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# OPENING SPEECH BY PIERRE MAUROY

## PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

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How to prepare the Socialist International for the 21st century, when before our very eyes a new world is emerging and socialism is renewing itself everywhere? This is the challenge that we must meet. And can we have any loftier dreams, after a hundred years of growth, than to experience the growing pains typical of the transition from adolescence to adulthood? This is the situation - demanding yet exciting - that the Socialist International must face today.

As we open our 20th Congress, I want to speak to you about this challenge, about this situation. In many ways the Socialist International is stronger than it was just four years ago in Berlin. Politically speaking it is stronger. Circumstances obliged us to have as our primary objective the reduction of the split in our history caused by the communist schism. In 1992 we rejoiced in the progress of democracy; but we worried about the difficulties of social democracy, especially in central Europe. The pendulum had swung, sometimes towards nationalism, sometimes towards ultra-liberalism, but always to the right.

Today, social democracy has become the primary political force in central Europe; the left has begun, with some success, to bring about a kind of rassemblement which its history has made particularly difficult: people's confidence has often been won over.

In Africa as in Latin America, communism - which had made certain breakthroughs - finally appeared as it truly was, a tragic hope, so here too the forces of the left naturally turned towards the Socialist International.

More generally speaking the Socialist International is also stronger in electoral terms. Of course we have had setbacks, in particular in those countries where we have been in government for many years, but often these setbacks also carried hope, as in France with Lionel Jospin, or in Spain with Felipe González, not to mention those countries where we have remained in power. Since 1992, we have had victories that have been both symbolic and significant.

In the European Union, we have had victories in Finland, Ireland, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Italy, so that the social democrats are directing or participating in the government of eleven of the fifteen member

states. In eastern and central Europe, we have won in Macedonia, Hungary and Poland, and had quite impressive and promising results in Romania and the Czech Republic.

In Africa, where until recently we were in government only in Senegal, we have now won in Mali, and forces which are getting closer to the Socialist International are ruling in Mozambique, Angola and of course South Africa.

In Asia too, where the Socialist International barely existed only a short time ago, the social democrats have either won or won back power in such important and influential countries as Japan, Pakistan and very recently India, where the party of the prime minister has applied for membership of the Socialist International.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, finally, following in the footsteps of our Chilean friends who are still participating in the government, the social democrats have won, one after another, in Jamaica, Barbados, Costa Rica, Colombia and St Kitts-Nevis.

The Socialist International is stronger finally in terms of its membership, and a few figures will show the extent of the changes that we are now witnessing. In 1951 when it was reconstituted, the Socialist International had fewer than twenty member parties; in 1976 it had about forty; in 1992 it had more than a hundred and ten, and today the figure is just under a hundred and forty.

It is this strength which, paradoxically, also makes it fragile; even though as I say that, I am well aware that these two factors exist in different ways. Our strength is an accomplishment, it is a fact of life: our fragility is merely a potential danger which we must appreciate in order to be able to deal with it. If I add that the political priorities of the International must adapt to world developments, and that our new forms of action must adapt to this revolution in numbers - this threefold increase in our member parties in less than twenty years - all of this requires profound reflection on our part.

To say that we are living in a new world is not enough. We have to reach agreement on what is really new, and then of course we have to draw the proper political consequences. The speed of change is doubtless something new. To think that in 1986 Mandela was still in prison, Gorbachev had just come to power, the Berlin Wall was in place, Reagan's conservative revolution in progress, Chile still under Pinochet's dictatorship, Central America still deep in conflict, and it was single-party-rule in Africa. That was just ten years ago; it might as well have been a century ago.

The scope of change is no doubt something else that is new. It is not one world coming to an end, it is several worlds, several historical cycles of unequal length and of unequal importance which are collapsing at the same

time before our very eyes: in 1917 the Russian revolution, and the ideological confrontation between socialism and communism; in 1947 the creation of Kominform, and political confrontation - sometimes even military - between west and east; in 1964 the first UNCTAD, the first United Nations conference on trade and development, and economic confrontation between north and south.

Today the east has imploded, the south has broken apart, and the cardinal points around which our world was built have disappeared. Democracy has unquestionably made progress to an extent unprecedented in the history of mankind. But the world's turmoil remains and is frequently even on the rise.

Inequalities are striking. A recent United Nations report has shown that the wealth of the world's 358 richest people exceeds the annual income of 45 percent of the poorest, that is 2.6 billion men and women. The movements of international capital, their power and speed, are transforming national currencies, even those of the large industrialised countries, into little bits of cork bobbing about on the ocean, sometimes negating all the constraints that people have accepted.

And an even more recent symbol of how the world is out of joint: here in New York the stock market fell after it was announced that there was a decrease in unemployment rates.

So it is that the emergence of new challenges forms the third new reality. Inequalities have developed considerably both between the continents, between the countries of each continent, and even within our countries. This applies as much to income as to knowledge, to inheritance as to information, to health as to power.

Our parties have also been mobilised by new questions concerning perhaps the environment here, or the emergence of new diseases there, or problems of drugs, or migration, all of which are generally found concentrated in the cities which will be a major challenge for civilisation in the coming century.

Everywhere the consequences of economic, financial and cultural globalisation are ushering in a new age of capitalism whose political consequences are the most forceful and decisive for us, because this new world, whilst becoming a global world, has remained an unequal one. Practically all problems have acquired an international dimension, therefore we must rethink our attitudes, reconsider our forms of action.

In most of our countries, the words and the practices of socialists have changed greatly. Through different histories, at a different pace, and along different paths, we have all moved in the same direction. The European social democratic parties have carried out their *aggiornamento*. Movements that

emerged from prison, from exile, from communism, from guerilla fighting, have joined with us. But we have all kept intact our democratic determination and our social ambitions while at the same time giving economic balances the attention they deserve. In short, we act at the heart of our political systems, bearing the hopes of tens of millions of militants and hundreds of millions of citizens.

But let us face the facts. Whether in power or in opposition, and regardless of which continent we live in, we are convinced that it is a matter of urgency to go on the offensive once again. The way in which globalisation began, dominated as it was by liberalism - that is by a complete absence of any real policy of cooperation - means that we are faced with a new choice. Either to carry on, each one for and by himself, seeing and deploring our national impotence, finding a tiny space for manoeuvre, at the mercy of all those who propound a nationalist retreat as a search for identity, certain to find some low-level meeting of minds. Or on the other hand, to draw the consequences of this globalisation, be aware of the power that we represent, define some collective responses at the international level and create a political balance of power with our adversaries and then go back on the offensive by finding the means for a higher meeting of minds.

I know the difficulties involved in this solution. But I also think it would be the most fruitful, and that it is urgent that we bring together our internationalist vocation and our national interests. In any case I know that each and every one of us here is proud of the role played by social democrats in building the welfare state, and rejects the world where the uncontrolled law of the market is considered to be progress, even when this law becomes more and more like the law of the jungle where the weakest can only hope to survive at a very low level. We continue to forcefully reject that world.

I am convinced that the Socialist International has an important role to play in creating a different future, provided we have the will and that we find the means. This is a profound change that we must conceive and carry out.

Much was accomplished under the presidency of Willy Brandt: a substantial ideological review with the adoption of a new Declaration of Principles, successive waves of new members increasing our representativeness, and reports whose analyses and proposals have had an influence on the world.

Since 1992, I believe it can be fairly said that we have continued in that direction, relaunching the regional committees, the committees for Asia and the Pacific, Africa, the Mediterranean, and eastern Europe; and with what I call 'the seven pillars of renewal' in the brochure that has been distributed to you; the success of the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, the

holding of the president's round-tables, the creation of the cities committees, the actions of the 'blue helmets for democracy', the dynamism of IUSY, the establishment of stronger ties with international trades union organisations, and the monthly publication of Socialist International News.

If we add to all this the progress which will be the hallmark of our Congress, which is sovereign in this matter - our geographical influence - I think there is every reason for us all to be pleased with the result. As you know, the Finance and Administration Committee, which is presided over by Gunnar Stenarv, has considered, together with the appropriate regional committees, the 80 or so applications sent to us, the number of which alone indicates the prestigious aura of our International throughout the world.

The Council deliberated yesterday, and now on Wednesday it will be our turn to consider these proposals and to reach decisions. But without prejudging our choices, I think it can already be said that there is every reason to be pleased with the progress that has been made in three very specific geographical areas: southern Asia, western Africa and as I mentioned earlier, central and eastern Europe.

I will add that after the tragic assault on Yitzhak Rabin, after the cruel electoral disappointments last May, and the recent handshake between the prime minister of Israel and the president of the Palestinian Authority - too long awaited and too short lived - we are concerned about this peace process that the social democrats have contributed so much to, and we are proud to now have side-by-side as members of the Socialist International the Israeli left and the Palestinian Fatah.

But despite all the progress that I have just referred to, much remains still to be done. Let us set aside for a moment the constraints: we must overcome them, in particular the financial constraints whose solution is a precondition, as we all know, of any large-scale reform. Let us try to imagine what the Socialist International could be tomorrow, about which I proposed to the Council a certain method which was accepted. There will be a vote on Wednesday on the principle of creating a high-level numerically limited commission presided over by Felipe González to put forward proposals; a decision on the composition of this commission at our next Council meeting in Rome; and the start, already from today, of the discussion.

Certain necessary changes concern specifically the way we function, and are aimed at adapting to what the Socialist International has become. There is no shortage of proposals. I have referred to them broadly in 'Journey to the Heart of the Socialist International', which you have received and which includes both a general report and some personal reflections on the future of the SI. These proposals must be discussed and implemented.

But we all know that the most important thing is the political content of our message and the symbolic force of our organisation. And I can describe this 21st century Socialist International by four adjectives: more aggressive, politically speaking; more universal, geographically speaking, more consistent, ideologically speaking, and more powerful, electorally speaking. That is the direction in which I suggest we should all move together.

Politically speaking our organisation must be more aggressive, which means we must lay down what we consider to be the most urgent priorities and guidelines for our common commitment.

To fight all dictatorships, and consolidate democracies by giving them the means to develop. To overhaul the international monetary system so that it can fight speculation and reduce rates of interest. To expand the G7, the group of the seven richest countries of the five continents, so as to create an arena for real economic debate promoting balanced and sustainable development. To include a social clause in commercial treaties to guarantee respect, everywhere, for a certain number of principles such as trades union freedom and a ban on the exploitation of children. To reform the United Nations and in particular the membership and powers of the Security Council as suggested in the Carlsson report. To create an international penal tribunal, so that war criminals know that, whatever their rank, whatever their nationality, they will have to account for their actions to the international community. To ban, once and for all, nuclear testing and to fight against nuclear proliferation. To strengthen and coordinate our struggle against money laundering, the mafias and organised crime.

These are examples of eight possible objectives of the Socialist International and its member parties for the coming years.

As well as more on the offensive, our organisation must also be more universal geographically speaking. A mere glance at the map shows our representation and membership throughout the world and what our priorities should be. First we must begin work in depth throughout the former Soviet Union and the Far East, where a vice-president could begin by preparing a report, especially on communism in Asia. Then we must strengthen the ties we have already formed in southern Africa, and in particular with South Africa. Finally we must help the left to pursue its restructuring in Latin America.

As you see, the geographical expansion of the Socialist International is not yet finished. The regional organisations, like the Party of European Socialists, can give us useful assistance by each promoting a dialogue on their own continent.

So, more aggressive, more universal, and I believe the Socialist

International could also be more consistent ideologically speaking. We are diverse and our diversity is also part of our wealth. But we are an international organisation which brings together political parties and not states. And we are waging a fight which to some extent goes beyond us all and which we must pay tribute to. Precise and rigorous criteria are required in order to join our International. I believe we stand to gain a great deal if we have procedures to ensure that these guidelines are respected and vigilantly implemented.

Finally, the International could be more powerful electorally speaking. In many countries we have high hopes of victory, for example in Morocco, or of a return to power as in Great Britain, or retaining power as in Mali, just to mention a few examples of forthcoming elections. Beyond that, the International must be able to cooperate even better with candidates and parties wishing to do so, not only during electoral campaigns but also before them, especially through better coordination of the activities of parties and their foundations. This was done successfully in eastern and central Europe with the Forum. I should like to see this done in the same way on other continents. An 'Initiative for Africa' has been proposed by many of our African parties as well as by a number of European parties. I support this.

Dear comrades, as you can see, the change I should like to initiate in the Socialist International is a profound one. For the past four years we have known great hopes, and lived through great dramas, we have always been at the heart of major world events: the democratic transition of South Africa with Nelson Mandela, the return to power of President Aristide, support for the struggle of Aung San Suu Kyi, the assassination and burial of Yitzhak Rabin, the Council meetings in Lisbon, Athens, Tokyo and Budapest - cities which symbolised fine electoral victories - and trips to the former Yugoslavia and support for the democratic forces.

In the coming weeks other great challenges will mobilise us. Let us tackle them in the spirit of the lesson that Willy Brandt taught us throughout his life: that what is possible may go beyond what is predictable.

Then we will be able to prepare the Socialist International for the 21st century.