

Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International
United Nations, Geneva, 26-27 June 2018

DECLARATION ON OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY AROUND THE WORLD

The Socialist International Council, meeting at the United Nations in Geneva, considered the historical role played by socialist and social democratic parties in the establishment, consolidation and defence of democracy. For most of the last half-century, unprecedented advances have been made, with member parties of the Socialist International among the primary architects of democracy in their respective countries. However, in the last decade the threat of a regression in democratic rights has emerged, and the Council considered the emerging and enduring challenges to democracy, and how they might be overcome.

The Council:

Reiterates that democracy is the foundation of a free, just and prosperous society, and that the members of the SI, as social democratic political parties, are defined by their fundamental commitment to democracy and its advancement.

Recognises that as social democrats we cannot take democracy for granted in any of our countries, in particular where democratic rights were acquired relatively recently. It is vital to guard against a regression to previous undemocratic systems and practices and to counter the threat posed by anti-democratic forces.

Considers that the current wave of populism that has emerged around the world, in particular right-wing populism, represents a major danger to the hard-won freedoms that SI member parties hold dear.

Recognises that a significant source of the disillusionment that has contributed to the rise of populism is rooted in an ineffective and unjust response to the global financial crisis that began a decade ago. This relates in particular to austerity policies, the effects of which are still being felt and have had most impact on those who bore least responsibility for the crisis.

Calls for coordinated international action to address the new threats posed to democracy by unaccountable corporations that are able to exercise power and influence over the electoral process and by the rapid spread of influential misinformation on social media.

Underlines the importance of cooperation and solidarity across international borders in offering support to those struggling to establish, consolidate and defend democracy. In this regard the collective strength of the Socialist International can be exercised to great effect, making use of our global network of activists, party members and elected representatives to mobilise in defence of democratic rights and freedoms.
