OPEN LETTER TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

You are about to vote on whether or not to send troops into Somalis. Witte missions on site in Somalis, the MSF sections would litre to share with you their opinion on this decision.

REMINDER

The United Nations agencies, the NGOs and the International Committee of the Red Cross are trying to cover the needs of the 650,000 displaced persons in the South and central regions of Somalia.

The present aid operations aim at meeting the nutritional and medical needs of these people through the following programmes:

- general food distribution in the form of dry rations or through kitchens.
- supplementary food for the undernourished.
- medical programmes: vaccination, dispensaries.
- supply of drinking water.
- training personnel.
- veterinary programmes.

In an effort to decongest urban centres (as in the town of Baidoa), programmes have moved away from these centres towards rural areas. The distribution of dry rations and seed contribute to programmes of returning to the land. This policy has encouraged a not inconsiderable return of displaced persons. But they remain very dependent on international aid.

WARNING

Should armed intervention be voted, the following points should, in our opinion, be taken into consideration:

- insecurity is not only due to bands Chat can be controlled by force. It is also due to the existence of clan conflict and power struggles. The fact that local and traditional authorities, who continue to exist despite the obvious difficulties, are overwhelmed is mostly due to the fact that economic activity is summed up in international aid that is coveted by all the various parties. There is no way that military intervention on its own will resolve these problems.
- Armed intervention will necessarily be focused on the urban areas, which will further isolate the rural population. Forced into these same rural zones, looters will constitute a major threat to rural populations that international aid will no longer be able to, reach.
- A political solution is an indispensable priority for helping the country resolve the crisis it is going through. Not everything has been tried from this point of view! Military intervention that is limited to a police action and not accompanied by the determination to re-initiate the dialogue between the factions will only further reduce the chances of finding a political solution.