



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9308th meeting

Monday, 24 April 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Lavrov/Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Immongault
Ghana	Mr. Mbomba
Japan	Mr. Ishikane
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Al Marar
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations

Letter dated 3 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/244)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations

Letter dated 3 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/244)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/244, which contains the text of a letter dated 3 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: Allow me to start my remarks with a few words on the Sudan, where the situation continues to worsen. Since the start of fighting on 15 April, hundreds of people have been killed and

thousands have been injured. The violence must stop. It risks a catastrophic conflagration within the Sudan that could engulf the whole region and beyond.

I strongly condemn the indiscriminate bombardment of civilian areas, including health-care facilities. I call on the parties to stop combat operations in densely populated areas and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid operations. Civilians must be able to access food, water and other essential supplies and to evacuate from combat zones.

I am in constant contact with the parties to the conflict and have called on them to de-escalate tensions and to return to the negotiating table. We will continue our efforts with our partners to secure a permanent halt to the fighting as soon as possible.

Working with humanitarian organizations on the ground, we are reconfiguring our presence in the Sudan to enable us to continue supporting the Sudanese people. Let me be clear: the United Nations is not leaving the Sudan. Our commitment is to the Sudanese people, in support of their wishes for a peaceful and secure future. We stand with them at this terrible time.

I have authorized the temporary relocation, both inside and outside the Sudan, of some United Nations personnel, many of them with their families. I call on all Security Council members to exert maximum leverage with the parties to end the violence, restore order and return to the path of the democratic transition. We must all do everything within our power to pull the Sudan back from the edge of the abyss.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening the Security Council today on the important issue of effective multilateralism. Multilateral cooperation is the beating heart of the United Nations, its *raison d'être* and guiding vision. The establishment of the United Nations, in 1945, represented humankind's best attempt to prevent any repetition of the horrors of two world wars and the Holocaust. Over the past 78 years, the multilateral system has held together and delivered some notable successes.

The tools and mechanisms established by the Charter of the United Nations have played their part in averting a third world war. Peacemaking and preventive diplomacy by the United Nations have helped end conflicts around the world. United Nations peacekeeping operations have helped societies move away from conflict, saving perhaps millions of lives.

Our disarmament and non-proliferation efforts have helped to confine nuclear weapons to a handful of States. The United Nations was central to the decolonization process and the independence of 80 former colonies that are today Members of the United Nations. We have helped to advance economic and social progress and contributed to reducing poverty and hunger, eradicating diseases and building recognition and respect for fundamental human rights. The global humanitarian system coordinated by the United Nations saves millions of lives each year. Multilateral solutions to global problems, from the ozone layer to the eradication of polio, are tried, tested and proven to work.

None of that progress would have been possible without countries standing together as a multilateral human family, which makes today's situation all the more dangerous. We face unprecedented and interlocking crises, but the multilateral system is under greater strain than at any time since the creation of the United Nations. Tensions between major Powers are at a historic high, as are the risks of conflict through misadventure or miscalculation.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in violation of the United Nations Charter and international law, is causing massive suffering and devastation to the country and its people and adding to the global economic dislocation triggered by the coronavirus disease pandemic. Elsewhere conflicts grind on, from Myanmar to the Sahel, from Somalia to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond. The situation in the Sudan now threatens to destabilize the entire region. While there are some promising developments in Yemen and Libya, more than 100 million people have fled their homes to escape violence, conflict and persecution around the world.

Effective multilateral responses are urgently needed to prevent and resolve conflicts, manage economic uncertainty, rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and address challenges to the global norms against the use and possession of nuclear weapons. We are witnessing a deepening climate crisis, soaring inequalities, a rising threat from terrorism, a global pushback against human rights and gender equality, and the unregulated development of dangerous technologies. All those global challenges can be solved only through respect for international law, adherence to global commitments and the adoption of appropriate frameworks of multilateral governance.

As difficult as the past year has been, I am heartened that Member States have made progress in several crucial areas. A binding treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity was finalized. The twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Sharm El-Sheikh, achieved a breakthrough in addressing loss and damage caused by climate change. The General Assembly recognized the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Those developments are important, and their effects could be far-reaching.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative and the memorandum of understanding to facilitate the export of Russian food and fertilizers are compelling examples of the significance of multilateral cooperation facilitated by the United Nations. They clearly demonstrate that such cooperation is essential to creating greater security and prosperity for all, and I urge their continued implementation.

But we need to do better, go further and work faster. That must start with countries recommitting to their obligations under the United Nations Charter, putting human rights and dignity first and prioritizing the prevention of conflict and crises. The principles enshrined in the Charter and reinforced in the Declaration on Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States — respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States, non-interference in the affairs of other States, the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the peaceful settlement of disputes — are bulwarks against uncertainty and fragmentation. They are the foundation of all international cooperation to end conflicts, save lives, protect human rights and promote social and economic progress.

Secondly, I urge Member States to use the full range of diplomatic tools that the United Nations Charter provides for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Those include the use of my good offices to help resolve disputes and secure peace.

Thirdly, effective multilateralism must include a commitment to tackling new and emerging challenges and filling in gaps in global governance to achieve the promise of the Charter in the twenty-first century. That is the driving force behind my report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), including the proposed New Agenda for Peace, which will offer a unifying vision

anchored in trust, universality and solidarity. It will address all forms and domains of threats, taking a holistic view of the peace continuum, from prevention, peacemaking and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustainable development. It will underline preventive action as a priority at all levels. *Our Common Agenda* envisions a multilateralism that is more inclusive, with space for the contributions of all countries and communities, and more networked, with strong links among the United Nations family, international financial institutions, regional organizations, trading blocs and others.

Member States are in the lead on adapting intergovernmental organs to meet changing needs. A majority now acknowledge that the Security Council itself would benefit from reforms that reflect today's geopolitical reality. The same is true of the Bretton Woods institutions; they also do not reflect the reality of today's global economy. The High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, which I appointed last year, has identified a number of transformational shifts to address peace and security challenges, growing economic inequalities, the triple planetary crisis of climate-biodiversity-pollution and a widening digital divide. I hope its report will make a significant contribution to our collective reflection in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future, to be held next year. I count on members' engagement and support in preparations for the Summit.

Our institution was created for crisis. Throughout its history, the United Nations has overcome seemingly intractable conflicts and deep divisions. We must find a way forward and act now, as we have done before, to stop the slide towards chaos and conflict. It is time to deepen cooperation and to strengthen multilateral institutions, to find common solutions to common challenges. Members of the Security Council, particularly those that enjoy the privilege of serving permanently, have a particular responsibility to make multilateralism work, rather than contribute to its dismemberment.

Competition between States is inevitable, but that should not rule out cooperation where shared interests and the greater good are at stake. And when competition escalates into confrontation, the multilateral system, founded on the Charter and international law, is the most effective means to manage disputes peacefully. We must cooperate. We must adapt multilateral institutions and foster trust where it is most needed. The urgency of global challenges demands bold and swift action.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

It is symbolic that we are holding our meeting on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy, which was inscribed as an important date on the calendar via General Assembly resolution 73/127, adopted on 12 December 2018. In two weeks' time, we will celebrate the seventy-eighth anniversary of victory in the Second World War. The defeat of Nazi Germany, a decisive contribution to which my country contributed decisively, along with the allies, allowed us to lay the foundation for the post-war international order. Its legal basis was the Charter the United Nations, and our Organization itself, embodying true multilateralism, took on a central, coordinating role in world politics.

For nearly 80 years of its existence, the United Nations has been fulfilling its most important mission mandated by the founding fathers. For several decades, the basic understanding among the five permanent members of the Security Council on the supremacy of the purposes and principles of the Charter guaranteed global security, and thereby created the conditions for truly multilateral cooperation governed by universally recognized norms international law. The United Nations-centred system is currently experiencing a deep crisis, the root cause of which is the desire on the part of some of its members to replace international law and the Charter of the United Nations with a certain rules-based order. No one has seen those rules; they have not been the subject of transparent international negotiations. They have been invented and applied with the goal of countering the natural processes of establishing new independent development centres, which is the objective manifestation of multilateralism. There have been attempts to deter them with illegitimate unilateral measures, including cutting off access to modern technologies and financial services, removal from supply chains, the confiscation of property, the destruction of competitors' critical infrastructure and the manipulation of universally agreed norms and procedures. As a result, global trade has become fragmented, market mechanisms have collapsed, the World Trade Organization has become paralysed and now the International Monetary Fund has clearly and completely been transformed into a tool for achieving the goals of the United States and its allies, including their military goals.

In a desperate attempt to assert its supremacy by punishing those who disobey it, the United States has taken the path of destroying globalization, which it has extolled for years as the ultimate good of humankind, maintaining the multilateral world economic system. Washington and its Western subordinates have applied those rules every time they needed to justify illegitimate measures taken against those who based their policies on international law and refused to align themselves with the self-interest of the golden billion. Those who do not agree are blacklisted according to the principle of “those who are not with us are against us”.

Western colleagues have long found it inconvenient to reach agreement in universal forums, such as the United Nations. In order to ideologically justify the strategy of undermining of multilateralism, they introduced theme of the unity of democracies in countering autocracies. In addition to the so-called summits for democracy, the composition of which is determined by a self-proclaimed hegemon, other clubs for the chosen are being created in circumvention of the United Nations — the Summit for Democracy, the Alliance for Multilateralism, the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, the Media Freedom Coalition, the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace — all those and other exclusive projects are designed to undermine negotiations on relevant topics under the aegis of the United Nations, to impose non-consensual concepts and solutions that benefit the West. First, a narrow group of the select few make decisions behind closed doors, and then they present these arrangements as a position of the international community. Let us call a spade a spade. Nobody allowed the Western minority to speak on behalf of all humankind. We must be civil and respect all members of the international community. By imposing a rules-based order, its sponsors arrogantly reject the key principle of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, the sovereign equality of States. The quintessence of the complex of exceptionalism was the lordly statement of Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, that Europe is a garden and most of the rest of the world is a jungle. I will also quote the NATO and European Union (EU) joint declaration of 10 January, which states, “we” — the united West — “will further mobilize the combined set of instruments at our disposal, be they political, economic or” — and I stress this — “military, to pursue our common objectives to the benefit of our one billion citizens.”

The collective West has set out to reshape multilateralism at the regional level for the advancement of its interests. Recently, the United States called for the Monroe Doctrine to be revived and demanded that Latin American countries limit their ties with the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China. That policy, however, was confronted with the determination of countries in the region to strengthen their own multilateral structures, first and foremost, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and to defend their legitimate right to assert themselves as a pillar of a multipolar world. Russia fully supports those legitimate aspirations.

The United States and its allies have now devoted considerable effort to undermining multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region, where the successful open system of cooperation on economic matters and security has been developing for decades around the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). That system has allowed for the establishment of consensual approaches that are acceptable for both the 10 ASEAN member States and their partners in dialogue, including Russia, China, the United States, India, Japan, Australia and the Republic of Korea, ensuring a genuinely inclusive multilateralism. With its so-called Indo-Pacific strategy, Washington has embraced a policy of destroying that established consensus-based architecture.

At its summit in Madrid last year, NATO, which had always tried to convince everyone of its peaceful disposition and the exclusively defensive nature of its military programmes, spoke about global responsibility and the indivisibility of security in the Euro-Atlantic and the so-called Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, NATO, which is, of course, a defensive alliance, is now moving its line of defence to the Western shores of the Pacific Ocean. Block-based approaches undermine ASEAN-focused mindsets and are manifested in the creation of the military alliance among Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States — AUKUS — which is trying to drag into its ranks Tokyo, Seoul and a number of ASEAN countries. Under the aegis of the United States, mechanisms for intervention in maritime security issues have been established to uphold the unilateral interests of the West in the South China Sea. Mr. Borrell Fontelles, who I have already quoted today, mentioned the promise yesterday to send EU naval forces to that region. It is no secret that the purpose of the so-called Indo-Pacific strategy is to contain the People’s Republic of China and isolate Russia. That is how Western colleagues view effective multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific region.

After the collapse of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the departure of the Soviet Union from the political scene, hope emerged for the advancement of the principles of genuine multilateralism, without any dividing lines, in the Euro-Atlantic space. But instead of unleashing the potential of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on an equal, collective basis, Western countries not only preserved NATO, but — contrary to their solemn pledges — embarked on a brazen takeover of adjacent territories, including territories where vital Russian interests always existed and will continue to exist. As the then United States Secretary of State Jim Baker reported to President George Bush senior, the main threat to NATO is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I would add that currently the United Nations and the requirements contained in its Charter also pose a threat to Washington's global ambitions.

Russia has been painstakingly trying to reach mutually beneficial multilateral agreements based on the principle of the indivisibility of security, which was solemnly proclaimed at the highest level in the outcome documents of the OSCE Summits of 1999 and 2010. There, it is explicitly and unambiguously stated in black and white that no State should strengthen its security at the expense of the security of other States, and no State, group of States or organization can be given primary responsibility for maintaining peace in the OSCE area or consider any part of the OSCE area as its sphere of influence.

NATO ignored those commitments made by the Presidents and Prime Ministers of its member States and did the opposite, proclaiming its right to take any arbitrary action. An egregious example is the unlawful bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, including the use of depleted uranium, which subsequently caused a surge in cancer among Serbian citizens and NATO troops alike. Joe Biden was a senator at the time, and he said with pride on camera that he personally called for the bombing of Belgrade and the destroying of all bridges on the Drina River. And recently the United States Ambassador to Belgrade, through media outlets, called on the Serbs to turn the page and stop taking offence. The United States has a lot of experience with that. Japan has long been shamefully silent about who bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. School textbooks do not say a word about that. As we know, at the recent Group of Seven meeting, the United States Secretary

of State, Mr. Blinken, lamented with great pathos the suffering of the victims of the bombings, but failed to mention those who organized them. These are the “rules”. And no one dares contradict them. After the Second World War, there were dozens of criminal military ventures by Washington, without any attempt to secure multilateral legitimacy. The shameful invasion of Iraq by the United States-led coalition in 2003 was a violation of the United Nations Charter, as was the aggression against Libya in 2011. The result was the destruction of Statehood, hundreds of thousands of dead and rampant terrorism. Another blatant violation of the United Nations Charter was the United States intervention in the affairs of former States of the Soviet Union. Colour revolutions were organized in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. There was a brutal coup in Kyiv in 2014. In addition, there were also attempts to forcibly seize power in Belarus in 2020. Not only do the Anglo-Saxons — who are confidently leading the West — justify these criminal misadventures, but they also tout their policy of advancing democracy.

However, this is again done in accordance with their rules: they will recognize the independence of Kosovo without a referendum, but they will not recognize Crimea, despite the fact that there was a referendum there, and they will not touch the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands, because, as a British Foreign Secretary recently — and cleverly — claimed, there was an organized referendum there. This is laughable.

In order to abandon double standards, we call for all to adhere to consensual agreements that were agreed upon through the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States (General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV), annex) of 1970, which is still in force and which explicitly proclaims the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States and

“the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples ... possessed of [] governments representing the whole people belonging to the territory ...”.

Any objective observer can clearly see that the Nazi Kyiv regime can in no way be regarded as representing the “whole people belonging to the territory” who refused to accept the results of the brutal coup in February 2014. As a result of this, the putschists unleashed a war against them. Similarly, Pristina cannot claim to represent the interests of Kosovar Serbs, who

were promised autonomy by the European Union, just like Berlin and Paris promised special status for Donbas. The results of these promises are well known.

The Secretary-General eloquently stated this during the second Summit for Democracy on 29 March:

“Democracy flows from the United Nations Charter.

“Its opening invocation of “We the Peoples” reflects the fundamental source of legitimate authority: the consent of the governed.”

The key word in this context is “consent”.

In order to halt the war that was unleashed in the east of Ukraine as a result of the coup, multilateral efforts undertaken for the advancement of a peaceful settlement were enshrined in resolution 2202 (2015), with which the Security Council unanimously approved the Minsk agreements. These agreements were trampled upon by Kyiv and its western handlers, who themselves recently, cynically, and even with pride, recognized that they never intended to implement them. They simply wanted to gain time to funnel weapons into Ukraine for use against Russia. They therefore publicly proclaimed that they violated a multilateral obligation of all members of the United Nations enshrined in the Charter, requiring that all Members comply with the resolutions of Security Council.

Our subsequent action to prevent confrontation, including President Putin’s proposal from December 2021 for an agreement to be reached on multilateral mutual-security guarantees were high-handedly rejected. Nobody, we were told, can prevent NATO from embracing Ukraine.

For all of the years since the coup, despite our insistence, nobody, and certainly none of Kyiv’s handlers, brought Poroshenko or Zelenskyy or anyone in the Verkhovna Rada to their senses. On the contrary, through legislation, the Russian language, Russian education, Russian media outlets and Russian cultural and religious traditions were destroyed in direct violation of the Ukrainian Constitution and the universal conventions on the rights of national minorities. In parallel, through legislation and in day-to-day life, the Kyiv regime introduced Nazi practice and theory. It openly organized exuberant torch-bearing marches in the centre of Kyiv and other cities with SS division banners held high. The West watched with silent glee, because this was fully in line with United States plans to leverage the openly racist regime that they fostered

in the hope of comprehensively weakening Russia, with a strategic focus on eliminating competitors and sabotaging any scenarios seeking to promote fair multilateralism in world affairs.

Today, it is clear to all, even though it is not commonly discussed, that this not at all about Ukraine. It is about whether international relations will continue to be shaped through the establishment of a sound consensus on the basis of a balance of interests or through the aggressive and volatile advancement of hegemony.

We cannot consider the Ukrainian issue separately from the geopolitical context. Multilateralism provides for respect for the United Nations Charter and the interlinkage among its principles, which was mentioned previously. Russia has clearly announced the goals that it is pursuing through the special military operation: to eradicate the threats to our security, which were created for years by NATO representatives directly on our borders, and to protect people who have been deprived of their rights proclaimed through multilateral conventions from the Kyiv regime’s publicly announced threats to destroy and expel them from territories where their ancestors had lived for centuries.

We openly declared what and who we were fighting for. Amid the hysteria whipped up by the United States and the European Union, we would like to inquire: what were Washington and NATO doing in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya? Were there threats there to their security, their culture, their religions or their languages? What were the multilateral norms guiding them when they proclaimed the independence of Kosovo in violation of the principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and destroyed the economically stable States of Iraq and Libya, located thousands of miles from United States shores?

The multilateral system has been threatened by the shameless attempts by Western States to subjugate the Secretariat of the United Nations and other international institutions. There has always been a personnel imbalance there in favour of Western countries, but until recently the Secretariat has at least tried to maintain neutrality. Today, however, this imbalance has become chronic, and staff members of the Secretariat are taking more and more liberties with politically motivated conduct that is not befitting of international civil servants.

We urge the Secretary-General to ensure that all of his staff comply with impartiality in line with Article 100 of the United Nations Charter. We also urge the Secretariat leadership, when they are drafting documents on the aforementioned “Our Common Agenda” and the New Agenda for Peace, to be guided by the need to encourage Member States to find ways to seek consensus and to balance interests rather than to help to advance neoliberal concepts. Otherwise, instead of a multilateral agenda, there will be a deepening of a division between the “golden billion” and the international majority.

Speaking of multilateralism, we cannot be limited to the international context alone, just as we cannot disregard the international context when we talk about democracy. Double standards need to be abandoned, and multilateralism and democracy need to be respected, both within States and in their relations with one another. Everybody already knows that the West, in imposing its understanding of democracy on others, does not want to see the democratization of international relations on the basis of respect for the sovereign equality of States. But now, as it is trying to advance its own “rules” in the international arena, they are increasingly asphyxiating multilateralism and democracy at home, applying increasingly repressive tools for suppressing any dissent — as their criminal Kyiv regime has done, with the support of its teachers, the United States and its allies.

As was the case in the Cold War, we have reached a dangerous threshold, possibly even more dangerous than any we have seen before. The situation has worsened with the loss of trust in multilateralism. When the financial economic aggression of the West is destroying the benefits of globalization, and Washington and its allies have abandoned diplomacy, what they are asking for is to clarify international relations on the battlefield.

And this has all been done within the halls of the United Nations, which was created to prevent the horrors of war. The voices of responsible and sensible forces and the calls to show political wisdom and to revive the culture of dialogue are being muzzled by those who have decided to undermine the core principles of multilateral relations. We all need to return to the source and respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter in all its diversity and interlinkages.

Genuine multilateralism at present necessitates the adaptation of the United Nations to reflect the trends of the establishment of a multilateral architecture

of international relations. Expedited reform of the Security Council is needed to enhance representation of Asian, African, Latin American countries. The current excessive overrepresentation of the West in this main organ of the United Nations undermines the principle of multilateralism.

We call on all States that respect the Charter to join the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, established at Venezuela’s initiative. It is also important to tap into the constructive potential of the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Collective Security Treaty Organization are ready to contribute. And of course we support enhancing the use of the initiatives and positions of the regional associations of the countries of the global South. The Group of 20 could also play an important role in supporting multilateralism if its Western participants stopped distracting colleagues from pressing issues on its agenda in their efforts to suppress the topic of their responsibility for the crisis situations accumulating in the global economy. It is our shared responsibility to preserve the United Nations as a hard-won model of multilateralism and coordinated international policy. The key to success is working together, renouncing any claims to exceptionalism and once again ensuring respect for the sovereign equality of States. That is what we all signed up to when we ratified the Charter.

In 2021, President Putin proposed convening a summit of the permanent members of the Security Council, but although the leaders of China and France supported the initiative, it has unfortunately not yet been implemented. The proposal is directly related to multilateralism, and not because the five Powers possess any privileges over the rest but because of their special responsibility under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. And that is exactly what is now crucial to the United Nations-centric system, which is in danger of collapse thanks to the West’s actions. We are seeing ever-increasing concerns about this state of affairs in the numerous initiatives and ideas of the countries of the global South, in East and Southeast Asia, the Arab and the Muslim world generally and Africa and Latin America. We appreciate their sincere commitment to resolving every current issue through honest, concerted efforts aimed at harmonizing the balance of interests on the basis of the sovereign equality of States and the indivisibility of security.

In conclusion, I would like to address all the journalists who are covering today's open debate. Their colleagues from Russia's media outlets were denied entry here. The United States Embassy in Moscow mockingly informed them that they were ready to issue passports with visas the moment our plane took off. I therefore have an important request. I ask them to compensate for the absence of Russia's journalists and to try to do their reporting in such a way as give the world audience genuinely multilateral views and assessments.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Al Marar (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over today's meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing.

Our sustained commitment to effective multilateralism, based on international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, is essential to maintaining international peace and security, and defending the principles of the Charter is therefore vital to maintaining effective multilateralism. Those principles, including respect for every nation's sovereignty, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State are fundamental to the ability of the United Nations to take effective measures in accordance with the Charter.

That is now a vital issue as we see the world experiencing major challenges and the largest numbers of armed conflicts since 1945. The forced displacement of populations is at an all-time high. And as we struggle to keep the Earth's warming temperature within the 1.5°C goal, our international efforts to deal with the growing threats of extremism and terrorism are encountering great difficulties. If we are to address our common challenges and threats we have to promote dialogue and cooperation among nations. We must redouble our efforts to peacefully resolve conflicts and crises from Ukraine to the Sudan. In that context, the following three points are critical if multilateralism is to improve peoples' lives.

First, multilateralism must serve the wider United Nations membership, which reflects the rights and aspirations of the planet's 8 billion people and

should remain front and centre in our work. Yet our international polarization and competing interests mean that the multilateral system and its mechanisms often struggle to act effectively. Some Member States have always been able to influence multilateralism and its conduct, including how to establish its systems and whether or not they function in all of our interests. It is those same Member States that can prevent or realize the reforms needed to make multilateralism more effective. Our international institutions and structures are currently unable to address today's challenges, which means that we must reform our multilateral mechanisms, including the Security Council, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, with a view to improving their legitimacy and representativeness. Decisions should be made with vulnerable countries' participation, not just by taking their concerns into consideration. For example, the emerging discussions on reforming the international financial institutions so that they can better support the countries of the global South are encouraging developments in promoting equality among peoples and establishing stability worldwide.

Secondly, protecting global common goods must be a top priority. Facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes, promoting human security and devising collective solutions, even if they are only partial, are key to addressing the challenges facing humankind. We have recently seen some constructive initiatives aimed at promoting cooperation, but that type of forward-looking cooperation should be the norm rather than the exception. The historic High Seas Treaty, and before it the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, are specific examples of multilateral achievements that portend a better future for our peoples.

Thirdly and lastly, multilateralism cannot be merely an intergovernmental process. The perspectives of all stakeholders, including women and young people, must also help drive the relevant discussions. During the coronavirus disease pandemic, public-private partnerships in the United Arab Emirates, including Dubai Ports World and the International Humanitarian City, supported multilateral efforts to ensure the global distribution of medical equipment and coronavirus vaccines. As the incoming President of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we believe that the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, especially in vulnerable countries, is a

cornerstone of success. The input of women, young people, indigenous groups, scientists, academia and the private sector will be channelled across all the Conference's outcomes.

In conclusion, we stress that only by working together can we establish peace, stability and prosperity for all nations and peoples. That requires us to reform our multilateral system to ensure that we deliver on those peoples' aspirations.

Mr. Immongault (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I commend Russia for convening this important debate on how to make multilateralism more effective, and I thank the Secretary-General for doing an excellent job of outlining the issues at stake and their scope.

Today's open debate comes a week after the publication of the report of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism. The recommendations made by the members of the Board, appointed by the Secretary-General, reinforce our determination to strengthen the foundations of the international community's ability to live together for greater international solidarity, which forms the basis for the security and dignity of current and future generations. That quest for international solidarity is the matrix of the Charter of the United Nations. By endorsing it, every Member of the United Nations opted for indivisible security. By joining the United Nations, every nation of the world rejected the idea of disjointed nations or stratified and superimposed nations. A clear choice is made in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, in which we describe ourselves as we the peoples of the world, as links in the same chain — that of humankind.

That spirit should not only remain at the centre of the collective security system but also underpin our projection of sustainable development and shared prosperity. The ideal approach that carries humankind towards its common destiny is the multilateral approach. Multilateralism is an inclusive dynamic of global governance that is based on respect and consideration for the narrative of each nation, because every State matters, every community matters and every life matters. Our differences in size, scope or appearance are indispensable complementary factors that not only define us but also, and above all, make us relevant and viable within the concert of nations. Pandemics, economic fluctuations, global warming and so on are constant reminders of our interdependence and common destiny. More than ever before, our main threats are transnational and cross-border.

To meet the challenges ahead, our security architecture should reflect the current realities. We must update our international institutions, mindsets and perceptions of lasting peace, shared prosperity and coexistence. We must reinvent solutions to contemporary threats, including climate change and the chronic insecurity of fragile States. We must address the crisis of international solidarity, which fuels the underlying economic, humanitarian, health and food crises. Indeed, we cannot meet the challenges of the current century with the tools of a previous century. Regrettably, a continent such as Africa, the second-most densely populated continent, which according to estimates will account for at least one quarter of the world's population by 2050 and today accounts for almost 70 per cent of the Security Council's agenda, has no permanent seat in this decision-making organ, in which its security fate is sealed. Let us put an end to unsettling observations and make concrete proposals.

First, we must reform the Security Council without further delay to ensure that it reflects today's reality and can respond effectively to current and future challenges. Of course, as an African I hope that such reform will prioritize the Common African Position and its legitimate claim, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration. It is clear that Africa will not wait indefinitely on the chaos of an intergovernmental reform process, which in the eyes of our peoples is an endless distraction. In that regard, I echo the words spoken before the General Assembly last September by Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic and Head of State (see A/77/PV.6). He underscored that Africa will wait no longer. It is time for that unacceptable injustice to Africa to be redressed. We intend to submit our thoughts on the issue to Africa's critical mass.

Secondly, we must redefine our rules and mechanisms to adequately address the evolution of insecurity and terrorism. With regard to rules, we must ensure inclusiveness and solidarity and leave no room for double standards or a solidarity based on variable geometry. Furthermore, it is important that we conclusively address the root causes of conflicts and crises.

Thirdly, we must draw up a new social contract — a new global pact between generations, between those who govern and those being governed, and between the global and regional levels, with a special focus on the conditions of young people and women. In

that new social contract for the future, bridges must replace walls in all areas. Education must cast aside the shackles of ignorance and intolerance. Multilateralism must prevail over unilateralist postures. And dialogue must always prevail over antagonism. It is an illusion to believe that humankind will survive in the form of bubbles of security and prosperity surrounded by an ocean of insecurity and poverty. If that were the case, the inevitable alternative to peace and prosperity for all would inevitably put everyone in danger and lead to collective decline. As a matter of priority, we must build a shield of actions and initiatives to protect against, and ban each nation from, any plundering of resources or deprivation of human dignity, in order to restore to the peoples of the world their aspirations for security, prosperity and greater freedom.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the need to abandon any distrust of, or deviation from, multilateralism. Just as a number of monologues do not add up to a dialogue, so a collection of bilateral relations will never have the effect, let alone the virtues, of multilateral consultation. Multilateralism leads to fragmentation and the division of the world into blocs, whereas multilateralism's calling is to bring about unity and the building of bridges among we the peoples of the world. We must provide answers to the current and future generations that are commensurate with their legitimate aspirations to live in security, peace and greater dignity. Those answers are at hand, and they cannot and must not be delayed any longer.

Mr. Mbomba (Ghana): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Russia on Russia's presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We also welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and we thank him for his insightful remarks.

I would also like to note that we associate ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The multilateral system, which was fashioned out of the ashes of the Second World War, has no doubt been the cornerstone, with some exceptions, of relative peace, security and development across the world. Adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign equality of States and the prohibition of the use of force, has been a pillar of global

stability. Given the current disinformation, migration crises and food and energy insecurity, the world has not faced a more profound crisis since the Cold War. Structural impairments, including the debilitating impact of the veto system in the Security Council, the chronic lack of financing for development, the increase in geopolitical competition and the decline in international cooperation, have hobbled our efforts to renew global institutions and deepen multilateralism.

In the face of an easy willingness to reject or undermine our shared normative values and the principles of collaboration and collective action, we risk relapsing into a neo-Hobbesian state of nature. It is not too late to seek a way out of the increasingly confrontational politics, zero-sum games and egoistic, chaotic and brutish tendencies of recent years. It is in the interests of States, whether small or mighty, to safeguard the multilateral system, since the agreed international rules and institutions allow for all voices to be heard and provide the ability to influence the international order in less costly and more sustainable ways. Ghana therefore welcomes the focus of today's debate, which provides us with an opportunity to deliberate on ways in which we can defend the United Nations Charter and promote it with a view to establishing an effective multilateral system. In considering how we can enhance an effective rules-based multilateral system through the defence of the United Nations Charter, Ghana would like to share five main points.

First, while it is important to reaffirm our respective commitments to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, it is equally pertinent to take practical steps to enhance our responsiveness to the Charter's demands. In that regard, we urge for prioritizing a more inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach that enables all actors to adhere to the norms and values of the Charter. In our view, that should be devoid of politicization or any form of selectivity in its application. We cannot overemphasize the importance of ensuring that Member States embrace a principled approach to the application of the Charter's provisions, underpinned by a shared, good-faith understanding and interpretation. We must also prioritize the desires of all peoples of the world if we are to achieve a smooth transition to a fair and equitable global world order. The cynicism that some countries display in twisting those principles or bending them to their will may bring them short-term tactical advantages, but history shows that such gains are ephemeral.

Secondly, a candid recognition of the realities of our time should spur us all to embrace deliberate diplomatic action to build mutual trust consistent with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. As my compatriot Kofi Annan once said, our futures, prosperity and security are wrapped together more than ever before. No country, however wealthy or powerful, can stand on its own any longer. That reality should compel us to build bridges, not burn them, and to lay solid foundations for dialogue and consensus, including in discussing countries' strategic intentions. That will be critical if we are to avoid misjudgments and unhealthy competition, especially among the major military Powers.

In that context, it is also important to make earnest and genuine efforts to address the structural flaws in the multilateral system as part of the ongoing reform initiatives within the United Nations system, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the Security Council. As an African Member State, we have stated our positions and justified our arguments. Those who support a strengthened multilateral system have a responsibility to reciprocate and to work constructively and urgently in good faith to address, with us, the historical injustice done to the African continent, which is also one of the weaknesses in the multilateral structure

Thirdly, the multilateral system should be turbocharged by working to effectively implement our goals together with regional arrangements that share similar objectives. We must therefore enhance the implementation of Chapter VIII of the Charter, especially with regard to regional prevention. The United Nations has its strengths, but when it is unable to act, we must embrace the strengths of regional actors. For instance, we cannot attempt any legitimate resolution of the terrorism crisis on the African continent without collaboration between the institutions of the African Union and regional economic communities and initiatives such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Accra Initiative in the Sahel. It is also only fair that when those regional bodies stand up and offer to act, their burden should be shared with the principal body bearing that primary duty.

Fourthly, the prevailing global challenges are so interconnected and multidimensional that we need to enhance collaboration and joint consultation among our various institutions and promote coherence if we are to avoid negative consequences from global policies. In

our view that demands that we consult with institutions and processes outside the United Nations system, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, but also, as appropriate, with relevant civil-society organizations and responsible private-sector actors, in order to adequately address the pressing needs of people around the globe, especially in the developing world. That is important because when global crises occur, such as the financial and food crises that we are currently enduring, we know that down the road there may be greater manifestations of sociopolitical instability, diminished capacities for conflict management and further conflicts.

Lastly, we believe that the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), including its New Agenda for Peace, provides us with a forward-looking vision for reinvigorated, inclusive and effective multilateralism to tackle contemporary global challenges. Those initiatives can lay the groundwork for effective multilateralism if they prioritize investment in interventions aimed at addressing existing and emerging risks, including those associated with nuclear weapons and the disproportionate threat to the countries of the Global South. Furthermore, we should enhance the convening power of the United Nations in tackling our multifaceted problems, including climate threats, gender inequality in all its forms and the work of involving women and young people in peace processes, areas that are all germane to strengthening the responsiveness of the multilateral system.

In conclusion, Ghana believes that the tools available in the Charter remain indispensable to addressing the existing and emerging challenges of our time. What we have to do is to strategically harness and effectively deploy those tools, including Chapter VI, on the peaceful settlement of disputes. Ultimately, we need all Member States, including Council members, to demonstrate greater political will if we are to make meaningful progress in the defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

First of all, I would like to express our concern about the current violence in the Sudan, which is having an intolerable impact on the country's civilian population. Switzerland joins the call of the Secretary-General in that regard.

The adoption of the Charter of the United Nations on 26 June 1945 signified a fundamental paradigm shift. War, previously considered a legitimate means of conducting foreign policy, was prohibited; territorial expansion by force, previously the privilege of the great military Powers, was outlawed, and the prohibition of the use of force, coupled with the obligation to resolve conflicts peacefully, was revolutionary. Those principles placed all countries, no matter their size or might, on an equal, or almost equal, legal footing. The privileges of the great Powers were already being debated intensely in San Francisco, but were finally accepted on condition of a clear promise, which was the greater responsibility of the permanent members of the Council for international peace and security.

As Member States, we all subscribe to the principles and values of the Charter, and we reiterated that commitment in the excellent Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations. Yet the Charter is being violated on a massive scale. For more than a year, State sovereignty, territorial integrity and the prohibition of the use of force continue to be flouted by the military aggression of a permanent member of the Security Council against its neighbour. The most effective way to preserve multilateralism and the integrity of the Charter is therefore to respect it. Switzerland emphatically condemns the military aggression against Ukraine, and I reiterate here Switzerland's firm call on the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine without delay.

This open debate is presented as an opportunity for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to the Charter and to discuss the strengthening of multilateralism. That is our duty not only today but also every time we call for the protection of civilians, every time we condemn violations of international law and every time we urge the parties to a conflict to silence their weapons and return to the negotiating table.

That is our duty under the Geneva Conventions, which represent a success story of multilateralism because they are among the few international treaties that have been universally ratified. When those Conventions mark their seventy-fifth anniversary next year, States must take concrete steps to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law.

It is also a duty, in time of peace as well as in time of war, with respect to the human rights that serve to

protect human dignity. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year will be an opportunity to reaffirm its universality.

Switzerland is convinced that effective multilateralism remains the only way to achieve the vision of a peaceful and just world; a world where the rule of law prevails, not the law of the strongest and where human dignity is always — always — respected; and a world in which the entire population benefits from social and economic progress. We are convinced of that because respect for the Charter remains vital for a small or medium-sized State such as ours and for most States Members of the United Nations, regardless of whether the world is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar.

We are also convinced of that fact because the Charter and multilateralism have enabled humankind to make remarkable progress, including having averted, so far, a nuclear confrontation; decolonizing many regions of the world; reducing poverty; improving access to health-care and education systems; making economic progress; and even walking on the Moon and creating artificial intelligence.

We have managed, in this forum, to negotiate the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, if we finally implement them in full, could save our planet and give rise to greater equality for our children and grandchildren.

It is clear that the effectiveness of the Charter depends on the willingness of States to implement it, and that will is too often lacking. We are living in a period of polycrisis. The United Nations estimates that one in four young people are affected by violence or armed conflict, in situations ranging from air strikes on Khartoum, Bakhmut or Sagaing to sexual violence in Port-au-Prince or Goma or being deprived of an education in Kandahar.

The principles of the Charter are not a menu from which to pick and choose. We call for unconditional respect for international law by all actors in all circumstances, and we call for the courage to finally and seriously engage in reform of the multilateral system, including the Council, in order to restore confidence in and within that system. With *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and the New Agenda for Peace, we have not only a unique opportunity but also an urgent need. We must change the course of history quickly. With leadership, political will and confidence, we can do it.

History will judge whether we have lived up to the Charter. One can deny the facts, use cynical rhetoric and spread misinformation, but the memory of history cannot be deceived. It will judge us. The human family cannot heal until justice is done for the victims and trust is restored. That is also the very first recommendation of the report issued last week by the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism: rebuilding trust through inclusion and accountability.

That requires that we listen to one another. Let us hold a dialogue about what unites us — a constructive dialogue rather than discussions about the number of poles in the world, a dialogue that reminds us of the universal principles to which we have committed ourselves. There is no alternative to effective multilateralism — a universal, inclusive multilateralism based on international law.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I thank the Russian Federation for having organized this debate and the Secretary-General for his statement.

In these challenging times, we should reinforce our commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to international law and to multilateralism. As members of the Security Council, we have a particular responsibility in preserving the principles and values based on which the multilateral system has been collectively built over nearly eight decades.

The conflict in Ukraine has added enormous stress to the multilateral system, which was already subject to fresh challenges and growing dissent. The failure of the Council to effectively deal with yet another war falls short of Member States' expectations concerning its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and eventually ends up eroding its credibility.

The international community has already proved its ability to adapt and evolve in several areas, except in that of peace and security. For example, in 2008, after the global financial crisis, a group of countries decided to establish the Group of 20, which has proved to be a valuable framework for addressing new economic and financial challenges. Its deficiencies aside, such as the limited representation of African countries, it has since come to be one of the most representative bodies in the international community.

The Brazilian position on Council reform is known to all: we believe that its current composition, which reflects the balance of power as it was in 1945, is not compatible with current geopolitical realities. The African continent and our region, Latin America and the Caribbean, are not represented in the category of permanent members. That has resulted in this body's increasing lack of legitimacy to take decisions on the peace and security agenda and underscores the sense of frustration with the shortcomings of the United Nations system as a whole.

That is not, however, the only cause of the situation in which we find ourselves. In addition to the structural flaws of the Council, we cannot but notice a lesser disposition to engage in dialogue and diplomacy, in contravention of the spirit of the San Francisco Conference.

Since the beginning of our current mandate as an elected member of the Council, there have been many occasions on which the demand for sanctions has been the knee-jerk reaction to crisis situations. In most cases, those initiatives were preceded by unilateral coercive measures, which are illegal under international law and ineffective. In our discussions, due consideration is rarely given to the spin-off effects on third countries, especially those that already face strong economic, social and institutional challenges and have the most vulnerable populations.

Brazil rejects the pursuit of hegemonies, old or new. In line with Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, we condemn the threat or use of force as a means of resolving disputes, as we have seen in the case of Ukraine. We also condemn the more subtle attempts to impose the will of the few on the many on the basis of concepts of dubious multilateral standing. We refute conceptions of the world that are based on simplistic divisions that fail to reflect the complexity of reality, an approach that does not benefit the vast majority of Member States and serves only to sow division among nations.

We advocate a return to the principles on which the Organization bases its very existence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, with an increased emphasis on peaceful means of ending conflicts. As a founding Member of the Organization, we have never and will never condone violations of Member States' territorial integrity.

We should not give up on diplomacy but, rather, seek solutions collectively to address the challenges of our times. Diplomacy and peace are the means and the purpose of the Security Council. We must not shy away from that responsibility.

The world is undergoing a process in which the international order is being redesigned. In our view, we are heading towards a sort of multipolar order that should be welcomed and nurtured, since it will benefit the whole of the international community. We are aware of the many shortcomings of the United Nations system, but we continue to trust in the centrality of the United Nations and its role in preserving peace and finding solutions to common challenges.

Brazil believes in the strength of the multilateral approach to issues such as the climate emergency and development needs, respecting the diversity of points of view and national positions. It is essential, however, that we engage in an earnest debate about the need for a renewed multilateralism, in particular in the field of peace and security, setting aside practices that will only deepen divisions instead of contributing to a more peaceful world.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique wishes to reiterate our hearty congratulations to Russia on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are delighted to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting.

We warmly welcome the initiative by the Russian Federation of convening an open debate on today's theme and express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his important briefing.

It is universally recognized that the creation of the United Nations represented a turning point in humankind's attitude towards mutual cooperation for peace and security. The Charter, signed on 26 June 1945 in the aftermath of the bloody and tragic Second World War, clearly affirmed the importance of multilateralism. It proclaimed unambiguously therein the will and determination of "we the peoples of the United Nations".

Furthermore, the Charter listed four purposes of the Organization, the last one of which sums them all up and is set out as follows in Article 1, paragraph 4: "To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in

the attainment of these common ends". That was, in our view, the birth of the new multilateralism that guides modern-day interactions among States and nations.

It is our conviction that the overriding objective of that multilateralism is to fulfil the purposes of the United Nations, chief among them the maintenance of international peace and security. That brings to mind the old saying to the effect that war appears to be as old as humankind, but peace is a modern invention. That also resonates with Article 2, paragraph 4, of our Charter, which represents a new approach to war in its nature, an invention of the Charter that we agreed to abide by.

It is our understanding that in that provision of the Charter, the founding mission of the United Nations was to provide all its Member States with a solid basis of equal security. Our Organization would thus become a forum in which we could work together to resolve disputes peacefully and to prevent the outbreak of another world war. In sum, the Charter proclaimed the overriding importance of collective security.

In that context, the equal and indivisible security of States is at the core of the collective security consecrated by the Charter in its letter and its spirit. Collective security means that the security of one is the security of all and that security, in our globalized world, is also a global concept, a global good that cannot be divided or fragmented. That is why in our view Article 51, on individual or collective self-defence, comes as an exception and a reminder of the fact that all States deserve to live in peace and security.

In that connection, it is our view that relations among nations should be based on respect for the principles of equal rights and of the self-determination of peoples.

As the most representative intergovernmental organization and the utmost expression of multilateralism, the United Nations is the main forum for addressing multifaceted and complex global challenges through collective action. Any profound divisions among Member States can therefore only undermine the important endeavour that the founders of the United Nations undertook to advance in 1945.

In that regard, multilateralism, unlike unilateralism, implies adherence to common principles and objectives, founded on respect for a system of shared norms and values and guided by the principles of consultation, inclusion and solidarity among nations.

The current global security challenges, such as inter-State wars, intra-State conflicts, terrorism, transnational organized crime, the proliferation of weapons, limited peacekeeping capacity and financing, divided and competing collective security systems and nuclear disarmament, among others, require a concerted approach and a reinforcing of the role of multilateralism.

Divisions in our approach to the collective security architecture and mistrust can only undermine dialogue. They hamper our efforts for the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts. They further weaken the collective resolve of our universal Organization to effectively achieve its objectives.

As Mozambique has stated in this Chamber time and again, peace is a global good. Its preservation requires our concerted efforts. With the positive cooperation of States, we can find concerted and harmonized ways to address most of the current and pressing conflicts around the world, including in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, on the Korean peninsula and even in Europe and beyond.

Let us not forget the tragedies of the two World Wars, the first of which claimed the lives of 9 million people and the second more than 60 million. We see no reason whatsoever why that should be repeated.

What I mentioned also bears testimony to the fact that the United Nations, especially the Security Council, must be reformed in order to be more inclusive, effective, just, fair and democratic. Only in that manner can we collectively address the current geopolitical and security challenges facing humankind.

More important, it is a simple corollary of the fundamental principle of the sovereign equality of States that the Charter so clearly expounds. We value democracy at the national level, and it must also be valid at the international level.

Mozambique therefore reiterates its call for a reform of the Security Council that takes into account the African Common Position, based on the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

In addition, the Council must improve its working methods. It must enhance its capacity to deliver in the interest of all humankind. That means taking actions that can bring about positive change and promote peace and security around the world.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that in order for multilateralism to prosper and be more effective, the United Nations and the entire membership must abide by and uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at all times. Multilateralism must be reinvigorated in the interests of humankind as a whole in order to address today's global challenges. Multilateralism is at the core of our Charter's calling.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Let me start by thanking Secretary-General Guterres for his remarks and thanking him and the entire United Nations system for all the efforts made to promote peace and security and to support the Charter of the United Nations.

I also thank colleagues for coming together to talk about how we can defend the Charter and make multilateralism more effective. This is a serious topic, even if the meeting was convened by a Council member whose actions demonstrate a blatant disregard for the Charter of the United Nations.

At the United Nations, if one asks a difficult policy question, one gets 193 different answers. That makes our work challenging. But it is also right, because, after all, that is what the United Nations is all about: Member States can work through disagreements, find common ground and see where we can make progress together.

There are some things we are not meant to disagree about. There are some values and principles that are so fundamental, so critical to our purpose, that signing on to them is the price of admission to the United Nations. Those are the values laid out in the Charter of the United Nations, a Charter that we have all sworn to uphold and to protect, and it is quite clear what those values are.

That little blue book is written in plain language. It spells out our purposes and principles in its very first chapter. I will quote from Article 1:

“The Purposes of the United Nations are:

“To maintain international peace and security... to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples...to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems... [and] promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms”.

Article 2, paragraph 4, states clearly:

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State”.

Territorial integrity, respect for human rights, international cooperation: those are our values. They are the shared, stated principles that we all agreed to uphold — all of us. It is our belief in them that binds us together.

Those principles have been the basis for the greatest triumphs of the United Nations over the past eight decades. Despite the international system’s imperfections, our shared principles have helped us curtail nuclear proliferation, prevent mass atrocities and forge peace through negotiation and mediation. They have undergirded an international order that has helped us provide humanitarian aid to those in desperate need, to lift more than a billion people out of poverty and to prevent another world war.

Right now as much as ever, the world needs an effective United Nations and effective multilateralism. Challenges such as the climate crisis, the global food-security crisis and the coronavirus disease pandemic are exactly the kinds of borderless challenges that we need the United Nations to tackle.

And yet, right when the world needed the United Nations most, we were plunged into a crisis of confidence. Our hypocritical convener today, Russia, invaded its neighbour Ukraine and struck at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations and all the values we hold dear. That illegal, unprovoked and unnecessary war runs directly counter to our most shared principles: that a war of aggression and territorial conquest is never, ever acceptable. And as we sit here, that aggression continues. As we sit here, Russian forces continue to kill and injure civilians. As we sit here, Russian forces are destroying Ukraine’s critical infrastructure. As we sit here, we brace ourselves for the next Bucha, the next Mariupol, the next Kherson, the next war crime, the next unconscionable atrocity.

One hundred forty-one United Nations Member States have made it abundantly clear: Russia’s full-scale invasion was not about self-defence. Russia simply wants to redraw international borders by force in violation of the very Charter of the United Nations. And that goes against everything this institution stands for.

This does not concern just Ukraine or Europe. It concerns all of us, because today it is Ukraine, but tomorrow it could be another country, another small nation that is invaded by its larger neighbour. And what would we want the Security Council to do in response? Would we want to sit on our hands? No. It is the very reason the Charter of the United Nations was written in the first place.

And, unfortunately, Russia has shown us, consistently, over the past 14 months, that this invasion is not an isolated incident. In the past 14 months, Russia has weaponized global food supplies and obstructed the Black Sea Grain Initiative from achieving its full potential. Russia has breached its obligations under the New START Treaty and issued dangerous and provocative nuclear threats. Russia has violated universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, both outside and inside its own borders. It has violated international law. That includes the wrongful detention of American citizens: Paul Whelan, Trevor Reed, Brittney Griner and now, Evan Gershkovich. Trevor and Brittney are now, thankfully, home safe and sound. But Russia has imprisoned Paul Whelan and is now detaining Evan Gershkovich to use as political bargaining chips, human pawns. Paul was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Evan is a journalist. He was just doing his job. Using people as pawns is a strategy of weakness. Those are not the actions of a responsible country, and while Russia plays political games, real people suffer.

I want to direct Council members’ attention to the gallery, where today we are joined by Paul’s sister, Elizabeth. I want Minister Lavrov to look into her eyes and see her suffering. I want him to see what it is like to miss one’s brother for four years, to know he is locked up in a Russian penal colony simply because Russia wants to use him for its own means.

I am calling on Russia right now to release Paul Whelan and Evan Gershkovich immediately, to let Paul and Evan come home and to cease this barbaric practice once and for all.

While Russia may be undermining the Charter of the United Nations and this institution, the rest of us can and must do better. The United Nations needs reform — Council members have heard that. To support and maintain its fundamental principles, this body must evolve to meet the twenty-first century. As part of that evolution, the Security Council needs to better reflect

today's global realities. We must find credible, sensible and politically viable paths to that end. And while we work to forge those paths, those of us on the Security Council have a duty to do more and to do better.

As all Council members know, in San Francisco last year, I announced six principles for responsible behaviour for Security Council permanent members. Those were standards we set for ourselves, that we welcome all to hold us to and that we encourage for other permanent members.

The United States believes in the United Nations and in the Charter. And that belief gives us faith that it can be made better still. Our response to Russia's flagrant violations cannot be to abandon this institution's founding principles. Instead, we must recommit to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and peace and security and use those principles as guideposts as we strengthen the United Nations and make it fit for the purposes of the twenty-first century. We must reform this institution and support efforts, such as the Secretary-General's ambitious *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) initiative, to modernize the multilateral system.

We must not shirk our responsibilities to address threats by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to international peace and security.

We must forcefully address the situation in the Sudan, as we heard the call from the Secretary-General for peace and a cessation of hostilities.

We must use our platform to call out aggression and human rights violations wherever and whenever we see them. We must renew our commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, to heal the climate and to end poverty and hunger. That is the brighter future we hope to build.

We must rally behind the Charter of the United Nations, take our shared global challenges seriously, do everything in our power to be better neighbours and together create a more peaceful, more prosperous world for us all.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): At the outset, let me echo the strong concerns set out by the Secretary-General about the situation in the Sudan and the call for an immediate end to the violence. We have requested a Council meeting to address the situation tomorrow. I join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Minister Lavrov has called this meeting to share the Russian vision for the future of multilateralism. We have seen what Russia's idea of multilateralism means for the world. More than a year into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, President Putin has brought unimaginable suffering to that country while trampling on the Charter of the United Nations. Thousands of Ukrainians have been killed. Millions have been displaced. Across the world, billions have faced rocketing commodity prices and food insecurity.

It has been an unmitigated disaster for Russia too. Neither Russia nor its neighbours feel safer. Trust in Russia's promises to other States and to its own people is at a catastrophic low. Again and again the General Assembly has voted overwhelmingly to condemn Russia's invasion. President Putin can count the supporters of his war on one hand.

Russia has severely damaged its reputation in the international community, and now President Putin is threatening to move nuclear weapons into a neighbouring State.

For Russians, the world is getting smaller. Many tens of thousands of Russian men and women have been killed. Hundreds of thousands have been mobilized against their will; millions are fleeing the country to escape the draft. Independent journalists have been arrested; free speech has been crushed. Russia's economy is shrinking. Its army is in disarray, reliant on Wagner — an unaccountable mercenary group whose existence was denied a year ago, but who now offers the Russian Foreign Ministry advice on its Security Council presidency.

A Russian generation has lost its future, and the Russian Government cannot even explain why. Russia's justifications for the war — defeating Nazis and defending against bioweapons — are obvious falsehoods. Russia's claims to Ukraine's territory will never be recognized. For all of Minister Lavrov's claims about effective multilateralism, I see nothing effective or multilateral about Russia's foreign policy.

Multilateral institutions can and should evolve, the Security Council included, and, with the United Kingdom, it supports reforms to make it more effective and representative. Change must be underpinned by respect for the basic principles of the Charter, above all, the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The world also needs a free and safe Ukraine that can return to supplying the world with food. The United Kingdom will continue to stand together with Ukraine as it lawfully defends itself. Foreign Minister Lavrov claims that he is interested in ending the conflict as soon as possible. To do so, Russia must immediately remove its troops from all Ukrainian territory.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am honoured to speak as the representative of Mr. Qin Gang, State Councilor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

China thanks Russia as President of the Security Council for this month for its initiative to convene today's open debate and welcomes Foreign Minister Lavrov's presiding over this meeting. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing. I also agree with his assessment of the current challenges we are facing.

The world is standing at a historic crossroads now. Humanity is facing unprecedented global challenges. Acts of hegemony and bullying are causing colossal harm to the world. Bloc politics are creating huge divisions and confrontations. It has become all the more urgent and important to uphold the United Nations Charter. What is most needed now is for all countries to practice genuine multilateralism, strengthen unity under the banner of the United Nations, enhance the effectiveness of the global governance system, achieve common security, promote common development and open up our common future.

First, the authority of the United Nations Charter must be firmly safeguarded. The United Nations Charter is the cornerstone of the post-war international order. The principles of respecting sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, as stipulated in the Charter, have become the basic norms for governing modern international relations. The problems that have arisen in the world today are not because the United Nations Charter has become obsolete, but because its purposes and principles have not been effectively implemented.

The security and well-being of present and future generations of humankind still depend on the continued promotion of the spirit of the Charter and on the preservation of the status and role of the United Nations. To safeguard the authority and effectiveness of the Charter, we should not just do it in words, but also in deeds. We must not just have others do it, but start

with ourselves. We must not be half-hearted and do it selectively but do it all the time consistently. We must not have exclusive clubby circles, fabricate so-called democracy, confrontation and authoritarian narratives, and provoke geopolitical conflict, but advocate dialogue and cooperation and insist on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and resolve disputes by peaceful means.

Secondly, we must firmly uphold the international order underpinned by international law. The world has only one order, and that is the international order underpinned by international law. Faced with the great change and chaos in the world today, we must always be guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and use international law as the basis of our handling of international affairs. This is an important guarantee for upholding fairness and justice, addressing global challenges and safeguarding the sovereignty, security and development interests of all countries.

We oppose some countries distorting the meaning of international law, imposing their own will on the international community, packaging it as the so-called rules-based international order and wantonly violating the legitimate rights of other countries, in violation of the international rule of law. We also oppose the sidelining of international agreements, whether it is arbitrarily tearing them up or having double standards. There is no credibility to speak of in this regard. If a major Power arbitrarily turns important treaties and agreements that bear on international peace and security into dead letters, then not only will international law be eroded but the world will have no peace at all. In this regard, the relevant country should earnestly reflect on its actions.

Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure equal participation of all countries in international affairs. The international system with the United Nations at its core carries the common expectations of the world's peoples and should serve the interests of all countries. The United Nations cannot and should not serve the interests of only some countries, or even a few countries. It is unreasonable for citizens of one country to head some specialized United Nations agencies and international financial institutions on a long-term or even permanent basis.

The big change in the world is accelerating. The multipolar world is becoming a reality. The pace of democracy in international relations must also keep

up to truly reflect equality and enhance the equity and effectiveness of multilateralism. Developing countries, and African countries in particular, deserve to play a greater role in the United Nations. The right of developing countries to participation and decision-making must be ensured. We support the initiative of Secretary-General Guterres to reform the international financial institutions, and we must act immediately to improve the global governance system.

Fourthly, unilateral sanctions that violate international law must be resisted. Unilateral sanctions indiscriminately imposed by the United States and other countries outside the Council's mandate are entirely for maintaining their hegemony, technological monopoly and ideology. Their practice has no legal basis. This stands in sharp contrast to the development and progress of the world. Unilateral sanctions are like a rampaging monster constantly creating and aggravating humanitarian crises, violating the basic rights of women and children, hindering the development and progress of countries, especially small and medium-sized countries, and causing immense damage to the harmony and stability of international relations.

What is of greater concern is that unilateral sanctions, often in the name of upholding international law and implementing Council resolutions, have subjected the United Nations to unfounded accusations and weakened its authority for multilateralism. We once again urge the relevant countries to immediately stop unilateral sanctions. We call on the international community and all countries to uphold fairness, justice and independence and to jointly resist and counteract such illegal acts.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a responsible major Power, China has always adhered to genuine multilateralism. In complying with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international law and international relations, China has the best record. President Xi Jinping's concept of building a community with a shared future for humankind represents a fundamental direction for resolving the major challenges and problems of the world today. China will make every effort to promote the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative and to comprehensively promote Chinese modernization, participate in the work of the United Nations on all fronts and contribute to

promoting international solidarity and cooperation in jointly addressing challenges and safeguarding the common values of humankind. In the face of a world of intertwined changes and turmoil, China will move firmly in the right direction.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): At the outset, I would like to make it clear that multilateralism is at the very heart of the United Nations. There may be different views on multilateralism, but I hope that today's open debate is intended to unite us rather than divide us. No single Member State can solve today's global challenges alone. We need a collective, multilateral response. Multilateralism functions only when Member States work together based on mutual trust and cooperation, consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

It is an irony — even a tragedy — that the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, continues its unilateral aggression against Ukraine, while hosting an open debate on effective multilateralism through the defence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on the very International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. Russia's unprovoked, ongoing aggression is nothing but outright defiance of the principles of the Charter. The relentless use or threat of use of the veto that has accompanied that aggression has blocked the Security Council from making decisions, paralysing and discrediting the Council when the world most needs it to fulfil its responsibility.

Russia must first and foremost immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and equipment from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That has been the repeated demand of the General Assembly, supported by the 141 votes — an overwhelming majority of the Member States — cast in favour of resolution ES-11/6. Let me be clear: any attempt to unilaterally change the peacefully established status of a territory by force or coercion should not be tolerated anywhere in the world. Also, any statement — especially by a permanent member of the Council — that denies the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, its neighbours or any other Member State should not be tolerated.

The concept note (see S/2023/244) circulated by Russia for today's open debate does not contain a single word about Ukraine or the aggression against it, and instead merely criticizes many other previous crises

and invasions. There is no country with a flawless historical record — all of us should squarely face that reality and be humble about it. In that regard, using the term “multilateralism” solely to criticize selectively the chosen unilateral actions of other countries is to misuse or politicize it. Promoting such a narrative in an attempt to garner support for one’s own camp and legitimize one’s actions will only create further division among us and undermine the rule of law and multilateralism itself. Revitalizing and upholding multilateralism is more important than ever.

Let us remind ourselves that this is not the first time we have been divided. Every previous time, we found a path to overcome our divisions. Let us go therefore back to the starting point — the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the rule of law, which underpin effective multilateralism in a world of diversity. That is why Foreign Minister Hayashi reiterated in this Chamber in January his call for States to unite in support of the rule of law (see S/PV.9241). That is why Japan promotes the rule of law in the Security Council and beyond. International law, including the Charter and United Nations resolutions, must be respected, complied with and implemented in good faith by all. The United Nations should continue to be the bulwark of multilateralism. The Security Council should lead that work, not hamper it.

We have to admit that the United Nations has never been perfect. Nonetheless, we all need the United Nations as the core of multilateralism. We must strengthen the functions of the United Nations through reform in order to better reflect today’s reality rather than that of almost 80 years ago, as the Secretary-General just reminded us in his briefing. It has been long overdue for world leaders to declare with one voice the necessity for an early reform of the Security Council, as they did in 2005. We should redouble our efforts to achieve that goal at the earliest opportunity.

Japan fully supports the Secretary-General’s initiative *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and will continue to actively and constructively participate in the discussions on the New Agenda for Peace. I hope that the ambitious recommendations by the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism will promote lively discussions among Member States. The future of the United Nations and of multilateralism depends on us — the Member States. Let us seize it together.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): Built on the rubble of the Second World War, the multilateral international order created by the Charter of the United Nations is an instrument for peace, based on principles such as the sovereign equality of nations, respect for international law, the non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Today those principles are being violated and flouted. Multilateralism means agreeing to abide by the rules that we have collectively contributed to establish and that we have all chosen to uphold in order to preserve international peace and security. We must all respect our common Charter and the system of collective security established by it, based on the rule of law. We reiterate that the use of force, except in self-defence, is illegal.

But for Russia, the rule of law and the principles underlying multilateralism no longer seem to apply. Russia used force illegally in Georgia in 2008 and in Crimea and the Donbas in 2014, and it has been doing so for more than a year throughout Ukraine. Russia is violating the fundamental principles of the international order. It violates Ukraine’s State sovereignty and territorial integrity; it systematically and deliberately violates international humanitarian law by targeting civilians; it violates international human rights law by deporting Ukrainian children and committing torture and other atrocities; and it violates the arms embargoes decided by the Security Council by procuring drones from Iran to indiscriminately bomb civilian infrastructure, in violation of resolution 2231 (2015). The General Assembly has unequivocally and overwhelmingly condemned those violations of our Charter. In particular, it has demanded that Russia end its aggression without delay and withdraw its troops.

If Russia really wants to defend multilateralism, it must actually respect international rules and international law and it must stop violating the Charter. If Russia truly wants to defend multilateralism, it must end its war of aggression, which has serious consequences for Ukraine and the whole world. If Russia truly wants to defend multilateralism, it must immediately withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory. If Russia truly wants to defend multilateralism, it must commit in good faith to the quest for peace. If Russia truly wants to defend multilateralism, it must respect the decisions of international courts, including the International Court of Justice, which has been clear on the issue since 16 March 2022.

Considering the scale of the challenges of our century, whether on the security, health, environmental or technological fronts, only collective responses can be effective. We must restore stability and overcome crises such as the tragedy unfolding in the Sudan by defending an ambitious multilateralism that protects the interests of our nations and peoples, as well as the common good of humankind. Only through strict adherence to the principles of international law and enhanced cooperation can we collectively maintain international peace and security. The law of might makes right protects no one.

We support international institutions and their reforms aimed at adapting global governance to today's challenges. That is the reason for reforming the Security Council, whose enlargement France supports. In addition, together with Mexico, we have put forward an initiative for the five permanent members to collectively and voluntarily suspend the use of the veto when mass atrocities are at issue. We call on all Member States to endorse that initiative, which is already supported by 106 countries.

France shares the Secretary-General's views on the future of our planet and populations. We contributed to the adoption of the New Agenda for Peace and are fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We remain committed to global health, education, combating food insecurity and climate change and the protection of biodiversity on land and at sea. Together with Costa Rica, we will host the United Nations Ocean Conference in 2025. In June we will also host a summit in Paris that should enable us to conclude a new global financial pact in a context where Russia's aggression in Ukraine has seriously exacerbated the situation in countries that are most vulnerable to the food crisis.

France promotes and supports ambitious action for gender equality, including through the Council's women and peace and security agenda. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and fully back his recommendations for *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which calls for an inclusive and effective multilateralism to better respond to humankind's most urgent challenges. Let us continue to demand respect for our common rules. Let us continue to take action for international peace and security. Let us continue to support and promote initiatives that truly benefit international solidarity and international law.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I too thank the Secretary-General for sharing his thoughts and insights with us today.

Over the years, multilateral institutions, with the United Nations at their heart, have promoted cooperation and brought prosperity and stability. To ensure that our institutions continue to serve us well, we must recommit to a revitalized multilateral system and uphold the fundamental principles underpinning them, especially at a time when they are being undermined. We need it to help us address the unprecedented global challenges we are facing.

Enhanced cooperation among multilateral organizations at the international and regional levels, with the United Nations at the core of that work, is especially important in the areas of peace and security and sustainable development. Malta is a strong advocate for the integrity, independence and functionality of the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. Human rights are universal and indivisible. A transformational shift in global governance to respond to growing inequalities is also needed. Building equality through multilateralism requires the full, equal and meaningful participation of women to promote gender-transformative actions and agreements.

I would like to make some observations on the concept note (see S/2023/244) circulated ahead of today's meeting.

First, it is important to highlight that since the creation of our Organization, the world has been widely guided by the Charter of the United Nations and its fundamental principles, among which we find the principle of the sovereign equality of States. It is also worth highlighting that according to the 1970 United Nations Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, there is no conflict between the principles of international law because they are interrelated, and each principle should be construed in the context of the other principles. In that context, we can never accept the results of last year's illegal referendums engineered by Russia as a pretext for the further violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Neither can we recognize the so-called republics emerging from Russia's illegitimate acts towards Ukraine and their "striving for independence or 'strategic autonomy'", as indicated in the concept note. On the contrary, such actions contribute to the unravelling of the rules-based order.

Secondly, it is deeply worrisome that the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, blatantly disregarded the Council's primary function of maintaining international peace and security when it launched its aggression against Ukraine. Nor can we forget that its illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war has generated one of the worst refugee crises since the Second World War, along with a global grain shortage, hundreds of thousands of people killed or injured, forced deportations of children, worldwide anxiety about a nuclear disaster and damage to the Council's credibility. Today we once again urge the Russian Federation to stop the war, withdraw its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and turn to dialogue and diplomacy as the tools that can bring stability to the region.

As an elected member of the Security Council, Malta firmly believes in making use in good faith of the toolbox for the peaceful settlement of disputes as outlined in Article 33 of the Charter. In that context, there is also space for the Security Council to strengthen its cooperation with the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. With regard to reforming the Security Council, Malta is firm in its belief that the Council should reflect today's realities and challenges. If it is to respond to true multilateralism, we underline that it is also important for the Council to be more inclusive.

Malta is a strong supporter of the standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Council. In the same vein, we also fully support the political declaration on the suspension of veto powers launched by France and Mexico, as well as the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. Finally, Malta unequivocally supports the Secretary-General's key proposals in the report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), as well as all the current related negotiations on advancing the work of the Organization and enhancing the constructive power of multilateralism, together with the work of the High-level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, established by the Secretary-General in March of last year.

In preparation for the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit, we underscore the need for the international community to take stock of the progress it has achieved so far and the gaps that remain, while engaging in intensive multilateral efforts

to bring the implementation of the SDGs back on track. We also look forward to the September 2024 Summit of the Future and to advancing ideas for governance arrangements in areas of global commons.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking Secretary-General António Guterres for his statement.

I would also like to underscore the importance of the topic we are discussing, which complements the debate organized by India in December 2022 on a new orientation for a reformed multilateralism (see S/PV.9220), the meeting organized by China in May 2021 on upholding multilateralism and the United Nations-centred international system (see S/2021/456) and even the debate organized by Viet Nam in January 2020 on upholding the Charter of the United Nations in order to maintain international peace and security (S/PV.8699). In other words, year after year, this Chamber has borne witness to States agreeing on the need for effective multilateralism in order to better defend the Charter. The problem is that, instead of decreasing, since January 2020 the number of conflicts has increased, despite the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. If we are to talk about multilateralism, it is time to transform words into action and speeches into deeds. After the tragic experiences that led humankind into two world wars, we enshrined multilateralism through the same Charter of the United Nations that we defend today. Never again would it be permissible for any nation, no matter how powerful, to jeopardize the peace and security of another nation, or of the world at large, simply because it suited its interests or ambitions.

The obligation and principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes is central, as recalled by the Security Council in presidential statement S/PRST/2022/3, of 6 May 2022, which was issued in connection with its consideration of the item entitled "Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine". In just two weeks' time, it will be the first anniversary of that statement, which has yet to be implemented. Another central principle of the Charter, which is sacred for States, is the inviolability of territorial integrity. In that sense, the debate that brings us together today will have been useless if at the end of it there is not one fewer conflict, one fewer war or one fewer invasion. What better outcome could today's debate have than the determination of your country, Mr. President, to end the military aggression against Ukraine, as ordered by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022? What

better legacy could your presidency have, Mr. President, than your Government choosing to return to the path of peace and withdrawing its occupying troops?

None of the pretexts invoked for attacking Ukraine in violation of the Charter have any legal basis whatsoever. We have been told in this Chamber, for example, that the invasion of Ukraine is a response to an alleged phobia of Russian culture. We have been told that the invasion is in response to an alleged plot by the West to weaken the President's country. We are told that Russia is acting in self-defence against Ukraine's anti-Russian policies towards certain inhabitants. As I just said, none of those arguments has any basis in the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter, we must remember, is one, indivisible and universal. There is not one Charter for the West, one for the East, one for the North and one for the South. There is not one United Nations Charter for Muslims, one for Christians and one for Jews. Neither can there be one Charter for Africa, one for Europe and one for America, and so on. No — the Charter is, I repeat, one, indivisible and universal. We cannot fail to recognize Russia's enormous contribution, including that of the great exponents of its culture, such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Pushkin and Pasternak. Neither can we imagine for one minute that they would agree with the death and pain that this absurd war has brought to millions of people.

The concept note for this debate (see S/2023/244) raises the question of how the United Nations can contribute to a smooth transition to a just and equitable world order. Rest assured that war and violence will in no way lead to an order that is more just and equitable, but one that is less so. Global military spending exceeded \$2 trillion in 2022, single-handedly undermining the core objectives of multilateralism and of this Organization, namely, peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. Worse still, nuclear weapons have no place in a law-based international order and challenge the very existence of humankind. We cannot therefore speak of effective multilateralism unless we move towards effective arms control and disarmament. Even Article 26 of the Charter refers to the least possible diversion of the world's human and economic resources into armaments. Let us silence the guns and honour the promise of peace we made in San Francisco, as well as our commitment to live together as good neighbours. What greater enemy of multilateralism is there than treating the world like a round of Risk or some such board game?

That was the way in which the colonial Powers of the nineteenth century and the fascist and Nazi regimes of the twentieth century understood the world as they invaded and annexed other nations and subjugated them by force, sometimes by resorting to shameful referendums to give the appearance of legality. Such practices are not only incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations but ethically intolerable.

Ecuador cannot remain silent in this situation and is committed to supporting the reform of the Security Council and the establishment of a New Agenda for Peace. But make no mistake: any institutional framework, however modern it may be, and any planning tool, however strategic and up-to-date it may be, will be reduced to empty gestures if they are not accompanied by a change in behaviour on the part of States. In that regard, the permanent members of the Council have an obligation to exercise responsible leadership that understands and respects the principle of *res communis omnium*, whereby our common heritage cannot be appropriated by one entity since it is for the shared use of all States in the international community. As former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali put it, only one power is left that can impose order on incipient chaos: it is the power of the principles that transcend the changing perceptions of expediency.

In conclusion, I must recall that multilateralism is not an end but a means upon which the women and girls in Haiti, Colombia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, the Sudan and Somalia, all of us and all of our nations depend. Let us defend the Charter of the United Nations by practising restraint and tolerance and maintaining and consolidating peace. As the Secretary-General reminds us in *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), peace is a global public good that we must protect and manage.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his remarks and paying tribute to his tireless efforts, as well as to his clear, strong and always principled position in favour of peace and security, multilateralism and respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

Four hundred years ago, François de La Rochefoucauld said: "Hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue". Fast forward to this meeting and the flagrant contradiction in which we find ourselves today. A permanent member of the Security Council has openly and defiantly disregarded the Charter of the United Nations. That very country has knowingly and

willingly transgressed every rule commonly established with regard to relations among States. It has ignored Security Council resolutions and its own international commitments, and yet it has chosen to lecture the world about multilateralism, as we heard today.

I could go on with generalities or repeat many important issues mentioned by colleagues around the table, but I prefer to recall the simplest facts. Russia is waging an unjust, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against a sovereign nation. It is questioning that nation's right to exist and has the audacity to pretend to come to the rescue of sovereign equality. The Russian military and the Wagner Group are committing horrible crimes in Ukraine, as documented by the United Nations, while Russia pretends to defend universal values. Russian missiles are destroying residential areas, killing civilians and flattening schools, health facilities and other civilian infrastructure to force an entire country into submission. And Russia has come here to share its views about friendly relations and cooperation among States. If it were not for the thousands of innocent victims, the millions forcibly displaced, the countless children stripped of their dreams and deprived of their childhood, the immense pain of the tortured, the women raped and the families torn apart, it would be a parody — something that Monty Python might have entitled *Preserving the United Nations Charter, Russian-style: shred it and store it six feet under*. Unfortunately, this is not a parody, and we cannot laugh. What has happened in Ukraine is a tragedy — a human-made catastrophe with serious security repercussions in Europe and detrimental ripple effects around the world. It represents the opposite of everything we stand for and everything that brings us together here. No peace-loving nation will buy an artificial parallel reality engineered to transform an aggressor into a defender of the Charter, an arsonist into a firefighter or a warmonger into a peacemaker. That is the real issue, and it is what we think we should be talking about, especially today.

The ongoing war in Ukraine and the current global reality are putting in question the fundamental question of multilateralism, its future and our ability to defend it. Almost eight decades have clearly shown that multilateralism has continued to be indispensable to promoting peace and stability, upholding the rule of law and promoting and protecting human rights. Today we need multilateralism more than ever, because we know that global challenges require global solutions

and that we can achieve more by working together rather than by pursuing our interests individually. No one country, regardless of its size or wealth, will be able to deal successfully with climate change, transnational terrorism or future pandemics. That requires a genuine commitment to international cooperation, diplomacy and compromise and the firm recognition that no country can achieve its goals at others' expense. That requires defending and standing by what we have agreed, respecting international commitments and condemning those who abuse and deform their spirit in the guise of defending it.

The United Nations needs reform in order to strengthen it and make it more efficient and more effective, not to undo it. We do not want a world fuelled by resuscitated imperial appetites, a world fragmented by new rivalries rather than one united in purpose. The number of poles will be meaningless and ridiculous if we fail to address the fundamental challenges posed by climate change and environmental deterioration. The General Assembly has affirmed many times that it will not accept a future where might dictates right and that it will not be trolled by cynical semantics whereby an aggression is labelled a "special operation" and crimes are disguised as "special care". Yes, let us call a spade a spade, since hypocrisy is nothing more than the audacity to preach integrity through depravity.

And unfortunately there was a ton of it from Russia today, in a toxic mixture of everything that fits its propaganda. In particular, it has become a Russian obsession to refer to the Republic of Kosovo, a country recognized as such by more than half of the United Nations membership, in justifying its unlawful actions in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine since 2014 — which, as we all know, are still going on at this moment. The International Court of Justice has ruled that Kosovo's independence is in accordance with international law. The Court has also asked Russia to stop its war. And there is nothing that sounds hollower than the desperate effort to justify the unjustifiable and the attempt to hide behind the unacceptable. As we know, you cannot hide the sun with your finger, and once again today we heard nothing on the key issue — under which article of the Charter has Russia attacked its neighbour and annexed parts of its territory by force?

If we want to maintain the United Nations as the cornerstone of the multilateral world, we need to show respect for one another, not contempt. We need to show

solidarity, not threats. We need to choose diplomacy and foster dialogue, not wage war. We need to work together to abide by our commitments. And we need justice through accountability for the crimes committed so that the perpetrators can be held to account. In today's terms of urgency, that means that Russia must end its war, withdraw its troops from Ukraine and respect the latter's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Peñalver Portal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statements to be delivered by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations. We welcome Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov and Deputy Foreign Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Ryabkov presiding over the Security Council today. We are grateful for the convening of this open debate as we commemorate the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, an initiative proposed in the General Assembly by our brother Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela during its chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement from 2016 to 2019.

In the current complex situation, dogged by escalating tensions and new forms of domination and hegemony, threats to international peace and security are growing and multilateralism is gradually weakening. The multidimensional global crisis, which has been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic, is having a greater impact on the countries of the South as a result of the unjust and unsustainable prevailing international order. Inequalities, social exclusion and poverty have deepened. Conflicts are proliferating, unconventional wars are increasing in number and the arms race is accelerating out of control. Attempts are being made to reimpose a unipolar order by disregarding international treaties and increasing unilateral coercive measures, together with other frequent violations of the Charter and international law, undermining peaceful coexistence among nations. In the face of that grim reality, we reaffirm the importance of combining our efforts to strengthen multilateralism, international cooperation and solidarity in order to overcome our shared challenges. We must urgently and meaningfully transform the United Nations, which will enable us to advance towards a democratic, just and

equitable international order that respects the sovereign equality of States for the benefit of present and future generations. We must promote a culture of peace that ensures the security and welfare of our nations. The role of the General Assembly must be revitalized and strengthened to enable it to do its work without interference from the Security Council. And we must reform the Council and make it a more transparent, inclusive, democratic and representative organ.

Multilateralism and full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law represent a path to guaranteeing peaceful coexistence, maintaining international peace and security and finding lasting solutions to systemic problems. The implementation of unilateral coercive measures and the establishment of spurious and arbitrary lists, such as those made up of States allegedly sponsoring terrorism in contravention of international law, must cease immediately. The world needs solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect, not blockades and sanctions. Cuba will steadfastly and consistently continue to defend the Charter and international law and uphold the provisions of the Declaration proclaiming Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace. In strictly adhering to those principles, we reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism and the preservation of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The convening of today's debate on effective multilateralism is timely, provided that we approach it in a comprehensive manner. In this regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his accurate diagnosis.

Mexico believes that multilateralism is important in addressing the common problems of humanity, but for it to be effective, it is essential that States respect and fulfil their obligations in full compliance with the rule of law. Only in this way will it be possible to deploy the multilateral mechanisms needed to prevent the weakening of the international order or to restore it when it has been broken. In this regard, the current challenges that call into question the effectiveness of multilateralism are enormous. The constant violations of the Charter of the United Nations, resolutions of the Security Council and obligations derived from treaties and political commitments put international peace and security at risk in a highly volatile dynamic.

As for violations of the Charter, the invasion of a sovereign country by another represents a flagrant violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter and constitutes an act of aggression under the terms of General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974. On the other hand, we also reiterate our concern over the frequent invocations of legitimate self-defence against non-State actors, which could be an abuse of Article 51 of the Charter.

We are faced with breaches of the system of collective security on which the United Nations and much of the world order is based. The frequent non-compliance with decisions of the Security Council without any major consequences undermines the Council's authority and credibility in the eyes of the international community and the peoples of the United Nations.

With regard to non-compliance with international treaties, we will mention only one example, but it is one that has historically been of the greatest concern to Mexico. More than 50 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the commitments made by the nuclear-weapon States under Article VI are still far from being fulfilled. The same is true of some political commitments. In the area of small arms and light weapons, for example, a matter of great interest to many countries, including my own, it is regrettable that effective measures to prevent, combat and eliminate illicit trafficking in these weapons have yet to be adopted. Even some of the major arms-producing countries allow or tolerate their proliferation and diversion, which is a major accelerator of conflicts around the world.

Effective multilateralism should therefore take measures to contain and reverse such situations. Unfortunately, this is difficult to achieve, especially in matters of international peace and security, when the Security Council is paralysed by the veto that only a few may exercise. Those with the veto power are able to halt the action of the international community as a whole.

Multilateral judicial bodies remain limited in scope. It is therefore necessary to achieve the universality of the Rome Statute, which created the International Criminal Court, as well as to advance in the acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. But reality shows us another side to the situation: after almost 80 years, fewer than half of the States Members of the United Nations accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

In short, discussions such as the ones we are having today are necessary and timely. But the challenges facing multilateralism go well beyond the limitations of the United Nations. As has already been said many times today, if we truly want to move towards a more effective multilateralism, preventive diplomacy and mediation must be real options, as should the ineluctable reform of the Security Council. For this reason, Mexico has submitted a proposal for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council so as to give impetus to the negotiations under way in the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Irvani (Islamic Republic of Iran): We acknowledge the Russian presidency of the Security Council for convening this important and timely open debate, and we thank Mr. Lavrov and the Secretary-General for their insightful views and briefings reaffirming the significance of multilateralism.

Multilateralism has been recognized as a well-established approach to addressing global challenges. Effective multilateralism, operating within the framework of the United Nations Charter, is essential for ensuring international peace and security. Achieving this requires a strong commitment to upholding international law, promoting transparency and accountability, and adhering to the principles outlined in the United Nations Charter.

The United Nations Charter established a comprehensive framework of principles and norms that Member States must adhere to in their relations with one another. These principles include the peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, the prohibition of the use of force and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. By abiding by these principles, Member States can promote a stable and secure international legal order that benefits all nations and peoples.

In the meantime, multilateralism must ensure the active participation of all nations, regardless of their size, wealth or political orientation. The exclusion of any country undermines the principle of inclusiveness

and may result in biased outcomes. All countries, especially those directly affected by decisions made through multilateral mechanisms, should have an equal opportunity to participate, contribute and be heard in decision-making processes.

The integrity and effectiveness of multilateralism are undermined by the abuse of the United Nations system and selective application of international law, as well as the use of unilateralism, which poses a serious threat to international cooperation, peace and security. Unilateral coercive measures, including their extraterritorial application, represent a concerning example of harmful unilateral acts that run counter to the fundamental principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and basic human rights. These illegal measures have far-reaching humanitarian consequences and can undermine diplomatic affairs aimed at resolving disputes and promoting cooperation.

Within this context, the unilateral withdrawal by the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, together with the imposition of illegal unilateral sanctions on Iran, and its coercion of other countries to engage in these illegal actions in defiance of the International Court of Justice order are striking examples of how such harmful unilateral acts violate the United Nations Charter, undermine the United Nations systems and threaten multilateralism.

In its recent judgment, on 30 March 2023, in the case concerning *Certain Iranian Assets (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)*, the International Court of Justice declared that the United States has violated its international obligations to the Iranian people by imposing unilateral sanctions that are deemed illegal under their international law. The International Court of Justice's ruling is final and binding, requiring the United States to comply with its decision.

In conclusion, collaboration, rather than confrontation, should be the cornerstone of multilateralism. Collaborative approaches foster trust, build consensus and promote sustainable solutions to global challenges. Through collaborative problem-solving and engagement with all parties, multilateralism can effectively address the challenges facing our world today. In this context, diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation should be the preferred means for resolving disputes among Member States.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, on Russia's presidency of the Security Council for the month of April, and we commend you for choosing this important topic for today's meeting. It is a topic to which Egypt attaches special importance, especially in the light of the complexities our world has been encountering, with multiple difficulties and challenges that require promoting cooperation within the international multilateral system. That would ensure its effectiveness and ability to address the challenges that affect developing countries, in particular African countries.

As we are talking today about strengthening multilateral action and restoring the effectiveness of the international system, as reflected in the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, we must first recall the history of the system and the objectives of the Charter that established it. The signing of the Charter, in 1945, represented a watershed moment in the history of humankind, during which the international community made a conscious decision to establish international relations on the basis of cooperation and consensus, upholding the values of justice, peace and coexistence and achieving an effective system for collective security, while acknowledging the principle of equality among all States in terms of sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Egypt has always been a major supporter of the multilateral international system and an influential factor in its stability. It was among the first countries to sign the Charter and played a pioneering role in the establishment of other international and regional organizations, in particular the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in addition to establishing effective groupings and alliances within international forums such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 and China. More than 75 years after the establishment of the United Nations, we have observed a number of practices that have infiltrated the multilateral international system and threaten the values on which it was founded. Allow me to mention some of what we see from those practices that represent reasons for concern about the future of the multilateral system.

First, there has been a remarkable retreat from the basic principles on which the United Nations was founded, and there have also been attempts to violate the principle of the sovereignty of States, as well as a constant endeavour to interfere in their internal affairs under various pretexts that differ according to the circumstances.

Secondly, we have seen some major Powers monopolize decision-making and international policymaking in dealing with specific cases, especially in Africa, without understanding the nature of the matters on the ground, without adequate consultation with the countries of the continent or coordination with their regional mechanisms, and with disregard for the developments that have occurred on the African continent over the past seven decades.

Thirdly, many countries have adopted double standards in their dealings with the draft resolutions submitted to the United Nations, as they determine their voting patterns not according to objective considerations and their consistency with the Charter but rather according to the parties involved in each issue and the nature of their political and strategic relations and their existing ties with each of them.

Fourthly, we have seen continuous attempts by a number of States to politicize international forums of a technical nature, which undermines the ability of those forums to act and weakens the ability of countries to achieve consensus, disrupting important aspects of international multilateral action, such as international trade, development efforts and confronting climate change.

Fifthly, we have seen continuous attempts by some States to downplay the main leadership role of all States and their contribution to multilateral international action on various issues by attributing greater importance to the actions of non-State actors, which is a very dangerous development. While we acknowledge the role of civil society and other non-State actors, their role must remain supportive of States and complement their efforts, and they must not act as a substitute for, or in opposition to, them.

Egypt believes that a comprehensive reform of the international multilateral system needs to be based on the following.

First, all States need to believe in peaceful coexistence based on justice, equality and the principles of the Charter. That constitutes the international

consensus that establishes the current international system, while developing those principles to address the ongoing challenges facing humankind.

Secondly, immediate action must be taken to reform the global economic governance system, at the heart of which are the Bretton Woods institutions and other international financial organizations. We need that reform in order to enable developing countries to face global challenges such as climate change and food security, in line with the initiative submitted by Egypt with the support of world leaders to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-seventh session, held in Sharm El-Sheikh last year, and on the basis of the need to reform the multilateral trade system.

Thirdly, we need to reconsider the collective security system represented by the Security Council, which no longer reflects the current international reality after decades of complex international practice. In that regard, Egypt supports the ongoing governmental negotiations to reform the Security Council and calls on all countries to adopt the comprehensive vision presented by Africa, based on the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, in a way that corrects the historical injustice against African countries and contributes to making the Security Council more just and representative for developing countries. In addition, there is a need to work with regional mechanisms and organizations.

Egypt has been actively engaging in current dialogues on the future of the international system and its repositioning in a changing world and follows with interest the valuable ideas and proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in policy papers and in preparation for the Summit of the Future, to be held next year, based on his report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). We look forward to contributing to a new agenda for peace through effective partnership with regional organizations. That is a window of opportunity that should not be wasted, and we will work on building international consensus in that regard during the upcoming year.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): First of all, Mr. President, it is a profound pleasure for me personally to see you preside over the Security Council today, and my delegation thanks you and the Russian presidency

for organizing this important debate on international security and effective multilateralism. We also thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing.

Today international peace and security is confronted by multiple threats arising from violations of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, great-Power rivalries, a renewed global arms race, the proliferation of conflicts and disputes and the spread of terrorism, hate and Islamophobia, as well as organized crime, rising poverty and growing climate impacts. We believe that those multidimensional and global challenges can be overcome only through multilateral cooperation.

We reject a unipolar, bipolar or even a so-called multipolar world if it is dominated by a few large and powerful States. Such an order would be contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. We seek effective multilateralism — a multilateral order constructed on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter, one in which every Member State has an equal voice and an equal stake.

At the same time, we must express our concern about some new concepts advanced in some of our discussions within the United Nations, such as “multi-stakeholder” and “networked” multilateralism. Those concepts, too, are contrary to the United Nations Charter, which envisages an international system composed of equal and sovereign Member States. Effective multilateralism can address the current and emerging threats to international peace and security. A critical part of that endeavour must be to promote universal and consistent respect for the fundamental principles of the Charter by all States, irrespective of their size, power or influence. To that end, the Secretary-General should prepare an annual review of situations on the Security Council’s agenda, outlining where the Charter’s principles and the resolutions of the Council are being violated or remain unimplemented. The Council must take bold decisions to secure the compliance of States with the Charter’s principles and its own resolutions and decisions. The Council has various means available to it under the Charter to secure such compliance.

The Secretary-General has rightly mentioned decolonization as a major achievement of the United Nations. Yet a prime illustration of derogation from the Charter and Security Council resolutions is the situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where the Kashmiri people’s exercise of their right to

self-determination, prescribed by the Security Council, has been subverted and suppressed by India over seven decades of force and fraud. Another is the situation in occupied Palestine. Protestations of commitment to the Charter ring hollow when no action is being taken to redress those blatant violations of the Charter and the resolutions of the Security Council on two issues that have remained on the Council’s agenda for the past 75 years.

Secondly, if the world is to avoid global catastrophe, it is now essential to redress the rising tensions between the major military Powers. We hope that a sincere effort will be made to end the war in Ukraine based on the Charter and international agreements. We hope that tensions will not be further provoked in Asia. We are concerned about the expansion of military alliances and the escalation of military expenditures and capabilities. Such developments also threaten peace and stability in South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

The Summit of the Future next year should reaffirm the solemn commitment, especially by the militarily significant States, to refraining from the use or threat of use of force, respecting the principles of the Charter, implementing Security Council resolutions, restraining military expenditures and provocative deployments and eschewing military blocs and alliances. Rising global tensions have undermined the entire edifice of arms control and disarmament. An uncontrolled arms race, which now encompasses several new weapons and arenas of competition, will sooner or later lead to a disastrous conflict involving States armed to the teeth with conventional and nuclear weapons. The United Nations can and should take the lead in reviving the process of arms control and disarmament, based on the consensus achieved in 1978 at the General Assembly’s first special session devoted to disarmament, whose central principles were equal security for all States, ensuring national security at the lowest possible level of armaments and the preservation of military balance and mutual restraint at the global and regional levels. We must also outlaw dangerous military doctrines, especially the presumption that conventional wars can be fought between nuclear-armed States without fear of nuclear escalation.

The Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General can do much more to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes through the multiple modalities available under Chapters VI, VII and VIII of the Charter. The New Agenda for Peace, mentioned

by the Secretary-General, should also address the fundamental causes of conflict, including poverty and hunger, foreign occupation and oppression, injustice, human rights violations and environmental and climate impacts.

Finally, effective multilateralism can be built only on the foundations of strong international institutions. The Security Council should be enlarged and become more representative, accountable, democratic, transparent and effective. It should not become an enlarged club of the large and powerful States. However, a reformed Security Council in itself offers no panacea for ensuring effective multilateralism. It must be accompanied by making full use of the considerable potential of the General Assembly, the activation of the United Nations disarmament machinery and, most critically, the reform and democratization of the Bretton Woods institutions. Effective multilateralism, in short, must be comprehensive, inclusive and equitable. Pakistan will work assiduously to promote such effective multilateralism, including in the preparations for the Summit of the Future next year.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Lagdameo (Philippines): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on multilateralism. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., recently stated that

“amid challenging global tides, an important ballast is the stabilization of our common vessel, that is, our open, inclusive and rules-based international order, governed by international law and informed by the principles of equity and justice” (*A/77/PV.5, p.3*).

With that in mind, and as a proud founding Member of the United Nations, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, its principles and firm adherence to the rule of law among nations. We reject any attempt to deny or redefine our common understanding of those principles. The landmark 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States represents our common understanding of those principles. In multilateralism, international law is a great equalizer.

For its part, the Philippines has made every possible effort to reinforce the predictability and stability of international law in addressing challenges to peace and security. International law provides a strong basis for dialogue and consensus in addressing differences. With the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we provided an example of how States should resolve their differences — through reason and through right. Resorting to the peaceful settlement of international disputes through arbitration and credible and competent international tribunals plays a key role in the interpretation of international norms and should not be seen as an unfriendly act among civilized nations.

Defending the Charter means adherence to its fundamental principles and compliance with international tribunals, as well as active engagement with United Nations processes, including through the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure constructive outcomes. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the Manila Declaration, which reaffirms fundamental principles of the Charter, including the obligation of all States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that justice and international peace and security are not endangered. As an initiative of non-aligned countries, the Manila Declaration remains as relevant as ever as we confront complex interrelated challenges to the rule of law and the Charter, including in the context of the New Agenda for Peace.

Fundamental to an effective multilateralism is an inclusive, transparent, reformed and representative Security Council. A reformed Council should be able to respond decisively and swiftly to twenty-first-century challenges and threats to international peace and security. It should highlight improved working methods aimed at ensuring greater participation by non-members. It should also involve an enhanced mechanism for consultations between the Security Council and regional groups and subgroups.

I would like to conclude by underscoring that for the Philippines, a people-centred multilateralism will thrive as a unifier and a platform for the inclusion and empowerment of nations and their citizens. People-centred multilateralism must be a constant, even as we continue to face global challenges amid geopolitical tensions and strategic competition. Multilateralism will be effective if we adhere to the principles that we deeply cherish — non-aggression, non-interference, peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and equality and mutual benefit.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Sabbagh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, who is presiding over this meeting. I also thank the Russian Federation for holding this important meeting, which is timely and substantive.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

Since its inception nearly 80 years ago, the United Nations system has been the principal face of multilateralism at the international level. The United Nations has directly contributed to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, decolonization, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, promoting efforts for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism. The Charter of the United Nations is clearly organized and includes specific benchmarks with regard to the work of its principal organs, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the other organs established by the Charter. The Charter also includes a number of provisions that regulate the mechanisms and mandates of all the organs that it creates. There is therefore a need for those organs, in discharging their mandates and activities, to abide by those provisions without departing from their mandates or encroaching on those of other organs. Any disruption or competition among those organs should also be avoided, whether at the decision-making level or at the level of the management of international crises and conflicts.

The mechanisms and working methods of the United Nations have significantly affected the development of friendly relations among Member States, which have also been influenced by the increasing number of challenges imposed by the changing reality of international relations. That calls for continuous and comprehensive reviews of those mechanisms and working methods in terms of their substance and procedures. The fundamental approach to promoting the work of the United Nations is based on true pluralism by enhancing the values of peace, resolving conflicts peacefully and establishing sovereign equality among

all Member States, as well as by enhancing development, economic cooperation and shared benefits. To achieve that objective, all Member States should abide by the founding principles of the United Nations system as reflected in its Charter, in addition to the provisions of international law and the established norms of international relations. Meanwhile, we must avoid using new terminology and concepts, such as the so-called “rules-based international system”, to evade the established provisions and principles of international law. Such terminology and concepts have never gained consensus among Member States.

The development and improvement of the work of the principal organs of the United Nations require more objectivity and informed planning in order to manage the discussions they conduct and address the items on their agenda. In recent years, the General Assembly has witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of items on its agenda, and there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of non-consensual resolutions adopted, while in many cases they are required to be put to a vote despite the substantial differences prevailing with regard to their substance and procedural content. The Security Council has also witnessed severe political polarization, especially on the part of a number of its permanent members, in the form of reframing from addressing important issues and priorities in an endeavour to divert the Security Council away from its primary mandate, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security, in order to serve their own narrow political interests and destructive agendas.

The multilateral system established by the United Nations has faced many challenges in addressing a number of political, economic and social crises during the past two decades. That was clear in its spectacular failure to prevent the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003; its inability to put an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people, who have languished under the yoke of the Israeli occupation for decades; its inability to address the increasing terrorist threats and the outbreaks of pandemics and diseases; and the worsening humanitarian suffering due to poverty, hunger, thirst and lack of health care. Preserving genuine multilateralism will require reforming the current structures, above all expanding the Security Council to be truly representative of the new reality in international relations and reforming financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to address the interests

of developing countries, especially the countries of the South. That will also require actively addressing any attempts to manipulate the provisions of the Charter and misinterpret them to justify interfering in the internal affairs of Member States or to fuel bloody conflicts and stoke chaos and terrorism, thereby increasing peoples' suffering and depriving them of opportunities for development.

During the past decade, my country, Syria, has been a victim of the loss of genuine multilateralism and the exploitation by a number of countries of the United Nations as a platform to serve their hostile and interfering policies in intervening in the affairs of Syria. Syria was left alone to face the threats of the most intractable and cruel terrorist groups. Its national resources and wealth were pillaged by foreign forces illegally present in its territories, not to mention the worsening humanitarian suffering of its people due to the unilateral compulsory measures imposed by the United States and the European Union, which are totally illegal, inhumane and immoral and have

adversely affected all aspects of daily life and given rise to significant numbers of displaced persons and refugees, thereby constituting grave violations of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that today we need more than ever to review the methods of work of the United Nations system and guarantee the promotion of true multilateralism based on the Charter, by upholding its purposes and principles and achieving the objectives that the founding fathers of the United Nations aspired to, and by upholding and promoting the efficiency and efficacy of its work in order to uphold its credibility at the international level.

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

The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m.