

much to enhance its position as the U.N. organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Our Secretary-General has wisely warned us of the risk that there may come "a time when the Council is desperately needed and will be found to be too weak to fulfil its responsibilities". The problems arise not because of weaknesses in the Council's structure or powers, but rather from a lack of impetus. To give a greater sense of purpose to the Council, the Charter provides for periodic meetings at which members could be represented by a Cabinet member or other specially-designated representative. Remarkably the Council held the first such meeting in its history at the time of the Twentieth-Fifth Anniversary celebrations. This Assembly welcomed the Council's intention to hold further periodic meetings, but none has taken place.

I propose that the Security Council should begin meeting regularly at Ministerial level. Fifteen Ministers meeting together could give a new sense of life and political purpose to the Council. Instead of following a formal agenda, they could have a free discussion of major issues of international peace and security, based on a special report by the Secretary-General. The meetings should be held in an informal atmosphere, without a small army of advisors, thus allowing the Ministers to exchange views informally. Meetings at Ministerial level should be held once or twice a year rather than once every twenty-five years. The first meeting might well be devoted to finding ways to make the work of the Council more relevant to the major issues of peace and security.

ECOSOC

When I spoke here last year, I suggested that the Economic and Social Council should be given a more significant role. At its spring and summer sessions, the Council considers a bewildering variety of issues. It has even less success in what should be its central task - setting priorities and coordinating the work of this family of organizations in the economic, social, cultural, educational health and related fields. My delegation believes the Council should have more frequent and shorter sessions. At each of these it could deal thoroughly with one group of subjects, covering all of its agenda over a two-year period. From time to time the Council should also meet at Ministerial level to review major economic or social questions when policy considerations justify participation at this level. In all U.N. organs, I welcome new practices of informal consultation and negotiations through contact groups which help to turn the U.N. from a deliberative body into a real negotiating forum.