Mr. President,

I am confident that under your skillful stewardship this august House will have a fruitful debate on the question of expansion in the Security Council and its working methods. We also look forward to working with you in the Open-ended Working Group established for this purpose.

2. Our objective must be the evolution of a transparent, democratic and effective Security Council that enjoys the support and confidence of the membership of the United Nations.

3. There is obviously a need to make the Security Council more representative. The membership of the UN has increased from 111 in 1963, when the Council was last enlarged, to 191 today. The composition of the Security Council must be enlarged, principally to reflect the larger membership of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. With few exceptions, these new members do not wish to acquire privileges, merely representation on the Security Council as non-permanent members.

Mr. President,

4. We have completed 10-years of our debate on this very important question. We have heard voices of frustration over the slow progress in the Working Group. The reason for the deadlock in the Working Group is the demand of a few countries to acquire the unequal status of permanent members of the Security Council. The majority of the UN would not like to repeat the mistake of 1945, when a few countries decided how the Security Council should be structured, and how the permanent members should enjoy privileges which erode the fundamental principle of sovereign equality. There was no consensus on the issue in 1945, there is even less today.

5. Unfortunately, there are few countries which appear to believe that only yardstick by which progress on Security Council reform, including its expansion, can be measured is achievement of their ambition to become a permanent member of the Council. It is from this perspective alone they would like to judge the outcome of this whole exercise. Their desire to seek a permanent status on the Security Council is not motivated by altruistic or noble sentiments. The United Nations was created on the basis of the sovereign equity of states. In the 21st Century, the General Assembly cannot be expected to bestow special privileges on some while denying them to the vast majority of nations.

6. There is no “quick-fix” for the new aspirants, nor those hanging on to their coat-tails, to find a place in the “Exclusive Club”. The decade-old debate has also made it evident that countries which aspire for the permanent member status do not enjoy support or confidence even in their own regions.

Mr. President,

7. To recapitulate, Pakistan’s position on the expansion of the Security Council is:

- We firmly believe that the objectives of the reform and expansion of the Security Council should be to promote greater democracy, and participation, and transparency, and accountability, in the work of the Security Council.
Pakistan is against any increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council as it would serve to accommodate the interests of a few countries only, and conversely, alienate the small and medium sized countries, who constitute an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly.

We strongly advocate an increase in the category of non-permanent membership only so as to proportionately reflect the increase in the general membership of the United Nations, particularly in the large number of small and medium sized states.

8. The deliberations over the last ten years clearly show that there are unbridgeable differences on the composition and on the veto issues. It is, therefore, time to seriously consider the alternative proposal of the NAM that, “if there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place, for the time being, in the non-permanent category”. Many countries outside the NAM also share this view. The Italian proposal, tabled last year echoes this position. The NAM’s proposal to increase of seats in the non-permanent category is not only logical, but it also reflects the proportionate increase in the general membership of the Organization.

Mr. President,

9. It is also apparent that the majority of the Member States desire the elimination of the veto. As the Commission on Global Governance phrased it in its 1995 report “to add more permanent members and give them the veto would be regression, not reform”. Apart from the Member States, scholars and blue-ribbon commissions have criticized the veto provisions for being inequitable, undemocratic and debilitating to the capacity of the Council to fulfill its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

10. We also know the history of the veto. It was a device born under coercion when some of the existing Permanent Members came forward with a rather simple threat of “no veto, no organization”. Despite that threat, the question of the veto still had to put to the vote, as it did not command consensus. That vote of 13 June, 1945 with 30 in favour, 2 against, 15 abstention and 3 absents, are reflected in the records of this Organization.

11. The justification in support of the veto offered then was that the victors of the World War in their own image, should not, then or ever in the future embark on actions against any one of them. The logical conclusion then was that this concept of veto related to the actionable position of the Charter under Chapter VII only, and that the subsequent extension of this extraordinary and exceptional right into areas beyond Chapter VII is an unwarranted license going well beyond the original concept.

12. The apprehensions of the Member States were soon vindicated when those wielding veto power made use of it, not for the collective peace and security, but for their own national interests. During the Cold War, it led to the virtual paralysis of the Security Council. Consequently, some issues, as old as the United Nations itself, are still awaiting resolution such as the people of Palestine and Kashmir.

Mr. President,

13. There have been some positive trends in the area of working methods of the Security Council under Cluster-II issues. Notable improvements include: (a) Arria formula meetings to enrich the Council’s discussions on pressing issues; (b) Secretary General’s retreat to discuss various thematic issues; (c) Triangular coordination meetings between Troop Contributing
Countries (TCCs), the Security Council and the Secretariat; (d) open debates on various issues affecting the Member States; (e) ministerial or summit level meetings; (f) briefings by the Security Council President to the non-members etc.

14. However, there are still many issues which need transparency, openness and consistency. To this end, the General Assembly can encourage the Security Council to take the following measures:-

One: The Security Council may evolve a mechanism as to how the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter can be fully utilized for the pacific settlement of disputes and roles which the Security Council, the Secretary General and other UN bodies could play in resolving disputes and conflicts through peaceful means.

Two: The Security Council should prepare a compendium of its resolutions, conflicts and disputes where the Council has been unable to secure implementation, with a view to taking remedial action.

Three: Rule 48 of the Security Council’s Provisional Rules of Procedure should be adhered to in letter and spirit which call for the Council’s meetings in public. Closed meetings and informal consultations should be kept to a minimum as the exception they were meant to be.

I thank you, Mr. President.