Mr. President,

This item has been under consideration in the General Assembly for over a decade. This delay is a reflection of the importance and complexity of the issues involved.

2. There is general consensus that the Security Council’s composition and its working methods are not democratic. Decisions are taken by a few. The five permanent members, some more than others, exercise inordinate influence over the Council’s decisions. Simultaneously, there is a visible concern at the increasing concentration of the decision-making power in the Security Council in relation to the other organs of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

3. The endeavour to improve the Security Council should be guided by a vision of creating a new multilateralism which is democratic and cooperative – rather than oligarchic and coercive. It must address the principal concerns of the UN’s membership about the competence and sphere of responsibility of the Security Council; its composition and representativeness; its decision-making and working methods; its effectiveness and accountability.

4. First, the Council’s competence. The Security Council has been assigned the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security under the Charter, specifically under Chapter-VI and VII. But the Charter clearly stipulates that the Security Council acts on behalf of the General Assembly. Consequently, the Council is accountable for its decisions and actions to the “general membership”, which is represented in this General Assembly. Moreover, the Security Council cannot exclude the Assembly from reviewing its work and decisions; nor arbitrarily acquire exclusive competence over issues which do not directly involve the maintenance of peace and security – such as terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation. A major endeavour of any UN reform process must be to ensure the balance of responsibilities, envisaged under the Charter, between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

5. Second, the Council’s decision-making. Both the Charter and the Council’s “provisional” rules of procedures provide for discussion and decisions in open meetings and in a transparent manner. It is only thus that States can be held accountable for their positions and policies on the issues under consideration. Unfortunately, over the past three decades, most of the Council’s deliberations and decisions take place in closed “informal consultations”. Even the parties directly involved in various conflicts and disputes are almost completely excluded from participation in the deliberative and decision-making process. The Council’s decisions are mostly ex-parte – derogating an essential principle of “due process”. In the Council, initiatives emanate mostly from one or more of five permanent members, or other small groupings of major powers (usually designed as “friends” of the issue). The right of veto is usually exercised informally and invisibly; and, more infrequently, openly, to ensure that the Council’s decisions did not
infringe the interests of the permanent members. Given the binding nature of the
Security Council’s decisions, the power of the veto – explicit or implicit – is used
pervasively to shape the international policies and the behaviour of other States on an
increasing number of issues.

6. The reform of the Security Council must prescribe ways and means to introduce
greater democracy and due process in its deliberations and decision-making. Open
meetings should be the rule and not the exception. The exercise of the veto must be fully
justified, including through a possible review by the Assembly and even by the ICJ.
Similarly, the Council’s decisions to take enforcement action under Chapter-VII should
be subjected to a periodic review by the UN General Assembly to ensure against
injustice and injury to less powerful nations.

7. Thirdly, the composition of the Council. It is quite evident that the Security
Council’s current composition is not representative of the general membership. While the
five permanent members can be considered a separate and exceptional category, the
proportionate representation of the rest of UN membership has become progressively
worse over the last few decades. In 1945, leaving aside the P-5, 46 UN Member States
were represented by 6 elected States on the Council. A proportion of 7.5 to 1. By 1951,
when the Council’s expansion was proposed, 71 Member States were represented by 6
elected States. A proportion of 11.5 to 1. By 1966, when the Council was enlarged to 15
members, 122 Member States were represented by 10 elected States. A proportion of
12 to 1. Today, 186 States are represented by 10 States. A proportion of 18 to 1. It is
clear, therefore, that the size of the elected members of the Security Council must be
enlarged. It should at least restore the proportion of 10 to 1. This would indicate the
addition of at least 10 new elected members, and thus a Security Council composed of
25 Member States.

8. Secondly, the expansion should reflect the regional composition of the UN’s
general membership. Thus, the Council’s enlargement should accord larger
representation to Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are presently under-represented
in comparison to the other two regional groups.

9. Thirdly, the expansion should accord representation to those States which have
entered the United Nations after the last enlargement of the Council in 1966. These are
mostly small and medium States. It is this vast majority of small and medium States
which comprise the general membership and constitute the “new international realities”,
not the larger States which seek for themselves permanent membership of the Security
Council.

Mr. President,

10. If the issue of enlargement had been guided by an objective approach,
agreement would have been reached several years ago. Unfortunately, consensus has
been frustrated by the ambitions of a few States which desire the privileged status of the
permanent five. This status was the result of a historical agreement and is an
unfortunate legacy with which the UN membership has had to live. Our effort should be
to temper the inequity and imbalance resulting from this unfortunate legacy, not to
compound it further by creating new centres of privilege within the United Nations. New
permanent members will not neutralize the inordinate influence of existing permanent
members. Two wrongs cannot make a right. A larger oligarchy is no antidote to an elite power club. The unequal power of the five can only be tempered by the combined endeavours of the general membership, by adding a sufficient number of elected members who can influence the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council. If 4 or 5 new permanent members are added to a Council of 25, the rest of the UN membership – 181 States – will continue to be grossly under represented in the Council. A proportion of 12 to 1.

11. Such an addition of new permanent members would thus further erode the principle of sovereign equality and the concept of collective security enshrined in the UN Charter. It will aggravate tensions within every regional group, since the claim of each of the aspirants for permanent status is opposed by other Member States from their own respective regions. It would exclude the equitable participation of other States which have equal or better credentials for permanent membership than some of the 4-5 self-nominated aspirants.

12. Already, the announcement of the so-called “G-4s” collective ambition has provoked open divisions within and among regions. Several other countries have declared their own candidatures. The Foreign Ministers of the Islamic countries have declared that “any reform proposal, which neglects the adequate representation of the Islamic Ummah, in any category of members in an expanded Security Council, will not be acceptable to the Islamic countries”.

13. Moreover, the addition of new permanent members will further complicate decision-making in the Security Council. Such decisions would have to accommodate the interests of 9 or 10 permanent members rather than present five. This would happen even if the ‘new’ permanent members agree to forego the right of veto.

14. It is in view of such considerations that the NAM countries took the logical position 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.

Mr. President,

15. Enlargement in the category of non-permanent, elected members would adhere to the principle of sovereign equality, ensure greater representation of the general membership and promote greater democracy and accountability in the work of the Security Council. Instead of a new “concert of power”, we must promote the power of the principles of the UN Charter and the new paradigm of a cooperative and democratic multilateralism through an enlarged and reformed Security Council.

16. It is the hope of the Pakistan delegation that it is this approach which will inspire the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General’s Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. We hope that this Report will also help to promote general consensus on the issue of Security Council reform and enlargement. We are prepared, in this context, to consider new ideas and approaches to promote consensus.

17. However, any effort to rush through a proposal on the sensitive issue of Security Council enlargement through a vote at the General Assembly will be manifestly divisive.
It will defeat the very purpose of the Panel’s Report which, as we understand, is to promote collective and unified action within a united World Organization to address the new and old threats to peace and security. It is the aspirations of the general membership, not the ambitions of the few, that must drive the reform process.

18. Pakistan believes that the reform of the Security Council should be part of the comprehensive UN Reform – including revitalization of the UN General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other UN Organs. The issue of Security Council expansion cannot be considered in a piecemeal fashion divorced from other issues, including the competence, decision-making, working methods and accountability of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

19. The general membership must have the time and opportunity to consider the issues and the Report and recommendations of the Secretary-General’s Panel. This exercise must be conducted within this Assembly under your guidance. We should aim at adopting comprehensive decisions on the Panel’s report, including on UN Reforms by consensus at the High-Level Event next year, convened by the Secretary-General, to mark the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

I thank you.