



SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

For a New Internationalism and a New Culture of Solidarity

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

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Socialist International
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FOR A NEW INTERNATIONALISM AND A NEW CULTURE OF SOLIDARITY

I am pleased to present this report to the XXIV Congress of the Socialist International in Cape Town. This is the first time our Congress is being held in Africa. The struggle of the people of this continent for a society of rights, freedoms and democracy not only brought down dictatorships, broke barriers and opened new horizons for all, but in doing so, sowed the seeds from where political parties, movements and organisations inspired by the ideals of social democracy have grown and flourished in Africa. Indeed, social democracy in Africa is today a pillar of our worldwide movement and political parties from this continent form the democratic governments or the oppositions that conduct and determine the political life in many countries.

We come here, all of us, from all over the world, in the year of the 100th anniversary of the foundation of our member, the African National Congress, to forge together a path where the challenges of a new world can be met under the banner of A New Internationalism and a New Culture of Solidarity.

Since our last Congress in Athens, the Socialist International has not ceased in its efforts to secure our common goals and to find the right place in today's society for our common values and ambitions. In a time of great change, where the political landscape has altered considerably, our organisation faces, perhaps more than at any other time, the task to bring the hope and the promise of social democracy to fruition. To work tirelessly to imagine a better alternative to the current global financial system, to defend democracy and human rights, to promote multilateralism for a more sustainable global future, and to encourage and build a world society based on solidarity among people and between nations.

In the pages that follow, you will find details of the many initiatives that our International, with very limited resources, but with a huge will to succeed, has been conducting in the last inter-Congress period. Our President, the members of our Presidium, the chairs of our Committees, and all those who have been part of this journey deserve our organisation's heartfelt thanks.

Luis Ayala, London, August 2012

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RESPONSE TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

‘The global crisis has revealed the enormous inadequacies and fallacies upon which our financial system is based. The extent of the system’s failure is such that we cannot continue living in a world where the inequality gap keeps widening, our environment is dramatically deteriorating and where the financial world is driven by speculative and unbridled practices. Growing inequality in our societies is at once a moral, economic, and political failure resulting in low aggregate demand, high debt for hundreds of millions, and a desperate sense of powerlessness for our citizens – pointing to the capture of our democratic processes by powerful special interests.

The challenge of the 21st century is to align the global economic system with the values and principles of a democratic and fair society. We are not looking to reformulate the old institutions but to create a new system, which will guarantee a shared prosperity and wellbeing for all people.’

SI Message to the London G-20 Summit from the Socialist International Commission on Global Financial Issues, New York, 31 March 2009

Presidium, United Nations, New York



On **26 September 2008**, Socialist International leaders met at the **United Nations in New York** to address the financial crisis. Heads of State and Government that were present included H.E. Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile; H.E. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland; H.E.

Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq; Alfred Gusenbauer, Chancellor of Austria; H.E. Martín Torrijos, President of Panama; H.E. Boris Tadic, President of Serbia and Sanjaagiin Bayar, Prime Minister of Mongolia. Invited guests from the U.N. also participated, including the Director General of the ILO, Juan Somavía, the

Administrator of the UNDP, Kemal Dervis, and the Executive Secretary of the ECLAC, Alicia Bárcena.

Our Presidium discussion highlighted the magnitude and extent of the crisis. Warning signs of global vulnerability were evident in a model based on irresponsible economic greed combined with poor political management and regulation. Members urged a move away from societies based solely on money creating money, and a return to real and sound economies.

At this early stage, we emphasised the need for clear and transparent financial rules and called for the establishment of a World Financial Organisation to strengthen international regulation and accountability. We were unanimous that a progressive response needed an integrated approach, with financial, economic, social and environmental concerns given equal importance. Our concern was to also stress that the crisis must not detract from achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nor did we want the international community to regress on tackling poverty and global inequities.

During the course of the meeting, all agreed that the situation represented not ‘an era of change, but the change of an era’. This significant moment for social democratic forces could clearly define a new paradigm and real solutions. To this end, the Presidium decided to establish a Socialist International Commission on Global Financial Issues to deliver clear and timely guidelines and a roadmap out of the crisis.

First meeting of the Commission on Global Financial Issues, Vienna, Austria



Prof. Stiglitz and GFI Commission Members

We organised a series of meetings of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, the first of which took place in **Vienna, Austria** on **3 November 2008**. The Commission brought together political leaders, ministers and experts from continents worldwide, and was chaired by the renowned Nobel laureate, Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

Our Vienna meeting, hosted by the Chancellor of Austria and Commission member, Alfred Gusenbauer, highlighted the principles guiding the global social democratic response to the global financial crisis. Given the urgency of the crisis, and its effects on emerging and developing countries, we set out five practical initiatives to assist those directly affected. Calling for a new relationship between governments and the market, we underlined that



GFI Commission, Vienna

confidence would not be restored in the financial markets unless behaviour was changed through comprehensive and robust regulation, accompanied by far-reaching reforms made to the international financial system.

Our first five proposals were: a Social Protection Fund to aid developing countries with inadequate social protection schemes; a Small Enterprises Development Fund to support small businesses; a Financing Infrastructure Fund to help stimulate the economy; support for a short-term liquidity line for emerging and developing countries to be immediately established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF); new sources of funding and lending facilities to be found to rectify insufficient financial resources in multilateral institutions and regional development banks, as well as more fundamental reforms in global economic governance. These proposals were expanded upon in a Commission statement titled *For a new relationship between government and the market*.

Council, Vallarta, Mexico

At our Council meeting in **Vallarta, Mexico**, on **17-18 November 2008**, our movement took the opportunity to discuss further our position on the developing crisis. It was hosted by our member parties from Mexico, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, and the Party of Democratic Revolution, PRD.

High on our agenda was the critical role of politics, government and regulation in securing a sustainable and fair global economy. We additionally debated the changing international situation following the election of President Barack Obama in the United States and, further, opportunities for international cooperation and multilateralism.

Discussion focused on a comprehensive approach to the crisis, addressing not only the financial aspect but also its connections with environmental and energy issues, and poverty. New responsibilities and opportunities had opened for the global social democratic movement to place its concerns at the heart of the agenda for a new economic paradigm. We emphasised that these concerns were jobs, pensions, health, education and democratic governance.



A return to politics was essential and thus we proposed a new financial architecture, based on social democratic principles. We listed a series of interesting innovative approaches and best practices for social inclusion policies across the world, especially in emerging and developing countries. Examples included policies from Mexican migrant workers, social development projects in Guatemala, job creation policies in Angola, social inclusion programmes for indigenous peoples in Peru, and the need for democratic development in Equatorial Guinea.

Commission on Global Financial Issues, United Nations, New York

We reconvened our Commission on Global Financial Issues at the United Nations in **New York** on **31 March 2009**, to continue discussions on our response to the financial crisis, in advance of the 2009 G-20 summit that was due to be held in London.

Our Commission Chair, Professor Joseph Stiglitz, gave an introduction before opening the floor for a critical discussion on the inadequacies and fallacies of the economic system that have led to greater inequality and crisis around the globe. We called for a new set of rules for the world economy, rules under which citizens are not subservient to the market. It is necessary to guarantee that markets serve



people's needs, instead of letting them bear the worst of the crisis. We issued a message to the leaders of the G-20 calling for decisive international action, demanding that global leaders act now to restructure, re-regulate, and reform the global financial system. The Commission further called for new standards governing financial activities by function, the establishment of new mandatory standards for transparency and timeliness, the closure of tax havens, and the establishment of a new World Finance Organisation to set global standards and globalise enforcement. We acknowledged that the G-20 framework was a step forward in the search for a coordinated global response by the international community, but the aim should be to engage other nations in the pursuit of the common solutions to the crisis that were sought by all.

Council, Budva, Montenegro

Since its earliest days, the financial crisis never left our attention. We continued to focus on its impact across the globe, to build and disseminate proposals to alleviate this, and introduce financial reforms. We organised our next Council meeting in **Budva, Montenegro**, on **29-30 June 2009**.

Prime Minister Milo Djukanović of the Democratic Party of Socialists warmly welcomed us and, reflecting on his party and coalition's success



Milo Djukanović and Ranko Krivokapić

in the 2009 elections, said that in a ‘...major financial crisis such as this one, universal values were needed more than ever’.

The Speaker of the Parliament and leader of the Social Democratic Party, Ranko Krivokapić, expressed his honour in hosting the largest international organisation of its kind in the world, noting the need for an International such as ours during a time when the world faced new crossroads and challenges.



Addressing the effect of the crisis on the real economy, he told delegates that history will be the judge of how well governments and parties respond to the current crises the world faces.

President George Papandreou said freedom had been measured in terms of the money one had to consume, or the credit one was allowed by the banking system. Socialists, he stressed, defined freedom as the real power a citizen has to decide the direction their neighbourhood, city, village, nation should take. People should not be regarded simply as consumers, he continued, there is only one way for progress: societies must become more equal, more just, more humane, and citizens must be empowered.

Eero Heinäluoma, SI Vice-President from Finland and member of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, gave a keynote address. He stressed that politics must regain its role in steering development, and that justice cannot be achieved without addressing old privileges and structures that create inequality. He noted the need to get the economy growing again in a sustainable way through strong stimulation policies, policies that have been at the core of social democratic economic thinking for decades. He was followed by the Chair of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources, Christoph

Zöpel, who, in discussing the reconstruction of the world economy, put forward the benefits of a global welfare statehood, a model in which all people are employed, and elderly populations enjoy social security.

SI Vice-President Ségolène Royal observed that, in the face of the crisis, socialists have a higher responsibility. People expect us to produce order from chaos and it is incumbent upon us to put into place new rules to reduce inequality and ensure security. We are at a crossroads and face multiple challenges, she added, describing the current crisis as one of civilization. Socialist International Women President, Pia Locatelli, further defined the crisis as a man-made disaster. She stressed that women are still not significant bearers of political power and remain virtually excluded from decision-making in the financial sector, but have been hit the hardest by the economic downturn. She called for a gender-based dimension to crisis solutions and recovery, including investments in childcare, education, health care, and jobs for women. In adopting a resolution on the World Economy, we also reiterated that the crisis must not jeopardise the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, lest as many as 100 million more people remain poor or fall into poverty.

Council, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic



We evaluated the financial crisis again at our Council meeting held in **Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 23-24 November 2009**. We agreed a resolution outlining the consequences of the financial crisis policy that had been adopted by many governments. The resolution noted that Gross World Product (GWP) had shrunk in 2009. As a consequence of the global economic crisis, global inequality has increased and the shrinkage of GWP in 2009 and the slow growth expected

for 2010 remained linked to rising unemployment. The resolution additionally outlined enormous disparities in levels of development since the downturn. In assessing solutions to the effects of the crisis the resolution suggested that China and India, as rising economies, assume more responsibility for global economic development. China, for example, had substantial savings that it could have used to pump-prime domestic demand and improve its social security systems.

The resolution put forward a strategy of coordinated global policy. Reducing stimulus packages creates 'negative shock' on the economy. Unbalanced, sudden, and especially premature reductions in these stimulus packages could lead to an interruption in the recovery process. Many states have taken on large amounts of debt in order to prevent the crisis worsening. Even without such countervailing actions, deficits would have grown, because downturns lead to lower tax revenues and greater expenditures. The way that the bailouts were handled in several states especially contributed to the size of long-term public debt. Governments naturally respond to these mounting deficits by cutbacks in expenditures, yet it is imperative that services to the poor and basic investments in areas such as infrastructure, education and technology be maintained. Failing to ensure this, we said, will increase long-term crisis costs and impose additional costs on innocent victims of this crisis.

We found, unequivocally, that the financial sector must bear the costs of the crisis. The repeated bailouts are subsidies to the financial sector, and such subsidies contribute to an over-bloated sector and undermine incentives. Further, protectionist measures by developed states constitute the greatest danger, reducing export opportunities for less developed states. Africa, South East Europe and Mexico, among others, would be hit by these policies. Some of the stimulus packages that have been adopted involve unfair trading practices by providing subsidies and incentives to domestic firms. This constrains the recovery of less developed states, which do not have the resources to implement fiscal stimulus measures and provide support to their domestic industries. We welcomed London and Pittsburgh G20 Summit commitments to refrain from raising new barriers to investment or trade in goods and services, from imposing new export restrictions, and from implementing non-WTO-compatible measures to stimulate exports.

Commission on Global Financial Issues, University of Columbia, New York

The financial crisis, whilst peaking in 2008, endured in the years since. The magnitude of the crisis and global extent of its effects meant that recovery could not be quickly achieved. During 2009 we became extremely concerned at media



GFI Commission, New York

rumours implying the crisis was over. On **21 September 2009**, we organised a meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues at the **University of Columbia in New York**, to draw up a Report on the global financial situation at the time. Professor Joseph Stiglitz; Alfred Gusenbauer, former Austrian Chancellor and Vice-President of the SI; Elio di Rupo, Leader of the Socialist Party of Belgium and SI Vice-

President; Eero Heinaluoma, SI Vice-President, from Finland; and Martín Torrijos, former President of Panama and SI Vice-President, among others, joined us. Although it was true that financial indicators were showing better results at the time, at the global level unemployment figures remained unacceptably high, and we knew there was a danger of them increasing. At that time, global growth amounted to around 1%, which could not be considered robust enough to be convincingly reassuring. We concurred that the measures taken to combat the crisis should be maintained. ‘Exit strategies’, we reaffirmed, would place pressure on budget deficit considerations as well as increase public debt. We warned of the risk of a ‘reversal in the containment of the crisis’, from the severely affected real economy to the financial sector. Further, some of the most vulnerable groups affected perceived rescue packages as unjust, generating understandable feelings of anger and disaffection. To mitigate this we stressed it was indispensable that social policies and aid must not be affected or suppressed with the pretext of fiscal rescue.

Unemployment had significantly risen in Europe. While the region was expected to grow in 2010 and 2011 by levels close to 1%, this was clearly not sufficient to reactivate the economy, and unemployment levels were likely to remain high. In fact, employment recovery to pre-crisis levels could take four to five years, signifying the need for a reinforcement of pro-employment measures. Our Commission considered details of *The Global Jobs Pact*, proposed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which involved correcting the imbalances that existed prior to the crisis. The need was to re-establish equilibrium between the State, society, the individual and the market – as opposed to placing the economy above society or the environment, productivity over salaries, or capital

over jobs. We recognised that for a significant number of citizens, the financial and banking sector had, before the crisis, represented a certain security. The crisis had exposed a crucial weakness in governance. Politics should provide reassurance and build confidence. The Report also considered that the concentration of aid packages in larger institutions had not been equal. Packages to smaller, local and regional banks, would allow for easier channels of access to credit for small and medium-sized businesses. Further difficulties faced by countries included a lack of willingness by some governments to increase public expenditure, the impact on the economies dependent on their export sector affected by low international demand, and a weak consumer sector.

Presidium and Council, United Nations, New York

The report by the GFI Commission meeting, held at the University of Columbia, was presented to the SI Presidium two days later, on **23 September 2009**, as we gathered at the **United Nations in New York**. Together with a number of Heads of



Council, United Nations, New York

States and Governments we addressed the crisis. The Commission highlighted the priorities from the social democratic perspective with regard to the present phase of the crisis and the Pittsburgh G20 Summit. ILO Director General, Juan Somavía, also presented his organisation's initiative, *Global Jobs Pact*.

We developed a further report the following year at our Council meeting, also held at the **United Nations in New York**, on **21-22 June 2010**. The Council was preceded on 19 June by a meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues to prepare the proposal. Looking to assess the report and the global economy in the run-up to the G8 and G20 Summits in Toronto, Eero Heinäluoma presented a statement that the global economy still required well-coordinated economic policy between the world's major economies, as well as financial reform, new counter-cyclical capital requirements and greater global governance.

Commission on Global Financial Issues, Poros, Greece



We scheduled the next meeting of the Commission on Global Financial Issues in **Poros, Greece, on 12 July 2010**. Our President, George Papandreou, was on this occasion, also our host. Professor Joseph Stiglitz welcomed the participants that included guest academics from the United States, Professor James

Galbraith and Richard Parker, and British political analyst Peter Kellner.

We opened by expressing disappointment at the lack of a unified strategy to emerge from the Toronto G-20 conference, and took the opportunity to reiterate a call for multilateral solutions to what remained a global crisis. The participants discussed the sovereign debt crisis, the latest manifestation of shifting economic concerns from private to public finances, and the role of ratings agencies and speculators.

A lack of aggregate demand at a national and global level was highlighted as the driving factor behind the 2010 phase of the financial crisis. When the private sector bubble collapsed in late 2008, government investment was needed to pick up demand, but during 2010 there was simply not sufficient global demand for all affected countries to export their way out of their predicament. At this meeting, we suggested three mechanisms to increase aggregate demand. Firstly, a redistribution of income by such means as a bank levy or increased income tax on high earners that would move wealth from those who are not spending to those who would; second, a new global reserve system that could distribute money to developing countries, giving them purchasing power and helping to drive demand by using resources that would otherwise be idle; and third, as many of the banks were saddled with past liabilities, we proposed new financial institutions such as development banks and green banks that could create new credit mechanisms, enabling credit to flow once more to ensure resources would meet public needs. Considering that emerging economies generate over 50% of GWP, we further considered options on stimulating global aggregate demand. Emerging states have the capacity to drive growth and demand through a period of recovery, if finance and resources to spend are made available.

Participants also expressed their reactions to the latest wave of austerity measures proposed by European governments. We agreed the strategy of cutting a way out of the crisis would not work. The inevitable consequence of austerity measures would be an increase in unemployment levels, already high at the time, that would further reduce government revenues and risk a return to recession. A collapse in revenues would account for half of all the increase in budget deficits since the start of the crisis, with discretionary governmental stimulus policies making up only 7.5% of that increase. At this meeting, we highlighted that a further fall in revenues as a result of austerity measures would unquestionably exacerbate deficit problems. Members of the Commission agreed more realistic targets were needed for budget consolidation.

Further agreement called for a more transparent financial sector, improved system of global governance, and lessons learnt from the aftermath of the bank bailout, where the use of funds was at times inconsistent with the reasons for which they were provided. As noted previously, we called again for bank investment in the real economy, and in small and medium-sized businesses, rather than high-risk investments. We demanded the social democratic alternative should be consistent with the basic social values of sustainable human and economic development. The SI had to be at the forefront of this alternative to the narrative of cuts and austerity invoked by those who led the world economy into crisis.

Some participants in Poros had, in the past, lived in countries that had not been models of democracy but were repressive and dominated by personal interests. There was therefore a feeling that the debate should not be presented in terms of the state versus the market, but how to make the market serve the people. Global governance is worth fighting for. It was thought promising that a growing consensus favoured a financial transaction tax. This SI promoted initiative would redistribute some of the additional aggregate wealth created by free movement of goods. The subsequent increase in global wealth could then provide people with more



Discussions with Prof. Joseph Stiglitz and George Papandreu

security and adequate social insurance. The gathering in Poros resulted in a firm consensus that the emphasis should be on growth, with a long-term goal of reducing public debts and budget deficits once recovery is secure.

In 2011, three years after the outbreak of the global financial crash, protests continued across the globe by disillusioned citizens and victims of the economic crisis. Since the downturn, the International has stood in solidarity with those participating in a movement inspired by an honest desire to make a difference. It was refreshing to witness the rebirth of the ideals of cooperation and common humanity shown by these activists.

In October 2011, we released the following statement of solidarity:

We Are All *Indignados*

A feeling of unrest is sweeping the world. Thousands of citizens from all walks of life have gathered to march, protest and occupy in main cities around the world. This growing movement by outraged citizens, *indignados*, has been characterised by diversity. The demonstrations have spread to major financial centres in New York, the City of London and at the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. Thousands have marched in the streets of Santiago, Tokyo and Cairo. These people have come together to express their anger and frustration at existing economic and political realities, which have failed us, and, especially the current speculative nature of global financial capitalism, that created the bubble that burst in 2008, leaving the global economy in chaos and taxpayers to bear the cost.

It is unacceptable that those banks that made huge profits from the indebtedness of states and individuals were able to socialise their losses as we saw in the huge bailouts of 2008-9, without severe constraints and regulation in the aftermath. To see a return to risk-taking, speculation and profiteering within such a short space of time is an affront to those suffering the policies of austerity felt in the real economy. Citizens are rightly directing their anger at those who became extremely wealthy promoting complex financial schemes. Whilst delivering no tangible benefit to anyone outside the economic bubble, this behaviour directly precipitated the global financial crisis and its destructive impact on the lives of hundreds of millions around the world, resulting in an ever-growing disparity in income and wealth in those economies. As bankers continue to benefit from state funds and tax loopholes, the effects of cuts are felt, with rises in unemployment, declining salaries and worsening working conditions. The values and principles of

the global social-democratic movement are aligned with those myriad individuals uniting to decry this injustice, and the Socialist International stands today on the side of those who through these demonstrations seek a fair financial system, and will ensure that their demands are heard. It is equally crucial not to allow conservatives and those with an interest in maintaining the status quo to misrepresent their initiatives by spreading fear of anarchy and chaos. We recognise common goals with those protesting: more and better jobs, the respect of people before capital, free healthcare and education.

We reiterate our call for world leaders to show due consideration for the interests of the majority. A coordinated show of multilateralism by governments is needed. A more just and prosperous future must move away from short-termism, personal interest and profit to a more durable vision of a global economy that rewards responsibility and not risk. Initiatives long promoted by the SI would contribute to this: for example, the global tax on financial transactions. This would raise revenue whilst reducing the profitability of the most risky, socially useless transactions. Also, the influence of rating agencies must diminish. For elected administrations to be destabilised by unaccountable bodies is a threat to the very principles of democracy.

Our global movement has consistently prioritised a recovery based on sustainable growth in the real economy, and not another speculative bubble liable to burst at any moment. With improved global governance, market reform and fairer distribution of resources, we can design a financial system aligned to the benefit of the many rather than the few. We can provide greater security, stability and social justice. The challenge is to transform the urgency and determination of the street into concrete political action. This must be the task of our International today.

Conservative parties had obscured the consequences of the global financial crash in order to allow them flexibility over fiscal policies. As *We are all indignados* made clear, a unified plan of action was required, and it is this comprehensive policy that we agreed we would continue to seek.

Council Meeting, Athens, Greece

At our Council meeting in **Athens** on **1-2 July 2011**, hosted by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), delegates reconvened to monitor and re-evaluate the ongoing consequences of the financial crisis, in particular in light of recent events in Greece.



Michalis Karchimakis, General Secretary of PASOK, welcomed us. George Papandreou thanked participants and stressed the importance of regional and global cooperation in dealing with the current phase of the global financial crisis. Greece had suffered the consequences of unregulated financial markets and the negative impact of speculation. The Greek people, through the vote in parliament on the eve of the Council, had stood their ground, and now Europe, the international financial institutions, and politics should play their role in shaping the future.

In his speech, Papandreou explained the difficult decisions he had been dealing with in order to save Greece after its economic crisis.

‘These decisions’ he said, ‘were socially necessary decisions, to save workers’ wages, pensioners’ wages, small and medium-sized enterprises from default. These were painful decisions, but decisions to give us the time, the opportunity and the hope for real and deep change in our country, in our society.’

‘The Greek crisis’ he continued has also ‘highlighted a wider crisis, in Europe and in the world. But today Europe has another potential, which it has not realised.



And it is to humanise globalisation, to humanise the globalising economy. And this is a challenge for us progressives around the world.'

Papandreou observed we have pooled our sovereignty, and must continue with this to deal with the financial crisis. Problems have been hidden, 'We were able to borrow cheaply, not make the necessary changes that we should have made,

but also when the crisis struck then we could not borrow at all, while others could. And the differences in the rates of borrowing, the interest rates of borrowing, do not allow us to be competitive. These are systemic problems we must deal with, and find the will to do so.'

Crucially, he questioned whether we were living up to our responsibilities – three years after the financial crisis, the reason for the collapse has still not been addressed.

'Are we too weak to improve transparency on the financial markets and in areas such as the credit default swaps?

'We know that if a rating agency comes and degrades us one more notch they will have more power in their decisions than the Greek people and the parliamentarians in the Greek Parliament. And that is unacceptable in the world, if we want to have a democratic world'.

Quoting Nobel Prizewinner Amartya Sen, Papandreou said 'Financial institutions have a place in a democratic dialogue. But that is not the same thing as allowing the international financial institutions and rating agencies the unilateral power to command democratically elected governments.' He reiterated our call for a financial transaction tax, adding that regional support is integral for a sustainable economic future.

Papandreou concluded his strong presentation by stressing the choice must be in the hands of the people. This would be our democratic challenge; our potential must be in the hands of the many, not the hands of the few.

Redefining markets in a democracy - George Papandreou

The case of Greece was significant. Papandreou stressed that Greece's deficit was not simply a Greek phenomenon. It was, he said, due to the wider problem of market reaction to rising sovereign debt after economic crisis.

'After bailouts' Papandreou reported, 'governments in the developed world that had saved banks from a disaster were now being punished for the debt they had accrued with unsustainably high interest rates. This was compounded by the fact that the developed world found itself in a position of relative weakness because of a lack of competitiveness. Therefore growth in many parts of the developed world has been stymied.'

Greece was linked to the Eurozone, and faced high borrowing rates because, while the Eurozone had a common currency, it lacked an accompanying common economic policy – financial instruments to complete a fiscal union. Papandreou explained,

'In 2009, before elections, the conservative government declared the Greek deficit to be 4%. In reality, the deficit was 16% of GDP, and our debt had almost doubled during the five years of conservative government. We became an easy target for risk-averse markets, facing a series of coordinated attacks by speculators and rating agencies.'

'In order to stabilise the rapidly deteriorating economic situation in Greece' he continued, 'we made an agreement with the EU and the IMF to secure necessary funding. The conditions of these loans were to implement an ambitious fiscal consolidation programme that entailed deep sacrifices by the Greek people. By 2011, we achieved the largest deficit reduction ever within the Eurozone. We reduced the deficit from 36.6 billion euros in 2009 to 18.1 billion in 2011'.

Papandreou noted Ireland and Portugal took part in similar fiscal discipline programs. Markets continued to present problems, however, as Papandreou described, 'they pre-empt political decisions and override democratic institutions... the fact remains that Europe has been doing too little too late to tackle the crisis.' In the



case of Greece, it was the population that took the burden. Papandreou was compelled to propose a referendum to return the power to the people of Greece, to give them the opportunity to choose their future. He observed that: ‘This would also give our policies direct democratic legitimacy, an essential prerequisite to proceed with major reforms and break down the resistance of vested interests. While part of the political establishment in Europe reacted negatively, the referendum proposal changed the public debate. For the first time, parties that had vehemently objected to any fiscal or structural changes spoke out in favour of our Euro agreements.’

Papandreou invited Greece’s political parties to negotiate a national unity government. This would become the new administration, headed by Lucas Papademos. The Greek situation highlights our need for new policies in the aftermath of the economic crisis. In his report on Greece, Papandreou finished by considering that:

‘International financial institutions should be redesigned. We need greater democratic governance. We need transparency. We must redefine the role of markets, speculation and derivatives, rating agencies and tax havens. We shall continue to make our voice heard by promoting policies for social and environmental justice, and by securing the necessary development funds for the most vulnerable regions of the world.’

Presidium, United Nations, New York



Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq, and Mahamadou Issoufou, President of Niger

We held our annual meeting of the Presidium at the **United Nations Headquarters, New York on 23 September 2011**, in conjunction with the general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, which included discussions on the current impact and consequences of the global financial crisis. The event brought together Heads of State and Government from the Socialist International family.

The meeting was chaired by SI Vice-President Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq. Unable to leave very serious unfolding events in Greece, George Papandreou sent a letter to the Presidium underlining the positive and proactive role of the Socialist International and its members in campaigning for economic tools to encourage more sustainable and equitable growth.

Participating Heads of State and Government included President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger, also an SI Vice-President, President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia, President Boris Tadić of Serbia, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior of Guinea-Bissau, Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam of Mauritius and Prime Minister Igor Luksic of Montenegro, along with José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OAS).

We discussed in detail the ongoing impact and consequences of the global financial crisis on different areas of the world economy. President Tadić explained that in countries such as Serbia, their economic wellbeing was to a large extent determined by the fortunes of the global economy. He reflected upon the difficulties faced by all governments in tackling the results of a crisis on a scale none had predicted. Underlining the need for a recovery based on growth, Prime Minister Ramgoolam warned that emerging markets were at risk of suffering a similar crisis due to global economic interdependence. Prime Minister Luksic also addressed the need for progressives to reclaim the ideas originating from our movement, as the correct response to the crisis, and by these means to regain electoral competitiveness.



Presidium, United Nations, New York

SI Vice-Presidents participating in the debate called for stronger and more effective leadership on the European sovereign debt crisis, which, it was argued, could have been solved earlier with much less hardship if the political will had existed. Concerted action and cross-border cooperation was needed, within a multilateral framework of shared responsibility and the pursuit of initiatives such as Eurobonds and a financial transaction tax.

It was clear emerging economies would have to be part of the solution to the crisis due to continued strong growth, although the effects of the crisis had nonetheless been felt. Addressing the problem from a regional perspective, Secretary General Insulza outlined that although Latin America and the Caribbean had seen a decade of prosperity, vast inequalities in distribution of wealth had yet to be tackled and countries on the periphery still suffered the effects of the global crisis. He reiterated that no solution to the current crisis exists that can simply be applied to a single region.

FOUR YEARS ON... REASSESSING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

Council, San José, Costa Rica



The Council met in **San José, Costa Rica**, on **23-24 January 2012**, with ‘Financial Crisis, Markets and Democracy’ as one of its main themes. Hosted by the National Liberation Party (PLN), leaders and delegates from social democratic, labour and socialist parties around the world discussed the financial crisis four years after its initial impact. President of the Republic of Costa Rica, H.E. Laura Chinchilla, warmly welcomed us, and we saluted the country as a good example of successful social democratic policies. In opening, we stressed, social democrats were those most notable for providing progressive leadership and proposing solutions to the financial crisis. George Papandreou pointed to the urgent need to put markets to work for the common good and to keep the democratic process in control of speculators.



Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica

Almost four years on from the outbreak of the global financial crisis, it was clear economic problems were now deeper than ever. Growth in the global economy

was slowing, and citizens across the world suffered from increasing unemployment and cuts to public services. Actions long called for by the Socialist International, such as the redesigning of the global financial architecture, better regulation, promotion of sustainable growth and the strengthening of social protection, were more crucial than ever. These issues were recognised in the contributions made in San José, where participants took part in a constructive debate on prominent aspects on the global economy. A resolution of the Council was adopted unanimously that outlined a set of objectives: real growth, increased employment, stability, management of the sovereign debt crisis and its harmful effects on the economy. Once again, we argued in favour of the redesign of global financial institutions, the effective regulation of the financial sector, new instruments for development and sustainable growth.



GFI Commission, United Nations, New York

A 'progressive out of the crisis' blueprint

A few months later, we reconvened the Commission on Global Financial Issues at the **United Nations** in **New York**, on **4 April 2012**. Our meeting this time would focus on a global overview of this phase of the financial crisis and its ongoing regional ramifications.

We assessed the prospects for a turn-around in the US economy at this point, the sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone, as well as regional and global impacts. Further, we considered emerging economies and their expanding role in the recovery, the urgent needs of developing and undeveloped countries, and the policies of the international financial institutions in shaping recovery. These wide-ranging debates were necessary in order to devise strategies to place growth at the centre of the global agenda, and make a progressive 'out of crisis' blueprint.

In introductory remarks, Commission members noted that inadequate fiscal policies were responsible for prolonging the economic downturn. It was again acknowledged that the financial crisis had resulted from underlying problems in the global economy, namely the systemic problems in the banking and financial systems and macroeconomic problems of growing inequality leading to a deficiency in aggregate demand. We crucially observed that, according to data, inequality had worsened in this current phase of the financial crisis. Wages had stagnated or fallen and any growth of income coming out of the recovery has gone to the upper 1% of the highest earners. In the United States this 1% took nearly a quarter of the nation's income, which in terms of wealth, accounted for 40%. This redistribution from the bottom to the top, which was changing the face of society, was also adversely affecting aggregate demand, as people at the top save more than those at the bottom.

We need new thinking on how our societies are shaped and how our economies serve the needs of our citizens. Public spending and spending on social protection are not off the agenda – contrary to today's conservative political plans, they are not only in line with our ethics but are an economic necessity. Increased wages brings a rise in aggregate demand without further debt; additionally, the vast majority of people would support policies that would drive up wages. The SI could advance policies that would lead to coordinated rises in wages to stimulate recovery. The race to the bottom, where wages are slashed in a vain attempt to gain international competitiveness, must be stopped.

It has been shown, for example in Brazil and in other economies, that increasing minimum wages to reduce inequality has not been a barrier to continued growth. Instead, it has led to increased wages and purchasing power for those earning above minimum wage, whose income has risen in proportion to minimum wage increases.

The real cause of the 2008 financial crisis

An overwhelming sentiment among participants was that conservatives across the developed world had rewritten the history of the global financial crisis. By intentionally overlooking its true causes they were able to justify their ideologically founded austerity policies, harmful to growth and recovery. We have stressed that it is crucial to redress this approach, the acceptance of which has serious consequences for the prospects of getting out of the crisis. When objectively analysing the policies that precipitated the downturn, the facts bear out our arguments.



Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo and George Papandreou

The 2008 financial crisis was not caused by excessive government spending. It was not caused by waste and inefficiencies in the public sector. It was not caused by the cost of social security or people not working hard enough. It was not caused by too much regulation.

The real causes of the financial crisis were deliberate high-risk policies and actions, which directly precipitated the near collapse of the financial system. Aggressive lending, many cases of fraudulent behaviour and a greatly changed risk profile were among the key contributors. A lack of regulation of lending meant unaffordable loans were granted, often in the knowledge that they could not be paid back. Such unethical practices have led to financial ruin for thousands of families who do not see any justice in the way financial institutions have been bailed out only to continue unchecked with the pro-cyclical policies of the past.

Scare tactics, part of the accepted fabric of the financial system, have exacerbated the problem. Financial institutions were labelled as ‘too big to fail’, leaving governments’ hostage to the threat of the economy collapsing if they did not lend state support. Though there is a great deal of interdependence in the economy, global capital markets have divergent interests to society. There is understandable anger that institutions were bailed out after having acted irresponsibly.

In the Eurozone, the average deficit was only 0.6% of GDP just before the crisis in 2007. Therefore it is clear public spending cannot be blamed for current deficit levels. No democratic government has ever wasted resources on the scale of the trillions of dollars wasted through mismanagement in private sector financial institutions, yet the narrative we hear in no way reflects this.

Proactive, social democratic solutions

Fundamentally, there is a pressing need to question a system that is not working for most citizens, a system where a steadily growing economy does not result in

reduced unemployment or increased living standards for the least well off, but more concentration of wealth in the hands of those who are most well off.

Setting the historical record straight is only one part of the picture. During our meeting at the UN we also addressed the need for progressives to get ahead of rising events and provide proactive solutions to the current challenges faced by the global economy. We must focus on improving living standards and creating a better quality of life. Though globalisation was one of the contributing factors to the scale of the crisis that has touched countries across the developed and developing world, it has made it easier for us to appreciate that people across the globe need the same fundamental quality of life. Everyone desires the same basic standards of social protection, healthcare, job security, education and pensions. For decades, the large majority has accepted that profit maximisation is a precondition for growth, with profit pursued at the expense of the workforce – we stress that this is a misconception that must be challenged. At this moment of low growth and high unemployment, it is crucial to expand investment in order to stimulate growth. Progressives must underline that global growth is the best way to improve living standards in both the developed and developing world. This further will capture the enthusiasm and support of citizens.



Helen Clark, UNDP

Austerity has failed to result in growth in all cases where it was explicitly tried as a policy, with even the IMF acknowledging that austerity alone cannot resolve economic problems in the developed world. Today, this can be most clearly seen in the United Kingdom, where economic growth has stagnated under the current government's aggressive austerity policies. Though the facts show that austerity is not working, the debate has been framed so that any government that attempts to act against it will be crushed by the markets and ratings agencies.

Many analysts expound the idea of a trade-off in the economy, where equality and social justice is seen as incompatible with efficiency and growth. In fact, growing inequality reflects shrinking opportunity and a lack of social mobility, distortions in the economy which undermine efficiency, and under-investment in



Prof. Stiglitz and Commission Members

the areas of mutual benefit mentioned, such as infrastructure, education and technology. Democratic politics is at stake because policies have deepened inequalities, which has led to disillusionment with the democratic process. We now see campaigning to strip away rights of workers to transform this disillusionment into anger where labour rights are threatened and employment protection is decreased. This is particularly evident in the US where workers' protection is lower than any other developed country.

We therefore pursue change from the failed austerity agenda to a growth agenda as the only way to a sustained recovery. GDP alone is not a good way to measure the state of the economy. The progressive movement must be focussed not simply on growth, but on growth that benefits all society. The so-called economic recovery will be a jobless one if a structural transformation of the manufacturing sector results in lower employment. In the US, for example, if the current pace of recovery is continued, full employment will not be reached before 2025.

The pursuit of globally coordinated reform of the financial regulatory system also remains vital. As this chapter has highlighted, the SI has sought the implementation of a financial transaction tax, ending the abuse of anti-competitive practices and ensuring the transparency of credit default swaps. Alternative forms of investment such as green investment are important, as is investment in infrastructure projects and education.

Advancing the progressive agenda

The current dominance of conservatives and neo-liberals in government in the developed world makes it a challenging time for progressives to advance an agenda that will redress some of these imbalances. In the EU for example, this led to too many European summits dominated by those who want to reduce investment and government spending at all costs in a continuation of the pro-cyclical policies of pre-2008. The sovereign debt crisis has highlighted a crisis of

solidarity in the Eurozone, in contradiction with the principles upon which the EU is built.

A particularly damaging consequence of the crisis has been a rise in inequality and corresponding decrease in social mobility in many developed economies where social protection is less firmly established. Those countries following the Nordic model have maintained levels of social protection, with budget consolidation achieved by means such as the solidarity tax in Finland; the challenge for all governments must be to find just responses to the crisis that do not remove social protection from the most vulnerable. The unfounded argument that as a result of the crisis governments should cut back on social protection must be refuted wherever it is made.

Defining a new narrative will lay the foundation for an economy that works in the interests of more than just a few. To prevent a return to the excessive risk taking and unethical practices that were rife in many financial institutions, blind, unsubstantiated faith in the ability of the market to self-regulate must be eradicated. In the US, devotion to the ideology of deregulation resulted in an out of control financial sector, with those in charge ignoring the risks. More and deeper change is needed, to ensure that those who drive such policies are not left in charge of the recovery. Those with an interest in maintaining the status quo in the financial sector are a mobile elite, internationally organised through a corporate network.

To be successful, the progressive agenda needs both to mobilise the grassroots and to enhance cooperation and joint action between progressive forces from different countries and regions. One backlash against globalisation and the interdependence of the world's economies is a move towards protectionism, isolationism and economic nationalism. These cannot solve the problems faced by all economies. A key objective for social democrats must be to find common ground between democracy and globalisation.

REGIONAL RESPONSES TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Africa



In Africa, the need to work together for common goals in the aftermath of the economic crisis has been, and will continue to be, extremely significant. The SI Africa Committee met in **Dakar** on **19-20 June 2009**, under the heading 'From a time of crisis to a new era of inclusive partnership'. The Committee, hosted by the Socialist Party of Senegal and chaired by Ousmane Tanor Dieng, Secretary General of the party and the Committee Chair, brought together representatives from member parties across the African continent and beyond.

We were pleased to be received once again by our Senegalese comrades, who are part of the history of African socialism and our organisation, through the leadership and battles of two prominent men, Léopold Senghor and Abdou Diouf.



Ousmane Tanor Dieng

In Dakar, we discussed the lessons that can be learned from the financial crisis. Ousmane Tanor Dieng acknowledged that, although the crisis we faced has given rise to fear and anguish, we would now confront this new sequence of problems with a

refreshed sense of cooperation and social inclusion: political action must be placed at the service of human progress.

The Committee additionally referred to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) that were due to be signed between the European Union and CEDEAO, and raised the view that though the Doha negotiations had reached an impasse due to the issue of subsidies from industrialised countries, Doha could lead the African economies to bind themselves more strongly to the economies of the industrialised countries.

The Committee's wide-ranging discussion culminated in the adoption of the Declaration of Dakar. This called for measures of financial stabilisation, regulation for the financial system in the region, and the promotion of a diversified partnership between emergent countries and deprived nations. It was stressed that the EPA must rework multilateralism within an awareness of the concerns of African and European parties. The Committee called for strengthening of sub-regional and regional integration and an equal partnership.

We organised a meeting of our Africa Committee in **Windhoek, Namibia, on 29-30 July 2011**. Whilst the main theme of this meeting was democracy, which I detail in Chapter Two, the financial crisis formed an important part of our discussion on the economic agenda in Africa.



At the opening of the meeting, which was hosted by SWAPO, I underlined the crucial role of social democrats in Africa in leading the way for change and economic fairness. Chair of the Committee, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, highlighted the importance of good governance, which we argued was significantly linked to our economic agenda.

Participants concurred that the lack of good governance was hindering the continent's ability to deal with the ongoing consequences of the economic crisis. We agreed that populations of Africa must be able to voice its opinion in the face of global economic issues. Responding to the aspirations of African people would be vital in order to maximize the outcome of economic development efforts. Unanswered poverty resulting from the economic crisis, it was debated, would continue to affect peace in the region. It further had the potential to exacerbate conflict and corruption.

The most recent meeting we organised of our Africa Committee took place on **30-31 July 2012** in **Praia, Cape Verde**. Hosted by the African Party of Cape Verde's Independence, PAICV, delegates heard from José Maria Neves, Prime Minister of Cape Verde and President of the PAICV. The debate on the financial crisis was introduced by Cristina Duarte, Cape Verde Minister of Finance, who summarised the impact of the crisis on the region, its effects on the African economy and its repercussions on the African outlook, noting that regional drivers were key to a growing economy. A broad range of issues were highlighted, including money laundering, drug trafficking, corruption and national and regional crises leading to extremism and political uncertainty. These were considered important factors hindering growth and development in the region.



*Prime Minister José Maria Neves,
Cape Verde*

Participants underlined the fact that this global crisis needed a global response and as socialists we were looking for alternatives to the neoliberal approach of austerity. There was a call for clear regional leadership on this issue. We need to make sure that democratic rights and institutions were preserved while fighting the crisis. It was also seen as crucial to make the African voice heard at the international level and to be involved in decision-making that would impact the whole region. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants adopted the Praia Declaration, which highlighted these key points, as well as further themes that are covered later in this report.



SI Committee for South Eastern Europe, Tirana, Albania

South Eastern Europe

In South Eastern Europe political difficulties have been exacerbated by the global financial crisis. On **29 May 2010**, in **Tirana, Albania**, we organised a meeting of the Socialist International Committee for South Eastern Europe. The focus here was the Albanian crisis stemming from the 2009 parliamentary elections, but we additionally considered other regional developments. Delegates expressed concerns about the ability of Albania to deal with the pursuit of European integration while hampered by political and domestic crises and the effects of the global financial crisis.

Albania needed legitimate and strong political institutions and efficient, inclusive government within a clear framework in order to respond effectively to the financial crisis and the challenges of EU integration. Delegates also gave reports on the national situation in their own countries, leading to an appreciation of the similarities and differences in issues faced by parties across South Eastern Europe.

Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources, Moscow

The meeting we organised in **Moscow** on **4 June 2010**, for our Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources discussed the ramifications of the financial crisis on Russia and other CIS states. The meeting was chaired by Christoph Zöpel (SPD, Germany) and we were pleased to recognise the social democratic movement in the region. It was underlined that social democrats have throughout history supported the principled positions needed now more than ever. Contributions were made by Russian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Spanish and French representatives on the effects of the financial crisis on party initiatives.



Committee meeting, Moscow

There was a consensus amongst Committee members that the crisis was not over, and that social democratic parties must redouble efforts to ensure that those responsible for the crisis contribute fully to the recovery.



The impact of the crisis on the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, was discussed at the meeting of our Committee for that region, which we organised in **Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, 23-24 July 2012**. The Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) hosted the event, and its agenda covered a variety of themes, including the economic outlook for the

region. Mario Nalpatian, from ARF-D, Armenia, and Alexandra Dobolyi, from MSzP, Hungary, co-chaired the meeting.

Our exchanges highlighted the ripple effects of the worldwide economic crisis. There was a consensus that the global nature of the financial crisis and interdependence of world economies meant that the countries of the region were all subject to external factors.

Latin America and the Caribbean



At the meeting of our Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, which we organised in **La Antigua Guatemala** on **23-24 March 2009**, we held a discussion on the impact of the financial crisis in the region under the theme entitled ‘The global financial crisis: how to reaffirm the role of state and government institutions from a democratic and progressive perspective’.



President Alvaro Colom of Guatemala

favour of societies that were democratic and egalitarian were more relevant than ever.

Addressing the gathering in the inaugural session, I underlined the importance of social democratic solutions to the economic crisis, stressing that the meeting in Guatemala was an important step in confronting the challenges the whole region

faced in the global economic downturn. As observed from the outset, the answers to the current crisis were to be found in politics, not in the markets or the leading financial centres in the world. During discussions, we developed a common approach to the economic crisis, reflected in the Declaration of La Antigua Guatemala. Our talks highlighted that although this crisis was not caused by Latin America and the Caribbean, the region would suffer its consequences as a result. The role of progressives in protecting the poorest and most underprivileged members of society from the consequences of economic turmoil and in guaranteeing citizen-focused public policies is fundamental to comprehensive development. This must include universal access to basic services such as health, education, housing, and decent work, and must facilitate credit to benefit those most in need.

At our Council meeting in **Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic** on **23-24 November 2009**, it was highlighted that the financial crisis had been felt particularly hard in Latin America and the Caribbean. The crisis had interrupted the best period of growth (2003-2008) that the region had seen in the last 40 years. During this time, poverty had fallen in the region from 44% to 34%, although high levels of inequality had continued to exist, a reminder and warning of the post 1982 crisis, known as the “Lost Decade”.

We organised a meeting of the regional Committee in **Buenos Aires, Argentina** on **9-10 April 2010**.



Following extensive debates on various issues, the Committee agreed a Declaration on the International Financial Crisis. It stated that the international

financial crisis had originated in the North but had severely affected the global economy, including countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The period between July 2008 and September 2009 saw a contraction in the value of trade, as the emerging economies showed a marked reduction in exports significantly affecting the region.

The Declaration called for increased financial regulatory mechanisms and the abolition of ‘tax havens’, increased transparency for banks, and strict criteria for the injection of public capital. Most importantly, we called for a revival of the role of the State in the generation of policies and incentives that will lead to a new global financial and economic framework. This should encourage productive development and a consensus between the principles of democracy and of the market. The Committee urged the Presidents of the G-20, in particular the presidents of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, to pay particular attention to the principles they have embraced in search of growth that is equitable, inclusive and characterised by solidarity, and to avoid protectionism and other measures, which distort international trade.

The following year, we held a meeting of the Committee in **Porto Alegre, Brazil**, on **24-25 October 2011**, hosted by the Democratic Labour Party, PDT. Leaders and delegates of member parties and guests were welcomed by the president of the PDT and Minister of Labour and Employment, Carlos Lupi, who brought greetings from H.E. the President of the Republic, Dilma Roussef. They were also addressed by PDT Congressman Carlos Eduardo Vieira da Cunha, a Vice-President of the Socialist International. Among other guests, delegates also received a fraternal welcome from the President of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Congressman Adão Villaverde (PT) and by the State Governor, Tarso Genro (PT).



Carlos Eduardo Vieira da Cunha

The meeting’s theme on the financial crisis, ‘Facing the global financial crisis: ensuring economic growth through policies which promote greater equality and

opportunities', offered us the chance to reassess the ongoing impact of the crisis on the region.

The Committee Chair, Martín Torrijos, noted in his address that the region had maintained growth in recent years despite the financial crisis, yet still suffered unacceptable high levels of inequality. Addressing the opening of the meeting, I observed that the global financial crisis highlighted the challenge for social democrats of ensuring growth that offers opportunities for all.



Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, Porto Alegre

We welcomed guest economist and academic, André Scherer, the Technical Director of the Economy and Statistics Foundation of Porto Alegre, university professor and specialist in international financial regulation. He presented findings on the latest developments in the Brazilian economy and strategies to face the financial crisis with growth, but without compromising employment or social programmes.

Delegates shared with the Committee the measures implemented in their respective countries to confront the crisis. Growth with social justice and the eradication of inequalities continued to be key objectives of the Socialist International. We singled out as a priority the need to strengthen policies that promote stable employment and social investment to foster persistent, just, inclusive and sustainable growth in the region.

For the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, it was reiterated that only through policies that promote greater equality and opportunity could sustained economic growth be ensured while facing the international financial crisis.

RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS – STRENGTHENING REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND GAINING NEW DEMOCRACIES IN THE WORLD

‘The creation of favourable conditions for the preservation of human dignity and the flourishing of *community* is the basis and aim of democracy. To fulfil this fundamental function... economic and social rights, which are inseparable from an equal distribution of wealth: the right to food, clothing, health, drinking water, education and full development within their own cultures, all must be taken in to account. Democracy without this content is nothing but an illusion of freedom. Our commitment is to advance the cause of democracy in the world, to contribute to the spread of democratic governance. A democracy for citizens [is founded on] political, human, social, economic, cultural and environmental rights.’

Santo Domingo Declaration, Santo Domingo Council, Dominican Republic, 23-24 November 2009

RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

Committee on Social Cohesion, Poverty and HIV/AIDS, Vienna, Austria



Barbara Prammer, Vienna

Gender equality is an integral component of human rights and is prominent on our SI agenda. Women’s rights were put in the spotlight at the first meeting of the SI Committee on Social Cohesion, Poverty and HIV/AIDS, which was organised in the **Austrian Parliament, Vienna, on 22 May 2009**, hosted by Committee Chair Barbara Prammer. Introducing the conference theme of ‘Social Cohesion: a Social Democratic priority in the struggle for a fair society’, Victor Benoit, leader of the

Social Democratic Union of Haitian Social Democrats and an SI Vice-President, described in detail the dramatic and serious situation facing Haiti. He singled out women as vulnerable, assessing inter-related areas of poverty, discrimination,

disease and HIV/AIDS. He stressed the importance of both the international dimension and that of political democracy, without which social cohesion for women could not exist. The situation of migrant women was highlighted and participants concurred that addressing gender issues stood at the core of social democratic values, which make human beings central to the development agenda.

Latin America and the Caribbean Committee, Porto Alegre, Brazil



Equality for women including work and labour, education, health and reproductive rights was a theme discussed at our Committee meeting in Brazil, which gathered in the city of **Porto Alegre, Brazil** on **24-25 October 2011**, hosted by the Democratic Labour Party, PDT.

Vice-President of Socialist International Women, Miguelina Vecchio, presented the conference with information and regional statistics in regard to pregnancies, births, induced and spontaneous abortions, and maternal mortality. The participants were also shown a documentary on a well-known case requiring abortion in Brazil some years prior. The regional reality was a good starting point to help delegates understand the reproductive health rights women were being denied. This led to a strong debate on the type of public policies needed to guarantee the reproductive health rights of women, while also providing necessary health care and protecting the lives of both women and the young in general.

Further discussions on women's rights have taken place at various meetings of the Council and Committees. On **5 June 2012**, members of the SI Committee for the Mediterranean region meeting in **Madrid** addressed women's rights in the context of emerging democracy across the Arab world. Participants strongly supported gender equality, women's empowerment and the full participation of women in social, economic and political life during and after the transitions taking place across the Arab world.

100th Anniversary of International Women's Day, 2011

On 8 March 2011, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. When a resolution establishing a Women's Day was passed at the Second International Conference of Socialist Women held on the occasion of the 1910 Copenhagen International Socialist Congress, just three countries in the world had granted suffrage to women. Now, the situation has almost been reversed. Women worldwide occupy the highest level of elected office. Further, great advances have been made toward legal equality for women, and the rate of literacy and education amongst women has increased enormously.

There is, however, still a long way to go before equality is achieved. In many regions, the fight for women's rights continues, whilst even women allowed access to the workplace are often poorly remunerated in comparison to male counterparts. Despite successfully running some of the world's largest companies, women continue to be under-represented in management. This under-representation is even more striking on every continent amongst elected representatives of all political affiliations.

International Women's Day was created to promote the idea of equality of women in government and society, an objective that has yet to be fully realised. Throughout its history, the social democratic movement has brought forward democracy, justice, human rights and solidarity around the globe. In 2011, one hundred years on from the first International Women's Day, the Socialist International remained committed to its vision of a world where women and men are truly equal.



PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

SI presence at the Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Democracy is never more relevant than through the elected representatives of the people. As part of our ongoing efforts to deepen and extend the ideals of parliamentary democracy, I worked for, and finally achieved, an official status for the Socialist International within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the only existing global parliamentary body.



This has enabled our International to not only have a presence at the IPU Assemblies, but to convene attending parliamentarians who are members of our political family to exchange views on the main themes of the IPU's agenda from a social democratic perspective and on other issues of common concern to our members in their respective countries and regions. The meetings also aim to strengthen cooperation between parliamentarians from our movement.

These exchanges, which now take place regularly within the framework of the IPU Assemblies, have been organised at every Assembly in recent years, wherever the IPU has convened: in Bangkok in March 2010, Geneva in October 2010, Panama City in April 2011, Bern in October 2011, Kampala in April 2012, and we intend to be present more strongly than ever at the forthcoming assembly in Quebec City in October 2012.

Parliamentarians who have participated in these exchanges have agreed that our meetings have proved useful in dealing with a range of IPU matters, as for instance, in the examination of key issues on the Assembly's agenda, including the promotion of women in politics and defending and protecting the rights of parliamentarians wherever they are threatened as well as in the election of the authorities of the IPU. Participants have also been unanimous in the opinion that these meetings should continue, with a view to eventually establishing a global social democratic network of parliamentarians.

LABOUR – A RIGHT TO FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources, London



In the last four years we have worked towards fair and formal labour for all. Eradicating informal labour, which leaves people vulnerable to exploitation and low wages, is a key priority for the Socialist

International. We convened our Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources at the **Houses of Parliament** in **London**, on **6 April 2009**. Members reiterated their commitment to the concept of global welfare statehood proposed at the 2008 Congress in Athens. Achieving formal employment for all people of working age is a key challenge for global social integration as the majority of workers worldwide are involved in informal labour, and live without social protection.

We pledged to incorporate the essentials of the welfare state, employment, education, pensions and healthcare, with a strong public sector and fair tax regimes for financing wealth redistribution. Members acknowledged that new regulation is needed to ensure revenues from the production of national resources remain in producing states and regions in the interests of better living conditions for their citizens.

Committee Meeting, Stockholm, Sweden

The Nordic model was discussed at the Committee meeting we held in **Stockholm** on **11-12 June 2009**, this time comparing the concept with differing national realities and cultural traditions of member countries. Though the 2008 financial crisis had exposed vulnerabilities in the welfare state, the Nordic experience showed there was no disparity between a policy of economic dynamism and social, welfare-oriented initiatives within a regime of democratic freedom. This demonstrated it was possible to combine growth with social justice. We therefore

reiterated the Socialist International's concept of Global Welfare Statehood. Promoting awareness of the values behind a social model, and its actual design, would have a positive effect on development in other states. This should lead to an interconnection between the implementation of social protection, social inclusiveness, equal opportunities, and fairer taxes.



Stockholm, Sweden

Committee Meeting, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

Our commitments to labour were again highlighted at the meeting of the Socialist



International Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources we held at the **headquarters of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)** in Geneva on 5-6 November 2009.

We gathered members of the Committee to discuss informal labour, alongside ILO Director-General Juan Somavía, and a group of experts. Somavía observed that, without alternatives to the informal sector, there could be no real answer to development. Informal labour creates vulnerability and leads to negative repercussions for social and economic development.

Participants exchanged views on the Committee's Discussion Paper *Linking*



ILO Director-General Juan Somavia, Geneva

Labour with Social Integration and Social Protection Globally and the comprehensive 2009 OECD report on unprotected informal labour “*Is informal normal*”, published by the OECD Development Centre. A draft resolution - *The Challenges of Global Development at the End of 2009 and the Perspectives for 2010 - The Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Dimensions* was prepared for the next Council meeting.

This took place in **Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic on 23-24 November 2009**, where we examined the need for job creation to defeat poverty. Jobs and improved living conditions were agreed as our priorities, and representatives from across the globe presented their contrasting experiences.

The Council reinforced the view that measures to boost growth and reduce unemployment must be combined with a sustainable labour market policy. Without such policies, government stimulus packages could generate jobless economic growth. Less developed states need to transfer unprotected informal jobs to the formal labour market: a state based on principles of social solidarity should provide long-term protection against poverty. Our Committee on Economy Policy, Labour and National Resources would continue dealing with the issue of linking labour with social integration and social protection globally.

The Council resolution also considered migrant workers. At that time, on average in different states, more than a quarter of newly unemployed workers were immigrants. Migrant workers lived under more difficult circumstances than workers who were unemployed in the states of their residence because they lack family support. We were, therefore, concerned at the risk of circular immigration. The SI pledged to support plans of voluntary return and the rights of these citizens to social protection under equality of opportunities. We further welcomed the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program 2009 addressing the issue of global migration and supported the proposals of UNDP. Our resolution confirmed that ‘...a global political order in which all people and their political representatives – rich or poor – have the right of influence through participation’ must embrace human rights that are binding in international law.

Council Meeting, United Nations, New York



In **June 2010**, when our Council met at the **United Nations Headquarters, New York**, we debated our Resolution on Global Development and ‘A Global Jobs Pact’ adopted by the International Labour Organisation in Geneva in June 2009, which we support. Principles of the pact were:

- Employment growth through sustainable enterprises, public services and social protection
- An end to discrimination against women
- Enhanced support for victims of the economic crisis; in particular the young, low-wage, low-skilled and migrant workers
- Protection of employment, transition between jobs, and support for labour market access
- Establishment of effective public employment services
- Avoidance of protectionism, deflationary wage spirals, worsening working conditions
- Promotion of synergies between State and market, with efficient regulation to enable enterprise creation and promote employment generation across sectors

We reiterated the crucial importance of formalising non-protected jobs in less developed states, such principles of social solidarity can provide long-term protection against poverty. We have stressed that a successful global labour market policy is only possible if trade unions and employers' associations cooperate to devise it. We agreed that these organisations should be invited to G20 summit meetings, and the ILO should be placed on an equal footing with the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO in the context of global politics. We also agreed to intensify our cooperation in the future with the International Trade Union Confederation.

Committee Meeting, Rabat, Morocco

Our most recent meeting of the Committee on Economic Policy Labour and National Resources, was held in **Rabat** on **9-10 January 2012**, and was attended by members and guests from across North Africa and the Middle East region.



Hosted by the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), the meeting discussed welfare statehood in the Arab states. This was particularly important at such a time of transition in parts of the Arab world. Exchanges on the second day of the meeting centred on the document 'Welfare Statehood in the Arab States – The Alternative of the Socialist International to Social Irresponsibility', which incorporated the main conclusions of the meeting and the responses of the Socialist International to the current socio-economic situation in the Arab states.

To this we added calls for strategies based on social democratic values to build socially responsible welfare states founded upon social justice, solidarity and full employment.

THE PROGRESS OF DEMOCRACY ACROSS THE GLOBE

“Democracy is not simply an end in itself but is a means to resolve conflict and improve the lives of citizens. Through strong democracy, effective institutions and fair social policies, problems faced by our societies today become resolvable, and lives are improved. We will continue to raise our voice to call for the defense and promotion of democracy across the world. Only through free and fair elections and democratic representation will we achieve fairness. Only through dialogue will we build understanding. Only through democracy will we overcome conflict.’

Overcoming Conflict: Strengthening Democracy and Security, Paris Council, 15-16 November 2010

AFRICA



Since 2008 the African continent has witnessed much change and political progress. As I mentioned in Chapter One, our Africa Committee met in **Dakar** on **19-20 June 2009**. At this meeting there was a strong focus on the need to re-launch the democratic project in

Africa. Whilst decisive advances have taken place, for example in Ghana, where our member party won elections in 2009, fundamental new challenges to democracy were posed in countries such as Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau

In Dakar we stressed the notion that governance is associated with democracy, the legitimacy of political institutions and the functioning of national and international organisations. We recognise the crucial role of social democrats in Africa in leading the way for change, good governance, economic fairness and democracy, without which human development or the struggle against poverty and hunger cannot be won.

Democracy was also addressed at our meeting of the Africa Committee in **Windhoek, Namibia, on 29-30 July 2011**. The meeting opened with an address by Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana, Secretary General of the host party, SWAPO, who warmly welcomed us. Committee Chair, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, confirmed that good governance was impossible without free, fair and democratic elections, the rule of law and fair distribution of national resources. 'Democracy is the first step to ensure stability and lasting peace and security' he said. We agreed that sham democracies could only hinder positive development, and that, in Africa it is evident that elections in some countries continue to be flawed and electoral laws violated.



Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana, SWAPO

The Committee emphasised the importance that political actors respect the principles of free, fair, transparent and democratic elections, in order to prevent unrest among the population or the deterioration of the democratic credentials of the state.

The Windhoek Declaration called for Africa to be represented among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. In supporting the establishment of true democracies engaged in promoting human rights, prevention and resolution of conflicts, and the consolidation of peace, the Committee reaffirmed the important role of women in these areas.

Cameroon

In light of the contested electoral process in Cameroon, I travelled to the country in August 2011 in order to call for the October 2011 election process to be free, fair and democratic. The visit would include discussions with government authorities, the leadership of the SI-member the Social Democratic Front (SDF), electoral authorities and members of the diplomatic community in Yaoundé. Accompanied by Steen Christensen (SDP, Denmark), SDF Chair John Fru Ndi and SI Vice-President Chantal Kambiwa, I held discussions with Prime Minister Philemon Yang on the concerns that we had raised at our previous Africa Committee meeting regarding the elections in Cameroon.

We had identified a number of key areas to be addressed by the Cameroonian authorities for elections to be free and fair and to meet internationally accepted standards. Among the issues discussed was the composition of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), the body appointed to oversee election matters in Cameroon. Without representation of civil society or opposition members, ELECAM's independence was evidently questionable, not least because the President directly appointed its board members. Equally, we pointed to the need for a clear and precise electoral register and the importance of a single ballot paper to avoid abuses in the electoral process and guarantee equal opportunities to all candidates. The implementation of biometric technology for the electoral process and the abolition of presidential powers to create special constituencies were also raised. The SDF and other opposition parties have rightly demanded these key issues, which remain central to their legitimate demand for a constitutional amendment to be passed to allow the adoption of an electoral code that would guarantee free, fair and transparent elections.

We also met the ELECAM board and its chairman Fonkam Azu'u to discuss the issues in greater depth. Later during the visit we held a joint press conference with John Fru Ndi and the SDF, the leading political force in opposition in Cameroon demanding free and fair elections, in Yaoundé. We made clear our expectations of the Cameroonian authorities for elections that are fully compliant with the principles of democracy.

I had hoped that the October 2011 elections would mark a turning point for the development of democracy. However, despite assurances from the prime minister that the electoral code would be adopted on a consensual basis, the key demands listed above that both the SDF and the SI had called for had been ignored. The ruling party, once again, pursued superficial reforms to suit its own interests, making a mockery of prior claims that the electoral code would be consensually elaborated. The dramatically low turnout in the 2011 presidential elections reflected the belief held by many that the population is entirely unable to make an impact on political life. To regain faith in the political process, the people need to see that the authorities are prepared to accept the will of the majority, a requirement that is regrettably absent from Cameroon's present government. The absence of democracy in Cameroon and the determination of the regime to continue to hold power are at the heart of social and economic stagnation. By ignoring demands for change and maintaining a façade of democracy, they are simply prolonging the critical political problems and their negative social and economic impact on the population.

Central African Republic

On 23 January, 2011, the delayed first round of presidential and parliamentary elections in Central African Republic took place, in which Martin Ziguélé, leader of the Socialist International member party, the Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC), was one of four presidential candidates standing against the incumbent François Bozizé. On the day of the polls, many irregularities were reported, including fictional, displaced or non-existent polling stations, rigged voter registration lists, duplicate voting cards and an absence of the legally required minutes in a number of polling stations.

Ziguélé, Emile Gros-Raymond Nakombo and Jean-Jacques Demafouth, who together formed the *Collectif des forces de changement* (CFC) withdrew from the independent electoral commission (CEI) in order to disassociate themselves from the questionable results. They cited the process constituted an “electoral hold-up, meticulously prepared and carefully executed by General Bozizé and his party”.

Of the first round vote, on 2 February, Bozizé was awarded 66.08%, followed by former president Ange-Félix Patassé (20.1%), Ziguélé (6.46%), Nakombo (4.64%) and Demafouth (2.72%). However, Ziguélé, Nakombo and Patassé challenged the results in the Constitutional Court, a claim that was given greater impetus by the revelation on 5 February that results from a quarter of polling stations had not been taken into account. Finding evidence of failures, three members of the CEI in Boganda were arrested.

Provisional results from the first round of the legislative elections had given Bozizé’s Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) party outright victory in 26 of 105 seats, and the lead in the majority of those in which a run-off election will be contested. These results were rejected by Ziguélé and Nakombo as being part of the same flawed process that produced victory for Bozizé in the presidential election.

On Saturday 12 February, the Constitutional Court confirmed the results of the election, making only slight adjustments to the provisional scores announced by the CEI, placing Bozizé on 64.37% followed by Patassé in second place with 21.41% and Ziguélé in third with 6.8%. Ziguélé has rejected this predictable endorsement of the CEI by the Constitutional Court, which translated into re-election for Bozizé without the need for a run-off vote, as representative of a fraudulent vote.

Eastern Congo

Despite a peace accord signed in January 2008, armed conflict between insurgents, militias and government forces have continued with violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In November 2008 we called for an immediate end to this, urging the UN Security Council to reinforce the UN peacekeeping mission in the country with troops, air support, and resources and equipment needed to carry out its mandate. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced during the conflict and human rights violations continued to be committed. We have called upon the world community, including the African Union, to insist that the governments of the DRC and neighbouring Rwanda abide by their commitments to refrain from supporting armed groups and to take all possible measures to ensure, a lasting peace agreement.

Equatorial Guinea

In May 2011, Equatorial Guinea's leading opposition party denounced a 'government-led' campaign of violence and intimidation against its people, which, it said, led to beatings, arbitrary arrests and a series of unexplained detentions across the West African country. The Convergencia para la Democracia Social (CPDS) subsequently released a statement asking the long-standing President and then chair of the African Union, Teodoro Obiang, to justify why the country's authorities were turning a blind eye to these human rights abuses.

The statement said: "It seems clear that if nothing happens to the people who are violating the rights of the country's citizens... it is because they are carrying out orders from above, and more specifically, from President Obiang himself." Obiang has served as President of Equatorial Guinea since 1979, following a coup d'état. International observers reported the country essentially is a single-party state, dominated by the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea. The string of human rights violations came as President Obiang's party attempted to carry out sweeping constitutional reforms. These included the creation of a new committee for the Reform of the Fundamental Law of Equatorial Guinea, which had received wide criticism.

The Socialist International released a strong statement observing that for too long the Obiang regime had held the balance of political power, following years of authoritarian rule in the absence of free and fair elections. We recognised the need for constitutional reform, but in this case it seemed unlikely the people

would be able to make their voices heard, particularly as they were facing threats at the hands of their own government. We reiterated our support to the CPDS and opposition parties in their decision not to back the process.

We reaffirmed our continuing support for our member party, the CPDS, in its brave struggle for democracy in their country and our condemnation of the Obiang regime's victimisation of its members. We were very pleased to learn of the release from prison, as we had called for, of our comrade Wenceslao Mansogo, who had been detained after returning from our Council meeting in San José, Costa Rica.

Ghana

We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of President John Atta Mills, in Ghana on 24 July 2012. A true democrat, the Socialist International had been delighted at the genuine democratic process that saw John Atta Mills, candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), succeed to victory in 2009. In this election, we recognised and celebrated Ghana's diligent institutional work, and spirit of tolerance among its citizens and political leaders, as an example of the positive way democracy can function. President Atta Mills helped Ghana develop into a country with more freedom, prosperity and opportunity. His legacy will be the continuing economic and social development of Ghana, a shining example of democracy for Africa and the world.

Guinea

The Socialist International expressed its strongest condemnation of the killings perpetrated by the Guinean army in dispersing the peaceful gathering organised by forces of the opposition, on 28 September 2009, in the Stadium of Conakry, capital of Guinea. The massacre left more than 150 dead and over a thousand injured.

The political opposition protested against Captain Moussa Dadis Camara's intention to stand in the presidential elections. Head of the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), a military junta that seized power by coup d'état on 23 December 2008, Captain Camara had been engaged in organising a transition towards restoring civilian rule within a year through presidential elections in which he had affirmed he would not be a candidate. During the preceding nine months, his unbridled, populist and arbitrary rule worried political

parties and civil organisations, whose relations with the military junta had continued to deteriorate. Constitutional order in Guinea was violated in December 2008, and it is with a bath of blood that this militarist adventure with popular undertones has been pursued.

No effort must be spared to restore constitutional rule, we said, which should have happened following the death of President Conté in December 2008. We welcomed the unanimous repudiation expressed in Africa and the rest of the world, and reaffirmed our full solidarity with the democratic forces in Guinea, particularly the Guinean Peoples Assembly (RPG) of Alpha Condé, a member party of the SI.

President Condé was elected in Guinea's first free, fair and democratic elections in 2010. I was honoured to attend his inauguration at the *Palais du peuple* in the capital city Conakry with the presence of African heads of state, party leaders, personalities and guests.



Alpha Condé

In July 2011, the Socialist International was appalled to hear that a violent attack had been perpetrated on the Guinean president's residence in Conakry. The attack was a deplorable attempt to undermine nascent democracy in the West African country and, while the president was unharmed, a security guard was reported to have been killed.

In a state address after his election, Alpha Condé said:

"Our enemies can try everything, but they cannot prevent the Guinean people's march towards democracy. Democracy has begun and it will continue, I promised you change and, God willing, change will happen."

Guinea-Bissau

We have followed the political difficulties in Guinea-Bissau with great concern. In May 2009, we were shocked and appalled to hear of the assassination of

President Joao Bernardo Vieira by members of the army, and the killing of the armed forces chief of staff that preceded it. This heinous and criminal act marked a setback for democracy in Guinea-Bissau and the killings were swiftly condemned by the African Union.

In April 2012, we firmly condemned the subversion of the constitutional order by the military in Guinea-Bissau. We denounced unequivocally the reported seizure and detention of presidential candidate Carlos Gomes Junior, leader of the PAIGC, a member party of the Socialist International. The SI was equally concerned over the whereabouts and safety of Interim President Raimundo Pereira and other officials reportedly detained, and demanded the immediate release of all those illegally withheld.

This took place as the country prepared for the second round of the presidential elections scheduled for 29 April, in which Carlos Gomes Junior was the front-runner, having secured a substantial lead in the first round. The Socialist International called for the immediate re-establishment of democracy in Guinea-Bissau, and further expressed full solidarity with those defending democracy and with our member party, the PAIGC.

Mali

We strongly condemned the attack on democracy that took place on 21 March 2012. We declared that the attempt to take control of the government by force was totally unacceptable to our movement, to all democrats and to the entire international community. The Socialist International unreservedly condemned the subversion of the democratic order by elements of the armed forces. Africa and Mali have made historic advances in the consolidation and strengthening of democracy. This event placed a grave threat to Mali's hard-won democratic process, at a moment when the country should have been undertaking new presidential elections.

Our two member parties in Mali, the Assembly for Mali (RPM) and ADEMA-PASJ, have been fundamental pillars of the country's democratic development. Following mediation by ECOWAS to steer the country back to constitutional rule, Dioncounda Traoré, president of ADEMA-PASJ, has been named interim president until an election date can be re-established.

Mauritania

The Socialist International condemned the coup carried out on 7 August 2008, by the military in Mauritania against the first democratically elected government since it gained independence in 1960. We called for the immediate restoration of democratic rule and for the full respect of all political rights and civil liberties. The free and fair election held in 2007 underscored the desire and commitment of the people of Mauritania to live and work in freedom, and was an important milestone in the country's progress toward joining the community of democratic nations. No circumstance or situation can be used to justify undoing that progress through the illegal use of military force.

On **23-24 March 2012**, at our meeting of the Special Committee on the Arab World in Istanbul, we reviewed the significant steps needed in Mauritania to ensure scheduled elections take place under free and fair conditions, the key demand of SI member the Assembly of Democratic Forces (RFD) and of the Coordination of the Democratic Opposition (COD), of which the RFD is part. The COD further demanded, with our support, the installation of a transitional government to ensure transparency in the electoral process.



Special Committee on the Arab World, Istanbul

On 30 May 2012 we issued a new statement of concern. Under the regime of Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, Mauritania was suffering from a serious institutional crisis, a political impasse, the failure of the state to deliver to its citizens, deteriorating living conditions, and the mismanagement and misappropriation of national resources.

Eleven opposition parties formed the Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD) to unify their efforts in favour of democratic change. SI member party the RFD, under the leadership of Ahmed Ould Daddah, has been at the forefront of calls for genuinely free and fair elections and a democratic way out of the crisis for more than two decades. The



Ahmed Ould Daddah, RFD, Mauritania

non-compliance with the dates fixed by Mauritanian law for the holding of legislative and municipal elections effectively plunged Mauritania into a constitutional crisis. The constitution of Mauritania limits the mandate of deputies to five years, a term that expired in November 2011. As a result, the National Assembly has been legislating outside of the legal framework for nine months. The result is that the National Assembly was constitutionally void of all its powers, rendering the parliamentary majority illegitimate. Despite this, the regime continued to exercise power with impunity and showing complete disregard for the constitution and electoral timetable of Mauritania. To end this crisis and deadlock, the COD proposed a transitional government to take power. This would include representatives from all parties, with the goal of preparing elections to allow Mauritania's political institutions to regain their legitimacy.

These elections would be organised in their entirety by a consensus-based Independent National Election Commission (CENI). The results of these elections must be validated by an equally consensus-based Constitutional Council, a prerequisite for a truly transparent and fair vote.

Citizens across the country have expressed their dissatisfaction. The efforts of the RFD and COD successfully mobilised democratic activists to call for respect of their rights and freedoms. The recent removal of autocratic and anti-democratic regimes in the Arab world and western Africa have equally given impetus to demands for true democracy in Mauritania.

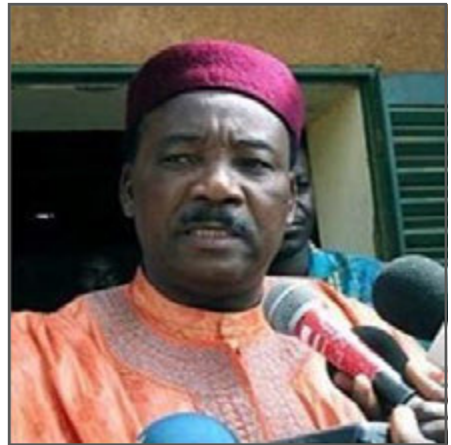
Throughout this turbulent period, the Socialist International has been committed to support the RFD and all democrats in Mauritania. In this moment where democratic change is sweeping the Arab world, we are convinced that in

Mauritania too, democracy will open the way for a fairer, more prosperous and more secure future.

Niger

We were deeply troubled to hear a military coup had taken place in Niger on 18 February 2010. The advancement and consolidation of democracy in Niger had been a focus of our attention for some years. The close collaboration with the SI member, the Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger (PNDS), led to many initiatives of the International in Niger, supporting their commitment to democracy and struggle against poverty in one of the poorest countries in the world. However, military authorities, led by Junta leader Salou Djibo, went on to launch a democratic presidential election that won them recognition for their handling of the transition and for not fielding any candidates of their own.

In April 2011, Mahamadou Issoufou, leader of the Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS) and an SI Vice-President, won the Presidential elections with 57.95% of the vote. The conduct of the elections was perceived as free and fair by observers and his inauguration was hailed a historic moment for Niger. The PNDS first joined the Socialist International in 1996, and became a full member in 2003; it has hosted a number of meetings of the International in Niamey in recent years. Issoufou was elected Vice-President of the SI at its last Congress in Athens.



Mahamadou Issoufou

As someone who embraces our shared social democratic principles and has played a crucial role in the ongoing process of re-democratisation in Niger, Issoufou's presidency will be crucial for strengthening its democratic institutions and opening up more opportunities for its citizens.

President Issoufou said, 'My election shows the commitment of the Nigerien people to democracy and change.' People can take pride in the way the campaign has been run, and the integrity of all the candidates involved who have shown great responsibility by adhering to the clearly expressed will of the people.

Senegal

Senegal is an example of the strength of democratic aspirations in Africa. Independent since 1960, Senegal developed its democracy under the leadership of Léopold Sédar Senghor, its first president and founder of the Socialist Party of Senegal (PS). Senghor brought the party into the membership of the Socialist International before his retirement from active politics in 1980. During the presidency of his successor Abdou Diouf, also a socialist, multiparty democracy flourished in Senegal and Diouf peacefully left office following the election of Abdoulaye Wade in 2000.

This successful democratic tradition became threatened before the last presidential elections when the Supreme Court allowed Wade's unconstitutional candidacy whilst disqualifying a number of opposition candidates on unclear grounds. Senegalese society had been suffering the consequences of a growing deficit of democratic governance, deteriorating social conditions affecting the entire population, an ageing infrastructure and lack of opportunities for people.

We urged Senegal to defend and preserve its heritage as a point of reference for democrats, a position achieved over the last fifty years through the efforts of its socialist leaders. Following the elections in February 2012, we were pleased to learn that Wade had conceded and that the process was considered democratic and fair.

South Sudan

The people of South Sudan marked the birth of their country – and the world's newest nation – in July 2011, following more than five decades of civil war and unrest. In jubilant ceremonies across the new Republic, tens of thousands of people took to the streets to mark a day many thought would never come: the official secession of South Sudan from Sudan. International media reported scenes of euphoria, particularly in the new country's official capital, Juba, where people waved flags, danced and played music until the early hours.

President Salva Kiir signed the constitution and took his oath in front of large crowds, before urging his fellow citizens not to forget the millions who had died as a result of the protracted Sudanese conflict, which raged in phases between 1955-2005. More than two million people are estimated to have perished in the second Sudanese civil war (1983-2005) alone. The weekend's festivities would be just the start of a long road for South Sudan.

Already one of the least developed countries in the world – with one in ten children dying before their first birthday – South Sudan has a range of issues to tackle. Violent clashes in the disputed border areas of South Kordofan and Abyei in 2011 have displaced tens of thousands of people and left scores dead.

Though the situation has since calmed, it is far from being resolved. The new government will be charged with attempting to split revenues from oil wealth between north and south, potentially re-drawing the border and addressing South Sudan’s virtually non-existent healthcare provisions, amongst other issues.

Despite these myriad challenges, the Socialist International congratulated the people of South Sudan on their new independence. We stated:

“The fact that 99% of South Sudanese voted for freedom in the referendum showed overwhelmingly that people wanted a clear split with the past, a new homeland and, above all, a fresh start. SI offers its warmest congratulations to the people of South Sudan. It is our sincere hope that the violence and upheaval that has scarred these two countries – North and South – now comes to an end. Democracy is alive and well; it needs nurturing and protecting to ensure that the next generation of South Sudanese are able to live through a new era of peace and hope.”

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



We organised a meeting of our Committee for Asia and the Pacific in **Manila, on 20-21 May 2011**. Hosted by SI member Akbayan Citizen's Action Party, the meeting brought together representatives of parties from the region and beyond and included Philippines President Benigno 'Noy-Noy' Aquino. On behalf of the International, I expressed the organisation's appreciation for the many issues being tackled by the government that also figured high on the agenda of our global movement, such as human rights, strengthening democratic institutions, good governance, education, social protection and reproductive health. I further underlined our satisfaction that Akbayan was collaborating with the President's coalition government on these matters.

Our Committee held debates on a range of issues affecting Asia and the Pacific. In regard to the border dispute between Cambodia and Thailand, it adopted a statement calling on both parties to establish a permanent cease-fire and resolve the situation peacefully through effective political dialogue.

A further meeting of the Committee for Asia and the Pacific was held in **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 7-8 October, 2011**, hosted by the SI member Mongolian People's Party (MPP), to discuss the advancement of democracy in the region.

I was pleased to highlight Mongolia as a good example of a democracy under the leadership of the MPP, delivering in economic performance to improve education,



health, public services, in short, the living standards of its people. The political emphasis in the Asia-Pacific region has too often been placed solely on the economy, ignoring rights and freedoms of citizens. We noted however, that many possibilities now existed for social democracy in Mongolia.

Participants reaffirmed that functioning multi-party systems, the holding of regular free and fair elections and the respect of fundamental freedom was imperative. A new era of change was beginning to take shape in the region, a change that in many countries has been driven by the values and principles of our movement.

We adopted a statement on Mongolia recognising the MPP's contributions to the establishment of modern Mongolia and its role in the transition to a true democracy. It plays an important part in the work of the Socialist International, as a centre-left, social democratic party with a positive and successful record.

The contribution of Pakistan, its war against terror and commitment to upholding the progressive agenda carried forth by the late Benazir Bhutto was discussed and recognised in a second declaration. In regard to the border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand, the declaration supported the dialogue in place to restore peace and stability. We welcomed the fact that both parties have refrained from using force since the new Thai government came to power, and urged both sides to respect the decisions of the International Court of Justice. On Timor-Leste, our Committee congratulated Fretilin for holding successful direct elections and for its leadership incorporating part of the wider process of strengthening political parties in the region.

In our Council meeting in **San José, Costa Rica** on **23-24 January 2012**, members welcomed the announcement of the definitive abolition of the death penalty in Mongolia and the positive role played by the Mongolian People's Party and the Socialist International in achieving this milestone.

Pakistan



The Socialist International warmly congratulated Asif Ali Zardari on his victory in Presidential elections held Pakistan, on 6 September 2008. Zardari achieved an overwhelming majority of votes in the country's federal and provincial assemblies. The successful election marked another important step in the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan, which the SI-member

Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and its former leader, the late Benazir Bhutto, fought so hard to achieve.

The Socialist International reaffirmed its solidarity with the PPP extending its best wishes to President-elect Zardari in the challenges ahead, their crucial struggle against terror and in favour of a free, democratic and secure Pakistan.

Burma

The Socialist International has long supported the people of Burma, and Aung San Suu Kyi who was made a Special Honorary President of the International at our last congress, and the National League for Democracy. While Aung San Suu Kyi was under house arrest, we fought for her release – heavily condemning the baseless illegal measures brought against her by the military regime in Burma. In May 2009, we called upon all nations to take the firmest stand possible on behalf of liberty for Aung San Suu Kyi and democracy for Burma. In **August 2009**, the Socialist International was appalled at the persistence of the Burmese military junta, defying worldwide outcries, condemning her to a further one and a half years of house arrest. We demanded her immediate release.

In **November 2010** we were finally able to celebrate the release of Aung San Suu

Kyi, after 21 years of detention. Our Council meeting in Paris saw this as a first step on the road to recovering democracy in Burma. In the meeting of our Committee for Asia and the Pacific in Manila on **20-21 May 2011**, we called for an immediate and decisive move for democracy in Burma. The SI was thrilled at the resounding success of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and the election of its leader Aung San Suu Kyi to parliament in **April 2012**, in a historic by-election. The Socialist International warmly congratulated the citizens of Burma, who courageously seized the opportunity presented by the election to demonstrate their long-held desire for change through the democratic process. The outcome of these polls demonstrated the strength of leadership, perseverance and determination of Aung San Suu Kyi in pursuit of the vision of freedoms, rights and inclusion for all the Burmese people, and equally, it constituted a powerful reminder that in all regions of the world today the calls for democracy must be heard and respected.

I am very pleased to report that following years of being denied entry by the Burmese authorities, I visited Burma in April after those elections, to hold direct talks with members of the Executive of the NLD, conveying the solidarity of the International, and to assess the situation on the ground. Burma initiated a process of limited reforms under President Thein Sein, a former general who since March 2011 has overseen the easing of censorship laws, the legalising of trade unions and the release of hundreds of political prisoners, including Aung Sang Suu Kyi. During more than two decades of peaceful and dignified struggle against Burma's military rule, Suu Kyi has been a shining example to democrats across the world.

The democratic aspirations of the Burmese people, so evident today, must lead and define the way forward. Leading up to the general elections in 2015, it must be ensured there is no return to the repression and authoritarianism of the past. The government, military and different political parties must remain engaged in a process that should deliver nothing less than full democracy. Despite the NLD having won almost all the seats contested in the by-elections, these represent less than one tenth of the national assembly, where currently 25% of the seats are reserved for members appointed by the military. The process of democratisation must be continued and deepened to extend to all areas of society and all branches of government.

CIS, CAUCASUS AND THE BLACK SEA

The SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea was established in Vallarta, Mexico, in November 2008. We organised its first meeting at the **United Nations, in Geneva on 16-17 April, 2009**, chaired by Alexandra Dobolyi (MSzP, Hungary) and Mario Nalpatian (ARF-D, Armenia).



At that meeting we exchanged views on the development of democracy in the region; our contribution to the peaceful resolution of existing regional conflicts and strategies to strengthen and promote social democracy in these countries.

Our Committee unanimously agreed to express its grave concern at the total lack of progress in Belarus and the persistent violations of human, civil and political rights which the people of that country continue to suffer. It expressed its support for and full solidarity with the Belarusian democratic forces as a whole, which live under what the meeting's participants called 'the last dictatorship in Europe'. In particular, the Committee underlined the importance of continuing to work together with the forces of the democratic left in that country, most of which were represented at this meeting, in order to secure a progressive and democratic option for the future, through the cooperation and joint efforts of all these forces.

Later, in January 2011, I was to undertake a visit to Belarus in solidarity with the democratic opposition, on which I further elaborate below.

Concerning Moldova's 2009 elections, we deplored the evident deficits in the

electoral process that led to a serious lack of credibility in the results. Our Committee called on the Moldovan authorities to respect democratic rights and commitments and ensure the open verification of validity of results as well as implementation of a transparent electoral framework, in order to guarantee free and fair elections, including the holding of new elections to ensure their legitimacy. We called for an easing of tension, conflict resolution and strengthening of democracy in the Caucasus. The Committee agreed to act in favour of a negotiated solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and toward dialogue and negotiation between Armenia and Azerbaijan to allow a new dynamic for peace. An SI initiative would be launched with the two SI member parties in Armenia and Azerbaijan. Further, the Committee would support and promote an open and unconditional rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia in order to permit a new era in their relations.

Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, Yerevan, Armenia



The Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea convened in **Yerevan, Armenia** on **11-12 June 2010** to discuss the role of social democracy in times of change, from democracies emerging from authoritarian regimes and societies that have won peace, to countries that continue to experience the pain of unresolved conflicts. The meeting was hosted by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun (ARF-D), and chaired by Mario Nalpatian (ARF-D, Armenia) and Alexandra Dobolyi (MSzP, Hungary).

The meeting was highly significant in bringing together representatives from Azerbaijan and Armenia, later reciprocated in a meeting we organised in Baku, Azerbaijan, detailed in Chapter Three.

The desire for transparency and electoral regularity in many countries of the region was strongly communicated. There was an emphasis on the role of social democratic parties to advance democracy, through cooperation between those who share similar realities and values within the Socialist International. I welcomed the first participation of parties from **Georgia**, demonstrating they could be part of a constructive partnership, and reiterated the hope expressed by delegates that an open, democratic Georgia could become a hub of stability for all in the region. I recognised the progress made by member parties such as the SDPU in **Ukraine**, to increase cooperation with trade unions, and welcomed some positive developments that had taken place within our member parties in countries such as the **Republic of Moldova** and **Kazakhstan**. I additionally stressed a call for calm in **Kyrgyzstan** in light of the tragic events that had occurred in Osh. Social democracy was a growing political force in the CIS, a distinctive presence in nine of the twelve states, confirming the relevance of, and need for, the work of the International in this part of the world.

Committee Meeting, Almaty, Kazakhstan



On **2-3 May 2011**, we organised a meeting of our Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea in **Almaty, Kazakhstan**, the first ever Committee meeting held in Central Asia. The Committee expressed its comprehensive support for the Nationwide Social Democratic Party 'AZAT' (NSDP 'AZAT'), Kazakhstan, which hosted the meeting, ahead of elections.

Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, Co-Chair of NSDP 'AZAT' welcomed participants recognising the significant impetus holding the meeting in their country would give to the development of social democracy in the Central Asia region. On

Kazakhstan, he outlined the unacceptable levels of inequality and authoritarianism that existed, and the importance of the advancement of social democratic values such as freedom, justice and solidarity. Later, NSDP 'AZAT' Co-Chair Bulat Abilov elaborated on Kazakhstan's democratic shortfall, epitomised by the current composition of its parliament where only the ruling party is represented, and the difficulties they faced to be officially registered and recognised as a political party.

I was pleased to open the meeting; the presence of the Committee in Kazakhstan was a proud moment for our organisation. In these times of reaffirmation of democracy in the world, the presence of the global organisation of social democrats in Almaty had a particular significance in light of the deficit of democracy and sense of political exclusion felt by citizens in Kazakhstan. Within the CIS region the presence of democracy was far from uniform, with some countries suffering from a complete absence of democracy and non-participatory processes, whilst others had developed nascent democratic systems, which need perfection and support.

During discussions on the challenges to democracy in the CIS and the Caucasus, many delegates made reference to the role of the SI in seeking solutions. The widespread presence across the CIS of political systems that do not genuinely allow the electorate to make a choice was noted. In reports on national situations, participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine made reference to their specific concerns with regard to internal political developments. Holding the meeting in Central Asia for the first time also allowed invitations to be extended to social democratic parties from neighbouring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, countries that faced serious barriers to democracy, as underlined by the inability of the Uzbek delegation to attend due to restrictions imposed on them by their country's authorities.

Addressing the meeting, Rahmatullah Zairov, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan drew attention to the similarities between the anti-democratic methods employed by the presidents of Tajikistan and Belarus. The meeting concluded with a declaration of support for the NSDP 'AZAT' in their attempts to re-register with the electoral authorities in Kazakhstan in advance of parliamentary elections.

Committee, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova



Our most recent meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea took place on **23-24 July 2012** in **Chişinău, Republic of Moldova**, hosted by the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM). Marian Lupu, chair of the PDM and speaker of the Moldovan parliament, warmly welcomed us.

Lupu highlighted the democratic progress made in the Republic of Moldova, and the vision of the PDM for a sustainable future for the country based on social democratic values. The holding of the last meeting of the committee in advance of the XXIV Congress was symbolic of the progress and the advances of social democracy in the region. In my opening remarks, I recalled that in 2009, at the first Committee meeting after the XXIII Congress, great concern had been expressed over the fate of democracy in Moldova, including a call for new elections. Political developments during the intervening years proved the struggle for democracy in the region could be won, bringing people together to remove obstacles and divisions.

The democratic challenge is a crucial struggle, and discussions focussed on the democratic deficits that continue to exist in a majority of countries of the region. In Belarus, the Socialist International continued to call for the release of Mikalai Statkevich and all other political prisoners. Concerns were raised about deepening restrictions on democratic freedoms in Ukraine. Both there and in Georgia, elections scheduled for autumn 2012 would be a test of the democratic credentials of their respective political processes. In Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, recent elections had failed to live up to expectations, and much work was still needed across the region to ensure the pre-eminence of true democracy.

The Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea has been instrumental in developing relationships between the global movement of the SI and social democratic parties in the region, discussing common policy objectives and sharing strategies for the advancement of common causes.

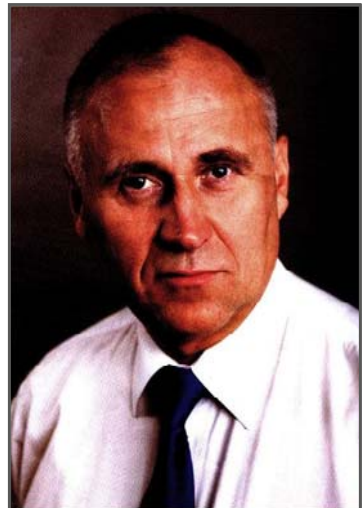
Belarus

Civil protests that took place on 19 December 2010 during elections in Belarus, ended in violent repression and the detention of four presidential candidates and hundreds of activists from the democratic forces. We sent two letters to President Lukashenko, demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained and an end to the use of violence and abuse against citizens exercising democratic rights.

The situation continued and on 18 January 2011, I travelled to Minsk, Belarus, to meet with social democratic parties, opposition forces and civil rights movements to express our solidarity and to demand the release of those detained. At the time, a total of 48 activists, 32 under arrest and 16 under suspicion, were facing charges of 'organising mass riots' presented by the government against the opposition. According to Article 293, parts 1 and 2 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus, the organisation of mass riots is punishable with 5-15 years of imprisonment and the participation in mass riots with 3-8 years.

I held talks with both the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (BSDP-NH) and the Social Democratic Party (Hramada); the United Civil Party, the Civic campaign 'Tell the Truth', Representatives of Alyaksai Mihalevich, the 'Human Rights Center', 'Viasna', the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, and the Committee to protect the repressed 'Solidarity'. Discussions focused on irregularities that took place during the presidential elections, the violence used against the post-election rally and its consequences, the situation regarding human rights (some 700 activists were arrested), and the demands made to the authorities.

In a press conference held in Minsk on 20 January 2011, I stated the government's actions were unacceptable, underlining that presidential candidates and other activists had been detained for a month in KGB prisons and had been prevented from access to their families and lawyers. On behalf of the Socialist International, I strongly called for their immediate release. Belarus must choose between moving forward to democracy and respect for human rights, or a further deterioration in their relations with the international community as a consequence of their disregard and increased violations of those rights.



Mikalai Statkevich

At our Council meeting in **Athens**, on **1-2 July 2011**, a resolution on South Eastern Europe, which included a statement on Belarus, was adopted. It called for the immediate release of Mikalai Statkevich, and the other incarcerated candidates, leaders and political and human rights activists; the full respect of human rights; the establishment of democratic governance and democratic rights; and international support to place pressure against Lukashenko's regime. We vowed to continue to work with all Belarusian democrats until the ultimate goal of a free and effective democracy in Belarus is realised.

SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Albania



On **29 May 2010** we held a meeting of the Socialist International Committee for South Eastern Europe in **Tirana, Albania**. The meeting focused on the crisis in Albania that had followed the unresolved violations

and irregularities of the 28 June 2009 parliamentary elections. Edi Rama, Leader of the Socialist Party of Albania (SPA) and Co-Chair of the Committee, reflected on the difficulties they had faced. Their party had exerted an extraordinary effort to protect and defend democracy, which was under threat in Albania. Stressing the need for support and understanding from the international community, he described the progressive left as the appropriate force to deal with the challenges of democratisation, modernisation, and European integration, stating that the SPA had never felt alone due to the support of those around the table.

Sergei Stanishev (BSP, Bulgaria), Committee Co-Chair, welcomed the responsible behaviour of the SPA, and its willingness to find a constructive and acceptable solution. He expressed his belief that a declaration of the Committee could contribute to resolving the crisis and guarantee a future free of doubts over elections in Albania. Stanishev also referred to EU integration, reflecting upon the experience of Bulgaria where the national goal of integration was only achieved through cooperation.

Presenting democracy as the most fundamental pillar of society, I spoke on the essence of democracy and the current crisis in Albania. Legitimacy needs to be regained, I said, with the steps taken by Edi Rama and the SPA needing to be replicated by other political actors in the country, in particular those responsible within the Democratic Party. Though the situation in Albania was a great challenge, meeting these challenges could provide openings for better times, as would be the case if the electoral transparency demanded by the SPA were achieved.

The Resolution adopted by the Committee reiterated the call of the International for an investigation of the electoral violations to bring an end to the political crisis. The Resolution took into account the deadlock that Albania had faced, stressing that reforms were essential to guarantee fundamental democratic principles there and ensure equal rights and opportunities for citizens, businesses and NGOs. In light of the gratitude expressed by the SPA for the support received from the SI and its member parties, and the importance of solidarity within the global social democratic movement, the Resolution also pledged the support of the International to any other member party that found itself in a similar situation in the future.

Montenegro



Democracy was in focus at our Council meeting in **Montenegro** on **29-30 June 2009**, as mentioned earlier, which was opened by the leaders of the host parties, the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) and the Social Democratic Party (SDPM). Whilst there was much discussion on our global view of democracy, we were also pleased to listen to the addresses on democracy in the

host country by both the Prime Minister, Milo Djukanović, of the DPS, and Speaker of the Parliament and leader of the SDPM, Ranko Krivokapić, who reflected on the coalition's success in the 2009 elections. Djukanović explained that they were committed to building a newly independent nation based on democratic principles, stability, economic development, good relations with neighbouring countries and integration with other nations and international organisations. Further, he commented, it was essential to cooperate with those holding similar ideas and convictions.

South Ossetia

On **9 August 2008**, the Socialist International expressed its deepest concern at the outbreak of hostilities in South Ossetia and called for an urgent ceasefire, respect for the civilian population affected by the conflict and respect for international and humanitarian law. We urged all parties involved to undertake dialogue to avoid an expansion of the conflict and its escalation into a full-scale war.

MEDITERRANEAN

Single Shore Mediterranean

With a vision of ‘a single shore’ for Mediterranean countries, we held a meeting of the SI Mediterranean Committee in **Barcelona, 5-6 October 2009**. The meeting was addressed at its opening by the President of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (government of Catalonia), José Montilla.



Chair of the Committee, Elena Valenciano, warmly welcomed participants, saying it was difficult to find a more propitious place than Barcelona for this meeting, being a dynamic, open, tolerant and multicultural space, which truly reflected the character of the region. Barcelona had been unanimously designated the permanent seat of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. Socialists here lived on the same shore, united by the same sea, and our ideal was that all on that shore should share the same conditions for life, development and equality and that in a not so distant future all would speak with one voice. Aware of the enormity of this task due to the complex circumstances that affected the region, we socialists were resolute in our determination to overcome the problems and fulfil our ambitions.

Welcoming everyone to Catalonia, José Montilla expressed that it was important to debate what type of a Mediterranean we wanted and on how to build a true co-existence between its inhabitants and a future of peace between its states. In this globalised world, he said, that has suffered profound changes, the SI values and social policies have taken on greater relevance. During the conference, participants from Albania, Andorra, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, Western Sahara and the PES, debated a wide variety of issues, in particular on

how to inject new impetus into the policies of cooperation and integration and on the key questions of democracy and peace in the region. Deficits in democracy in some countries were addressed as well as the importance of good governance and combating corruption, as stated in the document adopted by the Committee:

‘The way forward lies in democratic responsibility... Citizens deserve respect and consideration from their rulers. Nothing is less democratic than rulers with no sense of the ridiculous, who consider themselves above the people, above democracy and its institutions, and even above the most basic rules of dignity’.

The closing session was addressed by Jordi Herreu, Mayor of Barcelona, a city that had a socialist government for over thirty years. He highlighted the importance of the values of cooperation, solidarity and openness. The declaration highlighted the spirit of the event, and our view that although there is a north and south shore, for socialists it is a single shore, one of justice, equality, freedom, plurality, democracy and respect – a shore of peace.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, which we convened in **Buenos Aires, Argentina on 9-10 April 2010**, brought together over 100 participants from 33 member parties.

On strengthening democracy, the Committee focused its discussions on 'How to advance the social democratic priorities of jobs, health,



education and social security in the region' and 'Strengthening democratic institutions and deepening citizen participation'. A *Declaration on Puerto Rico* was adopted reiterating our Committee's call for SI member parties to support the unanimous request by the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation for the General Assembly to examine the case of Puerto Rico. A further *Declaration on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)* reaffirmed the region's support for the Argentinean position in relation to sovereignty. It called on the governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to reach an early just, peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute in line with relevant resolutions and declarations of the United Nations and the Organisation of American States. I presented a report on our mission to Venezuela, the details of which are highlighted below. Following debate, we agreed on a Declaration on Venezuela expressing concern over human rights and democratic freedoms in the country, requesting the liberation of political prisoners, the return of refugees, reiterating the call for dialogue between the political actors involved and announcing a further visit.

At the Council meeting in **Costa Rica on 23-24 January 2012**, former president of Guatemala, Álvaro Colom, gave a keynote address. He reflected on the accomplishments of his administration in fighting poverty and drug trafficking in Guatemala over the previous four years. He emphasised the importance placed by the National Union for Hope (UNE) on the defence of political and individual

freedoms in Guatemala, which were in danger of being eroded under the new administration. At the meeting I drew the attention of the Council to a recent SI statement expressing deep concern over the political harassment suffered, and the travel restrictions imposed on, Sandra Torres, a member of the party's leadership, who was prevented from attending the Council meeting in Costa Rica



Álvaro Colom

Honduras

On **29 June 2009**, during our Council meeting in **Budva, Montenegro**, we strongly condemned the coup d'état against the government of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales in Honduras, as well as his detention and forced expulsion from the country. We demanded the immediate re-establishment of democratic and institutional normality in that Central American nation.

The Council also demanded the immediate reinstatement of President Zelaya, joining voices with all the democratic organisations and international bodies, such as the Organization of American States, declaring it will not accept the recognition of any government that pretends to replace one that was legitimately constituted.

At the same time, the Council repudiated any attempt to justify this unacceptable rupture in the democratic life of Honduras under any pretext or argument. The Council emphatically condemned the violence, including the arbitrary detention of the Secretary for International Relations who was expelled to Mexico, as well as the detention of other figures, and we demanded that their freedom and physical integrity be respected.

Democracy is the only way possible for free people to conduct their affairs of State and to respond to the expectations of citizens for greater wellbeing, progress and security. The Council of the Socialist International resolved to remain committed and alert to developments in Honduras, watching for the fulfillment of this urgent democratic demand by the international community.

Venezuela



SI Member Parties from Venezuela

The SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted a Resolution on the political situation in Venezuela at its meeting in **Guatemala** on **23-24 March 2009**. It expressed its concern at the tense situation unfolding at that time, the Committee criticised political harassment and the decisions taken by authorities that violated the rule of law.



In support of our member parties, we agreed to send a special mission to Venezuela to gather direct information on the situation and encourage and strengthen dialogue among all the political actors in the country.

Our mission visited **Caracas** on **20-23 January, 2010**. I headed a delegation that included Peggy Cabral of the Dominican Revolutionary Party, Dominican Republic; Renée Fregosi of the Socialist Party of France; Paulina Lampsas of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement of Greece; Emilio Menéndez del Valle of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and Jesús Rodríguez of the Radical Civic Union of Argentina. We held significant talks, meetings on a wide-range of issues, with a variety of political actors and civil society organisations of Venezuela.

Throughout our discussions, I expressed hope and optimism to see Venezuela once again find the path of social peace thanks to the strong citizen participation lined up for the 2010 legislative elections. The subject of the election was one of

the main themes of our mission. We heard in our meetings expressions of concern over authoritarianism, increasing civil control and forms of censorship. Further signs of mismanagement included high inflation and deepening recession. A report on our mission was subsequently presented and adopted at the Council meeting held at the United Nations in New York. It covered our findings and expressed the sentiment felt across the Socialist International, the inescapable duty of solidarity with the political and social left of Venezuela.

Costa Rica

A special address was delivered at the Council meeting in **Costa Rica in January 2012**, which had particular resonance with strengthening democracy in Latin America. Nobel laureate and former president of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, highlighted the peaceful spirit of Costa Rica, epitomised by its abolition of the armed forces in 1948. The words and actions of the social democratic movement will be central to bringing an end to conflicts around the world, he said, reinforcing his unflinching desire to continue struggling for peace and the arrival of a day when countries of the world are filled with democracy, development and freedom, however long that might take. Delegates greeted the ex-president's inspiring words with a standing ovation. In this message of hope, we recognised the true spirit of global social democracy.



Oscar Arias

SUPPORTING THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

Egypt – A New Democratic Future

The time for change had arrived. In the Spring of 2011, after 18 days of massive protests, Hosni Mubarak was forced to relinquish his presidency, and the ‘revolution of Tahrir Square’ made history. The people of Egypt had won the first democratic battle and succeeded with their demands for political, social and economic change against an authoritarian



Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq

regime that had been in place for over thirty years. Holding their future in their own hands has now become more than just a distant dream for Egyptians. The holding of free and fair elections and establishing a civilian government as a basis for the further development of new democratic structures in the country, we said, will give the Egyptian people the opportunity to exercise their newly won freedoms and rights and these should be the first priority.

The Socialist International rejoiced that democracy and the will of the people could now be the foundation upon which a new Egypt can be built. Events in Egypt showed what can be achieved through the determination, resolve and unity of a people.

Freedoms and Rights for all

In **Athens on 19 March 2011**, the Presidium of the Socialist International gathered in the foothills of the Acropolis, to discuss the historic changes taking place across the Arab World. As a global movement that has democracy at its core, we were greatly encouraged by these developments. Alongside leaders from the region, we addressed ways to deepen our support for the nations and people from all walks of life who took place uniting behind this common cause.

The Presidium expressed its unambiguous solidarity with those engaged in the struggle for democracy, not just in northern Africa and the Middle East, but also with those who defend democracy at every moment, in other parts of the world. Throughout its history the Socialist International has been actively engaged in the process of democratisation. It is vital that these experiences are remembered whilst supporting today's democrats and recognising an historic moment which holds a similar significance for the Arab world.



Amira Yahyaoui, blogger from Tunisia

This Arab Spring started with the revolution in Tunisia and gained powerful momentum with the inspiring events that swept Egypt. Citizens of Tunisia and of Egypt made their voices heard and were able to push forward a democratic wave for change. These post-modern revolutions had the common characteristic that they were initiated by young men and women who transcended the factional and social divides using the only weapons they had access to: modern technologies and social media. They managed in a

spontaneous way to make their claims known to the world, underlining the despair created by societies paralysed by corruption, nepotism and unjust concentration of wealth.

We recognised that the success of the transition to democracy in Tunisia and Egypt was vitally important for the entire region and in particular for those who have encountered violence and repression in response to their demands. The journey towards democracy in these countries is part of the continuation of the process of world democratisation, which has seen the number of countries under a democratic system rise steadily during the last twenty years. Our organisation contributes to a democratic future in many countries around the world, some of which have only recently made democratic transitions and where the SI has parties in government. The challenge in many places is to develop democracy, to enshrine its principles in the institutions of the state and to ensure that it evolves and matures.

The process of making democratic governance successful has many characteristics, but among the most crucial are the principles of free and fair elections, the recognition of democratic election results, the accountability of those in power, equal opportunity to participate and the enjoyment and recognition of all fundamental freedoms and rights and a free media. But democracy is more than simply the holding of elections, it is the right to exercise a vote free of intimidation or fear, to participate in a transparent electoral process and to campaign and be heard as an opposition candidate. A democracy is defined by strong institutions, which act impartially, independently and to the benefit of all citizens.

Our Council meeting in **Athens on 1-2 July 2011** placed focus on the Arab world. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), our host party, welcomed us, while George Papandreou underlined the commitment of the International to stand by those in the Arab world fighting for democracy. On the conference's main theme, 'Advancing people's hopes in the Arab World: supporting the vision of freedoms and rights for all', discussions began with an introductory speech from the President of the Republic of Iraq, and SI Vice-President, Jalal Talabani, who addressed in detail developments in the region. Under this theme, a number of speakers from the Arab world contributed to the proceedings with their perspectives on the situation in their countries: from Egypt, Mona Makram-Ebeid; from Tunisia, Tahar El Almi, Popular Unity Movement (MUP); from Libya, Fathi Mohammed Baja, Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Libyan National Transitional Council; from Yemen, Mohamed Ghalib Ahmed Alsaqladi (YSP); from Mauritania, Ahmed Ould Daddah (RFD); from Morocco, Abderrahman Lamrani (USFP); and from Western Sahara, Mohamed Sidati (Polisario Front). The Council also heard the testimony of prominent bloggers from Egypt and Tunisia who spoke on the uprisings in their countries and their hopes for the future as cyber activists engaged with the democratic movements.

A resolution on the first main theme adopted by the Council highlighted the support of the International for democrats in Yemen, Libya and Syria in their struggle, and the commitment to accompany the important process of transition to democracy. In this document, we reaffirmed our support for a peaceful and lasting solution to the Western Saharan conflict and the work of the UN Special Envoy, mandating the SI Mediterranean Committee to continue its work on this issue.



We organised the constituent meeting of the SI Special Committee on the Arab World, established at the SI Council in Athens in July 2011, on the island of **Crete** on **28-29 October 2011**. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) hosted the meeting under the heading 'For a new society of rights and freedoms: winning the transition to democracy in the Arab world'. Participating in the meeting were leaders and personalities representing progressive democratic forces from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Western Sahara and Yemen, alongside other members of the International.

Opening the meeting, George Papandreou pointed to the feelings of solidarity and support that the members of the Socialist International in different continents shared with all those who were leading the democratic struggles in the Arab world.

I referred to the role that the International was set to play in continuing to support the democratic struggles across the Arab world. We had established this Committee to exchange views and experiences, put forward initiatives and work together with the actors of change in establishing common objectives and goals for the development of the new democracies, in the understanding of a shared set of values and principles to which all those present were committed. All delegations participating from the Arab world addressed the meeting on the issues affecting their respective countries, responding to the different themes on the agenda of the meeting. In the aftermath of the first democratic ballot held as a direct consequence of the Arab spring, participants welcomed the positive developments in Tunisia, where legislative elections had been widely praised as free and fair with a high turnout. Delegates from Egypt reiterated the need for elections to take place in their country, expressing the hope that this would happen in the near future as the next step in its transition. Representatives of the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) were congratulated on the liberation of

their country, which now required the support of the international community as it faced the challenges of transition and the need for national reconstruction and reconciliation.



Delegates, Crete

The movements for change in Syria and Yemen were discussed, and these are highlighted in more depth below. Also participating in

the meeting were bloggers from Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia, who were able to present a different perspective from the point of view of those social media users who continue to play a substantial role in the advancement of the goals of the uprisings. These activists both assisted with the coordination of the protests and ensured the dissemination to the wider world of information on the true nature of the political violence used by undemocratic regimes, circumventing restrictions placed on the media by those regimes and making the true extent of their actions visible to all. Among their concerns were that those trusted with responsibilities during the transition fulfil their obligations to the citizens, ending those practices as well as current military trials of civilians. Paying tribute to the people who had contributed to the end of despotic regimes, the Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that the actors of change continued to be heard under the new political system, with a need for the representation of women and young people who had played a fundamental role in the uprisings.

The support of our social democratic political family for the movements for change in the Arab world and the common objectives and principles of social justice, human rights, freedom of speech and expression and representative democracy shared by them are interlinked. The Committee heard from SI members facing forthcoming elections in Morocco, where socialist forces were to stand with the full support of the global movement as they



presented a social democratic platform to the Moroccan people. The meeting concluded in a declaration that embodied the commitment of all participants to a common undertaking, which they called ‘the spirit of Crete’ for democracy and freedom in the Arab world.

The meeting of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources, which we organised in **Rabat** on **9-10 January 2012**, discussed the developing welfare statehood and increasing social protection in the Arab world. The meeting, chaired by Christoph Zöpel, included participation from across North Africa and the Middle East region.

Fathallah Oualalou, Mayor of Rabat, gave an introductory speech. He underlined the need for democratic and socialist forces in Europe to reinforce cooperation with countries of the southern Mediterranean to build a profitable and dynamic partnership, and called for greater economic solidarity.

Contributions were also heard from Néjib Chebbi, leader of the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), Tunisia, Ahmad Sobboh (Fatah, Palestine) and Ahmed Lafdal (RFD, Mauritania), who outlined their experiences with regard to social protection and the welfare state in their own countries. Perspectives from outside the region on the issues at the centre of the discussions were added by Bernard Soulage (PS, France, Vice-Chair of the Committee), Paulina Lampsa (PASOK, Greece) and Heliodoro Quintero (UNT, Venezuela).



Fathallah Oualalou

Exchanges focused on the document, ‘Welfare Statehood in the Arab States – The Alternative of the Socialist International to Social Irresponsibility’, which incorporated calls for strategies based on social democratic values to build socially responsible welfare states founded upon the values of social justice, solidarity and full employment.

We held the second meeting of the Socialist International Special Committee on the Arab World in **Istanbul**, on **23-24 March 2012**, hosted by the Republican People's Party (CHP). Chairing the meeting, George Papandreou thanked the CHP



for their hospitality and said this meeting was an opportunity to find a unified voice for the faces of the democratic left. This would show solidarity for those struggling for democratic rights and freedoms and elaborating strategies for enhanced cooperation and action. In his opening address, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of the CHP,

outlined the need to ensure that the objectives of the democratic movements in the Arab world were fully realised, and not appropriated by external powers for their own interests. The indispensability of democracy was fully understood by the CHP, he commented, as the party was working hard to defend democratic rights and freedoms in Turkey.

I introduced the work of our committee and of the Socialist International on the Arab world, referring to the role of the SI in accompanying protests, revolutions and the process of democratisation over the previous 14 months. For all the advances made by the people in those countries during that time, there remained many challenges, and the SI would continue to work alongside our partners in the Arab world to maintain the momentum for change.

Representatives of the opposition Syrian National Council reported on the situation in their country and asked the International to keep up its political support for their cause. They stressed the necessity that humanitarian assistance be provided to those in desperate need in Syria and that the international pressure on the regime be stepped up to open the way for the Syrian people to decide by themselves a democratic future. Participants were united in their condemnation of the Assad regime and their desire to see an immediate end to violence. Calls were made for the Syrian



Walid Jumblatt

opposition to unite and present a clear and strong alternative to the regime. Support was expressed for the United Nations and Arab League initiative, and the six-point plan, which was endorsed by the presidential statement of the UN Security Council on 21 March. Equally the need for a solution that avoids further bloodshed was emphasised, as well as the need to open the way for free and fair elections to take place as soon as possible.

The importance for the International of continuing to be present alongside the democratic actors in the Arab world and with those who share the organisation's values and principles was stressed, as this kind of support is needed for the growth of healthy, new effective democracies. Participants from Egypt pointed to the divided nature of the political landscape, with no consensus on the path of future change. In this context, 2012 presidential elections in May and June would be critical and must be held under free and fair conditions. In Tunisia the important task of writing the new constitution was underway, and it was underlined that this document should reflect and acknowledge the equal rights and inclusion of people of different genders, religions and ethnicities, as well as minorities.

With reference to Yemen, the meeting heard that many challenges remain for the new transitional government, which must be allowed to carry out its work free of interference from the former regime. Crucial to this process is the national dialogue, which will search for consensual solutions to the country's pressing problems. With regard to Morocco, the recent elections under a new constitutional framework were acknowledged. More power has been given to elected representatives including the USFP, now in opposition, which can better fulfil its role of holding the new government to account.

The exchanges also recognised the important role played in Lebanon by the PSP in advancing the democratic agenda in the region and ensuring the political stability of the country. The role of President Jalal Talabani in Iraq was recognised, with the conviction that recent attacks will not weaken the resolve of the SI member party in that country to achieve peace, stability and economic prosperity for the people. These transitions need to remain faithful to the values of the uprisings, among them the guarantee of free and fair elections, justice for those persecuted and equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, recognising the contribution of women and youth.

Equally, the ability of the Socialist International to enhance cooperation between social democratic forces in the region was also a feature of the discussions,

emphasised by the presence for the first time in an SI meeting of a representative from Bahrain. There, many democratic activists including Ebrahim Sharif, the Wa'ad secretary general, have been imprisoned for their democratic struggle, and the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Enquiry into the violent reaction of the authorities to last year's demonstrations have yet to be fully implemented.

Participants also resolved to explore further ways in which the global social democratic movement could assist its members, as it recently has done by using the legal and political expertise within the movement to contribute to the preparation of the transitional justice law in Yemen. The law would provide the legal framework for reparations for violations of the rights of citizens and the settlement of the state's responsibility to those who have been wronged under the authoritarian regime. The same type of cooperation will be given in relation to the establishment and building of the new state institutions in some of the new democracies.

The Socialist International will continue to follow attentively the electoral processes in the Arab world, with the presence in some cases of observer delegations to accompany and monitor these crucial processes. Participants also agreed that dialogue and partnerships between social democrats and other actors united by their pursuit of democracy across the Arab world should be encouraged. The goal of this collaboration would be to contribute to the unity of opposition forces committed to ending authoritarianism and to the advent of democratic elections.



Istanbul

The meeting took note that in Algeria, the SI member Socialist Forces Front (FFS), which had not participated in elections for 15 years due to a lack of trust in the process, would present candidates for the parliamentary elections, and expressed its support for the party. Elections to the new Constitutional Assembly in Libya planned for June 2012 would be a historic opportunity for the people to freely exercise their democratic right as they launch the process of defining that country's constitution.

A declaration adopted at the end of the meeting incorporated the rich discussions that had taken place, and further stressed our solidarity with the progressive actors seeking democratic objectives in the Arab world.

Syria

We have been appalled at the violence and bloodshed against innocent victims that continues in Syria. Conflict broke out in March 2011. By August, clashes between the ruling Assad regime and protestors calling for freedom, democracy and change had reached boiling point across many parts of the country. The Arab Spring-inspired demonstrations, initially centred on the town of Deraa in Syria's south, spread to many other regions and culminated in a brutal attack on civilians in Hama. Reports from Syria described scenes of carnage on the streets of the city of 800,000, as military vehicles moved in over five days to target anti-government campaigners. Human rights groups reported that scores of people lost their lives as tanks fired on innocent bystanders and buildings, eventually shooting their way through to Hama's central square. In other areas of the country tens of thousands of people continued to show their defiance at government-led repression and brutality. International news agencies reported that some 50,000 people gathered in Deir al-Zour, 20,000 in Duma and a further 40,000 in Homs during protests. The demand for democracy continued and during September 2011 opposition figures gathered in Damascus. After five months of violent unrest across Syria, the assembly was billed as significant by observers, given that previous attempts to unite anti-government groups largely took place outside the country.

The Damascus meeting came just days after many high profile Syrian exiles met in Istanbul, Turkey, where they agreed to form a National Council – similar to Libya's National Transitional Council – consisting of 140 anti-government figures, half of whom currently live in exile. The Arab League's Secretary-General, Nabil Elaraby, held talks with Bashar al Assad urging Syria's leadership to find a solution to its five-month stalemate with protestors. Elaraby stressed the need for the Assad regime to adhere to its commitment to implement far-reaching reforms. Yet,

violent attacks across Syria showed no signs of stopping. The Socialist International released a statement demanding:

“It is unacceptable that more than 2000 people have lost their lives in a legitimate struggle for basic rights and freedoms. We offer our support to what we hope will be a united opposition – and we reiterate our solidarity with the Syrian people. It is imperative that democracy in Syria prevail.”

Syria’s violence and bloodshed must end

In a new statement, released on 16 February 2012, the SI called again for the immediate end to the violence and bloodshed escalating across Syria. The repression and killings by government forces grow more brutal by the day and are utterly deplorable. Among the many thousands that have been killed are hundreds of women and children, including those shockingly murdered in cold blood by sniper fire. Soldiers who have refused to follow orders and fire on their fellow citizens have also been ruthlessly executed. A stark example of the brutality of the regime was the indiscriminate bombardment of the city of Homs, including shelling of residential areas with no regard for the human cost. Government forces have also continued their crackdown in other cities including Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, Deraa and Idlib, adding the tragic loss of life in these attacks to the thousands of victims of the bloodshed, a horrendous consequence of the previous months’ struggle.

The United Nations has a responsibility to the innocent victims of the murderous violence of the Syrian regime and we urged it to take measures to protect the civilian population, deliver aid and bring an end to the violence. We called for a UN resolution, in line with the request of the Arab League and their call for the deployment of peacekeepers to bring a halt to the violence and safeguard civilian lives. Each delay or failure to act on the part of the international community, we stated, increased the suffering of the Syrian people and the number of casualties.

President Bashar al-Assad long ago lost his legitimacy to govern in Syria and the Socialist International reiterated its call for his immediate departure. Only through fundamental change, beginning with a transition to democratic rule and the holding to account of those responsible for the thousands of deaths, will Syria be able to start the process of rebuilding.

The SI strongly condemned the violence perpetrated by the Assad regime, and expressed our full solidarity with all those who continue to risk their lives striving in pursuit of democracy and for a life free of oppression.

Yemen

On 19 June 2011 the SI issued a statement noting that President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen was once again being urged to relinquish power as anti-government protests continued across the country – more than five months after the Yemeni uprising first began. In this challenge to the President’s 33-year rule, a highly influential group of religious and tribal leaders declared Saleh unable to carry out his duties after he was seriously injured in an attack on his presidential compound on 3 June. They called on Saleh to hand power to Vice-President Abdu Rabu Mansoor Hadi. Demonstrations saw tens of thousands of people take to the streets of the Yemeni capital Sana’a to call for the creation of a transitional government and to denounce the power vacuum, which had left the country and its people in political limbo. We applauded the sentiment and words of the religious and tribal leaders urging an end to the bloodshed. The Socialist International expressed support for the Yemeni Socialist Party and all opposition efforts to move Yemen – the poorest country in the Middle East – to a brighter, fairer and just future.

In our Council meeting in **Costa Rica in January 2012**, members approved the recommendation of the Ethics Committee to upgrade to full member status the Yemeni Socialist Party, whose members and leadership have been at the forefront of the democratic movement.

Yemen Visit

Considering the events that have unfolded over the previous two years, my trip to **Yemen on 18-20 March 2012**, was of great value. I travelled to Sana’a following the installation of new authorities resulting from the sweeping changes that had



With President Hadi

taken place after 14 months of civil and popular demands for democracy, freedoms and rights. I had meetings with the new President of Yemen, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Al-Hadi, the Prime Minister, other government ministers, the leadership and members of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), the SI member in that

country, its partners in the coalition of Joint Meeting Parties, and with representatives of the Youth and Change movements.

In my meeting with President Hadi, he outlined the huge challenges his country now faced, which included political, security and economic crises. Whilst there now existed actors with democratic consensus, major obstacles concerning security and economic issues continued, with division amongst and between the armed forces, the security forces and armed tribal forces. Yemen, the President added, needed support from the international community, including the Gulf Cooperation Council, the European Union, and the United States, among others. He called for support from the Socialist International to help the country to help itself and avoid further violence and instability, which would affect the entire region. In this regard, a great deal of hope was placed upon the 'national dialogue', a series of talks between the different political actors and sectors of society to resolve differences. I assured President Hadi of the support and solidarity of the social democratic movement in his tasks, wishing him the strength and wisdom to put into place the Yemeni people's new agenda for change.



Building a new, better state



During our meeting, Prime Minister Mohammed Basindwa expressed his appreciation for the support for the revolution and transition given by the global social democratic movement. He criticised the interference of the former president in his country's political affairs, stressing his determination to build a civil,

democratic state regardless of obstacles created by remnants of the former regime.

I held meetings with all seven of the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), including the YSP and al-Islah holding the rotating chairmanship of that coalition. The JMP have united as a political force to become the political motor driving the democratic revolution. One of their most pressing concerns is the question of restructuring the armed forces. The importance of working together across ideological divides in the interest of democracy was strongly emphasised by all representatives of the alliance. My discussions with the Minister for Legal Affairs Mohammed Mikhlafi centred on his important tasks in the transitional government, and the drafting of the Transitional Justice and National Reconciliation Law, addressing the urgent need to put an end to causes of division amongst members of Yemeni society. It was agreed that legal and political expertise within the SI would be used to contribute to the preparation of the law, crucial for reparation and reconciliation in Yemen.

Recognising the pioneers of change

In Sana'a, a special visit was made to the activists in Change Square, the epicentre of demonstrations against the former regime. We met with members of the YSP youth who were behind the popular movement for regime change in Yemen. The activists underlined they were willing to remain camped in their tents, which stretched for many kilometres through the streets of Sana'a, until the last representative of the old regime was removed from power. I was moved to declare that the dedication, courage and sacrifice of these protesters represented the hopes of people in Yemen, and real change would be brought to Yemen through democracy and the will of the people.

On **21 May 2012**, the Socialist International mourned the loss of more than 90 soldiers in a terrorist bomb attack in Yemen. The deadly suicide bombing took place at a rehearsal for a military parade and left a further 200 people wounded. We condemned, without reservation, this abhorrent, despicable act that came at a time when Yemen was in the process of rebuilding its democratic institutions and reforming the military, following years of autocratic dictatorial rule.

Such atrocities have the potential to destabilise the fragile political situation. Only through the realisation of the democratic process will Yemen be able to consign

violence, authoritarianism and terror to the past. In our statement we stressed the international community must stand ready to assist Yemen in its struggle to fulfil the promise of a better future for its people. The SI expressed its solidarity with all those who seek to bring peace and stability to Yemen. Acts of terror must never be allowed to deter those who pursue democracy, and we reaffirmed our support for the endeavours of Yemen's transitional government and the Yemeni Socialist Party in this regard.

FOR A COMMON ROAD TO PEACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND COOPERATION: THE NEED TO SECURE MULTILATERALISM

‘The ongoing global problems and challenges are interdependent; only the concept of sustainable global development, the strategy of sustainability in its economic, ecological, social and cultural dimensions can resolve these problems in the interests of global society.

Human security and sustainable development will only be successful if more democratic and effective institutional structures are created for the political system of world society. Democratic global governance is urgently needed. Global institutions – as part of the whole multilateral and multilevel global political system – must be given the capacity, flexibility and authority to meet the mounting expectations and demands of world society’s citizens concerning a secure and viable future.’

Declaration ‘The Challenges of Global Development in 2010 – The Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Dimensions’, adopted at the meeting of the Council of the Socialist International United Nations, New York, 21-22 June 2010

OVERCOMING CONFLICT - WORKING TOWARDS PEACE

The CIS, Caucasus and the Black Sea

Our meeting in **Yerevan** on **11-12 June 2010** was an important moment in the work of our Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and the Black Sea. Prominent on our agenda was the theme of conflict resolution in the region. The meeting was hosted by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Dashnaktsutyun (ARF-D). The discussion on conflict resolution was underscored by the participation in the meeting of the Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan (SDPA), represented by their Deputy Chair, Saladdin



Hosrul oglu Allahverdiev, a first such encounter since the open military conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. Welcoming delegates to Yerevan, ARF-D President Hrant Margaryan thanked the SI for its efforts in bringing together Armenia and its neighbour. He expressed optimism that their conflict could be resolved and welcomed the delegate of the SDPA, stressing that all present were members of the same ideological family, and that this coming together could help achieve success. He described how the party was trying to establish a country based on social democratic principles.

Welcoming the attendance of the two parties, I noted the high importance of this meeting, as there can be no solution to conflict without dialogue. This was a significant moment for us. The first official meeting to be held in Armenia, it was the result of a long history of collaboration and cooperation with the ARF-D. It represented the hope and aspiration social democracy can bring to people.

Saladdin Hosrul oglu Allahverdiev, SDPA Deputy Chair, and Armen Rustamyan from the leadership of the ARF-D, presented their respective countries' situations. Engaging in open and productive discussions on the unresolved issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, both speakers gave their views and also accepted questions from delegates. An extremely beneficial debate was conducted, addressing existing tensions and alternatives for peace.

At this meeting in Armenia, I conveyed our solidarity with the ARF-D, recognising their role in advancing social democracy and in encouraging efforts to find peaceful and just solutions to regional conflicts, within a spirit of openness and good neighbourhood, and without preconditions. I greeted the presence of the SDPA delegate from Azerbaijan, expressing our recognition of their efforts at home and courage in travelling to Yerevan to attend this meeting. He confirmed the willingness of the SDPA in hosting a similar meeting in Baku. These discussions provided a good example of how constructive and positive initiatives can be realised from within our International even in the most difficult cases.

Committee Meeting, Baku, Azerbaijan

We then organised a meeting of our Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea in Baku, **Azerbaijan** on **11-12 October 2010**. The event provided another opportunity to discuss the issues between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and in the region as a whole. In a preparatory visit to Baku, I met with the President of the Republic, Ilham Aliyev, to propose the holding of this meeting that would include

the participation of delegates from Armenia to foster political dialogue on peace and security.



Vugar Aliev, the President's Administration, and Araz Alizadeh, SDPA

Azerbaijanis and the Armenians in taking this historic step in Baku. I highlighted the urgent need to move forward on a peace process and to unblock the stalemate in existence since the ceasefire. The role of politics and political parties was crucial to ferment a culture of dialogue, of moving away from entrenched positions and achieving a sustainable solution.

The Committee's debates, which were widely covered by the media, not only in Azerbaijan but also in the region as a whole, included extensive exchanges between the delegations from the Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan and the Dashnaksutiun Party of Armenia. The meeting was attended by representatives of fraternal parties from countries of the region, and other SI members. We agreed, in conclusion, on the importance of building and maintaining a momentum and dynamic towards an early resolution to this conflict which has affected these two nations for so long and cost the lives of tens of thousands.

I agreed to compile an outline of common principles incorporating areas of mutual agreement, which was subsequently approved by the Council at its following meeting in Paris on 15-16 November.

Subsequently, at our Council meeting held at the headquarters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in **Paris on 15-16 November 2010**, the Council was greatly encouraged by the advances made in

the SI initiative for peace in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, following the SI meetings held in Yerevan and Baku. Representatives from both countries had engaged in unprecedented dialogue in activities of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea in both capitals, which contributed to define common principles upon which to approach the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. A statement on the theme of democracy and security was adopted unanimously by the Council.

Africa



The SI Africa Committee discussed 'Securing peace through conflict resolution' at its meeting in **Windhoek, Namibia** on **29-30 July 2011**. Participants highlighted that in Africa, reasons for conflict ranged from civil wars spreading across borders and clashes between ethnic and religious diversity, to the

unequal share of natural resources causing high levels of poverty, famine and the collapse of political institutions.

Social uprisings were the result of bad governance, lack of democracy and the fight over resources. We acknowledged that the resolution of these conflicts had to include participatory democracy, where regular, democratic and transparent elections were held. The protection and promotion of human rights, good governance and a sustainable economic and social development were all seen as important factors for peace, security and stability on the African continent.

The Committee further reaffirmed the position adopted by the SI Council at its meeting in Athens for a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict of Western Sahara. Participants emphasised the need to respond to the desire of the people of the region for peace, fully functioning democratic institutions, social justice and economic progress. As social democrats, we are all committed to working together to that end.

Two of the main themes at our most recent meeting of the Africa Committee in **Praia, Cape Verde** on **30-31 July 2012**, were ‘Working for peace and multilateralism: resolution of conflicts in Africa’ and ‘Advancing and strengthening democracy in the continent and overcoming authoritarianism’.



As I mentioned earlier, Cape Verde’s Prime Minister and President of the host party PAICV, José Maria Neves, addressed participants at the meeting. Underlining that peace and stability were the precondition for sustainable development, he said that regional integration and upholding the common values of our political family would allow us to achieve this.

In my opening remarks at the meeting, I observed that Africa had made great progress and social democrats in the continent had been in the forefront of the advance of democracy, resolution of conflicts and the efforts for more equality. Support for democracy and the rule of law was still needed, as the situation in Mali and Guinea-Bissau following coups d’état had shown. The Socialist International stood fully committed on the side of our members in those countries and throughout the continent in their struggle to defend and strengthen democracy wherever it was under threat.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng, Chair of the Committee, reminded participants this was the third meeting in Cape Verde, which was a symbol of the democratic achievements and stability of the country. He underlined that a concerted African response was needed in times of crisis, to fight the scourge of terrorism and problems in the world economy, to increase multilateralism, and establish good governance, which was key to development and democratic stability.

In the extensive discussions on the second and third themes, “Working for peace and multilateralism: resolution of conflicts in Africa” and “Advancing and

strengthening democracy in the continent and overcoming authoritarianism”, participants concurred that the democratic will of the people had to be respected and the Committee called for the re-establishment of the democratic order in Guinea-Bissau and Mali where coups d’état by the military had taken place. In Mali, several factors were threatening the return to constitutional order and territorial integrity, among them armed rebel forces that were active in the North and religious extremists were attempting to take over.

In the meantime efforts for the establishment of a national unity transition government were currently under way. Neighbouring countries and the sub-region were under threat of terrorist groups, which had tried to spread to bordering territories. Carlos Gomes Junior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, summarising the situation in his country where the first round of the presidential elections had



Carlos Gomes Junior, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau

been recognised as free and fair by internal and external observers before the coup d’état, called on both the UN and the international community to address the situation in his country and take the necessary steps to allow for a swift return to democratic rule.



Participants agreed that there were increasing conflicts in the region over raw materials and commodities, and food crises such as in the Sahel region were becoming more frequent. Strengthening relations and exchanging information

was another way to enhance multilateralism and a growing economy could be a factor of stabilisation and peace. Participants also called for the African Union, with its newly elected Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, to play a bigger role in the resolution of conflict, with the general understanding that regional institutions were able to resolve crises on their own without the intervention of the wider international community through the means of dialogue and negotiation.

The Praia Declaration adopted at the meeting stressed that the consolidation of true democracy in the continent was necessary in order to prevent military coups and too guarantee respect for the constitutional order.

Israel and Palestine

The International has been closely involved in the Middle East region for many years, working side by side with both its Israeli and Palestinian members, not only in the advancement of the political ideals and values we share, but in securing a horizon of peace for all the peoples of the region.

In this journey, we have achieved a great deal together. Firstly, in the acceptance of the two-state solution, which was the next logical step forward from mutual recognition. We nurtured this solution in our very early meetings and discussions with leaders of both the Israeli Labour Party and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. A second conclusion, which also emerged from our early discussions, was that dialogue and negotiation were imperative for progress. It has been then upon these very foundations that the international community has been able to register advances in the search for peace or, when this has not existed, has had to face failure and the tragedy of conflict and war.

Recognising from the very beginning the enormous complexity of the conflict and the great difficulties that would be encountered in trying to achieve peace, the advancement in the region of our shared ideals of tolerance, democracy, institution building and responsible government with our Middle East partners has been of crucial importance.

On **11 January 2009**, the Socialist International released a statement calling for peace after the abhorrent violence in Gaza that led to tragic and totally unacceptable loss of human life and a mounting humanitarian crisis.

Military escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has never resolved any part of the crisis, it has only resulted in greater human tragedy, deeper fear and distrust.

In that statement, we urged that violence must stop immediately. Equally urgent, we underlined the need to carry forward the fundamentals for a Palestinian state and a stable future for the peoples of the region. The underlying choice for both Israelis and Palestinians is what kind of society they wanted to live in. We, in the Socialist International, are convinced that both peoples want to co-exist in peace with each other and that both communities ultimately do not want to live in a society of confrontation. Palestinians long for normalcy in their lives, as do Israelis, and neither people want to build a future where violence continues to dictate daily life.

Our statement detailed that a crossroads had been reached where the option for peace marks the way forward. Choosing the other direction can only lead to human tragedy, on a path of regression, fragility and heightened insecurity. Peace is at stake in the region and it is for the Israeli and Palestinian people to decide the future they want. It is past time, long past time, to turn the tide and to bring the violence to an end. We stressed the need to act beyond the narrow scope of political self-interest, and in the interest of the greater good. The principal actors in the Middle East will ultimately determine whether peace is achievable and the people who today are suffering the most from the violence will render their judgement accordingly.

The SI Council adopted a resolution on the Middle East at its meeting **in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on 23-24 November 2009**. The document reaffirmed its conviction that the solution lay in creating a Palestinian state. An agreement must both recognise the right of Israel to live in peace within internationally recognised borders, and the need to bring an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. This would be a crucial step to create peace and stability in the region as a whole.

The Council expressed its concern regarding the continued stalemate in the Middle East peace process. It stressed the urgency of a prompt return to serious, effective and substantial negotiations, on the basis of the agreed terms of reference (which included the provisions of international law, UN resolutions and earlier signed agreements).

We reaffirmed that Israeli settlement activities in Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, 'natural growth', bypass roads and the building of a Separation Wall on occupied territory, are illegal. We said that these constituted a gross violation of international law, and a major obstacle to peace. We stressed that this is a violation of the signed commitment to abstain from '*any unilateral action liable to prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations*'. These activities must be halted at once in order to make territorial negotiations possible, and credible.

Council members returned to address the situation in the Middle East at their meeting in **New York on 21-22 June 2010**. Frank and open debates took place with contributions from representatives of the Israeli member parties, Ehud Barak, Israeli Defence Minister and leader of the Labour Party, and Avshalom Vilan, member of the Knesset from Meretz, and from representatives of the Palestinian member parties Husam Zomlot of Fatah and Mustafa Barghouti of the Palestinian National Initiative, as well as from participants from other parties.

Following intensive consultations with the Israeli and Palestinian delegations during the two days of the meeting, a far-reaching statement on the Middle East was presented and adopted by acclamation. This statement reflected that the Council was committed to help find a path for dialogue, negotiation and progress to achieve peace, an utmost priority for the peoples of the region and the international community. The Council, calling for an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and withdrawal to the 1967 borders, declared its support for the establishment of an independent, sovereign and viable democratic Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital which should exist side by side with a secure Israeli state.

Later, in 2011, seizing the opportunity for new openings for dialogue, we organised meetings of the Socialist International Middle East Committee in **Tel Aviv on 9 June 2011**, and in **Ramallah on 10 June 2011**, co-chaired by Colette Avital from the Israel Labour Party, and Nabil Shaath, from Fatah.



Tel Aviv



Nabil Shaath and Colette Avital

In the discussions in Tel Aviv I recalled that since the last Council meeting important changes had taken place in Israel and Palestine, and across the whole region, with the call for freedom and democracy as their common thread. Once again, the SI had the possibility to host discussions in the region between Israelis and Palestinians.

We heard views from the respective parties. Israeli participants spoke on the importance of resuming direct negotiations with the Palestinians, starting with security and border questions. They further addressed the need for negotiations to accompany a UN resolution recognising a Palestinian state. In Tel Aviv, participants addressed opportunities for the left in Israel to work together to form a real alternative to the right, the recognition of a state of Palestine within 1967 borders at the following UN General Assembly, and the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas and its implications for Israel and the Israeli parties.

Guest speaker, Akiva Eldar from the Haaretz newspaper, gave participants an overview of the Israeli Peace Initiative (IPI). He outlined the Israeli response to the Arab Peace Initiative, which had not been formally acknowledged or responded to by the Israeli government. The IPI was a new initiative, composed of different people, with new ideas and new actors, and meetings had been held with senior officials from Europe, the US and the Arab League.

Two special guests, Professor Shlomo Brom from Tel-Aviv University, and Professor Yoram Meytal from the Herzog Center for Diplomacy, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, gave presentations on the situation in neighbouring Arab countries from an Israeli perspective. Professor Brom provided insights into the possible scenarios for the nascent democracies in Egypt and Tunisia and their

impact on Israeli-Palestinian relations. Professor Yoram Meytal explained the changes taking place in Egypt and their impact on Israel in terms of security, foreign policy and the growing importance of public opinion in the new political scenario.

At the meeting in Ramallah, I underlined our commitment to support our Palestinian and Israeli members in their efforts to find a sustainable peace. At that moment there were positive developments in the Israeli peace camp, and the Palestinians were coming together to shape their future. The international



Ramallah

community felt the urgent need to move forward, especially in light of the democratic movements in the Arab region, from Syria to Libya. It was clear that for Israel and Palestine the only way forward were negotiations.

A message by President Abbas was conveyed to the meeting by his chief of staff, Altayib Abed Rahim. Xavier Abu Eid, PLO Negotiations Team, gave a presentation on settlements and territories outlining the situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Azzam Alahmed, Fatah, followed with an overview on the reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas that provided an insight into the terms of negotiations that had led to the agreement. The first introductory speaker, Nabil Shaath, Fatah, elaborated on the peace process deadlock and the prospects for Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Shaath reminded participants that Palestinians remained committed to three major elements: going back to full negotiations to find a solution, the recognition of the state of Israel within 1967 borders, and the commitment to non-violence. As the peace process had lost credibility, Palestinians were losing hope that major change would take place. They needed to regain parity in the negotiations with Israel, and this must be based on the elements outlined above. Palestine was not seeking to be recognised as a Muslim or even an Arab state, simply an independent state, giving its people what they deserve. Recalling developments that had taken place since the Council meeting in New York, where one of the most important statements on the Middle East issue had been made, Mustapha Barghouti, PNI, underlined the political importance of the reconciliation

agreement. He stated that for the first time Palestinians were unified around one programme, a programme of non-violent struggle, and President Abbas had the mandate to speak on behalf of all the Palestinians.



We were received in Ramallah by President Mahmoud Abbas, to whom I had the opportunity to outline the agreements reached at our discussions in Tel Aviv and Ramallah. President Abbas welcomed those agreements and highlighted that his priorities were negotiations with Israel. He had succeeded in bringing security and economic stability to his people but the most important point, ending the occupation, had not yet come true. He wished to see it happen during his lifetime and was willing to renew negotiations as soon as possible to finally make peace a reality.

Peace in the Middle East was part of our agenda at the Council meeting in **Athens on 1-2 July 2011**. The theme included introductory remarks by Nabil Shaath (Fatah, Palestine), Micha Harish and Colette Avital (Israel Labour Party) and Mustafa Barghouti (PNI, Palestine). Recalling the conclusions of our meetings in Tel Aviv and Ramallah, the Council adopted a resolution on peace in the Middle East. The resolution reaffirmed its view that in the absence of renewed negotiations, the Council supports the recognition of the State of Palestine by the United Nations within the 1967 borders.

The 2012 elections in Palestine were discussed during our Arab Committee meeting in **Istanbul, 23-24 of March 2012**. These elections should be an important moment to advance towards the unity of the Palestinian political institutions. In Istanbul we again expressed the urgent need for recognition of an independent State of Palestine.

Our most recent discussions on the Middle East took place at our Mediterranean Committee meeting that we convened in **Madrid on 5 June 2012**. Hosted by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), the meeting was opened by Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, the Secretary General of the PSOE, who addressed developments in the Arab world and support for the struggles for democracy underway in the region, highlighting that these developments made more urgent the need to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Elena Valenciano, Deputy Secretary General of the PSOE and Chair of the SI Mediterranean Committee, underlined the need for a common strategic action by the progressive forces in the region for democracy and social justice, with political cooperation and appropriate policies for economic development and employment with full respect for gender, youth, minorities, religion and cultures.

Following in-depth contributions by the Palestinian and Israeli delegations, the Committee called for a lasting peace based on two states with two capitals in Jerusalem and expressed condemnation of the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. It was underlined that peace is the best guarantee of security for Israel, just as sovereignty, development and democracy are for Palestine. Participants welcomed the efforts of Fatah and President Abbas towards consolidating reconciliation among the Palestinian people and his determination to hold elections.



Mediterranean Committee meeting, Madrid

DISARMAMENT

Committee Meeting, Berlin, Germany

We convened the SI Committee on Disarmament in Berlin on **21 April 2009**. During discussions, a ten-point plan for a comprehensive control policy was compiled:



1. Strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty

- Only when the nuclear states are ready to reduce their arsenals will we be able to irreversibly stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world. Not for nothing are both of the following required by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT): non-proliferation and internationally binding progress in nuclear disarmament.

- We advocate the implementation of the 13-point programme agreed at the Non-Proliferation Treaty review in 2000. This includes the urgent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the opening of negotiations in the Geneva Disarmament Conference over the verifiable ban on the use of fissile material for weapons purposes (FMCT) and the continued implementation of the disarmament obligation under Article VI of the NPT.

- We urge the nuclear weapons states to commit to a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and undertake not to use or threaten to use them against non-nuclear weapons states and nuclear weapons free zones.

2. For a zero solution to tactical and strategic nuclear weapons

- Against the background of global terrorism, the insufficiently controlled arsenal of thousands of tactical nuclear weapons represents a security risk. We demand more effective control of tactical nuclear weapons and the inclusion of these weapons in the disarmament negotiations with the aim of achieving a zero solution.

- The tactical nuclear weapons still stored in certain non-nuclear states

since the era of the Cold War should be dismantled as a first step.

- We welcome the agreement between US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to begin negotiations on the drastic and verifiable reduction of strategic nuclear weapons even before the START I treaty expires at the end of 2009. This is an important step in reviving the Non-Proliferation Treaty, in which the nuclear powers commit themselves to total nuclear disarmament. We also support the Russian proposal to include not just the dismantling of nuclear warheads, but of intercontinental ballistic missiles and heavy bombers as well.

- We welcome the fact that US President Obama wants to promote early consent to the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call for the CTBT to be ratified by the US Congress as soon as possible as a decisive signal to the NPT Review Conference that the nuclear powers are taking their disarmament obligation under Article VI of the NPT seriously.

3. Strengthen multilateral controls through better verification and multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle

- We demand an expansion of on-site inspections, the deployment of new monitoring technologies and the setting up of qualified impartial teams of inspectors. Under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we need to work for all NPT members to sign the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols and to bring them into force swiftly. The right of the IAEA to make special inspections including of non-declared installations must be strengthened and expanded.

- We demand the non-discriminatory multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle under the supervision of the IAEA, in order to combat the risk of uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear fuels and technologies.

- This will allow for a non-discriminatory access of NPT member-states to the civilian use of nuclear technology.

4. For a new arms control agreement on missile defence

- Ever more countries and alliances are planning to develop or expand their missile defence systems. A new arms race in this area, which is leading to new uncertainties, must be prevented.

- We need a new arms control agreement to limit missile defence (ABM treaty), which covers as many regions of the world as possible. The outer space must be kept totally free of weapons.

5. For an effective control of carrier technologies

- Missile proliferation has significantly increased in recent years and involves serious risks for entire regions. The effectiveness of the "Missile

Technology Control Regime” (MTCR) export control regime is extremely limited.

- The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOG) of 2002 must be developed into an international treaty.

- We welcome the Russian-American initiative for the multilateralisation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on the abolition of medium-range ballistic missiles.

6. Strengthen the chemical weapons ban through disarmament, drive forward the Biological Weapons Convention

- We demand that all chemical weapons be destroyed within the period to which the signatory states signed up under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the continued development of new verification technologies.

- 162 states have so far become members of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We welcome this and urge other important states, especially those in the Middle East such as Israel, to join the convention as well. We call upon the United States to overcome the resistance to an effective inspection and control system, with the aim of establishing a control system with comprehensive rights of inspection at the next BWC Review Conference in 2011.

- We support the programme to reduce the threat from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (Cooperative Threat Reduction Agreement), the initiative to reduce global threats (Global Threat Reduction Initiative), and the initiative against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Proliferation Security Initiative), as innovative approaches to increasing global security.

7. For conventional arms control and overcoming the crisis in the CFE treaty

- The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (ACFE) must be brought out of deadlock and adapted to the new realities – following the end of the Cold War – and thereby become once more an anchor of security and stability in Europe.

- We appeal to all states involved, to the NATO states as well as Russia, to overcome the blockades, and we demand new regional efforts for a functioning system of conventional arms control from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean through more involvement on the part of Russia.

8. Protect the civil population by banning especially pernicious weapons, and establish controls of small arms and light weapons

- For us disarmament policy is more than just security policy. We want to

prevent the use of especially pernicious weapons and ban this type of weapon altogether.

- Together with civil society we succeeded in creating the political pressure to ban anti-personnel mines in 1997. This was followed in 2008 by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We call for the biggest producers and users of cluster munitions to join in signing up to this agreement.

- Our campaign applies also to small arms. We are counting on the negotiations agreed by the UN General Assembly in 2008 over an international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to contribute to the limitation of arms exports and we call upon all states to engage in constructive negotiations.

9. Get regional initiatives for disarmament and security under way

- Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific and Southeast Asian states, and recently the states of Central Asia have all created nuclear-free zones. We welcome any other such initiatives in the world. We are working to ensure that these experiences are used for Europe and other regions of the world.

- The cooperative security bodies at the United Nations, OSCE, NATO, the NATO-Russia Council, The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the NATO-Ukraine Charter, the Partnerships for Peace, the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and other bodies must become much stronger than hitherto as active instruments of confidence-building, disarmament and arms control.

10. Overcome the blockade at the Geneva Disarmament Conference

- We call upon all governments involved in the UN Disarmament Conference in Geneva to lift their blockades and make progress in the negotiations over the reduction of nuclear weapons, the prevention of the arms race in space, and a ban on the production of nuclear-weapons-capable material even before the NPT Review Conference to be held in May 2010.

- The Geneva Disarmament Conference, the only disarmament forum at the UN, must once again become the active forum for global disarmament, in which all states will have to assume their own responsibility.

Council Meeting, Budva, Montenegro

This comprehensive proposal was confirmed at the Council meeting in **Budva, Montenegro** on **29-30 June 2009**. We reiterated that it was socialists and social democrats that had broken through dogmas and opened the path to security through agreements on disarmament and cooperation during the Cold War. Participants described the role of the SI during the 1990s in helping to produce advances such as the zero option.

In contributions on this theme, it was stated that while conservatives talked of security resulting from force, socialists had a broad and comprehensive approach to security. In adopting the Declaration on Disarmament, the Council concurred that a treaty-based, multilateral arms control and disarmament must become the binding basis of international relations. Efforts at global disarmament are intimately linked to the possibility of solving regional conflicts which feed and fuel the arms race and nuclear competition between major regional forces.

Committee, United Nations, New York



Rolf Mützenich, SPD Germany, and Marc Saxer

We re-convened the Disarmament Committee at the **United Nations, New York** on **17 November 2009**, to discuss 'Strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Nuclear Disarmament' and 'Missile Defence and new Arms Control'. We recalled the long tradition and contribution to peace and disarmament of the Socialist International. Committee chair, Rolf Mützenich (SPD, Germany), stressed that issues relating to disarmament needed social democratic answers and his party was keen to progress

on these issues. Recalling the 10 key points plan, he stressed the need to discuss the issue of arms control and missile defence, making reference to the position of Russia on this issue.

Our discussions benefited from presentations from Marc Saxer, a specialist on arms control and disarmament, and Rhianna Kreger, from the Global Security Institute based in New York. During debates, participants highlighted many diverse issues, such as human security, encouraging the middle powers initiative, the role of parliamentarians in different national and international fora, adopting a 'holistic' approach to the NPT whilst pressing to uphold previous commitments, addressing the problem of nuclear materials trafficking, and on the next generation of cyber weapons. It was noted that there were currently many positive signals internationally which must be supported and promoted, and participants stressed the need for a greater European involvement in this.

Council Meeting, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

A further discussion on disarmament took place at the **Santo Domingo Council** on **23-24 November 2009**. Speakers highlighted recent international developments, which gave hope for the 2010 Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT). A Resolution on the subject was adopted calling for the positive steps to be supported and encouraged. It was imperative to strengthen the NPT, we said, which is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We further made clear that, in the long-run, significant cuts in nuclear warheads and stockpiles cannot be reached without complementary conventional arms control.

Council Meeting, United Nations, New York

The following year, in **June 2010**, the Council approved two declarations on disarmament and non-proliferation at their meeting at the **United Nations, New York**. The first, A World Without Nuclear Weapons warned of the very real possibility that deadly weapons may fall into dangerous hands. We supported efforts such as the Global Zero campaign, United Nations projects and non-governmental activities, which have helped generate a new political momentum and made the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons more tangible. We demanded a new arms control agreement on limitation and the setting up of a cooperative missile defence system incorporating Russia, which was urgently needed to prevent a new arms race in missile systems. Overall, the document found 'bold steps can be taken on the road to a world without nuclear weapons. Common security can only be achieved by disarmament and cooperation'.

The Comprehensive Arms Treaty, which was also approved, focussed on some milestones achieved in the disarmament process, such as the ban on anti-personnel mines and Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The future struggle was to ensure that as many countries as possible observe the fundamental principles governing the limitation and control of arms transfers and to set out internationally binding guidelines for all arms exports. These guidelines are a crucial element in the fight against the transfer into crisis areas of small arms and light arms – “weapons of mass destruction in slow motion”, as Kofi Annan once called them – which constitute the main weapons in most violent conflicts and internal wars.

Committee Meeting, Moscow, Russia

NATO strategy and missile defence were on the agenda at the meeting we held of our Committee on Disarmament in **Moscow** on **3 November 2010**. Addressing the participants at the opening of the meeting, Nikolay Levichev, Leader of A Just Russia faction in the State Duma, stressed the importance of dialogue between NATO and Russia on all disarmament issues.



Nikolay Levichev

He highlighted the enhanced cooperation between A Just Russia Party and the International, and the satisfaction of his party in being able to host (delete) such a gathering of members of our political movement. We echoed the sentiment that the meeting was an invaluable opportunity to debate these issues in a Russian context, and to hear different perspectives and points of view

on such crucial themes. Committee chair Rolf Mützenich expressed the need to search for common answers to current threats. The 10-point plan on disarmament had been a comprehensive analysis of the steps towards joint security through disarmament, he added, now the Committee could focus on specific issues of relevance in Russia.

The meeting's exchanges addressed the need to find a spirit of co-operative security and the need for a limiting agreement to avert the danger of a new arms race in the field of missile defence. Better co-operation between NATO and Russia regarding missile defence was necessary, a situation that would lead to a breakthrough in trust that was beneficial for all. During the meeting, concerns were expressed about the implications of missile defence, and whether this represented a US model for defence rather than a European one. Whilst there was some acknowledgement that missile defence was firmly a part of US and NATO policy, the nature and origins of the threat, if not from within Russia or NATO, were questioned, and the need to find a solution acceptable to all parties emphasised. Russian co-operation with NATO in a range of areas was also considered a cause for optimism.

We further touched upon the wider impact of the actions taken by NATO and Russia, in particular in relation to the south Caucasus, where stability in some of the more volatile areas has been threatened. It is important to move beyond simple military or technical solutions to such threats. Alternatives to minimise risk were emphasised.



The Committee adopted a resolution based on this discussion, under the title of NATO Strategy and Missile Defence. The resolution called for ratification of the new START treaty, greater engagement between Russia and NATO on nuclear policy, a new arms control agreement, and the pursuit of binding agreements on the future of missile defence.

The road to peace is indeed a common road. We all require a prosperous, sustainable future; we all require peace and respect of our democratic rights. As the many goals of the Socialist International demonstrate, these objectives are common for all and as such require global solidarity.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND A SUSTAINABLE WORLD - THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY

Following on the continuing work of our Commission for a Sustainable World Society (SWS Commission), at our Congress in **Athens**, on **30 June - 2 July 2008**, we reaffirmed the commitment of the worldwide social democratic movement to advancing a common sustainability in our ever more interdependent world. Finance, food and fuel crises have spread from continent to continent in our increasingly borderless world. Climate change makes demands on nations' resources. There are potential flashpoints for conflict over access to energy as well as natural resources. Increased environmental migratory flows, the proliferation of infectious diseases and other health problems deepen tensions in the poorer, more vulnerable countries and regions.

Securing an international system responsive to climate change required mutual respect between developing and developed nations and a much greater degree of solidarity than had been seen.

SWS Commission, St Petersburg, Russia



We held a seminar of our SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society in **St Petersburg** on **14-15 July 2008**. Hosted by the Just Russia Party, which had recently become a member of the Socialist International, the meeting gathered together members of the Commission and party representatives with Russian scientists and experts for discussions focused on climate change issues.

Under the chairmanship of Ricardo Lagos and Goran Persson, Co-Chairs of the Commission, and hosted by Sergey Mironov, Chairman of the Council of the Russian Federation, Chair of the Just Russia Party and a member of the Commission, we addressed three main themes: tackling climate change with economic growth based on equity, employment and respect for the environment; assessing alternative sources of energy; and strengthening national and international regulations protecting water and forests. During discussions, we reaffirmed equitable economic development, generation of clean energy and protection of the earth's environment. Significantly, we recognised that all these aspects are interconnected in humanity's struggle to address the challenge of global warming and climate change. This seminar formed part of the Commission's agreed programme of work.

SWS Commission, Stockholm, Sweden



Our Commission next convened in **Stockholm**, on **5-6 September 2008**, and was hosted by the Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP, and Commission Co-Chair Göran Persson.

We addressed the issue of technology transfers and capacity building for developing countries as part of the global response to mitigating climate change and to promote

sustainable economic development. Further, we highlighted the need to seek the necessary funding for this strategic planning. We stressed that the worldwide economic crisis must not be allowed to slow the pace of negotiations toward achieving a new climate regime. In Stockholm, the Commission warned of the risks of resorting to incrementalism and half-measures and we urged the international community to strengthen efforts to produce a climate agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznań, in December 2008.

Our Commission was pleased to recognise developing countries had become more actively engaged at the UN Climate Change Talks in **Accra** on **21-27 August 2008**. The agreement in Accra to include deforestation in developing countries in

a new climate regime was additionally encouraging, as was the headway made toward an arrangement to limit carbon emissions by specific industries, the so-called sectoral approaches. The Commission stressed the importance of harnessing science and technology in order to progress. The transfer of green technologies to the developing world was critical, and we urged more concerted efforts by nations in the context of both North-South and South-South cooperation to determine how best to upgrade current capacities and maximise new technologies. Developing countries, we noted, would require massive transfers and great amounts of technical and capacity-building assistance. Funding under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was not nearly sufficient, particularly in the case of Africa, which is especially vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. Small island nations were also at high risk. Substantial input is needed, from public and private sectors at every level, and between national governments and international agencies. We underlined that achieving the necessary degree of cooperation was a political challenge. It is crucial that the developing world is given a greater voice in negotiations toward a new climate agreement, as they are so significantly affected.

SWS Commission, Cape Town, South Africa

Our discussions continued at our next Commission meeting in **Cape Town, South Africa**, on **2 March 2009**. Hosted by the then President of the Republic, Kgalema Motlanthe, and ANC Leader, Jacob Zuma, discussions focused on Africa's experience of tackling global warming and climate change and the continent's perspective on the global negotiations to achieve an agreement at the 2009 COP15 Summit in Copenhagen.



Attending the meeting were leaders and ministers from a number of our member parties and governments in Africa, from countries including Angola, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. We were united in our message: while being the least responsible for global warming and climate change, Africa was enduring the worst of its effects. The way forward for global negotiations, it was agreed, required increased solidarity from the North to the South in order to assist the African continent in addressing and adapting to these new challenges. At the gathering we underlined the interconnection between environmental, social and economic justice. We recognised that it was the most vulnerable in Africa that suffer worst from the effects of global warming, particularly in drought prone and low lying coastal areas. A crucial message here was that climate change constituted a poverty issue for the continent.

We also addressed the negative impact of violent conflicts on the environment, infrastructure and social cohesion in Africa. There is an urgent need for greater regional and international cooperation to help in resolving conflicts peacefully as part of an integral approach to confronting climate change. We placed emphasis on the critical needs of African nations in the area of adaptation to climate change, and that key to adaptation was the will of the nations of the developed world, particularly in the face of the global economic downturn, to effectively assist the continent in its efforts to enhance technological capacity.

As we have recognised previously, the need for new technology is pertinent. In Africa this is particularly important and upgraded technology and training was considered crucial in the continent's efforts to progress in the transition to renewable energy, particularly the use of solar, wind and thermal power. Achieving a new model of human interaction in a sustainable world society, our Commission reaffirmed, required heightened levels of global solidarity. The challenge is not only about technology, but also about education and of creating a culture of conservation and environmental protection, from the local to the global levels.

SWS Commission, Beijing, China

In **Beijing, China, on 14-15 May 2009**, under the heading 'High-Level Talks on Sustainable Development', our Commission held discussions with President Hu Jintao, as well as leaders of the government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party (CPC). These provided a vital opportunity to discuss policy options.

George Papandreou, SI Commission members and Chinese officials underlined the critical and interconnected challenges we faced from climate change, and the common goal of achieving sustainable development. We agreed that all countries must contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with commitments based on the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' as stated in the Kyoto Protocol. It was further agreed, as we have specified, that climate change presents a good opportunity for promoting sustainable economic growth, including investment, and the substantially increased use of renewable sources of energy. This would have potential benefits for both developing and developed countries.

We were looking for more Earth-friendly models of development and prospective new frameworks of governance, particularly at the international level, to manage and preserve the common wealth of humanity in sustainable ways. All countries have a moral obligation to contribute to the effective mitigation and adaptation of climate change, including with regard to technology transfers to developing countries, in ways that are the most fair and just.

The concept of promoting a return to a 'culture of harmony', in which emphasis is placed on mutually supportive relations between people and nature even as economic growth is pursued through market mechanisms, was highlighted by participants. With a view to that year's COP15 Copenhagen summit, a common long-term vision that would support a future of equitable and ecologically sound development and growth was emphasised.



SWS Commission meeting, Beijing

Council meeting, Budva, Montenegro

We raised the issue of climate change again at our Council meeting in **Budva, Montenegro**, on **29-30 June 2009**. This was especially pertinent due to the 2009 COP15 Copenhagen Summit, and with this in mind, the Council emphasised the need that a new accord adopted there must be ambitious and realistic, but also grounded on a more social base than the Kyoto Protocol had been.

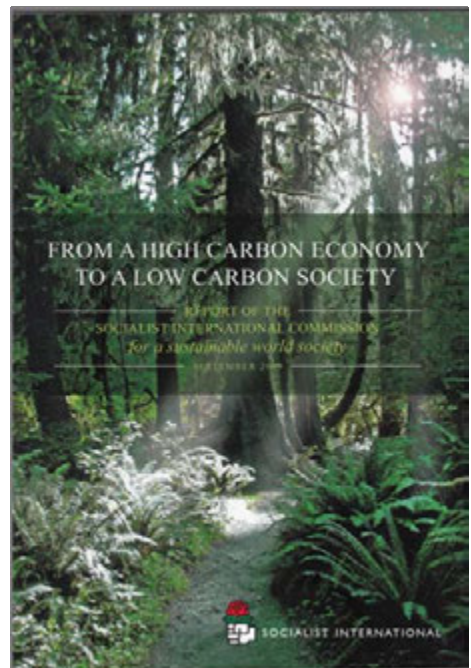
Our position was reiterated that developed countries should set an example by making significant efforts to lead the way. The principle of a common responsibility for our future, based on an approach adapted to countries' respective capabilities, should guide future international protocols.

Building on the Commission's contribution, the Council stressed that countries of the South needed the support from the North to ensure financing to implement the necessary measures for their adaption to climate change. We repeated that ensuring technology transfers must be complemented with help to put in place national strategies for low carbon development in developing countries.

It is of utmost importance that we reconcile in a balanced way the economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects of development while adhering to the concept of sustainable development. The urgent call was reiterated to act now, in the interest of all, towards a world which is more just, more equitable and more respectful of the environment, without creating new inequalities from essential environmental concerns.

Commission for a Sustainable World Society Report

Our Commission for a Sustainable World Society produced a report, entitled 'From a High Carbon Economy to a Low Carbon Society'. This comprehensive report was presented at a meeting of the Presidium of the Socialist International and Heads of State and Government that took place at the **United Nations, New York**, on **23 September 2009**. The report's findings were debated by participants in a discussion on the SI goals ahead of the COP15 in Copenhagen.



COP 15 Copenhagen

The United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP15, in **Copenhagen**, took place on **7-18 December 2009**. This major event provided us with a significant platform for our proposals on climate change.



George Papandreou, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Climate Change and former President of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, Belgian Minister of State Elio Di Rupo, and myself held a press conference at the Conference venue, on 16 December. We presented our SWS Report 'From a High Carbon Economy to a Low Carbon Society' at the Conference.

We stressed the need for a substantial agreement to be reached on the core issues of emissions reductions by developed countries. We were further looking for this to include commitments on reductions by developing countries and emerging economies, sufficient financial assistance for developing and most vulnerable countries, a target for a maximum of 2C increase in temperature, and the need to move forward to a legally binding agreement.

During the UN Conference, we organised meetings with delegates, among them Environment Ministers from different regions of the world and civil society representatives, in which opinions among members of the Socialist International were shared on the Conference debates and negotiations, as well as on the expected outcome.

Council Meeting, United Nations, New York

Whilst pledges were made at Copenhagen, they still fell far short from our hopes and expectations. We reconvened to discuss climate change at our Council meeting at the **United Nations, New York, on 21-22 June 2010**. We began to focus on an international unified response to climate change, now setting our sights on the 2010 COP16 UN summit that would take place in Cancún. The Council approved a declaration reiterating the urgency to meet emission reduction targets and calling on the international community for solidarity to reach the common goal.

Council Meeting, OECD Headquarters, Paris, France



“Facing the consequences of Climate Change: The urgent need for a meaningful agreement at COP16” was one of the main themes of our second Council meeting of 2010, which took place in the headquarters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in **Paris on 15-16 November 2010**. Martine Aubry, First Secretary of our host party, the Socialist Party of France (PS), made an opening address on behalf of her party, in which she referred to the longstanding relationship between the International and the socialist movement in France, and presented the position of the PS on current challenges, both domestic and global, faced by socialists everywhere.

The Council heard a keynote speech by Ricardo Lagos, as Co-Chair of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society. Amongst the guest speakers, Mohammed Waheed, Vice-president of the Republic of the Maldives, highlighted the particular vulnerability of the island states to climate change.

The Council unanimously approved a special appeal, *L'appel de Paris*, directed at the COP16 with the following clear points:

- To insist on the urgent need to advance towards the conclusion of an ambitious and realistic international agreement on climate change, with binding commitments, objectives and deadlines for a clear achievement;
- An outline of an international financial architecture to combat climate change. The materialisation of the Green Fund, which was agreed in Copenhagen, to ensure that by 2020 the objective of 100 billion dollars is achieved annually for developing countries to fight climate change;
- To support the proposals made by the UN Secretary General on November 5, 2010, of which some form part of our Commission's recommendations, including a tax on financial transactions and on air and sea transport and the redirection of fuel subsidies, among others;
- To advance schemes of compensation, technological cooperation, training and financing adaptation and mitigation measures;
- To encourage the actions for the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD activities plus), as a concrete expression of cooperation among developed and developing countries to confront climate change;
- To establish systems for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of the commitments taken, and actions undertaken, to reduce emissions, while contemplating mechanisms to make binding these obligations and to agree sanctions in the case of non-compliance;
- To deepen the scientific and technological cooperation between developed and developing countries. This interchange must promote research and the use of green and advanced technology in the developing countries for equity and greater justice in international relations;
- To keep at the hearts of the debate those agreements reached and actions taken that are undertaken in relation to people, in particular those most vulnerable, such as migrants and displaced people due to climate change, human settlements under threat, the repercussions of climate change in the world of labour, on food production, on access to running water, and the economies of developing nations, and in relation to the world and cultural heritage under threat, as was called for in the SI Council in Budva, Santo Domingo and New York;

- The international community must live up to its responsibilities, it must provide the means to act now, and it must not continue to postpone crucial decisions while the environment living conditions on the planet degrade;
- International institutions, nations, peoples and political forces assume their responsibilities and do not renege on their commitments to the planet, or lose the force of their voices, and that they do not allow fatalism or conformism to dominate.

SWS Commission Meeting, Mexico City



We held a further meeting of our Commission in **Mexico City** on **26-27 November 2010**, to put forward our views on the negotiations that were due to take place shortly after, at the COP16 in Cancún. The meeting was hosted by Commission member, Beatriz Paredes, then President of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The Commission focused on the

key issues and priorities of the Socialist International to obtain a meaningful agreement at the negotiations in Cancún.

Activities began with a public event, broadcast live across Mexico, in which Commission members presented views and engaged in a panel discussion with a large audience of members of parliament, party leaders, trade union leaders, representatives of NGOs and environmental organisations, academics and the media.

We held a meeting with the President of the Republic of Mexico, Felipe Calderón, host of the COP16, and with members of his government. During these discussions, we exchanged views with the President on issues central to the agenda of the Conference and the process of negotiations.

Our main priorities comprised the urgent need for an ambitious and realistic international agreement with binding commitments, objectives and deadlines,

and as a minimum, the formalisation of the voluntary pledges made since Copenhagen. It was noted that even if every pledge made since Copenhagen were formalised and honoured, it would still leave the world far short of what was needed.

It was evident we needed deeper emission cuts, keeping in mind differentiated responsibilities; an agreement on REDD+, with a call for clear targets on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; and progress of technological and scientific cooperation. The principle that adaptation measures should be increased in developing countries with low Human Development Indices and in those most vulnerable to climate change was supported, in line with the long-held position of the International on climate justice.

The need to put into place the proposal to create the Copenhagen Green Fund to mobilise 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 to assist developing countries was emphasised, along with the importance to set a multilateral framework to fulfil the short-term commitment of 10 billion dollars per year in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Dedicated funds for countries affected by climate change were seen as necessary, along with a greater sense of solidarity.

COP 16, Cancún, 2010

The goal of the Socialist International and of our Commission for a Sustainable World Society for an ambitious and realistic international agreement on climate change, with binding commitments, objectives and deadlines, gained ground in Cancún. A unified response by the international community to climate change, an objective our organisation placed great emphasis on, was brought closer, while multilateralism and the United Nations process to deal with climate regained credibility.

We were pleased that the Cancún decisions met many of our calls for action on climate change. The long-term cooperation under the Convention and on further commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol provided a good basis for the continuation of the negotiation process towards more ambitious binding objectives to be dealt with at COP17.

Our call for deeper emission cuts was reflected by the conference. COP16 further recognised that addressing climate change required a paradigm shift towards building "a low carbon society" - which was stated in the title of our Commission's report published in 2009.

Cancún reaffirmed - as we did at our Council meeting in Budva - that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and over-riding priorities of developing countries. The Conference encouraged developing countries to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector, reduce emissions from deforestation and from forest degradation, as we had also asked.

Significant advances were seen providing enhanced financial, technological and capacity-building support for mitigation actions of developing countries. This broke new ground in deciding to subject internationally supported mitigation actions to international measurement, reporting and verification, as our SWS Commission has argued, in accordance with guidelines to be developed under the Convention. Lastly, we were pleased at the decision to establish a Green Climate Fund as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention, which reflected our call for a Green Fund. We therefore gained much hope from Cancún.

SWS Commission, Johannesburg, South Africa



H.E. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa

With the more hopeful outcome of COP16, our SWS Commission was focused on retaining momentum on the goals pledged. We organised a meeting with environment ministers from SI member parties in **Johannesburg, South Africa on 30-31 October 2011**, to discuss our priorities for the following climate change conference, the COP17, that would take place in Durban.

The meeting was opened by His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa and a Vice-President of the SI. In his address, President Zuma outlined the heavy responsibility and sense of urgency felt as his government prepared to host the COP17.

Crucial to tackling the clear and present danger of climate change was to put the Cancún agreements in operation. At the meeting, we applauded the commitment President Zuma had shown to ensuring the success of the climate negotiations in his country. Further, we expressed the hopes of the International for progress on the Green Climate Fund, deeper emissions reductions and mitigation financing.

During the discussions, we paid particular attention to the situation facing the populations of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which as we have already outlined, are threatened with disappearance under rising sea levels if global temperature continue to increase. We reiterated that countries least responsible for climate change are suffering disproportionately from its consequences, signifying that greater leadership and accountability is needed from developed economies. Following the discussions, the Commission adopted a declaration entitled 'On the Road to Durban: Priorities and Targets for COP17', which presented the meeting's demands that needed to be met in Durban.

COP17, Durban, 2011

George Papandreou, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and myself took part in a series of special meetings on **7-9 December 2011**, during the high-level segment of the COP17/CMP7 summit in **Durban**. These were significant proceedings to advance our social democratic perspective on climate change, emphasising our commitment, and concept of climate justice.



At the COP17, we hosted a meeting of ministers and government representatives from SI member parties present in Durban, at which the state of the conference negotiations were examined with participants from all continents and regions.

We held further discussions with President of South Africa Jacob Zuma and with other delegations and representatives of global NGOs and civil society, including Kumi Naidoo, executive director of Greenpeace. On Friday 9 December, the SI held a press conference at the COP17 venue with George Papandreou, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and myself, under the title 'Durban: An opportunity for climate justice', at which the SI vision for meaningful agreements at COP17 was put forward.



With Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and George Papandreou, COP17, Durban

In a statement, we outlined that the COP17 summit had brought positive moves towards our commitments, including a framework for the operation of the Green Climate Fund, and a plan to ensure a mechanism for technology transfer by 2012. We congratulated our South African hosts for showing the leadership and perseverance to obtain these and other agreements.

It must be acknowledged at the same time that some of the commitments we had been hoping to see in Durban on formalising emission cuts, as outlined in our Johannesburg declaration, were not achieved. The international community must persevere within the framework of the UNFCCC to come together in a common search for solutions. Multilateralism continues to be the only way forward, with the vast majority of the nations on the planet wishing to see political will match the scientific requirements and no longer willing to accept 'pledge and review', with the direct involvement of political leaders in the process, crucial in delivering the responses needed.

Council Meeting, San José, Costa Rica

Building on the Johannesburg meeting and the Durban summit, our Council meeting in **Costa Rica** in **January 2012**, adopted a declaration on climate change entitled 'Climate change: The responsibility to make a difference'. Bernal Jiménez, from National Liberation Party (PLN), which hosted the event, noted that they aimed for Costa Rica to be carbon neutral by 2021.

In his opening remarks, George Papandreou praised the role of President Laura Chinchilla and the PLN as a force for progress and prosperity in Costa Rica and for its people, turning their country into an example of sound environmental policies and protection of natural wealth in the world.



Bernal Jiménez, PLN, Costa Rica

President Chinchilla explained that Costa Rica was a country in which the importance of sustainable development was fully understood and where human resources were the most valued assets. The strength of such a sustainable development with emphasis on the quality of human resources had enabled Costa Rica to diversify production and become more competitive, vital in times of global economic turmoil. She underlined that for over six decades Costa Rica had prioritised public spending on the improvement of the living conditions and opportunities for the people, saving the resources that would have been spent on weapons and soldiers to invest them in health and education, objectives for social democrats throughout the world. The statement adopted called on all member parties to lead by example, united behind the shared goal of the International's 162 member parties and organisations of a low carbon society with climate justice at its core.



Council, San José, Costa Rica

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND ECONOMICS FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Council Meeting, Athens

On March 2011, an earthquake and tsunami caused a nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan. The subsequent release of radioactive materials constitutes a key example of the grave dangers of nuclear power. The disaster was discussed at our **Athens Council, on 1-2 July 2011**, where we were joined by Mizuho Fukushima, Leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) of Japan and SI Vice President, who opened discussions on the presentation, *Nuclear energy and the lessons of Fukushima*. She explained that hers was the sole party in Japan to have consistently opposed the use of nuclear energy and described the devastating effects that took place on 11 March.



Mizuho Fukushima, SDP Japan

Delegates were updated on the situation at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, and SDP proposals were outlined for the abolishment of nuclear power. The Council adopted a resolution on this theme, reiterating that nuclear is not a medium to long-term solution to global energy needs, and calling for the use of renewable energy.

Committee Meeting, Bucaramanga, Colombia

We held a meeting of our Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in **Bucaramanga, Colombia on 30-31 May 2011**, to discuss, among other things, the central role of energy in the development of the region. At the inaugural session, more than five hundred people enthusiastically applauded the speeches and tributes paid by Martín Torrijos, Chair of the Committee, and myself, to Horacio Serpa, governor of Santander, and former SI Vice-President.

With nuclear power representing less than 15% of global electrical energy

consumption, even before renewed reticence seen since the Fukushima disaster, and non-conventional and renewable energies holding an even less significant share of the global power supply, fossil fuels - coal, gas and oil - continue to represent the majority of our energy use. However, due to high consumer demand, such energy use cannot be reconciled with our fight against climate change and reducing emissions. More than one and a half billion people on the planet live in extreme poverty. They can only aspire to better living conditions if we have the capacity and the intelligence to search for adequate combinations to 'power development'.

The Latin American and Caribbean region is exceptionally rich in clean and renewable energy, in particular solar energy, and we therefore encourage the utilisation of renewable energy opportunities. The region has a surplus of fossil resources, however, renewable technologies should be encouraged due to our current increased need for environmental protection, and, further, the lack of homogeneity in the availability of fossil resources. We emphasised intra-regional energy deficiencies justify and highlight the advance towards a plan for regional energy integration. It was very interesting to hear some participants advance the idea of 'Energy Solidarity' in the region. This concept would encompass energy costs, security of provision, energy integration and environmental respect.

Another issue discussed related to energy sovereignty, in particular in light of the processes of integration and of opening up to foreign investment. Further debate considered the ethical debate on the advisability of producing energy from food on a planet where a good proportion of the population still suffers hunger on a daily basis. In economic terms, this question raised the link between this type of energy production and food shortages, and price increases in years to come.



Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, Bucaramanga, Colombia

Committee Meeting, Asia-Pacific

We dedicated one of the main themes of our SI Asia-Pacific Committee meeting in Ulaanbaatar, **Mongolia**, on



Prime Minister Batbold of Mongolia

7-8 October 2011, to 'Combining economic growth with environmental responsibility: the dual challenge of development'. We took the opportunity here to consider the importance of combining economic development with sustainability, and a heightened sense of responsibility.

Mongolian Prime Minister Batbold stressed the need to use the natural resources at hand in the interest of the population while preserving and protecting the environment. He further underlined the importance of enabling the people to benefit from Mongolia's recent economic growth and referred to initiatives such as the Human Development Fund that had been implemented by his government to ensure that citizens received their share of the revenue from natural resources.

Introducing the theme, Enkhbold Nyamaa, Deputy Speaker of the Mongolian Parliament, outlined the policies and measures that had been taken in Mongolia to turn fast advancing economic development into environmentally friendly green growth. They faced similar challenges to those faced by other fast-growing economies. In Mongolia's case, they considered the environmental impact of the development of the mining industry, rapid increase of housing and growing infrastructure. Ultimately, the question was how to strike the right balance between development and environmental responsibility - and to ensure the state retains a regulatory role. Mining, and other companies working in the exploitation of natural resources, must remain accountable to environmental protection. A consistency of state policies to halt environmental degradation was considered crucial to live up to the need to tackle the impact of global warming, the draining of lakes and rivers, or further desertification. Recent floods in countries of the region, as has been seen in Pakistan, Cambodia or Thailand, where large numbers of people were suffering, highlighted a sense of urgency on these issues.

THE ECONOMY AND MULTILATERALISM

The resolution adopted by our Council meeting in **Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic** on **23-24 November 2009**, proposed a number of economic strategies for enhanced multilateralism and global solidarity.

Speculation on financial and commodities markets has become influential and we recognised the need to create a World Fund for commodities to contain this. The major commodities are agricultural; we supported the 2009 G8 decision to assist small farmers' funds with 15 Billion US dollars. The drop in price of many global commodities may have advantaged consumers in developed countries, but it disadvantaged producers in less developed states. Industrial states' subsidies to farms exports in developing states will exacerbate the inequitable distribution of food resources. This has been seen in the Commonwealth of Independent States, South America and the Middle East. We need global rules to ensure that providing food for people in crop-growing regions takes precedence over trade in agricultural products.



Reacting to the G20's reform of financial systems and institutions, members of the Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources meeting at the **Houses of Parliament, London** on **6 April 2009**, welcomed the extension of regulation, as well as supporting the

Financial Stability Board within the IMF and World Bank. This was seen as a first step in creating a new World Finance Organisation. We concluded that effective actions against tax havens and a monitor of Credit Rating Agency activity were needed.

The following year, at the Council meeting held at the **United Nations** in **New York** on **21-22 June, 2010**, we adopted a declaration, incorporating trade, the

economy and multilateralism, which addressed the challenges for global development. Coordinated global policy was called for, as well as green growth and education reform. In mid-2010, we were disappointed to note that better-developed states have not implemented such policy. We continued to call for fair trade, with less developed states being given greater access to markets in more developed states.



José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General, OAS, a guest keynote speaker at the NY Council

The SI was further concerned that by mid-2010 the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Round had not moved closer to its goals. Importantly, the multilateral dimension had not been addressed as a key issue of the negotiations.

The economy was the first main theme at the SI Council meeting we held at the OECD headquarters in **Paris on 15-16 November 2010**. Delegates from both developed and developing countries discussed the latest developments affecting the world economy, including the G20 Seoul Summit and its outcome, with particular emphasis on social democratic priorities in regard to a sustainable recovery, employment and growth, poverty reduction and climate financing, calling for constructive cooperation and coordination between nations to tackle the imbalances in the world economy.

The Council was addressed by the OECD Secretary General, Angel Gurría, who outlined the policies of his organisation on these important issues. The discussions included valuable contributions from SI Vice-President from France Ségolène Royal, Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic of Montenegro, members of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues from different continents, SI Vice-Presidents and party leaders from various regions of the world, including PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, and among the guests, Vice-Minister Jieyi Liu of China. SI Vice-President Eero Heinäluoma, as Rapporteur of the Commission, presented the conclusions of the debate, which were later reflected in a statement.

Discussions at our Council meeting in **San José, Costa Rica** on **23-24 January 2012**, also reviewed the economy, under the theme 'Redefining markets in a democracy and overcoming the crisis with growth in the real economy'. The Council unanimously adopted a resolution outlining our priorities: to redress the world economy to recover real growth, increase employment, achieve stability and overcome the sovereign debt crisis. As we have stressed, the SI has and will continue to argue in favour of the redesign of global financial institutions, effective regulation of the financial sector and new instruments for development and sustainable growth.

Global economic development affects regions differently. One example is that of the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea. As we noted earlier, exchanges on regional economic developments that took place during our Committee meeting for this region, in **Chişinău, Moldova, 23-24 July 2012**, found there was a consensus that economic interdependence had left countries subject to external factors.

A common challenge for countries of that region was to increase salaries as a proportion of GDP, which remain low and are a contributing factor to inequality and slow economic development. In addition, delegates reported further problems that related to their economies, such as those presented by emigration and a dependence on remittances in countries with large diasporas. Economic prospects are also closely linked to the political situation, where authoritarianism and corruption in some countries deprive citizens of opportunity and prosperity and wealth is concentrated in the hands of a powerful elite.

FOR A NEW INTERNATIONALISM AND A NEW CULTURE OF SOLIDARITY AMONG PEOPLE AND BETWEEN NATIONS

‘Wherever we are in government, our members show a responsibility both to their own citizens and citizens elsewhere in this interdependent world, which we want to see defined by solidarity and common responsibility. We know this can be accomplished by ensuring fairness is at the heart of government policies, by prioritising the concerns and needs of our citizens, by upholding democracy unflinchingly, and by using the means at our disposal to encourage it where it is under threat.’

SG Report to the SI Council Costa Rica, 23-24 January 2012

Committee Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina

We endeavour to bring the feeling of solidarity to all our meetings, discussions and events. One of the themes focused on at our Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, which we convened in **Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 9-10 April 2010**, was titled ‘Solidarity as a central pillar of social democracy’. Referring to the humanitarian challenges resulting from natural disasters the region faced at the time, the theme illustrated the fundamental requirement of solidarity between nations and regions, in order to deal with, and resolve, the common problems of the world.

At the meeting, special contributions on the theme were made by leaders from Haiti and Chile, two countries that have recently been shaken by devastating earthquakes.



We were shocked and deeply saddened to hear of the earthquake, measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale that hit the nation of **Haiti** on 12 January 2010. The tragedy caused widespread destruction, with over 100,000 killed, and more than 300,000 injured. Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Western hemisphere, and has suffered several natural disasters in recent years.

A little over a month later, we were distressed to learn an earthquake, measuring 8.8 on the Richter scale, hit **Chile**, on 27 February 2010.

The earthquake and subsequent aftershocks and tsunamis caused the death of close to five hundred people and devastated land and infrastructure across the central and southern regions of the country and coastal areas.

At our Committee meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, we called for a unified international response to both events as quickly as possible. A Resolution on Haiti was adopted by the Committee



that reaffirmed its solidarity with the Haitian people and called for continued support in the country's reconstruction. The resolution further urged SI member parties in Haiti to strengthen their strategy of unity with other democratic political forces in the country, which should lead to a new political force for real change. A Declaration on Chile was adopted, expressing solidarity with the Chilean people and recognising efforts of the '*Concertación*' to ensure financing the reconstruction would be quick and equitable. Appreciation was additionally voiced for the great contribution the '*Concertación*' made in government in transforming the political, economic and cultural life of Chile. A Motion in Solidarity with **Brazil** was also agreed following the recent landslides that had devastated areas in the State of Rio de Janeiro, causing hundreds of deaths and injuries.

Such commitment to our partners across the globe is vital. Lives, communities and nations are today interconnected in multifaceted ways but during times of crisis this can be forgotten. The Socialist International's call for a 'New Culture of

Solidarity' seeks to reinforce this message, not only in our political work, but also during disasters, transition or other times of need, to achieve a truly humane global community.

The Committee in Buenos Aires additionally approved a statement on the 2010 summit of Latin American and European States. The statement detailed that for socialists and social democrats, answers, such as those in response to the financial crisis, cannot be limited to economic ones only, but must also extend to include commitments for real solidarity to benefit the most vulnerable and all those left behind.

'This is a common challenge for all our parties, whether in Europe, Latin America, Africa or Asia. It must lead us to reflect together and together build alternatives that respond to the expectations of the people'.

Our commitment to solidarity can be seen in all the significant global issues I've covered here, from our response to the financial crisis, negotiations in the Middle East and joining together for the common goal of climate change mitigation. At the meeting of SI member parties for the Mediterranean region, in **Madrid in June 2012**, I acknowledged the importance of this, remarking that the call for a new internationalism and a new culture of solidarity would be our strong message at the XXIV Congress, in Cape Town. Socialists were now signalling a change of course. There was an economic agenda for growth with the political agenda to match. The SI is a platform for the convergence of progressive values and principles, and this can be seen in the activities of the organisation.

Carrying forward the notion of promoting internationalism and a new culture of solidarity means we can be ambitious in our aims. Social democracy is working for a new international framework to deal with the major challenges on the global agenda. Further vital issues to those already illustrated in this report include poverty and HIV/AIDS which we addressed at our meeting in **Vienna, in the Austrian Parliament, on 22 May 2009**. We concurred that tackling poverty and HIV/AIDS was at the very core of our priorities.

We focussed again on HIV/AIDS in **Accra, Ghana**, where the SI Committee on Social Cohesion, Poverty and HIV/AIDS convened on **24 May 2010**. The need for renewing our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was

also discussed at this meeting. The Chair of the host party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and Committee Vice-Chair, Kwabena Adjei, highlighted the importance of the meeting's focus on poverty and the need for cooperation and solidarity.

It was considered imperative not to content ourselves with finding short-term solutions but to take the necessary measures to ensure change. We must make greater efforts to find long-lasting solutions to poverty and this can only be achieved by working together with a sense of common responsibility.

Léopold Gnininvi, Secretary General of the CPDA of Togo, who introduced the theme on the MDGs, stressed that greater global teamwork was needed to fulfil the commitments pledged. Key areas that need to be realised include hunger, primary education for all, reducing child mortality rates, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and sustainable development and employment. With the level of progress currently underway, and in light of the recent financial crisis, participants concurred that the targeted objectives for 2015 clearly appeared out of reach.

Kwabena Adjei outlined a set of measures that must be included in poverty reduction strategies – and in order to progress the MDGs. These included: the adoption of correct macro-economic, structural and social policies, sustainably managing the environment, extending property rights to the poor, investing in healthcare, universal primary education and IT skills training, affordable housing, modernising agriculture, investing in infrastructure and transport, job opportunities, improving work ethics, fair wages, gender equality, good governance, peace, and conflict resolution.



SI Committee on Social Cohesion, Poverty and HIV/AIDS, Accra, Ghana

Solidarity underpins all these goals, along with the need to forge sustainable international partnerships. The Committee recognised it would take significant political will – and global solidarity – to implement measures necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

On the occasion of the XVIII International AIDS Conference that took place in **Vienna**, on **18-23 July 2010**, we organised a side event. We were able to further highlight our commitment to a collective approach in the struggle against HIV-AIDS.



In our discussions, the goal of closing the gap between rich and poor was underlined. In the case of HIV/AIDS there is a clear link between the escalation of the disease and poverty. Social democrats should be amongst the first to encourage and promote contributions to the

Global Fund, as called for at the Vienna AIDS Conference, to obtain the US\$20 billion goal and support measures for its most effective use. We further considered options to make cheaper medicines available to poorer countries.

We agreed it was vital for social democrats in the struggle against AIDS to reassert the role of politics in the issue. A set of goals was considered that included, greater protection of rights for those affected, eradication of gender discrimination, the availability of modern family planning, and increasing awareness and education.

Presidium, United Nations, New York



The annual meeting of the Presidium with Heads of State and Government in conjunction with the United Nations General Assembly was held at the **UN Headquarters in New York on 20 September 2010**. Supporting the work of the United Nations, discussions at this meeting focussed on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Summit,

which was also taking place that month. In particular we centred on the contribution of the global social democratic movement to the achievement of the MDGs, and our determination to pursue all efforts to reach this objective.

Eliminating poverty, hunger, disease, exclusion, environmental degradation and illiteracy, the creation of equal opportunities, and guaranteeing fundamental rights, are goals at the heart of our identity and vision as a global movement.

In his opening remarks, George Papandreou reflected upon the impact of the financial crisis on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, stressing our role to maintain pressure on governments to continue MDG progress despite budget cuts. The MDGs, it was argued, need to be worked towards as a whole, not individually. Whilst progress had been



Michelle Bachelet

made in some areas, in others there had been little or no advance. In this regard, former Chilean President and Head of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet, called for more to be done to address the goals on women's issues and gender equality.

Contributors from Africa further commented that the uneven progress on the MDGs had led to a wide disparity of results.



Tarja Halonen

Throughout these contributions the sentiment was clear, that the achievement of the MDGs was dependent upon numerous issues. Tarja Halonen, then President of Finland, referred to this when she spoke of the different dimensions of the MDGs, incorporating economic, environmental and social factors. Further measures considered imperative to move forward in solidarity included a global financial transaction tax, as proposed by the SI, and goals to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In the closing of the meeting, it was noted that the Millennium Development Goals were about empowering people all over the world, and we reiterated the need to work towards them with optimism, combating self-interest, nationalism and the politics of fear.

Rio+20

A hugely significant event since our 2008 Congress in Athens was the 2012 Rio Earth Summit. Standing at the pinnacle of a sustainable and collective vision of the future, this was an event that represented every component of our work in the Socialist International. Incorporating aspects such as poverty eradication, gender, labour, equality, education, and democracy, in a framework of sustainable political and social cohesion. The 2012 Rio Earth Summit was a recall to solidarity and, crucially, it had the potential to motivate a global audience.



RIO+20

United Nations Conference
on Sustainable Development

Twenty years on from the Earth Summit, world leaders once again gathered in Rio de Janeiro, in pursuit of a future of sustainable development and global prosperity. This was a momentous occasion. We organised a meeting of Ministers and delegates to the conference from our political family on the eve of the High-Level segment of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on **20-22 June 2012**, to review the common aims and objectives of our global organisation for Rio+20.

At the 1992 Earth Summit the Socialist International had declared that we envisaged a scenario 20 years on where 'the Earth is preserved and the nations and people feel closer together.' Today, we cannot say that the Earth has been preserved, and the need remains, perhaps more than ever, for all nations of the world to work together in the common interest of the planet.

In 2012 in Rio de Janeiro we wanted to see all governments renew their political commitment to sustainable development as the only course of action that would allow long-term environmental protection and economic prosperity.

The citizens of our countries, we said, expected nothing less than a clear undertaking from Rio+20 that their governments will pursue sustainable development in all its dimensions – the economic, social and environmental – to

which a joint and coordinated approach is needed. Sustainable development is a key focus for the SI. On these three pillars, our global movement has been active and engaged, promoting and implementing policies that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

We have never lost sight of the need to place poverty eradication, equitable distribution of resources, decent jobs and opportunities for the most vulnerable among the priorities in the sustainable agenda we have sought to implement in our movement. Support for developing countries including efforts to overcome uneven progress, for instance in Africa, has been an integral part of our vision of a fair global economic system. Investment in the green economy is crucial to create jobs whilst contributing to a more sustainable future for the planet. Our member parties have made great advances on social protection and universal access to healthcare provisions and education, as well as steps to reduce poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

Part of this task is also to reduce inequality and social exclusion, and open new opportunities for people to fulfil their potential in life. Gender equality and the rights of women, including reproductive rights, must be guaranteed. It is unacceptable that whilst women play a prominent role in development, they continue to be marginalised and under-represented in many countries. Respect for human rights is paramount, which also means addressing the fact that too many people in the world remain without safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Food security and efforts to free humankind from hunger remain fundamental.

Rio+20 did not, unfortunately, produce the results we had hoped for, despite the expectations. For our part, we agreed in our discussions in Rio that we will continue to strive unflinchingly in pursuit of our policies in favour of sustainable development in the path of many within our own movement who inspired and defined the task ahead. We will do this as political parties committed to democracy, the upholding of freedoms and rights and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, all of which are inseparable from the efforts to achieve sustainable development. In this spirit, we will persevere in the multilateral efforts to reach these goals through a new internationalism and a new culture of solidarity that the time and these challenges demand.

Empowering our International



Eero Heinäluoma, SDP Finland

The Council meeting in Costa Rica adopted the report of the Working Group on SI Reform, chaired by SI Vice-Presidents Eero Heinäluoma, Beatriz Paredes and Nouzha Chekrouni. The working group was open to all member parties of the SI. It held meetings in Geneva in September 2011 and in Marrakech in December 2011, and presented its conclusions to the San José Council meeting.

The Report recognises the International's relevance for all regions and the unique global perspective that encompasses its work, based both on its history and the understanding of and involvement in different problems in the world. A number of aims and goals have been established to optimise and strengthen the work of the Socialist International and its different organs, the functioning of its committees, the work of the Council, communications, coordination, and other areas, so that, building on our strengths, we can together further empower our International for the times ahead.



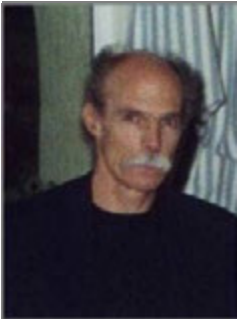
IN MEMORIAM

Raúl Alfonsín



We were deeply saddened at the loss of former Argentinean President Raúl Alfonsín, one of Latin America's most respected leaders and a champion of democratic freedoms, who died of lung cancer on 31 March 2009 at the age of 82. Alfonsín came to prominence as one of the only politicians who dared to speak out against the military government that toppled Isabel Perón in 1976. He launched numerous human rights based initiatives and was both Chair of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and a Vice-President of the Socialist International. His commitment to principles and values is remembered.

Douglas W. Payne



We mourned the loss of Doug Payne, a longstanding collaborator associated with numerous activities of the Socialist International, who lost his battle against cancer in July 2009. Doug was active in the pro-democracy SI initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean, participating in many SI Missions, and later became closely involved with the organisation's activities in the Asia-Pacific region. He is remembered for his compassion, his understanding of international politics and his sharp wit.

Svend Auken



It was with deep regret we heard Svend Auken, former leader of the Danish Social Democratic Party and former Vice-President had passed away. Auken lost his battle with cancer at the age of 66, on the 4 August 2009. He was known for his work on environmental issues and serving as European Affairs spokesperson for his party. His support for our movement is remembered with gratitude by friends and colleagues worldwide.

Michael Foot



We were deeply moved by the passing of Michael Foot, former leader of the Labour Party, who died on 3 March 2010, aged 96. Michael Foot was much admired and that tributes were paid to him from all sides of the political spectrum was a testament to a man whose sincerity and sense of principle transcended party lines. He stood against the evils of fascism, campaigned against nuclear weapons, and remaining throughout his life a fervent advocate of the principles of peace, freedom and social justice. He is sorely missed.

Girija Prasad Koirala



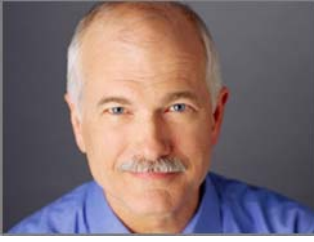
We paid tribute to the life and achievements of Girija Prasad Koirala, former Prime Minister of Nepal, President of the Nepali Congress Party, and SI member in Nepal, who died on 19 March 2010, aged 85. Politically active for over sixty years, he was imprisoned and exiled on numerous occasions for his pro-democracy views. His role as the architect of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2006 that brought an end to 10 years of violence and Maoist insurgency stands out as an accomplishment that is a permanent legacy.

Paulo Jorge



We mourned the sad loss Paulo Teixeira Jorge who passed away on 26 June 2010 in Luanda. Angolan-born Paulo Jorge was chosen to lead the talks with Portugal for the independence of Angola and was one of the architects of the Alvor Accords which were signed in 1975. He became Secretary to the President of the Republic for Foreign Affairs, and later, Foreign Minister, MPLA Secretary for International Relations and a Member of Parliament. Jorge joined the Socialist International in 1996. His dignity, sense of camaraderie, friendship and humour is sorely missed.

Jack Layton



The sad passing of Jack Layton on 22 August 2011, from cancer, was a great loss for his party, for Canada and for our global movement. In 2003 he became leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) and within a year his policies had almost doubled NDP votes. Under his leadership the NDP became the country's Official Opposition in 2011 with overwhelming national support. Jack shared the SI's principles and vision and his tireless spirit, along with his belief in social justice and universal healthcare, has inspired and motivated us. He is remembered for all these values, and as a true politician for the people.

Cuahtémoc Sandoval Ramírez



The loss of Cuahtémoc Sandoval Ramírez, who died 22 February 2012 has greatly saddened us. Cuahtémoc worked in the Mexican state of Guerrero as Secretary for Migration and International Affairs in the state government. He was a regular participant of SI meetings on behalf of the Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD), of which he was a founding member. He is greatly missed by many within our global political family.

John Atta Mills



We were deeply saddened to hear that President John Atta Mills of Ghana had passed away on 24 July 2012. President Atta Mills was a true democrat, with an unyielding commitment to the values of the Socialist International and his party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Under his presidency, Ghana has developed into a country with more freedom, prosperity and opportunity. His legacy is the continuing economic and social development of Ghana, a shining example of democracy for Africa and the world.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE INTER-CONGRESS PERIOD AND PARTICIPATION AT OTHER RELATED EVENTS

XXIII CONGRESS OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL,
Athens, Greece | 30 June-2 July 2008 –The courage to make a difference

Attendance at congress of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE),
Madrid | 4-6 July 2008

Seminar of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society,
St Petersburg | 14-15 July 2008

Participation in Simi Symposium, Greece | 18 July 2008

Meetings in Chile with current and former presidents of the republic and party leaders
| 7 August 2008

Attendance at inauguration of President Fernando Lugo, Paraguay | 15 August 2008

Attendance at Democratic National Convention, Denver, USA | 24-27 August 2008

Meeting of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society,
Stockholm | 5-6 September 2008

Meetings with SI President, Athens | 10 September 2008

Meetings with the chair of the SI Finance and Administration Committee and SPD,
Helsinki, 12 September 2008

Meeting with Socialist Party leadership, Mons, Belgium | 16 September 2008

Attendance at British Labour Party conference, Manchester | 22-24 September 2008

Meeting of the SI Presidium and heads of state and government, United Nations,
New York | 26 September 2008

Meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, Vienna | 3 November 2008

Attendance at seminar organised by Jean Jaurès Foundation,
France | 13 November 2008

Attendance at French Socialist Party congress, Reims | 14 November 2008

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, Vallarta, Mexico | 16 November 2008

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee,
Vallarta, Mexico | 16 November 2008

Meeting of the Presidium of the Socialist International,
Vallarta, Mexico | 16 November 2008

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL,
Vallarta, Mexico | 17-18 November 2008 – A Global Social Democratic Response to
the World Financial Crisis

SI observation of local and regional elections, Venezuela | 23 November 2008

Attendance at PES Presidency meeting, Madrid | 30 November

Attendance at PES council, Madrid | 1-2 December

SI delegation to observe presidential and legislative elections, Ghana | 7 December
2008

Meeting with secretary general of SAMAK, Copenhagen | 10 December 2008

Meetings with president and foreign ministry, South Africa | 16 December 2008

Meeting with Morgan Tsvangirai in Botswana | 18 December 2008

Participation in Jean Jaurès event, Paris | 13 January 2009

Participation in Policy Network meeting, London | 28 January 2009

Observation of Venezuelan referendum | 15 February 2009

Meeting of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society,
Cape Town | 2 March 2009

Attendance at Independence Day celebrations, Ghana | 5 March 2009

Delegation to observe elections in El Salvador | 15 March 2009

Participation in PRD conference, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic | 17 March
2009

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean,
Antigua Guatemala | 23-24 March 2009

Participation at Global Governance Conference, Viña del Mar | 27-28 March 2009

Meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, New York | 31 March 2009

Attendance at the funeral of Raul Alfonsín | 2 April 2009

Meeting of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources,
London | 6 April 2009

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea,
Geneva | 16-17 April 2009

Meeting of the SI Committee on Disarmament, Berlin | 21 April 2009

Attendance at PES meeting, Toulouse | 24 April 2009

Attendance at the Athens Climate Change Summit | 12 May 2009

Meeting of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society, Beijing | 15 May 2009

Meeting of the SI Committee on Social Cohesion, Poverty and HIV/AIDS,
Vienna | 22 May 2009

SI participation in independence anniversary rally, Accra, Ghana | 10 June 2009

Meeting of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources,
Stockholm | 11-12 June 2009

Meetings with PSOE, Madrid | 16 June 2009

Meeting of the SI Africa Committee, Dakar | 19-20 June 2009

Participation in A Just Russia Party congress | 24-25 June 2009

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, Budva, Montenegro | 28 June 2009

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee,
Budva, Montenegro | 28 June 2009

Meeting of the SI Presidium, Budva, Montenegro | 28 June 2009

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL,
Budva, Montenegro | 29-30 June 2009 – Working for a new global framework for the
world economy, peace and security, democracy and the environment

Participation in Simi Symposium, Skiathos, Greece | 12 July 2009

Attendance at PRD congress, Dominican Republic | 19 July 2009

Attendance at Australian Labor Party conference | 30 July 2009

Participation in Fatah general congress, Bethlehem | 3-6 August 2009

Attendance at the funeral of Svend Auken | 10 August 2009

Meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues,
New York | 21 September 2009

Meeting of the SI Presidium and heads of state and government, United Nations,
New York | 23 September 2009 – presentation of the report of the SI Commission for
a Sustainable World Society ‘From a high carbon economy to a low carbon society’

Attendance at British Labour Party conference, Brighton | 28 September 2009

SI presence during Greek elections | 4 October 2009

Meeting of the SI Mediterranean Committee, Barcelona | 5-6 October 2009

Participation in USFP conference in Morocco (El-Yazghi) | 19 October 2009

Attendance at SAP congress, Sweden | 28 October-1 November

Meeting of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources, ILO
Geneva | 5-6 November 2009

Attendance at SPD congress, Dresden | 13-15 November 2009

Meeting with the chair of the SI Finance and Administration Committee,
Helsinki | 14 November 2009

Meeting of the SI Committee on Disarmament, New York | 17 November 2009

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, Santo Domingo | 22 November 2009

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee,
Santo Domingo | 22 November 2009

Meeting of the SI Presidium, Santo Domingo | 22 November 2009

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL,
Santo Domingo | 23-24 November 2009 – At a turning point for a sustainable future -
the social democratic way forward

Participation at PES leaders' dinner and congress, Prague | 6-7 December 2009

Participation at COP15 summit, Copenhagen | 7-18 December 2009

Chilean elections | 13 December 2009 & 17 January 2010

Mission of the SI to Venezuela | 20-23 January 2010

Attendance at Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, India | 5-6 February 2010

Attendance at Progressive Governance conference, London | 19 February 2010

Attendance at PS (Argentina) congress, Buenos Aires | 13 March 2010

Attendance at PES prime ministers and leaders' meeting, Brussels | 25 March 2010

Attendance at IUSY congress, Stockholm | 26 March 2010

Meeting of SI parliamentarians 122nd IPU Assembly, Bangkok | 27 March 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean,
Buenos Aires | 9-10 April 2010

Participation in climate change conference organised by A Just Russia party,
Moscow | 29 April 2010

Attendance at inauguration of President Laura Chinchilla, Costa Rica | 8 May 2010

Meeting with Oscar Arias, former president of Costa Rica | 9 May 2010

Meeting between representatives of three political internationals and NDI 25th
anniversary event, Washington DC | 10 May 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee on Poverty, Social Cohesion and HIV/AIDS,
Accra | 24 May 2010

Participation at SDP Finland congress, Helsinki | 26 May 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee for South Eastern Europe, Tirana | 29 May 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources,
Moscow | 4 June 2010

Participation in Samak congress, Helsingor, Denmark | 7 June 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea,
Yerevan | 11-12 June 2010

Meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, New York | 19 June 2010

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, New York | 20 June 2010

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee, New York | 20 June 2010

Meeting of the SI Presidium, New York | 20 June 2010

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, United Nations,
New York | 21-22 June 2010

Participation in SAP seminar, Bommersvik, Sweden | 28 June 2010

Attendance at funeral of Paulo Jorge, Luanda, Angola | 1 July 2010

Meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, Poros, Greece | 22 July 2010

SI side event at AIDS2010 Conference, Vienna | 22 July 2010

Meetings with the president and foreign minister of Azerbaijan,
Baku | 28-30 July 2010

Meetings in Paris with OECD officials, Pierre Mauroy, and PS,
Paris | 14-15 September 2010

Meeting of the SI Presidium and heads of state and government, United Nations, New
York | 20 September 2010

SI delegation to Venezuelan elections | 26 September 2010

Meeting of SI parliamentarians at the 123rd IPU Assembly, Geneva | 5 October 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea,
Baku | 11-12 October 2010

Participation in election rally of the Democratic Party of Moldova,
Chisinau | 17 October 2010

Meeting with Piero Fassino and PD, Rome | 22 October 2010

Meeting of the SI Disarmament Committee, Moscow | 3 November 2010

Meeting of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources,
Paris | 13 November 2010

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, OECD, Paris | 14 November 2010

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee, OECD, Paris | 14 November
2010

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, OECD,
Paris | 15-16 November 2010 – global economy - climate change - resolution of
conflicts

Meeting of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society,
Mexico City | 26-27 November 2010

Attendance at PES council, Warsaw | 2 December 2010

Attendance at inauguration of President Alpha Condé, Guinea | 21 December 2010

Meetings with party leaders in Chile | 13 January 2011

Visit to to Belarus | 18-20 January 2011

Attendance at ceremony marking the centenary of Bruno Kreisky's birth, Vienna | 20-
22 January 2011

Attendance at Jean Jaurès Foundation event | 25 January 2011

Meetings with Dutch Labour Party leadership, Amsterdam | 26-27 January 2011

Meetings with SI President and PASOK, Athens | 6-10 February 2011

Participation in Mauritius Labour Party congress and meeting with the Prime Minister, Port Louis | 16-19 February 2011

Meetings with the leadership of the ANC, South Africa | 20-22 February 2011

Attendance at PES presidency meeting, Brussels | 24 February 2011

Meetings with Congress Party, India | 1-4 March 2011

Attendance at PES leaders' meeting, Athens | 5-6 March 2011

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, London | 5 March 2011

Meetings with chair of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, Panama | 13-16 March 2011

Meeting of the SI Presidium, Athens | 19 March 2011

Attendance at SAP congress, Stockholm | 25-27 March 2011

Attendance at Portuguese Socialist Party congress, Porto | 8-10 April 2011

Meeting of SI parliamentarians at the 124th IPU Assembly, Panama City | 16 April 2011

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, Almaty | 2-3 May 2011

Attendance at the Socialist Party of Chile congress and meetings with member parties | 6-11 May 2011

Attendance at Policy Network conference, Oslo | 12-13 May 2011

Meeting of the SI Asia-Pacific Committee, Manila | 20-21 May 2011

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean,
Bucaramanga, Colombia | 30-31 May 2011

Participation in the SDP congress, Montenegro | 3 June 2011

Meeting of the SI Middle East Committee, Tel Aviv & Ramallah | 9-10 June 2011

Meetings with Finnish SDP and chair of the SI Finance and Administration Committee,
Helsinki | 16-17 June 2011

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, Athens | 30 June 2011

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee, Athens | 30 June 2011

Meeting of the SI Presidium, Athens | 30 June 2011

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, Athens, Greece | 1-2 July 2011

Meeting of the SI Africa Committee, Windhoek | 29-30 July 2011

SI delegation to Cameroon – meetings with government officials, opposition parties
and electoral authorities | 9-11 August 2011

Meetings in Costa Rica to prepare the SI Council | 14-19 August 2011

Meetings with the PRD, Dominican Republic | 29-30 August 2011

Participation in PDT Congress, Brazil | 1 September 2011

Meetings with SI President and PASOK, Athens | 5-7 September 2011

Meeting with co-chair of the SI Working Group on Reform,
Helsinki | 9 September 2011

Meeting of the SI Working Group on Reform, Geneva | 12 September 2011

Meeting of the SI Presidium and heads of state and government, United Nations,
New York | 23 September 2011

Meeting of the SI Asia-Pacific Committee, Ulaanbaatar | 7-8 October 2011

Observer delegation to presidential elections in Cameroon | 9-12 October 2011

Meeting of SI parliamentarians at the 125th IPU Assembly, Bern | 17 October 2011

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean,
Porto Alegre, Brazil | 24-25 October 2011

Meeting of the SI Special Committee on the Arab World, Crete | 28-29 October 2011

Meeting of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society, Johannesburg | 30-31
October 2011

Meetings with SI President and PASOK, Athens | 8-11 November 2011

Meetings with French Socialist Party, Paris | 12-14 November 2011

Meetings regarding SI Finance and Administration Committee and SI Working Group
on Reform, Helsinki | 17-18 November 2011

Attendance at PES council, Brussels | 24-26 November 2011

Participation in COP17 and meeting of ministers and government representatives
from SI member parties, Durban | 7-9 December

Meeting of the SI Working Group on Reform, Marrakech | 12 December 2011

Meetings with member parties, Chile | 5-6 January 2012

Attendance at ANC centenary celebrations, Bloemfontein | 7-9 January 2012

SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources,
Rabat | 9-10 January 2012

Meeting of the SI Presidium, San José | 22 January 2012

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, San José | 22 January 2012

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee, San José | 22 January 2012

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, San José,
Costa Rica | 23-24 January 2012

Attendance at PSOE Congress, Seville | 3-5 February 2012

SI observer delegation to Venezuelan primary elections | 10-15 February 2012

Participation in Senegalese Socialist Party election campaign | 20-21 February 2012

Attendance at CHP congress, Ankara | 26 February 2012

Meetings with PRD leadership, Dominican Republic | 1-2 March 2012

Meetings with prime minister and People's National Party, Jamaica | 3-5 March 2012

Meetings with SI President and PASOK, Athens | 9-11 March 2012

SI delegation to Yemen: meetings with president, government and political parties
| 18-20 March 2012

Meeting of the SI Special Committee on the Arab World, Istanbul | 23-24 March 2012

Meetings with government and party leaders in Tanzania and Zambia
| 27-31 March 2012

Meeting of SI parliamentarians at the 126th IPU Assembly, Kampala | 2 April 2012

Meeting of the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, United Nations,
New York | 4 April 2012

Meetings with president and Pakistan Peoples' Party, Pakistan | 22-23 April 2012

Meetings with NLD leadership in Burma | 25-29 April 2012

Participation in EDEK Congress, Cyprus | 5-6 May 2012

Meeting with SI President, Athens | 10-11 May 2012

Preparatory meetings for the SI Congress, South Africa | 12-15 May 2012

Observer delegation to the Dominican Republic presidential elections
| 18-21 May 2012

Attendance at PES leaders' meeting, Brussels | 23 May 2012

Participation in Finnish SDP congress, Helsinki | 24-25 May 2012

Meeting of the SI Mediterranean Committee, Madrid | 5 June 2012

Attendance at French Socialist Party electoral evening, Paris | 10-11 June 2012

Attendance at Democratic Party of Moldova congress, Chisinau | 16 June 2012

Meeting of SI environment ministers and attendance at Rio+20 conference on sustainable development, Rio de Janeiro | 19-21 June 2012

Participation in Portuguese Socialist Party event marking 40 years in the Socialist International, Lisbon | 26 June 2012

Meetings with SI President and leaders of SI member parties, Brussels | 28 June 2012

Observation of Mexican elections | 1-3 July 2012

Meeting of leaders from SI member parties in the Balkans, Thessaloniki | 12 July 2012

Meeting on the Global Financial Crisis, Samos, Greece | 19 July 2012

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, Chisinau | 23-24 July 2012

Meeting of the SI Africa Committee, Praia, Cape Verde | 30-31 July 2012

Meeting of the SI Ethics Committee, Cape Town | 28 August 2012

Meeting of the SI Finance and Administration Committee, Cape Town | 28 August 2012

Meeting of the SI Presidium, Cape Town | 29 August 2012

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International, Cape Town | 29 August 2012

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Cape Town, South Africa | 30 August-1 September 2012 – For a new internationalism
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