of an important consensus reached by Member States in the 2005 World Summit. China commends the President of the General Assembly for making revitalization of the work of the Assembly a priority for this session.

The General Assembly should focus more on its function as a body for policy deliberation, encouraging Member States to participate actively. In response to the latest international developments, it should set priority issues, focus on deliberation and address important matters of immediate concern to Member States, especially developing countries. China supports the General Assembly in continuing to promote international cooperation on political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian issues.

In matters involving the maintenance of international peace and security, China encourages the General Assembly to strengthen coordination and cooperation with the Security Council, according to the division of labour set out in the Charter.

In recent years, the Group of 20 and other emerging multilateral mechanisms have played an important role in global governance and in addressing financial crises. The efforts of the United Nations and the Group of 20 should be complementary, so as to generate synergy. China supports greater exchange and interaction between the United Nations and the Group of 20 and welcomes the useful practice of having the Group's Chair and the Secretary-General brief the General Assembly.

China supports General Assembly efforts to improve its working methods, streamlining the

policymaking process, improving effectiveness and fostering a practical, action-oriented style. Member States should demonstrate political will aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of General Assembly resolutions so as to maintain the Assembly's authority.

The effectiveness of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is an important guarantee that the work of the Assembly is carried out efficiently. China supports strengthening that Office, especially with regard to its ability to address the human and financial difficulties faced by developing countries.

The revitalization of the General Assembly affects the interests of all Member States. China firmly supports the revitalization of the General Assembly and supports efforts by the President of the General Assembly to that end.

Within the framework of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, China is prepared to promote the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on the subject. We hope that efforts to that end will be based on the principle of progressing from easier issues to more difficult ones, so as to move forward in a practical and concrete way.

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

Given the theme of our current session, "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means", it is more important than ever that this Assembly be strengthened, so that it too can strengthen its vital role in ensuring that the peaceful settlement of disputes is given the primacy that it so much deserves.

We strongly believe in the strong relevance of the theme of the current session to our deliberations today. The Assembly should encourage and nurture mediation efforts in a timely manner and promote preventive diplomacy and peacemaking well before conflicts take shape. In dealing with those and other common social, political and developmental challenges faced by our world today, the Assembly must be given space and enabled to perform its Charter functions effectively.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 65/283, on mediation, earlier this year, which, inter alia, establishes a forum in which Member States can interact with the Secretary-General on the issue of mediation, strengthens the ability of the Assembly to

perform its rightful oversight role and proposes concrete ways to mainstream the use of mediation across the United Nations system.

Before proceeding, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Algeria, as our Non-Aligned Movement coordinator.

We would like to join others in congratulating the Permanent Representatives of Tanzania and Georgia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly for the sixty-sixth session. Indonesia adds its voice to those of others in commending both Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis of Lithuania for their very valuable work while co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group during the sixty-fifth session.

We underline the importance of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which is already robustly building upon the achievements of previous sessions. To that end, we are convinced that resolution 65/315, along with earlier resolutions on revitalization, can and should serve as the main basis for the Ad Hoc Working Group's work.

Allow me to highlight some points from resolution 65/315 that Indonesia views as critical in taking forward the Ad Hoc Working Group's work. We underscore that greater political will on the part of countries remains central to advancing our collective efforts to energize the Assembly. It is not for any shortage of United Nations resolutions and decisions that we continue to push for the Assembly's revitalization after 18 years of debate on United Nations reform. It is the lack of or slow implementation of resolutions already adopted on the issue that is fundamentally behind the Assembly not being able to discharge its Charter role fully.

The Working Group should therefore continue, and even intensify, its efforts to identify further ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on previous relevant resolutions and evaluating the status of their implementation.

In that regard, the inventory chart annexed to the annual reports of the Ad Hoc Working Group has proved a highly useful instrument. We welcome the

provision in resolution 65/315 requesting the Secretary-General to submit an update on the provisions of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization that are addressed to the Secretariat for implementation. My delegation looks forward to learning from the update about the reasons and constraints that might be behind the lack of implementation of the relevant resolutions.

We also believe that the improvement in the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees remain very important in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Assembly. My delegation therefore supports the call for the Assembly's Main Committees to discuss their working methods at the current session of the Assembly. In that regard, we are ready to engage, in a constructive manner, with the Chairs of the Main Committees in the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Concerning the relationship with other principal organs of the United Nations and other groups outside the Organization, we wish to stress that while there should be cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders so as to effectively address the many collective global challenges, it is vital that there be balanced relations among them and that they work within their mandates.

Indonesia also welcomes the efforts made by the Assembly to broaden and deepen its cooperation with civil society as well as with national and regional Parliaments.

With regard to the selection and appointment process of United Nations Secretaries-General, which has consistently been among the topics of a dynamic debate in the Ad Hoc Working Group, our view is that, without prejudice to Article 97, the Assembly should play a more meaningful role in the process of the selection and appointment of Secretaries-General. We share the views expressed that there must be a substantive interaction of the candidates with the Assembly, and that due regard must continue to be given to the principle of regional rotation.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/65/71) in which it proposes that the Assembly conduct hearings or meetings with candidates for the post of Secretary-General.

We reiterate the significance of the General Assembly playing a crucial role in all aspects of the work of the various United Nations organs, including in the selection and appointment of the heads of United Nations agencies and senior officials of the Secretariat.

In conclusion, let me once again assure the Assembly of the Indonesian commitment to continue working with all delegations in the endeavour to reinforce the status and functions of the General Assembly.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): I would like to thank the President for having convened this joint debate on the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations and the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. This plenary meeting provides an opportunity for the discussion of issues that are directly related to the proper functioning and, ultimately, to the very credibility of the United Nations system.

Allow me, at the outset, to express our gratitude to Ambassadors Dalius Čekuolis of Lithuania and Camillo Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for their competent work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-fifth session.

Under their able leadership, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/315, which represents a significant contribution to the revitalization of the General Assembly. Brazil welcomes its provisions, particularly with regard to the role of the Assembly in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and the executive heads of United Nations system organizations, and the strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, as well as the suggestions to review the working methods of the plenary and of the Main Committees.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassadors Ombeni Sefue of Tanzania and Alexander Lomaia of Georgia on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly for the present session. They can certainly count on my delegation's full support and constructive participation.

The General Assembly is the most representative decision-making body of the United Nations. Its universal membership and democratic statute provide it the legitimacy that enables it to function as the natural

political forum for the consideration of all relevant issues on the international agenda. That unique legitimacy also confers a central role upon the General Assembly in overseeing the implementation of the mandates accorded by Member States to the United Nations system. Our efforts to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly should therefore be viewed as a matter of priority.

Brazil believes that the relationship among the principal bodies of the United Nations should be mutually reinforcing and complementary. It is not enough to ensure that each individual body performs its functions in accordance with the Charter. Rather, it is necessary to promote greater coordination and collaboration among them. In order for the system to be effective, the work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission should be conducted in an integrated manner. It is also important to strike the necessary balance among the principal organs, particularly as regards the Security Council and its relationship with the General Assembly.

Enhancing direct interaction between Member States and the Secretariat should also be at the forefront of the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly. More frequent and direct dialogue between the General Assembly and internal system-wide coordination mechanisms such as the Chief Executives Board would be an important step in that direction.

The General Assembly itself can do more to improve its own effectiveness. Brazil welcomes efforts to rationalize the agenda and streamline working methods, both in the Assembly and in the Main Committees. The strengthening of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is another important issue that should be addressed by, inter alia, providing sufficient resources in the regular budget and improving the transition procedures between presidencies.

The question of the implementation of United Nations resolutions is an issue of the utmost importance in the context of the revitalization of the General Assembly. Member States must show the necessary political will to identify and eliminate constraints on the implementation of resolutions, so as

to preserve and strengthen the role and authority of the Assembly.

The role of the General Assembly in the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General should reflect its position as the main governing body of the United Nations. Members must build on existing resolutions in order to enhance the current procedure. The full membership should have the opportunity to meet and interact with prospective candidates in a structured manner prior to endorsement. In that regard, we welcome the initiatives taken by His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon on the occasion of his recent reappointment.

Furthermore, we strongly support more in-depth consideration of the role of the General Assembly in the procedures governing the selection, appointment and confirmation of the heads of the major specialized agencies, funds and programmes. More direct involvement of the General Assembly in the process would provide greater transparency and enhance the participation of Member States. We believe that a more balanced region- and gender-based rotation and representation across such senior positions within the United Nations system could be in the interests of the membership as a whole.

The process of the revitalization of the General Assembly cannot be considered in isolation from the wider context of the institutional reform of the United Nations, including reform of the Security Council. It is incumbent upon us, the Member States, to continue to strive for the necessary changes that will enable the General Assembly to realize its full potential as the primary source of legitimacy for global governance.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I am honoured to address the General Assembly on behalf of my country at today's joint debate. We believe that the issue of General Assembly revitalization has assumed particular significance in recent years. That was quite vividly reflected in the emphasis placed by the President of the General Assembly on United Nations reform, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and the reform of the Security Council, which are among the four priorities of the new presidency of the General Assembly.

I am happy to place on record my delegation's appreciation for the good work done by the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly in the past year, His Excellency

Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and His Excellency Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania. I would also like to place on record my delegation's appreciation for the work done by the Algerian delegation as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue, as well as for the work of the other negotiating partners, who worked in a spirit of cooperation during the past session.

Let me also welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and of the United Republic of Tanzania as the new co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during this session. The Indian delegation will support them both in their tasks.

Before I proceed to articulate India's position, permit me to use a modern-day analogy to elaborate our basic approach to the two agenda items at hand. Whenever Facebook users post their views, they get feedback from their friends, who in turn express themselves through three basic options: "like", "comment" and "share". The best posts usually receive large numbers of "likes" and are "shared" repeatedly, but the good ones get an equally large number of "comments", because there is still scope for further improvement. Staying with the Facebook terminology, we could say that, at present, General Assembly revitalization is highly commented upon, much liked but rarely shared. There is even the danger that, if not acted upon quickly, the only function that would be applied to General Assembly revitalization is that it would be consigned to the "Event" category with its status updated once a year.

United Nations reform is a process that has to evolve with the evolving international situation. An illustrative case in point is the extremely useful role that the major troop-contributing countries could play in the United Nations, but are not allowed to merely because we have not yet sufficiently reformed the United Nations to reflect contemporary global realities.

Starker still is the stubborn refusal to implement the obvious, such as the commitment by world leaders in 2005 to bring about early reform of the Security Council. The perpetuation of the current state of affairs, sometimes with the active connivance of delegations purely out of narrow-minded national positions emanating from limited ambition, is a travesty of the Assembly's prerogatives.

Such a state of affairs is the most appalling disservice to Article 10 of the United Nations Charter, which vests in the Assembly the power to discuss any questions or matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any of the organs provided for in the Charter, namely, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat, save those expressly excluded.

The starting point of my delegation's position on the issue of General Assembly revitalization is the firm belief that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations is respected, both in letter and in spirit.

The General Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the United Nations in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. In keeping with those guidelines, my delegation participated actively in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-fifth session. We provided a number of inputs at the meetings during the previous session. Those inputs were provided in a spirit of constructive engagement. We are pleased that they were taken on board in the negotiations leading to the adoption of resolution 65/315. While we are generally happy that resolution 65/315 has been able to highlight some of the important steps required on our collective journey towards a revitalized General Assembly, we firmly believe that we still have some distance to travel.

Without prejudging the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which should start soon, I would like to place on record the Indian delegation's considered views on some of the important aspects of the issues on General Assembly revitalization. First of all, it is critical that we establish a proper relationship of respect for the respective mandates between the General Assembly and the Security Council, in the spirit of the Charter. In that regard, it is particularly important that the Council not encroach upon the mandate of the General Assembly through extremely wide and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression, and of what

constitutes a situation under which it can take action under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is clear that the Council's agenda is, to say the least, overburdened, because it has anointed itself with the responsibility of dealing with issues that, although seemingly important, leave the Council with less time to deal with the real hotspots that constitute the real threats to international peace and security. The balance between the General Assembly and the Council is only one of the dimensions of the problem that needs to be addressed. We propose to raise those issues in the Ad Hoc Working Group.

The Assembly must have a greater say in the process of selecting the Secretary-General. The continued circumscribing of the Assembly's role and responsibilities in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General requires change in the interests of the United Nations system in general, and of the Assembly's prerogatives in particular. As it was the General Assembly that limited its own role, it will have to be the General Assembly that claws back its rightful place in the process of selecting the Secretary-General.

The Assembly and the other entities that form the United Nations system must reflect diplomatic best practices in their day-to-day functioning. The Assembly has a lot to learn from Member States in that regard.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, legislative and policymaking representative body of the international community. The General Assembly can expect India's constructive support and participation in those efforts.

Mrs. Kolontai (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In our national capacity, we would also like to make the following points.

The Republic of Belarus views the United Nations as an organization that should elaborate and implement a development strategy for the future. To that end, the United Nations must adapt to new realities. The main organs of the United Nations, as well as the basic orientation of its activities, must be reformed. It is completely obvious that a strong,

reformed United Nations would respond to the interests of the whole international community. The effective work of the Organization constitutes a key element for ensuring international security, development, economic and social development, the fight against poverty and inequality, climate change and the other challenges that face humanity.

In that regard, the clear and resolute action of the General Assembly, the primary organ of the Organization, in which all Member States participate, is of the utmost importance. We believe that the revitalization of the General Assembly is therefore one of the decisive elements in the reform of the United Nations as a whole.

In our view, several tasks in that arena deserve priority. First, strengthening the role of the General Assembly in addressing matters of maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the United Nations Charter; secondly, maintaining a balance, again in accordance with the United Nations Charter, among the primary organs of the United Nations in their consideration of the entire spectrum of issues on the agenda of the Organization, above all the balance between the General Assembly and the Security Council and between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; thirdly, enforcing the good faith implementation by Member States of General Assembly resolutions; fourthly, strengthening the role of the President of the General Assembly; and finally, improving the machinery for selecting the Secretary-General and for enhancing the role of the General Assembly in that regard.

My delegation has therefore consistently supported efforts to enhance the effectiveness, functionality and transparency of the General Assembly. The Republic of Belarus is opposed to the unjustified referral of issues within the purview of the General Assembly to consideration by the Security Council. We call for further interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council, including regular consultations and joint briefings between the Presidents of both of those important United Nations organs. We are convinced that the effectiveness of the General Assembly and its work is directly linked to its ability to build consensus on the most urgent matters on its agenda. Maintaining the practice of adopting General Assembly resolutions by consensus is imperative, since that practice enables us, by taking into account the interests of all participant States of the

General Assembly, to achieve the maximum possible; it also ensures the compatibility of adopted resolutions with the points of view of different legal and political systems.

Belarus underscores the need for the unconditional implementation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly that concern the activities and working methods of its subsidiary bodies. We believe that dragging our feet when it comes to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions undermines that organ's authority and in turn has repercussions on the effectiveness of the United Nations system as a whole.

Our delegation welcomes the work done by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, including the convening of thematic meetings and interactive debates with the participation of the President of the General Assembly and the Second Committee along with representatives of the Secretariat. In our view, that practice enhances the exchange of opinions on the most urgent issues before the Assembly, while promoting mutual understanding between States Members of the Organization and the Secretariat, and it enables a more complete picture to be drawn within the framework of the General Assembly revitalization process.

At the same time, we are also pleased to note that the report (A/65/909) of the Working Group reflects matters that we consider important concerning the revitalization of the work of General Assembly. Such revitalization would also lead to progress in the work of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. In our view, it is extremely important that the Special Committee produce substantive results. In our opinion, the Special Committee, whose job is to optimize the work of the United Nations, should be relieved of some of the shortcomings that are typical of our Organization's work. As an example of such defects we might adduce a problem facing the Special Committee whereby individual issues that have been on its agenda for many years have still failed to achieve the consensus required for substantive decisions to be made. Belarus supports open discussions on the idea of implementing more flexible methods for organizing the work of the Special Committee. We believe that the Special Committee, as the only special body of the whole whose purview

encompasses the legal aspects of United Nations reform, should not itself escape the process of reform.

Without wishing to deny the progress that has been made in revitalizing the work of the General Assembly, my delegation cannot but note that much remains to be done. We believe that only through joint and vigorous action by all Member States will we be in a position to achieve the goal of revitalizing the General Assembly and achieving the other United Nations reforms, while respecting the sanctity of the Charter, thereby strengthening the Organization so that it can more effectively meet global challenges.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): I am pleased to address an agenda item that could make the General Assembly what we have always known it to be, namely, the world's most prestigious intergovernmental body, which represents 193 Member States, and discusses a wide range of critical issues that impact the lives of the world's peoples. While I am pleased to be here today, it is with concern that we see the General Assembly continue its slow decline in terms of its role and overall relevance. On that note, I wish to align my statement with the one made earlier by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

There can be no doubt that the revitalization or, as some may wish to term it, the "reformation" of the General Assembly, has seen some progress throughout the years. To a significant degree, that is due to the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. Malaysia commends the Working Group for convening four separate thematic meetings earlier this year to deliberate on the main aspects of revitalization.

Particular recognition must also be accorded to the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, who worked hard to move the process forward. Their diligent work has culminated in a report (A/65/909) that touches on a wide range of issues, from the appointment of the Secretary-General and the need to strengthen the Office of the President of the General Assembly to the timely issuance of meeting records. I also wish to congratulate the new co-Chairs on their appointment and to assure them of the cooperation of my delegation in making further progress in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

At this juncture, I wish to pay some attention to the issue of the implementation of General Assembly

resolutions. In Malaysia's view, among all the areas that need improvement, no other weakness of the General Assembly more seriously undermines its relevance or effectiveness. However, given the number of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, it would be a monumental task, to say the least, to follow up on each and every one of them. With that in mind, it would be more practical if the implementation of resolutions were prioritized in a responsible and transparent manner that is fair to all. As a suggestion, resolutions adopted by consensus and that had a greater number of sponsors could be given priority over others. However, irrespective of the methodology used, Malaysia would certainly support the establishment of a mechanism and the creation of a special unit to assess the status of implementation of resolutions.

Obviously, in an ideal world we would be able to closely monitor the implementation of all resolutions. In truth, however, with the variety of matters to discuss and the number of resolutions that are submitted to the Assembly these days, we need to consider rigorously rationalizing the list of agenda items for a given session. The Assembly's agenda needs to be more focused on urgent and relevant issues that affect the everyday lives of the peoples of the world.

We could look, for example, into the possibility of biennializing or triennializing agenda items and even clustering them. That would reduce the number of agenda items and lessen the burden on Member States, particularly those with smaller delegations. Malaysia agrees that the inclusion of too many items on the General Assembly's agenda would have a counterproductive affect on the quality of the debate. As such, we might think about applying sunset procedures that could assist in reducing the number of agenda items and resolutions to be considered by the General Assembly. Such a practice would surely need to be implemented in consultation with the Assembly and concerned States.

Much has been said about the need to deepen the relationship between the General Assembly and the other principal bodies of the United Nations. In that regard, it is heartening to note that there has been greater interaction between Presidents of the principal organs. Malaysia also welcomes regular meetings between the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council. However, as two of the main bodies of the United Nations, there should also be more interaction between their members as

well. That could be done through an open interactive dialogue session between representatives from both organs, which could, for a start, take place on a yearly basis. That would allow greater understanding, recognition and appreciation of the issues, problems and challenges faced by the other.

It is true that the General Assembly and the Security Council wear different hats. It may, however, be a misconception to believe that the two principal bodies are competing with each other. On the contrary, there is a symbiotic relationship between the two, which can metaphorically be described as two sides of the same coin. Both bodies have roles to play in the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time, both bodies have their respective mandates outlined by the United Nations Charter. As such, it is important for the two to work together through consultation and cooperation and with a high sense of mutual respect for one another. Each body must also ensure that it does not encroach upon the mandate and responsibility of the other. Only with that in mind and by working hand in hand can both bodies effectively address the myriad issues that the international community must confront.

The issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly has been a subject of the plenary debate since 1991. Given the number of years that issue has been considered, it is high time that all relevant actors take a deeper look into revitalizing not only the General Assembly, but also the United Nations as a whole and its organs and components, as changes in the General Assembly would necessarily affect those other entities.

On the General Assembly itself, Malaysia welcomed the convening of a retreat organized by the Permanent Mission of Finland in June to discuss strengthening the Assembly. It is through efforts such as that retreat, together with the necessary political will, that the Organization will be able to live up to its name and what it stands for, as well as the ideals upon which it was founded.

Mr. Viinanen (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement made previously by the observer of the European Union. In addition, I have the honour to make a few further remarks.

Let me begin by thanking the two outgoing co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, the Permanent

Representatives of Lithuania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who did excellent work in furthering discussions on the issue. We also welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Georgia as the Working Group's new co-Chairs, who are now charged with leading that important process.

Finland attaches great importance to the General Assembly as the most global and truly representative body on the planet. The Assembly has a central role in global governance, and we would like to see it strengthened further. We think that it is crucial that the General Assembly also deal with issues related to international peace and security. Accordingly, during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Finland and Turkey introduced a draft resolution on mediation. We commend the President of the General Assembly for choosing the strengthening of the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes as the theme for the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly.

As many participants here today know, for the past nine years, Finland has organized a retreat for newly elected members of the Security Council. This year, we decided to try a similar approach with respect to the General Assembly and invited the then President of the General Assembly, the President-elect of the Assembly and members-elect of the General Committee to a retreat in Tarrytown. We also invited the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, Mr. Srgjan Kerim, to deliver a keynote address on his experiences.

One of the aims of the workshop was to give the incoming members of the General Committee an opportunity to familiarize themselves further with the working methods of the General Assembly. The Secretariat, led by Under-Secretary-General Shaaban, did a great job of highlighting some of the relevant issues pertaining to the practices of the General Assembly and the General Committee. The participants also received a briefing from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland on *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. The Swiss handbook was welcomed as an excellent practical contribution to the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and a very useful reference to all of us.

Another purpose of the retreat was to give the elected members of the General Committee an opportunity to discuss ways of strengthening the General Assembly in a more informal setting. The brainstorming that took place produced many useful ideas and suggestions. For example, many participants thought that there might be scope for developing the role of the General Committee in strengthening the Assembly. Among other things, there were also interesting ideas on thematic debates and outreach activities.

We have circulated to members the report of the retreat, contained in document A/65/945, so I will not go into more detail on the retreat's deliberations. Instead, I want to thank the Secretariat and all participants for a successful retreat. I hope the results will be useful to the wider membership and for the revitalization process. It is our intention to organize the retreat again next year and to develop the concept further.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, allow me to express Japan's gratitude to the co-Chairs of the previous Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania, and His Excellency Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for their dedication and work culminating in the report contained in document A/65/909 and for their involvement in the drafting of resolution 65/315.

I also wish to welcome the newly nominated co-Chairs in this process, His Excellency Mr. Ombeni Sefue, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, and His Excellency Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, to whom I pledge Japan's close cooperation in their efforts to resolve those high-priority issues.

One greatly anticipated outcome of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is the strengthening of relations between the Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations, such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as of reciprocal coordination among the major organs. In that regard, the submission of annual reports by the Security Council to the General Assembly and the holding of regular consultations between the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly are invaluable.

The report is one of the main instruments for cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. In close dialogue between His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, and His Excellency Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral, Permanent Representative of Portugal and President of the Security Council at that time, a plenary meeting of the General Assembly for examination of the report was organized separately from the Security Council reform agenda for the first time in 15 years, in order to focus the work solely on the activities of the Security Council. Japan welcomes such efforts to promote intensive interaction with the membership at large. Such interaction has occurred more consistently in recent years, in accordance with resolution 65/315. We are pleased to note that the recent presidential note on the Council's working methods (S/2011/507) was also consulted for guidance in the preparation of this year's annual report (A/66/2).

Concerning the appointment of the Secretary-General, the Charter clearly assigns distinct roles and responsibilities to the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the light of that, Japan greatly appreciates the smooth process by which the Security Council and the General Assembly appointed His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon for a second term as Secretary-General. We believe that it is essential that the focus of our discussion be on the role of the General Assembly in ensuring the process's transparency on the basis of past resolutions and existing practices, such as resolution 51/241 — which allows for the possibility of consultations by the President of the Assembly with Member States in identifying potential candidates without prejudice to the Security Council's prerogatives — as well as resolution 60/286, which provides the option for the Assembly to hold a formal presentation of candidatures for the position of Secretary-General in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with Member States. As we proceed with the revitalization of the work of the Assembly, a review of our experience in implementing the relevant resolutions will contribute to more meaningful discussion in that area.

The need to reinforce the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly is well recognized. In that context, we also welcome the efforts undertaken by Presidents of the General Assembly, past and present, to reinforce the role and

functions of the President and the Office, including, most recently, the handbook issued by the Permanent Mission of Switzerland in cooperation with His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. In the light of the importance of the issue, Japan is prepared to take an active part in discussions aimed at achieving that objective in an efficient and cost-effective manner within the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

With respect to strategies to help the General Assembly raise public awareness regarding its activities, it is Japan's view that the most crucial measure of the value of the Assembly in the eyes of the public is that body's effectiveness in addressing global challenges. Along with vigorous efforts to solve such problems, it is essential to provide press outlets with accurate information that is pertinent to the interests of the general public. The President of the Security Council currently holds a press conference after almost every consultation. In order to bring greater attention to the work of the General Assembly, the President of the Assembly and the Chairs of the Main Committees and other interested parties, such as the facilitators of particular events or draft resolutions, should make similar efforts to publicize Assembly activities and achievements by having more frequent press encounters and conferences.

We anticipate constructive and results-oriented discussions in the meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group to be convened by the co-facilitators, and take this opportunity to reaffirm Japan's commitment to contributing positively to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on today's agenda item, about which my delegation wishes to make the following comments, focusing on four topics.

First, on strengthening the General Assembly's role and power, we are once again debating the matter of revitalizing the work of the Assembly, one of the critical elements of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations. It hardly needs emphasizing that this is a sensitive process that must be pursued with determination and commitment on the part of the entire international community, in order to strengthen the

Assembly's role as the principal deliberative, political and representative organ of the United Nations.

My delegation believes that strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly requires, among other things, the inclusion on its agenda of emerging and pressing issues of the day that are relevant to the international community as a whole and that should be considered without delay, so that the Assembly continues to be a body capable of reacting quickly to global events. In the same context, we believe that thematic debates are an essential tool for enabling us to conduct serious discussions and come to agreement on substantive and current issues. In that regard, we commend the quality of the debates held in previous sessions, which will undoubtedly continue during the current President's tenure. We also stress the importance of seeing concrete results emerge from those debates, so that we can evaluate the Assembly's work.

We firmly believe that strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly also entails recognition of its role in maintaining international peace and security. While Article 24 of the Charter confers chief responsibility for that area on the Security Council, that responsibility is not exclusive. In our view, the Assembly should respond more quickly and effectively to issues relating to international peace and security.

The question of the reports that the Security Council is required to present to the Assembly also needs our continued attention. While the Council's annual reports have improved, they are still descriptive and narrative, and therefore do not reflect the real dynamics within the Council, the context within which decisions are taken, not to mention cases where the Council has been unable to consider various matters on its agenda as it should have.

We should also emphasize the importance of the regular meetings between the Presidents of the principal organs of the United Nations. We believe that concerted cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information between the General Assembly and the other organs should be further strengthened with the help of transparent, regular mechanisms that allow for interaction with Member States, particularly those directly involved.

Secondly, with respect to improving the working methods of the General Assembly, over the past few

years several measures have been taken to improve the methods of work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, including the use of interactive debates, round tables, and question-and-answer sessions within the Committees. We believe, however, that some of the proposals made concerning an improvement in the working methods of the Main Committees should be discussed in greater depth. Those proposals concern, *inter alia*, rationalizing their work, with, of course, the consent of all Member States; making it easier for developing countries to access information on the Committees' websites — information that should be more detailed and made available in all official languages of the United Nations, on a timely basis; and harmonizing best practices among the Main Committees, which, let us recall, differ from one another.

My third point concerns the appointment of the Secretary-General. We would at the outset like to congratulate Mr. Ban Ki-moon on his reappointment to a second term of office as Secretary-General. We welcome his vision of the programme of work for the next five years, which he shared with us here in the Assembly and in other forums. We thank him for this initiative and for his efforts to coordinate with Member States. That is positive and commendable, and makes the United Nations more transparent, which we welcome. We would like, however, to consider in much greater detail during this session the process whereby other heads of other United Nations system organizations are selected. We should take into account the relevant recommendations included in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/65/71).

Fourthly, I should like to touch on the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We must ensure that the Office has sufficient and predictable human and financial resources, and review, *inter alia*, the budget of the Office of the President, which has not been modified since 1998, except to allow for inflation. As the General Assembly is one of the most important organs, and its President the head of the Assembly, all the resources necessary must be made available to enable the President to discharge his mission, listen carefully to the views of Member States and take appropriate action in the framework of fulfilling his mission as the head of this important organ. We would also underline the importance of strengthening the institutional memory of the Office of the President of

the General Assembly so as to ensure the effective management of each presidency and create continuity among them.

In conclusion, I should like to offer my delegation's support for the mandate handed down by the Assembly last September to create, at its sixty-sixth session, an Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly that would be open to all Member States and that would, inter alia, assess the level of implementation of relevant resolutions. We believe that such an assessment is a matter of priority and must lead to the identification of obstacles to the implementation of many decisions in that respect, so as to move forward the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Mr. Shin Dong Ik (Republic of Korea): Let me begin by extending my gratitude to President Al-Nasser for having convened today's debate and for providing the membership with this opportunity to consider the revitalization of the General Assembly during this session. I would also like to congratulate the new co-Chairs, Ambassador Ombeni Sefue, of Tanzania, and Ambassador Lomaia, of Georgia. At the same time, I would like to express our gratitude to the two co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, of Lithuania, and Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves, of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for their excellent leadership and guidance during the sixty-fifth session.

My delegation firmly believes that the role and authority of the General Assembly should be strengthened as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as is acknowledged by the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1). In that regard, my delegation wishes to welcome the decision to designate the issue as one of the themes of the general debate at the sixty-sixth session. However, after two decades of discussing the issue of General Assembly reform in this forum, my delegation wishes to point out that the slow progress made thus far does not satisfy our expectations or our desires.

All of us share a common concern about the marginalization of the General Assembly and the need to revitalize this body. That is commensurate with the role of the General Assembly as acknowledged in the 2004 report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565). Indeed, the

revitalization of the General Assembly should not be delayed any further. We must take into consideration the numerous and diverse challenges and global crises facing us. The General Assembly should be revitalized so that it can properly play its intended role, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter. With that backdrop in mind, my delegation would like to make some comments on the revitalization of the General Assembly as the sole universal organ of the United Nations.

My delegation is of the view that the General Assembly's loss of vitality has resulted from its chronic operational shortcomings rather than from any conflict between the General Assembly itself and other organs of the United Nations. My delegation would like to note that the revitalization of the General Assembly can be achieved by redressing problems with its managerial practices, such as the adoption of repetitive resolutions, difficulties in securing useful means of implementation caused by excessive numbers of resolutions, and occasional management inefficiency.

First, my delegation shares the view that the relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs such as the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and others must be complementary, not competitive. In that regard, my delegation attaches great importance to actions aimed at ensuring increased cooperation, coordination and exchange of information among the principal organs. That should be achieved by holding regular meetings between the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, and between the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as is stipulated in paragraph 9 of resolution 65/315.

As another means of enhancing the role and authority of the General Assembly, paragraph 7 of the resolution appropriately takes note of the importance and benefit of a continuing interaction between the General Assembly and international or regional forums and organizations dealing with global matters of concern to the international community. In that regard, my delegation believes that the General Assembly can play a more creative role in addressing global matters by gleaning fresh ideas and concepts from active interaction with international or regional forums.

Secondly, my delegation shares the view that an improvement of working methods within the General Assembly would also make it a more efficient and effective decision-making organ. Further exploration of the biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the agenda of the General Assembly, including through the introduction of a sunset clause, with the clear consent of the sponsoring State or States, and avoiding any duplication of work are all examples of areas in which the General Assembly can improve. In addition, the Assembly needs to engage in more active outreach activities aimed at civil society and the media in order to raise awareness about its sometimes-overlooked work.

Thirdly, with regard to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads, my delegation has no doubt that the role of the Secretary-General has shifted from chief administrative officer of the Organization to equal parts diplomat and advocate, civil servant and chief executive officer, as well as a symbol of United Nations ideals and a spokesman for the interests of the world's peoples, in particular the poor and vulnerable among them.

In that regard, in consideration of the multifaceted issues that the Secretary-General, currently Mr. Ban Ki-moon, is requested to deal with, my delegation shares the view that the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General differs from that used with regard to other executive heads in the United Nations system, given the role of the Security Council, in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter. The Secretary-General should therefore be selected and appointed by gaining the widest possible support of the entire United Nations membership through a transparent and inclusive process.

Lastly, my delegation strongly supports the current practice of submission by the President of the General Assembly to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly of his views on the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. We also welcome the transfer of lessons learned and best practices from current Assembly Presidents to their successors. In that regard, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to commend the outstanding efforts, and their corresponding outcomes, made by the previous President, Mr. Joseph Deiss, and the current President, Mr. Al-Nasser. My delegation believes that

strengthening human and material resources is crucial for the efficient operation of the Office of the President of the General Assembly.

My delegation wishes to stress that revitalizing the work of the General Assembly should be a continuous and action-oriented process and must be evaluated through a results-based approach. My delegation looks forward to continued and updated tangible results from the Ad Hoc Working Group during this session. It affirms our full cooperation with and support for the successful completion of that overdue endeavour.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We wish to felicitate His Excellency Mr. Ombeni Sefue, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, and His Excellency Mr. Alexander Lomaia, Permanent Representative of Georgia, on their appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. We assure them of our full cooperation in achieving our shared objective. We also take this opportunity to commend the outgoing co-Chairs for their leadership of that process.

The work that we are resuming today is important because it is aimed at underlining the unquestioned legitimacy and primacy of the General Assembly as the principal policymaking and norm-setting organ of the United Nations. It is important because it is about strengthening the role and improving the work of the Assembly, which is mandated to discuss any question or any matter within the scope of the Charter. It is significant because it is being undertaken in the most representative and democratic organ of the United Nations.

However, it is also essential to remain mindful that the discussions on revitalization of the General Assembly should not morph into a ritual that yields nothing substantive. It is imperative to focus our discussion on the common objective of strengthening this body. In the past several years, a number of useful suggestions have been made. It is possible to identify convergences and agree on a way forward.

The agenda of the General Assembly can be streamlined to better focus our debates. Assembly resolutions must be implemented on a non-selective and non-discriminatory basis. There could be a special unit in the Office of the President of the General

Assembly to assess the status of implementation of various resolutions.

Our endeavour to improve the working methods of the Assembly, however, should not lead us to divisive and arbitrary concepts, such as sunset clauses. No item should be considered for exclusion from the agenda without the Assembly's approval and the express consent of the State or States concerned. A balance would have to be found to accommodate the Assembly's desire to have a greater role in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and the requirements of Article 97 of the United Nations Charter.

It is important to recognize the progress made on improving coordination and interaction between the Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, and the benefit of briefings by the Secretary-General and the Assembly President on their priorities and activities. That practice must continue, as should the holding of thematic debates on issues of importance to Member States.

With regard to strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly, we reiterate our proposal of constituting a troika, consisting of the outgoing, incumbent and future General Assembly Presidents. However, efforts to strengthen the institutional memory of the Office should not unduly constrain flexibility in the selection of staff by the incoming President. In any event, the President of the premier United Nations organ should not be handicapped by the lack of assured budgetary and human resources.

Pakistan accords a high priority to the subject of revitalization of the General Assembly. To enable the Assembly to play its rightful role as envisaged by the Charter, the importance of renewed political will on the part of Member States and their determination to respect their decisions cannot be overemphasized. Pakistan is convinced that the General Assembly must play a central role in discussing and offering solutions to major issues of the day. We look forward to a substantive and constructive debate and assure the co-Chairs of our cooperation and support.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to congratulate the President on his leadership of the General Assembly and to assure him of our cooperation for the success of his work. We also want to thank the

representatives of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and of Lithuania for the work accomplished in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. We welcome the representatives of the Republic of Georgia and the United Republic of Tanzania, appointed as co-facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

The normative frameworks of international law and human rights have been drawn up and universalized within the General Assembly of the United Nations. The programmes and action plans of major international conferences called by the Assembly form the most important reference points in the universalization of global policies on health, decolonization, education and the environment, among others.

All positive outcomes of the United Nations have been achieved in this great Assembly by large majorities in the Organization. Its positive impact has been intrinsically linked to the will of States to respect such global agreements, without impositions.

Unfortunately, the people of the world long ago lost their voice in the United Nations. The United Nations has ceased to respond to the problems of humankind. The unjust power relations within the Organization have become increasingly exclusive and authoritarian as neo-liberal globalization continues. Instead of becoming more democratic, the United Nations has become more elitist. The imperialist Powers that dominate the Security Council are working assiduously to control all the items on the agenda of the United Nations and to weaken the role of the General Assembly.

The Security Council has crafted a strategy that is aimed at weakening the various organs of the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly. It has taken over matters that are not within its purview as set forth by the Organization's Charter. It has incorporated into its working agenda a vast range of subjects, such as nuclear non-proliferation, gender matters, women's issues, childhood and HIV/AIDS.

The transformation of the United Nations must lead to a stronger role for the General Assembly in the area of peace and security, among others. The Security Council must not be allowed to impose its conditions in those areas while the rest of the States look on powerlessly. The process of transforming the United

Nations must begin with a substantial change in its structure and functioning.

The reform of the Security Council and the revitalization of the General Assembly have been under negotiation for nearly two decades. Very little progress has been achieved, since the same regime from 1945 remains in place. It is essential to promote true changes and to transform the United Nations. The proposal by the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Commander Hugo Chávez, calls for a recasting that goes beyond reform and proposes a serious review of the constituent bases of the United Nations system, which should serve to strengthen, *inter alia*, the sovereignty and legal equality of States and the principle of peoples' self-determination.

The aim is to promote a General Assembly that is more effective, efficient and relevant. To that end, discussions have focused on three subjects: first, expanding the role and authority of the General Assembly; secondly, the role of the General Assembly in the appointment of the Secretary-General; and, thirdly, improving the Assembly's working methods. However, that has been insufficient in the light of the proposal for recasting the United Nations and against the backdrop of the changes that have taken place in the world since the end of the Second World War.

Venezuela believes that, for the time being, the General Assembly must fully exercise the powers conferred upon it by the Organization's Charter. That includes, among other things, taking decisions on issues related to international peace and security and on the appointment of the Secretary-General — including discussing whether the election of the President of the General Assembly should first go through the Security Council.

Mr. Mostahkam (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Let me also express my gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and of the Republic of Lithuania for their tireless efforts in co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the Assembly's sixty-fifth session. I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania and Georgia for their

appointment as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the present session and to assure them of my delegation's cooperation in making progress in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

As to the agenda item under consideration in today's meeting, I wish to put on record a few observations on behalf of my country.

Despite our many efforts in recent years to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly, we remain far from accomplishing our main tasks, which include, *inter alia*, enhancing the role and authority of the Assembly and streamlining the relationship between the Assembly and the other principal organs of the United Nations.

A review of the different resolutions on the revitalization of the Assembly makes it evident that a great number of them deal with the Assembly's role and authority. This clearly demonstrates how important the enhancement of the role and authority of the Assembly is for the general membership. We should therefore not neglect the great importance of this issue; indeed, we should explore concrete ways and means for bringing about full respect for the functions and powers of the General Assembly as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

With respect to the relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs of the United Nations, the particular relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council has been a matter of extensive debate, especially during various United Nations reform processes for many years. A good number of Assembly resolutions establish certain criteria to clarify the relationship between these two important principal organs of the United Nations. The Charter itself confers important functions and responsibilities on both organs. Nonetheless, in recent years, we have witnessed the gradual but constant encroachment by the Security Council on the functions and the powers of the General Assembly and other organs, such as the Economic and Social Council.

There are numerous examples of the Council encroaching on the powers and prerogatives of the Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations. We are particularly concerned about the Security Council's norm-setting, law-making and establishing of definitions in areas beyond its competency. Let me recall Article 13 of the Charter, according to which the

General Assembly, as the sole universal and representative organ comprising all States Members of the United Nations, is primarily tasked with the progressive development of international law and its codification.

The revitalization of the General Assembly, as part of the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, is a dynamic and continuous process. We should remain committed and constructive throughout this ongoing exercise with a view towards strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative body of the United Nations. My delegation would be prepared to actively participate in a discussion that is transparent, open and inclusive.

Mr. Lomaia (Georgia): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for having appointed me as one of the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. The assignment is of significant importance, as it is the first of its kind for my country. It is all the more important as the President has made

the revitalization of the General Assembly one of the main issues on his personal agenda.

In my brief remarks, I would like to assure all Member States and the leadership of the United Nations that, in that capacity, my delegation will devote every effort to build on the progress achieved during the previous period. We will do our best to take forward the issue of the strengthening of the role of the General Assembly as the principal forum for global debate and to enhance its capacity to quickly and effectively respond to major political events and effectively cooperate with other principal organs, such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, among others. In doing so, we will rely on the support and cooperation of Member States and of such groupings as, inter alia, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the European Union.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in this debate. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 120 and 121.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.