

**Minutes of the SI Council meeting at the United Nations, New York**

**11-12 July 2017**

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**Tuesday 11 July 2016 – first day of the Council**

*Opening*

**Luis Ayala** (SI Secretary General) opened the meeting, and declared that it was a great pleasure to be joined by the UN Secretary-General for the first SI Council meeting since the XXV Congress in Cartagena. He reflected that the UN was the embodiment of the international community's commitment to peace and security, for rights and freedoms and to achieve sustainable development and overcome climate change, among other challenges. He noted that António Guterres was known to the SI having come through the ranks of the organisation, and would participate in a conversation among friends, providing an overview of the international situation before answering questions raised by delegates.

*Address by the UN Secretary-General*

**António Guterres** (Secretary-General of the UN) expressed his enormous pleasure at being in the Council to share his concerns, which coincided with the same principles and ideas that he had previously worked for in common with many of those present.

Guterres referred to a terrible deficit of trust in the world, between peoples, political establishments and multilateral organisations. This was linked to globalisation, which had been perceived to be the solution for all mankind's problems. Though there had been a remarkable increase in global wealth and living conditions of the majority, urbanisation and technological progress had brought about an increase in inequality, leaving many people, regions and sectors behind. When eight people held the same wealth as half the global population, it showed that there was something wrong with the way wealth and power were distributed. This had an impact on the political landscape, on election and referendum results and on a growing negative attitude to multilateral forms of governance. There existed a paradox where multilateral solutions were needed to global problems, while at the same time a deficit of trust existed in relation to multilateral organisations and political establishments.

Though there was not a risk of a new world war, there had been a multiplication of conflicts that had been mostly internal in their beginnings but had regional and global implications. Fighters moved from one country to another, becoming closely connected to a new threat of global terrorism. These new conflicts came with less clarity in power relations due to their asymmetric nature. The world had changed since the days of the Cold War when things would happen when the president of the US became convinced that something had to be done, as in East Timor. Today, power relations had changed and it was not certain whether major global powers were in fact engaged in the solution of complex problems in the world. This was compounded by the increase of localised areas of fragility, and fragility of states, institutions and societies, creating the conditions for conflicts to become interlinked with regional implications.

The global megatrends of climate change, population growth, food insecurity, water scarcity and chaotic urbanisation were becoming more interlinked and enhancing each other. Climate change was the main factor of acceleration of all the others, creating dramatic humanitarian problems that contributed to the

massive movement of populations that were a source of conflict. In this context there was clearly a role for multilateral organisations, which needed strengthening for a number of objectives to be possible. A stronger capacity for diplomacy for peace and conflict resolution was needed, requiring strong multilateral organisations and regional and global level and more clarity in power relations. The agenda of sustaining peace was aligned with sustainable and inclusive development, which is an essential element of prevention of all conflicts. He believed the agreement on Agenda 2030 was fortunate as there was no alternative to globalisation, but it needed to be made fairer and required a global strategy to leave no one behind.

An extremely important area of work of the UN was supporting member states in achieving the SDGs, which have a clear link to climate action. Strong commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement was another priority, but it was not enough in itself to reach the objective of 1.5 or 2°C of warming. Despite the US announcing they would leave the agreement it was vital that all other states stay the course, maintaining their commitment, and promote the potential for cities, businesses, states and civil society to pledge their engagement even when governments were not committed.

The UN was trying to pursue a number of avenues of reform that all interlinked, with the same global strategy but different strands. One was reform of the UN development system to make it more effective in the implementation of the SDGs and Paris Agreement. Approval had been given by the General Assembly to make the UN more accountable and transparent when it came to peace and security architecture, with a strong shift in relation to the eradication of sexual exploitation of youth in the peacekeeping context. They would soon present a reform that would put more emphasis on preventing and sustaining peace, rather than the simple traditional form of peacekeeping activity. A final reform underway was a management reform with gender parity as one of its key objectives that aimed to have simplification, decentralisation and more flexibility. The strategy was to give the UN more freedom to act but be more transparent and more accountable in relation to its results.

The commitments and reforms mentioned were key to reconciling the UN with large sectors of public opinion that were reluctant in relation to this multilateral form of governance. The UN was increasing its partnership with regional organisations, having signed a very important agreement on peace and security with the AU. On the sustainable development goals, the UN worked closely with the AU and other sub-regional organisations and was trying to increase cooperation with Asia. He was a strong believer in the EU and that only by enhancing cooperation at different levels of multilateral organisations could we deliver in relation to the complex challenges of the time.

The UN needed to be able to address not only the problems of the present but also those of the future. Inequality was one of the main problems of globalisation. Youth unemployment existed in several areas, and in North Africa and the Middle East, for instance, had been a dramatic factor in the increase in insecurity, radicalisation and violent extremism. The world needed to be prepared for what was coming, with forecasts predicting massive changes in the labour market. Preparations were needed on a national and global level, as this technological revolution could make a world in which nobody was needed to drive cars, trucks or trains a reality in the near future. In labour-intensive sectors this was a drama for the developing world, middle-income countries and even developed countries, as these sectors could disappear, making labour less necessary. At the same time certain skills and education would be essential in order to master the kinds of technologies central to the future world. There were also problems in relation to the lack of regulation, like in cyber space. The potential consequences of artificial intelligence or genetic engineering could mean that not only economic regulation but also ethical problems would be on the table.

As an organisation, as political parties, as political movements and international organisations, it was necessary to make a strong effort to anticipate the future and seek solutions or at least to mitigate the problems and profit from the opportunities created. The social problems and questions faced in 10 or 20 years would be completely different, but it was now that we need to be prepared for them, rather than having the same optimism as existed in the 90s in regard to the solution of global problems that had now been proven wrong. This meant that we were not able at the time to create mechanisms to correct the inequalities of globalisation that could have allowed a much more orderly world today.

*Questions to the Secretary-General*

**Ahmed Ould Daddah** (Mauritania, RPM) offered his advice, stating that Guterres should say loudly what he felt was just and good for the world as its primary political authority, as he would not change the world or the role played by the great powers.

**António Guterres** would never say what he did not think in truth. The UN could not be transformed into an NGO – it had its role in preventing and mediating in conflicts that required the stability to negotiate with actors with various sets of problems. In his view a balance always needed to be found between principles that must be maintained no matter what and the necessary pragmatism to be useful.

**Horacio Serpa** (Colombia, PLN) asked about the S-G's views on the disarmament process in Colombia, where the UN had been a crucial driving force in achieving the disarmament of the FARC.

**António Guterres** considered Colombia's achievements to be a major victory. He noted that it was important to acknowledge and recognise that the implementation of agreements was very difficult and a complex process that ran the risk of giving rise to a certain degree of frustration. Also, in a democracy the commitments needed by a state needed to be guaranteed and upheld regardless of the outcome of elections and a pivotal objective was to consolidate the peace accord, achieving successful negotiations with the ELN and guaranteeing citizens security to ensure they had the conditions to pursue economic and social development and access social justice. It was important to maintain all these processes over time, regardless of the political options chosen in future by the Colombian people.

**Carlos Roberto Lupi** (Brazil, PDT) identified the refugee situation as a great problem facing the whole world, and asked how the UN intended to work to resolve the problems of refugees in the world.

**António Guterres** stated that it was not just the UN that would resolve the problem of refugees in the world but everyone. One important step was preventative action to avoid the creation of new refugees, accompanied with a considerable increase in solidarity to the countries that hosted refugees. A third point was to re-establish the integrity of international protection systems, to create conditions that ensured refugees could settle, take root and create a home, not fall victim to traffickers or criminal acts.

**Pedro Sánchez** (Spain, PSOE) mentioned the European Council had raised the need to go further with asylum and refugee policy. He considered that there needed to be a common policy and active European solidarity, with which the difficulties and challenges could be overcome.

**Janet Camilo** (Dominican Republic, PRD) reflected that more than a century had passed since the 1910 International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen which called for the right to suffrage, but gender equality had yet to be attained and asked Guterres for advice as to how social democrats could

honour their history, settle the debt towards women and overcome the scourge of gender-based violence.

**António Guterres** considered gender equality to be an issue for both men and women. Power was an important factor, and it was an issue not just for political parties, but also the state, the private sector, institutions and families. The world was culturally dominated by men, and a pivotal goal within the UN, and one that should be pursued by all democratic societies, was gender parity. This required complex measures – not only quota systems but deeply rooted policies to tackle the root causes of inequality. The protection of women and children against violence and sexual exploitation needed to be achieved, alongside policies to empower women at all levels of society.

**Sandra Torres** (Guatemala, UNE) asked how UN support for Guatemala could be ensured in the fight against impunity, where progress was at risk due to mafia influence in the state. She also asked when the UN would adopt a firm stance on migration, with Guatemala dependent on remittances from 2 million citizens residing in the US, the majority of whom had a problem relating to migration.

**António Guterres** made a commitment that he would do everything in his power to ensure that the UN continue to contribute meaningfully to fighting against corruption and impunity in Guatemala. On migration, a number of unequivocal statements had already been made. It was of course a human rights issue and many more opportunities for legal migration were needed, which would be effective in combating traffickers. In Europe, low birth rates meant that without migration the majority of countries would not be able to maintain health systems, so migration was a need, and should be done in a fashion that gives human dignity. Refugees had additional rights and could not be rejected.

**Isabel Allende** (Chile, PS) asked about the effect of a change in US policy on the world, namely withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, cuts to grants that help the growing population and budget cuts planned for the UN, as these would go against the grain of cooperative globalisation.

**António Guterres** stated that it was necessary to remain faithful to one's principles and ensure that the US contribute in a proper fashion to protecting the world against climate change. Continual dialogue with the US administration was required, recognising that their political system was complex. Individual towns and states, business leaders and key players in key sectors had expressed clearly that they were committed to tackling climate change. It was also important to make the most of every positive opportunity and exercise positive influence where possible.

**Kornelia Ninova** (Bulgaria, BSP) asked whether Guterres shared the opinion that Europe needed to be split into groups of countries to develop at different speeds or whether it should stay united and strong.

**António Guterres** did not consider that it was his role to tell the EU what to do in relation to its own development. Though he had been strongly committed to EU unity as prime minister of Portugal, he would not now give advice to Europeans, just as he would not advise Africans on reform of the AU. He believed nonetheless that there would be no solution for European problems without effective European solidarity, as mentioned earlier by Pedro Sánchez.

**Elio Di Rupo** (Belgium, PS) asked what the UN approach was in tackling the global threat of terrorism, which had multiplied in its effects throughout the world.

**António Guterres** stated that a multifaceted approach was needed to fight terrorism, a crucial part of which was the elimination of the territory of the Islamic State, as that enabled them to organise terrorist actions throughout the world more easily. Without a political solution in Iraq and Syria however, the impact on global terrorism would be very limited. The root causes of terrorism were linked to economic development, and he considered youth unemployment to be the greatest factor exacerbating the ability of terrorists to recruit. Many foreign fighters moved from country to country to fight due to a lack of opportunities rather than an ideological motivation. A global vision to combat terrorism needed to eliminate or reduce cultural, religious, social and economic causes.

**Ouaffa Hajji** (SIW) asked how power sharing between men and women could be achieved, in a world where conservatism was becoming more and more significant. She considered that the SI was moving very slowly towards parity and that something else was needed, wondering how socialist women could be better involved in the implementation of the SDGs.

**Rafael Michelini** (Uruguay, NE) believed that everything was ultimately a human rights issue, from refugees, to climate change, to corruption, which was a particular issue in Latin America. He asked Guterres what the UN was doing specifically on corruption and its effects.

**Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana** (Namibia, SWAPO) asked whether the question of independence and self-determination for nations was still important for the UN, and whether the Palestinian and Saharawi people should give up their struggle. She further asked what progress had been made on reform of the UN.

**Carlos Vecchio** (Venezuela, VP) referred to the situation in Venezuela as the most complex in Latin America, with a deeply rooted crisis at all levels. He asked Guterres what his view was on the crisis and what he thought the role of the UN should be, in light of the perception that the UN did not take timely action and the need to rebuild trust in international institutions.

**Shazia Marri** (Pakistan, PPP) raised the long-standing issue of Jammu and Kashmir, between Pakistan and India, calling on the UN to look into the issue due to human rights violations taking place. She asked for Guterres's thoughts on the conflict and prospects for its resolution.

**Mani Shankar Aiyar** (India, INC) expressed his surprise that Guterres had not mentioned nuclear disarmament, in spite of a recent resolution calling for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. On the final settlement of Kashmir he undertook to request his government to set the conditions for bilateral dialogue and asked his Pakistani counterpart to do the same.

**António Guterres** agreed that parity was not enough. In choosing those in the administrative bodies of the UN he had nominated the same number of men and women, as parity was essential for changing the power structure. Once men and women were in equal positions in decision-making bodies, it would be much easier to guarantee effective equality in decisions and policies. This needed to be combined with social and economic measures to create conditions for equality.

He expressed his agreement on the importance of human rights, and declared them crucial in preventing and overcoming the majority of crises currently faced. The issue was however one on which there was not unanimous agreement in the Security Council, the General Assembly or even within the Human Rights Council. There was a particularly delicate debate within the UN about human rights within

the context of national sovereignty, with one view that upholding human rights was a pretext for regime change or interfering in the domestic affairs of a member state.

The question of Israel-Palestine and Western Sahara were not forgotten. He would be visiting Israel and the Palestinian state in August, and was strongly engaged in the promotion of the two-state solution. He had also just appointed a new special envoy for the Western Sahara question and intended to have initiatives to re-establish a political dialogue.

Reform was difficult, as everyone was in favour until reform dealt with their own situation. They were trying to create a new methodology, a dialogue with member states to generate a win-win situation, rather than one in which one group of countries perceived that another wanted to undermine its power or influence. If the conditions for a consensus were created, it would allow the formulation of reform programmes that might be accepted by everybody.

The situation in Venezuela was greatly worrying, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights had spoken on the issue and was independently following it in an effort to contribute positively to a resolution. Guterres had been closely following the various initiatives and in contact with the Holy See and countries in the region. The truth was that the good offices of the UN could only be used with the agreement of both parties, and the conditions were not in place to do more than simply look to cooperate with those acting in mediation.

The situation in India and Pakistan was related to this, and he had been talking to both Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Sharif since taking office. Again, his good offices could only be active with the agreement of both sides, and the conditions had not been created for that to be effective. He was nonetheless very attentive to the situation, which he considered one of the most difficult and potentially dangerous in the world.

On the role of the UN and the defence of human rights, it was very important to strengthen the architecture and mechanisms connected to the OHCHR and the Human Rights Council. This was not a process on which there was unanimous agreement among members, in particular when it came to allocating a budget to such a process. He was determined to increase the capacity of UN human rights mechanisms and hoped to have enough margin of manoeuvre to do that.

**George Papandreou** (SI President) expressed his thrill that Guterres was the UN secretary-general, and his pleasure that he had discussed important global matters with the Council. He considered that Guterres had brought a new spirit to the UN at a very difficult time in the world, creating great hope. The SI should contribute to his efforts by remaining true to the value they believed in.

### ***First working session of the Council***

**George Papandreou** highlighted some of the key issues raised by the UN secretary-general, noting that though globalisation had brought many positive developments it had created new divisions, inequality and marginalisation in many parts of society. New technologies had the potential to replace workers, creating even deeper cleavages and problems. More global cooperation was therefore needed, more unity, solidarity and empathy. Though Guterres could not be partisan, as social democrats SI members could be very vocal to show the alternative to autocracy, racism and xenophobia. On climate change and sustainable development, it was clear that the SDGs were a social democratic platform for the world and

a basis on which to develop policies and actions. He supported the need to reform the UN, recognising that there were forces that did not wish to support the UN or its humanitarian and aid work.

He concluded that the SI was becoming more relevant, as there needed to be a force for humanising globalisation and working for peace, justice, equality, gender parity and a humane approach to migration and refugees. He outlined the strengths of the SI – remaining true to its values, its people around the world with great capacity and human capital, its courage in very difficulty situations and its commitment to peace. He thanked the PLC for their hosting of the XXV Congress and called on the Council to set a roadmap to the next Congress, building on the ideas, determination and strength of the movement to achieve with passion, comradeship and the passion to change the world.

### Adoption of the agenda

**Luis Ayala** noted that the agenda contained items on appointing a number of officials and delving into further discussions on political issues it had been decided to discuss, as well as discharging a mandate from the Congress for a number of elections. Prior to this process, he reported that following a competitive leadership election within the SI-member PSOE in Spain, the new secretary general of the party, Pedro Sánchez was present. The Spanish party held a vice-presidency since the Congress in an interim capacity until the election of a new secretary general, and it was now proposed that the Council should endorse the decision that Pedro Sánchez hold the position of SI vice-president.

The Council endorsed **Pedro Sánchez** as SI vice-president

**Pedro Sánchez** (PSOE, Spain) thanked the SI Council and Presidium for the trust place in him. He considered the SI to be more necessary than ever, with a mission to recall and uphold the principles of social democracy in the 21st century. As stated by the UN secretary-general, social democracy had to advocate for a form of globalisation that served the needs of all in society, in particular those that had lost out. The SI should offer an alternative to globalisation as it currently stood, with an approach that differed entirely from the isolationism that was plaguing large parts of Europe.

He considered the first priority to be flying the flag of progressive multilateralism, which championed human rights, fights against inequality, protection of the environment and peace. This required strong multilateral institutions and the development and implementation of Agenda 2030 of the UN. The social democratic agenda could not be separated from the fight against climate change, and he proposed the establishment of a commission or working group to formulate a climate change energy plan to uphold the Paris accord within a new development paradigm, showing solidarity to the most vulnerable. He called for unity and for socialists to raise the internationalist flag with more strength than ever before.

### First main theme: Strengthening multilateralism for peace

**Horacio Serpa** (PLC, Colombia) reflected that holding the XXV SI Congress in Colombia had been an important event for the country and the peace process as a whole, thanking all those who had expressed their support for peace. Since the Congress the FARC had laid down their arms, with the last weapons left with the UN 15 days prior to the Council. The peace that the SI had advocated for more than 20 years was coming to pass, and was having a tangible effect on the country. Now, the negotiations that were underway with the ELN needed to be completed. He agreed with the UN

secretary-general that whatever happened in terms of who held power in Colombia, the authorities needed to uphold the agreement with the FARC. A dangerous coalition of the right and far-right was threatening to recall the agreement, and this could not be allowed to happen, so he called on all those present to remain vigilant to ensure Colombia did not return to war.

**Vlad Plahotniuc** (PDM, Moldova) outlined that for more than 25 years since Moldova's independence, the country had been facing separatism and conflict in the Transnistria region. Current negotiations had been underway for 10 years under the 5 plus 2 format, but nothing had moved forward. The status quo was not acceptable, as the idea of peace had been shaken by events in Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014. He proposed a meeting in Moldova on peace and security before the end of the year, hoping it could be a platform to discuss issues within the political family and with other groups in order to strengthen peace.

**Silav Ibrahim** (KDP, Iraq) stated that the legitimate demands of Kurds for national rights had been met with violence since the First World War. Since 2005, the KRG had been engaged in building the kind of Iraq envisioned by the new constitution but the government had not lived up to its commitments, and had since 2014 failed to support Kurdistan during the fight against ISIS. The Kurdish people had made a historical decision to hold a referendum on independence, which would give a mandate to initiate a peaceful negotiation over the timing and terms. They called on peaceful, democratic and progressive forces to assist the people of Kurdistan to exercise their right to self-determination.

**Julião Mateus Paulo** (MPLA, Angola) considered that the challenges of the world demanded global thinking and strengthening of multilateral mechanisms. He recalled the proposals of the SI in 2005 on 'UN Reform for a New Global Agenda', in the face of concern about the ineffectiveness of multilateral instruments and the instrumentalisation of the UN to interfere in the sovereignty of countries. Referring to the devastating conflict in the Great Lakes Region, he outlined the efforts of countries in the sub-region to ensure peace was achieved, with the establishment of the International Conference of the Great Lakes.

**Armağan Candan** (CTP, Cyprus) regretted that the international conference on Cyprus in Crans Montana had had an unsuccessful result, despite being so close to success. His message was that if both leaderships had the political courage and will, they could make it, as all parties had a lot to gain from an agreement. Turkish Cypriots remained committed to a solution, but they wanted to know their future. If it could be successfully solved, it could be a good example for Christians and Muslims, Turks and Greeks living together as equals in an area of prosperity in the East Mediterranean.

**George Papandreou** agreed with Armağan Candan, having spent many years in foreign policy and as prime minister trying to reach a solution. He believed that the two communities had reached more understanding than ever before, and hoped that for progress within the UN framework, building on the positives.

**Mani Shankar Aiyar** (INC, India) considered that multilateralism was becoming increasingly unpopular, linked to the obsolescence of the structure of the UN set up in 1945. The gap between the General Assembly and Security Council had become wider and wider, and to be more relevant the UN now needed to be more democratic. Without an overhauled structure, regional and bilateral efforts were taking the place of the UN, as with the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir. He noted that though 120 countries had voted to totally prohibit nuclear weapons, no nuclear-armed countries had participated in that conference.

**Wednesday 12 July 2017 – second day of the Council**

***Second and third working sessions of the Council***

***First main theme*** (continued)

**Luis Ayala** announced that the Council would turn its attention to Turkey, where the leader of the CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, had just finished a march from Ankara to Istanbul to demand justice for the Turkish people. The SI secretary general had had the opportunity to walk on that march, alongside Kılıçdaroğlu and the next speaker, Umut Oran.

**Umut Oran** (CHP, Turkey) considered that changing the course of history was hard but not impossible, if the right ideas were presented by the right people at the right time. The CHP believed that demanding justice in Turkey was the right idea for the present time, when the state of emergency in place since the 2016 coup attempt was making Turkey more restrictive in terms of press freedom, human rights and democracy. He outlined how Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu had marched 450 kilometres over 25 days to call for justice, thanking all those who had supported the march and expressing his belief in a more democratic, peaceful, respectful Turkey.

**Ibrahem Muslem** (PYD, Syria) explained that the revolutionary movement in Northern Syria was associated and organised according to the principles of the SI – freedom, democracy and fraternity. It was a safe haven from the oppression of the regime and brutality of terrorism, with guaranteed freedom of expression and organisation. This model had enemies who wanted to discredit it through media destruction and direct attacks on the ground. He expressed his hope that SI members would defend their revolution and help them to correct any shortcomings.

**Ahmed Boukhari** (Polisario, Western Sahara) reported that since the XXV SI Congress there was a profound interest in moving the negotiating process between Morocco and Polisario forward. Most troubling at that time was the issue of human rights, with reports of torture and degrading treatment perpetrated by Morocco against Western Sahara. He considered that the role of the UN and secretary-general's envoy would be limited if the international community failed to support those efforts, calling on the SI to adopt a position in favour of self-determination of the Saharawi people.

**Abdessalam Edebbbarh** (USFP, Morocco) wished to clarify his party's position on some of the issues, stating that as established in the 2015 report of the SI mission to Western Sahara, the Tindouf camps were not under the sovereignty or administration of Morocco. His party wanted the conflict resolved through reconciliation, as the people in the southern provinces of Morocco wanted to live in peace. Morocco had now re-joined the African Union, which and would support efforts in seeking a political solution that was peaceful and mutually acceptable.

**Edna Molewa** (ANC, South Africa) requested that the issue of Western Sahara and Morocco be dealt with in accordance with the decisions already made by the UN. She noted that there were on-going discussions regarding how the AU could assist in a matter that was still regarded as an occupation, which is how it was registered and recorded at the level of the UN. The SI should not be entering into discussions about a change of language.

**The chair** noted that there was a draft text on the issue, and called on the member parties directly involved to be aware that the new UN secretary-general was attempting to deal with this long-lasting

issue, and take on board the point of view of the AU and other players, in efforts to come to a common text.

**Araz Alizadeh** (SDPA, Azerbaijan) explained that a conflict had been going on in Azerbaijan since 1989, in Nagorno-Karabakh. Over 20% of Azerbaijani territory was occupied by Armenia, and there were over a million refugees. Azerbaijan wanted peace, but aggressive actions by Armenian armed forces had caused the deaths of 30 children in the space of 45 days. He called for the liberation of Azerbaijani territory and an end to the activities of the Minsk Group of the OSCE, which he considered a Russian campaign that could not solve anything.

**Hagop Der Khatchadourian** (ARF-D, Armenia) responded that the Azeri accusations were false and insulting, but the ARF-D was committed to fostering cooperation and promoting peace. He reported that Azerbaijan had launched a surprise attack on Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016 with many civilian lives lost. Azeri warmongering had created an unbearable situation and it was trying to activate the frozen conflict by promoting war. He called for solidifying the 1994 ceasefire, negotiations through the Minsk Group, and an end to Azeri violations and using defenceless people as human shields.

*Second main theme: Reaffirming our values and policies for the change we need*

**Elio Di Rupo** (PS, Belgium) spoke about social democracy in Europe, which was facing a triple crisis – economic, financial and migratory – but above all had to face an existential crisis due to the withdrawal of one of its members, which reflected a rejection of free movement and migration. Politically, the situation of social democratic parties in Europe was worrying, with only one-fifth of European heads of government true socialists or social democrats.

Globalisation had taken place much too quickly and the left needed more determination to denounce the wrongs of globalisation. It should stand for the upward standardisation of social, environmental and health norms, taking into account the difficulties in developing countries. Faced with new technologies and new economic realities, new forms of social protection were required. A new collaborative project of eco-socialism should ensure fair and sustainable access to natural resources, fairly distribute wealth and encourage human connections.

**Kornelia Ninova** (BSP, Bulgaria) referred to the aggravated inequalities caused by the financial and economic crisis. A major topic for social democrats was how to defend worker's rights faced with globalisation and new technologies. The left in Europe needed to examine why it had lost support, which she felt had occurred where there was not enough differentiation in ideas or coalitions had been formed that were not based on principles. The BSP had recovered from 10% support two years before by reforming, opening up the party and working together with cooperatives, unions and civil society.

**Eero Heinäluoma** (SDP, Finland) felt that it fell to social democratic parties to provide people with a new hope for a better future, faced with three urgent challenges. Globalism had provided opportunities but also imposed limits on national decision-making, with fears and resentments exploited by right-wing populists. Large-scale immigration and the plight of refugees had led to the growth of anti-immigration and nationalistic movements. Climate change was required strong measures, as the problems of one had become issues for all. The answers needed to come from social democratic values and principles.

**Isabel Allende** (PS, Chile) considered that recent changes in world society had not always followed the direction of progress and sustainable development. Democratic socialism continued to be the response to global challenges; though society was changing, values of equality, social justice, freedom, solidarity and social cohesion remained fully valid. To deepen democracy and advance towards real sustainable development, responses to new phenomena were needed, allowing each person to achieve their ambitions. These responses needed intellectual work, social participation and above all political will.

**Victor Benoit** (Fusion, Haiti) stated that those in the SI needed to strengthen trust in the ability of member parties to improve living condition, as in many countries voters were not distinguishing between the left and the right. He considered that the SI needed to clearly distance itself from the negative effects of globalisation, with initiatives to bring parties closer to the people. Better communication should attract people to social democratic parties and candidates, allowing them to gain an advantage from renewed values and principles that were shared by the population.

**Pia Locatelli** (PSI, Italy) noted that the 2008 crisis had widened the gap between rich and poor, with concentration of wealth weakening the economy and worsening living conditions. This was unacceptable to those who believed in social justice and required a reassessment of internationalism to combat the economic power of multinational companies and fight corruption. She called for more clarity on the time frame for achieving gender parity within the SI, to change the structure of power at all levels, suggesting that the equality committee be composed in a gender balanced way with a clear mandate.

**Miguel Vargas** (PRD, Dominican Republic) considered that multilateral cooperation and democratic values were a *raison d'être* of the SI and the backbone of the organisation. Effective cooperation between peoples would enable them to address challenges and take advantages of opportunities in the prevailing global context. SI member parties in Latin America and the Caribbean had been focused on the principles of co-existence and co-habitation to examine the political realities of the region, with a sacred commitment to solidarity, peace and dialogue as an essential factor in democracy.

**Shazia Marri** (PPP, Pakistan) spoke of the need to identify the change that was needed, which for social democrats in Pakistan was a return to normalcy in the face of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. Resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir issue required mature leadership on both sides, and she was encouraged by support from the UN for a multilateral solution. There were positive signs for the PPP in Pakistan ahead of elections in 2018, and she asked for the support of all SI member parties to promote the shared agenda of an egalitarian society that had been championed by the late Benazir Bhutto.

**Carlos Lupi** (PDT, Brazil) defined the history of the SI as one of struggles in defence of the weakest. The errors of social democrats happened during the exercising of power, when they adopted conservative economic policies as a way to stay in power, and it was necessary to reaffirm fundamental principles. In Brazil a legitimately elected government was brought down by a coup coordinated by the vice president with the support of the mainstream press, who wanted to curtail social rights. He called for a reaffirmed commitment to an effective state and the construction of a fairer and more fraternal society.

*Third main theme: Defending and protecting democracy where it is denied or is under threat*

**Karamba Touray** (UDP, Gambia) thanked the SI and those present for standing by the UDP and the Gambian people, who had overcome 22 years of struggle and dictatorship in December 2016. Despite

abuse and violence, the party had maintained its pursuit of freedom and belief in democracy and he outlined the events by the regime to hold onto power prior to the election victory of President Barrow, which followed the mobilisation of the whole opposition in a coalition. Gambia was now on a transition from dictatorship to freedom, and he encouraged all those facing challenges to never lose hope.

**Saleh Kebzabo** (UNDR, Chad) considered democracy in Africa to be the fruit of a long journey that began with decolonisation. The major problem now was the principle of democratic alternation, as constitutions had been altered to allow presidents to remain indefinitely in power, with the assistance of the electoral administration and judiciary. One source of hope was African youth, though the blight of youth unemployment remained a major problem. He called for more momentum to open doors to women, who had been largely excluded from development processes. Democracy was the only way to development, and those countries that had moved towards democracy performed better on all levels.

**Sandra Torres** (UNE, Guatemala) reported that Guatemala was still in a transitional phase, moving towards democracy, with a need to ensure that this benefited all people and not simply elites, with minimum guarantees that would allow citizens to live in equality and enjoy dignity. Organised crime, drug dealing, human trafficking, corruption and impunity were curtailing the path to democracy. UNE was alone in giving unconditional support to the international commission against impunity, whose work had been hindered by the government. The party would continue to fight for justice and transparency.

**Mikalai Statkevich** (BSDP-NH, Belarus) outlined that due to the conflict in Ukraine, support for human rights and democracy had been lost and the status quo was being maintained by European countries that did not want war or refugees. Belarusians simply wanted the right to freedom, and had been counting on international solidarity from countries that were now practically supporting the dictator. Social democracy in Europe was in crisis because comrades had lost their moral compass, supporting injustice in neighbouring countries for the sake of their security, forgetting that freedom was universal.

**Jean Marc Kabund à Kabund** (UDPS, DR Congo) paid his respects to Etienne Tshisekedi, the UDPS secretary general who died on 1 February. In the DRC there was a crisis without parallel in the world, as Kabila sought to remain in power indefinitely, refusing to call elections and ignoring SC resolution 2348, raising the threat of a civil war. The state lacked authority, with widespread corruption, embezzlement and violations of human rights. He denounced the support Kabila still received from countries in the sub-region, including SI members, calling for socialist solidarity to ensure he left power by the end of 2017.

**Edgar Giménez Caballero** (PDP, Paraguay) stated that Paraguay existed as two nations; a wonderland in the imagination of the government and the reality where young people and schools were desperate and hospitals were without medicines. It had been a long democratic transition since 1989, which was not yet concluded due to weak institutions and insufficient financial resources. The current president was seeking to exercise authoritarian control of the judiciary and persecuting opposition leaders. With the support of the SI, the PDP believed that by 2018 it would be possible to bring down this leader.

**Jean Tsomelou** (SDF, Cameroon) reported that after 35 years of being led by Paul Biya, the country was on the verge of an explosion. Elections were controlled by the party in power, with instruments in place to eliminate possible opponents. The Anglophone population had been marginalised, leading to protests, arrests and concerns for education. He called for the unconditional freeing of those arrested in these cases and an honest dialogue to resolve the problem. The SDF needed support from the SI and the international community ahead of presidential, parliamentary and local elections in 2018.

**Samuel Doria Medina** (UN, Bolivia) gave an account of 15 unsuccessful attempts by the Bolivian government to try and imprison him, as he developed an alternative for the future of the country, where populism and an authoritarian form of control had taken hold. To defeat authoritarianism it was necessary to defeat those who used democratic rhetoric to rule with an iron fist, by listening to people's problems linked to employment, opportunities, healthcare, education and justice. He added that for Bolivia, justice involved once again having sovereign control of its Pacific coast.

**Carlos Vecchio** (VP, Venezuela) noted that the situation in Venezuela affected other countries in the region, due to money laundering, corruption and bribery. Venezuela suffered from an absence of democracy, with political prisoners and the judiciary used to close the parliament. There was a social crisis, with 80% living in poverty, and the Maduro regime was trying to tamper with the constitution. For the reestablishment of democracy he called for elections with international observers, the release of political prisoners, the full respect of the remit of the National Assembly and urgent humanitarian aid.

**Hilik Bar** (ILP, Israel) reported on the election of Avi Gabbay as new leader of the ILP, bringing hope for the renewal of negotiations for peace in the Middle East. He believed that there was no perfect partner in conflict and war, but there was an obligation to find any path for peace with the partner that wanted to live alongside, rather than instead of Israel. An Israeli-Palestinian agreement was possible and most of the parameters were known. With true, brave and committed leadership on both sides, the conflict could be brought to an end, as peace was not a luxury or a bonus but a necessity.

**Edna Molewa** (ANC, South Africa) reflected that democratic gains seemed to be rolled back in many parts of the world, with the rise of populism and slide towards authoritarianism. Democratic aspirations were being stifled by sectarianism, political and religious violence. Intractable conflicts were dragging on for decades. It was incumbent on those who had emerged from imperialism and colonialism to speak out against injustice, as the ANC had resolved to do in support of the people of Western Sahara and Palestine.

*Establishment of working organs of the SI for the inter-Congress period*

*a) The statutory committees: election of the members of the Ethics Committee and the Finance and Administration Committee*

**The SG in the chair** announced that following intensive consultations, the Ethics committee should be composed of the following members in accordance with the statutes, with regional balance.

- *Americas*: Costa Rica, PLN; Dominican Republic, PRD; Uruguay, NE; and a fourth party to be agreed by the members of the region.
- *European Union*: Belgium, PS; Bulgaria, PBSB; Finland, SDP.
- *Africa*: Angola, MPLA; Morocco, USFP; South Africa, ANC.
- *Europe (non-EU)*: Russian Federation, JR Party; Turkey, CHP.
- *Middle East, Asia and Pacific*: Iraq, PUK; Pakistan, PPP.
- Socialist International Women

The Council approved the composition of the **Ethics Committee**

**The chair** proceeded to present the candidates for the Finance and Administration Committee:

- *Americas*: Brazil, PDT; Dominican Republic, PRD; Mexico, PRI; Venezuela, AD.
- *European Union*: Finland, SDP; Greece, Democratic Alignment; Hungary, MSzP; Romania, PSD.
- *Africa*: Angola, MPLA; Ghana, NDC; Niger, PNDS.
- *Europe (non-EU)*: Moldova, PDM, Armenia, ARF-D.
- *Middle East, Asia and Pacific*: Pakistan, PPP, and a representative of SIW from this region.

The Council approved the composition of the **Finance and Administration Committee**

*b) The regional committees*

**The chair** proposed that the **Africa Committee, Asia-Pacific Committee, Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea, Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mediterranean Committee** and **Committee on the Middle East** should continue their work during the inter-Congress period.

*c) The thematic committees*

**The chair** proposed that following exchanges in the Presidium, the **Committee on Migrations** should continue its work, charged with looking more closely at the challenge of responding to the question of refugees around the world.

*d) The SI Commission on Inequality*

**The chair** proposed that the **Commission on Inequality** continue its work, discussing identity issues, values and the struggle for world equality everywhere at all levels. He spoke of the need to address the question of climate change in light of the crucial commitments to achieve the Paris Agreement, and proposed to establish a **Commission on Climate Change**, which would re-launch the work of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society.

**Ouaffa Hajji** (SIW) spoke of the need for gender parity in relation to the composition of committees and commissions.

**The chair** replied that all committees elected their own chairs, and candidates could be put forward from either gender. There were also committee vice-chairs, so that where there was a male chair there should be a female vice-chair and vice versa.

**Mani Shankar Aiyar** (INC, India) asked whether the INC could be included in the Commission on Inequality.

**The chair** replied that although he had not been through the whole list of commission members, those who had been on the Commission on Inequality previously would continue to be members, recognising the important contribution of India to this commission.

The Council **established regional and thematic committees, and commissions** for the inter-Congress period, as proposed.

Matters for decision of the Council in accordance with the specific mandate of the XXV SI Congress

*a) Election of four SI vice-presidents*

**The chair** reminded the Council that there were four vacant vice-presidencies. In line with the statutes, at least 12 of the 36 total vice-presidents should be women. He announced that there were two female candidates from Asia and Africa, namely Shazia Marri (Pakistan, PPP) and Janira Hoppfer Almada (Cape Verde, PAICV), who could be immediately elected in line with the gender and regional balance requirements for the Presidium.

The Council elected **Shazia Marri** (Pakistan, PPP) as an SI vice-president

The Council elected **Janira Hoppfer Almada** (Cape Verde, PAICV) as an SI vice-president

**The chair** noted that it was possible for one of the two remaining vice-presidencies to be a male, and that Africa was underrepresented in terms of regional balance. Two candidacies had been received – Thiemoko Sangaré, leader of ADEMA-PASJ (Mali), and Bokary Treta, leader of RPM (Mali). He called a vote to determine which of the candidates should be elected an SI vice-president.

The Council elected **Bokary Treta** (Mali, RPM) as an SI vice-president

**The chair** concluded that there was one vice-president still to be elected, who should be female and from either Africa or Europe. He proposed that SIW could discuss this and come to the next Council meeting with a proposal.

*b) Follow-up of the Congress resolution empowering the Council to make changes to the statutes on the implementation of the principle of gender parity and the setting up and mandate of a committee on this issue.*

**The chair** reported on exchanges in the Presidium, where it had been decided that at the next Council the criteria for the establishment of the committee on achieving gender parity would be discussed. The Presidium would therefore return to this subject at its meeting prior to the Council. The Council agreed.

The Next Council Meeting: date, venue and main themes

**The chair** informed the Council that an invitation had been received by the newly-elected SI vice-president Pedro Sánchez for the PSOE to host the next meeting in Barcelona in the month of November.

The Council agreed that its next meeting should take place in Barcelona, hosted by our comrades in Spain.

Adoption of resolutions and statements of the Council

*Resolution on Puerto Rico:*

The **resolution on Puerto Rico** was adopted.

*Resolution on refugees:*

The **resolution on refugees** was adopted.

*Declaration on action to combat climate change:*

The **declaration on action to combat climate change** was adopted.

*Resolution on Cameroon:*

The **resolution on Cameroon** was adopted.

*Declaration on Guatemala:*

The **declaration on Guatemala** was adopted.

*Declaration on Venezuela:*

The **declaration on Venezuela** was adopted.

*Declaration on Syria:*

The **declaration on Syria** was adopted.

*Declaration on Cyprus:*

The **declaration on Cyprus** was adopted.

*Declaration on Mali:*

The **declaration on Mali** was adopted.

*Declaration on Turkey:*

**The chair** proposed that following on from what had been reported from Turkey on the Justice March that finished three days prior to the Council, a declaration should be issued in line with what had been said during the meeting on the issue and proposed by the Turkish (CHP) delegation.

The Council agreed on the issuing of a **declaration on Turkey**.

*Declaration on Western Sahara:*

**The chair** was informed that an agreement had not been reached regarding the previously announced declaration on Western Sahara.

*Closure*

**George Papandreou** concluded that much that was positive had come out of the Council, with the importance of the movement highlighted. Globalisation had brought many positives, but also excesses and inequalities and the SI was important for global cooperation to re-establish the social contract between government labour and capital and ensure the collection of taxes and combat huge concentration of wealth and corruption. He thanked everyone who had been participating in this meeting and the constructive discussions. The Socialist International would be back at the United Nations in the autumn for our yearly meeting of members of the Presidium with Heads of State and government during the High Level segment of the UN General Assembly.

***The meeting was declared closed.***

*End of the Council*

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