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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7539th meeting
Tuesday, 20 October 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi	(Spain)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Letter dated 15 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/793)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

Letter dated 15 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (5/2015/793)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, and His Excellency Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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/2015/793, which contains a letter dated 15 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, and I now give him the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: When people think about the United Nations, they often think of the Security Council. On it rests a heavy responsibility: to maintain international peace and security in a troubled, complex and interconnected world. The expectations of the Council and the United Nations as a whole are high around the world, and that is why a debate about its working methods is evidently of interest to many.

Let us recognize that the Council has adapted its working methods considerably over the years, from introducing Council missions to the field to informal interactive dialogues and open thematic debates, to name but a few examples.

The Secretariat has always been and will remain a vital partner of the Council. We provide detailed and, hopefully, actionable information on a wide range of issues on the Council's agenda. We translate the mandates of the Security Council into peacekeeping operations, special political missions, sanctions-monitoring groups and bodies such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria.

The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (S/2015/446) and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/682) provide recommendations on how such operations could be developed and improved. I want in particular to underline the proposals related to prevention and post-conflict measures, not least in the area of peacebuilding and development. Let us also recall that "peaceful societies" is a goal for the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Since the Secretariat facilitates the day-to-day deliberations of the Council, we must have a strong grasp of its working methods and working practice. While the Council, of course, decides on its own procedures, the Secretariat stands ready to provide institutional memory and advice to the rotating Council presidencies and to its other members.

An important interface between the Council and the Secretariat remains the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. The Working Group has given more transparency to

the Council's work through its crafting of notes, which are subsequently issued by the President, documenting trends of relevance to the wider United Nations membership, including troop- and police-contributing countries.

Let me mention some decisions of the Council on its working methods and the actions that the Secretariat has taken to implement them.

The Council has indicated that members of the Council and the Secretariat can continue to use the "any other business" agenda item to raise issues of concern. The Secretariat considers that to be a valuable practice. We have brought important matters to the Council's attention more than 20 times in the past two years.

In addition, the Department of Political Affairs has instituted a monthly practice of briefing Council members on situations that could become threats to international peace and security. Early-warning signals could, and in my view should, play an even more important role in preventing situations from deteriorating or spiralling out of control, as we have so often seen in recent years.

The Secretariat has also actively supported proposals to arrange briefings via secure video-teleconferences from United Nations offices around the world. The number of such video-teleconferences increased from one in 2009 to 41 in 2013, and to 101 in 2014. I have been part of that trend myself, and I think that it is a great innovation.

Furthermore, in response to calls from Council members and the wider membership, the Council website now offers a historical record of Council activities and information, for instance on reporting requirements and mandate renewals. The website also presents vital information on sanctioned individuals and entities in formats that are deemed useful to and by Member States.

The Council has also encouraged the early appointment of Chairs of its subsidiary bodies. It is important that the new Chairs be able to hit the ground running, with solid knowledge of the work of their Committees or Working Groups. Here, the Secretariat assists the outgoing Chairs in preparing documentation for the incoming Chairs. Following the election of five new Security Council members last week, that process will soon start again.

I should add that the Secretariat provides support to 16 sanctions Committees and 71 experts serving on 12 sanctions-monitoring panels. Identifying experts continues to be a time-consuming process. In response to calls from Member States to ensure geographical and other diversity, we have gradually expanded our roster of experts. In addition, the Secretariat is improving cooperation on sanctions through the Inter-agency Working Group on United Nations Sanctions, which brings together 24 United Nations entities.

As the Council, in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the Charter, intensifies its cooperation with regional organizations, the Secretariat is working in parallel to support the Council in those endeavours, not least vis-à-vis the African Union.

In closing, there is always room for improving any organization's working methods. The Secretariat looks forward to hearing the views of the other principal organs, Council members and the wider United Nations membership. We appreciate the transparency demonstrated by today's initiative. The work of the Security Council affects all Member States and people everywhere in a world where peace, development, and human rights are increasingly interrelated.

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

I now call on the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Lykketoft: It is an honour for me, as President of the General Assembly, to brief the Security Council during this annual debate on working methods. I do so in full appreciation of the privilege that this opportunity affords me as only the seventh Assembly President, I understand, to address the Council; the last time that took place was eight years ago. I thank the Spanish presidency and Ambassador Oyarzun Marchesi and each of the Council members for this opportunity.

We meet today as our Organization celebrates its seventieth anniversary. Indeed, on Friday we will mark the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations. We also meet today, three weeks after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) by world leaders, which is focused on addressing poverty and inequalities, combating climate change and environmental degradation, and strengthening institutions of justice and peace, and which responds to the ever-clearer

interlinkages between the Organization's three pillars of development, peace and security, and human rights, as expressed in the Charter.

In that context, the annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council is extremely timely. Guided by the principles of transparency, inclusivity, accountability and efficiency, such a discussion is of great interest to the larger United Nations membership. It can also be to the benefit of the institutional relationship and interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly this year as together we bring forward the process to select and appoint the next Secretary-General.

The relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is, or at least can be, both mutually reinforcing and complementary. The full United Nations membership, through the Charter of the United Nations, has conferred on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that the Council acts on their behalf in carrying out its duties.

In addition, there are a number of areas where the actions of both the Council and the Assembly are closely linked, and indeed interdependent. That includes certain peace and security issues, the review of the Charter of the United Nations, the appointment of the Secretary-General, the election of judges to international tribunals, certain recommendations from the Assembly to the Council, the Security Council's annual and special reports, as well as the relations between the Security Council and certain subsidiary organs established by the Assembly. Only last week, we saw an example of this when the General Assembly elected the five new non-permanent members of the Security Council for the period 2016-2017.

During the rest of my term in office, I will continue to promote effective cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information among the Presidents of the principal organs of the United Nations and the Secretary-General. I especially intend to uphold the tradition of holding meetings with the monthly Presidents of the Security Council and of staying in close contact with them on issues of common interest and joint activity.

Given the Security Council's significant responsibilities and this mutually reinforcing relationship, it is not surprising that the working methods of the Council are of great interest and concern to the wider United Nations membership. That interest is even greater during years when the next Secretary-General is to be appointed. We must never lose sight of the fact that, at any given moment, 178 Members of the United Nations are not members of the Security Council, and that some 35 per cent of the membership has never even served as Council members.

For years, there have been widespread calls for increased transparency, inclusivity and a more rigorous process in selecting the next chief of the Organization. Through General Assembly resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the General Assembly, the United Nations membership has unanimously provided clear guidance for the way forward. Specifically, they have requested that the General Assembly President and the President of the Security Council begin the process of soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General. I have already commenced the discussion on this matter with the current Security Council presidency. I will continue to interact with the presidency with a view to jointly circulating a letter to the whole membership inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner and describing the entire process. It is also envisaged that the Presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council would jointly circulate to all Member States, on an ongoing basis, the names of individuals who have been submitted for consideration as candidates, together with accompanying documents, including curricula vitae. In addition, Member States have requested that the General Assembly, without prejudice to the role of the principal organs as enshrined in Article 97 of the Charter, conduct informal dialogues or meetings with candidates, thus contributing to the transparency and inclusivity of the process.

General Assembly resolution 69/321 also underlines that whoever assumes the position of Secretary-General should be the best possible candidate — a person who embodies the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and demonstrates a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Such a person should also be a candidate with proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills.

I am absolutely confident that there are a number of potential female candidates who possess those credentials and more. Bearing in mind that in 70 years the United Nations has never had a female Secretary-General, the inclusion and consideration of women candidates should be an important focus for all of us as

we ensure that the Organization continues to advance gender equality on all levels.

Lastly, from the very start of this discussion, we have heard calls for the selection process to be finalized as early as possible, preferably three months prior to the assumption of office by the next Secretary-General. Speaking from my own experience in September, providing adequate time for preparation prior to assuming office in the Organization is fundamental to ensuring the effective discharge of responsibilities during the transition period.

Given the critical role that the Secretary-General plays in ensuring that the Organization is run as efficiently and as effectively as possible, and given that the outside world increasingly expects the highest possible standards from the Organization, the process of selecting the next person at the helm must be as open and as thorough as possible. I look forward to working with all Member States to that end.

There are three further relevant issues regarding the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly that I wish to touch on briefly.

First, the General Assembly receives and considers the annual and special reports of the Security Council, which, according to the Charter, shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security. This exercise represents an important aspect of the transparency and accountability that the wider membership expects vis-à-vis the Security Council. While there have been improvements in the report in recent years, there have also been calls from Member States to further improve its analytical quality. This year, on 12 November, the General Assembly will consider the Security Council report that the Council adopted this morning, and I encourage all Member States to participate and share their views.

Secondly, with regard to the election of the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council, the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/307, on revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, decided that the elections of the non-permanent members of the Council should be conducted six months before the elected members assume their responsibilities. During this seventieth session, the Assembly will therefore hold two elections of non-permanent members – one of which, as mentioned earlier, was held just last week, and the second is scheduled for June next year. This is a welcome development that will allow newly elected members to better prepare for their two-year term in this Council.

Finally, it would be remiss of me to conclude without addressing the issue of Security Council reform — arguably one of the most discussed and sensitive issues within the United Nations and beyond over many decades. As was underlined by a large number of world leaders during this session's general debate, this topic is of central importance to a large majority of the membership. The General Assembly has decided to immediately continue the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in the seventieth session, and I intend to move this process forward, as much as possible, in the coming period.

One of my first decisions as President of the General Assembly was to set the theme of the seventieth session. I chose to focus on the idea that this historic, and perhaps defining, session for the future of the United Nations could capture a new commitment to action on the part of the 193 Member States. The Council's invitation to me to brief the Council today is an example of such action and, I hope, the beginning of a year of excellent cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Let me therefore thank the Council once again for this opportunity. I look forward to hearing Member States' statements and input to this very timely debate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Jürgenson.

Mr. Jürgenson: It is a great pleasure for me to address the Security Council in my capacity as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council at this open debate devoted to the working methods of the Security Council. I wish to thank the Spanish presidency of the Council for convening this debate and for inviting us. Ambassador Oh Joon, the President of the Economic and Social Council, is unable to attend because of prior commitments abroad and sends his regrets.

This meeting is a welcome step in improving cooperation among United Nations Charter bodies. The relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council are enshrined in the Charter of the Organization. Article 65 states that the Economic and Social Council may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist it upon its request. The legal basis for cooperation could not be

clearer. Yet the use of this provision has been very limited. Its most constructive incarnation is probably the establishment by the Economic and Social Council of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, following an invitation made by the Security Council in its resolution 1212 (1998) to contribute to the elaboration of a long-term programme of support for Haiti. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group continues to exist and contributes to the promotion of coherent and sustained development support to Haiti.

Following the promising example of the Haiti Group, and responding to a request from the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council established Ad hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi, which were active from 2003 to 2006. These Groups, which promoted a comprehensive approach to peace and development in post-conflict settings, prefigured the country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission, for which they constituted an avant garde.

Interestingly, the creation of these Groups led to enhanced interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, particularly the latter's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. In recent years, the Economic and Social Council has followed the development of the situation in South Sudan since that country joined the community of nations and has maintained interaction with the Peacebuilding Commission under its agenda item "African countries emerging from conflict". However, interaction with the Security Council has diminished considerably.

The time has come to revitalize the relationship among the Charter bodies of this Organization. The changing nature of conflict — from inter-State wars to complex civil conflicts that are intractable and reoccurring — highlights the fundamental link between sustainable development and lasting peace. As the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) rightfully stressed, the promotion of inclusive economic and social development and the broadening of community engagement are key to prevent relapse into conflict, and innovative approaches are needed to integrate conflict prevention, governance, development and human rights.

The changing context of global cooperation for development through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) further enhances this opportune moment for a revitalization of the relationship. The Agenda seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom and recognizes the major challenge to the achievement of durable peace and sustainable development in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The Agenda also promotes a culture of peace and non-violence. In particular, Sustainable Development Goal 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, lays the ground for common work. Sustainable Development Goal 16 highlights the need to address violence, abuse and exploitation, as well as to strengthen national institutions against crime and corruption, making them more transparent, accountable and effective. The connection between peace, stability and development could not have been more clearly stated.

The definition of follow-up and review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda offers an opportunity to engage in a joint reflection on how the Charter bodies of the United Nations, as well as the Peacebuilding Commission, work together to translate the Agenda into tangible and coherent policy measures by the United Nations system and the international community at large.

The Economic and Social Council can interact with the Security Council on a regular basis on issues of common concern. There are many of these issues: the promotion of institution-building and improved governance, the need for social inclusion as a key component for sustained peace, the role of women and youth in that context, the consequences of economic and financial crises for global stability and the impact of environmental degradation on weakened societies.

On each dimension of sustainable development, namely, economic, social and environmental, and on their contribution to the overall objective of peace, the United Nations development system, under the oversight of United Nations Economic and Social Council, has a lot to contribute. The Economic and Social Council can act as a counterpart of the Security Council so as to embrace a truly holistic approach to peace and security, an approach that world leaders have recognized as the only one that can lead to sustainable results. The Economic and Social Council stands ready to work together with the Security Council on the modalities for such interaction, be it through more systematic interaction on issues of common interest or through the establishment of an ad hoc working group.

The debate today should pave the way for renewed coherence among United Nations bodies and for

mobilization around the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which the Security Council also has a lot to contribute. I trust that our willingness to work together and make the best use of our respective bodies will be stronger than the political and institutional cleavages between us. Together, the entire United Nations system, including its principal bodies, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, can provide strong, integrated policy support and guidance, within their respective mandates and competencies, to the cause of peace and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): At the outset, I would like to commend and thank you, Mr. President, and the Spanish presidency of the Council for convening this very timely debate this morning. I also welcome the very valuable contributions by our three briefers, notably the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

I am speaking today on behalf of Angola, Chile, Jordan, Malaysia, New Zealand and Spain — six countries from six different regions of the world. We are six Security Council members that are committed to collaboration and to working together on the set of issues before us today, including my own country as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions of the Security Council. We share a common wish to make the working methods of the Council and the Council's interactions with other organs of the United Nations, as stated this morning, more effective, so as to better reflect contemporary realities.

This annual open debate is about much more than just the working methods of the Security Council. It is about the decision-making culture and the effectiveness of the Council. It also goes to the heart of the Council's performance and accountability to the whole United Nations membership and the Charter of the United Nations. The current crises facing the United Nations and the Council's difficulty in responding effectively to those crises suggest the need for a new approach.

Meaningful changes are driven by practice, by taking the initiative and leading by example as much as by rules and procedure. While there are good ideas on working methods contained in the President's concept note (S/2015/793, annex) agreed to by the Council, the dilemma is that they are couched in vague language, are often not implemented, and some Council members even resist implementing them. That reflects the disconnect between the Council's working methods, this debate and the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. The Council will find solutions and improve its performance by adapting its working methods in innovative ways to meet the needs of specific cases, not as a result of the generic work done in the Informal Working Group, although the latter should base its future work on the common points of action from the outcomes of this open debate.

The Council must throw off some of the constrictions that have cramped even the way it discusses matters, let alone how it makes decisions. While consensus on procedures is a fine goal, it should not be elevated to the point where we have a 15-member veto, not just in the Council itself, but also in its subsidiary bodies, including its sanctions committees. That was never the intention of the Charter. All Council members have a responsibility to find solutions to improve our processes and culture and to work at all levels of our diplomacy. For that reason, we have fostered increased dialogue among the Permanent Representatives on the Council's working methods, including a monthly meeting to discuss how we work together on the issues before us.

We also need working methods that produce effective political focus in the Council's work. The Council's members have to display more discipline and restraint in the range of initiatives considered or taken, many of which absorb valuable time and distract us from real problem-solving and diplomacy and have limited world impact. We also have some distance to go in terms of focus and interactivity in order to ensure that open debates are a useful forum for exchanging views between the Council and the rest of the Organization. They need to be more than a platform for States to record national positions.

The veto may not be, strictly speaking,a working method, but it has a significant negative impact — a cascade effect — on the working methods of the Council, where elected members are routinely excluded for no reason other than habit. There needs to be a more inclusive process for developing resolutions and presidential statements. All Council members need the opportunity to engage and contribute meaningfully. It is a simple request, but in the current Council practice it is the exception, not the norm.

Arguably, the very recent introduction of the penholdership system has improved Council efficiency. It ensures that the first drafts of most Council products are prepared by delegations with consistent knowledge and a long background in the issues. But it has also diminished the opportunity for wider Council engagement, especially by the elected members, and has significantly increased the risk of Council products being crafted in a way that serves only the interests of the permanent members. In those respects, the system cuts across the principle of collective responsibility that underpins the Charter. We should all feel a sense of ownership over the Council's work, and we should not preclude others from offering their drafting ideas for texts. Wherever possible, we want to encourage changes to the penholdership system. That is an obvious way both to ensure necessary continuity, by including permanent and elected members, and to leverage their relevant expertise, whether that be regional or through their chairmanship of subsidiary bodies or some other source.

As today's three briefers made clear, the Council needs to become better at cooperating with other United Nations and regional organs, bodies and offices. One simple way to promote better interaction would be for Council members to respect the role of the presidency in organizing the Council's regular business for the month. That should include arranging for interactions with the Secretariat, the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and also with other bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission whose advisory and early warning capacity are of direct importance to the Council's work. We also need to get more serious about the supporting partnerships and the complementary roles of the United Nations, regional organizations and counterparts, especially the African Union, in preventing and managing conflicts. In that effort, it is also important to improve consultations and coordination with troop- and police-contributing countries, especially in relation to the development and renewal of mandates. The knowledge and challenges that they acquire in the field is an asset that the Council must consider when discussing its mandates.

The process for the Secretary-General's appointment, which includes the Council's close cooperation with the General Assembly, will be a key issue for all Members of the Organization over the next year. It is not acceptable that the Council has been slow to take up the necessary engagement between the Presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council on a matter of such direct importance to all Member States. That is especially relevant given the unequivocal call from the General Assembly, which we have all supported, for dialogue and a more transparent and inclusive process in the decision-making on this specific issue.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this annual debate on the working methods of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, President of the General Assembly Likketoft and Mr. Jürgenson for their comments and for setting the tone for our discussion. I would like to speak briefly about some recent working method improvements and the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission, before concluding with a few words about selecting the next Secretary-General.

At a time when the Security Council is grappling with such disparate and complex threats to international peace and security, the Council has an obligation to consider how to adapt and improve its functions. We believe that the Council should continue to explore how its working methods can be improved and welcome suggestions on how best to do that. Council presidencies have some discretion on innovating, and the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, which Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola so ably leads, is another place where we try to improve the way the Council does business. The Informal Working Group has made a lot of progress over the past few years by adopting a series of notes to improve the Council's working methods, from clarifying the role of penholders to revamping the handover process from one subsidiary organ chair to the next. Very relevant to today is the fact that the Informal Working Group has done its part to promote dialogue with non-Council members and United Nations bodies, including through note S/2013/515 on the subject. That leads me to a part of that note I want to highlight, which is the Council's commitment to the Arria Formula and other formats.

My delegation is a big supporter of Arria-format meetings. At their best, such meetings provide an important venue for us to hear views beyond those of Member States, a way to inform ourselves informally about the difficult issues on our agenda. After Wednesday's Arria-format meeting on supporting victims of terrorism, chaired by Spain and the United

States, the Council will have held 13 Arria-Formula meetings thus far in 2015, where it has inviteda wide range of civil society to participate in our work. Those meetings have provided opportunities to hear directly from individuals experiencing unimaginably difficult circumstances, and many have been extremely powerful in reminding us of the human toll that accompanies conflicts. For instance, in the last year we have heard from civil society leaders and activists from Syria and Crimea and from threatened lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individuals, to name just a few. We have held five Arria-Formula meetings with the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Syria.

We also want to highlight the importance of peacebuilding. A bit later in this meeting, Ambassador Skoog will discuss the topic in more detail. The Security Council has continued to welcome the Chairs of the various country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in Council meetings. In its advisory function to the Security Council and other United Nations entities, the Peacebuilding Commission provides valuable information from diverse stakeholders on the ground in post-conflict States. We deeply value its role on the ground in building institutions to give countries a genuine chance to stabilize and develop. We look forward to participating in the 2015 peacekeeping architecture review process and hope that it will outline how the Council and the Peacebuilding Council can best work together, playing differentiated but complementary roles in engaging with countries recovering from and vulnerable to conflict.

Finally, as co-equal principal organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council each has its own defined role in the selection of the Secretary-General in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations. The United States is in favour of the membership's gaining an understanding of the views of potential nominees for Secretary-General and supports a selection process for Secretary-General that is guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, building on best practices and the participation of all Member States, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 69/321. As we agreed in that resolution, the United States looks forward to a process that leads to the appointment of the best possible candidate for the position of Secretary-General — one who embodies the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and who demonstrates a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Organization. With the innovations of the General Assembly revitalization resolution in hand, we believe that the course has ben set for the selection process of the next Secretary-General. We look forward to continuing engagement during this important moment in the Organization's history.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Spanish presidency for having organized this debate on the Security Council's working methods, including the question of the appointment procedure for the future Secretary-General. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson; the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Lykketoft; and the Vice-President of Economic and Social Council, Mr. Jürgenson, for their statements.

Successive Chairs of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions have spared no effort to improve the Council's working methods, promote greater transparency in the Council's activities and strengthen its interaction with States that are not members of the Council. When looking at the statistics of annual public meetings, resolutions adopted unanimously, presidential statements and press releases, we note that there has been undeniable progress. For example, of 263 formal meetings held in 2014, 241 were public and 15 were with the troop- and police-contributing countries. Of 63 resolutions adopted that year, 60 were unanimous. However, the increased frequency of public meetings, which often do not lead to the adoption of a concrete decision, should not obscure the absolute necessity of further qualitative reform.

The Council's inability over several decades to find a solution to the Palestinian issue and the absence of any progress for nearly five years in resolving the Syrian crisis clearly demonstrates that this organ is not efficiently and responsibly fulfilling its mandate as it addresses the challenges of the twenty-first century. The effectiveness of the Security Council must be assessed in the light of these results in terms of both prevention and conflict resolution.

In this regard, Chad supports the proposal made by France that the five permanent members adopt a code of conduct to collectively refuse to exercise the veto when the Council considers situations involving war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. However, we remain sceptical about the effectiveness

of this too early restriction of the use of veto, given that the holder of the right has the freedom to use it even in those exceptional conditions if it considers that its vital interests are threatened. Therefore, it is important that the contours of this proposal be clarified. However, in our humble opinion, the best way to limit the misuse of the veto is through Charter reform.

Beyond this particular context, the principle of the veto itself, granted to a membership category, deserves special examination in view of the reform of the Security Council. Africa, victim of historical injustice, home to almost a billion people, is now the only continent in the world that has neither a permanent representative nor the veto power, nor, worse still, the possibility of being heard. The legitimacy and credibility of the Security Council and the effectiveness of its action will depend in the future on the participation of all its members and on equal footing. Chad reaffirms its commitment to the African Common Position on this issue.

The elected members of the Council are doing remarkable work in the subsidiary bodies and working groups that they chair and whose work they direct. Given the important role of these bodies, we are calling for a more open and inclusive process in the designation of their Chairs. It seems unfair that a facilitator appointed by the permanent members choose them as he or she wishes. Also, we think that increasing transparency and improved interaction with other States is a function of the latter's access to the subsidiary bodies and their work.

Similarly, the role of penholder, reserved for a category of member in charge of drafting the draft resolutions and declarations, seems like an anachronism and a form of guardianship that should be banished. We believe it is high time that the African members of the Council be allowed to fulfil this penholder function on issues concerning Africa. That should also be the case for other regions. Moreover, it would also be wise to encourage participation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Chairs of its country configurations in the plenary meetings of the Security Council, given their valuable contributions in the post-conflict stabilization process.

In the same context, we underline the importance of a greater involvement of regional organizations like the African Union and its subregional mechanisms in maintaining international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Similarly, the Council should further promote preventive diplomacy to avoid the constant need to turn to Chapter VII of the Charter.

At the centre of today's debate, inter alia, is the cooperation between the Security Council and other United Nations bodies, in particular the General Assembly, in relation to the selection of the future Secretary-General. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of resolution 69/321 of 11 September 2015, which constitutes a major step forward. Chad strongly supports the principle of electing the future Secretary-General by the General Assembly from a list of several candidates for a single term of office. We hope that the Security Council and the General Assembly will show great mutual understanding on this issue. It is high time that, 70 years after the creation of the United Nations, the procedure for appointing the Secretary-General take into account the new reality of the world and meet the expectations of the 7 billion people on the planet.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): If I may say so, we seem to be having a small problem with certain working methods of the Council because when speakers take the floor in a language other than English the English interpretation is so loud that we can hear it in the Chamber. It therefore becomes very difficult to appreciate the beautiful French of, for example, the Permanent Representative of Chad. The experts tell me that someone must have an iPhone or iPad at maximum volume, making it audible to the entire Chamber. Therefore, while we attempt to fix this little problem of the Council's working methods, I would ask all members to check their electronic and computer devices.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I hope I can solve that problem by speaking in English. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate and for all the initiatives the presidency has taken so far, and I also thank the briefers.

As I said during the wrap-up debate in June (see S/PV.7479), I am frequently struck by how formal our working methods can be. Even in our allegedly informal meetings there are too many prepared speeches and too few genuine discussions. So in the spirit of bringing more interactivity to this meeting, today I am just going to pose questions, three sets of them in my three minutes. I hope other speakers will feel free to respond in their own statements or in person afterwards, or, indeed, by replying to me on Twitter, where I am @matthewrycroft1.

For my first set of questions, I would like to ask for thoughts on improving the day-to-day interactions of the Council. How can we bring more transparency? How can we improve participation? And for efficiency, what more can we do to stick to schedules and keep our statements to the agreed-on length? Doing so could lead to more time for horizon-scanning or for hearing from people on the ground, including through Arria Formula meetings. If we are given ideas, we will pursue them next month during our presidency. The Council has been warned.

For my second set of questions, I would like to ask what the point is of good working methods if the will to use them effectively is not there. What is the point when one member can bring the very best working methods to a standstill by raising an arm in veto? I am proud that the United Kingdom has signed up to the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. We will never vote against credible Council action to stop mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. If other members, permanent or not, join us, we will send a powerful message that the Council can really deliver when it matters most. The same could be said about the appointment of the next Secretary-General. I welcomed the statement made by the President of the General Assembly this morning. Would it not send a very welcome message if the United Nations appointed its most powerful advocate in a fair, transparent and structured way? Appointing a woman to the role would be more powerful still. So what should we do next to maximize the number of credible female candidates?

Thirdly, what more can we do to ensure that the Council's work is not just about ending conflicts but also about avoiding future ones? With Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals, we have made a good step forward, but we can do more. That is the United Kingdom is planning to convene the first ever meeting of development ministers next month in the Security Council to discuss the issue. What more can we do to connect the various parts of the United Nations and link the development agenda to our work in the Council on peace and security?

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to remind the Council that the representative of Angola delivered a statement that was also intended to be on behalf of Chile, Jordan, Malaysia, New Zealand and Spain. It is therefore understood that those Council members will not take the floor.

Ms. Murmokaité (Lithuania): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate, and the briefers for their useful insights.

Improving the Security Council's working methods is an issue of great interest to all Member States. After all, while only 15 Council members prescribe and set legally binding norms, all 193 United Nations Members have to implement their decisions. Greater accountability, transparency and openness in the Council's work are therefore paramount. Briefings by the presidency at the beginning and end of the month and by the Chairs of subsidiary bodies have become routine, and more Council meetings are being held in an open format.

We welcome the fact that more Sanctions Committees are now briefing the Council in public. In our view, such practice should become standard, because it enables us to have a better understanding of what those bodies do, and that is key to better implementation, whether of sanctions regimes or counter-terrorism measures. Particularly where the Counter-Terrorism Committee is concerned, we believe it is essential for it to engage with the membership of the United Nations in order to raise awareness and provide a platform for sharing good practices and insights on how best to tackle the threat of terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters. To that end, my delegation has sought to increase the number of the Counter-Terrorism Committee's open briefings and special events, and through them tackle some issues that may not be on the Committee's regular agenda. There is nothing regular about the threat and spread of terrorism these days, and the United Nations counter-terrorism machinery must adjust to that new reality.

Late last year, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) took a useful step in bringing the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force together for an informal briefing. Such meetings should not be one-offs, especially since the gap between assessment and assistance, and for that matter, between bodies with mandates from the Security Council and from the General Assembly, remains. It is vital that we overcome the silo mentality and make sure that we respond jointly and promptly to countries' concerns and needs for assistance. There is still a lot of work to be done to that effect.

Regarding the Sanctions Committees, we have sought to engage actively with the countries concerned

and their neighbours and with relevant regional actors, both formally and informally. We did so with the aim of improving understanding of the situation at hand and of how the decisions we take affect developments on the ground, including the concerns that countries may have about the impact of sanctions and their related capacity-building needs. We believe these are good practices that should be continued. Visits by the Chairs of subsidiary bodies to the countries concerned should be further encouraged. And, of course, as the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned, the handover from Chair to Chair should be better managed and streamlined. We should strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to provide adequate assistance to the Sanctions Committees in their work. In that regard, we should keep in the mind the work done last year by one Council member, and we hope we can move it forward, with the best interests of the countries concerned at its heart.

Where appropriate, we should also consider closer cooperation among the Council's subsidiary bodies. We have had a positive experience, both on their substance and for practical reasons, with joint meetings between the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), as well as between the Yemen Sanctions Committee and the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. They save time for both experts and briefers and can help us deal better with the ever-growing demand for meeting spaces and interpretation services.

We welcome the steps that the DPA has taken to establish consolidated sanctions lists and provide more systematic information on the United Nations website and social media. Press statements and other forms of media engagement by relevant subsidiary bodies or their Chairs — although that practice is not common — offer additional avenues for outreach and disseminating relevant information and should be further explored.

Speaking of websites, we call on Council members to take a fresh look at the possibilities of adjusting the structure of the Security Council's annual report in line with the realities of the information age. My delegation has submitted a number of proposals in that regard, as the representative of New Zealand has mentioned, to the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and we are open to engaging further on the matter with all Council members.

As the Council endeavours to tackle an unprecedented number of crises simultaneously, better use of the agenda item on "any other business" during consultations would be welcome. One useful option that can strengthen the Council's preventive approach is the ability to be flexible through the use of "any other business" and informal briefings, aimed at flagging potential crises, by the Secretary-General, the DPA or, for that matter, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, since human-rights violations are usually harbingers of more serious trouble to come. With regard to the Council's increasingly heavy workload, we believe there is some scope for improvement by reviewing existing mandate cycles to make things a little easier, especially in cases where situations remains static for long periods of time and may not warrant the existing frequency of deliberations, as, for example, in the case of quarterly meetings on Kosovo.

In our view, Council members must put the "interactive" back in interactive debates. We should take advantage of the rare meetings with Force Commanders, police commanders, regional organizations and other relevant actors to engage in genuine exchanges, not limited to the reading of prepared statements. Similarly, there is room for improving the Council's dialogue with the Peacebuilding Commission. While the Chairs of peacebuilding country configurations do brief the Council occasionally, their experience and insights could be used more extensively, and in consultations as well.

Open debates remain a highly important tool for the work of the Council. However, more thought should be given to structuring them better. It is frankly painful to see ministers from countries that are not Council members addressing the Council with only junior experts there to listen to them — or to think of our own colleagues speaking at 8.30 p.m. on issues of critical importance. Such questions remain open, although a number of useful documents have already been adopted. Previous Council documents contain useful indications which should be revisited and taken up again.

During the general debate of the General Assembly last month, several events dedicated to the issue of veto restraint drew large numbers of participants. It is simply unacceptable that veto powers should be used to protect the perpetrators, as has been the case with Syria or the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, and not the victims. Lithuania fully supports relevant initiatives, including the call for adopting a code of

conduct to that effect. Failure to bring the perpetrators to account encourages impunity. Repeated failure to do so calls the Council's credibility into question. We believe that the Council should make better use of the tools available to pursue justice, including cooperation with the International Criminal Court, with respect to both new referrals and the follow-up on existing referrals.

Finally, let me touch upon the election of the next Secretary-General. As the United Nations claims its rightful place in the twenty-first century, so should the selection of the chief officer of the United Nations meet twenty-first century standards. He or she will take up one of the most challenging jobs on Earth. For the first time, as the President of the General Assembly reminded us today, General Assembly resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the Assembly's work, envisages a joint activity on the subject.

While we are realistic about expecting change to be of limited scope in the short term, we remain convinced that greater transparency, inclusiveness, interactivity and diversity of candidates, including in terms of gender, are definitely in order in the process of selecting and appointing the individual who will lead the United Nations at a time of unprecedented challenges and tasks ahead.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Spain for its initiative in holding today's open debate. We have listened carefully to the statements of Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, the President of the General Assembly Mr. Lykketoft and Ambassador Jürgenson, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

Thanks to the joint efforts of its members in recent years, the Security Council has made good progress in improving its working methods. With more emphasis on greater transparency, the Security Council has markedly increased the number of open meetings convened and paid more attention to briefing non-Council members on its work. The work of the Council has become more more efficient and targeted, thanks to an improvement in its working procedures. The Council has also used various modalities to strengthen communication and exchanges with relevant Member States, regional organizations, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, among others.

The holding of today's open debate on working methods fully reflects the positive attitude and willingness of the Council to draw on the opinions of wider membership to further improve its work. While China supports the Council's continuing efforts to improve its working methods, it would also like to emphasize the following several points.

First, in accordance with its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council should focus its energy and resources on addressing the most urgent issues that threaten international peace and security. With regard to thematic issues, it should act strictly within its mandate and enhance communication with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and others. With such coordination and division of labour, it should be possible to avoid the duplication or overlap of functions by the different organs.

Secondly, the Security Council should attach more importance to preventive diplomacy and mediation. It should promote the culture of peace and increase the use of such peaceful means as mediation and good offices for dispute resolution. It should push for the diplomatic settlement of disputes and handling of crises and, wherever possible, should avoid simply resorting to the threat or use of such methods as sanctions. The Council should act in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations to enhance cooperation with regional organizations.

Thirdly, the Security Council should engage in more adequate consultations to reach a broad consensus. Before any action is taken, every effort should be made to reach consensus through patient consultations and negotiations among Council members. Efforts should be made to avoid forcing a text through if it is still the object of major differences, so as to preserve the credibility and authoritativeness of the resolution.

Fourthly, the Council should give more weight to the opinions of the countries concerned and enhance dialogue and interaction with non-Council members. Listening to the opinions of the countries concerned will help the Council to make more rational decisions. Such mechanisms as the meeting with the troop-contribution countries and police-contributing countries, and the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations should be fully utilized. Communications with troop contributors and the Secretariat should be enhanced before deploying in peacekeeping missions or adjusting their mandates.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful

to you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on such an important topic. We welcome the participation of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft; the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson; and Ambassador Jürgenson, who is representing the President of the Economic and Social Council.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela also supports the statement to be made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Faced with complex challenges in the area of international peace and security, which call for effective and timely responses by the Security Council to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, our country values the holding of this debate on its working methods. This exchange makes it possible to reaffirm the need to strengthen the Council's working relationship with the rest of the membership and the principal organs of this multilateral Organization, within the framework of their respective mandates. That process must involve the entire Organization and its subsidiary organs. A comprehensive reform of the Organization is necessary and cannot be put off.

While some decisions and working methods have been agreed and some documents approved with the aim of improving the working methods of the Security Council, including presidential note S/2010/507, we believe that they are still far from what is required to face up to the the existing challenges. Moreover, we need to find effective formulas to promote greater transparency and inclusivity, if we are to meet the expectations and reflect the collective interests of the Members of this Organization. We must also do something about the status of the rules of the Security Council, which have been in provisional form for 70 years. We need to adopt a definitive text to regulate the work of that body and put an end to the excessively discretional nature of its actions.

Despite those calls, there are still some major obstacles, such as lack of transparency, that adversely affect the working dynamics of the Security Council, and ultimately undermine the results of their execution. At times, the process of negotiating a draft resolution has lacked the necessary inclusivity, the discussions having been confined to a group of actors without taking into account the opinions of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. Since the unity of the Council is an important element for maintaining international peace and security, achieving that objective requires the full participation of all the Council members. In that regard, we stress the need to put an end to those types of exclusionary practices that undermine transparency and inclusivity.

We must focus attention on the sanctions Committees. The primary purpose of those subsidiary bodies of the Council, given the exceptional situations in which they are established, should be to assist in the political resolution of disputes. Ten of the 16 sanctions Committees now in existence affect African countries. The sanctions Committees should operate alongside an ongoing political process. In other words, their objectives should be clearly circumscribed and they should have a clear end date.

However, that is not what happens under the current practice of the Council. Once established, sanctions Committees, for whatever reason, will exist for decades if some of the permanent members so desire. The remaining members, the elected members, can do little to prevent it. Although they may chair the Committees, they have little, if any, power to change things. The non-permanent members of the Council can do little to change such imbalances, given the opposing factions that impede the possibility of carrying out needed improvements.

Sanctions should not be used as a political tool against countries and peoples. They should not be seen as an end unto themselves, but rather as an instrument bound to the solution of a given conflict. The sanctions committees must not be seen as merely punitive.

Another issue that we must review is the power wielded by penholders, the few permanent members that decide what, how and when mandates are created and considered, sometimes with little regard for the opinions of other members. The Council's practice is based on a consensus reached through negotiations; that is why we believe that a thorough democratization of the Council's working methods is urgently needed, especially regarding sanctions.

Bearing in mind that international peace and security affect all Members of the Organization, according to the principle of the sovereign equality of States, it is important for the Security Council to convene open or public meetings more frequently, in order that countries, particularly those whose cases are under consideration, may contribute to discussing

the issue with a view to reaching a peaceful resolution of the conflict. That is even more important in cases involving regional organizations. It is therefore paradoxical, given that the African Union is a strategic partner of the United Nations, that its representative, former President Joaquim Chissano, was unable to participate in the briefing on Western Sahara held in April (S/PV.7435). We hope that Mr. Chissano will be able to participate in the next meeting on that issue and that such a situation will not be repeated.

Moreover, Venezuela believes that troop-contributing countries should, in accordance with Article 44 of the Charter of the United Nations, participate in the decisions of the Council on the employment of their contingents in peacekeeping operations. In that vein, we support the calls of those countries for a genuine implementation of the provisions of Article 44, which would result in better functioning of the Security Council and its instruments for promoting peace.

The relationship among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be based on respect for their respective competencies. That is why the Council should deal strictly with issues relating to threats to international peace and security, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations. We are concerned about the tendency of this organ to address issues outside its jurisdiction, issues that are properly handled by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, which can consider them from a security perspective as well. Such was the case of resolution 2240 (2015) on migrants, adopted recently by the Council, with Venezuela abstaining. Our country sees the interaction between the Security Council and the other main bodies in terms of balance and respect for their respective functions under the Charter.

In the context of a close and harmonious relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, we would like to highlight the important role that the latter should play in the election of the next Secretary-General. Consultations on that topic should be guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness and should start as quickly as possible, by sending a joint communication by the Presidents of both bodies, including a description of the process as a whole and inviting candidates to be presented in a timely manner.

We are therefore convinced that the General Assembly should play a more active role in that matter so that it will not find itself simply endorsing the recommendation made by the Security Council. The General Assembly should be able to choose among several candidates, taking into account geographical balance. We also strongly support the nomination of female candidates to fill the position mentioned and the mainstreaming women's equality in the Organization.

Venezuela also believes that the review of the Council's decision-making mechanism, in particular the veto power, could have a positive influence on the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly in terms of its working methods, primarily the competency of the General Assembly's jurisdiction. In that regard, we wish to again highlight that the threat of using the veto has thwarted the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian State to be admitted as a full Member of the United Nations, despite the overwhelming support on the part of Organization's membership.

To conclude, Venezuela calls for a body with a more balanced focus that will avoid applying double standards in the examination of the issues under its consideration. In that regard, as non-permanent members, we look forward to working together towards a Security Council that takes into account the views of all of its members, and the diverse geographic, political and cultural realities of the world.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): Nigeria is very grateful to Spain for organizing this debate on the working methods of the Security Council and for providing a concept note (S/2015/793, annex) to guide our deliberations. We also welcome the convening of the debate in an open format. It allows the Council to hear from the wider United Nations membership on matters of concern to all of us. Indeed, the large number of delegations that I see today participating in the debate is a clear indication of the interest of Member States in the working methods of the Security Council.

We want to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council for their briefings.

The topic of working methods, I believe, is the subject of a continuing discourse. We strongly believe that the change that we all seek will be achieved incrementally — not through a revolution. As the principal organ of the United Nations charged with the maintenance of international peace and security,

the Security Council plays a unique role in the global security architecture.

However, in carrying out that role, Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations makes it clear that the Council acts on behalf of the Members of the United Nations. That being the case, there is a need for the Council to conduct its affairs in a manner that is not only transparent, but accountable. We acknowledge the positive changes in the Council's practices in recent times. Much has been achieved in making the Council more open. However, we believe that a great deal more can be done and, indeed, should be done.

In recent years, the Council has embraced greater transparency and inclusiveness by making more frequent use of public meetings, such as this debate, where interested Member States are free to participate. We have also witnessed instances where Member States participating in the Council's open debates have been granted the right of reply to respond on issues of concern to them. We welcome that as a sign of the Council's readiness to accommodate the interests of other Member States.

The convening of meetings in open format in the Council Chamber is a remarkable way by which the Council has engaged with Member States. We believe that giving Member States the opportunity to hear the briefers speak and present their own perspectives on matters concerning them adds value to the work of the Council and underscores the effectiveness of rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Engagement with regional organizations is also significant in facilitating the work of the Council. In recent times, the Security Council has made vigorous efforts to deepen its engagement with regional organizations, within the framework of partnerships for the maintenance of international peace and security. In that context, we want to take special note of the Council's relationship with the African Union. I believe that is a valid point of departure. It has not been smooth sailing — the beginning was a bit stormy — but that is a partnership that we would like to see strengthened in the interest of peace and security on the African continent, as most of the items on the Council's agenda, as members know, are African issues.

On the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, the adoption of Assembly resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the work of the Assembly, especially the aspects pertaining to the appointment of the Secretary-General, is a significant step in lending greater transparency and inclusiveness to the selection and appointment process. It is our hope that the requisite political will is manifest in implementing the resolution in a manner that will yield concrete results.

On the Peacebuilding Commission, we recognize the critical role it plays in supporting the work of the Security Council. As a vital component of the United Nations peace and security architecture, the Peacebuilding Commission has worked assiduously to fulfil its mandate of post-conflict peacebuilding, preventing the recurrence of conflicts, improving coordination within and outside the United Nations for continued engagement in post-conflict countries and marshalling resources to support peace. Nigeria encourages periodic stocktaking briefings and interactive exchanges with the Commission. We believe that enhanced coordination and cooperation between the Council and the Commission is indeed essential to promoting peace in post-conflict situations. The Council can draw on the Commission's advice, in particular in the areas of revisiting mandates, establishing benchmarks and reviewing peace operations.

With regard to the Economic and Social Council, Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations states that "it may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist the Security Council upon its request." While we have seen significant engagement between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council has been almost negligible. It is significant to note that, of the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights — two of them, namely, development and human rights, fall under the purview of the Economic and Social Council. We would therefore like to see closer interaction between both Councils, considering the importance of the mandate of the Economic and Social Council and how it has a bearing on peace and security. That is particularly crucial in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the international scene evolves and the dynamics of global peace and security change, the Security Council must become more receptive to the notion of closer engagement and coordination with various actors on the world stage, within and outside the United Nations system. They have an important role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security.

That cooperation, symmetry and symbiotic relationship must be established.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to commend you, Mr. President, on convening today's debate. We have seen a genuine revolution in the working methods of the Council, with Angola speaking on behalf of six members. Such initiatives should be supported — for example, it could be emulated by the new members joining the Council from the European Union.

The Security Council has been discussing in an open format the issue of improving its working methods for several years. We believe that external audits and periodic stocktaking of the working methods helps Council members to define areas where there is room for improvement. However, we think it is necessary once again to state clearly that the working methods themselves and decisions on their possible modification are the preserve of the Security Council. We firmly believe that the sole goal of reforming the Security Council's working methods should be to improve the Council's effectiveness and efficiency in carrying out tasks to maintain international peace and security, which is the primary responsibility of the Council in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Allowing ourselves to be swept away by populism will only harm our action.

We have heard criticism of the Council that at times it treads on the prerogatives of other United Nations bodies. We fully share those concerns. Our colleagues in the Council are well aware that we are cautious when it comes to the consideration of thematic subjects in the Security Council, in particular when it comes to those that rightly should fall within the remit of the General Assembly. Today we heard about plans to discuss in the Council the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — and specifically Goal 16. This is not a matter for the Security Council. This kind of discussion was planned months before the Agenda was officially launched, even before the specialized bodies — the General Assembly and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which is under the Economic and Social Council — have the possibility of beginning to work on a mechanism for conducting a review of the implementation of the Goals. We cannot support such initiatives in the Security Council, as they gravely undermine the Charter prerogatives of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. This issue must be treated extremely seriously.

We must also recognize that many Security Council meetings devoted to thematic subjects receive a great response from Member States. The number of speakers in open debates can exceed 100. On such days the General Assembly appears to move into the Council Chamber. Would it not be better to hold such debates in the General Assembly Hall, where all can speak on an equal footing?

There is another negative trend with regard to the revitalization of the General Assembly. Dragging the General Assembly agenda into the Security Council draws the Council and its members away from fulfilling their main task: focusing on country subjects and issues on which it can and must take urgent and tangible decisions. Perhaps due to a lack of time and the possibility of an in-depth, patient investment of effort into mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of each conflict situation, on the initiative of several countries, the Council is increasingly pushed into adopting rushed decisions and sanctions mechanisms based on invoking Chapter VII of the Charter. The effectiveness of such decisions leaves a lot to be desired. They often lead to merely worsening a crisis.

There has been a lot of commotion in recent months in connection with the selection of the next Secretary-General. Moreover, at times the discussion has not been on substantive or technical issues. The Secretary-General still has over a year left in his mandate. However, some delegations seem intent on launching the selection process right now. We do not think there is any practical value in that, other than point-scoring for those promoting the initiative. Furthermore, we should not be putting further pressure on the current Secretary-General, much less bringing into the United Nations the "lame duck" concept — as the saying goes in certain countries whose political systems are hardly paragons of effectiveness.

What we really should be focusing in the context of choosing the next Secretary-General is the need for further democratization of the work of the Secretariat. It cannot be considered normal when you have a situation whereby three key positions — the Under-Secretaries-General for peacekeeping, political and humanitarian affairs — are effectively usurped by three countries. We believe that, in order to maintain the effectiveness and legitimacy of the work of the Secretariat, we need to rotate those and certain other senior posts among all States Members of the United Nations. It is important

to make the process for their appointment more transparent.

We are satisfied overall with the relations between the Security Council and the Secretariat. The leadership of the Organization is always available to us and has an opportunity to approach the Council on any issue. We welcome the work of the Security Council Affairs Division. However, we would like to draw attention to another aspect of the work of the United Nations.

The Secretariat is a gracious host, offering its premises at Headquarters for events on a broad range of issues organized by Member States. However, we need to understand that, when holding such events, all Members of the Organization — bar none — must respect the rules of the house. In that regard, we think it is unacceptable that, at the event on combating violent extremism organized by the delegation of the United States on 29 September, notwithstanding protests by the leadership of the Secretariat and certain delegations, that delegation invited representatives of the self-declared "Kosovo", which is not a State Member of the United Nations. Kosovo Albanian representatives cannot be allowed to enter United Nations territory except when accompanied by Secretariat officials. Such action on the part of the United States is an abuse of its position as host country of the United Nations and demonstrates blatant disrespect for the Secretariat leadership. We call for an end to such high-handedness.

On the other hands, when there is a real need to hear the opinions of newly independent States that are not United Nations Members, the United States tends to erect visa barriers. Every year, Georgia introduces to the General Assembly a draft resolution on refugees that cannot be considered without inviting representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to New York. Those representatives must be given the opportunity to have their say, even if only at special, informal events at Headquarters.

The same applies to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the work of the United Nations. Situations arise in which countries that one would imagine to be the strongest proponents of the participation of civil society actually block appearances by representatives of NGOs that hold different views to their own. Those who would be seen to be objective should endorse the participation, for instance, of representatives of the overwhelming majority of the population of Crimea in the United Nations work.

Many delegations have noted the difference in the Security Council's approach to countries on its agenda. Unfortunately, that approach is selective. When drafting a Security Council position, some of our partners, for example, have objected to duly reflecting the opinions of African States hosting peacekeeping operations, such as the Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and others. At times even the opinion of the African Union is ignored. On the other hand, the positions of third countries on other issues, conveyed via members of the Council, acquire exaggerated significance and become an obstacle to the adoption of necessary decisions. We call on our colleagues in the Council to act consistently and in a principled manner on such issues and to be guided exclusively by the need to strengthen international peace and security.

We have consistently advocated improved coordination of the activities of the Security Council with the broadest possible circle of Member States, as well as with representatives who are competent to provide information that is important to the adoption of decisions. To that end, the Security Council is endowed with appropriate mechanisms, including unofficial meetings under the so-called Arria Formula. Unfortunately, however, in recent years there has been a growing trend to use such meetings to stage propaganda spectacles in which, for the reference of the Security Council, certain delegations seek to promote their own unilateral positions.

Moreover, the cost of using United Nations premises and conference services — including interpretation in some cases — is met through the regular budget. In other words, all we taxpayers would appear to be subsidizing the political activities of certain States. That is unacceptable, and we call on our colleagues to use the Arria Formula format exclusively for its original end of providing greater clarity to the Security Council with respect to situations on its agenda.

We are convinced that the Council would benefit from a democratization of its work, facilitated by a more balanced distribution of obligations informally linked to the so-called penholdership of some dossiers. Certain Council members should not consider countries or even regions to be their exclusive purview or act as mentors on issues concerning those countries. Such

conduct is a remnant of days gone by that we need to abandon.

In conclusion, with respect to the issue of the veto, which has been raised today, although we do not believe that it is relevant to the matter of working methods, the veto is one of the key provisions of the Charter that prompts Council members to reach consensus. I would simply say that it is clear why undermining the right of veto is the goal of those who would seek a mathematical majority on the Council, yet it is unclear why the veto is sometimes criticized by representatives of countries or regions that, in the absence of the veto, would find themselves under massive pressure from a particular group of States. I would suggest that they consider their own national interests.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French):* I thank the Spanish presidency for having organized this debate. In the spirit of your concept note (S/2015/793, annex), Germany and France have decided to issue a joint intervention. I shall deliver the first part, and my German colleague the second. This unprecedented initiative reflects the depth of the Franco-German friendship and our shared willingness to change both expand the Security Council and to change its working methods. The excellent Spanish concept note stresses that the Security Council has demonstrated creative thinking with respect to evolving circumstances by establishing a practice and procedures that enjoy legitimate confidence and demonstrate efficiency in its work.

I thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council for their introductory remarks. France and Germany strongly favour strengthening relations between the various United Nations bodies, in full respect for the powers set out in the Charter. Much has been said about the Economic and Social Council, but we feel it important to mention two important partners of the Security Council: the Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Respect for human rights and harmonious development are inextricably linked to peace and security. Germany and France encourage more frequent briefings to the Council by the High Commissioner for Human Rights or his deputy, the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, as well as other human rights mechanisms. The protection issues are at the heart of the Council's activities and its mandated peacekeeping missions; this is the heart of a more preventive approach to crises. It is therefore natural that the Council should interact directly and frequently with those who are primarily responsible for these issues, as well as in post-conflict situations with the Peacebuilding Commission, as has already been noted.

There is no lasting peace without justice and the fight against impunity. France and Germany are in favour of more extensive contacts between the Council and the International Criminal Court, either through visits here by the Prosecutor or of the Council to The Hague, and of the improved sharing of information across peace missions in cases where the ICC is investigating, given that the Court's activities are in fact intrinsically linked with the justice provisions of the mandates of these operations. We can only regret that some Council resolutions are not implemented as they deserve. Consistency requires that the Council itself drew the consequences of the resolutions it has adopted with regard to ICC referrals.

The responsibility to protect depends on the Council's ability to avoid obstacles when it must act to prevent or stop mass atrocities situations. As Council members know, France and Mexico have proposed an initiative to regulate the use of the veto in the case of the most serious crimes, as defined by the Rome Statute. Our German friends, like 80 other States on all continents, have given us their support. This is a pragmatic initiative aimed at achieving a collective and voluntary commitment on the part of the permanent members. Aware of this challenge, and seeking the broadest possible effort, Germany and France have decided to support the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, whose objectives are complementary to the French initiative.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to make only a brief comment in my national capacity, since Spain's position was clearly reflected in the statement made by the representative of Angola. At the end of this meeting, I shall, in my national capacity, deliver a brief summary of today's debate, to be circulated to all delegations.

Resuming my functions as President of the Security Council, I thank representatives for keeping their statements brief. The concept note before the Council

(S/2015/793, annex) up to ten minutes are alloted to joint statements by groups, three minutes to national statements, and only two minutes to national statements complementing joint statements. Some delegations have told me that two minutes is very little time, but if a delegation has already been represented in a statement delivered on behalf of a group, then two minutes should be sufficient. I believe that in that respect our working methods should evolve, because when the Organization was created it had 51 Member States, and now we are 193. We will have to organize ourselves in a different, more innovative way in order to become more effective.

I should like to ask that representatives speak at a normal speed so that the interpreters can properly translate their statements. I would also like to encourage delegations to continue to deliver summarized versions of their statements and circulate their full statements in writing or post them on their respective web pages.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I very much welcome the opportunity to participate in this open debate of the Council on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I would first like to say a few words on behalf of the Commission. I wanted initially to express appreciation for the recognition of the role of the Peacebuilding Commission that has been expressed by so many here around the table this morning.

I believe that today's debate is very timely in the light of the three reviews on the United Nations related to its peace and security agenda that have been presented to Member States over the last couple of months.

The reviews make a strong case for changing the way we do business in order to ensure a more effective response and support to sustaining peace. More integrated, coherent and holistic action is called for in order for our common goal of building and sustaining peace not to be relegated to a near afterthought, but rather to put it at the centre of what we do. That will require concerted efforts from all of us, within our respective roles, as well as a real shift towards working better together.

With only 10 years in the making, the Peacebuilding Commission is still one of the youngsters in the United Nations family. I would like to highlight three features that make the PBC a fairly unique intergovernmental advisory platform to the Security Council, upon its request, and that have made useful contributions in support of the countries with which it has engaged over the years.

First, the countries with which the PBC engages are always at the centre of our deliberations. Durable peace can be achieved only at the national level and requires strong national leadership, building, inter alia, on broad, inclusive processes. Without their perspective, our understanding will fall short of addressing the specific challenges they face. Therefore, it is imperative that we focus our support on strengthening the capacities of post-conflict countries in order for them to take the lead and exercise full national ownership. It is also therefore a critical aspect of the PBC's advisory function to help integrate the national perspectives of the countries on its agenda.

Secondly, the PBC is a staunch advocate for improved cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union (AU). During the just-concluded Africa Week, the impressive depth and breadth of the activities undertaken by both the AU and the regional economic communities in responding to conflict became clear.

Closer cooperation means first of all that we listen. By virtue of being neighbours in the region, these actors have a more intimate understanding of the issues at hand; they are often more invested; and they often have a lot of credibility at the national level. By drawing on these actors' knowledge and experience, we gain a deeper understanding of country-specific realities, which in turn is a prerequisite for effective United Nations support.

The Peacebuilding Commission forged stronger partnership with regional and subregional actors as a matter of priority, and we encourage others to do the same.

Thirdly, the unique composition structure of the PBC membership ensures that peacebuilding strategies receive the broad support of key stakeholders, which contribute to and engage in the process of the design and implementation of these strategies, both in New York and in the field. For example, through the membership of the top troop- and police-contributing countries, the PBC can help ensure a more holistic approach when considering decisions on transitions between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We engage with those that are implementing the often far-reaching peacekeeping mandates. Our membership also includes key donors, including the international financial

institutions. Consultations with, and contributions from, these stakeholders can help to ensure greater coherence and continuity of international engagement and support throughout the so-called conflict cycle.

Turning to the relationship between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission — a relationship that is of fundamental importance to our ability to fulfil our mandate and to deliver on our advisory function — I should like to highlight three points where our respective bodies might work even better together.

First, through its convening role of a wide array of critical regional and international actors, we can help bring a peacebuilding perspective to the Council's decision-making. Our input contributes to breaking the silos between United Nations principal organs and actors and addressing fragmentation and duplication of effort by bringing together security and development actors.

Secondly, the PBC can help formulate the post-conflict strategies of the countries requesting our advice and bring priority peacebuilding issues to the attention of the Security Council upon its request.

Lastly, in support of the drawdown phase of peacekeeping operations, the PBC's partnerships with regional organizations and international and regional financial institutions will help sustain attention and commitment from the international community to national peacebuilding priorities, focusing in particular on addressing the root causes of conflict and supporting post-conflict peacebuilding objectives.

In conclusion, the report of the Advisory Group of Experts entitled "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace" will be under consideration by Member States. It provides important recommendations on how to strengthen the relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council. The Group recommends that the Security Council regularly request and draw upon the advice of the PBC. We can certainly do more from our side as well in terms of providing more timely, relevant and strategic advice on post-conflict peacebuilding to the Council. A number of recommendations in the report aim at ensuring that we remain an effective instrument that can help the Council meet its longer-term objective, and it is certainly our ambition to try to live up to that.

I should now like to say a few words in my national capacity under rule 37 and on behalf of the Nordic countries, namely, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

A few weeks ago, world leaders gathered here in New York to adopt an agenda of historic significance. The 2030 Agenda sets the world on a path towards sustainable development. A month before that, leaders met in Addis Ababa to agree on means of financing for development, and we are now optimistically looking ahead to Paris, where we are, hopefully, set to embrace a universal and ambitious climate agreement. These achievements are signs of political will. They demonstrate our ability to unite and find collective solutions to face the most serious challenges of our time. Vigorous strides are being made with respect to the development leg of the United Nations.

At the same time, the peace and security leg is hobbled. The number of conflicts in the world is at its highest since the 1960s. The number of people fleeing from war, persecution and poverty is the highest since the end of the Second World War. We have failed in prevention, and we have failed in our response. The Security Council is clearly falling short of its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. The determination that the international community has demonstrated in the areas of sustainable development financing and climate must be matched by Council resolve to redouble its efforts in support of diplomacy, good offices and political solutions. The world has a right to expect that the Security Council and its members will be guided first and foremost by the ideals set out in the United Nations Charter.

We believe that we need a more effective, representative and transparent Security Council that can adequately respond to today's challenges.

First, limiting the use of the veto would be a key step in enhancing the Council's ability to respond to global crises. Therefore, we the Nordic countries strongly support the code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes elaborated by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, as well as the Franco-Mexican initiative to restrain the use of the veto. We encourage those Member States that have not done so to come forward and support those initiatives.

Secondly, we need a reformed Council that is truly representative and that reflects the geopolitical realities of today, and in which Africa, Asia and Latin America are adequately represented. The Nordic countries

support the intergovernmental process on Security Council reform and efforts to move this process forward.

Thirdly, we need more transparency. Open debates and public briefings serve to make the Council more open to the wider membership, thereby contributing to strengthening the buy-in and the legitimacy of its decisions. The use of new technology offers new opportunities.

A topical matter is the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. We expect the Council to do its part in ensuring that the landmark resolution adopted in September (General Assembly resolution 69/321) is fully and promptly acted upon. As a first step, the next President of the Council should, together with the President of the General Assembly, kick-start the nomination process with a joint letter calling for qualified candidates, especially women.

Fourthly, we need a more holistic approach, as highlighted in all the recent reports on peace operations, peacebuilding and resolution 1325 (2000). Active consultation and dialogue with troop- and police-contributing countries and regional and subregional organizations, as well as with countries on the Council's agenda, leads to a richer understanding of the challenges and potential solutions. The use of other instruments, such as the horizon-scanning briefings, Arria Formula meetings and informal interactive dialogues, can help bring potential crises and deteriorating situations to the early attention of Council members. Such interaction helps the Council to devise preventive measures.

Finally, we need more efficiency. New non-permanent members need to be prepared when they join the Council. We welcome last year's decision to hold Council elections six months before the start of the new members' term. We note the annual Finnish workshop called "Hitting the ground running", which aims at providing new members with an in-depth orientation to Council practice, procedures and working methods.

The expectations regarding the Security Council are high. The challenges in coming to grips with the new threats are indeed very daunting, but we believe that the Council can move to become more effective. Above all, that requires political will and that members of the Council take their roles and responsibilities with the utmost sincerity and with the full realization that their task is to put the Charter of the United Nations above their narrow national interests.

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

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate. I am pleased to take the floor in my capacity as the coordinator of ACT, which stands for Accountability, Coherence and Transparency. Launched in 2013, ACT is a cross-regional group of 25 countries aimed at improving the working methods of the Security Council. ACT's efforts focus on the Security Council in its present composition and have remained independent from the comprehensive Security Council reform process.

How the Security Council can prevent or stop mass atrocities has garnered considerable attention. There is widespread and growing concern about the veto when employed in such cases to block Council action. In that context, ACT welcomes the political declaration presented this morning by France, addressed to the five permanent members, on the suspension of the veto in cases of mass-atrocity crimes.

However, ACT believes that all Security Council members, and indeed all States, have a role to play in improving the Council's response to atrocity crimes. Under the leadership of Liechtenstein, we have therefore prepared a code of conduct, a voluntary political commitment, which contains a pledge to support timely and decisive Security Council action in situations involving atrocity crimes, as well as a pledge not to vote against credible draft Security Council resolutions aimed at preventing or ending these crimes. Since effective Council action to prevent and end atrocity crimes is a matter for all Council members, the code is open for support by any current or potential future Security Council member — that is, all Member States. As of today, a total of 82 States have committed themselves to it. The code will be officially launched on 23 October, on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. We encourage all Member States to commit themselves to the code before then.

Under the stewardship of Estonia and Costa Rica, ACT also played an active role in the negotiation of General Assembly resolution 69/321, on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, in particular with regard to the appointment of the next Secretary-

General. The resolution was adopted by consensus, and ACT looks forward to its full implementation. In line with that resolution, and in order for the selection process to be open and inclusive, our group encourages the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council to write a joint letter addressed to all Member States calling for nominations. To be completed on time, this process should start without delay. Following this essential first step, our group looks forward to the publication of a regularly updated list of candidates, as well as the scheduling of meetings and hearings with declared candidates.

Since the publication of presidential note S/2010/507, the Council has agreed on 10 subsequent notes, but their implementation has often proved to be unsatisfactory or inconsistent. In order to facilitate such follow-up, ACT suggests that the Council prepare a note that would consolidate and streamline all decisions taken regarding working methods.

Presidential note S/2013/515, issued in 2013, touches upon many aspects related to interaction and dialogue with non-Council members and bodies. Our group has welcomed the commitment reiterated therein to continue the practice of providing wrap-up meetings and informal briefing sessions to non-members. Seeking information and understanding regarding the Council's activities remains a crucial and legitimate request. We regret that so far this year only four wrap-up sessions have taken place.

The format of Council meetings remains another a key element of access and transparency. ACT therefore welcomes the efforts of the Council to hold open meetings. So far this year, just about half of the meetings have been public, a figure similar to last year.

ACT welcomes the 12 Arria Formula meetings organized during 2015. We want to underline that that format permits interaction with non-traditional briefers, including representatives from civil society, thereby allowing the Council to be more thoroughly informed about a given situation.

ACT notes that 19 open debates have taken place in 2015. Such debates are of crucial importance in order to hear the views of the wider membership, including troop- and police-contributing countries. However, the response of the Council to open debates remains in most cases rather limited. The outcome documents are usually adopted before the views of the wider membership are even heard. ACT therefore hopes that today's open debate on working methods can contribute to shifting this practice, and it welcomes the intention of Spain to ensure follow-up. As it did last year, ACT will produce a document that could serve as a guide for follow-up work by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Question.

Presidential note S/2013/515 also recalls the intention of the Council to remain committed to maintaining regular communication with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). That advisory body to the Council has a strong role to play in preventing the recurrence of conflicts. A coordinated and committed approach to post-conflict peacebuilding is key to preventing countries from falling back into conflict. ACT is convinced that the PBC can assume the role of a forum where critical situations are discussed early, in an inclusive manner and with relevant stakeholders. We also encourage the Council to invite the Chairs of the various country-specific configurations to participate regularly in Council meetings.

More generally, ACT welcomes the Council's renewed focus on prevention. We regret that horizon-scanning meetings have all but discontinued since 2013, and we would welcome enhanced engagement by the Secretary-General to inform the Council about matters that, in his opinion, may threaten international peace and security. The report of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention (S/2015/730), as well as the 2015 reviews on peace operations, women and peace and security, and the peacebuilding architecture all contain useful ideas and proposals in that regard.

The Council acts on all our behalf, on behalf of the full membership of the United Nations. This is why accountability, coherence and transparency in its work and in the implementation of its own decisions are crucial. Last week, five new members of the Security Council were elected. ACT encourages all elected members to seize the opportunities that are presented to them. Our group calls for the implementation without delay of presidential note S/2014/268, on enhancing wider participation by Council members in the work of the Council, and presidential note S/2014/393, on ensuring continuity in the work of the subsidiary bodies.

ACT notes with satisfaction the way the Council visiting missions have been recently arranged, with two countries on the Council co-leading the mission. That practice can serve as an example for the drafting of the

products of the Council. In that regard, ACT welcomes the involvement of the United Kingdom and Spain in the elaboration of resolution 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security, adopted in the past week.

Today's debate is the sixth in what has become an annual practice since 2010. Our discussion is about much more than presidential note S/2010/507 or simply working methods. It is about making the Council more effective, accountable and inclusive. It is about how to ensure that the Council carries out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in a more transparent and effective way in order to contribute to positive developments on the ground. To that end, ACT will remain committed to working constructively with the Security Council and the wider membership.

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

Mr. Braun (Germany) (*spoke in French*): I speak on behalf of France and Germany, following the statement made by my French colleague.

Germany and France have consistently supported a reform of the Security Council with a view to making it more efficient and more in tune with the current global political realities. A revision of its working methods is a significant way to achieve that end. We thank those who contribute daily to the implementation of its procedures and who assist delegations, namely, the Security Council Affairs Division, under the very competent leadership of Director Movses Abelian.

We also underscore the importance of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions on the topic and its efforts towards codification, as was illustrated in the annex of concept note S/2010/507, adopted under the efficient leadership of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations. We pay tribute to the Japanese delegation and congratulate them on their recent election to the Council.

The President's concept note emphasizes the need for transparency and inclusiveness as well as the crucial role of the Secretary-General. Germany and France support a more transparent and inclusive process for selecting the Secretary-General. Our work needs to be guided by the consensus achieved through General Assembly resolution 69/321, adopted of 11 September, on revitalizing the General Assembly. It is now crucial to implement the clear provisions of the text on which all Member States have agreed. That is particularly important for the joint letter by the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council on the issue of nominations for the post of Secretary-General. The resolution invites Member States to consider women candidates for the position, given the fact that to date all the Secretaries-General have been men. We firmly support that call.

We also support all efforts that will enable us to improve the transparency of the Security Council, by including non-member States through Arria Formula meetings and monthly wrap-up sessions. We will also support the efforts to promote more interactive discussions, and we would like to encourage future members of the Security Council, whom we congratulate on their recent election, to follow that path.

Finally, it is crucial to improve the working methods of the Council, but that cannot replace the urgent need for structural reforms. Germany and France would like to recall their support for the consensus decision by the General Assembly of 14 September 2015 on the issue of equitable representation and expansion of the Security Council. It is now important to enter into a phase of negotiations on the text during the next stage of intergovernmental negotiations.

If the Charter of the United Nations has withstood changing times, that is because it enshrines the most fundamental rules to help us navigate the fog of peace, to quote the title of a recent book by our friend Jean-Marie Guéhenno. I would like to conclude by saying that the text of the Charter has contributed to forging a friendship and lasting partnership between France and Germany within the European Union. It is that phenomenon that we would like to illustrate for the Council today by making this joint statement.

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

Mr. Mahtar (India): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate. Given the paucity of time, I will come to the substance directly.

First, we think that the openness of this debate is constricted by imposing a time limit of three minutes on non-members and no time limit for members.

Secondly, one of the more important issues before the United Nations in the coming year will be the selection of the next Secretary-General. There is a great

deal of debate on the prerogatives of the Security Council and the General Assembly in that matter. At the heart, however, is the question of the prerogatives of the five permanent member and the rest of the membership of the United Nations. To a large extent, that is determined by something as seemingly innocuous as the working methods of the Council.

My delegation has pressed for the Council to recommend two or more names to the General Assembly. While the pronouncements of the General Assembly do not specifically provide for it, there is, in our view, no legal impediment for the Council to do so. An important step would also be to do away with secret straw polls using different coloured slips that allow the five permanent members to exercise the veto without even taking ownership of it. Discussions should be held in official meetings of the Council, preferably open ones but not necessarily so. The Secretary-General should issue reports, as is usual, summarizing the proceedings. Except for April, June and October, it will be elected members who will preside over the Council in every month of 2016. It will be for them to decide whether or not the selection of the Secretary-General will remain the sole preserve of the five permanent members.

Thirdly, in the debate about transparency, we need to mention that the most non-transparent of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council is the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) — the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. No information is shared on the criteria for listing or delisting individuals and organizations on whom sanctions are applied. It is our apprehension that there may in fact be no criteria at all and that any of the 15 members may be allowed to exercise a veto without assigning any reason and without the wider membership being informed of their having done so. In April, the new Chair of the 1267 Committee organized a briefing for the wider membership of the United Nations and said that he would do so periodically. However, no meeting has since been held. His predecessor had also kept the work of the Committee cloaked in secrecy.

Fourthly, Article 44 of the Charter requires that consultations be held with troop-contributing countries before the mandates of peacekeeping operations are finalized. Regrettably, that has never happened. Again, we look towards the elected members of the Council to make a new beginning.

Fifthly, there should be transparency in determining the list of speakers in open debates. In our view, priority should be given to Member States rather than organizations with consultative status. With regard to non-members, there would be merit in beginning with Ministers followed by plenipotentiary envoys and then others.

We appreciate that the outcome of this debate will be adopted after all speakers have spoken. We would request that on the next occasion of an open debate an informal discussion should also be arranged with non-members of the Council on the content of the outcome. That would go a long way towards enhancing its acceptability.

In conclusion, I must say that the problems afflicting the Security Council go deeper than its working methods. While a focus on working methods is useful, it can in no way be a substitute for reforming the Council in a manner that would give its decisions legitimacy and acceptability.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): It is true that time is short, because there are many delegations that want to take the floor, but I would like to point out that six member delegations have limited their speaking time and that one member spoke on behalf of six. Therefore, we are applying the same rules to Council members.

I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your wise leadership of the work of the Security Council this month, and I wish you every success. I also wish to thank you for convening this meeting on the working methods of the Council. We agree with the concept note (S/2015/793) that you have so carefully prepared.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has, on several occasions, called for the reform of the Security Council and the improvement of its working methods. We live in a world torn apart by war, violence and serious extremism, so we look to the Council to defend international security and maintain peace. The process of Security Council reform began in 1993. A number of reports and statements have been published since that date in documents calling for improvements in the Council's working methods and stressing the

complementary relationship among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Although positive results have been achieved in such areas as transparency and broader participation, it has, unfortunately, not yet been possible to find a comprehensive solution that allows the Security Council to address its fundamental tasks as we would have wished.

We have now reached a point in which a majority of States Members agree that there is a fundamental problem with the working methods of the Council, which affects its credibility and weakens its ability to resolve conflicts, as we can see from the Council's deadlock with respect to several issues, including the Palestinian question and the crisis in Syria. My delegation therefore appreciates all the efforts underway to improve the Council's working methods, including the initiative of French President François Hollande with respect to restrictions on the use of the veto in situations involving serious crimes and the initiatives that would support that proposal.

My delegation calls for the positive consideration of all of the ideas for reforming the Security Council, in particular those proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, to which my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, belongs, with a view to improving the working methods of the Security Council and in favour of voluntary restrictions on the use of the veto. We also support the idea of a collective agreement to remove the obstacles to accountability for war crimes and genocide, to increase transparency, including in the selection of the Secretary-General and in relations with regional organizations, and to enable the Council to accomplish its most basic and most important function, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security with a view to preventing conflicts and resolving the issues afflicting countries in post-conflict situations.

The reform of the Security Council is one of the major tasks that the international community should take up as it celebrates the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. My country stands ready to cooperate fully with other Member States in order to attain that important objective.

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

Mr. Alday González (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Spanish delegation for convening today's open debate and for its introduction of the concept note (S/2015/793) to guide our discussion, and we grateful for the briefings presented by the President of the General Assembly, the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council and Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson.

The growing participation of Member States in open debates such as today's demonstrates clearly that there has been gradual improvement in the working methods of the Council and provides a clear signal of the interest of the majority in advancing the goal of providing the entire membership with more transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and efficiency. We particularly acknowledge the boost that the elected members of the Security Council have given to the process in recent years, and we hope that the countries elected by the General Assembly last week to sit on the Council from January next year will strengthen that dynamic.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge the meticulous work carried out by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group through various working groups to improve the ways in which the Council and other United Nations organs can improve the interaction among them, and between each of them and the other Member States. We therefore welcome the support of ACT members for the political proposal to restrict the use of the veto in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, as put forward by the Foreign Ministers of France and Mexico last month here at Headquarters. We hope that the complementary initiative on the part of ACT members will also enjoy the wide support of Member States when it is formally presented on Friday at the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of our Organization.

Mexico sees the veto as a responsibility, not a privilege. When a permanent member uses it to block action against mass atrocities, it does so in contravention of the Charter. Limiting the use of the veto in such situations is a moral imperative and a principle underlying the accountability of the permanent members of the Council to the international community.

We also call on the Security Council, in the discharge of its role as guarantor of international peace and security, to do a better job in its advisory role to the Peacebuilding Commission, and to enhance its interaction with countries contributing troops

and police to peacekeeping operations, with timely consultations on the definition, amendment or renewal of mandates.

In recent years, we have found that the flow of information to non-Council members on what is discussed in this Chamber has improved. The desire of some countries on the Council to inform their counterparts, coupled with the work of analysis and dissemination undertaken by non-governmental organizations and academia, has also contributed to that improvement. In that context, I thank the delegation of Venezuela, which, in its capacity as representative of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, has on a daily and consistent basis shared information on the work and agenda of the Council with the rest of the regional Group.

We also believe that the issue of whether or not to hold monthly wrap-up sessions at the end of each presidency reflects the sharp division of views prevalent within the Council on its working methods. There are those who have resolved to strengthen the transparency that must prevail in the Security Council, and those who resist, reinforcing the stereotype of secrecy that has often characterized this Chamber, which inhibits a more transparent relationship between those who sit around this table for two years or on a permanent basis and those who are spectators.

We welcome the result of the process on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly regarding the election of the next Secretary-General. The active involvement of the membership and civil society enables us to move forward. We commend the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council for working in a coordinated manner to implement the provisions of the resolution. We believe that a clear timetable for the selection process and the holding of forums in which we can meet and exchange views with the candidates, perhaps using the Arria Formula format, would be very useful to the entire membership and would meet the objective of promoting greater transparency in the election of the next Secretary-General.

Similarly, we hope that the spirit of cooperation we saw in the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly will be transferred to the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. We appreciate the work done by Ambassador Rattray as facilitator of the intergovernmental negotiations during the Assembly's sixty-ninth session and hope that his successor or successors can build on the lessons learned in the past twelve months so that they can facilitate progress with absolute transparency and objectivity.

Mexico believes that reforming the structure of the Security Council is possible if all parties place political will and commitment before any other consideration in the negotiations. We need a more effective, transparent and representative Security Council that is able to adequately respond to the challenges that arise in the international agenda.

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

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Spain for convening today's open debate, which we realize is the result of great efforts by our Organization at this time when we are celebrating its seventieth anniversary.

As the President's concept note (S/2015/793, annex) rightly states, although very significant progress has been made in the working methods of the Security Council, there is room for more improvement and for better implementation, which will help to boost the effectiveness of the Council's decisions and to provide greater coordination with other organs of the United Nations. As the representative of Angola noted earlier, the Council's work lies at the heart of the work of the Organization.

I would like to discuss two points that Colombia considers worthy of highlighting.

First, one of the issues that has a direct impact on the work of the Security Council is naturally related to the enormous challenge of bringing about lasting peace in conflict areas or places that have just emerged from conflict, and although the Peacebuilding Commission — we have just heard from its Chairperson, the Permanent Representative of Sweden — the Peacebuilding Fund, the Peacebuilding Support Office and other operational peacebuilding entities play a key role, the issue remains part of the Security Council's responsibilities. As the report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture states, it is necessary to have a more comprehensive approach to peace consolidation, one that avoids fragmentation and a silo mentality in the roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council and that takes into account the fact that not only are military and field operations

part of the Council's responsibilities, but so are conflict prevention, recovery and rebuilding operations in post-conflict situations.

Secondly, with respect to the resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution 69/321), my country, along with many others, played a very active role in the negotiations on the draft. We believe its adoption stands as great recognition of our work and an important step towards greater transparency and more inclusiveness in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. Clear guidelines like the joint letter from the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council outlining and explaining the procedure, continual sharing of information on the candidates, and informal dialogues or meetings with candidates are of enormous importance. All this will support greater involvement of the membership, which I think has begun. The resolution is a fundamental part of our vision of working methods reform. Colombia calls for its implementation without hesitation.

Another initiative that is very dear to my country, which 48 Member States have joined, is the search for suitable women candidates for the position of Secretary-General. The historic role that a woman could play at this new stage would be the beginning of great progress in reform. Like these 48 nations, I am sure that we can work together on this proposal, which hopefully can be a great historic opportunity — as many here have said, beginning with the President and many other members of the Council, for whose support I am grateful — to initiate those changes and bring together the visions that civil society, academia and of course the Organization itself have as we approach the important election of the next Secretary- General of the United Nations.

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

Mr. Winid (Poland): I would like to thank the President for organizing today's meeting and for Spain's devotion to discussing the working methods of the Security Council.

Guided by the President's excellent concept note (S/2015/793, annex), I would like to focus on just two issues, especially on the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, with special emphasis on the selection and the appointment of the Secretary-General.

More transparency, inclusiveness and greater interaction with the candidates should guide the process of electing the next Secretary-General. We were pleased to include these aspects in the recent General Assembly resolution, 69/321, on revitalization of the Assembly's work, negotiated under the very able leadership of Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia and Wilfried Emvula of Namibia. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their reappointment to their positions.

Like Colombia, Poland is in favour of presenting women candidates for the position of Secretary-General and therefore welcomes the relevant provisions in resolution 69/321. In our opinion, choosing a female Secretary-General would constitute a significant step towards achieving gender balance throughout the entire United Nations system.

Yet another fundamental principle serving as a cornerstone of our work within the United Nations is geographical distribution. On this occasion, I would like to recall that in the 70-year history of our Organization, the Secretary-General has never been appointed from among candidates from the Eastern European Group. We therefore believe that the Council should take regional rotation duly into account in its recommendation of a candidate to the General Assembly.

We are looking forward to an official start of the process of selecting the next Secretary-General by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as envisaged in the Assembly resolution. We also hope that the cooperation between the Council and the Assembly during the upcoming election will set a good example and standards for the future.

I would also take this opportunity to emphasize that comprehensive Security Council reform is not limited only to the Council's working methods. This is a matter of great importance to my country. We are looking forward to a swift resumption of the intergovernmental negotiations, which were skilfully conducted by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Ambassador Courtenay Rattray, during the Assembly's last session. While welcoming the progress reached so far in improving the Council's working methods, Poland believes that further increasing transparency in the Council's activities would serve not only the wider membership, but also the Council itself.

In my final 10 seconds, I would like to say that it is remarkable how much more an organization can

achieve by making very simple adjustments to its working methods. Small steps can be taken that will hopefully lead us to more comprehensive reform of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole.

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

Ms. Rodríguez Pineda (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome this timely debate, held as we mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations and aimed at promoting efforts to achieve an accountable, more transparent and effective Security Council, adapted to the world of today. We would also like to thank the briefers for their presentations, all of which help to give us an up-to-date picture of their work and of the interaction between the various organs of the United Nations.

Today I would like to discuss three issues of particular relevance to the working methods of the Security Council.

First, the use of the veto by those who have that right has frequently prevented this body from complying fully with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. It does not foster unity or encourage us to seek a common understanding, and far from helping to defend the collective interest, it obstructs and undermines it.

We also believe firmly that we must take specific action if we are to enable the Security Council to prevent and stop mass atrocities. As a first step, we could limit the use of the veto in cases of atrocities, and we therefore support France and Mexico's proposal for restraint in its use, and for a code of conduct for Security Council actions against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. However, we must not stop there. We should keep in mind that the area in which the Security Council has had the greatest failure has been in implementing and genuinely following up on its own decisions. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that those decisions are complied with effectively.

Secondly, Guatemala is concerned about the increase in the number of letters sent to the presidency of the Council with the aim of justifying military action taken in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. In our view, while we are aware of the underlying problems related to the Article, when we are discussing the Council's working methods we should question whether such communications genuinely comply with the obligation under the Charter to report immediately any action taken under that provision. It is clear that most of the time such letters are sent ex post facto simply in order to justify actions that have already been taken. Also questionable is the legality of their open format, which assumes the argument that once a communication has been sent any future military action can be justified. From our point of view, such communications do not exempt the Council from its responsibility to maintain international peace and security in each of these situations individually, and it is one of the reasons it is vital to ensure proper compliance and control of the use of this format.

Thirdly, I would like to briefly discuss the selection and election process for the next Secretary-General. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/321 showed that it is possible to achieve changes in anachronistic processes in the Organization that do not respond to the times we live in. Despite the fact that some progress has been made, Guatemala regrets the fact that no agreement was reached on issues such as requiring the Security Council to recommend several candidates to the General Assembly and the Secretary-General's term of office and re-election. The Council will be discussing them, but we should recall that the Secretary-General is appointed by the entire membership and the decision must therefore be made jointly. At this time, when we are conducting serious reviews of many key points of the United Nations system, a critical analysis of the selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General should be a priority. It is time that we began to act and revitalize the process in a judicious manner, acknowledging the realities of the present and anticipating future challenges.

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

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank the Spanish presidency for convening today's open debate on reforming the working methods of the Security Council, for which my delegation would like to make the following proposals.

First, an analysis of current conflicts and geopolitical tensions demands that we not only conduct a review but institute an immediate, appropriate, strategic and transparent implementation of the necessary reforms.

Second, the Security Council should accord the Assembly greater importance and be ready to learn

from its Member States' collective wisdom. That can be achieved through closer cooperation on the part of the Council with the Presidents of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The latter could be transformed into a global development council, to be developed collectively, working towards the centenary of the United Nations, under a new plan for a 2045 global strategic initiative, a vision proposed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, last month in his address to the General Assembly during the general debate (see A/70/PV.13).

Third, holding more open meetings will improve synergy, transparency and cooperation. There should be genuine, meaningful interaction among Member States rather than prepared statements that are read out.

Fourth, for new non-permanent members to perform effectively from the start, we propose that during the interim period after their election but before they take their seats, they be allowed to attend meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, as well as informal consultations of the whole, in order to become acquainted with their new roles.

Fifth, regarding the election of the next Secretary-General, my delegation believes that the slate of candidates should be shared with the General Assembly so that it can have a greater say in the selection of the Organization's highest position.

Sixth, the rule of law should govern not only internal relations within countries but should also be used to ensure more agreement among Members of the Council, who should abide by it, transcending their national interests. In that regard, my President has also proposed that in 2016 the United Nations convene a high-level international conference designed to reaffirm the basic principles of international law.

Seventh, the use of the veto should be exercised with the greatest caution, particularly in certain circumstances that call for clearly defined guidelines.

Eighth, any sanctions should be imposed by the Security Council, with a proper assessment of their impact, and should not be imposed unilaterally.

And finally, what we need most is not just reform but a change in attitude. The national interests of Member States must be balanced with greater objectivity and a global perspective.

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

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank all the Members of the United Nations for the great support they have given us in enabling us to serve on the Security Council. I am also grateful for the congratulations we have received today. It will be a great honour and pleasure to work with everyone on the Security Council beginning in January 2016.

(*spoke in English*)

In order to save time, I will make only salient points here and circulate my full text afterwards.

Improving the Security Council's working methods has always been one of Japan's priorities. We therefore welcome Spain's initiative in holding today's open debate and are very grateful for its concept note (S/2015/793, annex), which makes very valid points. I am also grateful for the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, chaired by the Permanent Representative of Angola. On that issue, I would like to mention that after the presidential note S/2010/507 was issued in 2010 by the Working Group under the Japanese chairship, the Working Group issued a total of 10 more notes.

And yet what we have done to date is not enough.

Let me refer to a couple of concrete proposals. There is a proposal on the participation of the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the chairs of the Commission's country-specific configurations. There are also proposals and a General Assembly resolution concerning the process for selecting and appointing the Secretary-General (General Assembly resolution 69/321). Many previous speakers addressed this subject.

Concerning the issue of the veto, initiatives put forward — most notably by France and by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group — on restraining its use in situations of mass atrocities have received growing support. Japan supports both these initiatives.

This is the twenty-second open debate that I have had the honour to address since assuming the post of Permanent Representative of Japan two years ago. Open debates are in general a useful means for the Council to learn more about the views of non-Council members. However, most of the 22 open debates I have attended were just statement after statement, with little follow-up. Although non-Council members bring valuable input, very rarely do they receive feedback

from the Council. The only exceptions that I remember are France and New Zealand this year, when summaries produced by the President were shared with us. Thus I am afraid that open debates have not served their intended purpose. I therefore welcome and support your concept note (S/2015/793, annex), Mr. President, which addresses this particular issue, and especially your intention to adopt an outcome at a later stage. This is indeed what note S/2012/922 recommends.

Japan has had the pleasure of serving as Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions twice in the past. Once on the Council, my delegation is determined to contribute actively to the Working Group, in cooperation with other members of the Council and also with the wider United Nations membership.

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

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Let me first express appreciation to Spain for organizing this important open debate.

As the United Nations marks its seventieth anniversary, we are faced with a conflict-ridden world, numbers of displaced persons and refugees unheard of since the Second World War, and a global terrorist threat emanating from an increasing number of non-State armed groups. Today's crises, more than ever, call for a Security Council with its doors wide open to the outside world and its concerns. Against that backdrop, the Council's working methods should be adapted with the need for an effective, inclusive and transparent Security Council in mind. Improvements have been made in the past, but there is still much to be done. Let me share our views regarding three aspects of working methods: transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness.

With respect to transparency, and with regard to strengthening the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, the process of the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General is of eminent importance. Significant steps were made with the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/321, such as the decision to request the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to start the process of soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General through a joint letter addressed to all Member States. In this regard, let me acknowledge the individual efforts made by both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council. We encourage the Council to contribute further to the transparency of the selection process through the implementation of resolution 69/321, as well as by organizing meetings open to the wider membership and civil society, such as Arria Formula meetings, with candidates for the position of Secretary-General.

With regard to inclusiveness, we would welcome increased cooperation between members and non-members of the Council, in order to widen support for the Council's decisions among the general membership and beyond. This is of particular importance when the Council discusses situations that affect the interests of a country that is not a member of the Council. In a similar vein, greater involvement of troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries when discussing specific peace operations would contribute to greater support for the mandates of such operations and, therefore, to a more effective fulfilment of those mandates.

Other options include regular public briefings by special envoys and special representatives of the Secretary-General and public horizon-scanning briefings by the Secretary-General. The latter option would also increase the Council's ability to operate in a proactive and preventive manner. In addition, both the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture underline that, in order to achieve sustainable peace, all United Nations actors must come together in a much more coherent way. Building sustainable peace is a long-term endeavour that requires attention throughout the whole conflict cycle and beyond the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

From this point of view, we could benefit from closer cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council could draw upon the Commission's advice regarding peacebuilding dimensions of mandates. This would help ensure that the mandates, benchmarks and reviews of peace operations reflect the longer view required for sustaining peace. The Peacebuilding Commission might also play a useful role for countries transitioning off the agenda of the Security Council.

With respect to effectiveness, let me recall the pressing need for the Security Council to take action

in the case of mass atrocities. Increasingly, we see civilian populations at risk of mass atrocities. The Council has a duty to use its powers to prevent and halt these atrocities. However, on several occasions this Council failed to exercise its responsibility due to the use of the veto. In the case of risk of mass atrocities, the use of the veto is irreconcilable with the fundamental purposes and principles of the United Nations. It delegitimizes both the Council and the United Nations as a whole. What remains is an image of the United Nations as an organization incapable of fulfilling its core responsibilities.

We therefore recommend that all current and future Council members — indeed, all States Members of the United Nations — support and implement the proposals of France and Mexico, as well as the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, to support timely and decisive action by the Security Council aimed at preventing or ending the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

We need a Security Council that is transparent in its working methods and inclusive towards non-Council members and other United Nations organs and that acts effectively and decisively for the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular when faced with mass atrocities. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations provides an excellent opportunity to reform the working methods of the Security Council and to ensure that it can operate truly in the spirit of the Charter.

It is up to all of us, members and non-members alike, to seize this moment. In that spirit, and speaking in my national capacity as the representative of an aspiring member of the Security Council for the 2017-2018 term, I would like to pledge the commitment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the principles of transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness, on and off the Council, as a partner for peace, justice and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. With the consent of the members of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.