

Dear Friends, Honorable representatives of the member parties of the Socialist International,

Honorable members of the Presidium:

Secretary-General, Louis Ayala, and President George Papandreou,

The Movement for Self-determination, which I represent, takes its name from the cardinal principle expressed in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. This is one more reason why I am honored to be speaking to you here today, in Geneva, at the place where the United Nations was founded. In the Republic of Kosova, our Movement is the leading left oriented opposition against neoliberal governments that have been ruling our country for the past two decades. As a people we have come out of 100-year long colonization, we have come out of the war of the late 90s, and we have survived genocide. Thereby, as a political Movement, we have no doubts that we will not merely survive the current authoritarian government in Kosova, we will be victorious.

Please allow me to talk about what this victory means, and who it is for. It is the change that will put an end to the brutal and abusive privatizations that have left our workers unemployed. Almost half of our population has been left unemployed, while only 1 out of 8 women in Kosova have a job. Through our neo-Keynesian economic model, through the developmental state, we will not merely fight unemployment; we will secure worker rights, strengthen unions and enforce collective contracts, reduce working hours and increase minimum wage and job safety, fight corruption and redistribute income equitably through progressive taxation. This change will mean 24-hour potable water in each home; social housing for the homeless; sewage channels and infrastructure for the urban sprawl. Free quality education and healthcare, because these are not commodities, these are rights that each citizen should enjoy.

Dear friends, the problems we face in Kosova and the Balkans, are similar to the problems workers face from Michigan to South Africa, from India to Chile. The source of the issues is often the same, and thereby it is imperative that we find and implement the solutions together, in the spirit and practice of real solidarity.

Kosova declared independence in 2008, currently recognized by 113 member states of the United Nations. In 2010 the International Court of Justice ruled in favor of our declaration of independence, and Kosova is now a member of the IMF, the World Bank and different other IGOs including FIFA.

We aspire to become a member of the European Union, with the aim of providing our contribution toward a more social Europe. However, we are not working just towards external recognition of our independence. We struggled for our collective freedom, but

freedom is not merely about external sovereignty. We are not merely seeking recognition from others. Freedom is also a responsibility, external towards other nations, and internal towards all of our citizens. It is the responsibility of each state and government; it will be our responsibility when we will be in government, to secure the political and economic, social and cultural rights of the people, without discrimination.

People in our country have long been hoping for this change, and they have been organizing. Last year, in the parliamentary elections, our Movement doubled the support and won the most significant vote share in comparison to any other political party. As a political Movement, we won the elections, but we were prevented from governing because of the last minute power driven tactics and unprincipled coalitions made by right-wing parties. Nevertheless, the election results have proven that the only thing they can still do is buy a little more time. Their downfall is long due. Social democracy is soon to win. The Movement for Self-determination will be the next government in Kosova.

I want to invite you all to Kosova, to see the change that is about to come to a small country that refuses to accept neoliberal determinism as its fate. Visit Kosova to meet our people and learn about our struggles and hopes, which I believe are common in values to your struggles and hopes. I want to invite each one of you, those who come from states that have recognized the independence of Kosova and those who still have not. We want to get to know you, to learn from each other, and to push forward the struggle against inequality for social and international justice.

In the end, I also want to state that for the past three years, we have regularly attended the Councils of the Socialist International, based on our decision to become a member of this organization. In light of the common values we share, we ask for your support for our membership.

I thank you very much for your kind attention, and for the support that the Socialist International has given us during these past three years. I look forward to our continued discussions and cooperation in this vital global organization for social-democracy and solidarity among people and nations.