



ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

**From the Luanda Council in November 2015
to the Geneva Council in July 2016**



SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

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PREVIOUS COUNCILS

LUANDA, ANGOLA

27-28 November 2015

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COUNCIL

Meeting of the SI Council in Luanda, Angola

27-28 NOVEMBER 2015



Latifa Perry

The Socialist International held its second Council meeting of 2015 on 27-28 November in Luanda, hosted by the MPLA, its member party in Angola. Delegates converged in Angola's capital representing SI member parties and organisations from across Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. The meeting addressed the main themes of "Working for global stability, peace and security in times of crisis", "Struggling for equality and common progress in an interdependent world", and "COP21 – Our goal for a universal binding agreement, common commitments, differentiated demands and precise objectives".

The meeting opened with a minute of silence, in memory of all those who had recently lost their lives in acts of terror around the world. This support and solidarity was also reflected in a [declaration](#) later adopted outlining the SI position with regard to the terrorist threat.

Another major [declaration](#) was addressed at the COP21 conference in Paris, due to open just two days after the Council. In it were set out the aims and priorities of the International for a universal binding agreement, with common commitments, differentiated demands and precise objectives.

The meeting was opened by the Secretary General of the SI, Luis Ayala, who highlighted the global nature of the challenges we face today, be they conflicts in any corner of the world or the struggle for freedoms and rights anywhere. The Council meeting was a manifestation of the commitment of the SI to find responses to global challenges, to secure peace, democracy, equality and human rights and to tackle terrorism and climate change. Around the world, members of the SI had been elected to advance this agenda. He thanked the host party for their hospitality and congratulated all Angolans on the recent anniversary of their independence.

SI President George Papandreou, in his opening address, also paid tribute to the people of Angola on the fortieth anniversary of their country's independence, noting how since the end of its civil war it had become a flourishing democracy free from outside interventions, that was internationally engaged both in the Great Lakes region and on the UN Security Council. He reflected on the interdependence of humanity's problems, with the refugee crisis linked to terrorism, insecurity and inequality. He underlined that military action against terrorists could only be effective in tandem with a plan for peaceful transition.

Delegates were warmly welcomed to Angola by Julião Mateus Paulo, MPLA Secretary General and a Vice-President of the SI. He recalled the 500 years of colonial history that had preceded independence in Angola, and the long civil war that followed, and outlined the path taken by the government for development since 2002. He

outlined how there existed new military, economic and social tensions on an international level, and that Angola was searching for a durable peace in Africa and engaged in initiatives in the Great Lakes region.

On the first main theme, Manuel Augusto, Secretary of State for international relations of the government of Angola, outlined the engagement of the country in the international sphere in favour of peace processes, in particular in Africa. During the discussions, delegates representing countries recently touched by terrorism spoke with great dignity and solemnity. The Council was informed of steps taken by President François Hollande and President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in response to the recent terrorist acts committed in Paris and Bamako, with representatives of their parties underlining their determination to overcome this scourge and appealing for the solidarity and support of those present and the international community in this struggle.

The breadth and quality of the interventions underlined the will and determination of all those present to fight terrorism in all its forms and make the world a more peaceful, stable and secure place. In addition to the detailed declaration of the Council on this theme, a separate [declaration](#) on the refugee crisis was adopted, which acknowledges the link between conflict and terrorism and the flows of migrants seen across the world today. The declaration urges the international community and European Union to fulfil their ethical responsibility faced with almost unprecedented refugee flows.

On the theme of equality, a broad range of views was heard advocating equality in many forms – both between the richest and poorest within societies, between developed and developing countries, and between different genders and social groups. Delegates outlined the challenges faced in ensuring that the benefits of development reach all sectors of the population, as well as the importance of the role that social democracy would have to play in this process. The diverse contributions during the debate underlined the important work that will be undertaken by the SI Commission on Equality, which will meet during 2016 to define approaches and priorities of the social-democratic movement in the struggle to eliminate inequality in the global economy.

The timing of the Council just days before the opening of the COP21 Summit in Paris gave an opportunity to address a strong message for an outcome to the climate negotiations built on social democratic ideals and the move towards a sustainable world society. Fátima Jardim, environment minister of Angola, gave an introduction to the debate, underlining the commitment of her country to a positive result at the summit and the steps it was taking in regard to its own emissions reductions. In addition to the declaration of the Council on climate change and COP21, the secretary general reported that the SI would have a presence in Paris, in order to ensure that the social democratic voice and its proposals would be heard during the talks.

The Council gave a particularly warm welcome to the recently released political prisoner Mikalai Statkevich, who was incarcerated in Belarus for four years and eight months on false charges, following the fraudulent presidential election of 2010, with much of that time spent in solitary confinement. He recounted the circumstances of his arrest and imprisonment to the Council and thanked the Socialist International for its sustained efforts to secure his release from prison.

Recognising the fraternal hospitality of the host party and the milestone that this year represents in the history of Angola, The Council adopted a [declaration](#) marking the historical struggle and civil war in Angola, and the progress made towards peace and reconciliation since it was brought to an end. A [statement](#) was also adopted in relation to the upcoming legislative elections in Venezuela.

The Council heard a report of the meeting of the SI Ethics Committee held in London in October, and its recommendations regarding applications for membership and changes to membership status. The Council approved the upgrading to full membership of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (BSDP), Egyptian Social Democratic Party (ESDP), Nationwide Social Democratic Party (OSDP, Kazakhstan), Progressive Democratic Party (PDP, Paraguay) and A New Era (UNT, Venezuela). The new member parties admitted to the organisation were the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP, Iran), as a full member, and the Social Democratic Party (TDP, Cyprus) and Democratic Union Party (PYD, Syria) as consultative members. The Arab Social Democratic Forum became an associated organisation of the Socialist International.

The Council equally approved the report of the SI Finance and Administration Committee and adopted the [budget](#) for 2016. The Committee's report included an update on the payment of fees, a condition for membership which, in accordance with the statutes, is ceased if these are not paid for three years.

At the closing of the meeting, the Secretary General thanked the host party for their hospitality and said that the SI would take the principles and positions of the organisation forward at the COP21, where members would be the following week. The SI President closed the meeting by stating that in a time of paradox and contradictions, politics must not be confined to national borders but needed to be international and inclusive, to combat division, hate, populism and xenophobia. There was no way to solve problems by hiding behind walls, and it was the task of all those present to continue to work together for a better world.

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International
Luanda, 27-28 November 2015

Declaration on global stability, peace and security

The Council of the Socialist International, meeting in Luanda on 27-28 November 2015, discussed recent developments in relation to global stability, peace and security. In particular, the Council recalled its recent declarations in New York in July 2015 and Geneva in December 2014.

Recognising global terror as a fundamental threat to peace, security, stability and the common values and principles of our organization, the Council:

Expresses its deepest sympathy with all victims of terrorist atrocities. In recent weeks we have witnessed the tragic loss of innocent life in attacks that have taken place in Egypt, France, Iraq, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

Condemns without exception these acts and offers its wholehearted support to those at the forefront of the battle against terrorism.

Reiterates its solidarity and support to the government of Mali, led by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, which is engaged in a struggle to secure peace, democracy and economic progress for all the people of Mali.

Reiterates its solidarity and condolences to the people of France, the French Socialist Party and President François Hollande, who have shown great courage and conviction in the aftermath of the shocking attacks in Paris, and who share our objective of the eradication of those responsible and their ideology.

Extends its solidarity to its member party in Tunisia, Ettakatol, which has been one of the architects of Tunisia's democracy, which must be cherished and protected as a counterexample to the rhetoric of the terrorists.

Expresses its support and solidarity to the government of Nigeria and President Muhammadu Buhari in their determined struggle to protect their people against the terrorism of Boko Haram.

Reiterates its full support to the government of Niger, led by President Mahamadou Issoufou, in its efforts to repel terrorism, enhance regional stability, deepen democracy and secure development.

Also underlines its solidarity with the people of Cameroon and Chad who have suffered from terrorism, and calls for concerted international cooperation to defeat Boko Haram in all the countries in which it operates.

Recognises the heroism and bravery of Kurdish forces in both Iraq and Syria, who are defending democracy and human rights on the front line of the battle against terrorism and extremism.

The Council once more reaffirmed the commitment of the global social democratic movement to maintain peace and resolve conflicts. In line with this fundamental undertaking, the Council:

Reiterates the importance of a political solution to the civil war in Syria, which has now entered its fifth year and claimed more than 250,000 lives.

Expresses its support for efforts to bring about a ceasefire in Syria, including talks have been taking place in Vienna under the auspices of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). If a durable peace is to be found it will require multilateral cooperation and support from all major international actors.

Calls for coordinated action to defeat Daesh/ISIS and other terrorist organisations in order to protect the innocent victims of terror. This includes more stringent measures to restrict their funding, their access to arms and the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq.

Appeals to the international community to unite in a universal anti-terrorist coalition based on a common understanding of goals, objectives and targets, as well as consistent and transparent joint actions that will ensure mutual understanding and trust.

Endorses the call of Resolution 2249 of the United Nations Security Council calling on states with the capacity to take all necessary measures, in compliance with international law, to redouble and coordinate their efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed by Daesh and other terrorist groups.

Expresses its concern that the shooting down of a Russian military aeroplane by Turkey will increase tension and jeopardise efforts to build a unified coalition against terrorism.

Underlines its commitment to a Syrian-led political transition to prepare the holding of free and fair elections and the investiture of a government that is the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and all groups in the society, irrespective of ethnic background.

Expresses its utmost concern for those living in the territory currently occupied by Daesh, who are suffering under this barbaric regime on a daily basis. The victims include those women and children subject to the abhorrent practice of being sold into slavery.

Considers that a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Syria and a return to peace and security is an indispensable component of the fight against Daesh.

Further considers that the rise of Daesh has been aided by the conflict in Syria and that bringing this conflict to an end will help to bring stability to the region, including in Iraq.

Reiterates its commitment to the resolution of other outstanding conflicts, in recognition of the role that the SI and its member parties can play in this regard.

Considers thereby that regional peace and stability is dependent on a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, based on the unconditional recognition of the State of Palestine on the 1967 border with East Jerusalem as its capital, and an end to occupation and settlements.

Decisively encourages the efforts of the United Nations aiming to achieve a political solution in Western Sahara, in accordance with UN Resolutions.

Calls on Morocco and the Polisario Front to renew and intensify direct negotiations, as requested by the UN Secretary General, in the search for a lasting solution within the framework defined by the United Nations.

Insists on the formation of a transitional government of unity in Libya, and expresses its support for the United Nations and the international community in their efforts to consolidate reconciliation in a key country of the region in a serious, staunch and constructive way.

Will continue to closely follow the current efforts to bring an end to the division of the island of Cyprus, and considers of great importance the confidence-building and other measures based on our principles and values and the resolutions of the United Nations to reach a solution to the problem of Cyprus on the basis of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation.

Convinced of the need and the responsibility of the Socialist International to continue in its efforts to work in a concrete manner towards global stability, peace and security, the International will undertake further initiatives focusing on these aims and remain seized of the matter in the coming months.

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International
Luanda, 27-28 November 2015

Declaration on climate change and COP 21

Following discussions on climate change and the COP21 Summit at the Council meeting of the Socialist International in Luanda, delegates recognised the growing acknowledgement of climate change as the single greatest threat to the future of humanity, and the need for urgent and meaningful action from all the nations of the world. The Paris Summit may well be the last opportunity to avert a global catastrophe and the Council outlined the vision of the Socialist International for a universal binding agreement, common commitments, differentiated demands and precise objectives, calling for:

1. More ambitious emissions targets to restrict global temperature rise to 2C;
2. An outcome centred on climate justice;
3. Financing for the Green Climate Fund to 2020 and beyond;
4. Extra assistance for adaptation measures in countries already suffering the effects of climate change;
5. An end to fossil fuel subsidies;
6. Concerted action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation;
7. Initiatives in favour of more efficient agriculture and responsible consumption;
8. The introduction of a global carbon tax;
9. A climate agreement in harmony with the Global Goals;
10. Robust measurement, reporting and verification of progress towards emissions reduction targets.
11. The Socialist International, its member parties and Council delegates to take concrete actions to reduce their own environmental impact.
12. Representatives of SI member parties to take the lead in Paris.

1. Current commitments are not enough

The UN has received emissions targets in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) from countries responsible for more than 90 per cent of global emissions, which indicates a willingness from the majority of nations and governments to work towards a global agreement in Paris. However, the pledges made are only enough to limit the global rise in temperature to 2.7° to 3°C, a level far in excess of the goal of 2°C set out in the Copenhagen agreement. Ambition needs to be raised, and any agreement in Paris needs at a minimum to include mechanisms for the upward revision of emissions targets if we are to have any chance of meeting the 2°C target for global temperature rise. This means the establishment of a five-yearly cycle under which countries have an obligation to ratchet up their commitments, making progressively tighter emissions reductions. Countries need to supplement their commitments by developing and adopting Deep Decarbonization Pathways (DDP) in order to guarantee a zero carbon future for the planet.

2. Climate justice and common but differentiated responsibilities

The principle of climate justice originates within our movement and has always been at the heart of our climate policy. The SI continues to support the principle of common but differentiated

responsibilities, in recognition of the duty of developed countries to do more and go further in their commitments as a result of their historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions.

3. Financing and the Green Climate Fund

One potential obstacle to ambitious targets is the issue of finance. The Green Climate Fund (GCF), which sets aside finances for climate change mitigation and adaptation, is therefore a crucial plank of any climate agreement. Though important steps have been taken to secure initial funding for the GCF, the total pledged is nowhere near enough and the agreements reached in Lima at COP20 do not set out a clear time frame for the scaling up of funds. The gap between the amount currently pledged and the \$100 billion per year promised after 2020 needs to be bridged. The lack of a clear pathway has been interpreted by some developing country partners as a sign of a lack of commitment to the GCF by Annex I parties. Without significant progress, the negotiations in Paris will take place in an atmosphere of mistrust from those countries that will be depending on the fund in the years to come. An agreement on where the funding will come from post-2020 is therefore indispensable for an agreement with the necessary level of ambition.

4. Extra help for adaptation where it is already needed

It is important to recognise that the effects of climate change are already being felt in many countries, and disproportionately so in the world's least developed economies. It is therefore necessary to ensure that adequate funding is given not only to climate mitigation, but also adaptation. The regrettable need to invest in costly measures to mitigate against the effects of climate change in vulnerable areas should serve as a wake-up call that failure to act now, while there remains a chance to avert extreme climate change, will prove much more costly in the long-term.

5. End fossil fuel subsidies

If goals to reduce carbon emissions are to be met, it is imperative that our dependence on fossil fuels is ended. For this to be achieved, it will be necessary to begin the process of systematically abolishing all fossil fuel subsidies, which encourage overconsumption of energy and are a great obstacle to progress. This needs to be a carefully managed process, implemented in such a way as not to harm development. The objective should be to replace fossil fuel subsidies with clean energy subsidies, through investments in the green economy that will provide long-term benefits both economically and environmentally.

6. Reduce emissions from forestry (REDD+)

The agreement reached at COP21 must bring about reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors, including deforestation and forest degradation, which account for nearly 20 per cent of the global total. We reiterate our support for the REDD+ mechanism, which aims to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, and offer incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands through investment in low-carbon paths to achieve more sustainable development. REDD+ further includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

7. Reduce emissions from agriculture

Reducing emissions from agriculture has a significant environmental benefit, as the sector is directly responsible for more than 10 per cent of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions reduction measures can also improve efficiency, which reduces costs and saves money. Work also needs to be done on public awareness of the importance of emissions from the production of the food we eat, in order that consumers are able to make better and more environmentally sound choices.

8. A global carbon tax

A global tax on carbon would encourage governments, businesses and citizens to reduce their reliance on carbon emitting resources. The proceeds of such a tax could be used to enormous benefit, for reducing the cost of energy from alternative sources, financing climate change mitigation and adaptation measure and promoting sustainable development as a route to ending poverty. Creating a relationship between the carbon cost of the food we eat and its monetary cost would also be an effective tool to encourage the switch to a more environmentally sustainable diet.

9. An outcome that reflects the Global Goals

Our vision of a sustainable future equally includes the pursuit of the Global Goals, which were agreed at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September. Achievement of goals on eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, achieving gender equality and building a more secure world go hand in hand with a willingness to tackle climate change, which can exacerbate many of the difficulties faced in the developing world.

10. Measurement, reporting and verification

Previous attempts to reach an agreement have met difficulties in part because of a lack of confidence that countries are sincere in their commitments to reduce emissions. For this reason a robust system of measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) is needed, Where developing economy nations lack the capability to effectively and accurately measure their emissions, technological and logistical resources and expertise should be shared to enable MRV.

11. Individual responsibility

The SI Council feels that the fight to prevent irreversible climate change is important from a personal as well as a political and governmental perspective. For this reason, SI member parties resolve to take concrete actions to reduce their impact on the environment and encourage their members to do the same. In this way, our movement can lead by example in its actions as well as its policies. In line with this commitment the Socialist International will seek to reduce the environmental impact of its own meetings, exploring ways to reduce the use of printed materials through electronic distribution of documents.

12. Taking the lead at COP21

Without strong commitments in Paris, the future of the planet looks bleak. We believe that by following the above framework, COP21 can be the moment when the world unites to move towards a sustainable world society. The Council therefore particularly calls on SI member parties who are in government to work tirelessly at the summit for an outcome built on social democratic ideals.

Council meeting of the Socialist International
Luanda, 27-28 November 2015

Declaration on the refugee crisis

The Socialist International is greatly concerned by the plight of refugees around the world, which has become an extremely grave humanitarian crisis. The Council therefore reiterates the absolute commitment of the SI to the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, as enumerated exhaustively in its Charter on the rights of Migrants. Special care needs to be administered to the most vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied minors and women.

The Council urges the European Union to find a collective response to the arrival of refugees, with all member states fulfilling their ethical responsibility to facilitate the redistribution of asylum claims. The EU needs to develop a unified asylum policy. The adoption of an EU asylum status would be a positive step in this direction. A consequence of the absence of a comprehensive policy is that many member states continue to show a complete lack of solidarity with refugees and seem determined to abandon their collective ethical and legal responsibility. We abhor the violations of human rights and xenophobic and anti-immigration discourses witnessed in some states, which have refugees and migrants as their target. These practices and attitudes have placed an excessive burden on front states in the region such as Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq as well as on entry point countries such as Greece and countries in the Balkans. Ninety percent of displaced people are displaced within or into another poor country and the pressure on these states is only going to increase. Only ten percent of all global refugees seek refuge from a poor country into a rich country.

A great many of the refugees and migrants in the world today are fleeing conflict, and extensive conflict resolution efforts are needed in addition to urgent humanitarian assistance. The persistence of conflicts, terrorism and insecurity, and a lack of democracy and governance completely inhibit opportunities and prospects, must be addressed if the refugee crisis is to be brought to an end.

Lack of support for refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria risks fuelling a new cycle of disaffection, alienation and radicalisation among young people who feel vulnerable, abandoned and unwanted. This only makes it more urgent to ensure the necessary resources are available for large-scale humanitarian assistance to provide as a minimum for the alimentary, sanitary and educational needs of those forced to flee their country.

We are more than aware that the refugee flow will continue and even increase. The lack of a coordinated policy from the EU and the international community will further exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. We call on the international community to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with the root causes of the recent refugee exodus. In particular an agreed roadmap for transition to a peaceful and democratic Syria is of utmost importance. This roadmap for Syria needs the full cooperation and participation of both the international community and the regional and neighbouring countries. Accepting and respecting such a roadmap would be a major step to peace in the region. It would give hope and real prospects for many refugees to return and participate in the reconstruction of their country and the construction of a democratic Syria.

The SI reiterates that although the media attention has highlighted the refugee exodus towards Europe from Syria, this is a global issue affecting many parts of the world. According to the United Nations, the continent of Africa has the largest number of economic refugees. Refugees in Africa are leaving their countries because of wars and the economic and social consequences caused notably by underemployment. Tens of thousands of Africans are leaving their countries in search of a better

life in Europe, attempting to cross the Mediterranean where, regrettably, many of these young people perish. We challenge the European Union and European governments to take the necessary decisions faced with this drama, both to ensure a better reception for refugees in Europe, and to monitor the conditions of their exit from their countries on the African continent.

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International
Luanda, 27-28 November 2015

Declaration on Angola

Original: French

The Socialist International Council held its second ordinary annual meeting in Luanda, capital of Angola, on 27-28 November 2015, a year in which that country celebrates the 40th anniversary of the proclamation of national independence, after five centuries of colonial settlement.

Since its emergence, Angola has proved to be a steady hand in the struggle for the end of colonization in Africa, for the end of the racist and apartheid regime in South Africa, and an end to segregation in Namibia and Zimbabwe, a fact that led Angola to more than twenty years of fratricidal war with the participation of foreign armed forces and mercenaries that completely destroyed the country, disintegrated families and created irreparable trauma.

Wisely, Angolans achieved peace, and are currently promoting national reconciliation, the reconstruction of the infrastructure of the country, the mitigation of trauma and the recovery of the national economy while working for a truly democratic society based on the universal values of freedom, human rights and social justice.

The participants observed with affection that under the leadership of our member political party MPLA, Angola is making determined progress towards the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law based on respect for fundamental freedoms of citizens.

In this context, the participants in the second annual ordinary meeting of the Socialist International Council encourage MPLA and its leader, José Eduardo dos Santos, to pursue this path and continue efforts to contribute to peace in Africa, a continent strongly affected by fratricidal wars and by the action of terrorist groups, created, supported and funded by countries that covet their natural resources in exchange for the continuation of underdevelopment, poverty and dependence.

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International
Luanda, 27-28 November 2015

Declaration on the legislative elections on 6 December in Venezuela

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International is following with concern the difficult political, economic and social situation currently underway in Venezuela, and its descent towards a progressive deterioration of the democratic values and political coexistence, which are the fundamental basis of democratic political systems. We therefore call on the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela to make all efforts to create the conditions and political environment favourable to a climate of harmony and peace during the forthcoming legislative elections that will take place on 6 December.

We call on the National Electoral Council (CNE), the different political actors in the country and Unasur to start a political dialogue that will genuinely facilitate conditions for a fair and equitable electoral process with the presence of international observers including the various national and international electoral NGOs, and citizen observers that will contribute to the transparency and international recognition of the Venezuelan electoral process. The Socialist International is convinced that the Venezuelan legislative electoral process represents the best opportunity for the Venezuelan people, through their vote, to find the solution to the serious political, economic and social crisis that affects the country.

The Socialist International categorically condemns the recent acts of violence affecting Lilian Tintori, wife of the leader of Voluntad Popular, Leopoldo López, the former presidential candidate, Governor Henrique Capriles and parliamentary candidate Miguel Pizarro of the Justice First party, who have been victims of aggression. Events culminated with the assassination on 24 November of the regional secretary of Acción Democrática in Altigracia de Orituco, Luis Manuel Díaz, during a campaign meeting in Guárico State. They stood at the time on a platform with the local opposition candidate, Rummy Olivo, who was herself accompanied by Lilian Tintori. We hold President Nicolás Maduro and his government responsible for guaranteeing a climate of peace and political dialogue, which allows the realisation of fair and transparent elections that ensure the authentic expression of the popular will.



| CLIMATE CHANGE

SI Declaration on climate change and COP21

29 NOVEMBER 2015



Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International **Luanda, 27-28 November 2015**

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1. More ambitious emissions targets to restrict global temperature rise to 2°C;
2. An outcome centred on climate justice;
3. Financing for the Green Climate Fund to 2020 and beyond;
4. Extra assistance for adaptation measures in countries already suffering the effects of climate change;
5. An end to fossil fuel subsidies;

6. Concerted action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation;
7. Initiatives in favour of more efficient agriculture and responsible consumption;
8. The introduction of a global carbon tax;
9. A climate agreement in harmony with the Global Goals;
10. Robust measurement, reporting and verification of progress towards emissions reduction targets.
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1. Current commitments are not enough

The UN has received emissions targets in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) from countries responsible for more than 90 per cent of global emissions, which indicates a willingness from the majority of nations and governments to work towards a global agreement in Paris. However, the pledges made are only enough to limit the global rise in temperature to 2.7° to 3°C, a level far in excess of the goal of 2°C set out in the Copenhagen agreement. Ambition needs to be raised, and any agreement in Paris needs at a minimum to include mechanisms for the upward revision of emissions targets if we are to have any chance of meeting the 2°C target for global temperature rise. This means the establishment of a five-yearly cycle under which countries have an obligation to ratchet up their commitments, making progressively tighter emissions reductions. Countries need to supplement their commitments by developing and adopting Deep Decarbonization Pathways (DDP) in order to guarantee a zero carbon future for the planet.

2. Climate justice and common but differentiated responsibilities

The principle of climate justice originates within our movement and has always been at the heart of our climate policy. The SI continues to support the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in recognition of the duty of developed countries to do more and go further in their commitments as a result of their historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions.

3. Financing and the Green Climate Fund

One potential obstacle to ambitious targets is the issue of finance. The Green Climate Fund (GCF), which sets aside finances for climate change mitigation and adaptation, is therefore a crucial plank of any climate agreement. Though important steps have been taken to secure initial funding for the GCF, the total pledged is nowhere near enough and the agreements reached in Lima at COP20 do not set out a clear time frame for the scaling up of funds. The gap between the amount currently pledged and the \$100 billion per year promised after 2020 needs to be bridged. The lack of a clear pathway has been interpreted by some developing country partners as a sign of a lack of commitment to the GCF by Annex I parties. Without significant progress, the negotiations in Paris will take place in an atmosphere of mistrust from those countries that will be depending on the fund in the years to come. An agreement on where the funding will come from post-2020 is therefore indispensable for an agreement with the necessary level of ambition.

4. Extra help for adaptation where it is already needed

It is important to recognise that the effects of climate change are already being felt in many countries, and disproportionately so in the world's least developed economies. It is therefore necessary to ensure that adequate funding is given not only to climate mitigation, but also

adaptation. The regrettable need to invest in costly measures to mitigate against the effects of climate change in vulnerable areas should serve as a wake-up call that failure to act now, while there remains a chance to avert extreme climate change, will prove much more costly in the long-term.

5. End fossil fuel subsidies

If goals to reduce carbon emissions are to be met, it is imperative that our dependence on fossil fuels is ended. For this to be achieved, it will be necessary to begin the process of systematically abolishing all fossil fuel subsidies, which encourage over consumption of energy and are a great obstacle to progress. This needs to be a carefully managed process, implemented in such a way as not to harm development. The objective should be to replace fossil fuel subsidies with clean energy subsidies, through investments in the green economy that will provide long-term benefits both economically and environmentally.

6. Reduce emissions from forestry (REDD+)

The agreement reached at COP21 must bring about reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors, including deforestation and forest degradation, which account for nearly 20 per cent of the global total. We reiterate our support for the REDD+ mechanism, which aims to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, and offer incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands through investment in low-carbon paths to achieve more sustainable development. REDD+ further includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

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Reducing emissions from agriculture has a significant environmental benefit, as the sector is directly responsible for more than 10 per cent of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions reduction measures can also improve efficiency, which reduces costs and saves money. Work also needs to be done on public awareness of the importance of emissions from the production of the food we eat, in order that consumers are able to make better and more environmentally sound choices.

8. A global carbon tax

A global tax on carbon would encourage governments, businesses and citizens to reduce their reliance on carbon emitting resources. The proceeds of such a tax could be used to enormous benefit, for reducing the cost of energy from alternative sources, financing climate change mitigation and adaptation measure and promoting sustainable development as a route to ending poverty. Creating a relationship between the carbon cost of the food we eat and its monetary cost would also be an effective tool to encourage the switch to a more environmentally sustainable diet.

9. An outcome that reflects the Global Goals

Our vision of a sustainable future equally includes the pursuit of the Global Goals, which were agreed at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September. Achievement of goals on eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, achieving gender equality and building a more secure world go hand in hand with a willingness to tackle climate change, which can exacerbate many of the difficulties faced in the developing world.

10. Measurement, reporting and verification

Previous attempts to reach an agreement have met difficulties in part because of a lack of confidence that countries are sincere in their commitments to reduce emissions. For this

reason a robust system of measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) is needed, Where developing economy nations lack the capability to effectively and accurately measure their emissions, technological and logistical resources and expertise should be shared to enable MRV.

11. Individual responsibility

The SI Council feels that the fight to prevent irreversible climate change is important from a personal as well as a political and governmental perspective. For this reason, SI member parties resolve to take concrete actions to reduce their impact on the environment and encourage their members to do the same. In this way, our movement can lead by example in its actions as well as its policies. In line with this commitment the Socialist International will seek to reduce the environmental impact of its own meetings, exploring ways to reduce the use of printed materials through electronic distribution of documents.

12. Taking the lead at COP21

Without strong commitments in Paris, the future of the planet looks bleak. We believe that by following the above framework, COP21 can be the moment when the world unites to move towards a sustainable world society. The Council therefore particularly calls on SI member parties who are in government to work tirelessly at the summit for an outcome built on social democratic ideals.



| CLIMATE CHANGE

SI at the COP21 in Paris

09 DECEMBER 2015



Political will for ambitious targets

The SI President and Secretary General held a press conference today at the COP21 in Paris. They presented the positions adopted by the organisation at its recent Council meeting held in Angola in regards to the COP21 and underlined the political will of the member parties of the Socialist International worldwide for achieving ambitious targets at the Conference to tackle climate change. This press conference followed a meeting held earlier that day of ministers, heads of delegation and other political representatives present at the COP21 from parties belonging to the Socialist International, where an informal exchange of views was held on the process underway at the Conference in Paris.



| CLIMATE CHANGE

Socialist International Greet Paris Agreement

14 DECEMBER 2015

The Socialist International enthusiastically welcomes the Paris Agreement, approved unanimously by almost 200 countries at the COP21 climate change conference in Paris on Saturday. A universal agreement on this scale is unprecedented, and the end result of more than 20 years of climate talks under the UNFCCC. Its adoption signals a consensus among all countries of the world about the serious and immediate threat posed by climate change, and a recognition that concerted action is required by all countries to address its causes.

The SI welcomes in particular the new commitment to keep temperature rises “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C”. The agreement also underlines the importance of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in the implementation of the agreement, reflecting the diversity of national circumstances.

Negotiations in Paris have succeeded where previous summits have fallen short, and it is important to recognise the hard diplomatic work over many days and nights that has gone into making an agreement happen. The SI warmly congratulates President François Hollande, who created the political conditions for this Conference in Paris to be the defining moment for this crucial Agreement, and applauds the exceptional role played by COP21 president Laurent Fabius, without whose tireless efforts, experience and leadership in the negotiation process, an agreement would not have been possible. We equally recognise the dedication and commitment of Ségolène Royal, an SI vice-president and French Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy.

The agreement is a turning point in the fight against climate change, but will require sustained effort and commitment in its implementation. It equally remains the case that despite the ambition to work towards limiting global temperature rises to 1.5°C, the pledges made by countries to date through their INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) are insufficient to even reach the higher target of a 2°C rise. In this regard, the newly agreed review mechanism, whereby a global stocktake will take place every five years from 2023, is of vital importance. This five-yearly review must be used not only to monitor the progress made towards existing targets, but also to increase ambition and bring about progressively tighter emissions reductions.

Equally important is the commitment to mobilise climate finance of USD 100 billion per annum up to 2025. The Agreement echoes the view of the SI that developed countries should bear the most responsibility for climate finance, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. We welcome the commitment to set a new collective quantified goal

prior to 2025 from a floor of USD 100 billion, which will take into account the needs of developing countries at that time.

The SI now calls on all countries, having signed the accord, to enshrine their obligations under the Paris Agreement in their national legislation as a further sign of their commitment to honouring each and every one of the promises made at COP21. Doing so will further strengthen this historic agreement and make it more binding.

The SI has long been actively engaged in the search for a global response to climate change, both through the work of its Commission for a Sustainable World Society and with the inclusion of the issue on the agenda of its Council and Congress meetings, most recently in Luanda in November. SI member parties in government have been encouraged to work together for an outcome with the social democratic principle of climate justice at its heart, the importance of which was recognised in the Paris Agreement. The SI was present at the COP21 through its President and its Secretary General, and an informal exchange of views took place with ministers, heads of delegation and other political representatives attending the COP21 from parties belonging to the Socialist International where these principles were reaffirmed.

If nations continue to show the political will that was needed to reach an agreement in Paris, the SI believes that this will mark the end of the age of fossil fuels and a definitive step towards a zero-carbon future. The world is now on a clear pathway to a greener, fairer and more sustainable planet and the SI and its member parties will continue to be at the forefront of efforts to deliver the promises made in Paris in their entirety.



| BURKINA FASO

SI condemns terrorist attack in Ouagadougou

16 JANUARY 2016

The Socialist International vigorously condemns the terrorist attack carried out last night in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, which has left 28 people dead from many different countries, responsibility for which has been claimed by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Our thoughts are with the family and friends of the victims.

126 hostages were rescued by security forces following an operation to reclaim the hotel where the attack happened, during which a number of terrorists were killed.

The Socialist International expresses its wholehearted solidarity with newly elected President Roch Marc Kaboré who assumed office at the end of December, and with his government and people. This is the third major terrorist attack to take place in 2016, following those in Istanbul and Jakarta earlier this month, and we reiterate once more our call to the entire international community to join forces to bring an end to this international scourge against humanity.

In their efforts faced with this tragedy in Burkina Faso, our International stands firm alongside President Kaboré and his party, the MPP, members of our political family.



| TURKEY

SI supporting CHP in their work for a Turkey with freedoms, rights and democracy

16-17 JANUARY 2016

On the occasion of the 35th Congress of the Republican People's Party, CHP, of Turkey, held in Ankara on 16 -17 January 2016, the Socialist International Secretary General attended at the invitation of the party leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, with whom he held talks on political developments in Turkey and on the main issues on the party's agenda. The SI SG conveyed the full support of the International for their work for freedoms, rights and democracy in Turkey. At this Congress, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was re-elected as party leader. On 17 January the SI Secretary General attempted to visit Can Dundar, the chief editor of Cumhuriyet, a national daily paper, and their Ankara correspondent, Erdem Gul, held at Silivri Prison outside Istanbul since November 2015 without formal indictment in a case receiving broad public attention as a grave infringement of freedom of expression and of the press in Turkey.

Sergei Stanishev, President of the Party of European Socialists, PES, who attended the CHP Congress on behalf of that organisation, was also attempting to meet the imprisoned journalists. Members of the CHP, other Congress guests and the lawyer of the journalists accompanied the foreign guests, who were denied access to the prison by the authorities. Members of the Turkish press covered the visit and reported on their impressions. A written message was conveyed to the prisoners whose content, along with their response, were published in the press. Later in the day, the SI Secretary General held talks with leading journalists of Cumhuriyet at the newspaper's headquarters in Istanbul.





| VENEZUELA

Venezuela must respect democracy

18 FEBRUARY 2016

The installation of the new National Assembly in Venezuela in early 2016 was defined by various political actors and the international public opinion as a moment of democratic reaffirmation in this Latin American country. In recent years, countries in this region of the world, as well as in other continents, have expressed their anxiety and concern about the worsening social and economic situation and social cohesion in Venezuela. The deterioration of institutional life, increased violence, persistence of conduct contrary to the values shared by the community of democratic nations, together with the existence of political prisoners, have contributed to deepening this sense of alarm among democrats of different political persuasions in many regions of the world.

However, the elections to the National Assembly last December, beyond their results, confirmed the high degree of mobilisation of society, the strong civic spirit that still exists among Venezuelan people, the faith in democracy as the only path shared by the great majority of citizens of this country, and their confidence in the mechanisms and institutions of the country to resolve the situation, achieve a consensus and find ways to move forward and build a future for all Venezuelans.

Therefore, since the beginning of this year, we and many others have been following with interest developments in the political life of Venezuela, where the Executive must now share and interact, within the democratic framework as we all understand it and as required by the Venezuelan constitution, with another branch of the State, the Legislature, a clear majority of which is overwhelmingly in favour of dialogue and a mutual respect for diversity, and willing to build an inclusive way forward for all citizens.

However, a new and serious anomaly has arisen in the framework of Venezuelan democracy, despite the recent developments that led to the installation of this new National Assembly. It has distanced Venezuela from the democratic and institutional order required by its constitution and from the clear and legitimate mandate granted by the people at the elections last December.

The Supreme Court, whose members were replaced in the last few days of the previous legislature, after the new composition of the National Assembly became known, is now overriding the latter's sovereign will and ignoring its decisions, becoming a kind of second chamber not provided for in the constitution, as demonstrated in recent days when it approved the economic emergency decree and the special powers which President Maduro granted himself, although this had previously been expressly rejected by the Assembly.

The Socialist International today raises its voice in defence of democracy in Venezuela, calling for the desire for change expressed at the polls by the citizens of this country, the separation of powers and the National Assembly to be respected and, on a day like today, which is the second anniversary of Leopoldo López's political imprisonment, while Manuel Rosales and Antonio Ledezma, as well as other citizens, continue to be deprived of their freedom for political reasons, we welcome the approval of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Law by the National Assembly on its first reading.



| UGANDA

In support of democracy in Uganda

22 FEBRUARY 2016

In recent years the people of Africa have continued advancing and moving forward democratic governance in an important number of countries of the region. Today, more and more people in that continent enjoy freedoms and rights, a precondition for progress, development and peace.

Members of the Socialist International in a good number of countries in Africa have been protagonists and actors of an era of change that has been bringing new opportunities and a new face to the political life of the continent. Nevertheless, authoritarianism, oppression and other evils of the past still linger in the political life of some of the countries in the region. In some cases this has led to open conflicts, or at the very least to a culture of political stagnation, despite the growing collective consciousness that democracy is the only way forward.

The presidential election held in Uganda this past weekend which retained Yoweri Museveni in power is unfortunately an example of those negative cases. Elections in which opposition candidates are oppressed, social media is shut down, the main contender from the opposition is arrested several times during the campaign and the electoral process is flawed with disruptions and irregularities, cannot and should not be accepted. Added to that, Uganda has for some years now, been managed by Museveni as if it were his private domain.

Uganda has definitely joined the list of countries in Africa where there exists a greater contrast with those that, despite a troubled history of colonisation and unfair economic international relations, have managed to achieve multiple democratic gains in current political developments in Africa. Definitely, people throughout the continent, as other members of the international community, should stand up today for the rights of the Ugandan people. We in the Socialist International are firmly on their side.



| BELARUS

The SI in Belarus

28 FEBRUARY 2016



The Socialist International, represented by its Secretary General, was present in Belarus for the central committee meeting of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Narodnaya Hramada), held in Minsk on February 28th. Mikalai Statkevich, who was released from prison last August where he had been detained as a political prisoner since 2010, was re-elected Chair of the party. Discussions centered on the continuing struggle for a free, democratic Belarus to achieve stability, justice and rights for the Belarusian people.





| NIGERIA

National Chairman of All Progressives Congress, APC, Nigeria, meets SI Secretary General in London

9 MARCH 2016



APC National Chairman, Chief John Odigie-Oyegun and Socialist International Secretary General Luis Ayala, London, 9 March 2016



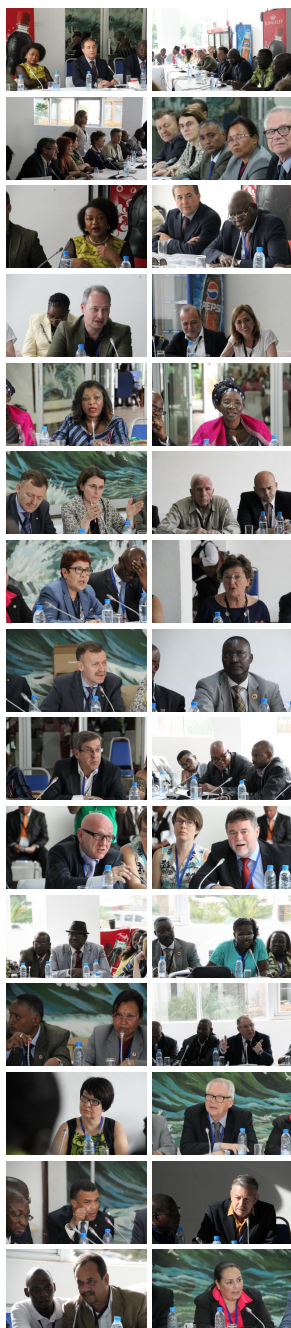
Head of the UK Branch of the APC, Philip Idaewor, with Chief John Odigie-Oyegun and Luis Ayala, 9 March 2016


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IPU

SI meeting held at the 134th Assembly of the IPU in Lusaka | 20 MARCH 2016



Latifa Perry

The SI held a meeting of parliamentarians from its member parties on the occasion of the 134th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU, which took place in Lusaka, Zambia, from the 19th to the 23rd of March 2016. Participants, attending from all continents, also included a number of Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament and Leaders of Parliamentary Groups from our political family.

The meeting held discussions on issues of particular concern to members in regard to current international developments, the contribution of our movement to democracy at both global and national level, conflict resolution, the fate of refugees and the migration phenomenon, and an exchange of views on items on the agenda of the IPU Assembly.

The meeting, chaired by the SI Secretary General, included parliamentarians from member parties and organisations from Angola, Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Chile, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Lesotho, Palestine, Portugal, Russian Federation, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa, Spain, Turkey and Venezuela, as well as a representative from The Global Fund.

In their exchange of views, participants touched upon aspects of the issues for debate by the IPU Assembly, and in particular, they examined the choice of emergency items due to be voted on. The Deputy-Speaker of the National Assembly of France introduced the motion which they had submitted relating to the 230 million unregistered children in the world. The representative from Morocco presented the motion submitted by their national delegation on the process for international recognition of a sovereign Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The third emergency item relating to human trafficking, presented to the IPU by Sudan, was also noted.

In a round of interventions, all participants had the opportunity to address and share information on issues of concern to their party or country. The meeting heard reports on the latest political developments in a number of cases, including where there were new governments from our movement as in Burkina Faso and Portugal, and the situation in Nepal where a new constitution had just been agreed; the challenges faced by the Palestinian people in their quest for an independent state and respect for their human rights; the challenges to democracy such as those experienced by the new parliament in Venezuela vis-à-vis the country's President, the ongoing political crisis in Haiti which needed much more attention from the international community, or the situation in Turkey and the role of our members, political developments in Guinea-Bissau and in São Tomé & Príncipe; an update on Russia, and equally information on the current situation in Czech Republic and Hungary. There was also a contribution on the prospects in Spain to form a new government following the last elections.

The issue of terrorism was of major concern among the contributions, as highlighted by the representatives from some of those countries most recently affected, namely Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso. The President of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso expressed appreciation and thanks to the Socialist International for its

solidarity at a crucial time, and stressed the need for joint efforts to combat terror.

The pressing issue of refugees and internally displaced people was highlighted by many, and in its discussions the meeting agreed to reiterate the SI's unequivocal position on this subject: namely the need to firmly defend the human rights and physical integrity of all refugees and asylum seekers in line with international norms and United Nations conventions; to underline the illegality of all forms of collective deportations; to recall that the poorest countries are burdened with the greatest number of refugees while noting that richer countries invest large sums in border controls; to stress the imperative to combat all forms of xenophobia and racial discrimination, and to draw attention to the values on which the EU was founded. Amongst the key challenges noted were taking measures to defend those who are most vulnerable, namely women and children, and the obligation of every member of the international community to aid and protect.

In the meeting's discussions, the question of gender equality in politics was also commented on by several participants, including information on new instances where more women had reached higher positions of responsibility. During the IPU Assembly in Lusaka, the SI also attended the meeting of women parliamentarians.

During the discussions it was registered by many participants the value of these meetings held by the International.

While in Lusaka, the SI Secretary General also paid a visit to the headquarters of the SI member party in Zambia, the ruling Patriotic Front, where he held a meeting with Davies Chama, their Secretary General.

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| BELGIUM

Socialist International condemns terrorist attacks in Brussels

22 MARCH 2016

The Socialist International condemns without reservation the cowardly and indiscriminate terrorist assault on innocent civilians in the heart of Brussels and at Zaventem airport, and expresses its deepest sympathy and solidarity with the victims of these despicable acts, the local emergency services, and all the people of Belgium. We extend our sincere condolences to the families and friends of those killed and to all those who have suffered trauma and injuries in the explosions that struck Belgium's capital today.

The SI equally stands in support of its socialist members in Belgium, the government of the country and all its institutions as they come to terms with this attack and take measures to catch the perpetrators and protect citizens. We look forward to the apprehension of all those responsible for the planning and execution of today's bombings and for justice to be carried out.

Now is a time for all decent people around the world to unite in defence of the universal values of freedom, tolerance and peace, and reject the chaos, destruction and fear caused by terrorism. These acts are above all an attack on our way of life, and the number of major terrorist attacks in recent months in different locations around the world has demonstrated that this is a threat which requires a united global response.

The Socialist International once more calls on all its member parties and the entire international community to join in a comprehensive response to terrorism in order to eliminate this scourge without sacrificing the fundamental freedoms and rights that these attacks seek to undermine.



| PAKISTAN

SI Solidarity with the Pakistani people

28 MARCH 2016

The Socialist International expresses its solidarity with the people of Pakistan as they come to terms with the horrendous terrorist attack carried out yesterday near Lahore. Over 70 people lost their lives as they enjoyed a Sunday afternoon in the park, including numerous women and children, and over 300 were injured.

We strongly denounce this violent act, as we have other such terrorist attacks in Pakistan and elsewhere. Our thoughts and condolences are with the family and friends of the deceased and our sympathy is with all those injured and suffering as a result.

The Socialist International stands shoulder to shoulder with its member party, the Pakistan Peoples' Party, PPP, and with all peace loving people in Pakistan.



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| LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

01-02 APRIL 2016



Nicolás Monegro

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean held a meeting in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 1-2 April 2016. The agenda centered on two main themes: “Building alliances and coalitions to advance our objectives of sustainable development, fair progress and opportunities for all” and “Improving the electoral systems and processes in the region”. The Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), whose leader, Miguel Vargas, is chair of the Committee, hosted the meeting. The opening session included the participation of Danilo Medina, President of the Dominican Republic and candidate for re-election in the forthcoming polls to take place in May.

Opening the meeting, Miguel Vargas thanked the parties of the Socialist International for their presence in Dominican Republic at a very special moment for the country that will be holding general elections on 15 May. For these elections, he explained, the PRD and the PLD signed an agreement last September for a shared government of national unity, an alliance which draws inspiration from the ideals and the vision of their historical leader, José Francisco Peña Gómez. The two largest Dominican progressive political forces have reached an understanding to give the country a majority government that will allow it to develop a broad reform of the State, with measures that will guarantee social inclusion, a substantial improvement of the public services and address the outstanding institutional reforms.

The SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala, thanked the hosts of the meeting and recalled his participation, as a witness, in the signing of the agreement for government last September. It's strength comes from the coherence of shared values and principles of both parties and, at the same time, it is an alliance consistent with Dominican political history. It also reflects the will of political actors that are not restricted by their own benchmarks but instead are able to respond to the needs of the nation and the expectations of its citizens. Luis Ayala expressed confidence in their victory on 15 May and in a government committed to ensuring welfare, justice, inclusion and opportunities for all Dominicans. He shared with the participants the concerns and the work of the International in these times “of big challenges and definitions”. The responses to the challenges for peace, democracy, sustainable development, greater equality, extending solidarity with the plight of refugees and migrants, are today key tasks for the International in the whole world, as it is also in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The President of the Republic and presidential candidate in the forthcoming May elections, Danilo Medina, in his intervention, warmly welcomed the presence of the Socialist International in Santo Domingo. He thanked Miguel Vargas for having signed with him a unity agreement without precedence in the history of the country, in favour of social gains, wellbeing and peace for all Dominicans. In his party's principles, President Medina said, there are elements that are common to the member parties of the SI in the region, a region that is growing, innovating, lowering the levels of poverty and advancing in guaranteeing social rights within a democratic framework. To face the challenges in education, housing, health, social protection, today it is necessary to build

large political majorities that will be able to respond to the social demands of the country, he affirmed. The adequate reply to these demands is not the anti-politics nor the populisms, he said, but a process of building alliances between political forces with common principles and projects, such as the one that now exists in his country.

On the first main theme of the agenda, “Building alliances and coalitions to advance our objectives of sustainable development, fair progress and opportunities for all”, the Committee heard contributions by participants from Nicaragua, Uruguay, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Argentina. In their interventions they recalled that at different historic moments in their respective countries, the progressive parties have known the experience of forming governing coalitions. Many times these alliances were inspired by the search to regain lost democracy or to advance by means of political agreements to overcome situations of violence and conflict. What characterises the current political alliances in the region is that generally these are appearing within a context where there is democracy and peace, and rather than being agreements to overcome situations of crisis, they represent the identification of common political aspirations as a basis upon which to build agreements between parties to ensure the fulfilment of their goals and these are presented to the citizens as shared programmatic proposals. This is a reality that goes beyond the simple electoral agreement and involves the search for common objectives. In their different contributions, the delegates conveyed to the host party, the PRD, their confidence that this policy of alliances will be greatly validated in the coming elections and their wish that the next shared government of national unity succeeds with important achievements in favour of a better life for all Dominicans.

The Committee heard to an intervention by Mitzy Capriles de Ledezma, wife of the principal Mayor of Caracas, Antonio Ledezma, one of the political prisoners in Venezuela detained since more than one year. Her words, she said, were on behalf of all the women and families of prisoners being held for political reasons in her country. She denounced the arbitrary measure of deprivation of freedom that today affects her husband and so many other Venezuelans. She thanked the member parties of the Socialist International for the permanent support given by the organisation to her country and shared with the Committee her wish and hope to see very soon Antonio Ledezma and all the Venezuelan political prisoners released from prison.

The SI President, George Papandreou, expressed that Latin America and the Caribbean are very close to his heart, as he has himself experienced dictatorship and exile. The democracy which has been gained globally, is a system that must be defended and guaranteed wherever and whenever it is under threat, he maintained. In this sense, the policies of alliances have a strong justification when they look to regain democracy. But democracy is also consolidated when political parties that share common principles and projects are moved to act together against inequality and to respond to global challenges such as climate change, sustainable development, or the phenomenon of refugees and migrants, and to formulate common, democratic and responsible proposals, thus lessening the threats of authoritarianism, populism and fundamentalism. George Papandreou spoke of the refugee crisis and the current austerity policies in Europe, adding that the democratic and social model in that continent that in the past served as inspiration for the progressive forces in this part of world, could benefit from observing today’s experiences in this region.

In the debate on the second main theme, “Improving the electoral processes and systems in the region”, the Committee heard contributions from Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Paraguay and Argentina, based on the experiences in their own countries and developments in the institutional and regulatory fields. All participants highlighted the importance of having electoral and party laws that are modern and suited to their own realities. A common factor is the need to have an autonomous electoral body that is impartial, permanent, materially well provided for and not subject in their budgets to a payroll of employees and the appointment of top authorities motivated by the swings of their own electoral contingency. Regarding the use of electronic and technological means for the registration of the electorate, their identification and the voting itself, there were common views that the advances in these matters could be a very important contribution for the legitimacy and efficiency of the processes, but it was also noted that it is insufficient to make the credibility of the citizens during the electoral process solely dependent on them. Other aspects considered and that must be taken into account were the financing of politics, whether this is public, private or mixed, the limitations to campaign expenses and the accountability of candidates. Venezuelan participants, for their part, emphasised the relevance of the role of international electoral observers, the regulation of re-elections and the nature of administrative sanctions to avoid the de-registration of candidates, following the recent experience in their country.

On the last point of the agenda, the delegates spoke of the political situation in their respective countries. Besides that of the Dominican Republic, which was widely explained during the meeting, the Committee heard from the Venezuelan delegates about the latest political developments in their country following the approval in recent days of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Law promoted by the political forces of the *Mesa de Unidad Democrática* (MUD) in the Venezuelan National Assembly; from the Brazilian delegate on the situation confronted by the government of President Dilma Rousseff; the delegate of Peru gave an update to the Committee on the electoral prospects in the forthcoming elections to be held in that country; the SI Vice-President and representative of Haiti informed about the challenges faced by the government and the provisional presidency of the Republic with a view to the realisation of elections; the delegate of Chile informed about the state of the advancement of reforms

contained in the programme of President Bachelet; the delegation of Costa Rica informed about the current internal work of his party PLN and its future projection; the delegate of Panama referred to the work of his party and the importance that it assigned to the modifications of electoral laws and parties in his country; and the UCR of Argentina shared with the Committee its experience during the first months of coalition government. From Europe, the delegate of the PSOE updated the Committee on the latest advancements and the perspectives that the leader of the party, Pedro Sánchez, finds in his efforts to form a coalition government under the leadership of the socialists in Spain.

Before the closing of the meeting, the SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala, updated the Committee on the latest activities of the International and the new and forthcoming initiatives. He referred, among other matters, to the work ahead in the coming months by the Commission established by the International to examine inequality in the world economy and propose specific policies to combat it in the developing world, in emergent economies and the developed countries. At the close of the debates, the Committee approved a resolution on the agreement of shared government in Dominican Republic, another about the situation in Brazil and another on the current political and institutional crisis in Venezuela, and reiterated the appreciation of everyone present for the fraternal hospitality received from its member party in Dominican Republic, the PRD.

[List of participants](#)

[Resolution on the Dominican Republic](#)

[Declaration on Venezuela](#)

[Declaration on Brazil](#)

[Press coverage of the meeting](#)

| OTHER ACTIVITIES

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Colombia

| 28-29 AUGUST 2015

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean at the OAS, Washington DC

| 01-02 DECEMBER 2014

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in the Dominican Republic

| 09-10 MAY 2014

Global politics and economy – the view from Latin America and the Caribbean

| 26-27 JULY 2013

Committee convenes in Porto Alegre **| 24-25 OCTOBER 2011**

‘Energy, development and integration’ and ‘Competitiveness and equity’ focus of regional meeting in Bucaramanga, Colombia **| 30-31 MAY 2011**

SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean meets in Buenos Aires

| 09-10 APRIL 2010

Latin America and the Caribbean in the global financial crisis: Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Guatemala **| 23-24 MARCH 2009**

José Francisco Peña Gómez – TEN YEARS ON

**Resolution in recognition of the Agreement for a Shared Government of National Unity
between the Dominican Revolutionary Party and the Dominican Liberation Party**

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Santo Domingo on 1-2 April 2016:

CONSIDERING: That the unity of the family, founded upon the values of peace, solidarity, freedom and equality, constitutes one of the basic principles of social democracy as expressed in the 1989 Declaration of Principles of the Socialist International;

CONSIDERING: That the alliance of social and political forces, setting aside individual interests and past differences, with the ultimate aim to guarantee for their peoples complete wellbeing, sustainable development and prosperity for each and every person of society must be the purpose of all political activity;

CONSIDERING: That in our region, the experiences of Venezuela with the *Pacto de Punto Fijo*, and of Chile with the *Concertación*, as well as of Spain with the *Pacto de la Moncloa*, each one within their own determined historic, social and political circumstances, were key factors in the consolidation of their respective nations as vibrant economies and solid democracies and serve as an example to promote a productive dialogue between different political organisations with a view to achieving prosperity for all;

CONSIDERING: That the thesis of Shared Government supported by Dr José Francisco Peña Gómez, one of the founding leaders of social democracy in our region, is the ideological essence underpinning the Alliance between the Dominican Revolutionary Party and the Dominican Liberation Party, ahead of the upcoming elections on 15 May 2016;

RESOLVES: To express its recognition of the unifying efforts made by the Dominican Revolutionary Party, represented by its president Ing. Miguel Vargas, and the Dominican Liberation Party, represented by the President of the Republic and Presidential Candidate Lic. Danilo Medina, to secure the Agreement for a Shared Government of National Unity aiming at a comprehensive reform of the State, with measures that will guarantee social inclusion, a substantial improvement of public services and outstanding institutional reforms.

Resolution on Venezuela

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Santo Domingo on 1-2 April 2016, expresses its deep concern at the Venezuelan political and institutional crisis resulting from the attitude of the government of President Nicolás Maduro who has been promoting a power struggle by using the Supreme Court of Justice against the autonomous decisions of the Venezuelan Legislative Power, following the result obtained by the political organisations of the *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática* (MUD), of a qualified majority of two thirds of the National Assembly, following the elections last December.

The Committee recalls that it is a principle of the Socialist International that no State can have political prisoners, least of all a democracy, and, in this sense, it expresses its satisfaction at the recent approval by the National Assembly of the Amnesty and Reconciliation Law. The Socialist International urges President Nicolás Maduro and all the Venezuelan institutions to recognise the sovereign decisions of the Assembly and not to hinder by any means the coming into force of this Law, which will allow the liberation of political leaders today held in jail, such as the former presidential candidate and leader of *Partido Un Nuevo Tiempo*, Manuel Rosales, the leader of *Voluntad Popular*, Leopoldo López, the Mayor Antonio Ledezma, the three members of parliament, Rosmit Mantilla, Gilberto Sojo and Renzo Pietro, elected on 6 December 2015, the students and many others who today remain unjustly in jail for political reasons, as well as the return of those in exile for political reasons, such as Carlos Ortega, Carlos Vecchio and Oscar Pérez among others.

The Socialist International rejects the undermining of the constitutional powers of the Venezuelan National Assembly by the Bolivarian government which, by means of the Supreme Court of Justice, makes rulings that violate the spirit of the Venezuelan National Constitution and compromises the values of the democratic system, which are based on the respect, the equilibrium and the autonomy of the powers of the state.

The Socialist International observes with concern the attacks on journalists and on editors of the independent media, and the use made by the state monopoly of the supplies of paper to the press in order to control information and freedom of expression.

The Socialist International calls on the Venezuelan Bolivarian government to concentrate their efforts in order to urgently resolve the grave problems and sufferings which today affect the Venezuelan people as a consequence of the crisis in hospitals and services and the food and medicine shortages that threaten to carry the country towards a humanitarian crisis of major proportions and serious consequences for future generations of Venezuelans. Therefore, the Socialist International calls on the government of Nicolás Maduro to engage in the dialogue that the National Assembly has unanimously convened as the only way towards reconciliation and to achieve solutions to the grave political, economic and social problems in the country today.

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 1-2 April 2016

Declaration on Brazil

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 1-2 April 2016, considering the political crisis facing the Federative Republic of Brazil:

Ratifies its commitment to democracy, in which it is fundamental to respect the people's will expressed in the polls with a free vote.

Expresses its solidarity to the Brazilian people and its democratic institutions.

Considers that all people involved in acts of corruption, the corrupt as well as the corrupters, must be brought to justice to answer for their actions.

Draws attention to the intention to initiate a process of political judgement of President Dilma Roussef, who was constitutionally elected by popular vote.

It cannot be accepted that a government elected by the people be substituted in a process where until now there exist no proofs that incriminate the President of the Republic, a fact that would constitute a real coup against the sovereign will of the people.

There is no sovereign greater than the people themselves.



| CIS, CAUCASUS AND BLACK SEA

SI calls for an immediate end to the confrontation between Azerbaijanis and Armenians

04 APRIL 2016

The Socialist International has followed with great concern the hostilities and attacks that have taken place in the last 48 hours between Armenians and Azerbaijanis with a regrettable loss of numerous lives.

Our International calls for an immediate ceasefire and for an end to these hostilities, and at the same time reiterates the urgent need for a resumption of dialogue within the framework of the Minsk Group, a body accepted by both Armenia and Azerbaijan and recognised by the multilateral organisations, to resolve through negotiation and in accordance with the principles of international law, the longstanding conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh.

The absence of a perspective for a solution in the prevailing atmosphere of belligerence and armaments build up has led to the current hostilities. Our International reiterates the need for a greater commitment by the international community as a whole to bring its influence to bear in favour of peace between Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

On the basis of the dialogue which has been carried out within our International by our member parties in Armenia and Azerbaijan, we call on them to actively contribute to this process.



| VENEZUELA

SI denounces ruling against amnesty and reconciliation law in Venezuela

12 APRIL 2016

The Socialist International denounces the grave disregard of the sovereign will of the Venezuelan people and the usurpation of powers by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) of the country, which yesterday declared as unconstitutional the Amnesty and National Reconciliation Law that had been approved by a majority in the National Assembly on 29 March this year.

The resounding electoral victory in the elections to the National Assembly at the beginning of December 2015 was based on a clear proposal to the people: an amnesty law which would facilitate and enable the normalisation of political life in Venezuela and the reconciliation of its society. Three months after assuming their functions, the representatives in the National Assembly honour their commitment and at the same time they are prevented from complying with the wishes of the Venezuelan people by a strongly questioned TSJ whose powers appear to be dominated by the party in office.

The International also profoundly regrets that the regime of president Nicolás Maduro, rather than accepting the offer extended by the opposition to advance a dialogue starting with a law that sets free the prisoners of conscience and permits the start of a normalisation of the country, instead ignores this opportunity, and takes refuge in authoritarian institutional bodies which are favourable to the regime, delaying the gaining of a greater democracy, which sooner or later will happen in Venezuela.

To the great majority of Venezuelans who last December expressed themselves in favour of change in the country, the International reiterates its solidarity and unwavering commitment with the cause of Venezuelan democracy. Faced with situations like these, the response should not be one of alienation or scepticism. Democracy is the only way to build a Venezuela which is more free, more just and with better opportunities for all. We will always be on the side of the Venezuelan people in all their efforts to achieve these objectives.



| GAMBIA

SI denounces criminal crackdown of demonstrators and arrest of SI member party leader in Gambia

16 APRIL 2016

The Socialist International denounces in the strongest terms the violent repression in recent days by government security forces in Gambia, of demonstrators demanding electoral reform and the right to free speech, and the arrest today of Ousainou Darboe, leader of the SI member United Democratic Party (UDP) of Gambia, following the storming of his home, and the rounding up and detention of other party officials and supporters who had gathered there.

Before his arrest, Darboe had denounced the violent crackdown of demonstrators and declared that they would go to claim back those detained and demand the handover of party organisation secretary Ebrima Solo Sandeng amid reports that he had been tortured to death under detention for taking part in the demonstrations.

Darboe declared that the demonstrators had done nothing wrong and were simply exercising their constitutional right, adding that he, along with other members of the party, would demand the release of their detained comrades, including a number of women, who are reportedly seriously injured.

The Socialist International is profoundly concerned and strongly condemns the violence and grave human rights violations perpetrated by the government against the political opposition in Gambia and demands a total clarification of the fate of UDP organisation secretary Ebrima Solo Sandeng and others arrested with him, and the immediate release of UDP party leader Ousainou Darboe and his colleagues.

Our International calls on the relevant authorities in the African Union and the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights to act urgently to protect the rights of all those today under serious threat in Gambia. The Socialist International also calls on its member parties in government to make representations to the government of Gambia for the immediate release of Ousainou Darboe and all those under detention. We equally call on all members of the international community to remain alert and vigilant to developments in Gambia, where President Yahya Jammeh, a former military officer who originally seized power in a coup in 1994, is known for repressing the opposition.

The Socialist International will do its utmost to contribute to the realisation of the aspirations and goals of its member party and other democratic forces in Gambia for the development of a society with freedoms and rights and an effective democracy. Presidential elections

scheduled for December this year must become, for the first time in the political history of the country, truly free and fair.



Ousainou Darboe, arrested leader of the UDP Gambia, at the offices of the SI in London at a recent meeting with the Secretary General of the SI



| EQUATORIAL GUINEA

The long road to democracy

26 APRIL 2016

It came as no surprise to anyone when the president of Equatorial Guinea's National Electoral Commission made his first announcement of preliminary results following the presidential elections held in that country on Sunday 24 April. With some 10 percent of the votes counted, the results reflected a 99.2 percent in favour of the incumbent President Teodoro Obiang who has ruled the country for the past 37 years. Nobody needs to wait for the final results, which are expected to be released in three days' time, as the outcome will show little difference. Every previous election held during his tenure has resulted in between 95 and 99 percent in his favour.

The main opposition party, the Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS), a member party of the Socialist International, along with the coalition of the Democratic Opposition Front (FOD), boycotted the elections, branding them as not credible due to the lack of democratic conditions and the persistent harassment and intimidation of the opposition.

Despite the country's oil wealth, the people of this small nation continue to suffer widespread poverty, inequality, injustice and lack of opportunity. Opposition forces, such as the CPDS, are stifled and prevented from engaging in the political life of the country. Under these conditions and the resulting repressive environment, elections are strictly controlled, cannot be trusted and cannot be considered democratic.

Obiang will certainly be declared the winner of these elections, by the president of his National Electoral Commission Clemente Engonga Nguema who at the same time serves as the Interior Minister and First Deputy Prime Minister of his government, thus extending his term in office by another 7 years, until 2023.

For the people of Equatorial Guinea, the long road to democracy continues. Our International stands in solidarity with them, with its member party, the CPDS, and all the other democratic opposition forces striving to make their voices heard. The international community should take notice and the world should heed their call.



| DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SI delegation observes elections in the Dominican Republic

13-16 MAY 2016

A delegation of the Socialist International was in the Dominican Republic from 13 to 16 May to observe the Presidential, Parliamentary and local elections held in that country on Sunday 15 May. The alliance, including the PLD and the SI member party, the PRD, has won a majority in these elections and the incumbent President, Danilo Medina, has been re-elected in the first round of voting with close to 62% of the vote.



Roberto Rosario, president of the Central Electoral Board (centre left) with members of the SI delegation, SI Secretary General Luis Ayala (centre right), Bernal Jiménez, SI Vice-President, PLN, Costa Rica (left) and Victor Benoit, SI Vice-President, Fusion, Haiti (right)



Some of the members of the SI delegation (from left to right): Jorge Farfán (APRA, Peru), Luis Florido (VP, Venezuela), Bernal Jiménez, (SI Vice-President, PLN, Costa Rica), Peggy Cabral (PRD, Dominican Republic), Luis Ayala (Secretary General of the SI), Victor Benoit (SI Vice-President, Haiti), Edgar Zambrano (AD, Venezuela) and Timoteo Zambrano (UNT, Venezuela)



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| COMMISSION ON INEQUALITY

Defeating inequality in the world economy - a global plan of action

| 03-04 JUNE 2016



Latifa Perry

The Socialist International Commission on Inequality held its first meeting on 3-4 June 2016 in Brussels, hosted by the Socialist Party of Belgium, PS. The Commission had been established by the SI to put forward new ideas, innovative concepts and policies to defeat inequality in the world economy. With a view to drawing on the accumulated experience at the helm of government on matters related to the issues in the remit of the Commission, its membership includes a number of current and former heads of state and government and other leaders drawn from all continents.

Attending the meeting were: leader of the host party and chair of the Commission **Elio Di Rupo**, former Prime Minister of Belgium and an SI Vice-President; **George Papandreou**, SI President and former Prime Minister of Greece; **Luis Ayala**, SI Secretary General; and Commission members **Laura Chinchilla**, former President of the Republic of Costa Rica; **Eero Heinälouoma**, former Deputy Prime Minister of Finland, former Finance Minister and former Speaker of the Parliament, and SI Vice-President; **Ricardo Lagos**, former President of the Republic of Chile; **Marian Lupu**, former President of the Republic of Moldova, former Minister of the Economy, Leader of the Democratic Party of Moldova, PDM, and SI Vice-President; **Richard Parker**, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the University of Harvard, former advisor to Senator Kennedy, former President of Americans for Democratic Action, ADA, from the Democratic Party, USA; **Anand Sharma**, former Foreign Minister and of Trade and Commerce of India, Deputy Leader of the Indian National Congress and Deputy leader of the INC parliamentary group in the Indian Parliament; **Mohamed Bazoum**, Minister of the Interior of Niger and President of the Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger, PNDS, participating on behalf of Commission member **HE Mahamadou Issoufou**, President of the Republic of Niger; and **Ajay Bramdeo**, representative of the African Union, on behalf of Commission member **Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The Commission also includes **Salceem Mandviwalla**, former Finance Minister of Pakistan, Senator of the Pakistan People's Party, PPP, and Chairperson of the Committee on Finance of the Senate of Pakistan.

Over the course of the two-day meeting, participants were in agreement that inequality represents one of the most serious challenges undermining our democracies, our societies and our common future, and that the main objective of the Commission was to define concrete steps that the social democratic movement could take to reduce inequality. In this first meeting, participants identified a number of overarching concepts in relation to inequality, and underlined that a coordinated global effort would be necessary to confront and reverse increasing economic inequality within and between societies, countries and regions of the world.

Participants were unanimous in their support for the notion that access to education is a powerful tool to reduce inequality in future generations. Reducing inequality requires the defence of free education in the developed world, where it is coming under increasing threat, and a redoubling of efforts to expand education provision in the developing world, with particular emphasis on those previously denied education in the past, namely the poorest in society and girls. Commission members observed however that the young generation in many countries was already the most highly educated in history, but continued to struggle due to the lack of opportunities for meaningful and secure employment. Education for all is a prerequisite for a more equal society, but not a cure for all the diverse causes of inequality.

Concern was thereby expressed over the prevalence of jobless growth, which has led to many of those who are able and qualified to work being denied the opportunity. Discussions on employment also incorporated the related issue of trade and workers' rights, which are closely linked to inequality. The erosion of workers' rights is a major cause of global inequality and trade agreements need therefore to include basic standards of rights for workers, which will also enable democratic governments to push back against the efforts of huge transnational companies to use their economic power to exert influence over governments, leading to a worsening in working conditions.

A clear link was identified between action on climate change and addressing inequality, which represent the two most crucial tasks in the 21st century. The inequalities in the world economy are also reflected in the disparity in per capita emissions between developed and developing countries, and their responsibility for historical emissions. It is also the case that the principle well known to climate change negotiations of common but differentiated responsibilities can be applied to tackling inequality. Although action on inequality is necessary everywhere, due to diverse starting points and stages of economic development the exact nature of this action is highly differentiated.

The differentiated approach that would be required in order to tackle inequality was a key feature of the discussions, with participants bringing local perspectives on the most pressing issues facing their countries and regions. This was an ample demonstration of the importance of the diverse composition of the Commission, which is a great strength. It was stressed that there is no one size fits all approach to tackling inequality, and that therefore the conclusions of the Commission must respect the different challenges faced in different continents.

Participants from the EU and the US noted the impact of the great recession on levels of equality, as a result of post-recession growth accumulating disproportionately in the hands of the already wealthy. The problem of wealth concentration in the hands of the richest one per cent persists, and is relevant on both a regional and global level. One proposed solution to this injustice was the exploration of ways to increase taxes on capital, which is currently taxed at a lower rate than income in many jurisdictions.

In Latin America, the problem of inequality is of paramount importance, as a result of a failure to significantly reduce inequality despite economic development and rising average incomes. For the members of the Commission, this demonstrates why in many ways measures such as GDP per capita are given too much pre-eminence when it comes to determining which economies are successful. Once annual incomes get beyond a threshold of approximately \$20,000 per capita, there is a much stronger correlation between the level of economic equality and general well-being than between total income and well-being and this was one of the motivating factors behind the support of the Commission for efforts to give additional prominence to the Gini coefficient in order to embed income distribution as a measure of development.

The concept of economic justice is a vital principle for many developing countries, particularly in Asia, where 60% of the world's population live, and development remains the key to poverty reduction. There, raising incomes is a vital first step to reducing inequality. Nonetheless, participants stressed that inequality is not simply a question of income but also very much relates to the provision of food security, healthcare and education.

Commission members from Africa raised the issue of the link between conflict, insecurity and inequality. Inequalities on an international level exacerbate poverty, which is a source of conflict. A lack of security also undermines efforts by democratic governments to implement the policies that would bring about a reduction in inequality. These challenges are particularly acute in the Sahel region of Africa.

As a result of this first round of discussions on tackling global inequality, the Commission members agreed on a series of fundamental policies that need to be put into effect to deliver a reduction in inequality. These included the need to end tax havens; implement more progressive taxation; explore ways to tax capital at a higher rate than wages where applicable; create a link between GDP and Gini coefficient as a measure of prosperity; reaffirm the crucial role of education as a prerequisite for reducing inequality; end discrimination on the grounds of gender, nationality and ethnicity; reform international institutions in order that they reflect contemporary realities; couple economic justice with climate justice and a reduction in emissions; intensify the struggle against corruption; tie minimum wages to median income; and pursue conflict resolution to bring the stability needed to reduce inequality.

The Commission will hold its next meeting in Niamey, the capital of Niger, at the invitation of Commission member HE *Mahamadou Issoufou*, President of the Republic, in the first half of September. The Niamey meeting will build, deepen and continue the discussions, advancing in the preparation of a comprehensive report on inequality. The forthcoming SI Council in Geneva in July will include discussions on the theme of inequality, during which the global membership of the SI will have the opportunity to contribute to this debate and the development of the Commission's report.

| OTHER ACTIVITIES

Meetings and Reports of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues

04 FEBRUARY 2013

Making the case for meaningful agreements at COP17

07-09 DECEMBER 2011

SI Commission and environment ministers set priorities and targets for Durban

30-31 OCTOBER 2011

Hope regained in Cancún 14 DECEMBER 2010

In Mexico, Socialist International outlines priorities for COP16

26-27 NOVEMBER 2010

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