

Honorable President, Secretary General, dear friends

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you all, as International Secretary of the Social Democratic Party of Serbia and on behalf of the president of the party Mr. Rasim Ljajic.

Today, we have a great opportunity to show once again that progressive and social democratic and socialist movements can play in the creation of a more stable, peaceful, and prosperous world.

The Social democratic party of Serbia, today, since its founding, strongly shares the belief that the road to defending peace leads and it is inexorably linked to the strengthening of democracy and to a society that shares values of social solidarity, social dialogue, and commitment to defending and improving human rights.

We believe that Socialist International is an important way in which all progressive forces can join and together shape the world through cooperation and collaboration.

The world we find ourselves in today is the world on a brink of multiple crises that is more than ever global a need global solution, that have been forged having in mind that we live in a world that has been radically changed in the last couple of decades.

Once again we are seeing rising multipolarity in our world with increased complexity that it brings with itself, and that struggle between powers of old and rising new players in international relations can lead to confrontations, decoupling of relations that have been built over decades, and that have brought our world closer together and built new partnerships and most importantly brought prosperity to millions as they were lifted from poverty thanks to opportunities that increased global cooperation brought them.

International legal order, that since World War II was guarded and led by the United Nation's Charter which has been the vital guarantee of global peace, today is under great strain.

Violation of the legal order leads to conflict, insecurity, and human suffering, primarily due to continuous violations and disrespect of the rules and principles of international law and its principles: respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of states, refraining from the use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and respect for human rights as a whole.

Because we live in a radically different world from the one we lived in one year or three years ago, especially in the region I'm coming from, we need to recommit to our values of internationalism and progressive outlook.

Together, all progressive actors and movements from across the spectrum should join forces so we can create the needed impact. We as social democrats, socialists, and progressives have important responsibility toward our citizens our, neighbors, and communities, to take seriously their needs, fears, and uncertainties that are now higher than they have ever been in years.

What is our foremost power to create a more peaceful world than to listen to the voices of those who are most hurt by the lack of it?

This is why, for a progressive movement to continue being a movement that has the meaning of peace interwoven in its DNA, democracy is vital value and a vital tool. Democracy is vital for giving voices to the voiceless, to those we are seeking to represent, whose lives we vowed to safeguard, to improve and to conquer their fears of hardship by offering genuine hope for a better life and better tomorrow for every working family, every woman and every child.

Our values must lead us to become genuine hope so people in need do not go after a saccharine rush of vile populists who offer a better tomorrow on the back of other unfortunate groups in

society, destroying and discarding the value that brings us all here – the value of solidarity with fellow human regardless of every other difference.

That is why we need democracy if we want a new, better, and more peaceful future for humankind.

Democracy must mean empathy. Democracy must care about each other and each member of our society and their unique needs. Democracy should never be just a check on some abstract power, it should mean listening with care to the voice of millions and listening to the faintest voice of one individual in the direst of needs. Democracy must care and protect women and girls from any kind of violence, and not just to care and protect us, but to support us more and stronger than ever to get more space and places at the decision making tables and negotiating peace processes.

As socialdemocrats and socialists, We need to stress that only global and regional cooperation rooted in values of solidarity and equality can successfully and in a socially just way meet the great global challenges that we are facing now and together.

We as social democrats always advocated for a tolerant society free from all forms of discrimination, with true equality of rights and opportunities. Unfortunately, populism, extreme rights nationalists, xenophobia, and a divided, polarized world are our reality in countries all over the world.

Our response to this, most insidious form of populism, which threatens hard-won freedoms, must be to re-double our struggle to reduce inequalities, increase opportunities and achieve sustainable growth to the benefit of all citizens.

We must be the ones who can answer all questions and insecurities that autocrats and those who seek to use those fears to stoke hate seek to exploit.

From the existential threat of climate change to issues of making the global economy work for the benefit of workers across the world and making sure that workers' rights are always respected it is more than ever obvious that global challenges demand international cooperation, and it is our duty to together make sure that no one is left behind, that there are no „winners“ and „losers“ of this inevitable processes.

Supported by the great influence and importance that this organization has in the world, we are sure that we will continue to fight for our common goals and values, with the desire for the SDPS to contribute as much as possible in that struggle. Thank you.