

**DECLARATION OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS**
Santiago, Chile, 19-20 July 2013

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International (SI) held the first meeting of its Committee on local governments in Santiago de Chile on 19-20 July. This meeting, led by the Secretary General of the SI, Luis Ayala, aimed at developing and strengthening the coordination of local authorities within the Socialist International. The discussions were fruitful, rich in analysis and proposals, and defined priorities and current tasks for local governments, reinforcing a common progressive platform.

The meeting focussed on the challenge of improving the quality of democracy, building cities based on solidarity in order to advance towards the achievement of equality of opportunity and social justice.

The delegates agreed on the importance of this meeting, considering the necessary interrelationship among the diverse actors, members of our International. The challenges we face today with regard to governance must be met with clear solutions and open-minded considerations with respect for the values of social democracy that are today more than ever necessary to place the citizen at the centre of politics and its management.

It is our duty to contribute to the governance of diverse societies and cities in their cultural, social and political expression, and to respond to this challenge in a way that accommodates all forms of diversity that co-habit in our cities.

The SI Committee on Local Governments agreed the following:

To guide the formulation of public policies for the purpose of building integrated cities to allow social inclusion. This involves the promotion of development and the access to goods and services in an environment of social diversity, including the historically disadvantaged sectors, responding to gender, economic and ethnic barriers that exist in our societies.

To advance towards the building of more autonomous local governments through decentralisation of the central government. Today, there exists the deep need in local governments to achieve a political autonomy in decision-making, and a financial autonomy for the economic sustainability of local management. Local governments are the first instance of power and contact with the citizens, and require greater empowerment to widen the scope of action and allow the citizens and their governments to lead and direct public expense where it is required, without a central directive body that may distort the actual intention of local politics.

The socialist and social democratic local governments must direct their efforts at advancing public policies with a rights-based approach, guaranteeing for all citizens

universal access to public goods and social services. It is necessary to transform the paradigm of public policies, going from an approach that considers the citizens as mere recipients of services and public goods, to an approach of people entitled to their rights.

Within a context such as the current and generalised one of political disaffection, it is of great importance to instil in local, national and world governance the values and principles to inspire an action that respond to the citizens' demands for more equality, fairness and social justice. These are values and principles permanently embodied within the members of the Socialist International.

This should involve greater participation and a sense of belonging in the public policies aimed at our citizens, thus ensuring that the action of our cities result from the opinions, views and participation of the diversity of people who live together in our communities.
