

[Extract]

United Nations

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Security Council

Sixty-third year

6020th meeting

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New York

[...]

The situation in Somalia

Mr. Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias

Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me to thank and commend you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on so critical and difficult a situation as that in Somalia and to express our gratitude that it is being held in a public format. We should also like to thank the representatives of the Secretariat for their briefings. We have taken note of the Secretariat's support for the establishment of a multinational force and of the difficulties it is experiencing in that regard. In addition, we welcome the representative of the International Maritime Organization and listened carefully to his concerns at the situation of piracy in the region. Finally, we thank the representatives of Somalia and the African Union for their statements. We are heartened by their positive attitude towards the political solutions in Somalia, but we also agree with their support for the creation of a multinational force.

Panama is deeply concerned at the situation of instability in Somalia, not only because of the risks it poses to international peace and security, but also because it affects the humanitarian situation of the Somali people. There are few situations in the world so grave as that being endured in Somalia today. In that context, Panama has repeatedly requested that the United Nations lend effective support to the

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the only Mission that currently has any effectiveness in Somalia, and we regret that it has not been provided in the form requested by AMISOM and the Secretary-General. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic structures of this Organization have prevented such support. Furthermore, while we support the deployment of a multinational force, we are not unaware of the difficulties posed by the risks involved in establishing such a force, and we have heard a number of ideas about that here. Therefore, we reiterate once again that the Organization is obliged to effectively support AMISOM with the troops and materiel that it needs until something more substantive can be done. With regard to the situation of piracy, which obviously concerns all of us and is linked to the situation in Somalia, we understand that that fact cannot prevent us from seeking individual solutions to it when required. The Security Council has proved that naval forces of various countries can come to the region with the approval of the Government of Somalia to try to stop that piracy. As stated by the representative of France, such Council authorization should be renewed and strengthened.

However, it is worrisome that military forces of various countries are operating independently in a region as narrow as Somalia's territorial waters and the Gulf of Aden. Panama believes that the Security Council should review that situation and consider the possibility of providing some form of coordination of those forces under the leadership of the United Nations.