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## Security Council

Sixty-second year

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Monday, 17 December 2007, 10 a.m.

New York

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[Extract]

### *The situation in Somalia*

**Mr. Ambassador Alfredo Suescum**

Alternate Representative of Panama to the United Nations

**Mr. Suescum** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and the representative of Somalia for their statements. They have once again depicted one of the direst situations we face. Unfortunately, seemingly unlike other organs of the United Nations, the Security Council appears unable to find an effective way to improve this thorny situation.

The Security Council has received many reports in which the humanitarian and human rights situation merited particular attention. They include the briefing presented to the Human Rights Council on 11 December by Ms. Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the briefing to the Security Council on 6 December 2007 by Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Ms. Arbour reiterated her concerns with regard to the human rights of Somalis caught in the crossfire of the conflict, especially in Mogadishu. For his part, Mr. Holmes briefed the Council on the terrible humanitarian situation in the improvised refugee camps surrounding that city, which house some 600,000 people. According to Mr. Holmes, that may be the largest group of internally displaced persons in the world today.

In addition, recent political events serve to highlight the deterioration of the Transitional Federal Institutions. The endemic and progressive fragmentation of Somali politics should spur the international community and the people of Somalia themselves to show greater support. In the short and medium terms, there is a risk that the new Government of Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein will collapse, and along with it our efforts to stabilize Somalia.

Reports indicate that the international community and relief organizations have made significant progress in humanitarian coverage, but that a great deal remains to be done. As a matter of priority, the Government and the opposition must both address the critical political situation and undertake specific measures to ensure the implementation of the outcome of the National Reconciliation Congress.

On a more strategic level, the Security Council can no longer sit back with arms folded. The mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) will again expire in February 2008, and the Council has yet to find a way to strengthen or replace that operation. In the coming weeks we must therefore take fundamental decisions with regard to that operation and the possible alternatives to replace it: either the deployment of a multinational force or the dispatch of a peacekeeping force. As a prelude to whatever decision is taken, it will be necessary to dispatch a technical assessment mission.

Finally, the Government must have zero tolerance with soldiers and civilians leading illegal groups throughout the length and breadth of the region. It must reduce excessive border controls, prevent the harassment of relief workers and dedicate greater resources to dealing with piracy.

Our lack of action could jeopardize the credibility of this Council. Consequently, it is crucial that we act energetically and rapidly, given these challenges.