



Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

8699th meeting

Thursday, 9 January 2020, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Pham Binh Minh/Mr. Dang (Viet Nam)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Estonia	Mr. Reinsalu
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Ms. Müntefering
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Niger	Mr. A Barry
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Mr. Gonsalves
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
Tunisia	Mr. Baati
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Upholding the United Nations Charter

Letter dated 31 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1)

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Upholding the United Nations Charter

Letter dated 31 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1)

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, the Head of Government, Ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in the meeting: His Excellency

Mr. Olof Skoog, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, and Mr. Robert Mardini, Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

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/2020/1, which contains a letter dated 31 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2020/1.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Vietnamese presidency of the Council for organizing this timely debate. I congratulate Viet Nam on assuming the presidency of the Security Council at the beginning of its tenure on the Council itself.

I also welcome the presence of the Chair of the Elders, Mary Robinson. And I am pleased that we are beginning the year of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations with a discussion on its founding document.

Peace is our most precious value and the essence of our work. All that we strive for as a human family depends on peace. But peace depends on us. Unfortunately, the New Year has begun with fresh turmoil and long-standing suffering. Geopolitical tensions have reached dangerous levels, most recently in the Gulf, as well as from traditional military threats to the economy to cyberspace. Conflicts that no one is winning grind on and on and on, from Libya and Syria to Afghanistan and the Sahel.

With turbulence on the rise, trust within and among nations is on the decline. We see this trust deficit in streets across the world, as people vent their frustrations

and voice their feeling that political establishments are out of touch, incapable or unwilling to deliver. We see it in the work of the United Nations, including the Security Council, when Member States struggle or fail to find reasonable common ground. And, in this vacuum, the climate crisis is now upon us with ever-growing fury, sparing no one. International cooperation is at a crossroads. All of this presents a grave test to multilateralism. It poses a challenge for the Security Council, which under the Charter has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It underscores, more than ever, the focus of today's meeting, namely, upholding the United Nations Charter.

At this time of global divisions and turmoil, the Charter remains our shared framework of international cooperation for the common good. In an era of spreading hatred and impunity, the Charter reminds us of the primacy of the rule of law and human dignity. In a time of rapid transformation and technological change, the Charter's values and objectives endure. The peaceful settlement of disputes. The equal rights of men and women. Non-intervention, self-determination and the sovereign equality of Member States. And clear rules governing the use of force, as set out in Article 2, paragraph 4, and Chapter VII of the Charter. Those principles are not favours or concessions. They are the foundation of international relations. They are core to peace and international law. They have saved lives, advanced economic and social progress and, crucially, avoided a descent into another world war. But when those principles have been flouted, put aside or applied selectively, the result has been catastrophic: conflict, chaos, death, disillusion and mistrust. Our shared challenge is to do far better in upholding the Charter's values and fulfilling its promise to succeeding generations.

While the Charter and its purposes and principles remain as relevant as ever, our tools must adapt to new realities. We must use them with greater determination and creativity. That includes ensuring the implementation of the Security Council's decisions by Member States pursuant to Article 25 of the Charter. One of the most effective ways to demonstrate our impact is to invest in prevention. We spend far more time and resources managing and responding to crises than on preventing them. Our approach needs to be rebalanced. The founders of the United Nations had a crystal-clear focus on prevention when drafting the

Charter, from the opening words of its Preamble to dedicating an entire Chapter to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Chapter VI outlines many available tools, including negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement. We have ample evidence that these can be effective when applied with purpose and unity. I call on the Council to further utilize the powers granted to it by the Charter, including investigations of disputes in accordance with Chapter VI and the referral of legal questions to the International Court of Justice for advisory opinions in accordance with Article 96 of the Charter.

Let us also recognize that the Sustainable Development Goals, which are objectives in their own right, are among our best tools for prevention. I urge all Member States to make greater investments in the 2030 Agenda, in particular in gender equality, inclusion, social cohesion, good governance and a fair globalization that advances the rights of all, unleashes the talents of all and gives all a stake in society.

In addition to prevention, the Charter was visionary in imagining a world in which the United Nations worked dynamically with regional organizations to maintain international peace and security. While Chapter VIII predates most of our regional partners, it sets a framework for cooperation and division of labour. We are investing in regional partnerships in crucial new ways. I have put significant emphasis on a strategic partnership with the African Union, including through its Silencing the Guns initiative and its Agenda 2063. The European Union continues to provide strong support across our agenda. At the same time, we are working to strengthen ties with all other regional organizations. Among them, of course, is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, so ably chaired this year by the Council's President, Viet Nam.

Throughout its history the Security Council has adapted its work based on the changing nature of conflict and enhanced multilateral cooperation in peace and security. Peacekeeping is not mentioned in the Charter, but it is firmly rooted in its ideals and epitomizes the kind of collective action for peace that the Charter envisaged. Today some 100,000 United Nations peacekeepers protect civilians and promote peace in several of the most troubled regions of the world. United Nations peacekeeping remains a vital and cost-effective investment in global peace and security. But effective peacekeeping requires strong international support. The Action for Peacekeeping

initiative stresses our shared commitment to make our peacekeeping missions stronger, safer and fit for the future.

Finally, as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, I wish to direct a special message to the Security Council. The privilege of membership carries vital responsibilities to uphold the Charter's tenets and values, particularly in preventing and addressing conflict. Present and past disagreements must not be an obstacle to action on today's threats. We must avoid double standards; but perceptions of double standards must not be an excuse for no standards at all. War is never inevitable; it is a matter of choice — and often it is the product of easy miscalculations. Peace, too, is never inevitable; it is the product of hard work, and we must never take it for granted.

At this time when global fault lines risk exploding, we must return to fundamental principles. We must return to the framework that has kept us together. We must come home to the United Nations Charter. Strengthening our commitment to that resilient, adaptable and visionary document — and thus to the very notion of international cooperation itself — remains the most effective way to collectively face the global challenges of this grave moment, and the decade before us. The Charter compels us to do everything in our power to save people from the scourge of war and injustice. As we face new threats, but also new opportunities for a better world, that is the work that must define the seventy-fifth anniversary year.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson: I am honoured to address the Security Council again as the Chair of The Elders at this important open debate. I thank the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for the invitation.

As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, I wish that the founder of The Elders, Nelson Mandela, could address the Council, in his powerful and inimitable voice, with his strong vision and purpose. Instead, the Council has me, with my Irish accent, trying to rise to the occasion. For rise to the occasion we must. At the start of a new year and a new decade, The Elders are clear that the world faces two distinct, existential threats: nuclear proliferation and the climate crisis.

Responding to those threats is critical, but made harder at a time when multilateral cooperation is being undermined by populism and nationalism. The Elders issued a statement in early December in which we urged all world leaders to acknowledge that effective multilateralism is in their own national interest, regardless of size or strength. Getting others to cooperate by means of internationally agreed mechanisms is less costly and more reliable than unilateral force. This collaborative approach is at the heart of the United Nations Charter, and the only way in which we can hope to tackle challenges such as the climate crisis and nuclear proliferation.

We also need this sense of cooperation as the world seeks to address the recent alarming escalation of tensions in the Middle East. Indeed, it is my understanding that Iran's Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif, was due to address the Council today. He was going to speak about the role of the United Nations Charter in supporting international peace and security but has been prevented from doing so as tensions have risen between Iran and the United States. This is highly regrettable. It is precisely in times such as these that we need to hear the voices of all concerned.

As the Secretary-General has reminded us, Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations requires parties to any dispute that threatens international peace and security to hold negotiations or use other peaceful means to resolve their conflict. The gravity of the current situation in the Middle East means that dialogue and negotiations are urgently needed, and I urge the representatives in the Chamber to consider what the United Nations can do to bring them to the table in the spirit of its Charter.

What we need today is a new vision and bold sense of purpose on how we will tackle the scourge of war. With respect to nuclear arms control, The Elders have spoken out clearly and forcefully about the need for all nuclear Powers to get serious about disarmament and to pursue policies of nuclear minimization in order to preserve peace for future generations. We sum those up as the four "Ds": doctrine — every nuclear State should make an unequivocal declaration of no first use; de-alerting — almost all warheads should be taken off high-alert status; deployment — substantially reduce the one-quarter of all nuclear warheads that are currently operationally deployed; and decrease — dramatically cut the number of nuclear weapons in existence, with the United States and Russia reducing to a total of no

more than 500 each. The Elders hope that instead of a new arms race in 2020, we will see a re-energized Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and an agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation to extend the New START Treaty until 2026.

With regard to the climate crisis, The Elders recognize the need for a bold new initiative. The disappointing outcome of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Madrid shows that there is still insufficient political will for urgent, collective action to avert catastrophe. We need a new mindset. There are those, for instance, who call for work to begin on a new fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty, which is a bold and innovative idea that seeks to bring transparency, accountability and agreement to the cessation of fossil fuel production in a way that supports jobs and livelihoods. New ideas like those are needed.

We need a new mindset that recognizes the urgency of the challenge the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change posed in its report *Global Warming of 1.5°C*. We need new ideas borne from a shared understanding that we need to reduce global carbon emissions by 45 per cent by 2030. The Security Council should be a key player in shaping that new mindset, but unfortunately it is seen by many as not being fit for purpose. Too many members, not least those with the special responsibility of holding permanent seats, treat it as a forum for advancing their own narrow interests rather than a means of addressing common challenges.

I address the Council today as a woman, and indeed a grandmother. If women had equal power in the world today, I believe that we would have a very different problem-solving way of dealing with the challenges that we face. Women drew up a remarkable agenda in Beijing 25 years ago, but not enough progress has been made since to really champion equality, and both within and outside the United Nations women now face a backlash in marking that anniversary.

I ask the Security Council in particular to give greater priority to the terrible problem of systemic violence and discrimination against women and girls, which is a cause of immense suffering. I call on the Council to implement its numerous resolutions dealing with gender inequality with full funding. That should

start with resolution 1325 (2000), the twentieth anniversary of which we will mark this year.

I also urge the Council to listen to the children and young people who have come together in their millions to strike for Fridays for Future. They have understood the importance of thinking globally and acting locally. They are bonded together by the threat that they see posed by the climate emergency. That bond has enabled them to reach out in solidarity, and even love, to those most vulnerable, most affected and least responsible for what is causing the climate crisis. They are asking us not to listen to them but to listen to the science. We should all take heed. The science of the climate crisis makes it imperative that we implement in full the voluntary commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the commitments of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

We need a bold new vision in which every country, city and corporation commits to being carbon neutral by 2050. We need a change of mindset to enable a just transition to clean energy in a way that allows us to stay at or below 1.5°C of warming. We need to put a proper price on carbon. Every country needs to take seriously the report of the Global Commission on Adaptation, *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience*, and build resilience in communities for the new normal that we are experiencing — an experience exemplified by the terrible bushfires in Australia.

The calls for action are getting louder. Civil society is coming together for a People & Planet call to action in 2020 on 20 January, and the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day in April promises to see the greatest mobilization in human history. When Nelson Mandela addressed the General Assembly on 3 October 1994 (see A/49/PV.14) as President of South Africa, he posed the following question. Given the interdependence of the nations of the world, what is it that we can and must do to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere? In response, he suggested that a new initiative was needed — one that should inspire all of humankind because of the seriousness of its intent. The time for such an initiative to protect people and the planet is surely now. Future generations will neither forget nor forgive if we squander this opportunity.

The President: I thank Mrs. Robinson for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

Seventy-five years ago, the founders of the United Nations instilled into the Charter their hope and aspiration to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. They enshrined in the Charter the principles of sovereign equality, respect for the political independence and territorial integrity of all States, restraint from the threat or use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. Those fundamental principles have become the foundation of contemporary international law, guiding friendly relations and cooperation among nations, and spurred the development of a comprehensive body of international law governing all areas, from non-proliferation and disarmament and the promotion and protection of human rights to trade, environment and climate change.

The history of the United Nations is living proof of the true value of the Charter. Respect for the United Nations Charter has been pivotal in preventing another world war, promoting peaceful solutions for conflicts all over the world and maintaining international peace and security. Recent worrying events in the Middle East underscore ever more the utmost importance of upholding the Charter, especially the principles of non-use of force, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Disrespect for the Charter and international law, on the other hand, has been posing serious threats to international and regional peace and security and challenging the very relevance and legitimacy of the United Nations. Today emerging and complex global challenges make it impossible for single nations to cope. Inequality of opportunity, unilateralism and the abandonment of multilateral efforts are among the root causes of protracted armed conflicts. Power politics, the use or threat of use of force, coercion, interference or aggressive actions against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States are escalating tensions in many regions.

In such difficult times, the United Nations Charter proves to be more relevant and essential than ever. We must act to ensure that the United Nations and its actions reflect the common interests of all Member

States. We must promote multilateralism and equitable relations among States in accordance with the United Nations Charter. That is the only way to maintain international peace and security, promote sustainable development, address climate change and facilitate post-conflict reconstruction, for a better, more peaceful and just world.

Viet Nam believes that States bear the primary responsibility in promoting and safeguarding adherence to the United Nations Charter and international law at all levels. We also believe that, as the organ charged by the Charter with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council must be at the forefront to ensure respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter, and that Council members must take the lead by setting good examples themselves. In that vein, I wish to put special emphasis on three points.

First, we must reinforce our commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. States should make maximum use of the tools available to them under the Charter, especially in the areas of conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. In that regard, I share entirely the view of the Secretary-General that conflict prevention and mediation are among the most important means to relieve human suffering.

Secondly, we should enhance the role of regional organizations and expand their collaboration with the United Nations and the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security in their respective regions and beyond. In South East Asia, the United Nations Charter was the source of inspiration for the Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has become the legal framework of a stronger, more cohesive ASEAN community. ASEAN today has affirmed its central, indispensable role in the regional security architecture and in addressing regional challenges and maintaining regional and international peace and security.

Thirdly, we need to ensure adherence by all States, large and small, to the fundamental principles of international law and the United Nations Charter in the planning and implementation of all development, security and defence strategies, as well as foreign policies. We must cultivate a culture and a mindset of adherence, which, as history suggests, is the only way for peace to be sustained.

Seventy-five years ago, as the United Nations came into being, Viet Nam declared its independence, bearing in mind the monumental values of the Charter. Since the very early days of independence, Viet Nam expressed its wish many times to be a Member of the United Nations and its willingness and commitment to upholding and adhering to the purposes and principles of the Charter. As a nation heavily scarred by war and now on the path of reform, development and international integration, Viet Nam has a profound understanding of the utmost importance of upholding the Charter in ensuring lasting peace, building an international order based on international law and promoting friendly and equal relations among States.

As a non-permanent member of the Council and a Member of the United Nations, Viet Nam is strongly committed to upholding the United Nations Charter. In the spirit of a partnership for sustainable peace, we will spare no effort to contribute to the endeavours of the United Nations and the international community to ensure the effective adherence to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter for the ultimate aim of global peace, security and sustainable development.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): The many-sided complexities, contradictions and challenges manifest in the global political economy and system of international relations conspire to demand, more than ever, a United Nations fit for the purpose of ensuring a multilateral, rules-based international order of peace, security, prosperity and sustainable development for all of humankind. Indeed, we in a country like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, an exemplar of small-island exceptionalism, awash as it is with a historical bundle of debilitating and uplifting legacies and the contemporary encumbrances and possibilities of our Caribbean civilization, see the necessity and desirability of a vibrant and well-functioning United Nations as a matter of the highest priority. We signal that with my presence.

The foundation stone, known as the Charter of the United Nations, was shaped and laid, by outstanding visionaries and realists, to meet the immediate exigencies of the post-world war global condition and the

foreseeable prospect of an evolving comity of nations to dwell together, if not always in unity, but cooperatively in the pursuit of peace, security and prosperity.

Each generation, in humankind's quest for a better life, is always faced with inherited and fresh challenges. Accordingly, each generation is both blessed and burdened with a mission of continuity and change, as the circumstances admit. At the dawn of the second decade of the twenty-first century, and in the seventy-fifth year of existence of the United Nations, it is justifiable and wise to remind ourselves of the enduring core purposes and principles of the United Nations, recommit to them and sensibly reshape and reform our United Nations in appropriate ways to better execute its mandates in a rapidly changing global order. But what we must not do is to reject or dismantle the foundation stone, which the original builders so carefully put in place and which their esteemed continuators have so painstakingly maintained or fortified. In that regard, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends Viet Nam for spearheading the initiative to hold today's debate. We endorse the presidential statement (S/PRST/2020/1) just adopted. I adopt and call as my own the words of the Secretary-General and the Chair of The Elders.

Fundamentally, the Charter of the United Nations codified and developed an efficacious international legal framework to regulate relations among sovereign States, in a rational and principled way, so as to maintain and promote international order in the interests of all humankind. The international legal framework is, by its very nature, multilateral. It is axiomatic that there cannot be a unilateral United Nations — that is an oxymoron. Its very essence must be multilateral. In holding aloft international law of a deepening multilateralism, the founding fathers drew upon right reason and experience and proceeded to codify and elaborate the requisite statutes, rules, settled customs and norms for authoritative decision-making.

Every Member of the United Nations knows fully well that which is plainly acceptable or unacceptable within the terms of the Charter and international law. To be sure, there are always spheres of genuine contention and disputatious conversations derived from national interests or technical interpretation. However, too often there is an inclination by too many Member States to present what is plainly wrong as right, and vice versa.

We all know that it is unacceptable for one State or a group of like-minded States to drive a horse and

chariot through the bedrock principles of sovereignty, independence, the equality of States, non-interference, non-intervention and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Similarly, we all know that it is plainly wrong for any State or group of States to be in quest of hegemony or to be engaged in the unilateralist weaponizing of international trade, commerce, finance or banking.

We all know that the treasured right to self-defence cannot be exercised disproportionately or outside the boundaries of international law. We all know, too, that it is unacceptable to support or harbour terrorists and international criminals, to facilitate the spread and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or to deny people basic fundamental human rights.

Yet, in the hallowed halls of our United Nations, there is a daily diet of justification for that which is plainly wrong or unacceptable. We ought to resolve, in this new year, to desist from such justification.

One of the essential contributions to be made by small States like ours is the tireless advocacy of the timeless principles enshrined in international law. With no ideological or geostrategic axes to grind, we consider it our solemn obligation not only to articulate these principles but also to ensure that they are applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths, rather than selective, uneven and unpredictable tools to further hegemonic power or Great Power ambitions.

The Charter of the United Nations also promises us development and economic well-being, which bear upon international peace and security. Accordingly, our best collective efforts require the fixing of underdevelopment, economic insecurity and vulnerability to external shocks so as to limit unnecessary conflict and discord. Similarly, we must acknowledge and act upon the security consequences of climate change, the misuse and abuse of the Earth's resources, including the seabed, and the weaponizing of outer space.

As I conclude, I want to say a few simple, straightforward things. The arrogance of power, however derived, too often imbues human beings and nation States with a sense that restraints on them are impermissible. This corrupting power is ignoble and slowly, even imperceptibly, deprives the powerful of much of the virtue that they possess. Powerlessness, too, can be, and often is, debilitating. Powerlessness

invites cowardice and the opportunism of the meek; it is also a strong stimulus for solidarity.

In the end, the absence of virtue, a tendency to ignobility, irresponsibility and rank hypocrisy are clear and present dangers that attend both the powerful and the powerless, although not in equal measure. The metaphoric cards are stacked in favour of the powerful; accordingly, from those to whom much is given, much more is rightly expected. On behalf of the proverbial least of those among us, let us be steadfast in our commitment to the core principles and values of our United Nations and be a conscience in this unruly and chaotic world of much promise. Hopefully, a renewed grace in our United Nations may take us to a better, more peaceful, secure and prosperous place for humankind's abode.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia.

Mr. Reinsalu (Estonia): On behalf of Estonia, I would like to thank the Government of Viet Nam for convening this important debate on the role of the Charter of the United Nations and to thank our briefers for their statements.

At the outset, allow me to express my deepest condolences to the loved ones of the victims of the Ukrainian plane crash near Tehran. I hope the circumstances of that tragedy will be investigated promptly, fully and independently.

Our multilateral system established after the Second World War is a network of agreements and organizations created to save future generations from grave suffering and endless wars. It is widely believed that institutionalized international cooperation provides relative stability, security and predictability. If that cooperation fails, then the probability of conflict increases and we fail to collectively stop acts of aggression, terrorism and other grave violations of international law.

We are living in turbulent and uneasy times. Recent tensions in the Middle East seriously concern us. I have condemned the attacks on the United States Embassy in Baghdad and condemn the missile attacks on the two bases in Iraq, which also house Estonian troops. Despite some recent signs of de-escalation, the situation remains tense. I call for serious negotiations between the parties to ease tensions and avoid nuclear proliferation.

When it comes to worldwide cooperation, there is no other organization like the United Nations. It is regarded as the primary infrastructure for global cooperation. Our support for the United Nations and its Charter is based on the assumption that many problems can be solved — or solved better — together rather than bilaterally or single-handedly. Such cooperation produces global public goods, such as better health, security and knowledge. The Charter of the United Nations represents the constitution of this cooperation, and it can serve as a source of peace and stability only when its principles are upheld.

In that context, we observe with concern how violations of international law, including the United Nations Charter, are taking place in our continent, Europe. The Security Council has drawn attention to grave breaches of international law against Ukraine and Georgia. At the same time, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions expressing grave concern over the actions against the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine and Georgia. Those are concerns we wholeheartedly share.

According to the Charter, the Security Council is responsible for upholding and promoting international law. Those who drafted the Charter also stressed respect for human rights. We know that States that respect human rights and dignity are more stable, both within their own national borders and in relation to other States. Therefore, it remains crucial that, in situations of grave violations of international humanitarian law, the Security Council engage and react. That has not been the case with regard to the tragedy in Syria, where the veto has been used over and over again. For that, we know the Syrian people are paying the highest possible price.

The Secretary-General has reminded us that, while the Charter's principles are as relevant as ever, we must continue to update its tools and must use those tools with greater determination. Those are very wise words. Those with special tools and privileges granted by the Charter also have a special responsibility, particularly when it comes to the veto. Estonia believes that countries should refrain from voting against initiatives aimed at preventing or halting mass atrocities. The Security Council must lead by example.

Estonia started its membership in the Security Council this month. I would like to thank all who

placed their trust and confidence in us. It is a great responsibility and an opportunity to exercise global responsibility. We look forward to talking to one and all and are open to hearing their concerns and ideas. The principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the international rule of law will also guide our work in the Council.

The President: I now call on the Minister of State in the Federal Office of Germany.

Ms. Müntefering (Germany): Before I begin my remarks, let me thank the Secretary-General and Her Excellency Mrs. Robinson for their briefings.

I also congratulate Viet Nam on joining the Security Council and assuming this month's presidency. We should all applaud Viet Nam for the topic of today's debate. I certainly do, because the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are, in fact, the fundamental reason for our work here at the United Nations. They guide our peaceful coexistence as nations large and small. Seventy-five years after their adoption, it is not clear how we will be able to transmit this remarkable progress for humankind to the next century. What will the world look like another 75 years from now, on the threshold to the twenty-second century? Written at the end of the darkest days in the history of humankind, the Charter represented new hope for the peoples of the world. Threats to peace and security were to be resolved thereafter through the force of the law rather than the law of force.

Germany became a Member of the United Nations in 1973. With our accession to the United Nations not even 30 years after the horrors of Second World War, my country was given a seat at the table of nations once again. Our past instils in us a particular responsibility to champion the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a member of the Security Council, we are also guided by the will to defend and strengthen the rules-based international order and to promote universal respect for human rights. We firmly believe that respecting the Charter and commonly agreed international rules is the best way to help to foster peace and security and the well-being of all nations and peoples.

My plea today to all representatives around this table and the wider United Nations is to return to the roots of this Organization, which was built on the basis of sharing power, mutual respect and joint responsibility. That shared power came from a position of power,

from lessons learned and conviction. And, talking of founding fathers and mothers, Eleanor Roosevelt said:

“It is not enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it is not enough to believe in it. One must work at it.”

Conflict after conflict in the past — from the Sahel to the Balkans, from Asia to North Africa — has taught us the lesson for today, that lasting peace and security can never be achieved by military means. We need to prioritize prevention and look at long-term drivers of conflict. Without respect for human rights, good governance and social inclusion, peace will remain elusive. The Security Council has increasingly embraced the advancement of human rights as a critical element of promoting peace and security and preventing conflicts and atrocities. Germany attaches great importance to that.

The women and peace and security agenda is also a priority of Germany’s Security Council membership. With the upcoming twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), this year will be critical for expediting the agenda’s implementation, including resolution 2467 (2019), on ending sexual violence in conflict. In its second year on the Security Council, Germany continues to call for respecting international law, including the law of the sea and international humanitarian law, and promoting and upholding human rights. We will continue to advance the disarmament agenda and we will fight for accountability for grave human rights violations, atrocity crimes and crimes against humanity.

Multilateral cooperation is the backbone of our foreign policy, and promoting the rules-based global order with the United Nations at its core is at the heart of our interests. That is why German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, his French counterpart, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, and other partners co-founded the Alliance for Multilateralism last year. Its objective is to support and strengthen the international rules-based order with the United Nations Charter and other international law at its heart. More than 50 countries are already working together in that framework, both with the United Nations and within it. We will strive to tackle emerging threats through the development of new multilateral agreed rules and principles. Examples include the Humanitarian Call for Action and the principles agreed in Geneva on lethal autonomous weapons systems. We

will also strive to promote norms and principles for upholding stability in cyberspace.

In that vein, we encourage the Security Council, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, to address new threats to peace and security, including gross human rights violations, the effects of climate change and the risks emanating from new technologies, which often act as drivers of conflict.

The recent events in the Middle East are of serious concern to all of us. Regional security and stability are at stake. A military confrontation, let alone a full-scale war, would have terrible consequences for the lives of the people in the Middle East and beyond. We are relieved to see signs of de-escalation and call for maximum restraint. The United Nations was founded on the central aspiration to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We must be clear — conflicts can be solved only by political means.

It is up to us whether our grandchildren will remember us with pride and hope for a better future as we today commemorate the work of the pioneers who founded the United Nations, as the power of justice is justice of power.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): As this is the first open debate for the year 2020, South Africa would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new elected members — Estonia, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam — to the Security Council. We wish them all the best during their two-year terms. We have no doubt that the newly elected members will play a constructive role in the work of the Council, and we look forward to working with them to that end.

We also thank the outgoing elected members — Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland — for their positive contributions to the work of the Council. Finally, we thank you, Mr. President, for dedicating the first thematic debate, during this historic seventy-fifth year of the Organization, to the Charter of the United Nations, which forms the foundation of the Organization’s very existence and our ongoing work.

As a founding Member of the United Nations, South Africa — together with fellow African States Ethiopia, Egypt and Liberia — participated in the drafting and adoption of the Charter in San Francisco.

South Africa deposited its instrument of ratification on 7 November 1945.

We note with regret that the Foreign Minister of Iran was not granted a visa to attend this meeting, thereby denying an important actor in the troubled Gulf region an opportunity to express the country's views on peace and security in the context of a debate on the United Nations Charter. The denial of entry to the States Members of the United Nations — in this case to one that participated in the drafting of the Charter and deposited its instrument of ratification on 24 October 1945 — to participate in a United Nations debate contravenes the 1947 hosting agreement and undermines the resolution of disputes through constructive dialogue.

The signing of the Charter of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945 was a seminal moment in the relations of States that invoked a sense of unity for a common cause — a moment during which, as the second Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, later pointed out, “The hopes that were then aroused in many hearts outran the limitations of human nature” (see SG/382). The signing of the United Nations Charter was and remains an expression of hope that the peoples of the world can live in peace and prosperity, in larger freedom.

The United Nations Charter represents a normative and contractual framework for the values that we as nations of the world aspire to and the commitments we intend to abide by. Following the unsuccessful attempt of the Covenant of the League of Nations to create an environment in which another world war could be averted, the United Nations Charter succeeded in the creation of a multilateral system of governance that has ensured that countries are able to convene within a rules-based environment and framework to discuss and promote issues of international peace and security, human rights and development.

We recognize that since its inception the Charter has played a significant role in regulating relations between Member States by forbidding the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State and advocating for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

While the Charter reinforces respect for the sovereignty of nations, it also, in Article 33, calls on all nations to collectively pursue a non-antagonistic and mutually beneficial approach to its international relations.

Despite the noble aspirations of the Charter and its positive impact, some Member States have violated, and continue to violate, some of its central tenets. Article 2.1 of the Charter maintains that the United Nations is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members; however, unilateral actions and disregard for international law continue to this day.

We must stress that the Charter is a compact that Member States have agreed to voluntarily abide by for their mutual benefit. There cannot be selective adherence to the Charter, as that would undermine the very credibility of the compact. The selective implementation of the Charter undermines the Organization and the post-Second World War international system of governance that we have developed.

The Charter makes very clear that the Security Council is the sole body that can authorize the use of force. Additionally, the Charter provides that States may act in self-defence, including confronting imminent threats; but such threats must be credible, real and objectively verifiable for the use of force without Security Council authorization to be justifiable.

South Africa is of the view that, to uphold the original intention of the Charter, which ultimately is predicated on peace, even in the event that there is evidence of a real and credible threat, any recourse to the use of force based on self-defence should be brought to the Security Council for authorization. Ultimately, the Charter seeks to prevent the use of force. Therefore, the issue is not just about whether the use of force is legal or not, but whether its use contributes to the Charter's vision of a more peaceful and prosperous world.

The Charter provisions of the equality of nations, mutual respect and adherence to international law must be upheld if we are to resolve current disputes through negotiated settlements and prevent the outbreak of further conflicts. This approach is necessary in the context of emerging threats to international peace and security such as the growing number of intra-State and trans-State conflicts, the rise of non-State actors, terrorism, transnational organized crime and other such acutely global threats. We should not allow for competing political interests to undermine respect for international law and self-determination in cases such as that of the Western Sahara and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Charter is explicit on the role of regional organizations, as reflected in Chapter VIII, which

makes provisions for regional arrangements to address matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. That is a testament to the vision of the drafters of the Charter, as, at the time, regional organizations were not as developed or equipped to deal with peace and security matters as they are today.

Today Chapter VIII is even more relevant in terms of regional organizations, particularly the African Union and regional economic communities on the African continent, as they have established peace and security mechanisms, including those dealing with mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. As Members of the United Nations, we must continue our efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination with regional arrangements to ensure that our efforts are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

While the Charter remains relevant, we must acknowledge that the world today is very different from the world that existed 75 years ago, when the Charter was signed. At the time of signing, there were 51 Member States. The majority of Member States from Africa and Asia that make up today's 193 Member States were not yet independent but still colonized.

While the values that underpin the Organization should not be changed, Charter amendments are necessary to ensure that the Organization reflects the current global reality. In the first few years of the Organization's existence, Member States were willing to make the necessary amendments to the Charter, and the five Charter amendments that were made accommodated the growing membership of the United Nations.

However, it has been 47 years since the most recent Charter amendment. For the Organization to be effective and remain relevant, it must reflect the current state of the world, and we must be willing to make the changes necessary to ensure that Member States are adequately represented in all the principal organs, including the Security Council.

We must use the opportunity of the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter and the United Nations itself to recommit to the aspirations we had when it was signed. That would require us to recommit to upholding and returning to the letter and spirit of the Charter and its central principles, through which we pursue international peace and security and continue to pursue the mutual benefit and development of all. That is not an optional approach but a prerequisite

and necessity for international peace and security and for creating a world that understands that the interests of each nation are imbedded in the interests of all of us.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Viet Nam's initiative to convene today's open debate. We are pleased to see you, Your Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, presiding over the meeting. We thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his briefing, which contains a host of important observations and insights worthy of in-depth consideration by us all. China also thanks Mrs. Mary Robinson for her presentation.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences in connection with the demise of passengers from various countries in the Ukrainian airplane crash that took place in Iran, and I express my heartfelt sympathy to the victims' families.

Seventy-five years ago, the Charter of the United Nations officially came into force, marking the birth of the United Nations and the start of a brand-new chapter in human history. The Charter of the United Nations is a great historical text that came into being in the twentieth century as a cornerstone of multilateralism. The Charter establishes the basic norms governing international relations today, develops generally recognized principles of international law and charts the way forward for human society.

Over the past 75 years, the four purposes and seven principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations make up the basic credo by which States interact with one another. The principles of, *inter alia*, sovereign equality, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the prohibition of the threat or use of force, respect for the political independence and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs have taken root in the hearts and minds of peoples and have contributed significantly to world peace and development.

If we look around the world today, universal peace remains elusive. Unilateralism is on the rise, dealing heavy blows to the international rule of law and order. As a result of spreading protectionism, the world economy is plagued by uncertainties. That is compounded by acts of bullying, the effects of which are being felt around the world and are jeopardizing global peace and stability. The recent sudden heightened tension in the situation in the Arabian Gulf region has significantly

increased the risk of war. Much remains to be done to achieve peace and security, as today's world makes it more imperative than ever to uphold the Charter.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. Recalling the spirit of the Charter is the best way to commemorate the Organization's seventy-fifth birthday, and that is especially relevant given the present context. One need only open the Charter to find its unequivocal message expressed in the first paragraph of the Preamble, namely,

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind”,

That is the founding aspiration of the United Nations and, more important, the mission of the Organization's 193 States Member. Seventy-five years later, we must ask ourselves: Have we really succeeded? Will this and succeeding generations be saved from the scourge of war? The answer, which remains as yet unknown, will depend on whether every State bears in mind the founding aspiration proclaimed in the Charter and honours the mission enshrined within it.

In upholding the Charter, we must pursue mutually beneficial cooperation. The world is undergoing the most dramatic shifts in a century. No country alone can take on the challenges confronting humankind. No country can afford to regress to self-imposed isolation. It is imperative to create greater opportunities through cooperation, overcome risks and challenges and achieve shared development. It is also imperative to strive for win-win results on an equal footing and refrain from an all-for-me approach, so that all countries enjoy equal rights and benefits from equal opportunities on a level playing field.

In upholding the Charter, we must be guided by the international rule of law. Countries must interact with one another in good faith, with integrity and must not waver or go back on their word. International cooperation must be anchored in rules, which means that one must not do whatever one wants. We must firmly oppose the practice of putting one country's own interests above those of others, oppose the wanton misinterpretation of international law, oppose the hegemonic logic of its selective application and oppose long-arm jurisdiction and unilateral sanctions.

In upholding the Charter, we must adhere to the principles of equity and justice. Equity means that

matters of an international nature should be discussed and managed by us all; that all countries are equal regardless of their size; and that big countries have a duty to help smaller ones, as do rich countries poorer ones. Justice is manifested in mutual respect for one another's sovereignty, independence and territorial Integrity. It is also manifested in respect for every country's independent choice of path towards development and right to pursue a better life and a bigger space for development.

In upholding the Charter, we must take effective measures. The Charter should not merely ornament a bookshelf, much less be used for lip service. It should be put into practice on the ground to generate tangible results. The Charter confers upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is the sacred mission of the 15 members of the Council. We must always act in the interest of the greater good, namely, safeguarding world peace. We must enhance mutual trust, strengthen unity, avoid the politicization of certain issues and remain committed to diffusing conflicts and preventing wars so that we can have a safer and more secure world.

Currently, the United States unilateral military adventurism has led to heightening tension in the situation in the Arabian Gulf region. China supports Secretary-General António Guterres' call for peace. We have been actively engaged in diplomatic efforts and are committed to playing a responsible and constructive role in safeguarding international law, equity, justice and regional peace and stability.

We call on all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint, return to dialogue and consultations without delay, jointly work towards a de-escalation of the situation and collectively uphold the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. If the situation in the region were to spiral out of control, it would not serve the interests of any party. Restoring peace is of crucial importance to the entire world. The Security Council should discharge its duty emanating from the Charter with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

China was the first country to sign the Charter. It has consistently and scrupulously adhered to the purposes and principles of the Charter and has unfailingly supported efforts to defend the authority and functions of the United Nations. In 2015, before

the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.13), President Xi Jinping systematically expounded on the importance of building a community of shared future for humankind, which is a continuation and sublimation of the purposes of the Charter.

In the face of the new era and new situations, China's commitment to the Charter is unwavering, and China will honour every one of its promises to support the United Nations. China will uphold the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, play its important role as a permanent member of the Security Council, remain committed to taking an impartial stand on both international and regional hotspot issues and propose constructive solutions to safeguard international peace and security.

China will uphold the sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, and is ready to share its development experience and provide the necessary assistance to countries in need. But China will not impose any models or attach any political strings to its assistance.

China will uphold the principles of the non-use and non-threat of force. Peaceful development has long been enshrined in China's Constitution. Regardless of its stage of development, China will never seek hegemony or expansion. China will faithfully fulfil its obligations under the Charter, actively participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations, seriously fulfil its financial obligations to the United Nations and support the United Nations central role in international multilateral affairs.

China will actively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China will have completely eradicated absolute poverty and comprehensively built a well-off society by 2020. China will promote the high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative so that the dividends of China's development will be able to benefit all countries in the world.

The world we live in is full of hope. It is also rife with challenges. We must not give up our dreams just because reality is complex. We must not abandon our pursuits just because our ideals are not within easy reach. Let us act together and work tirelessly to realize the purposes and principles of the Charter and build a community of shared future for humankind.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Vietnamese presidency for convening this debate on upholding the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. I also welcome the participation of the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson and thank them for their briefings. Their message must be heard — we will prevent and stop wars only through a return to dialogue, negotiation and cooperation. That is the *raison d'être* of the Security Council and the United Nations.

As President Macron mentioned in his speech before the General Assembly on 24 September 2019 (see A/74/PV.3), it is up to us, in a world that has become multipolar, to reinvent robust multilateralism that sees the spirit of the United Nations Charter and diplomacy prevail over national isolationism, States respect their obligations unconditionally and the Security Council act to restore peace and security. That is more necessary now than ever in the Middle East, given the current tensions and the risk of conflict. At a time when civilian populations there have already suffered too much from the scourge of war and terrorism, it is time at last to move towards de-escalation.

Within the framework of this strong multilateralism, we believe in the imperative need to privilege the channel of political negotiation to put an end to conflicts where military and violent logic prevails, as is the case in Libya, Syria, Yemen, the Sahel, the Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. The Secretary-General and his special representatives play an eminent role in this regard and we must support and accompany their efforts.

To be strong, this multilateralism must address the challenges of our time, whether it be the fight against inequalities, climate change or discrimination against women. In 2020, it is essential that all States fortify the commitments they have made under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We must also take into account the impacts of climate change on international peace and security. We hope that the Secretary-General will regularly report on these risks and suggest measures to prevent these future sources of conflict.

The United Nations needs the support of all — regional organizations, civil society and business — to face these challenges. That is why, alongside Mexico and UN-Women, France will launch coalitions of actors resolutely committed to the

emancipation of women during the Generation Equality Forum, which will be held in Mexico City and Paris in 2020, 25 years after the Beijing World Conference on Women. The Security Council must contribute to it within the framework of the women and peace and security agenda.

Our action in favour of international peace and security must be carried out within the framework of the rules and principles laid down in the Charter. The universality of human rights on which our organization is based cannot be called into question in the name of national, cultural or religious specificities.

The Security Council cannot remain silent in the face of massive violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. That is why France and Mexico called in 2013 for a suspension of the veto in the case of mass atrocities in the form of a political, voluntary and collective commitment on the part of the five permanent members. To date, 105 Member States have joined this initiative. We call on all States to join it.

The fight against impunity is essential to ensuring that these violations do not recur and that justice is done to the victims. In this regard, we call for the universal ratification of the Rome Statute.

Finally, our Council must pursue its efforts to take full advantage of the tools that the Charter makes available to us. First among those are the tools for the peaceful settlement of disputes. We welcome the establishment by the Secretary-General of the High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation. When other means for the peaceful settlement of disputes do not allow that, recourse to judicial methods of settlement may help States to reach a solution. When circumstances require, the Council must make use of the full range of tools at its disposal, in particular peacekeeping operations and sanctions.

We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to peacekeeping reform, through his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, to ensure that this tool is capable of addressing contemporary challenges. We must strengthen coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations and provide support for African peace operations.

Modernizing our Organization is critical to making it more efficient. France supports the reforms initiated by the Secretary-General. There is an urgent need to

reform the Security Council to reflect the reality of the contemporary world.

To conclude, I recall that building peace requires courage. Let us form the wish that this courage and this responsibility will mobilize us for the year to come. It is in our common interest.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): Let me at the outset welcome you, Sir, to preside over this body. We also welcome the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and other honourable Ministers to the Council.

I thank the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, for their briefings. Indonesia echoes their call to reaffirm the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and renews its commitment to promoting the pacific settlement of disputes.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), respectively.

The Charter of the United Nations embodies our collective hope and determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. At the same time, it provides a rules-based platform for dialogue and cooperation, bringing together nations large and small based on sovereign equality. Three-quarters of a century have passed since the adoption of the Charter, and it is saddening that we are seeing growing resort to unilateralism, countries withdrawing from internationally agreed commitments, and increasing use of coercive measures to achieve national policy objectives. We have witnessed such activities recently in the Middle East and many parts of the world.

While we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Charter in 2020, it is ironic that we are also starting the year on a very sombre note. The very Charter that we hold dear is in jeopardy. It is being violated again and again. We cannot afford to become spectators and let our collective efforts of the past three-quarters of a century be forgotten or see our future generations lost to the scourge of war — the very thing that we, the peoples of the United Nations, committed to avoiding. It is essential that we take action.

First, we must stop unilateral actions in violation of the Charter. Instead, we should promote dialogue and

the peaceful settlement of disputes. The use of force has never been a solution and never will be. Indonesia calls on all Members of the United Nations to fully comply with the Charter and its implementation. To those that are not complying, we join the Secretary-General in the clear message that he sent very recently: “Stop escalation, exercise maximum restraint, restart dialogue and renew international cooperation.”

Secondly, we have to fully and faithfully implement the Charter through our renewed commitment to multilateralism. No nation, no matter how powerful, can effectively address global challenges on its own. We need inclusive and mutually beneficial collaboration and dialogue among nations, as well as the sharing of national best practices and lessons learned. To underpin multilateralism, we need to also continue strengthening the role of regional and subregional organizations. Neighbours know best.

In line with Chapter VIII of the Charter, we recognize the important role of regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security, as we have strived to do in our ASEAN region. We need to ensure that all agreements, resolutions, decisions and declarations that we have agreed upon as a collective family of nations are faithfully implemented, whether they relate to economic and social issues, climate change or the issue of Palestine. There can be no exceptions. We cannot talk about upholding the United Nations Charter if we fail to address the question of Palestine. Our seventy-fifth anniversary is being celebrated in many places, but not in Palestine, which still lacks a homeland. Prevailing disrespect for international law and the principles of the Charter has further diminished the chances of achieving the two-State vision for sustained peace and stability in the region.

Thirdly, We need to reaffirm our collective support to the United Nations and its three pillars: peace and security, development and human rights. All of them should be promoted equally and moved forward at the same pace. Each organ of the United Nations has its own unique mandate based on the Charter to do that. We continue to support the United Nations reform, as it is critical to ensuring the Organization remains relevant and fit for purpose and has impact on the ground

In conclusion, the Security Council needs to be reminded not only of our political commitments, but also of our duty to implement those commitments, to

ensure the primacy of human safety and security. The United Nations was established upon the mandate of “We, the peoples of the United Nations”. We cannot afford to let our peoples down.

Mr. Baati (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country’s delegation welcomes you, Mr. President, and the other ministers present here. We appreciate the presidency of the Security Council selecting today’s theme, which is extremely important as it is intimately related to the main mission of the Council, namely, achieving and preserving peace and security. That should be undertaken by upholding the Charter of the United Nations, whose adoption, 75 years ago, we are celebrating this year. I also thank the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson for their valuable briefings.

The Charter was drafted and adopted after the horrific tragedy of two world wars, which led to the loss of millions of lives and unprecedented destruction. Through its principles and values, the Charter reflects the collective desire of people throughout the world to establish an institutional and legal framework governing relations among countries and guaranteeing the maintenance of international peace and security in order to save the world from repeated wars and conflicts.

More than seven decades have passed since the founding of this international Organization, during which the world has witnessed — and is still witnessing — numerous accelerated events and transformations as well as disputes and conflicts, in addition to human tragedies that we had thought would never be repeated. However, new challenges have emerged, including violent extremism, terrorism, climate change, nuclear proliferation, cyberterrorism and the displacement of tens of millions of refugees. All those threats pose a serious challenge to world peace and security and have a negative impact on development and prosperity.

This situation is linked to being far from having achieved the vision and objectives of the Charter. We believe that upholding the Charter as a reference, unifying and binding document is essential to achieving greater effectiveness as we tackle various situations and improve the performance of the Security Council as the primary organ entrusted with implementing the Charter’s vision, especially in the area of international peace and security. The principles of the Charter — in particular the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, non-interference in the

internal affairs of States, the right to self-determination and the sovereign equality of States — still continue to constitute the cornerstones governing international relations. Moreover, the values of the Charter — in particular equal rights, non-discrimination, tolerance and good neighbourliness — continue to be guidelines for achieving and maintaining harmony and stability worldwide.

Tunisia upholds international legitimacy and respects the Charter of the United Nations. Those constitute guiding principles of our foreign policy. We have established our national legislation based on the principles of the Charter. After the revolution to guarantee freedom and dignity and chart our path towards democracy, we have been keen to conform our legislation and policies to the Charter's directives.

Tunisia has returned to the Security Council after 20 years — the fourth time that we have been members of the Council. We still have the same commitments and principles that govern our foreign policy. We have a steadfast commitment and continuous contributions towards bolstering international peace and security, as well as preventive diplomacy and multilateralism. We will also continue to promote dialogue and settling disputes peacefully, rather than through the use of force.

It is along those lines that my delegation calls for enhancing the measures provided by the Charter to the Council with the aim to enabling it to work more effectively, meet the challenges it faces and play its role in the peaceful settlement of conflicts and crises, while also avoiding new conflicts and stepping up measures to maintain international peace and security. Preventive and proactive work for maintaining peace and security is of particular importance. We call upon the Security Council to address crises in their initial phases while benefitting fully from Chapter VIII of the Charter by encouraging regional organizations to play their role in preventing conflicts and settling crises.

In that context, we appreciate the regular and periodic meetings held between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. We also call for more cooperation with other regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States. On the other hand, my delegation calls for focusing on the socioeconomic and human rights dimensions while maintaining peace and security. Violating those rights will lead to conflicts. Other socioeconomic challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, marginalization,

exclusion, climate change and the lack of sustainable development, also contribute to crises and conflicts.

The success of the Security Council in its main mission of maintaining peace and security greatly depends on its unity and consensus among its members. Unfortunately, over recent decades we have seen obvious signs of weakness in that area, which reflects negatively on the image and credibility of the Council. That is clearly demonstrated by numerous hotbeds of tension and conflicts at the international level, as well as by many issues and crises that lack solutions to date despite their direct impact on world security and stability. They also cause human sufferings and tragedies for many people, especially in the Arab region and the African continent.

Based on Tunisia's commitment to international legitimacy and the purposes of the Charter, and out of its desire for a more effective role by the Council, as well as its commitment to just causes, at the top of which is the question of Palestine, we renew our call for respecting the relevant Security Council resolutions, leading to a just and comprehensive solution enabling the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights, including establishing their independent State on their territory, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. Minister, for coming here to be with us. I also thank all the other ministers who have honoured the Security Council with their presence today. I would like to say how nice it is to once again have Mary Robinson representing The Elders. I thank her for all the work The Elders do to uphold the Charter of the United Nations.

We very much welcome as well the spirit of collaboration that the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam has brought to this enterprise, including on presidential statement S/PRST/2020/1, which the Council adopted today.

We have heard many quotations from the Charter. Nobody could accuse the founding Members of a lack of ambition when they drafted the Charter. But at times, the United Nations has often suffered from an almost unbridgeable gap between the power of its central vision and the actual actions that it has been able to carry out. By "United Nations", I do not just mean the United Nations bodies, but also, we, the Member States. And yet the United Nations takes action that directly affects the lives of millions of ordinary citizens.

The United Nations has 13 peacekeeping missions operating in regions that are home to 1.8 billion people. The World Food Programme delivers food to nearly 87 million people in 83 countries, providing 15 billion meals. In 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees supported 20.4 million refugees, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East supported a further 5.5 million Palestinians. The World Health Organization vaccinates hundreds of millions of people. In 2018, it vaccinated almost half the world's children, and it has eradicated smallpox and is close to eradicating polio — the world is 98 per cent free.

If the United Nations did not exist, we would have to create it. The Charter makes very clear the emphasis on States cooperating to harmonize actions to attain common ends. I hope that we can remember that Article of the Charter as we deal with some of these intractable issues of peace and security on the Security Council.

I was very struck by what Mr. Kofi Annan said in his farewell address to the United Nations in 2006. He said:

“Together we have pushed some big rocks to the top of the mountain, even if others have slipped from our grasp and rolled back. But this mountain, with its bracing winds and global views, is the best place on Earth to be. (*A/61/PV.10, p. 3*)

The rules-based international system, which the Charter embodies, is the best prescription to those bracing winds and the rocks rolling back down the hill.

The United Kingdom has the honour of being a founding Member of the United Nations, like some other members here today. We share the belief in the rules-based international system and the United Nations role at the apex of it. As we leave the European Union, the United Kingdom looks forward to having the United Nations as an even more important stage for British foreign policy, as an active and independent force, and we very much hope, as my Foreign Secretary has said, as a force for good so that we can cooperate with other colleagues to strengthen the security and prosperity that the United Nations has helped create over recent decades.

In a world in which change is moving at an ever-increasing pace, the Charter should be seen as a framework around which we can construct our responses to those challenges. It should be an enabler, a point of

reference and the constant source to which we turn in a world burdened with increasing complexity and uncertainty. Used in such a way, as we heard from the Secretary-General and others today, the Charter gives us what we need to help us head of crises, de-escalate confrontations and develop effective responses to conflict. Again, I draw the attention of our colleagues to the things that we are battling with in the Council, notably Libya, Yemen, Syria and tensions in the Gulf.

We should not regard the Charter as a straitjacket. We want to have options for collaboration and action. We do not want to reduce those options artificially, because if we do we bring only detriment to the people we represent and serve. The Secretary-General and other colleagues have highlighted peacekeeping. If I may, I would like to pay tribute here to Brian Urquhart, who will be 101 next month. He did more than many people to set up the United Nations peacekeeping arrangements, and that is something which, like special political missions, does appear not in the Charter; rather, they are an excellent example of Member States working together within the framework of the Charter and in the context of the Security Council to address the challenges of yesterday and today.

We believe that we need to retain that forward-looking spirit as we look for ideas to tackle the challenges of tomorrow, such as the rise in new technologies, which my Prime Minister referred to in his General Assembly address (see *A/74/PV.4*), the challenges of antimicrobial resistance or the impacts of climate change. Those were not foreseen by the drafters of the Charter, but they very much remain on our minds.

While we face new threats that the founders of the United Nations did not see, the responsibility that all parts of the United Nations hold remains, and the Secretary-General drew attention to that as well. It is a well-worn phrase, but with great power comes great responsibility, and I think that it is also something that we should bear in mind. The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but others, including the Secretary-General, through Article 99 of the Charter, also have a vital role to play. I would like to echo what the Secretary-General said about Article 25 and the need to uphold the decisions of the Security Council in that context.

A few people have mentioned reform and veto reform. Let me therefore set out the United Kingdom's

position. We are a signatory to the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency code of conduct, which commits us to not vote against credible Security Council action to stop mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. But the fact that we do not all agree on the veto should not prevent us from making progress in pursuing other areas of Security Council reform.

I want to say a word about State sovereignty and respect for equality, State sovereignty and the principle that countries are all equal and that stronger countries should help weaker countries. That cannot be used as an excuse for failing to address conflicts or violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It is violence and conflict, and not our attempts to help Member States prevent them, that threaten State sovereignty. Here I draw my colleagues' attention to Article 2 of the Charter, which makes clear that nothing should upset the fundamental rights that the Charter sets out.

I would like to close, if I may, by referring to the current situation in the Middle East, since that has featured in our debate today. My Foreign Secretary recently visited Washington, D.C., and I would like to reprise what he said there. He said that we recognize the danger and threat that Iran poses to the Middle East, and we recognize the right to self-defence. At the same time, we want to see tensions de-escalated. We want to find a diplomatic way through, and that is why the remarks that we have heard recently about a diplomatic solution are so important. It also means that the Government of Iran should be willing to consider and committed to a diplomatic outcome as well. I can pledge that the United Kingdom stands ready to assist any diplomatic efforts.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome you to New York, Mr. President, and we are pleased to see you presiding over the Security Council. We also extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General and Mrs. Robinson for their briefings.

This year we will mark the closely connected seventy-fifth anniversaries of the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations. Seventy-five years ago, the conditions were created for the establishment of a post-war global order, and the load-bearing structure of that was the United Nations as the cornerstone of the system of international relations and multilateralism.

Enshrined within the Charter of the United Nations are all the principles of multilateralism. Its purposes and principles enjoy the status of imperative norms of international law. The Charter's provisions include the inadmissibility of the use or threat of use of force and the imperative of the peaceful settlement of disputes. There can be no justification for non-compliance with the Charter, under any circumstances. The foundation of that structure is the system of collective security, steered by the Security Council. I would like to emphasize the word "collective". The entire Charter highlights the notion of collectivism and the fostering of friendly relations and cooperation. In addition, the Charter outlines the essential principle of the sovereign equality of all States, large and small.

The process of creating a polycentric, multipolar world has become irreversible and not everyone is in favour of it. Attempts at revisionism with regard to the principles of international law embodied in the United Nations Charter are often disguised in pretty packaging. Today's fashionable concept of the rules-based order is the most striking example. Such rules are selected and employed as needed. The purpose of that concept is to replace universally agreed international legal instruments and mechanisms with narrow formats in which alternative, non-consensus-based solutions are developed in circumvention of legitimate multilateral frameworks. In essence, we are dealing with attempts by a small group of States to usurp the process of making consensus decisions on key issues on the international agenda while using this concept as a cover.

What is very dangerous is the fact that the proponents of the concept of the rules-based order have set their sights on the exclusive prerogatives of the Security Council without hesitation. I will give a few examples.

Following the failed attempt to force politicized solutions through the Security Council — accusing the Syrian authorities, without proof, of using banned toxic substances — the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was granted the authority to determine who had been responsible for using chemical weapons. That was nothing less than an encroachment on the authority of the Security Council.

Another example of disregard for the authority of the Security Council was the establishment of the so-called International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism

to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes in Syria, in contravention of the United Nations Charter. Regrettably, there is an ever-increasing number of such examples of the revision of international law. Recently, we have seen the steady weakening of the disarmament machinery — torpedoing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and threats to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Today, we face the risk of the entire treaty architecture that covers nuclear missile arms control being dismantled.

We believe that any action that seeks to interfere in the domestic affairs of States for the purpose of overthrowing their legitimate Governments is unacceptable. We oppose the use of unilateral coercive measures in the absence of the corresponding Security Council resolutions or in addition to measures taken by the Council, which undermines the role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security and is incompatible with the Charter and universally recognized principles of international law, including the peaceful settlement of international disputes, the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs.

For many years now, the distortion of the norms of international law and mindless intervention have caused more suffering in the Middle East and North Africa than in other regions. The lack of a settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the illegal intervention in Iraq, endless violence in Afghanistan, the murder of the leader of Libya and destruction of the country, attempts to overthrow the legitimate authorities of Syria and the extrajudicial killing of an official of a sovereign State in a third country are but a few examples of actions that have left wounds on the body of international law and order.

The quintessence of those regrettable developments was the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, which was approved by the Security Council and is of key importance to nuclear non-proliferation. As a result of increasing confrontation, the region and, indeed, the entire world are on the brink of a conflict whose consequences are unpredictable. We call for an immediate de-escalation. The risk of conflict is too great and the price too high.

We must also note one more violation of and non-compliance with international law and its unconditional obligations by the host country of the Headquarters of the United Nations. We have been talking about this issue for a long time. The most recent example of this artificial crisis was the denial of a visa to Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammed Javad Zarif, who was supposed to speak at today's meeting.

The Russian Federation believes that strict compliance with the United Nations Charter is the only way to preserve peace. In that regard, there is no alternative to maintaining and strengthening a system of international relations, based on the United Nations Charter and the universally recognized principles and norms of international law derived from it. Despite all the complexities and contradictions in the modern world, for us and for the majority of countries the United Nations remains the backbone of international relations and the legitimate universal tool that lets us collectively search for responses to crises and challenges. It has a unique mandate for addressing key international issues and maintaining international peace and security and we will continue to uphold it.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure to have you here in New York, Mr. President.

We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his important contribution and Mrs. Robinson for her inspiring words. Similarly, we welcome the many high-level representatives who have honoured us with their presence at today's meeting.

It is fitting that we meet here today to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations and discuss the importance of addressing ongoing challenges to the maintenance of international peace and security, as required by the world in which we live. It is precisely when tensions run high that respect for the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations becomes more essential and mandatory than ever.

The Charter of the United Nations is far from being a mere document with guidelines on international law. This document serves as an indispensable guide for all nations on the path to the same destination — that of peace. It goes above and beyond Government mandates and State matters. The main objective of the Charter of the United Nations is to safeguard the dignity of human beings through the maintenance of international peace

and security. Upholding its provisions is therefore not a superfluous matter. On the contrary, it is a matter of humanity and dignity, for which we are all responsible.

The Dominican Republic is honoured to have signed the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirms, here in the Chamber today, its commitment to defending, promoting and respecting it. We, the peoples of the United Nations, are called upon to uphold the Charter in order to protect present and future generations from the scourge of war. Preserving peace is essential to building just and inclusive societies that provide opportunities for people to develop in freedom and where their human rights are guaranteed and economic growth and political stability are ensured.

The Dominican Republic would like to emphasize the importance of promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes within the framework of multilateralism as a mechanism for conflict prevention, while taking into account the various tools that the Charter places at the disposal of States for that very purpose. We urge the international community to have faith in the power of dialogue and compromise to resolve disputes, while preserving peace and security throughout the world as the guiding principle, above any dispute and particular interest.

In addition, we stress the need to continue working to strengthen the culture of peace. Present and future generations must view peace as the natural order of things and conflict as an isolated event. The development of a culture of peace through the promotion of the Charter is a useful preventive tool that can be realistically implemented by States, with the cooperation of the regional and subregional bodies of this consortium of nations.

The United Nations is the home of all nations, where conflicts must be prevented and resolved to bring to our peoples the hope of a future free from war. It is here that we all have a common stepping stone for building a better world. The Charter is our manual for peaceful coexistence; let us continue to defend, respect and promote it.

Allow me to conclude by recalling the words of the Dominican humanist of continental renown, Pedro Henríquez Ureña, who noted that the ideal of civilization is not the complete unification of all men and all countries but rather the harmonious preservation of their differences.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Viet Nam for organizing this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson for their inspiring presentations.

As many have recalled before me, 75 years ago our Organization rose from the ashes of two world wars. Carried by the shared memory of unspeakable horror, the framers of the Charter of the United Nations wanted to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Today we must reaffirm this objective, but also reflect on the major principles of international relations, the most important of which is multilateralism. It is an indispensable factor of international stability, democracy and prosperity and is at the heart of the Charter.

For Belgium, this week more than ever, multilateralism is not limited to fine words during the ministerial week of the General Assembly. Multilateralism must translate day in and day out into concrete actions, making use of the institutions created under the Charter. In my country's view, the role of the Security Council is therefore paramount when there is a threat to international peace and security.

In 1945, 51 of us signed the Charter and joined the new Organization. Our United Nations family has since almost quadrupled. Joining that family, however, means accepting obligations for the benefit of a higher purpose. In recent decades, we have developed new means of implementing the Charter, including international criminal courts, stronger mandates for peacekeeping operations to protect civilians and the imposition of targeted sanctions. Let us also mention the efforts of the Secretary-General, who, through his good offices, facilitates the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Similarly, regional organizations play an indispensable role, which has, moreover, continued to grow, particularly in the areas of prevention and early warning.

Yet we have not been able to protect all populations from the scourge of war. A glance at the world map is enough to see how fragile peace is. In addition, new challenges are testing our resilience as an international community, such as the multiplication of non-State actors that threaten our security, the risk of an arms race, and climate change and its impact on security. To respond to those challenges, we need to make the system we have created more operational. There are a number of concrete initiatives aiming to achieve that.

The fight against war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide is the primary responsibility of each State. However, the Security Council also has a responsibility to act in a timely manner, such as by referring to the International Criminal Court a situation in which one or more of those crimes appears to have been committed. Despite the tools and means at our disposal, we often react too slowly, sometimes too late. We have been slow to agree on how to interpret the warning signs of a crisis, such as massive human rights violations, and how to mount a collective response.

The Charter also affirms the primacy of the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts. The International Court of Justice plays a crucial role in that regard, in particular through its advisory opinions. The Court will be fully effective, however, only if all States accept its compulsory jurisdiction.

Finally, in Belgium's opinion, reforms are needed to strengthen the legitimacy, representativeness and effectiveness of the Council. That is why we fully support the code of conduct drawn up by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and the initiative of France and Mexico to regulate the right of veto. In particular, we cannot ignore the principle of the rule of law in our own procedures and working methods. To be consistent, the Security Council must guarantee individuals the right to due process and to fair and clear sanctions procedures.

In conclusion, as a founding Member of the United Nations, Belgium remains committed to the Charter — to its letter but above all to its spirit — and our wish is to translate that commitment into concrete action.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): We are very glad that you are with us today, Mr. President, and the United States appreciates that the signature event of Viet Nam's Security Council presidency is focused on the enduring importance of the Charter of the United Nations. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres and the Chair of The Elders, Mary Robinson, for her remarks.

Seventy-five years ago, the nations of the world came together to draft a charter meant to stand the test of time. Today we recognize the enduring importance of the Charter precisely because it is built on our faith in fundamental freedom and human rights, the dignity and worth of every individual and equal rights for all.

Those notions fundamental to American democracy have gained broad acceptance over time.

We are proud to have played a foundational role in the birth of this institution and to support the values that inform its central tenets. The Charter reflects a commitment to multilateralism that respects national sovereignty by creating space for sovereign nations to gather and deliberate, and the founding members of the United Nations endeavoured to help us overcome disagreements and achieve greater peace and security for the human family.

Unfortunately, to echo a question raised last year by Secretary of State Pompeo, we must ask ourselves today: Does the United Nations continue to serve its mission faithfully? As I remarked frequently during the United States presidency of the Security Council last month, the Security Council must acknowledge that inaction, repetition and intransigence have created a credibility gap. As the body with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council needs to recapture its sense of unity and purpose.

Therefore, as we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary, we should stand together to reaffirm our commitment to uphold the core principles of the Charter. The United States is a proud leader, partner and host country of the United Nations, and we are firmly committed to those principles. Members should note, however, that reaffirming a commitment to the Charter means to take seriously our responsibility to act, not merely to talk, and to abide by the principles of the Charter, not merely to profess support for them. On far too many occasions, we have seen nations that are parties to the Charter suppress human rights, undermine the sovereignty of their neighbours, harm their own citizens and even deny the right of other nations to exist. That kind of hypocrisy is deeply damaging to the credibility of the United Nations, as a whole, and to this organ, specifically. The eyes of the world will be on the United Nations during its seventy-fifth anniversary — therefore, there is an especially urgent need to bolster the Council's credibility.

Through focused and sustained action, the Council can continue to promote accountability in places like Syria — seeking to ensure, among other objectives, that those who use chemical weapons against their own people are held responsible, that those who force thousands of residents to flee their own countries are

held to account and that those who threaten the world with nuclear weapons are stopped. That work takes time, focus and commitment, but it is essential. The United States will continue to lead on those issues, seeking close partnerships within the Council and in the broader United Nations community.

We also recognize the need to reform many parts of the United Nations to ensure that it effectively and efficiently delivers on the mandate of the Charter. United Nations reform remains a top United States priority, as its full realization will ensure that the Organization is fit for purpose across the three vital pillars of peace and security, development and management.

By reaffirming our commitment to upholding the United Nations Charter, we can send an important signal to the world — that we maintain the same faith in human rights and human equality as those who signed the Charter in 1945 and that we will continue to act on that faith in hopes of bringing greater peace and security to all people. I hope that each of my colleagues will join with us in reaffirming that commitment in both word and deed.

I would now like to address recent events that are connected to our discussion of the importance of upholding the United Nations Charter. Last week, the United States took defensive military action against Iranian threats. President Trump's decision was in direct response to an escalating series of armed attacks in recent months by Iran and Iranian-supported militias on United States forces and interests in the region. Those attacks are detailed in the letter we submitted yesterday, pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter. That decision was not taken lightly. For years, Iran and Iranian-supported militias in the region have threatened the lives of Americans and have shown unyielding contempt for the authority of the United Nations.

President Trump has made clear that his highest and most solemn duty is the defence of our nation and its citizens. Therefore, we will act decisively in the exercise of our inherent right of self-defence to protect Americans when necessary, as is recognized under the Charter. As President Trump made clear in remarks delivered yesterday, we want a future — a great future — for Iran. It is a future that the people of Iran deserve, one of prosperity at home and harmony with the nations of the world. Today, therefore, I want to reiterate that the United States is ready to work towards that end and to embrace all those people who join us

in seeking it. Moving forward, we hope to find willing partners in that work.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to apologize on behalf our minister, who, due to time constraints, was unable to travel to New York to attend this important debate.

On behalf of the Government of the Niger, I would also like to once again congratulate the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on its election to the Security Council, a mandate begun with the great responsibility of presiding over the Council for the month of January. I also congratulate Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia, on their election as new members of the Council, along with my country, the Niger.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing and his ongoing commitment to the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and thereby to international peace and security.

The President has convened this debate on the theme “Respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as soon as key element for the maintenance of international peace and security”, a theme whose relevance need not be demonstrated, as it invokes the fundamental objectives of our Organization.

As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in 2020, this debate is an opportunity to remember our priorities in the face of the many crises and challenges all over the world and to propose appropriate mechanisms to address them. It is therefore to your credit, Mr. President, that you have placed the Charter at the centre of our concern.

This debate gives us the opportunity to renew our commitment to multilateralism in the pursuit of the noble objectives that we set ourselves 75 years ago and to more effectively take into account certain imperatives in the implementation of the Charter in order to prevent the recurrence of the tragedies that led to the creation of the United Nations in 1945.

Fortunately, despite the frequent crises which have broken out in a number of regions, we have generally been able to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter — although we have not been able to take effective collective measures to prevent and remove threats to peace and to suppress acts of aggression or

other breaches of the peace, as provided by the purposes and principles of the Charter.

In the 75 years since San Francisco, the end of the great wars has not been synonymous with the restoration of peace in the world. On the contrary, conflicts of varying intensity have been compounded by threats of a new kind, such as terrorism, cybercrime, serious epidemics and the harmful effects of climate change, to name but a few. In addition to the colossal number of human casualties they have caused, those threats have inflicted untold suffering on civilian populations, especially women and children, throughout the world. They have also generated massive displacements of people at a level rarely equalled in the history of humankind and have generated waves of migration whose tragic consequences are all too well known.

Terrorism has become one of the worst threats to international peace and security today. It deserves our special attention because, in addition to taking lives, it undermines the very foundations of nation States. That is particularly true in my region — the Sahel — which, in recent years, has seen terrorist groups use asymmetric warfare to kill innocent civilians, stir up intercommunal conflicts and no longer even hesitate to attack the defence and security forces of States head-on.

In this arena and in others, the international community should show solidarity. That is particularly true of the Security Council, which, pursuant to the Charter, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. As we meet today, a Nigerien military camp 40 kilometres from the Malian border is being attacked by terrorist hordes.

Chapter I of the Charter, containing the principles on which multilateralism is based and to which my country is firmly committed, calls upon Member States to promote collective measures to prevent and remove threats to peace and to respect the sovereign equality of Member States. As the President of the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mahamadou Issoufou, said in his address to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session,

“multilateralism has made progress only in the wake of bloody conflicts, as was the case with the treaties of Westphalia, in 1648, and the Treaty of Vienna, which founded the European orders that succeeded the Thirty Years’ War, the Eighty Years’ War and the Napoleonic wars, respectively. The same was true of the attempt to establish the

League of Nations after the First World War and the creation of the United Nations following the Second World War. Each time, the objective was to create rules and institutions capable of establishing an order that was conducive to peaceful international relations and governed by the rule of law and that could enable us to emerge out of a state of nature in which every State had absolute freedom to resort to force” (*A/74/PV.4, p. 11*).

In its Preamble, the Charter of the United Nations quite rightly recalls the need to spare succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We must therefore not forget the teachings of history. The complex nature of international relations makes multilateralism even more necessary today in an increasingly globalized world in which States are increasingly interdependent.

In conclusion, I would thank Viet Nam once again for having made the wise choice of the theme of today’s debate and also paraphrase my President by saying that the world needs governing institutions. While it is true that national interests govern the foreign policies of States, these national interests are better defended through cooperation rather than through confrontation. My country, the Niger, remains committed to the principles and ideals of the Charter of the United Nations and, along with other Members, it will continue to defend those

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with longer statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I wish to inform all concerned that we will suspend this open debate at 1 p.m. and resume it at 3 p.m.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): First of all, I should like to commend our friends from Viet Nam for having made the wise decision to put this issue on the agenda at this time, although, dear Sir, when you decided to hold this open debate based on this topic, you might not have been aware of the importance of that decision. I congratulate you on having taken over the presidency, and I wish you the best of luck in this regard.

As the Council is aware, I am representing a small — or, if I had more self-confidence, I would say

midsize central European country — whose history is replete with instances of being occupied and oppressed by foreign Powers and dictatorships. We therefore always had to fight for our own freedom and sovereignty, which we gained only 30 years ago. So it is understandable that country with a history like Hungary's would highly value the existence of the United Nations and consider it as the most important international organization in ensuring peace and security.

I want to express how warmly we welcome the membership of Estonia in the Security Council, whose candidature we supported given the fact that they are freedom fighters, as we are. We encourage it to represent the interests of the small, freedom-loving central European countries in an appropriate manner, but I am fairly sure it is going to do so.

I think that this is the right place to express our deep concern at the recent developments in the Middle East. We have learned the lesson in recent years that the security situation in the Middle East and the security situation in Europe have a very, very strong correlation and that whatever happens in the Middle East has a direct security impact on the European continent. We are therefore strongly interested in seeing a de-escalation of the situation and consider dialogue and diplomatic efforts more important than ever before. We are fairly sure that without all these, the situation will definitely get worse and worse. We urge the United Nations, and the Security Council itself, to fulfil its mission and take all the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

The United Nations Charter was signed 75 years ago, so it is time to take it seriously and apply it properly. I wish to highlight three specific aspects of importance to Hungary in this regard.

First, Europeans have had bad experiences recently in the form of massive flows of illegal migration, which constitute a serious security threat, contrary to what is suggested by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. We know full well that another crisis in the Middle East would immediately cause additional migratory pressure on Europe, a phenomenon that we definitely want to avert, because the migratory waves that have taken place so far have resulted in an increasing threat of terror for the European Union. I think, therefore, that this would be the right time for the United Nations to recognize the danger and the security

threats that migration poses to countries of destination and transit.

The second aspect we would stress is that the fight against terror must be continued. We consider the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) to be a global threat to peace and security. We commend the United States, which leads the international coalition against ISIS, and are a proud member of that coalition, with 200 troops on the ground.

The third aspect of importance to us is that the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons must not increase. We consider proliferation as a global security challenge. There are international rules and regulations that set out the number and list of countries that have nuclear weapons, and we definitely do not want to see the number of such countries increase. We believe that in future greater emphasis should be placed on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament in order to prevent a new nuclear arms race.

In conclusion, we Hungarians are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations given the fact that we are experiencing quick changes and the creation of a new world order, which could result in continual security challenges. Such challenges should be addressed according to the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Soares (Timor-Leste): Let me begin by congratulating the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on its leadership as the President of the Security Council for the month of January 2020 and further expressing to it our sincere gratitude for having invited Timor-Leste to deliver a speech before this body. I wish to also thank Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, for their briefings.

Over the years, through the promotion of international cooperation, we have witnessed and experienced some progress in social and economic development. Yet we are still far from having achieved sustainable and equitable development and delivering on the promise of the inclusive, just and peaceful societies highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Evident challenges, ranging from violent extremism, financial crises, transnational crime and global poverty to environmental degradation, unilateral

foreign intervention and occupation, continue to pose threats to international peace and security, human dignity, and, above all, are serious threats to our common existence as nations.

As a country that hosted successive United Nations missions from 1999 to 2012, Timor-Leste has a history that is forever intertwined with that of the Council. Timor-Leste is an example of what can be achieved when the Council unites around the common purpose of upholding international peace and security. Our experience leads us to believe that global challenges and tensions can be addressed and prevented only through multilateralism, based on a spirit of solidarity and inclusivity and in a partnership aimed at upholding fundamental human rights and human dignity, and to that end the Security Council has a fundamental role.

Timor-Leste is committed to supporting global efforts to uphold the United Nations Charter and related international laws and norms. Our recent conclusion of a maritime boundary treaty with Australia, through the use of the special conciliation mechanism under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, reaffirms our belief in the international rules-based order and in the United Nations as the appropriate platform to resolve conflicts.

We are witnessing the rise of conflicts around the globe, which continue to pose both conventional and non-conventional threats to global security. Climate change, the drug trade, people-smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crimes, as well as extremism, radicalism and terrorism, know no borders. It is no longer the problem of any individual Member State. They have become threats to everyone. We all know well the connection between poverty and rising inequalities, weak State institutions and the lack of political will to act, on the one hand, and the rise of those threats, on the other. In this context, the authority of the Council and of permanent and non-permanent members alike is called upon and critically needed to properly respond to these threats to global peace and stability, fulfil its mandate and uphold the Charter.

Timor-Leste is of the view that through genuine and constructive cooperation at both the regional and the global levels, as well as through integrated measures, we can tackle and address the root causes of these global challenges accordingly. In the context of the United Nations, it is imperative for all organs within the Organization to strengthen their work and engage

in a coherent and complementary manner. We must ensure that our actions contribute to fulfilling each of the intended mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations and do not undermine the importance of multilateralism.

In this respect, and as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we urge all Member States to recommit to the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, along with the international laws and norms. We urge in particular the major Powers to lead by example on how to align decisions and actions on international security matters with the Charter and to ensure that actions taken will not contravene and undermine the purpose and principles of the Charter of this multilateral Organization.

While the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations is undoubtedly a moment of celebration of all that has been achieved by the Organization, including the Security Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security, it is also an important moment for reflection. For Timor-Leste, whose future was decided through a Council-mandated mission that organized a referendum, we reflect on why the Council mandate for a referendum for the people of Western Sahara has not been fulfilled. I make the same call for attention to the issue of Palestine.

Timor-Leste's Constitution enshrines the principles of self-determination, respect for territorial integrity, non-interference and collective security, and a just and equitable world for all peoples and nations. We also strongly believe in the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, based on international laws and norms. Unilateral coercive measures against any State undermine the spirit of the Charter and do not contribute to solutions.

Our recent history makes us firm believers in the power of the Security Council and its role in upholding international peace and security. However, we are also conscious that the world today is very different from the world that gave rise to the United Nations. Thanks to the promise of the Charter, we who were once colonized have joined the international community as independent and sovereign States and are today proud Members of the United Nations, joined together in finding collective solutions to global challenges. The composition and work of the Council can be more

effective if it is able to effectively reflect change and address the rising challenges.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Nicaragua.

Mr. Moncada Colindres (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to congratulate the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam and thank him for having organized this meeting on the defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the presence of Secretary-General António Guterres; Mr. Abdulqawī Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice; and Mrs. Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, an independent group of world leaders working together for peace, justice and rights humans.

Nicaragua associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This meeting represents an historic opportunity that allows us to reflect on, reaffirm and defend the commitment of States to the validity of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of its foundation. Recent world events confirm that we are on the edge of the critical limits of civilization and that the long-sought peace among States and peoples is in a state of dangerous and growing insecurity due to State terrorism, aggression to sovereignty and violations of international law.

Today as yesterday, we peace-loving peoples always reject the language of aggression and war. No State can resort to the use or threat of use of force in international relations. Such exceptionalist policies in violation of international law do not help resolve conflicts peacefully; on the contrary, they aggravate and subject the international situation to further stress.

The vocation of peace and respect for the sovereign equality of States and non-aggression obliges us to resolve inter-State disputes through the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

On several occasions, Nicaragua has rejected and condemned illegal actions aimed at changing democratic Governments, thereby violating the

constitutional order and leading to widespread violence, and at orchestrating coups d'état to overthrow legitimate Governments elected by the people. That reaffirms the premise of the concept note (S/2020/1, annex) prepared by the presidency of the Council, namely, that, when the purposes and the principles of the Charter are applied, humankind and peace reap the benefits, whereas, when they are violated, we put them at serious risk. As we yearn for peace and believe in the prevention and resolution of disputes through peaceful and inclusive means, we reject policies of aggressive interference and the imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures and sanctions in violation of international law.

We reiterate that Latin America and the Caribbean are a zone of peace, in which Nicaragua remains an important agent for ensuring stability, peace and security. We have based and will continue to base our international relations on friendship, solidarity and reciprocity among peoples. We condemn State-sponsored terrorism and the violation of the sovereignty of other countries and international law. We recognize the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes through recourse to international law and the Charter. In that context, we attach particular importance to the International Court of Justice, which enjoys our full support and whose work contributes to global security in promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The United Nations must assume its historical role in promoting respect, understanding, security, sovereignty and territorial integrity, while working on an equal playing field on which multilateralism and the will of all men and women prevail. It is necessary to promote a culture of peace, reject aggressive and bellicose policies, war and confrontation, and reaffirm the validity of the Charter, which has helped save the world from another world war.

We express our concern and consternation in the face of recent events that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, including the selective assassination of leaders of countries that are Members of this Organization. Those illegal and unjustifiable acts deepen the very serious situation facing peace and security in the world.

Nicaragua appeals to the international community to comply with the aspirations that we set out for ourselves 75 years ago to work together in solidarity,

cooperation and with respect for the Charter of the United Nations to eradicate poverty and war. Those are scourges that today constitute the greatest obstacles to ensuring international peace, development and security, which is the bedrock on which our Organization was founded 75 years ago.

In conclusion, as we begin 2020, we wish to convey a message from our Government of Reconciliation and National Unity, presided over by Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra and our Vice-President Rosario Murillo,

“From our Nicaragua, blessed and free forever, we extend a greeting full of good will, with wishes for a world based on dialogue, reason, peace and so much more, in every respect, for all the Governments and the peoples of the world. Humankind deserves the greatest efforts and prayers to live with respect and in understanding and peace”.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Haiti.

Mr. Edmond (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank you very much, Mr. President, for having kindly organized this open debate as part of Viet Nam’s presidency of the Security Council on an issue that is more timely than ever, that is upholding the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. I would also like to commend the Vietnamese Permanent Mission for the concept note (S/2020/1, annex) drawn up for this meeting, which fortunately provides a valuable framework to deepen our reflections on this topic.

This debate comes at a time of elevated tensions and increasing concern in the Persian Gulf. In that regard, I would be remiss if I did not associate myself with the call for maximum restraint as made by Secretary-General António Guterres, with a view to avoiding escalation, unnecessary destruction and suffering.

Our Organization, the fruit of a compromise entered into in the wake of the Second World War, has since shown itself capable of playing a crucial role in the lives of all peoples and of resisting the myriad challenges that we have faced over time. Initially conceived by some 50 States, including the Republic of Haiti, our Organization today has 193 Members with a considerable broadening in its purview over recent decades, which certainly testifies to the relevance and deep importance of its Charter.

For the peoples of the United Nations it has been first been a matter of ensuring that we have the means for collective and appropriate action in order, inter alia, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice within one lifetime brought untold suffering upon humankind. To reach that ambitious objective, the founding fathers of the Organization defined a range of purposes and principles in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter, which constitute a true legal basis for the multilateral system.

Furthermore, in the declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels, the States Members of our Organization renewed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and justice, as well as to an international order based on the rule of law, which represents the essential underpinning for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. They affirmed that they were

“determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.” (*resolution 67/1, para. 3*)

In other words, the Charter of the United Nations holds a central place in international life. This instrument makes the Security Council an important pillar in the architecture of the Organization, conferring upon it the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the eve of the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we reflect back with satisfaction on the road that we have travelled since 1945, although much remains to be done to raise our Organization to meet the ideals of its founding fathers. The scrupulous observance of the Charter of the Organization will certainly contribute to develop a multilateralism that is more conducive to international peace and security. We must therefore fight relentlessly and with all our strength to safeguard all the gains made, while respecting the spirit and the letter of the Charter.

Tangible and irrefutable progress has been made in a number of areas, particularly in the contribution to decolonization, economic assistance, human rights and even the codification of international law. With regard to disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security, we still need to step up our collective efforts. Today we must jointly and resolutely

address major challenges, such as the complex problems of terrorism, transnational organized crime, drugs, inequality, refugees, abject poverty and climate change, to mention just a few.

The reform of our Organization, which must take into account current and emerging challenges, remains a pressing need. My country welcomes all the efforts made to achieve a reform that holds out hope for peace, justice and development for all, and will continue to make an active contribution in that regard.

In conclusion, allow me to briefly mention the upcoming commemoration to mark 10 years since the earthquake that ravaged my country on 12 January 2010, which claimed the lives of at least 220,000 people, including 102 members of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, as well as the appalling material damage. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of all those who perished in that tragedy. The people and the Government of the Republic of Haiti will never forget them.

This is also an opportunity for me to reiterate to the Council the readiness of the President of Republic, His Excellency Mr. Jovenel Moïse, to make a lasting commitment in the country to the path towards genuine reconstruction. The holding of an inclusive national dialogue conducive to peaceful political, economic and social governance that respects the provisions of the Constitution of Republic will be a *sine qua non* for the work of our country's President in future. In that regard, it is my fervent wish that the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of its Charter, will continue to play an important role in our country, including through the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, established pursuant to resolution 2476 (2019).

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

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's membership of the Security Council and its presidency for the current month. It is no small feat, by any account. I am sure Viet Nam will excel in shouldering that important responsibility.

At this point, I would like to make the following statement on behalf of Canada, Germany, Sweden and Ukraine.

We thank all who expressed their condolences in connection with the crash of the Ukraine International

Airlines passenger aircraft near Tehran International Airport. We are grateful for the words of support to the families and loved ones of the victims of the tragic catastrophe. One hundred and seventy-six innocent lives were lost — citizens of Iran, Canada, Ukraine, Sweden, Afghanistan, Germany and the United Kingdom. The circumstances surrounding the catastrophe are still unclear. It is now up to the experts to investigate it and to find answers to the question of what caused the crash. To do so, our experts must receive unconditional support for their investigation into the incident.

That brings me to the end of my statement on that matter.

Before proceeding, I would like to put on record that my delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

We appreciate, Mr. President, your timely initiative to launch the year marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations with a discussion on the importance of upholding its founding document — the Charter of the United Nations. Let us recall that, back in 1945, at the San Francisco Conference, the very name of our Organization was the subject of intellectual debate, in particular with regard to the proposal by the prominent United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to name it the United Nations. It is interesting that those countries that opposed that name were afraid that there might be a conflict among the nations in the future and that the name — the United Nations — would not correspond to reality.

I wish to repeat the response of the Ukrainian representative to those concerns in San Francisco.

“The delegation of Ukraine believes that one should not have such a pessimistic outlook on the future of our Organization. It should be constructed in a way that would avoid the possibility of a division or conflict among nations”.

He also insisted that every nation that would become a member of the Organization would have to fully share the principles that united the nations during the war and fight for them. Today, I fully subscribe to the words spoken by the representative of Ukraine in 1945.

Yet, today, 75 years later, as a representative of the country that fought for the name of the United Nations and appealed for optimism and as a representative of the country that is the victim of an ongoing armed aggression on the part of a permanent member of the

Security Council, can I say that we made the right choice and fulfilled the aspirations of the founding fathers and mothers, as one delegate put it, of the United Nations?

Indeed, there is no unity among nations. There are ongoing wars among the Members of the United Nations and old and new democracies work hard to ensure unity at the national level — based on democracy, human rights, rule of law and social cohesion. That key message is consistently promoted by my own President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Since 1945, there have been very many Security Council meetings, other events dedicated to the United Nations Charter and anniversaries of all kinds. Let us recall the Security Council summit held in January 1992. If you read its 146 pages of verbatim records, members will see how good the speechwriters of all the Heads of State and Government who took part in it were. Members will see how euphonic and saturated with ideas the speeches were — although, rather amusingly, they occasionally departed from reality.

As we approach another milestone, we view Viet Nam's initiative to convene today's meeting as a useful opportunity to take stock of how the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are being honoured or not. Today's meeting also takes place against the background of escalating regional conflicts and the ongoing war between United Nations Members in Europe.

One thought I would like to share with those present is that among the dozens of statements on the United Nations Charter that I have read, there are several, to which I myself would subscribe. Those statements, with all the right words, glorify the supremacy of international law and the triumph of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter — except for one thing — they were made by those who, upon obtaining permanent membership of the Security Council and joining the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, unleashed, in this century, more than one war against their immediate neighbours. Therefore, let us not judge them by the ornate style of their statements but by their concrete deeds and compliance with the United Nations Charter.

Despite the fact that the drafters of the Charter envisioned, in Article 27, the intent to remove the prospect of a Council member casting a vote when a conflict of interest was clearly present, that integral

part of the Charter is often overlooked for the sake of political expediency. We regret that, under such circumstances, the Council was unable to take action on Ukraine's request in 2015 regarding the deployment of a robust United Nations-mandated multinational peacekeeping force in occupied Donbas. After a couple of years of inaction, the Russian Federation expressed doubt that such a request had even been made.

Let me remind those present that two years later, when the Russian Federation put forward its own proposal, we provided our partners in the Security Council with Ukraine's vision of the major elements of the mandate of a possible peacekeeping operation. Now, five years later, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine points to the importance of the deployment of peacekeepers along the Ukrainian-Russian border.

Certainly, the quality of work of the Security Council largely depends on the quality of its membership. At this point, I wish to commend the work of those non-permanent members who have left the Council upon completion of their two-year term. Our good friend and neighbour, Poland, which contributed significantly to the Council's activities, will be particularly missed by us. We trust that the new non-permanent members will be fully dedicated to the fulfilment of their important mission.

I come to this anniversary not to speak of futility or failure nor of doubt and despair. I come to raise a voice of confidence in both the future of the United Nations and the fate of the human race. Those are not my words. They belong to the Head of State who spoke them at the meeting dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Charter in 1965, during a major regional conflict.

Let me express the hope that by the time of the formal anniversary events in October, we will all, as truly united nations, by our actions — not our words — and by stopping ongoing military aggression and de-escalating regional conflicts, have the moral right to joyfully celebrate rather than sombrely mark yet another anniversary of the Organization, which was created by the people and for the people. The famous opening words of the United Nations Charter begin "We the peoples of the United Nations ...". We must do our utmost not to fail our peoples.

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

Mr. Amolo (Kenya): Kenya is delighted to see the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, His Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, preside this historic session. Kenya warmly congratulates Viet Nam for three things: its election to the Security Council; its accession to the presidency of the Security Council as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century; and its accession to the presidency of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, following the sterling stewardship of its predecessor, the Kingdom of Thailand.

I also bring special warm greetings from his colleague and friend, Minister of Foreign Affairs Monica Juma. She fondly recalls a successful visit to his great country not two months ago. We commend Viet Nam for timing this debate to mark the end of a turbulent decade and to spark a reflection on the direction humankind should take in the next.

By reviewing our contract with this body and in particular with the Charter of the United Nations, we hope we can recommit and rededicate ourselves to the letter and spirit of the Charter, underpinned by international rule of law and buttressed by robust multilateralism, so that all voices are heard on the world stage and the toolkit available to resolve the world's challenges reflects the complexity and diversity of humankind.

The insightful statements by the Secretary-General and Chair of The Elders Mary Robinson enrich our common understanding of the myriad challenges and clarify the importance of approaching solutions in a collaborative, coordinated and respectful manner.

Seventy-five years ago, the hopes and dreams of humankind, left in tatters by another devastating war, were renewed, rekindled and revalidated by the establishment of this body, the United Nations Organization, which was witnessed by 51 States, and by the reaffirmation of its *raison d'être* as enshrined in the seminal contract with all people, the United Nations Charter.

They came together in recognition that no single nation could solve the world's problems alone. Today, with 193 Member States, the importance of that reality demands that we not only further identify, minimize and eliminate the risks and threats strewn on our common path but also grasp and exploit the many opportunities that innovation, technology and cooperation can offer to solve many of those problems.

The spirit of democracy that underpinned humankind's desire to codify and secure a milieu based on international law needs to be revisited and entrenched. Looking back, it is commendable how the Charter facilitated, through the establishment of the various organs, the delivery of that promise in a holistic way. The Charter had the foresight to link and address in a structured manner the social, political and economic problems threatening international peace and security and asserted equal rights for all. The United Nations Charter's intrinsic value in defining the peace and security architecture of the world was to assert the concept of collective security, whereby all of humankind, on equal, democratic footing, would govern the commons.

Seventy-five years ago, only a handful of us were free. Today, close to 200 are politically free. It is inevitable, then, that the organs that manage this architecture must also expand their representative structure and democratize their decision-making to reflect the geographic and demographic spread that is our United Nations today.

Although regional representation is not specifically addressed in the United Nations Charter, we join all other Africans in asserting that the time has come to make that happen. We have to ensure equitable geographic representation in the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Africa remains the only region not represented in the Council in the permanent category. That must change.

The Charter bequeathed us a tool to facilitate the prevention of war. It recommends that solutions to any dispute be made, first and foremost, through negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, among others. Inspired by that ethos, Kenya has distilled and seeks to capture the letter and spirit of the Charter and the aspirations of the United Nations in a 10-point agenda for its Security Council campaign. The agenda underscores the critical nexus between peace, security and development and its first plank is building bridges. Kenya is dedicated and committed to building bridges and to working closely together with the entire United Nations membership to advance our aspirations in an inclusive, responsive and consultative manner so that the Council can work for all.

We seek to enhance the peacekeeping and support operations plank in our agenda. In our close to six-decade existence, Kenya has contributed

more than 40,000 troops in over 40 countries. We will continue to work with the United Nations and other Member States to enhance the capacity of the Nairobi-based International Peace Support Training Centre, a humanitarian peace support school. Eminent innovations to deal with asymmetric and emerging threats, such as the Counter Improvised Explosive Devices Centre of Excellence, are acceptable ways of building capacity and ensuring excellence.

Our challenge is to find an efficient workable balance between the pacific settlement of disputes and provisions relating to actions in support of peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression, and the involvement of regional arrangements and agencies. That balance will ensure that peacekeeping mandates also involve and provide for a transition to peacebuilding, including efforts to ensure the sustainability of peace and development, thus addressing threats to regional and international peace and security. The Peacebuilding Commission is an important intergovernmental instrument that can support that objective.

As delineated in the Charter of the United Nations, the Council carries the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We have witnessed the implications and effects of dissonance within the Council on important international peace and security questions and actions. We have also witnessed the evolution of new weapons of war and threats to peace, including violent extremism and terrorism.

We listened with great anguish today as the Niger spoke about challenges in the Sahel and the problems that Nigeria and other African countries confront in the face of this terrible phenomenon called terrorism. We will continue to work with others to leverage our wealth of experience in preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, building appropriate linkages for collaboration and harmonized action within the Council.

The Charter calls on the General Assembly to work in complementarity with the Security Council. Kenya therefore welcomes a strengthened Security Council-General Assembly partnership and the cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations, including the African Union (AU), to achieve peaceful settlements of disputes and maintain international peace and security. The Secretary-General's specific mention of a scaled-up relationship with the AU needs to be fast-tracked, and we anticipate

that the three African members of the Security Council, Niger, Tunisia and South Africa, will provide additional traction for the achievement of that important objective.

The Trusteeship Council was set up in a specific historical context to promote and protect the well-being and just treatment of colonized people. There are still some non-self-governing territories. It will take political will, trust, courage, the embrace of differences and a change of mindset to ensure that we all respect the principles of international law, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as well as the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of all States Members, as laid out in the United Nations Charter.

Kenya upholds and cherishes an ethos based on the rule of law in managing our domestic affairs. We leverage that ethos in our engagement in regional and international relations. We remain true to processes agreed in advance and uphold the integrity of our subregional, regional and international organizations.

As Africa's candidate for a Security Council seat for the period 2021-2022, we congratulate the current and immediate past African members of the Council. The Organization and its membership can count on Kenya's integrity, dependability and cooperation to deliver the best for humankind. More work still needs to be done. The United Nations can count on Africa, and the United Nations shall succeed.

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

Mrs. Kanchanalak (Thailand): I would like to commend Viet Nam for holding this open debate, which has come at a very timely moment when our world is facing immensely sobering security challenges everywhere, and most recently in the Middle East.

At the outset, Thailand wishes to associate itself with the statements to be made by the representatives of the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Today, the world's security landscape bears no resemblance to that of 1945, which was different from that of 1920, when the League of Nations was created after the First World War. What remains a constant is us, the peoples, whose nature barely changes. That is why, in order to move forward with our exercise, it is important that we step back and understand history.

As George Santayana wisely said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

There are at least seven factors we should keep in mind as we ponder the future relevance and effectiveness of the Charter of the United Nations for international peace and security. I shall be brief.

First, great Powers always write the rules and then break them. They resort to multilateralism only when it serves their first interest, which may or may not be their best interest. And unilateralism seems to answer to the first interest and the *schadenfreude* mindset faster, unless there are consequences.

Second, when one nation is pushed against the wall disproportionately, it will resort to any means, no matter how short-sighted and dangerous, to get out of the jam.

Third, violence begets violence and good sense gives way to fanaticism. It constitutes the race to the bottom, where there is no winner.

Fourth, despite all the technological advancements in communication tools brought to us by the fourth industrial revolution, nothing can replace diplomacy and dialogue, most importantly face-to-face.

Fifth, as wars become less conventional and global conflicts have become multifaceted, preventive measures and crisis management tools will have to be recalibrated to be more adeptly effective and consequential.

Sixth, the United Nations peace and security endeavour will be greatly aided if it is carried out in a concerted effort with regional cooperation. The growth and expansion of regional organizations and the proliferation of nuclear weapons have made such collaboration a necessity.

Seventh, sanctions lead only to the suffering of the people and rarely to regime change. It is therefore an injustice to people who already suffer under a given regime.

While the United Nations Charter remains essential, we need to revitalize its tools in order to effectively address the international peace and security questions of the day. The tools at the disposal of the Security Council are abundant, as outlined in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter. Furthermore, given the multidimensional nature of today’s challenges, it is necessary for the Security Council to engage even more

with other United Nations bodies such as the Economic and Social Council and its specialized agencies. This engagement will make the Security Council’s efforts and undertakings more relatable to those specific issues.

Thailand believes that a peaceful solution to any conflict is not just the best option; it is the only option. Let us join hands to uphold multilateral diplomacy and use it to its best capacity. Through our firm commitment to multilateral diplomacy and the agile application of the United Nations Charter, this principle will continue to guide us through this turbulent world and ensure that it is not only the dead who have seen the end of war.

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

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m. and resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President: I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine 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.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with longer statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): I would like to welcome you, Mr. President, and congratulate Viet Nam on commencing its term on the Security Council and for assuming the presidency for this month.

At the outset, I would like to offer my condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragic aeroplane crash in Iran. I hope the circumstances of the event are fully investigated.

The Charter of the United Nations continues to provide an indispensable basis for the maintenance of international peace and security. Seventy-five years ago, the founders created a world body to prevent the recurrence of devastating wars and establish a global order for sustainable peace and prosperity based on the

principles and rules enshrined in the Charter. Those aspirations remain relevant today, and upholding the rules-based international order continues to be of critical importance.

For the rules-based international order to be upheld, the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the rules, must be promoted and accepted. In that context, Japan is following the recent escalation of tensions in the Middle East with great concern. We urge all parties to make their best efforts to peacefully settle the issues. In coordination with relevant countries, we will continue to pursue diplomatic efforts to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the Middle East region. All unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion should not be tolerated. As a State surrounded by ocean, Japan is particularly committed to upholding the rules-based maritime order and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

For the rules-based international order to be upheld, agreed rules have to be observed. The States Members of the United Nations confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter requires that Member States accept and carry out the decisions of the Council. It is therefore deeply regrettable that some Member States fail to comply with Council decisions. For instance, North Korea continues its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, in violation of many Security Council resolutions. I note that those resolutions impose certain obligations on other Member States as well. Japan calls upon all Member States to fully implement the relevant resolutions.

For the rules-based international order to be upheld, the international judicial system should be properly developed and maintained. The Charter established the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Being a proud advocate of the Court, Japan has had the honour to contribute to it by providing it highly qualified judges, as well as financial support, and will continue to do so.

For the rules-based international order to be upheld, due attention has to be paid to the evolution of technology, such as in the cyber domain. In that connection, Japan welcomes General Assembly resolutions that call upon all Member States to be guided by the reports of the Group of Governmental

Experts, confirming the applicability of existing international law, including the Charter in its entirety, to this new domain.

For the rules-based international order to be upheld, the world governing body must maintain its effectiveness and legitimacy. The world has changed dramatically during the past 75 years, and the United Nations system must keep pace. The Security Council must be reformed to better reflect the realities of the contemporary world, where more Member States have the willingness and capacity to contribute to maintaining and restoring peace. Japan looks forward to tangible progress in the long-overdue reform of the Council and calls for the launch of text-based negotiations during this session. I would also like to recall that certain provisions of the Charter have already been declared as obsolete by the General Assembly and should be removed at the earliest opportunity.

For the rules-based international order to be sustainable and effective in face of the increasingly complex challenges of our time, it must reflect our collective faith in the dignity and worth of the human person, as enshrined in the Charter. We need to utilize a human security lens that emphasizes the protection and empowerment of every individual. As a long-standing advocate of the human security concept, Japan renews its determination to promote this approach, with the aim of upholding the values inscribed in the Charter.

In conclusion, Japan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to playing an important role in ensuring that the world envisaged in the Charter is achieved and the rule of law is observed.

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

Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania): Let me begin by expressing our condolences in connection with the tragic loss of life in the Ukraine International Airlines crash. At this difficult time, our thoughts go out to the friends and families of the victims.

I, too, should like to commend Viet Nam for having convened this important high-level debate. I further wish to express our gratitude to the briefers for their valued contributions. My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

The upcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations provides us an opportune occasion

to renew our dedication to the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to reflect on its importance to international peace and security and to reaffirm its fundamental importance to multilateralism.

As Lithuania marks the thirtieth anniversary of the restoration of its independence this year, we would recall that one of the main aspects that enabled us to foster our revived statehood was our commitment to the rules-based international order. Our national experience is an important factor encouraging and motivating us to defend and adhere to the principles of the United Nations Charter. It is with a deep sense of commitment to the founding principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter, that we take responsibility to deliver on the promise of peace and reaffirm our dedication to multilateralism. We must also seek a new generation of approaches capable of responding to emerging challenges, including those pertaining to climate change, cybersecurity and hybrid threats.

The integrity of the rules-based international system is indispensable to the maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, as ongoing conflicts continue to devastate many regions around the globe, some Governments are taking steps to turn their contested claims into faits accomplis through violations of international law and of the principles of the Charter. In Europe, we are also seeing a protracted conflict in Moldova, which has continued for more than two decades. The violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia has entered its twelfth year. For almost six years now, we have witnessed the ongoing occupation and annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and its military actions in eastern Ukraine. These blatant and systemic breaches of the Charter of the United Nations constitute a threat to international peace, security and stability. Lithuania, as a strong supporter of the principles enshrined in the Charter, will continue to advocate for accountability for violations of international law, including the illegal use of force in international relations.

It is crucial for the United Nations and the international community to develop the capacity for a swift and effective response. The Secretary-General's efforts and contribution to conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding and sustaining peace are therefore of the highest importance. Preventive diplomacy, as well as early action and mediation, are vital measures in preventing conflicts and mass atrocities. A decisive element of conflict

prevention involves putting an end to impunity and ensuring justice for all. The strong voice of the Security Council and its action in support of international law, accountability and justice is of the utmost significance.

We cannot further risk the Security Council losing its relevance. Inaction on the part of the Security Council and the international community, directly or indirectly, encourages aggression and the use of force and threatens the entire multilateral system, based on international law. Restraining the use of the veto, inter alia, would make the Council's responses to ongoing crises more coherent and reliable. Lithuania therefore strongly supports the initiative to limit the use of the veto in cases involving mass atrocities, genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity. Justice cannot be vetoed. It must surpass political manipulation.

Finally, international peace, security and justice are not possible without adherence to international law. Ending impunity and ensuring justice is an absolute must in order to reinforce trust in the United Nations, secure the credibility of the multilateral system and ensure its ability to carry out the contemporary stewardship of peace. The resilient and visionary Charter points the way with its enunciation of universal values, its grounding in peace, development, human rights and the rule of law, and its vision of our shared fate and future.

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

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, we would like to congratulate your friendly country on its membership in the Security Council and on having assumed the presidency of the Council for this month.

My delegation has read attentively the concept note for this meeting (S/2020/1, annex) and notes that its contents highlight the commitments of all Governments of the world under the Charter of the United Nations, without distinction or selectivity and free from double standards.

My delegation deplors the fact that the Government of the United States of America refused to give an entry visa to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic republic of Iran so that he could take part in this meeting. The host country is preventing the Council from hearing the point of view of an essential party that is involved in the maintenance of international

peace and security in our region. This behaviour by the host country undermines its commitments under the host country agreement and the provisions of the Charter that stress the equal rights and obligations of Member States.

No one can deny that we are living in a world that suffers from increased polarization because some Governments think that their political, military and economic might gives them the right to decide the fate of others. But what is more dangerous today is that the credibility and the status of the United Nations are suffering, which means that the Organization could meet the same fate as the League of Nations, which collapsed when it succumbed to the pressure exerted by major European colonial Powers aimed at giving legitimacy to occupation and aggression, even though it was supposed at the time to defend security, stability and peace in the world.

What is stated in the concept note is important, as global circumstances have been constantly changing. However, the Charter and the multilateral system established as a result have encountered severe tests. We firmly believe that this meeting should come up with recommendations based on transparency, self-criticism and defining mistakes, so that specific threats can be dealt with seriously, at the forefront of which are the rise of international terrorism; the spread of practices and measures that are outside the scope of international legitimacy; the increased manufacturing of weapons and their proliferation; violations of international conventions on the proliferation of weapons; the imposition of an economic blockade on a number of States; and the misuse of the Charter, particularly its Article 51, with a view to justifying aggression against countries, including my country Syria.

The Government of Syria, along with its partners, has scored victories in the war against terrorism, which will have important effects in terms of decreasing the threat of terrorism worldwide. However, while the Syrian people have paid a high price, irresponsible practices continue on the part of certain Governments, some of which hold permanent seats on the Council. Those Governments have done everything in their power to overthrow the legitimate Government in my country, using terrorism and United Nations mechanisms to achieve this goal by any means, even by falsifying facts, as they did in Iraq, Libya, Venezuela and other countries.

I would ask all present to reflect and to come up with honest answers to the following questions, which are raised earnestly by the Syrian people and many peoples of the free world. Of course, the answers will clarify the real factors and reasons for the non-implementation of the provisions of the Charter on the maintenance of international peace and security.

The questions are as follows. Why do Palestinians and Syrians continue to suffer under Israeli occupation? Why does the Security Council remain silent as certain permanent Council members continue to legitimize settlements and acknowledge the Israeli occupation's fake right to sovereignty over Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan? Why does the Council fail to implement its own relevant resolutions on combating terrorism and to hold accountable Governments that continue to fund and support activities of the terrorist Al-Nusra Front in Syria? How is it that the Council remains silent on the United States criminal assassination of Iranian and Iraqi leaders who were combating the terrorist Da'esh and Al-Nusra Front in Syria and Iraq? How is it that the Council continues to be held hostage to the will of certain Governments that try to obstruct the operations of the Syrian army and its allies against the Al-Nusra Front, which has been designated by the Council as a terrorist entity, as it occupies Idlib and its environs in order to make them a centre for terrorism and extremism?

Why do many Governments, mainly in the European Union, ignore the need to repatriate their national foreign terrorist fighters, who have wreaked havoc and committed murder in Iraq and Syria, and their families? There are 300,000 foreign terrorists and their family members in Idlib. How is that the Council remains silent with regard to aggression and military occupation carried out by forces of the United States, Turkey, France, Britain and other countries against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of my country? How is it that the Council remains silent in the face of the aggression of the Turkish regime on Libyan territory and of its transfer of terrorists from Idlib to Libya as it seeks to fuel the conflict in that fraternal country? How is it that some in the Secretariat even praise the Turkish regime as it continues its so-called humanitarian work in the northern part of Syria, whereas, in fact, Turkish forces have occupied parts of that region and displaced hundreds of thousands of people there?

The answers to these legitimate questions are very clear. As we speak of consolidating the Charter for ensuring international peace and security on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding the United Nations, we have only one solution to that end. The Charter should be for all and above all, without consideration or immunity for any political, economic and military Power.

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

Ms. Oehri (Liechtenstein): We thank Viet Nam for convening today's timely debate. In its seventy-fifth year, the Charter of the United Nations remains the centrepiece for multilateralism and the international rules-based order. Upholding its purposes and principles is indispensable for the maintenance of international peace and security. A clear renewed commitment on the part of the membership to that end is needed in the light of the ongoing erosion of certain key provisions of the Charter, including those governing the use of force, in particular given current tensions with the potential of further escalation.

In joining the United Nations, we all accepted that the use of force is illegal, except when authorized by the Security Council or carried out in self-defence. When invoking Article 51 preventively, States owe the international community a thorough justification, including evidence of the imminence of an external threat and the proportionality of measures to be taken in response. Excessively expansive and unchecked interpretations of Article 51 are a threat to the international rules-based order and an obstacle to the promotion of international peace and security.

On the World Day for International Justice in 2018, the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) over the crime of aggression went into effect, marking for the first time in history a permanent international court's authority to hold individuals accountable for that crime. That also equipped the Security Council with an important new tool — the ability to refer situations involving acts of aggression to the ICC. If applied in a meaningful way, that new tool can assist the Security Council in the prevention of conflicts, reinforcing its role under the Charter to maintain international peace and security, and it is ever more relevant given the proliferation of grave cyberattacks — acts over which the ICC also has jurisdiction if requisite thresholds are met.

In too many instances, we have seen political divisions prevent the Security Council from taking the action necessary to address some of the worst crises of our times, with enormous costs in terms of human suffering. Over the past decade, the use of veto has significantly increased, most significantly with respect to the situation in Syria. In addition, the use of veto has had a paralysing effect on anticipatory obedience, with negative consequences on the ability of the Council to perform its tasks.

As the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership, the General Assembly has a responsibility to hold the Security Council accountable in such cases. That is why Liechtenstein supports the automatic convening of the General Assembly whenever a veto is cast in the Security Council to discuss the matter. Such a discussion would take place without prejudice to any possible outcome and irrespective of the substance of the draft resolution that was subject to a veto.

The situation in Myanmar is one example of how the Council has failed to carry out its responsibilities owing to the mere threat of the use of veto. While that is deeply concerning, we are encouraged that alternative tracks to address the situation in Myanmar have been found. Recent proceedings at the International Court of Justice, under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and efforts to ensure individual criminal responsibility under way at the ICC and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar are acting in complementarity to bring justice to the victims of Myanmar's atrocity crimes. Those are positive steps.

At the same time, we continue to expect the Council to carry out its duties as envisioned under the Charter. The proceedings before the International Court of Justice should be yet another reason to do so. Liechtenstein continues to promote the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, now supported by 121 States, including two-thirds of the current Security Council membership, for timely and decisive Security Council action to prevent and end mass atrocity crimes.

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

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I express my sincere congratulations to Viet Nam, Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Niger and Tunisia on having begun their work in

the Security Council. I also join other countries in expressing appreciation for the work of Peru, Poland, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Kuwait during the term that just ended. I am also grateful for the excellent organization of this open debate and Viet Nam's efforts to ensure an open and inclusive Security Council during its presidency, and I also congratulate Viet Nam on assuming the presidency during the first month of the decade of implementation.

Seventy-five years ago, the world was emerging from one of the most brutal wars in history. The United Nations was built upon those fragile ashes. It is we, the peoples of the world, who strengthen those foundations year after year. After three-quarters of a century, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain intact, but in the face of destructive narratives inveighing against multilateralism, the threat of a resurgence in nationalism and an increase in violent extremism, today's debate represents a fresh opportunity to renew our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations.

Ecuador is a country of peace and is especially proud not only as a founding Member of the Organization, but also for having presided over one of the committees responsible for drafting the text of the Charter pertaining precisely to this area. Likewise, Ecuador held the first rapporteurship of the First Committee, dealing with disarmament and international security issues, and consequently had the honour of presenting to the General Assembly the first draft resolution which that organ adopted on the establishment of a commission to address the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy (General Assembly resolution 1 (I)).

This year, 2020, when we will celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary the Organization, will be key to determining the future of international peace and security for the new decade and beyond. This year will see the convening of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must be more ambitious and move towards the universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This year will also provide us with the opportunity to improve the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and, consequently, that of the entire world.

We have 10 years left to achieve Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is focused on achieving peace, justice and strong institutions, as

well as the other Goals, taking into account that peace and development are mutually reinforcing and that both are predicated upon just and inclusive societies.

The subject of this open debate is exceptionally timely in that, in addition to its action-oriented approach, it is forward-looking. We have just experienced difficult times of great uncertainty, while geopolitical tensions are at their highest level this century, as Secretary-General António Guterres said in his statement of 6 January, where he urged us not to forget the terrible human suffering caused by war (SG/SM/19929). In that connection, I would like to recall Pope Francis' appeal that all parties

“avoid an escalation of the conflict and keep alive the flame of dialogue and self-restraint, in full respect of international law”.

While one of the great achievements of our Organization has been to avoid a third world war, conflicts nevertheless continue to rage in several regions. The year 2020 offers us an opportunity to put an end to those conflicts, but others might still arise. It is up to us and us alone, as Member States, to choose the path to take. Without political will, the Security Council and our own institutions are reduced to empty shells.

More specifically, we must endeavour to ensure that this new decade is not remembered as one of unilateral action, but rather as the decade of collective effort. We will broaden the scope of our efforts to advance the Organization's work, as well to tackle our common challenges and to increase awareness and understanding of the value of the Charter of the United Nations. We will therefore be able to promote the defence of its founding principles; indeed, the guardians of the Charter are our peoples.

Finally, while the General Assembly strives to reach a comprehensive decision on the reform of the Security Council, the Council's permanent and non-permanent members alike must broaden open activities, such as this debate, and use the most transparent and inclusive working methods during their presidencies. We will defend the Charter of the United Nations by listening more to one another, fostering dialogue and resolving disputes exclusively through peaceful means. Let us practice tolerance and coexist as good neighbours.

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

Mr. Naeemi (Afghanistan): I want to thank the Vietnamese presidency for organizing this meeting on such an important topic, namely, upholding the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security.

We believe this to be a timely meeting, considering that we are on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter. Back then, the community of nations came together to end decades of conflict and destruction, creating an international framework to maintain peace and security around the world. Today, in a world that continues to suffer from the havoc caused by conflict and the evolving threat of terrorism, it is time to recommit to the values of the Charter and revitalize the role of the United Nations in achieving that challenging endeavour.

With the rise of violence and terrorist threats around the world, we must emphasize the work that the Secretary-General has put into enhancing the focus of the United Nations on prevention. We must continue to work on the implementation reform and revitalization efforts that emphasize economic cooperation over conflict in a more proactive approach that seeks to avoid polarization. We have been doing so in our region by promoting various initiatives, including under the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, which have fomented economic growth and connectivity in our region, as well as tackling the economic vulnerabilities that lead to conflict by giving people jobs and ways to ensure their livelihoods.

In terms of other ongoing reform processes within the Organization, Afghanistan continues to call for an effective and substantive approach to the reform of the Security Council. Having previously chaired the intergovernmental negotiations on the matter, we understand both the difficulty of the task and the importance of attaining a solution that can strengthen the Council's faculties and mandate for safeguarding international peace and security. We believe that a successful reform of the Council will enhance not only the organ's representation, but also its working methods in order to ensure that it adjusts to the threats of conflict, terrorism and violent extremism and operates in a more transparent and efficient manner.

In addition, the Council must continue to work in ensuring the effective implementation of all Security Council resolutions by all Member States — Council

members and non-Council members alike. Throughout the years, the Council has adopted a series of resolutions to target major threats to peace and security, such as the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and the financing of international terrorism. The lack of implementation of, or disregard for, those important documents by various countries does not only deter our efforts in the fight for international peace and security, but also leads to the weakening of the political mandate of the Council. That needs to be avoided.

Finally, the Security Council should further evaluate ways to make its many tools to counter threats to international peace and security more effective. Sanctions regimes and efforts to tackle the financing and movement of terrorist groups must be strengthened and thoroughly implemented to ensure that all countries comply with their obligations and such regimes. No financial havens or other sanctuaries must be allowed to permit the continued operation of those groups.

The United Nations has launched a global conversation on the role of global cooperation in building a better future for us all. We must heed this conversation as States and provide further inputs on ways through which we can continue to revitalize and reform this Organization, transforming it into a United Nations that is reflective of our modern reality and that can more effectively tackle the plethora of new challenges to peace and security. As a country that has seen and continues to suffer from the effects of conflict, terrorism and violent extremism, Afghanistan will continue playing a proactive role by proposing ideas and sharing its experience on ways in which the United Nations and the Council can approach our Organization's seventy-fifth anniversary with a stronger mandate that reaffirms the values of our Charter and our important mandate to uphold peace and security for all.

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

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I would like to begin by congratulating the five newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council, namely, Estonia, Viet Nam, the Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Latvia wishes them every success in their duties.

Let me also express our deep condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the Ukraine International Airlines flight that crashed en route from

Iran to Kyiv yesterday. There must be an independent and transparent investigation of the accident.

I thank the Vietnamese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and the Chair of The Elders for their briefings.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Effective multilateralism and the rules-based international system have been long-standing priorities for Latvia. This year's seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations is the right time to revisit and reconfirm our commitment to principles that alleviated the sufferings of the past century and promised a better future for the next generations. They constitute indispensable principles of international cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights and the rule of law, as well as the only viable way to achieve lasting global peace and security.

We are deeply concerned about the latest flare-up of violent confrontations in the Middle East. For the sake of preserving regional and global security and stability, it is essential to halt further escalation and create space for diplomacy. That is the only way forward to achieve a regional political solution and lasting peace while upholding international law and the role of the United Nations in the process. The credibility of the entire international system depends on our ability to effectively prevent grave violations of international law and respond to the multitude of new challenges. Here, the Security Council carries a special responsibility as the gatekeeper of international peace and security. However, the Security Council has not always lived up to the challenge, as indicated by escalating humanitarian crises and erupting conflicts. Furthermore, the use of the veto should never be acceptable in situations involving mass atrocities.

The Security Council should speak with one voice in rejecting impunity regarding the human suffering and mass atrocities that have taken place in Syria, Myanmar and Yemen. While we welcome the adoption of the Secretary-General's funding proposal for the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, the rigorous implementation of all parts of its mandate to ensure accountability

for the most serious crimes committed in Syria is crucial. We also express our support for the Syrian Constitutional Committee. At this stage, it is essential that all international and regional players support it so that a genuine political transition can be achieved.

Similarly, Russia's annexation of Ukrainian Crimea, as well as its covert and overt actions in Eastern Ukraine, violate the fundamental principle of the Charter of the United Nations of territorial integrity. Latvia welcomes the commitment reached at the Normandy format summit to stabilize the situation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict area, as well as the recent exchange of detainees. In that regard, we call on Russia to implement the Minsk agreements in full and restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Moreover, other so-called frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno Karabakh should be resolved by peaceful means and based on generally recognized principles of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, we should not stop striving for universal respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as those are essential for maintaining international peace and security against a backdrop of serious threats and growing turmoil in many regions of the world.

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

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): First of all, let me seize this opportunity to offer our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of the plane crash outside Tehran. We hope that all circumstances of that tragic event will be fully investigated.

Allow me also to congratulate you, Mr. President, both on your assumption of the Security Council presidency this month and on the commencement of your Council membership. We have full confidence that Viet Nam will contribute greatly to international peace and security over the next two years. I also thank you, Sir, for giving us this opportunity to discuss the relevance of the Charter of the United Nations, which is now more relevant than ever.

The upcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations is indeed an opportune moment to deliberate on how to uphold and ensure adherence to the Charter of the United Nations — the cornerstone of the international rules-based order — and how to

contribute to achieving its unavoidably linked and mutually reinforcing aims — peace and security, respect for human rights, justice and international law, social progress and the expansion of freedom.

But discussions are not enough. What is necessary is determined action towards achieving those goals. Given the time restraints, let me provide just a few action-oriented examples that are limited to the focus area of our meeting, that is, what we, the peoples of the United Nations, Member States, the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole could do.

First, we must respect and promote respect for international law, including the very basic principles enshrined in the Charter, which many of my colleagues have already highlighted. Therefore, we must react to any violation of those principles, in particular the gravest ones, such as the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of Ukrainian Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Russia's claims of sovereignty over territory seized by force in contravention of international law — including the Charter, which obliges States to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity of any State — should not and cannot be recognized. Acting in line with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 68/262, the States Members of the United Nations should reaffirm their commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Secondly, we must take steps in order to prevent and punish atrocity crimes, including by joining the relevant international legal instruments and implementing them. We must promote our work on a convention on crimes against humanity, ensure that relevant laws and human rights are upheld at all times, and report on genuine, measurable change at the domestic level to prevent atrocity crimes. A number of further, practically-oriented ideas in that regard are contained in documents S/2018/560 and S/2019/48, which are the respective takeaways from the Council's debate on upholding international law within the context of the maintenance of international peace and security, convened by Poland during our presidency on 17 May 2018 (see S/PV.8262), and the Arria Formula meeting on raising the effectiveness of atrocity crimes prevention, convened by Poland, Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Kuwait and Peru on 10 December 2018.

Thirdly, we must fully implement Security Council resolutions, as highlighted by the Secretary-General, including those on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, such as resolution 2475 (2019), on persons with disabilities. We must therefore take measures in accordance with our obligations under applicable international law to protect civilians, including those with disabilities; to prevent violence and abuses against civilians in armed conflict, including killing, maiming, abduction and torture; and to prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. Another issue that is of utmost importance to us is ensuring full respect for international humanitarian law. It is deeply regrettable that, recently, we have once again witnessed the systematic violation of those laws. Here, I wish to recall S/PRST/2019/8, adopted in connection with the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the universally ratified Geneva Conventions of 1949. Allow me to stress that compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, is not a matter of choice. It is both our legal and moral obligation.

Finally, notwithstanding the recent conclusion of Poland's 2018-2019 term on the Security Council, the organ that bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, we will continue to contribute towards that goal, including by upholding the Charter of the United Nations, fulfilling in good faith the obligations assumed under it, and bringing the aims of the United Nations closer to realization. We call on others to do the same. Solidarity, responsibility and commitment — both within and outside of the Council — are needed and expected by the peoples of the United Nations.

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

Mr. Cho Hyun (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to express our deep condolences following the tragic accident of the Ukrainian aeroplane crash.

I commend your initiative, Mr. President, to convene today's open debate on this timely and important topic. I take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Guterres and Mrs. Mary Robinson for their enlightening briefings.

Seventy-five years ago, the founders of our Organization came together to sign the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrines the strong collective commitment to save future generations from the

scourge of war, protect human rights and dignity, respect international law and promote social progress and better standards of living. The Republic of Korea is a country whose very existence is a living testament to the relevance of the United Nations Charter. It was the United Nations that helped Korea overcome the horrors of war. Had it not been for the help of the United Nations in post-war reconstruction, the Republic of Korea as it stands today would not exist.

At the General Assembly in September last year, President Moon Jae-in declared the three principles of peace on the Korean peninsula: zero tolerance for war, a mutual security guarantee and co-prosperity (see A/74/PV.3). Based on those guiding principles, he proposed transforming the demilitarized zone that cuts across the middle of the Korean peninsula into an international peace zone. As we continue our journey towards establishing permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, we hope to receive the vital support of the international community through concerted action and unity.

Despite the significant achievements made over the past 75 years, the Charter still faces daunting challenges. Protracted armed conflicts, large-scale human rights abuses and complex transnational issues, such as terrorism and human trafficking, are just a few of the challenges we face today. Amid the slow progress of the international community on such issues, multilateralism and the United Nations are being viewed with increasing scepticism. In this difficult context, we need to once again renew our overarching commitment to international cooperation and the principles of the Charter. That is because all of the challenges that we face today are global ones that call for global solutions. How can we enhance our collective efforts to that end?

First, we need the Security Council to play a central role in exemplifying the value of international cooperation and bringing the Charter to life. The Charter bestows upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council must do more to overcome divisions, embrace the prevention and peacebuilding agendas and make greater use of mediation and other tools set out in Chapter VI of the Charter. It is also vital to realize a consensual reform of the Council to ensure that it becomes more democratic, transparent, inclusive, effective and with equitable geographical distribution, as contained in Article 23 of the Charter.

Secondly, we need to strengthen coordination within the United Nations system to address international peace and security issues. The United Nations is the only organization with both the legitimacy and the capacity to bring the knowledge and resources of the international community together to tackle global challenges. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization, we must break down silos between the main organs, continue to pursue reform under the leadership of the Secretary-General and foster mutually reinforcing and coordinated efforts among the main organs.

Carrying a sense of responsibility commensurate with the progress it has made, Korea is ready to do its part. We strongly support the Action for Peacekeeping initiative led by the Secretary-General. The initiative enjoys broad support because its key goal is to bring together all partners and stakeholders in supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations and we believe that it will contribute to a more effective implementation of the Charter. In support of that goal, we look forward to hosting the next Peacekeeping Ministerial in Korea next year.

In Article 55 of the Charter, the United Nations resolves to promote higher standards of living and conditions of economic and social progress and development. Today, one of the biggest challenges to realizing that goal is our deepening climate crisis. To strengthen global solidarity for implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals, Korea will host the second round of the Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 summit later this year.

As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, we greatly look forward to its reinforcement and full implementation. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its strong commitment to playing its part in realizing the goals of peace, human rights and sustainable development, as envisioned by the founders of this Organization.

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

Mr. Fifield (Australia): At the outset, I wish to express my sincere condolences to the many countries and families who lost loved ones on Ukrainian International Airlines flight 752. To echo the words of Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator Payne, we know what it feels like to be a country that is searching for

lost loved ones at this time. In that vein, I also wish to take the opportunity to thank my colleagues in this Chamber and their Governments for their concern and support during our current bushfire challenge in Australia.

I warmly congratulate Viet Nam on taking up its position on the Security Council and on holding the first presidency of 2020. I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on maintaining international peace and security. As we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Australia recognizes the ongoing importance of the Charter of the United Nations in terms of peace and collective security, development and human rights in what is an ever-changing and ever more complex world.

The Charter forms a central foundation of the international legal framework that Member States enjoy the benefits of today. However, we cannot look at the Charter in isolation. The international rules we have today are built on the Charter and the current moment is one where States and civil society need to use their voices to support multilateralism and the rules-based order. From freedom of navigation to chemical weapons to accountability for serious international crimes, we need to ensure that the norms we have built on the Charter's foundations are upheld on land, at sea and in cyberspace.

Built in the shadows of the Second World War, the Organization's central tenets and responsibilities for Member States, as articulated in the Preamble, are to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to practice tolerance and live together in peace and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. However, in recent years, the strain upon the international rules-based order has continued to intensify. This is a collective problem that requires a collective solution. We need to ensure that the fundamental norms reflected in the Charter are protected — for all States Members of the United Nations and for the millions of individuals who look to the United Nations to protect their lives and their human rights. The credibility of the United Nations system depends on its willingness and capacity to do so. That, in turn, is dependent on Member States.

Upon seeing the warning signs, the United Nations must use its political authority and the preventive tools at its disposal to address potential conflicts and seek de-escalation. The political will of Member States is

central to enabling that. Members should be alert to these signs and should be able to flag them in order to ensure that fundamental norms are respected for the benefit of all. Australia continues to advocate for the implementation of the principles of the responsibility to protect across the United Nations and encourages current and future members of the Security Council to recall it during the Council's deliberations.

As we consider the contribution of the United Nations Charter and the frameworks and norms that have flowed from it, we renew our call for greater cooperation within and outside the United Nations, for increased focus on effectiveness at the field level and for the use of preventive tools. And from Member States, we need a recommitment to collective security that can enable the system to adapt to new challenges. Against that backdrop, Australia welcomes and urges the fullest possible implementation of the ongoing system-wide United Nations reforms to improve the Organization's effectiveness in contributing to sustaining development and sustaining peace. In that way, we can demonstrate our practical commitment to the Charter in the world today.

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

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): We are grateful to the Vietnamese presidency for convening this timely debate on international peace and security.

The world order established 75 years ago on the basis of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations is rapidly eroding today. Pakistan has a vital stake in the preservation and promotion of this order and in the building of a structure of world peace and cooperation on the foundations of the United Nations Charter.

Pakistan hopes that, in Afghanistan, the United States-Taliban talks, which we have facilitated, will soon result in an agreement that enables the withdrawal of foreign forces, a cessation of violence, a comprehensive intra-Afghan dialogue and the elimination of terrorism from Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has also deployed personal efforts to reduce the tensions in the Gulf region. Pakistan will not become party to any regional conflict. We will always be a partner for peace. Recent events have amplified the multiple and complex threats to peace and security in the Middle East — the denial

of self-determination to the Palestinian people and the disruption of the sovereignty and stability of Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

It is now over 150 days that 8 million people in the Kashmir Valley have been kept under a cruel curfew and a communication blackout by an Indian occupation force of 900,000 troops. All Kashmiri leaders remain in jails across India. Thousands of young boys have been abducted, arbitrarily detained, tortured and maimed; women subjected to sexual harassment, humiliation and intimidation; and all protest violently suppressed. My delegation has circulated a dossier of reports filed by independent journalists and observers, which vividly illustrate the climate of fear and the reign of terror that India has imposed on the Kashmiri people.

The signals from India of aggressive intent towards Pakistan are also unmistakable. India has issued new political maps that lay claim not only to Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, but also to Pakistan-administered Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. India's Foreign Minister has boasted that they will one day take physical control of that territory as well.

India committed over 3,000 ceasefire violations along the Line of Control last year. It has now cut the fencing along the Line of Control in five places and deployed Israeli Spike anti-tank and BrahMos cruise missiles along the Line. The incoming Indian Army Chief has claimed the right to launch a pre-emptive attack against Pakistan. India could stage another false-flag terror incident to create a *casus belli* for an attack. India's military doctrine envisages fighting a "limited war (with Pakistan) under the nuclear overhang". It has built the capacity for a so-called cold-start — that is, surprise — strike across the Pakistan-India border. On 18 August 2019, the Indian Defence Minister held out a thinly disguised threat of a pre-emptive nuclear strike against Pakistan.

Pakistan does not want war with India, but, as we demonstrated last February, if attacked Pakistan will respond resolutely and effectively. The February aerial exchanges were contained due to Prime Minister Imran Khan's gesture to unilaterally return the Indian pilot we captured after shooting down two Indian fighter aircraft. We may not be so fortunate next time.

Pakistan requests the Security Council and the Secretary-General to act decisively to prevent a disastrous war between Pakistan and India, to call for an end to the grave human rights violations in occupied

Jammu and Kashmir, and to enable the Kashmiri people to exercise the right to self-determination promised to them in the resolutions of the Council.

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

Mr. Aidid (Malaysia): At the outset, allow me to convey our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family members of victims of the tragic accident involving Ukrainian International Airlines flight 752 in Iran.

I would now like to congratulate you, Sir, on Viet Nam's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January, as well as to commend the convening of this timely and important open debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements to be made by the representatives of Azerbaijan and the Philippines on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), respectively.

Today's debate is being held against the backdrop of increasing hatred and mistrust, the growing threat of extremism and terrorism and the continued proliferation and possession of weapons of mass destruction. As those security threats are shared, so too must be their solutions. A few days ago we were highly alarmed by the geopolitical tension in the Middle East. Malaysia has always believed that every effort should be undertaken to resolve disputes and conflicts through peaceful means in accordance with the principles of international law, without resorting to the use or threat of use of force. We join others in calling for all parties concerned to avoid further provocation, exercise maximum restraint and de-escalate tensions.

Malaysia continues to believe that multilateralism is nothing other than responding to the aspirations of the peoples and the needs of humankind as a whole. The Preamble of the United Nations Charter — "We the peoples" — serves as a constant reminder of our resolve to serve humankind collectively through peaceful means. It is therefore fundamental for us to reaffirm our faith in multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, by upholding the Charter of the United Nations and advancing its three pillars of peace and security, human rights and development.

In our view, multilateralism does not in any sense represent a threat to nation States. Instead, we see it as a platform and means to address the complex challenges

that no country can overcome on its own. Our strong commitment to multilateralism, in particular in international cooperation on peace and security, is well demonstrated and articulated, as it was particularly during our membership on the Security Council and has been by the participation of our peacekeepers in peacekeeping operations around the world.

As a member of ASEAN, Malaysia will remain steadfast in contributing to regional and global peace and security. ASEAN's strong commitment to this important agenda is also demonstrated through the membership of two ASEAN countries in the Council today. We stand ready to enhance existing ASEAN-United Nations collaboration in peacekeeping and peacebuilding through training programmes and exchanges involving policies and best practices.

There is high expectation for the Security Council to deliver stability, peace and security to the world. At the same time, there is a growing demand for the Council to adapt to new political realities. In that regard, Malaysia continues to call for collective efforts to reform the Security Council and improve its working methods. Malaysia also wishes to stress the importance of the prompt, effective and full implementation of Security Council resolutions.

The survival of humankind depends upon us working together. We need cooperation, not confrontation. Malaysia has been, and will continue to be, a strong supporter of multilateralism and an advocate for the use of diplomacy for peace. To that end, we remain committed to upholding the rule of law and the rules-based international order and supporting international cooperation.

As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Malaysia calls on all parties to renew and intensify efforts in upholding the Charter, to engage in frank and productive dialogue and to strengthen multilateral action for a more peaceful, secure and sustainable world.

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

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate.

At the outset, we express our deep condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the aeroplane

crash in Iran. A thorough investigation into the incident is under way.

I am here today to deliver a statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Javad Zarif, whose visa was denied by the United States in contravention of the Headquarters Agreement. His statement is as follows.

“We are meeting today to discuss a momentous imperative with which we are all confronted. The world is at a crossroads. With the end of monopolies on power, one unhinged regime is frantically clamouring to turn back time. That has meant more damaging American unilateralism in defiance of international norms and law, including most recently a dastardly targeted assassination of the heroes who were the nightmare of such groups as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. But since the regime's inauguration, there have been more and more threats and attacks against the people of Iran and other sovereign nations in utter disregard of the Charter of the United Nations. It now even seeks to emulate the war crimes of Da'esh, menacing the cultural heritage of the millenniums-old civilization of Iran.

“Our action on 8 January against an air base in Iraq from which the cowardly armed attack against the martyr Soleimani was launched was a measured and proportionate response to a terrorist attack in the exercise of our inherent right to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. The rogue United States regime has withdrawn from several landmark accords, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and, not least, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). That — in an open affront to the Security Council — has involved the unprecedented and unlawful punishment by the United States of anyone who attempts to comply with resolution 2231 (2015), which unequivocally endorses the JCPOA.

“It has also adopted mob tactics to expand or gain market share in the face of the increasing diversification of the sources of power. In the case of my own country, United States economic terrorism has involved the strangulation of access by ordinary Iranians to food and medicine, as well as the use of illegal unilateral sanctions to give American oil a foothold in Asia. No one is spared from that malign behaviour, as evidenced

by how the United States approaches global trade, including its targeting of European infrastructure to force the entry of its own natural gas.

“The question raised by such rogue behaviour is how to protect the United Nations Charter. For if other States become passive unilateralists, succumb to unilateralism in their bilateral relationships or compromise Charter principles for the sake of short-term gains or the avoidance of immediate harm, they will inadvertently encourage the lawless unilateralist to bully them.

“In order to protect multilateralism, we must never appease unilateralist regimes. We need political will, as well as an instrument that will safeguard the values, principles and multilateralism enshrined in the Charter. Such an instrument should include a renewed commitment to the Charter, particularly non-intervention in the internal and external affairs of other countries and the prohibition of the threat or use of force; the rejection of all coercive unilateral measures, including sanctions, as unlawful, entailing international responsibility, including financial responsibility to compensate for damages imposed on the target and third countries; assigning international criminal responsibility for obstructing humanitarian trade in any way, shape or form; and the prohibition of depriving individuals of their freedoms and their extradition upon judicial requests made on the basis of, or related to, unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions.

“Iran is dedicated to multilateralism and committed to the Charter and its principles. Our commitment to the JCPOA, as well as our most recent inclusive initiative to promote peace and security in the Persian Gulf region — the Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE) — demonstrate our strategic approach. With the engagement of other littoral States of the Persian Gulf, the objectives of HOPE can be realized. In that endeavour, we welcome the assistance of the United Nations, including by acting as an umbrella.”

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

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): Allow me to begin by thanking Viet Nam for convening this important debate on upholding the Charter of the United Nations.

Let me join others in congratulating the newly elected members of the Security Council and wishing them success during their tenure. We thank the outgoing members, including two of the three African members of the Council — Côte d’Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea — as well as Kuwait, Peru and Poland for their important contributions to the work of the Council.

The topic that you have chosen, Mr. President, could not be more relevant in the context of the current state of affairs in the international arena and the role that the United Nations and the Security Council play in that regard. In 1945, Ethiopia was one of the only four African States to sign the Charter of the United Nations to establish a new world order based on international law and cooperation. It has indeed been an indispensable multilateral forum for advancing collective security and promoting sustainable development.

Nearly 75 years later, the grand principles laid down by its founders — sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-intervention and the peaceful settlement of disputes — remain pertinent and immutable. Its primary purposes, as defined in Article 1 of the Charter, also remain as relevant today as they were in 1945.

In the intervening decades, the United Nations has recorded remarkable advances and progress in fostering peace, security and international cooperation. It has had its share of challenges and shortcomings. However, in spite of those challenges — or maybe even because of them — it remains the only truly global multilateral body dedicated to safeguarding international peace and security, promoting respect for human rights and ensuring sustainable development for all.

In peacekeeping, the United Nations continues to make enormous contributions. As a leading troop-contributing country, my country has, over the years, deployed more than 90,000 troops in more than 11 United Nations and African Union (AU) missions to safeguard international peace and security. Currently, there are more than 8,000 Ethiopian troops and police officers serving in a number of missions.

There has, of course, been a groundswell of change in the global geopolitical landscape since the founding of the United Nations. Today, we are facing unprecedented challenges and threats, ranging from terrorism and violent extremism to transnational organized crime, unilateralism, protectionism and the weaponization of digital technology, including the use of social media for

nefarious purposes. The rise of poverty and inequality, the spread of pandemic diseases, the impact of climate change and other socioeconomic challenges continue to have serious ramifications for our collective security.

The need for revitalized multilateralism has never been greater. However, to remain effective, functional and relevant in the face of highly dynamic global events, the post-war international system must continually reform and evolve. That is why we need a renewed commitment to the multilateral system and the efficacy of the United Nations system. The question then is how we make this premier multilateral Organization fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

We believe that bolstering partnerships at all levels is critical to revitalize the United Nations system. Member States must show serious commitment to the reform of the United Nations. We should use the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary to develop and strengthen partnership and cooperation, particularly with regional and subregional organizations. In that regard, the United Nations-AU strategic partnership has shown promising potential, including in the context of the implementation of the African Union's goal of silencing the guns by 2020.

Partnership forms the foundational basis for a more resilient global and regional security architecture that will enable the United Nations to respond to the aspirations of "We, the peoples". While we need to deepen and institutionalize cooperation between the United Nations and AU, we must also be willing to go beyond the current focus on peace and security and pursue robust collaboration in other areas. As the primary organ entrusted by the Charter with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council must embrace the changing global dynamics and recommit to pursuing robust political solutions through meaningful partnerships with regional and subregional organizations.

The Charter attaches great importance to prevention. In our contemporary context, that entails addressing the root causes of conflicts, which increase the vulnerability of States. Such causes include political, economic and social exclusion, particularly of young people, women and marginalized groups; high rates of unemployment; rapid urbanization; deficits in governance; the mismanagement of diversity; and the competition for increasingly scarce natural resources.

Those challenges are further exacerbated by weak State institutions and the lack of capacity to deliver for a population that increasingly demands its rights and the efficient delivery of public services. The complex and protracted nature of today's conflicts means that domestic crises are often not contained within national borders and the resulting spillover may take the form of mass migration or a refugee crisis.

In the Horn of Africa, sweeping political reforms and the region-wide rapprochement initiated by my country has rekindled hopes for lasting stability and a new era of regional cooperation. There is now positive momentum and a range of possibilities for progress towards regional economic integration. The Security Council has recognized those positive developments. That recognition must be followed by concrete support as the countries of the region strive to advance peace and prosperity. Countries in the region must be encouraged to deepen and institutionalize the political and economic reforms that they have initiated, including through the lifting of unilateral embargoes and by de-securitizing the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

To conclude, the global concerns and realities of our time require us to reaffirm, with one voice, our solemn commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The ban on inter-State war in the United Nations Charter has so far contributed to forestalling another world war. In these trying times, we must once again resolve to maintain that trajectory. It will not be easy, but we must show greater wisdom and not be deterred by temporary waves of populism and unilateral tendencies that could undermine the multilateral system and the international law that it is based on. Let me take this opportunity to underline Ethiopia's unwavering commitment to the enduring tenets of the United Nations Charter and to playing its part fully, as it has done for more than seven decades.

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

Mr. Favre (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Vietnamese presidency for organizing this open debate. As 2020 begins, it is very important for all of us States Members of the United Nations to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, which is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary. Despite its age, it remains wholly relevant. Its role has not diminished, rather quite the contrary. The number of crises and conflicts in the world is of great concern. It is estimated that

168 million people will need humanitarian assistance this year. The world needs our action.

While the Charter is neither a magic wand nor a panacea, it remains a powerful tool for conflict prevention and peacekeeping, provided that Member States implement it in its entirety. Peace and security are also dependent on development and respect for human rights. It would be wrong to disregard them for security reasons. For the security and prosperity of small and medium-sized States, including Switzerland and the vast majority of Member States, an effective rules-based multilateral system remains essential. Respect for international law, including the prohibition of the use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes, is of vital importance to prevent escalations.

The similarities between the Charter and Switzerland's Federal Constitution are striking. Both promote shared prosperity, sustainable development and respect for human rights. Switzerland is a young State Member of the United Nations, fully engaged in the search for and implementation of multilateral solutions. Today more than ever, young people inspire us to assume our responsibility to resolve crises peacefully and to protect natural resources for future generations. But what kind of United Nations will young people need? We welcome the Secretary-General's reflections on that question. It is crucial that all segments of society express their views and it is our duty to listen to them. In Geneva and elsewhere in Switzerland, activities will take place this year to raise awareness about the Charter, anchor it more firmly in people's daily lives and remind us of the Charter's political relevance in the twenty-first century.

The Charter also provides the basis for action by the Security Council, including its obligations to the General Assembly, in particular the duty to ensure adequate interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly under Article 24 of the Charter. That is a fact often recalled by the interregional Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, coordinated by Switzerland, which promotes accountability, coherence and transparency in the Council.

What unites us is more important than what divides us. The Charter remains the common denominator — our starting point for strengthening multilateralism in the spirit of inclusion and dialogue. At a time when the Secretary-General stresses

that geopolitical tensions are at their highest level, Switzerland supports his call for resuming dialogue and renewing international cooperation.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and its Charter is an opportunity to recall that multilateral bodies and international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, are essential to ensuring international peace and security. It is more crucial than ever for the Security Council to fully assume the responsibilities bestowed upon it by the Charter.

The President: I thank the representative of Switzerland for keeping to the time limit and I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Albania.

Ms. Kadare (Albania): We thank Viet Nam for choosing such an important and timely topic for today's open debate, as we start the year that will mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the existence of United Nations.

Upholding the Charter of the United Nations and strengthening the multilateral system are crucial in effectively addressing the global crises the world faces today. Those challenges have significantly evolved, while new threats have emerged. No country can address alone the current complex challenges, such as climate change, mass migration, rising inequalities, new technologies, international terrorism and organized crime, all of which have a direct impact on the international security architecture. Under such circumstances, the United Nations needs to adapt its tools and rapidly adjust to new realities.

I would like to mention three interrelated elements, which we believe are crucial in upholding the United Nations Charter. First, we should make conflict prevention a reality. As the Secretary-General has emphasized since the beginning of his mandate, prevention must be at the centre of all efforts. We must collectively mobilize in order to prevent the deterioration of situations by addressing root causes long before conflict escalates into violence. In so doing, we must recognize the power of women's participation, which makes peace agreements stronger and societies more resilient.

Prevention also depends on sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development offers a framework for addressing the economic and social drivers of conflict and building stable inclusive societies. Albania strongly supports the Secretary-General's reform agenda, which aims to put conflict prevention, sustaining peace and sustainable development at the centre of the work of the United Nations.

Secondly, we need a more responsive and effective Security Council, the body in charge of preventing crises and maintaining international peace and security. When the Security Council has managed to overcome its divisions and take united action, it has successfully achieved the Charter's purposes. Regrettably, the Council has also quite often been unable to act in a timely manner, failing to find common ground in order to resolve conflicts and ease human suffering.

It should be underlined that membership in the Security Council is a responsibility, not a privilege, and implies the exercise of that responsibility on behalf of all Members of the United Nations, in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter. That is why the use of the veto to protect narrow national interests, in situations of mass atrocities, is unacceptable.

Thirdly, the maintenance of international peace and security cannot be understood without respecting and protecting human rights and international humanitarian law. Here I would like to emphasize that Albania believes that human rights are the Security Council's business — not only because the United Nations Charter calls on all Members to respect them but also because violations of human rights inevitably lead to instability, thereby threatening peace and security. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that we will not enjoy development without security or security without development, but we will not enjoy either development or security without universal respect for human rights.

I would like to conclude by stressing the commitment of my country to defend and strengthen the rules-based global order, international law and multilateral institutions. As a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the term 2022-2023, Albania pledges to engage actively in all efforts to strengthen the role of the Security Council, with a focus on its efficiency, credibility and accountability.

As the Secretary-General said today, international cooperation is at a crossroads. Indeed, the global challenges that we face today will test the Charter

and multilateralism, as well as our capacity to secure a better world for all of humankind, as we strive to deliver for "We, the peoples". Let us remember that upholding the Charter's values, which remain as relevant as ever, is both our shared responsibility and in our common interest.

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

Mrs. Zappia (Italy): I wish to thank the Vietnamese presidency for organizing today's very important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson for their insightful briefings.

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

The Charter of the United Nations is the main pillar of the legal and political architecture built in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. In the preamble of the Charter, the pledge to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war is unequivocal. That pledge is all the more imperative today, with new tensions arising in the world and the proliferation of regional crises. The current threats to global peace and security also make it more pressing than ever to recommit to and revitalize the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation normative framework.

It is true that the United Nations and the multilateral system based on the Charter face growing criticism. The Security Council struggles to offer solutions to major current political crises. Nevertheless, the underlying principles of the Charter are as compelling today as they were in 1945 and so are the objectives that they are supposed to serve — the global aspiration for peace and the well-being of all our citizens. The answer to the pushback that we are witnessing today is not less multilateralism but rather much more, with a more sophisticated approach that is designed to tackle today's more complex crises.

Italy knows that well. As a Mediterranean country on the front lines of an area afflicted by major instability and multidimensional repercussions that transcend the region itself, we are deeply aware of the need for a holistic approach. Only by combining security, development, the rule of law and human rights, as well as environmental protection and the fight against climate change, will we be able to create conditions conducive to sustainable peace and a future of prosperity for the generations to come.

As the Secretary-General said earlier, international cooperation is at a crossroads and, indeed, we need to do better to uphold the values of the Charter. As far as Italy is concerned, we strongly believe the ongoing reform processes started by the Secretary-General are crucial to improving the effectiveness of the United Nations and its capacity to achieve that goal. Italy reaffirms its steadfast support for conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding and recalls the prerogatives of the Secretary-General under Article 99 of the Charter. As the top troop contributor among Western countries, Italy champions the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

A reformed United Nations must continue to operate in a logic of shared responsibility among Members States and in partnership with regional organizations, such as the European Union and the African Union. That crucial notion is also reflected in our commitment to a reform of the Security Council to make it more representative, accountable, democratic, transparent and effective.

A final word on discrimination and inclusion: in its Preamble the Charter reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women. Let me stress the importance of gender equality. Women must be given the opportunity to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. By the same token, we must give voice and space to young people. As President Mary Robinson said this morning,

“[i]f women had equal power ... we would have a very different problem-solving way of dealing with the challenges we face”.

Indeed, we must continue to work relentlessly to achieve gender parity for the sake of peace and prosperity for all.

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

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and the Chair of The Elders, Mrs. Mary Robinson, for their briefings. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to Viet Nam for the wise choice of topic for today's open debate.

At the outset, allow me to recall the words of President Jair Bolsonaro during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session (see

A/74/PV.3). In accordance with the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, the Organization was created to promote peace among sovereign nations. It was not created to suppress nationalities, but to promote a world where sovereign nations respect each other and national Governments honour their own citizens. That is the only viable basis for a real and enduring peace.

After 75 years, we can honestly assess that the United Nations has lived up to its goal of becoming a podium to voice hopes and concerns from all over the world, a platform for fostering cooperation and partnerships and a tool that allows us to use diplomacy and dialogue as remedies for differences and grievances. The United Nations has also been successful in achieving what was perhaps its highest aspiration, namely, to avoid another systemic war among the world's greatest Powers. To a large extent, the value of the United Nations derives from its ability to frame the core of international relations, substituting power politics with shared commitments and ideas that have been guiding our actions since 1945.

We owe much of that success to the establishment in the United Nations Charter of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes as the *modus operandi* for inter-State relations. Going hand in hand with the prohibition of the use of force, Article 33 of the Charter crystallizes the duty of parties to seek peaceful solutions to their disputes. It also offers a variety of tools to address disputes that could endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. As with all other Chapter VI provisions, Article 33 is instrumental for conflict prevention.

With regard to the use of force authorized under Chapter VII, the Charter reminds us that the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States. Hence, all States have a legitimate interest in ensuring adherence to the mandate established in a Security Council resolution authorizing coercive measures. Moreover, the authorization must be limited in its legal, operational and temporal dimensions. Finally, when considering military action, the Council must demand adequate reporting and establish panels of experts to monitor implementation.

As we recognize our successes, we must also acknowledge that the time has come to renew our overall approach to peace and security and to reform the structure of the Security Council. An expansion of the organ in both categories is key to making it more

transparent, legitimate, representative and effective by bringing to the table those actors capable of making meaningful contributions to international peace and security. We must also address the fact that Africa still lacks permanent representation in the Security Council.

Almost 15 years have passed since the 2005 World Summit, where Heads of State and Government called for an early reform of the Security Council. Yet we remain far from having achieved that goal. This year should mark not only the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, but also the beginning of a new chapter in which our adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter is reaffirmed through our commitment to a reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

As much as we have spoken of conflicts and disputes, it is important that we also speak of peace not merely as the absence of aggression but also as the pursuit of justice, inclusiveness and freedom. As we have seen time and again in the Council, when peace processes are not inclusive, they tend to fail. In that sense, it is paramount to recall that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation not only of peace but also of freedom and justice. Bearing that in mind, Brazil reaffirms its uncompromising dedication to the highest standards of human rights and to the defence of democracy and the freedoms of speech, religion and the press. Such a commitment by all nations is imperative in order to attain lasting peace.

As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Charter, we must not forget that the future of humankind is embedded in each nation's exercise of its own identity and sovereignty. The United Nations must be the stage where we come together and work side by side for the benefit of our peoples.

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

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I join previous speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on this important topic. I also thank the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson for their very pertinent remarks earlier today.

The new year has been marked by rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. As a small State strongly committed to the multilateral rules-based system,

Singapore is deeply concerned by recent developments. There is an urgent need for all parties to exercise maximum restraint, de-escalate tensions and return to dialogue and diplomacy to resolve their differences. We fully endorse the call by the Secretary-General for parties to stop escalation and re-start dialogue in order to renew international cooperation.

In the context of recent developments, the debate today takes on particular significance. There is no doubt that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. However, all Member States can, and indeed must, contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, please allow me to make a few points.

First, we have to strengthen respect for the Charter of the United Nations, not only through our words but, more important, through our actions. Every Member of the United Nations, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council, have a responsibility to uphold international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The rules-based multilateral system requires respect for international law by all States at all times. If there is a selective approach to implementing international law or if there are unilateral actions that ignore international law, we will encourage a culture of non-compliance. Over time, repeated non-compliance will have the effect of weakening and undermining our rules-based multilateral system. It is therefore important for all members to guard against unilateral actions and selective multilateralism.

Secondly, we have to place greater emphasis on preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law, and we need to support the role of the Secretary-General in the settlement of disputes, in accordance with Article 99 of the United Nations Charter. Preventive diplomacy may be time-consuming, but it is an effective way to enhance the prospects for peace and reconciliation. We applaud the Secretary-General's pledge to make prevention a priority of the priorities, as he put it. The International Court of Justice is an important mechanism for dispute settlement, and it is vital that all Member States support the work of the Court and respect its decisions.

Thirdly, the Security Council must work harder to be cohesive and united on the key issues of our day. We know that this is not always possible. However, it is important for members of the Security Council,

especially the permanent members, to work harder to build understanding and find common ground on key international issues. That is our expectation. And when common positions are adopted, it is incumbent on all Member States to respect and implement the Council's decisions in full. We cannot allow countries to selectively implement or selectively ignore Council decisions. When we disrespect a decision of the Council, we undermine the credibility of the entire Council and weaken its ability to maintain international peace and security.

To be effective, it is important for the Council to work and coordinate closely with the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission and regional organizations. Notably, regional and subregional organizations have played an increasingly important role in maintaining peace and security in recent years. Their efforts can complement the actions of the Security Council, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We welcome the increasing number of meetings the Security Council has had with regional organizations in the past few months, and we look forward to the meeting on Association of Southeast Asian Nations-United Nations cooperation later this month, under your presidency, Sir. We also welcome the regular meetings between the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly.

The Security Council is at the forefront of the efforts of the United Nations to maintain peace and security, and members of the Council, especially the permanent members, must lead by example. At the same time, all of us here, as Members of the United Nations, have a responsibility to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter, not only through our words but also through our actions.

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

Mr. Mavroyiannis (Cyprus): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this extremely topical debate and to wish Viet Nam a successful tenure on the Council.

While reaffirming the Charter as the foundation of the system of collective security and the Security Council as the organ entrusted with the main responsibility for the maintenance and/or restoration of international peace and security, it is important that this debate go well beyond that. We need in particular to reassess the Council's evolution, since it reflects on

the Charter as well as the Council's record, as well as on the United Nations system as a whole.

We need, of course, to remind ourselves that the Security Council remains a *sui generis* body legitimized to some extent by history and power relations at the international level, but more so by its capacity to uphold international peace and security. Such a teleological approach to legitimacy comes with a number of caveats and entails full accountability vis-à-vis all stakeholders, be they Member States or other bodies or organizations. The Council needs to constantly demonstrate its relevance, and, in that context, we need to integrate the ongoing debates on its working methods, enlargement and representativity, the constantly broadening definition of threats to international peace and security, and the effectiveness of its decisions and actions.

The world has moved on since 1945. Adaptation is normal and welcome. The number of conflicts has steadily risen, and the nature of the belligerents has changed. The climate crisis is bound to increase conflict and displacement. Development, human rights and issues related to the legitimacy of political and social structures have become major challenges, including in the context of conflict prevention and resolution. The Council is compelled to adopt a more comprehensive approach to security and take account of conflict indicators without diverting its primary attention from hard security. It also must adjust its tools and instruments to our constantly changing world.

We all know that the way the system operates today is very far from the action contemplated under Chapter VII of the Charter. Given the evolving challenges facing effective multilateralism and the concurrent yet diametrically opposed trends of globalization and fragmentation, the United Nations has managed overall to find the tools to deal with this more complex security environment. The world order has advanced, in large part due to the fact that the rules governing it have become more comprehensive and prescriptive and hold States to a higher standard.

Only greater synergy, complementarity and additionality among the Security Council and other bodies and among States and international institutions in a dialectical relationship can contribute to the needed prevalence of a more comprehensive and integrated approach. Working together and not in competition would enhance the effectiveness of our collective

action. The Security Council, being at the epicentre of the system, would stand to gain from this double redefinition, on the one hand of the scope and the content of its mission, and, on the other hand, of the tools and actions available to it.

Through all this, the Charter will further consolidate its central role as, in essence, the Constitution of the international community and will serve as our guide for the generations to come.

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

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Viet Nam, Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Niger and Tunisia on assuming membership of the Security Council and to wish them success in conducting their mission, which is of the utmost importance and the highest responsibility.

Armenia commends the presidency of Viet Nam for the choice of topic for today's debate, on upholding the United Nations Charter to maintain international peace and security. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Chair of The Elders Mary Robinson for their remarks earlier today highlighting the central role of the Charter as the cornerstone of the international law and multilateralism.

The anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations is an opportunity to reiterate the full adherence of Member States to the Charter and to reaffirm the commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and uphold fundamental human rights and faith in the dignity and worth of the human being. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization is also an occasion to remember and pay tribute to all those who became victims of the atrocities perpetrated during the First and Second World Wars and gave their lives in the struggle for the peaceful future of the world. The Armenian people made a significant contribution to victory in the Second World War, which paved the way for the creation of the United Nations. Almost 600,000 Armenians participated in the war, and more than half of them did not return from the battlefields.

The Charter rests upon the objective of developing friendly relations among nations, based on respect for the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples. The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle that has led to a significant increase in the membership of the United Nations since

its foundation. The right of people to freely define their future is anchored in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that context, the inalienable right of the people of Nagorno Karabakh to self-determination through the legally binding free expression of their will represents a fundamental principle and basic premise for the peaceful resolution of the conflict, which is recognized by the co-chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group — the only internationally mandated mediation format dealing with the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Armenia greatly values the support of the United Nations and the Secretary-General for the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship towards the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Today's discussion is all the more relevant in the light of the current developments in Iraq and the wider Middle East. Armenia has expressed its concern about the ongoing situation and the risk of destabilization in its immediate neighbourhood and beyond. We have appealed for the de-escalation of the situation, and we hope that it can be addressed exclusively through dialogue and peaceful means. We believe that the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida, which perpetrated atrocities in Syria and Iraq, should continue to unite the international community and serve as a basis for consolidating regional peace and security.

Despite the major achievements of the United Nations in promoting peace and security in the past 75 years, we continue to face armed conflicts, pervasive poverty, increasing inequality, shrinking democratic space and violence against women and girls, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General's on the work of the Organization (A/74/1). Violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which include the right to self-determination, often represent the root causes of conflicts as we continue to witness discrimination, xenophobia, exclusion, State-led policies of hatred and the glorification of hate crimes.

As demonstrated many times before, intolerance and the cultivation of hate speech against ethnic and religious groups, if not addressed properly, can lead to mass atrocities and genocide. Armenia has been consistent in supporting multilateral efforts aimed at the prevention of genocide and strengthening the early-warning capacities of the United Nations. Multilateral

cooperation, as ever, remains important in terms of providing platforms for dialogue and action on global challenges.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Armenia's firm commitment to effective multilateralism, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

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

Mr. Ahmed (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council and wish them every success. In particular, I congratulate Viet Nam on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. We are confident that it will lead the work of the Council wisely and competently. I would like also to convey the greetings of the Foreign Minister of Egypt, Mr. Sameh Shokry, to his Excellency Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. We thank him for his kind invitation to let us participate in this important discussion. Our Minister was unable to attend this meeting owing to an urgent prior engagement.

This meeting comes at a critical time, as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the adoption of the Charter. We are proud that Egypt was one of the States that contributed to the drafting of the Charter. This critical moment requires us to scrutinize the successes of and the challenges facing the Charter, while seeking the means to ensure that the United Nations and the Charter meet present and future needs. We should like to address those points in this statement.

With regard to successes, Egypt believes that the Charter is well established due to its principles, which represent firm international rules of coexistence that cannot be undone or questioned. The Charter stresses the principles of sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, good-neighbourliness, the non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes, all of which serve as the foundations for stable relations among States. Without them, international systems cannot function properly, as evidenced by the many crises that are plaguing our world owing to non-respect for the principles of the Charter.

Concerning the challenges, there are internal ones emanating from the Charter and obstructing its implementation, and there are external emerging

challenges, owing to the fact that it was adopted 75 years ago. With regard to the emerging challenges, the Charter faces a new and different reality from that of the time of its adoption in the aftermath of the Second World War. Our world today faces challenges of terrorism and extremism that do not differentiate between religions and races while supported and financed by certain States for political purposes. We are also faced by other challenges as some work to dismantle State institutions and plunge others into a morass of identity conflicts. Regrettably, the situation in the Middle East is a case in point reflecting these two challenges, and in particular the situations in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

We also face challenges related to climate change, water scarcity and cooperation on the use of transboundary water resources. Addressing such issues requires cooperation and coordination among all States, as they have serious negative repercussions on various regions and must be dealt with. In that context, we are currently working to reach an agreement on the rules of operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, and we appreciate the role of the United States and the World Bank in negotiations to that end.

With regard to the internal challenges facing the Charter, we can encapsulate them in the following related and overlapping points.

The first relates to the commitment of States to implementing the Charter, its principles and the international resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Court of Justice. Egypt has had an excellent track record of commitment to such resolutions over 75 years, which demonstrates that we uphold our obligations under the Charter. That is not, however, the case for everyone. In the Middle East, we see the systematic violation by some of internationally recognized resolutions. The most recent example involves the two memorandums of understanding signed between the Government of Turkey and the Head of the Government of National Accord in Tripoli on 27 November 2019. That is an obvious violation of internationally recognized resolutions, in particular resolution 1970 (2011).

Secondly, the use of double standards prevails inside the Organization, in particular with regard to the Palestinian question. Egypt stresses that this question is at the root of all the turbulence in the Middle East. Finding a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian question, based on international resolutions, would

address the main reasons underlying instability in the Middle East.

Thirdly, the Security Council rushes to use Chapter VII instead of Chapter VI of the Charter, which calls for taking pre-emptive and preventive diplomatic steps and for activating the role of the International Court of Justice, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 36, on the referral of disputes of a legal nature to the Court, in addition to Article 96, on requesting an advisory opinion from the Court.

Fourthly, there is a contradiction in the use of the Charter. On the one hand, it stresses the principle of equality among all States, while on the other hand it affords only five States the right of veto, thereby creating a fundamental imbalance in the effectiveness and credibility of the Council and the United Nations in many situations.

Fifthly, we need to review the effectiveness of certain weak implementation tools, particularly those pertaining to sustainable development and the comprehensive concepts of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, while respecting the sovereignty of States.

In the light of all those challenges, in order to prevent the United Nations from serving as “a crisis baby-sitter”, in the words of the Secretary-General during the debate on this issue in February 2018 (*S/PV.8185, p. 3*), Egypt stresses the following.

First, the Security Council and other United Nations entities need to shoulder their responsibilities, stand firmly against violations of international resolutions and refuse to tolerate States that sponsor terrorism and violate international resolutions. We cannot continue to stand idly by and watch events of external intervention unfold in Libya and Syria without taking action. In that regard, I underscore what the Secretary-General said earlier in his statement with regard to the commitments of States under Article 25 of the Charter.

Secondly, States should cooperate in accordance with the principles of the Charter pertaining to good neighbourliness, the peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation with sincere intentions and mediation encouraged by the international community in various disputes.

Thirdly, international coordination must be enhanced through United Nations frameworks in the fight against terrorism, as well as intelligence-sharing

in that regard, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Fourthly, serious steps should be taken to achieve sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The capabilities of developing countries have to be boosted in order to access funds from the private sector. Underdevelopment remains the main driver of conflicts. Addressing disputes requires an approach to manage different stages of conflict, from peacebuilding to sustaining peace. Serious steps must be taken to prevent proliferation and achieve nuclear disarmament.

Fifthly, relations between the Security Council and regional organizations must be strengthened in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. In that regard, during its current presidency of the African Union, Egypt has worked to enhance the relationship between the African Union and the United Nations regarding peace and security while building on the comparative advantages of each of them.

Sixthly, a genuine reform of the Security Council cannot be based on piecemeal or phased solutions; rather, it should work to end the historic injustice against the African continent. Egypt adheres to the Ezulwini Consensus, which calls for the abolishment of the veto or bestowing that right on new permanent members of the Council to address the structural imbalance in the work of the Council.

In conclusion, Egypt understands that the United Nations and its Charter are at a critical crossroads. Hence, we emphasize the importance of taking practical steps to ensure that the role played by our Organization continues to be effective and to keep the Organization as a collective forum for the maintenance of peace and security for humankind while meeting the needs of our people for a decent life.

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

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for convening this open debate, which is of particular importance given that this year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, the founding treaty of this Organization, which includes the purposes and principles that unite all the nations represented here.

Guatemala, as a founding country of the Charter of the United Nations, firmly believes in this Organization

and in the essential role of the Security Council in the maintenance and upholding of international peace and security, the observance of human rights and the sustainable development of peoples.

This is a landmark year. Seventy-five years after its founding, given the global circumstances we face, we must turn our attention now more than ever to the founding principles of the Organization and to upholding the Charter to preserve international peace and security and fulfil the foundational and institutional existence of the United Nations.

Given the importance of this debate, I would like to contribute by referring to three established priorities that uphold the United Nations Charter: the first paragraph of the Preamble, the purpose set out in Article 1, paragraph 1, and General Assembly resolution 1 (I). I will proceed in that order.

The first paragraph of the Preamble specifies that the mission of the United Nations is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In that regard, we must pool efforts among nations to peacefully settle conflicts. The Organization was established to create mechanisms of peace and prevent future wars — we must do everything possible to avoid their outbreak.

The purpose set out in Article 1, paragraph 1, is to maintain international peace and security, and to that end to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of disputes. To that end, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security through the peaceful settlement of disputes by discharging its duties in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

Lastly, based on the Charter, General Assembly resolution 1 (I) was formulated in response to the way the Second World War ended and underscored the importance of eliminating atomic weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, 75 years after the Charter and in view of the imminent, devastating and tragic risk of another world war, it is now more necessary than ever to recall and fulfil the obligations to which we as States have committed ourselves in order to ensure international peace and security.

Guatemala underlines the trust that Member States place in the organs of this Organization, including the International Court of Justice, by bringing before its consideration disputes that have arisen among them, as well as the commitment of countries to maintaining and promoting the rule of law throughout the world. Guatemala recognizes the important work of the International Court of Justice, since its judgements provide certainty and due compliance with the norms of international law. Allow me to convey our recognition and support for the work of the Court and its judges.

I reiterate the importance that Guatemala attaches to the Security Council and its functions under Chapter VI of the Charter with regard to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Guatemala reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to assisting the Security Council in fulfilling those efforts by prioritizing the preventive approach to the maintenance and consolidation of world peace.

I wish to conclude my statement to the Security Council with these words of Pope Francis contained in his message to the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination, held in March 2017:

“An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction — and possibly the destruction of all humankind — are contradictory to the very spirit of the United Nations.”

We must do something about that. It is our responsibility.

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

Mr. Sukhee (Mongolia): At the outset, let me congratulate the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and express my gratitude for the convening of this open debate.

I take this opportunity to warmly welcome all the elected new members of the Security Council — Estonia, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam — and express our full confidence in their leadership and commitment in addressing world peace and security. Our appreciation also goes to the outgoing members — Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland — for their important contribution to the work of the Security Council.

The founding fathers of the United Nations established the Organization around three pillars — peace and security, development and human rights — to prevent war by binding us in a rules-based international order. Seventy-five years after the establishment of the United Nations, we are still tackling enormous challenges, including protracted conflicts, persistent poverty and hunger, terrorism and violent extremism, human rights abuses, financial and economic crises and a fast-changing climate. Respect for international norms and institutions is weakening. Multilateralism is being challenged more often.

The challenges of the contemporary world in the areas of peace and security, economic development and social progress, human rights and the rule of law urge the international community to renew its commitment to upholding and defending the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. In order to maintain international peace and security, States Members of the United Nations must pursue the principles of the Charter in good faith. In particular, all Members should fulfil the obligation to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

I take this opportunity to reassure those present of Mongolia's firm commitment to upholding and promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law. I therefore wish to reiterate Mongolia's principled position and commitment to promoting the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, in such a manner that international peace, security and justice are not endangered.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in 2020 presents an opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its collective commitment to upholding the United Nations Charter in order to maintain international peace and security.

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

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We congratulate Viet Nam — represented today by His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pham Binh Minh — for assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We welcome the presence of ASEAN member States Indonesia and Viet Nam as non-permanent members of the Council, as we look forward to the further strengthening of the ASEAN-United Nations comprehensive partnership and cooperation.

The relationship between ASEAN and the United Nations finds its roots in their respective Charters. On one hand, article 2 of the ASEAN Charter commits ASEAN and its member States to upholding the United Nations Charter and international law. On the other hand, Article 52 of the United Nations Charter cites the role of regional arrangements or agencies in the maintenance of international peace and security. Cooperation to promote regional and international peace and security is a key feature of the ASEAN-United Nations comprehensive partnership and cooperation.

ASEAN believes that regionalism and multilateralism are important principles and frameworks of cooperation, and that their strength and value lie in their inclusivity, rules-based nature and emphasis on mutual benefit and respect. We have a shared commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes, including full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We promote sustainable security in the region by reinforcing strategic trust and mutual confidence within ASEAN and in the wider Asia-Pacific region, helped by reaffirming the principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, as well as its application to the wider region, and on the basis of upholding the United Nations Charter and international law.

We acknowledge the continued contribution of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM-Plus in maintaining regional peace and stability. We welcome the defence sectoral body's theme last year on sustainable security, with the aim of strengthening, consolidating and optimizing defence cooperation and supporting cross-pillar activities. We are pleased to note further progress in

the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism, military medicine, humanitarian mine action and cybersecurity.

Peacekeeping remains the flagship programme of the United Nations enterprise. ASEAN-United Nations collaboration in peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding, with activities conducted through ASEAN member States' national focal points and the ASEAN Peacekeeping Centres Network, continues to be strengthened. As of July 2019, ASEAN member States had contributed approximately 5,500 military and police personnel, as well as technical expertise, to United Nations peacekeeping missions.

We have intensified efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda, including through the provision of a growing number of women peacekeepers and the establishment of the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry, to which the Secretary-General reiterated the United Nations commitment to providing technical support.

ASEAN cooperation has intensified efforts on matters related to international terrorism and non-traditional threats, including transnational crime. Representatives of ASEAN member States and the ASEAN secretariat have participated in United Nations-sponsored regional workshops and conferences on issues such as counter-terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters, cybercrime, environmental crime, illicit drugs and human trafficking.

ASEAN looks forward to further bolstering its partnership with the United Nations in our shared aspiration to maintain and enhance peace, security and stability and further strengthen peace-oriented values in the region and around the world.

In my national capacity, I wish to highlight the following points.

First, as a proud founding Member of the United Nations, the Philippines is firmly committed to international law, as it is an indispensable foundation in our efforts to build a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, with the States Members of the United Nations enjoying territorial integrity and political independence. In promoting respect for international law, all disputes must be settled peacefully, in accordance with Article 2 and Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter. The 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of

International Disputes is the authoritative articulation of our collective duty, under the United Nations Charter, to peacefully resolve disputes in the international arena.

Secondly, terrorism, with its links to drug trafficking and organized crime, is a most serious threat to international peace and security. The Philippines supports efforts mandated by the United Nations Charter on effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. We support the legal instruments we have developed throughout the years, along with Security Council resolutions and their effective implementation, to fight and end terrorism.

Thirdly, we uphold the primacy of sovereignty and, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members. The United Nations stands on the foundation of the aggregated sovereignty of its Members. It harnesses sovereignty not for some against others, but for the common purposes of peace and productive cooperation. It is also our view that today's conflicts equally require trust and respect for sovereignty, not a plain assertion of the multilateral over sovereign States. Working against sovereignty undermines the international order, as we have seen when States are made to fail by multilateral action.

I conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the Philippines to upholding the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter as we address with fortitude the persistent threats to world peace.

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

Ms. Quiel Murcia (Panama): Allow me to begin by thanking the Government of Viet Nam for convening today's timely debate, which seeks to reaffirm the inestimable value and commitment of the international community to upholding the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. We also welcome the important briefings made by the Secretary-General and Mrs. Mary Robinson, which underscored the crucial issues of today's debate.

As a founding Member of the United Nations, Panama has promoted the purposes and principles of the Charter and upheld multilateralism as a mechanism par excellence for effectively addressing issues on the international agenda and as the ideal framework for cooperation in promoting a more just and equitable peaceful order for all. At a particularly sensitive time in today's world, where collective efforts for peace are

imminent, it is important to renew the commitment that the international community made seven decades ago to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, by creating the conditions in which it could maintain justice and respect for obligations under treaties and other sources of international law. Renewed commitment is essential to ensuring a climate of coexistence, trust and tolerance for all.

We must urgently reflect on a world of that kind — one based on respect for fundamental human rights and the promotion of values that foster humankind's progress, with a global order of justice and freedom that values human beings, following the pain and suffering inflicted by two world wars.

The challenges and tensions on the global agenda are increasingly complex. The growing threats posed by conflicts, inequality, the scourge of terrorism, extremism, xenophobia, hate speech and humanitarian crises aggravated by the devastating effects of climate change challenge every day the effectiveness of this Organization and, above all, of the Security Council, which bears the greatest responsibility for preserving peace.

As we have pointed out before, the effectiveness of the United Nations requires determination and political will to face those challenges. We cannot continue to issue documents and declarations while the cost of the inability to take collective action is measured in human lives lost the world over. The United Nations is called upon to be an advocate for the collective good and a builder of peace, and to do so it needs to move from words to concrete action. As a country that favours constructive dialogue, Panama is aware that the Organization will be only as capable and relevant to the people as the States that are here are willing to be.

We need to return to the essence that gave life to our Organization. We need to genuinely empower ourselves with a strong and renewed culture of peace that preserves the vision of the original signatories of the United Nations Charter. The defence of the principles and values that emanate from it must be the commitment that unites us, as well as our legacy to future generations who, today as never before, are demanding it because they deserve to be safeguarded from the scourge of war.

Throughout its history, Panama has been part of, and witness to, the resolution of conflicts between countries in our region. Panama is a State party to

treaties that call for disarmament with a view to building a world free of nuclear weapons. We have full confidence in the work of the International Court of Justice to develop its methods for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

With this vision and in a particularly significant year where we are preparing to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Panama reaffirms its determined and unwavering commitment to the consolidation of a strengthened multilateral system based on the purposes and principles that gave life to the United Nations, whose core was, is and must continue to be the preservation of international peace and security.

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

Mr. Jinga (Romania): Romania aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will now make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Romania believes that the United Nations remains the most appropriate platform to collectively tackle threats to international peace and security. The Charter of the United Nations is fundamental to that aim. My country's commitment to multilateralism goes back long before the establishment of the United Nations. Romania is the only country to have provided a diplomat who was elected twice to head the League of Nations. His name was Nicolae Titulescu.

In line with the ambitious objective set out in the Preamble of the Charter to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, the United Nations is the main global cooperation framework for States and a pillar of international law and justice.

Today the role of the United Nations is much debated. Yet we can all agree that, 75 years after its inception, the United Nations has helped our societies to develop through dialogue, negotiation and shared responsibility. The Charter has proven to be a living and visionary document that contains, or allows for the creation of, tools to address challenges to international peace and security. It is our duty to improve those tools. Romania commends and supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to pursue the reform of the United

Nations system so that it can better respond to current global challenges.

We recognize the role of Chapter VI of the Charter in supporting the peaceful settlement of disputes and call for an increased use of conflict prevention and political settlement of disputes through early warning, mediation, coordination and strategic communication. In the current volatile international environment, following the political path to de-escalation is needed more than ever. Recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa confirm that the international community has a responsibility to create openings for political solutions in support of lasting peace. There is no other viable option for us to take.

Chapter VIII of the Charter provides the basis for the involvement of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Allow me to recall that, in 2005, Romania, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, promoted the very first resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Furthermore, when Romania chaired the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2018, cooperation between the PBC and the African Union was institutionalized for the first time. In the same vein, the Romanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with the support of the African Union, organized a training programme for African experts on stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction, held in Addis Ababa in November 2019.

Although the establishment of peacekeeping operations is not explicitly mentioned in the Charter, it is in the spirit of the Charter that United Nations peacekeeping is implemented. Dag Hammarskjöld famously considered peacekeeping operations as “Chapter Six and a Half of the Charter”, projecting them between the peaceful settlement of disputes mentioned in Chapter VI and the more coercive methods stipulated in Chapter VII. Thus, the United Nations gradually took its place as the leading organization in the field of peacekeeping, and Romania has been a steady supporter of that approach. For instance, my country participated in 10 United Nations missions and operations in 2019.

As we embark on a new year in which we must try to find solutions to the most pressing global challenges, allow me to reaffirm Romania’s commitment to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and its core values. The Charter calls for the protection of the dignity and worth of human beings. While improving

its tools is a matter of consideration and decision, trusting its principles and values remains axiomatic.

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

Mr. Skoog: I have the honour to speak on the behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. Turkey, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

Out of respect for all the subsequent speakers this afternoon and possibly tomorrow, I have abbreviated my statement considerably. The full version is available online.

I want to start by conveying our sincere condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the tragic plane crash outside Tehran yesterday morning.

Congratulations to you, Sir, and to Viet Nam for assuming the presidency of the Security Council. The EU welcomes your choice of topic for today’s open debate.

For almost three quarters of a century, the Charter of the United Nations has not only served as the legal basis of this Organization but has also stood as an enduring symbol of multilateral cooperation and the rules-based international order. Written at the end of the darkest days in the history of humankind, the Charter represented new hope for the peoples of the world. The United Nations Charter is as relevant and important today as it was when first signed. Upholding agreed rules and norms is the only starting point we have for handling increasingly complex challenges. The Charter and the multilateral cooperation that it has established have been a remarkable success. There has been a clear decline in violence and in the type of inter-State conflicts that the Charter was designed to handle. It works for all of us — countries that have military might and economic dominance and those that do not. We all benefit. The Charter serves us all.

At the same time, we must recognize that new types of threats are on the rise, including hybrid warfare, foreign interference and violent extremism. Fundamental global developments, climate change, changing demography and disruptive technology will continue producing new kinds of challenges to peace and security. We have to continue finding ways to prevent and handle these challenges by developing,

strengthening and reforming the multilateral system. Our only point of departure for tackling complex, interconnected, global challenges is multilateral cooperation that binds us all. The United Nations Charter is at the very core of that.

While we live in an era of unprecedented quantity and range of multilateral structures, the multilateral system is also increasingly being challenged. New competition and tensions are undermining the system. Widely accepted treaties and agreements seem to be put into question. It has been argued that this is the result of a shift of power, and the seemingly powerlessness of multilateralism in the face of modern challenges; that the legitimacy of the multilateral system is vanishing and that the ideals it represents are out of date.

But let us base our discussion here today on facts. Sidelining the multilateral system and returning to the rules that predate the United Nations Charter would bring us back to something that we, not least us Europeans, know all too well — chaos and violence. Power is not a zero-sum game, and respect for the international, rules-based system, is in everybody's best interests.

The unfolding escalation in the Middle East is an extremely serious case in point. It could jeopardize regional security and strengthen global terrorism. The EU is deeply concerned about the latest increase in violent confrontations in Iraq and underlines the need for de-escalation and dialogue and for respecting Iraqi sovereignty. The only way forward is a regional political solution in line with international law. In this context, the EU attaches great importance to preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and to its full implementation. It is a fundamental element of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture and crucial to the security of the region and of the world.

At the same time, in a fractured world it is essential that all Member States allow the United Nations to play its role as a platform for dialogue. The message of the new leadership of the European Union is clear. The EU is and will continue to be a guardian of multilateralism, standing up for the rules-based international order, including the protection of human rights, with the United Nations and its Charter at its core. The EU will continue to support the institutions that have served us so well and the rules and norms that have laid the foundation for the progress we have seen and benefitted from over the past 75 years.

To uphold the multilateral system and respect for the United Nations Charter is not only in the interest of all member states; it is also the responsibility of all Member States. The EU and its members are will consistently put cooperation over confrontation and multilateralism over isolationism, stick to our commitments and willingly help others stick to theirs.

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

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for the invitation to participate this open debate. I also welcome the new non-permanent members of the Security Council and wish them good luck.

Our participation is part of Argentina's firm commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and to full respect for international law. The theme chosen by Viet Nam could not have been more topical. This debate takes place in a context of particular sensitivity for the international community. This week's crisis in the Middle East requires us to understand that full compliance with the responsibility of the Security Council and respect for the Charter are more indispensable than ever. It is imperative today to use the tools of the Charter with full determination because international peace and security are currently in a situation of precarious equilibrium that in recent days has become even more unstable.

It is in this context that the Argentine Republic issued a statement on 4 January, stating:

“The Argentine Republic expresses its concern over the recent events in the Middle East. Violent acts in a global and hyperconnected world have the potential to have direct consequences worldwide. The Argentine people can testify to this, having suffered international terrorist acts at least twice in our recent past.

“In the face of this reality and based on our own experience, the Argentine Government urges the conflicting parties to take steps to ease tensions and to work towards a peaceful and negotiated solution to prevent an escalation that may jeopardize international security.

“The Argentine Republic, as always, endorses negotiation and diplomacy as the pathway to settle disputes. Accordingly, Argentina calls on the

international community to play a constructive role and urges multilateral organizations to assume the responsibilities conferred upon them, especially with regard to peace and international security.”

Argentina, as a founding Member of the United Nations, has always maintained that there is an imperative need to preserve dialogue and build consensus to resolve any conflict. We support the role of the Charter as an instrument for the prohibition of war in the policies of States. The collective security system gives the Council the primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security, and it is the organ that we have legitimized through the Charter for that purpose, in accordance with which the Member States duly agree to accept and comply with Council decisions.

The Charter provides for a delicate balance in authorizing the use of force, and in that regard the members of the Security Council have a fundamental responsibility that the other Member States have entrusted to them. Argentina has contributed from the very beginning of the life of the United Nations in efforts to improve the decision-making process in the Council. This position is a natural reflection of the fact that the actions of this organ have been frustrated on many very serious occasions. Reality has highlighted the need for the Security Council to be more democratic, transparent, efficient, representative and accountable to the international community in order to fulfil its mission. Its performance is essential, as the events of this week prove. In that context, the debate on the reform process is a critical element, aimed at responding to sudden and unpredictable events that occur in a globalized and volatile world.

Today, more than ever, consolidating multilateralism is essential and the articulation of a global framework that channels these tensions is not feasible without a Council able to respond to the international community. Among the peaceful means available to the Organization and its Member States, the Charter favours negotiation, investigation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, recourse to regional arrangements or agreements or other peaceful means of its choosing. In reaffirming its commitment to the Charter, Argentina reiterates the cardinal importance of the principle of the peaceful resolution of international disputes and argues that any method of peaceful settlement is equally valid for resolving conflicts and achieving fair solutions.

Negotiation is the primary and fundamental means for the resolution of disputes, and the parties must fulfil in good faith calls to negotiate that have been made by the organs of the Organization, including the General Assembly. The parties have the obligation to behave in such a way that the negotiations have meaning and to refrain from behaviour that could frustrate the negotiation. States outside a dispute must in turn refrain from acting in any way that may thwart efforts to find a peaceful solution.

In the context of the decolonization process, the obligation to negotiate is strengthened by the duty to end colonialism, as established in resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV) of the General Assembly. The end of colonialism, the international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, progress on environmental issues, women’s rights and the 2030 Agenda represent progressive developments arising from the Charter that together contribute to achieving the fundamental objectives of the Organization, reinforcing the ultimate goal of contributing to and maintaining international peace and security.

In sum, in the face of this week’s events, the defence of the purposes and principles of the Charter is more today more critical than ever. We encourage the States Members of the United Nations to actively trust and support the path of negotiation and diplomacy. This multilateral Organization par excellence and the Security Council in particular must act to fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them by the Charter. This is required by international peace and security, and the forthcoming debate of the Security Council, scheduled for 21 January, will be another opportunity to issue a clear signal in this process.

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

Mr. Arrocha Olabuenaga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate, which takes place in an international political environment in which the defence of the Charter of the United Nations is essential. As the Secretary-General said recently, we are living in dangerous times. It is precisely in these circumstances that we must return to the most basic premise, namely, the need to observe and defend the Charter of the United Nations.

In signing the Charter of the United Nations 75 years ago, the international community took a decision

that would define a new international order. The express prohibition on the threat or use of force in international relations marks a before and an after in the history of diplomacy and international law. Virtually the entire potential of the United Nations to consolidate a world of development, harmony and social equality, in the exercise of all its powers and resources, depends upon respecting that fragile and imperative principle.

The Security Council, being the depositary of the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, plays a fundamental role in that regard. Beyond being a body that reacts to crises, the Council must finally consolidate itself as the preventive body par excellence, while actively facilitating that all States fulfil their obligation to resolve their disputes by peaceful means.

In matters involving international peace and security, States must act in a manner consistent with the Charter and general international law. If the law is ignored, it is undermined. When States fail in that obligation, it is even more important that the Security Council be up to the occasion to defend and enforce the Charter, in strict accordance with its powers and in full exercise of its responsibility. Not only is the legitimacy of the Council at stake in cases of crisis; it is the life, dignity and value of the human person that are at risk.

In that context, Mexico once again calls on all States that have not yet done so, in particular the permanent members of the Council, to join the Franco-Mexican initiative on limiting the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. As mentioned by the representative of France this morning, the initiative has already been endorsed by 105 Member States. In our times, it is unacceptable that the protection of civilians, the fight against impunity and the granting of humanitarian assistance be held hostage to the political differences that lead to the inaction of the Council.

Likewise, Mexico reiterates to the Council its concern about the continuing invoking of Article 51 of the Charter by some States to address threats to international peace and security by military means, especially against non-State actors. It is very worrisome that that practice runs the risk of de facto broadening the exceptions to the general prohibition on the use of force irregularly. Given the importance and seriousness of the issues addressed in the notes that are sent to the Council under Article 51 and the lack of transparency with which they are processed, it is necessary for the

Council to review and modify its working methods in order to ensure full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, especially when the immanent right of self-defence is invoked.

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

Ms. Juul (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

We thank Viet Nam for organizing this debate. The Nordic countries are staunch supporters of the rules-based international order. The United Nations, with the Charter at its core, remains as important today as ever. We speak with one voice in support of multilateralism, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the fight against poverty, and respect for human rights. Let me highlight three achievements that we the peoples of the United Nations have accomplished under the framework of the Charter.

Special political missions and envoys have played a crucial role in reducing tension. In many instances, through creative and persistent diplomacy, they have prevented and shown the way out of conflict. Peacekeeping operations have proved critical in halting violence and creating an enabling environment for peace. Close coordination and cooperation with national and regional actors in the field will continue to be vital. Regional organizations such as the African Union and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States are instrumental in both preventing and removing threats to peace. And the Security Council still has unique legitimacy and powers in upholding respect for international law. When its members are united, its role is unrivalled.

The international architecture of organizations and norms that we have built together since 1945 constitutes an unparalleled success. However, today we see a worrisome tendency that the multilateral system is under pressure, as are the rules and norms that underpin it. The recent dramatic escalation in the Middle East is deeply concerning to us all. It is of crucial importance that all parties exercise maximum restraint, restart dialogue and engage in peaceful means to resolve their differences. The international community must make every effort to contribute to a long-term political solution to the current situation.

More broadly, we are facing major global challenges — climate change, irregular migration, terrorism, humanitarian crises and conflicts that no State can solve alone. As we embark upon the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the Nordic countries call for a renewed mobilization in support of multilateralism. The celebration of the United Nations this year is an important opportunity to reconfirm the benefits of international cooperation and what it means to people in our everyday life. That will continue to be at the core of the Nordic countries' multilateral efforts.

Our work as Members of the United Nations is not only about halting conflicts, but also about sustaining peace and creating conditions for sustainable development. We know that, when women participate and shape peace and reconciliation processes, we are more likely to achieve sustainable peace. We fully support efforts to reform the United Nations system to allow for a more holistic approach to peace and security, development and human rights.

The Nordic countries will continue to advocate for investing in a strong, effective and accountable United Nations. We remain consistent partners in our common effort to uphold the rules-based international order, which brings predictability and creates the necessary conditions for tackling the most pressing global issues of today.

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

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council in the very first month of Viet Nam's current term as a member. I also thank you for convening this debate at the start of the year in which we observe seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations.

The values of the Charter have served us well. The purposes and principles of the Charter have become the foundation of international law. They have played their part in the journey of many Member States towards peace, security and international cooperation. Reiterating support for those values is therefore timely. However, in a world constantly in flux, the reality is that the challenges to international peace and security are a step ahead of the systems designed to tackle them. It is now evident that there are fires all across the horizon. To undertake a fair evaluation of the available mechanisms without belittling their importance, we

need to ask ourselves whether they are still fit for the purpose of implementing the fundamental principles of the Charter.

The central premise of the Charter in terms of peace and security is ensuring world peace subject to law, for which collective security was the formula proposed. Alas, that goal has been elusive. Hence the instruments for implementing the primary objective have, over time, been engaged in other pursuits. As the quest for international cooperation in matters of peace and security has grown, improvisations have come to the fore. Many have been listed before.

The genius of the Charter was to recognize that, instead of constraining the abilities of sovereign States, Charter institutions magnified them. Hence there is a case to be made for innovations that enlarge the vision of global rule of law. It is possible that, just as generals often re-fight the last war, the drafters of the Charter responded to the factors and forces that led to the Second World War, without anticipating what we are now faced with. Notwithstanding all its imperfections, the United Nations Charter is still the main incarnation of the global spirit. Constancy to its principles promotes the common good. Moving away from a formal system that is well understood to one that is based on untested interpretations might have unexpected consequences. Justice dispensed on the fly might come to be resented.

It is increasingly acknowledged that the Council faces crises of identity and legitimacy, as well as relevance and performance. The globalization of terror networks, the weaponization of new technologies and the inability to counter those resorting to subversive statecraft are showing up the shortcomings of the Council.

One delegation that epitomizes the dark arts yet again displayed its wares by peddling falsehoods earlier today, which we dismiss with disdain. My simple response to that delegation — the delegation of Pakistan — is: even though it is late, neighbour, heal thyself of your malaise — there are no takers here for your malware.

We need the Council, as part of the political tool kit, to address ongoing and future threats to global peace and security. The answer to the crises the Council faces lies in invoking and working through the Charter provisions that provide for reform and change. We need a Council that is representative of current realities, credible and legitimate, rather than one that

rests merely on the claim that it existed at the inception. The Council needs to be fit for purpose for the twenty-first century.

As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “one must care about the world one will not see”. Resilient organizations are those that are not resistant to change — or else current emergencies can turn into catastrophes, even while we continue our endless prevarication. It is said that

humankind progresses when it collectively rises to its responsibility to the future. The time to act is now.

The President: There are still a number of speakers on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend this meeting until 10 a.m. tomorrow, 10 January.

The meeting was suspended at 6.05 p.m.