

Summary Minutes
of the SI Council meeting at the United Nations in Geneva

26-27 June 2018

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Tuesday 26 June 2018 – first day of the Council

Opening

Luis Ayala (SI Secretary General) welcomed all delegates to the UN in Geneva, which he saw as a familiar house and a familiar home for the SI. He described how the meeting went to the heart of many of the most important questions and challenges, as it would be working on peace, democracy and migration.

He described peace as the symbol of the SI, which had been created in 1951 out after the cataclysm of World War 2 and had become a great movement for peace throughout the years, inspiring initiatives for disarmament and denuclearisation. It maintained a crucial commitment to multilateralism, understanding its value and meaning when dealing with very complex issues and challenges. Most conflicts and challenges were born from the lack of freedom and democracy, which many in the movement knew about from their own experience. Migration had historically brought prosperity to many parts of the world, and it was peculiar that what should be seen as an opportunity was now presented as a threat.

Ayala felt that there had been positive developments since the previous Council, including the victory of Pedro Sánchez and the PSOE, who had hosted that meeting. Where people were fighting for freedom, fighting for democracy and working in the midst of complex conflicts for a different future, they were social democrats, and social democratic values continued to inspire many around the world. He reported that there were 41 applications for membership of the SI from all continents, which was a good sign. There were multiple tasks for the SI that could be faced with a lot of confidence.

Michael Møller (Director General of ONUG) expressed the privilege and pleasure he had in welcoming all delegates to the Palais des Nations and his appreciation that the SI had once again chosen to meet in Geneva, with the ambition to tackle everything from the state of the world to the fate of democracy, to the issue of migration.

Møller considered that it had become fashionable to diagnose a demise of the global order due to rising tensions and deepening conflicts. In light of cynicism about the global order he underlined the real and tangible improvements in the lives of everyone on the planet in terms of decades of great power peace, advances in life expectancy and unprecedented opportunity. He considered that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was absolutely critical and described how it gave structure to all the work taking place in Geneva.

Møller expressed concern over alarming deterioration in the health of democracy, which he felt was linked to the crisis of the global order, and putting the great advances of social democracy in peril. He rejected the idea that globalisation was out of control, but warned that only multilateral, concerted and global action could be successful. He criticised the flawed, biased and false debate on migration, stating that it was an essential part of human existence and a positive phenomenon. Those countries that complained

the loudest about migration rarely bore the greatest burden and there was a disconnect between perception and reality.

George Papandreou (SI President) expressed a sense of urgency felt at the Council that had been evident in the Presidium meeting the previous day. SI members were worrying where the world was going, facing a monster that challenged the political family and socialist and social democratic parties. Changes in the world such as climate change, robotics and artificial intelligence and their impact on the labour market, deep inequalities caused by globalisation, and the increased power of multinationals were putting pressure on societies.

Responses to these phenomena from right-wing leaders were challenging core socialist beliefs around democracy, social justice, equal rights and tolerance, which was a threat to any form of solidarity. This made our discussions ever more important, as peace and democracy were prerequisites for a genuinely just society of equal opportunities and rights. He wanted to see a real democratic debate where all ideas could be heard without violence and anger, for politics to lead the markets and education to be at the centre of the social democratic movement.

Progressive politics needed creativity to change the world for the better, to be optimistic about the new opportunities to work in a multilateral way with movements fighting for democracy and human rights and stand up to the alternative right around the world. The SDGs were not technocratic initiatives but deeply political and highly important for the SI's agenda. To use the power of the international community for good was a fight day in and day out, and he hoped that the SI could show that it was different in its practice and its views, to give hope rather than fear.

First working session of the Council

First Main Theme: 'The contribution of social democracy to the resolution of conflicts and to international peace and security'

Eero Heinäluoma (Finland, SDP) considered that social democracy had historically been a movement for solidarity, cooperation and justice with a commitment to a rules-based international order. Despite an historic decrease in open warfare under this international order over 70 years, it was being questioned and new threats were undermining multilateral cooperation. He emphasised the need to strengthen the UN, but recognised the need for reform, including strengthening the role of developing countries and women, and reforming the Security Council. At a time of critical challenges, social democrats had a unique responsibility.

Tetsuhisa Fukaya (Japan, SDP) described the realisation of peace one of the most important issues for his party, which was working for demilitarisation. He endorsed the strengthening of regional security through confidence building among Asian nations and a collective security based on trust. The SDP had repeatedly promoted peace through dialogue on the Korean peninsula, in order to put the Korean War to rest once and for all and remove the pretext for North Korea's nuclear development. Japan could play a role as a guarantor of denuclearisation and should normalise diplomatic relations with North Korea.

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) considered that without peace and stability there could be no democracy, progress and development. Conflicts motivated by religious, tribal, ethnic, social, economic and territorial disputes were having highly destructive consequences, opening up space to hunger, poverty, under-development and radicalisation. Africa was affected by terrorist groups operating in particular in North Africa, West Africa, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. He stressed that permanent and multilateral dialogue within the UN framework was fundamental to the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Nabil Shaath (Palestine, Fatah) regretted that the world was not run only by good ideas but also the balance of power. He considered the dangers of a unipolar world, which made it difficult for the UN, and since 1991 he described a deepening of colonial settlements and the creation of an apartheid Israeli state in the Middle East. There was now hope of an end to the American-controlled world, and Palestine had taken the decision to only accept a multi-party peace process guided by international law and the UN Charter. He called for unity among social democrats and in Palestine to help create a new multi-form world.

Qadir Wrya (Iran, KDP) described the Iranian regime's behaviour as irresponsible and destabilising, and focused on abuses of human rights and economic hardship in the country. Despite 40 years of oppression and persecution, including imprisonments, executions and forced exile the Iranian people were not subdued and continued the struggle against the regime. In Kurdistan, the oppression had been harder yet the theocratic regime had always been challenged. He called on the SI to support the legitimate aspirations of the Kurdish people and to condemn Iranian oppression and discrimination.

Chantal Kambiwa (Cameroon, SDF) spoke of the essential character of peace and security for all, democracy and development, in addressing the crisis of peace and stability in Cameroon. The 'Anglophone Crisis' continued to have a damaging effect on the life of the entire population, following violence and mass arrests by the government against English-speaking Cameroonians. The situation continued to deteriorate, with 160,000 internally displaced and thousands more fleeing to neighbouring countries. She called for SI member parties to exert pressure in favour of peace and security.

Hoshyar Siwaly (Iraq, KDP) recognised the longstanding support of the SI and its member parties for the Kurdish people. He reported on the independence referendum in the Kurdistan Region in September 2017 and the harsh response of the federal government. The KDP had always emphasised that the only way to preserve the unity of Iraq was through the implementation of the federal constitution, without which Kurds had been deprived of basic political, cultural and social rights. The KDP supported the reactivation of the SI Committee on the Kurdish Question and stood ready to host its next meeting.

Mustafa Barghouthi (Palestine, PNI) described the situation in Palestine as the longest occupation in modern history and a system worse than apartheid. He denounced recent lethal force against peaceful demonstrators by the Israeli army and called for boycott, divestment and sanctions to force Israel to change its course. He called for the same approach as during the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, to bring the suppression and oppression of the Palestinian people to an end.

Omar Barboza (President of the Venezuelan Parliament, from the UNT) expressed the worry of those who defend the ideas and principles represented by the SI throughout the world, due to the need to fight in order for all inhabitants of the planet to reap the benefits of globalisation. The democratic left needed to ensure that those who proclaimed its ideas truly defended them, to avoid phenomena such as in Venezuela, where so-called socialism was a con that damaged the model of progress and freedom and made a prosperous country a factory of poverty.

He described the situation in Venezuela as a hijacking of the country's institutions by a regime serving only corruption and impunity, creating a humanitarian crisis. The democratically legitimate National Assembly was under economic attack, and the UN had denounced human rights abuses as well as malnutrition throughout the country, which disproportionately affected the elderly and children. He considered that peace had been preserved due to the opposition's respect for the constitution, but the conflict could soon go beyond peaceful means if Maduro stayed in power.

He called for an SI committee on the economic and social crisis in Venezuela to defend true democracy and show solidarity, for the SI to support the conclusions of the Council of Europe that the elections in May 2018 were neither fair nor clean, and the recognition of the true sovereignty of the National Assembly elected in December 2015.

End of the first session of the Council

Second working session of the Council

Second main theme: 'Overcoming challenges to democracy around the world to secure freedoms and rights for all'

The chair introduced the first speaker on democracy, Ricardo Lagos, as one of the outstanding figures of the struggle against dictatorship in Chile, who symbolised the will of the Chilean people to recover democracy. He had contributed the work of the SI in several of its commissions and would introduce the theme of democracy.

Ricardo Lagos (former President of Chile) considered that to understand the problem of democracy today was vastly different from the fights against dictatorships of the 20th century. Democracy used to be about political parties, with people unable to respond to their leaders between elections, but that had changed due to new technologies and social media. Was it possible to make a more horizontal democratic system, whereby institutions allowed expressions by the people, who could be heard by leaders?

Some of the challenges currently faced were identical in both the developed and developing world, with a feeling that the next generation will be worse off. This was one of the consequences of globalisation, which was benefiting those with high incomes. A solution was needed to deal with the losers from globalisation, with economic growth aimed at reducing inequality and a simple tax policy that ensured an equitable distribution. This required that taxes must be paid, by both people and companies. He noted that once a certain income threshold was reached, it was income distribution rather than income per capita which most defined improvements in the social area, which represented a great challenge for many Latin American countries that were reaching that threshold.

He concluded on the importance of redefining labour and work for the era of artificial intelligence and big data, with a democratic system that allows for a reduction in working hours and more capacity for leisure. Social democratic values should be updated for this new reality, and it was necessary to be brave to uphold the accomplishments of political ancestors.

Sükhbaatar Batbold (Mongolia, MPP) mentioned the role of technology in changing the meaning of employment, space, democracy and the basics of society. Technology had the potential to penetrate all physical and geographic boundaries and democratise all aspects of life. New solutions were required to ensure decent work, and he proposed working with labour unions on international cooperation. A recent worrying trend was the reversal of democratic advances, which all social democrats needed to resist.

Mikalai Statkevich (Belarus, BSDP) described the recent work of the regional committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea, noting widening repression of the Lukashenko regime in Belarus and persecution in many countries of Central Asia, where political competition and civil rights were non-existent. He welcomed peaceful demonstrations in Armenia, and expressed concern about elections in Turkey and frozen conflicts in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. He expressed hope for a resolution to the humanitarian problem in Ukraine and concern that efforts for denuclearisation were being undermined.

Gwede Mantashe (South Africa, ANC) explained that in the centenary year of Nelson Mandela's birth, the ANC was pulling itself out of trouble and a government overpowered by corruption and state capture by business interests. He described a new dawn, with changes in government, the party and in the state itself. He considered that democratic governance was only meaningful in an economically empowered society, without which populism could take over due to economic instability. He called for courage in the face of onslaughts on national sovereignty, democracy and people's freedoms.

Araz Alizadeh (Azerbaijan, SDPA) noted recent defeats of socialists in all areas, considering that it was a result of many parties becoming similar to conservative parties, forming coalitions with forces that had no socialist values. He rejected compromising with an aggressor, which would lead its ambitions to grow and called for social democrats to show courage and not reconcile something that could not be reconciled.

Mario Nalpatian (Armenia, ARF) described democracy in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus as a permanent challenge of credibility and trust. Armenia was in a region of unresolved conflicts but looked to the future with a will to improve its situation and strengthen democracy. A popular movement had brought about a change in government and his party now had two major ministries. The new government had created great expectations for democratic reforms to build trust in the authorities and strengthen the rule of law.

Johnson Asiedu Nketiah (Ghana, NDC) addressed the negative consequence of the explosion of information technology, with fake news used to manipulate public opinion, and the subsequent need to safeguard the right to self-determination. Another challenge was the influence of money in politics, with the cost of politics having tripled in Ghana between 2012 and 2015, with candidates elected based on how much they could pay. He was concerned by the global influence of religion on policies, which were being determined based on beliefs rather than an assessment of the performance of the government.

Rafael Filizzola (Paraguay, PDP) described the political situation in Paraguay, where the same party had been in power almost without interruption since 1947. The present situation was complicated due to links between the outgoing president and money laundering and other forms of organised crime. Latin American countries could be considered low quality democracies and faced problems such as illegal financing and manipulation of the media. He noted that although Paraguay had moved its embassy to Jerusalem, most Paraguayans were in solidarity with Palestine and wanted a fair solution.

Svetlina Yolcheva (Bulgaria, PBSB) informed the Council that the PBSB was celebrating 135 years in the global socialist movement. However, hopes for an end to poverty, injustice and hunger in the 21st century had yet to be realised. This was caused by the insatiable growth of multinational companies. Despite 1.3

million tonnes of food being wasted every year, almost 800 million people in the world were hungry every day, and what needed to change was the global distribution of wealth.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng (Senegal, PS) reflected on the global political family of the Socialist International and said that it was up to those who had left the legitimate organisation to return from the cold. He regretted the serious negative effect on international relations as a result of unilateral steps by the USA. On the issue of migration he noted that only 1% of the migrants of the world were in Europe, while in terms of the African diaspora 80% of the migration occurred in Africa. The SI needed to be strong and united to defend its positions and allow space for dialogue on these issues.

Vladimir Marinkovic (Serbia, SDPS) spoke of the most important challenges for his party and country, with the key strategic aim of becoming a full member of the EU, accompanied by regional stability and economic development. A particular challenge related to education, as well educated young people with initiatives and ideas went to Western Europe and the USA. He considered that the SI had great opportunity to enhance efforts to finish the process of reconciliation in the Western Balkans and improve quality of life for all its people.

Imad A Farhadi (Iraq, PUK) reiterated that democracy in Iraq was under threat, and the PUK could lose its position in the Iraqi government due to vote rigging. He was concerned that international terrorism was not extinguished, and it was only through the proper implementation of the Iraqi Constitution that it could be prevented. He proposed the SI could hold a meeting of its Kurdish committee in Iraqi Kurdistan, and recommended congratulations to the HDP (Turkey) on its recent electoral success.

The chair proposed sending a message of congratulations to the HDP from the Council.

The Council congratulated the HDP (Turkey) for their electoral result.

Albin Kurti (Kosovo, MSD) described the MSD as the leading left-leaning opposition to the neoliberal governments leading Kosovo for two decades. Due to brutal privatisations almost half of workers had been left unemployed and the MSD wanted to fight unemployment, strengthen all of workers' rights, fight corruption and redistribute income equitably. He invited all delegates to Kosovo to see the change that was coming, when the MSD could govern and secure the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the population.

Isabel Allende (Chile, PS) noted that the previous day saw the commemoration of the 110th anniversary of the birth of Salvador Allende. She considered that the role of social democracy was to react to major transformations at the political, economic and cultural level in order to mitigate the worst effects of neoliberalism, guaranteeing equal pay for men and women and fighting unemployment and climate change. Representative democracy needed more citizen involvement and participation in decision-making. She strongly urged progress on women's rights and for a new consensus based on solidarity and respect for human rights.

Rafael Michellini (Uruguay, PNE) reflected that the once held certainties in relation to democracy, rights and freedoms no longer seemed to exist. While life conditions had improved, inequality still continued to grow. As a movement that defended workers, the SI had to adapt to societies where work was being lost and machines taking over at a staggering speed. It was easy to adopt a position against authoritarianism

or human rights violations but a lot of thought was required to imagine freedom and inequality in a world where people are no longer workers but simply consumers.

End of the first day

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Wednesday 27 June 2018 – second day of the Council

Third working session of the Council

Report of the Finance Committee

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD), co-chair of the Committee, reported that between 2016 and 2018 outstanding membership fees had been written off to the sum of £1,786,000. Some parties that had left the SI due to non-payment of fees had since requested re-admission. He congratulated by name the 26 parties that had paid their membership fees for 2018, and asked all delegates to convey the need to pay the fees for 2018 to those within their party responsible for finances.

The Council adopted the report of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Report of the Ethics Committee

Ariane Fontenelle (Belgium, PS), chair of the Ethics Committee, thanked its members for their work and reported on its decisions and recommendations. Regarding changes to membership status, the committee proposed that the MLPC of Central African Republic be upgraded to full member status pending the payment of its membership fees and the KPIK (Iran) be upgraded to consultative status. The committee further proposed admitting the SDPK of Kyrgyzstan as a full member, the CPP of Ghana and PPSF of Palestine as consultative members and the MSD of Kosovo and SDPS of Serbia as observer members.

She further reported on recommendations in two cases relating to respect for the Ethical Charter. The committee recommended that the Council should address irregularities with regard to the PSD of Benin, and that the Fusion Party of Haiti should be suspended until a report had been made on the situation on the ground. The committee was also in favour of admitting as a member the Social Democrat Assembly for the Progress of Haiti (Rasanbleman).

The chair proposed that the Council vote on the recommended parties one by one.

The Council agreed to admit the Movement for Self-Determination (MSD), Kosovo as an observer member

The Council agreed to admit the Social Democratic Party of Serbia (SDPS), Serbia as an observer member

The Council agreed to admit the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK), Kyrgyzstan as a full member

The Council agreed to admit the Convention People's Party (CPP), Ghana as a consultative member

The Council agreed to admit the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), Palestine as a consultative member

The chair opened the floor for discussion on the PSD of Benin and consequently of the chair of the SI Africa Committee.

Emanuel Golou (Benin, PSD) described his party as split between those such as him in the opposition and those who supported the government of Benin, which he described as a dictatorship. He claimed to be the representative of the legal PSD and expressed his concern that the Ethics Committee had taken a decision based only on documents sent by the party. He said that he would suspend his activities as chair of the Africa Committee until the court in Benin had ruled on the legality of the PSD and the Council could decide what was done.

Ariane Fontenelle clarified that the committee had received a number of documents, including official records explaining who the members of the party were, from the officially recognised PSD, and also from the Ministry of the Interior. The decision of the committee had been based on all these documents.

Johnson Asiedu Nketiah (Ghana, NDC) felt that there had not been a fair hearing. He proposed that the Africa Committee, as the body that had elected its chair, should have the opportunity to deal with the issue.

Gwede Mantashe (South Africa, ANC) considered that the Council had been presented with a fait accompli and should instead resolve to send the issue back to Africa, allowing Emanuel Golou to state his case.

Ousseini Hadizatou Yacouba (Niger, PNDS) said it should be taken into account whether Golou had been excluded from the party or whether he was just no longer the leader. She concurred that the question should be dealt with by the regional committee.

The chair clarified that the issue in question was the irregularities that had been found. The proposal was that the Africa Committee would discuss the matter and until that time there would be a suspension of the role of Golou as chair of the committee.

Rafael Michelini (Uruguay, PNE) did not object to the decision but pointed out that it was the role of the Ethics Committee to ensure the ethical rules of the SI were respected, whether the regional committees agree or not.

The Council agreed on the decision that Emanuel Golou would suspend his activities as chair of the Africa Committee until the committee could meet to discuss the issue.

The chair opened the floor for contributions on the suspension of Fusion, Haiti

Edmonde Supplice Beauzile (Haiti, Fusion) said she was surprised by the decision to suspend her party, which she had learned the previous day. She denounced the decision, claiming the SI had been fooled by Victor Benoit who failed to accept the verdict of the party in its internal democratic process. The party had not been heard, and any sanction would cause enormous damage to the Fusion Party.

The chair reiterated that these issues were not easy and that the Ethics Committee, which was set up to deal with such issues, did not take its decisions lightly. He called for respect of the integrity of the committee and for SI Vice-President Victor Benoit for what he had done in his life and his presence in the SI.

Rafael Michelini stated that the president of Fusion had had time to present her case, and he had given her his word and that of the Committee that they would look into the matter very seriously. An investigation of the strong claims was required, and the Ethics Committee had to protect the good name of the SI. While it was carrying out its impartial investigation, the party should be suspended.

The chair summarised the proposal of the Ethics Committee as a temporary suspension of the Fusion Party.

Victor Benoit (Haiti, Rasanbleman) recalled that he as a member of the SI had worked to create the Fusion party, which he was no longer a part of. He supported the decision of the Ethics Committee and was ready to answer any questions the investigation would have.

Gwede Mantashe (South Africa, ANC) said that it was fundamental that a person who was accused had the right to state his or her case. He added that the suspension of Fusion and the admission of a new party in Haiti should be considered as two separate cases.

Rafael Michelini preferred that the cases not be mixed and separate decisions be taken.

Araz Alizadeh (Azerbaijan, SDPA) supported the idea of carrying out an investigation before making a final decision.

Pia Locatelli (Italy, PSI) considered that if a party was accused of having heavily misbehaved with acts of violence, the Ethics Committee should listen to the party and check if that had happened.

Carlos Lupi (Brazil, PDT) considered that the creation of a new party in Haiti was a domestic issue and not one for the SI, which should not be arbitrary in its decisions or condemn. He felt that an investigation should take place first before a party is punished.

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD) proposed that the Ethics Committee send a delegation to the country in order to gather information before a final decision is taken.

Rafael Michelini underlined the role of the Ethics Committee in preserving the image and reputation of the SI. They felt that the very serious allegations could lead to erosion of the procedure of the SI and it was therefore necessary to put things on hold, including membership. Parties had to understand that the SI needed to protect its reputation, and the committee was not there to show good will in face of serious allegations.

Mario Nalpatian (Armenia, ARF-D) felt that to change the proposal of the committee would create a precedent that called into question its very existence. The Ethics Committee had found enough evidence to propose a full-scale investigation and in the meantime the party should be suspended pending the result of the investigation. The committee would be hampered if the Council started to question its methods.

The chair underlined the need for the integrity of the Ethics Committee to be respected, as it could face similarly difficult issues in the future. However, as a number of members had called for further investigation into the issue, he proposed that the party be placed under investigation with a specific time frame, that is until the next Council, when a final decision will be made.

Pia Locatelli considered the proposal acceptable.

Isabel Allende (Chile, PS) requested that in future the Council should receive a summary of an explanation of the basic facts of the case, as it was not aware of all that was known to the Ethics Committee. She considered the present proposal a good way to move forward.

The chair explained that a lot of time and effort were put into the decisions of the committee. The decision to place the party under investigation was accepted by the Ethics Committee. The chair put the proposed decision to the Council.

The Council agreed to place the Union of Haitian Social Democrats (Fusion) under investigation until the next Council when a final decision would be taken.

The Council agreed to admit the Social Democrat Assembly for the Progress of Haiti (Rassembleman) as a full member

Mustafa Barghouthi (Palestine, PNI) considered that his party had received unfair treatment as it had been asking for 3 years to be upgraded to full membership. He recognised that the party had not paid its membership fees, but asked for understanding for the financial situation of the party, and for the Council to support the PNI.

The chair replied that it was an issue for the Ethics Committee, and that as Barghouthi was aware, it was a condition that the membership fee was paid for any membership upgrade request to be considered.

Carlos Lupi (Brazil, PDT) stated that his party also had difficulties but was paying its fee. He did not want a situation where it became advantageous not to pay.

The chair moved on to the subject of the establishment of the SI Committee on Gender Equality and said discussions were underway to achieve a composition of the committee along the lines agreed at the last meeting. He proposed that the Presidium be mandated at its next meeting to decide on the final composition.

The Council agreed to mandate the Presidium to approve the composition of the newly established SI Committee on Gender Equality.

First main theme (continued)

Ibrahem Muslem (Syria, PYD) described the Syrian state as an authoritarian centralised regime based on the dogma of 'one language and one religion'. The PYD was working for a democratic and ethnically free political society in Syria, Kurdistan and the Middle East. Though they had, together with the international community, delivered a blow to terrorism, it had not been completely eradicated. He called for

decentralised governance in Syria, an end to the Turkish occupation of Afrin and for a special regional conference on the situation in Afrin under the auspices of the SI.

Ahmed Majdalani (Palestine, PPSF) expressed his thanks that his party had been accepted as an SI member, outlining that it had participated in the founding of the PLO. They would make every possible effort to fulfil their duties and commitments to the organisation.

Andrés Esono Ondo (Equatorial Guinea, CPDS) described how many of the problems discussed were a result of longstanding dictatorships that denied the citizens their rights and freedoms and appropriated the resources of their countries. He called on all socialist governments in power, in particular those in Africa to show solidarity with their sister parties that continued to fight against dictatorships. Without democratic change, freedom and prosperity for African citizens, immigrants would continue to arrive in Europe in search of all that was denied them by their corrupt and authoritarian governments.

Mohamed Sidati (Western Sahara, Polisario) wanted advancement towards a solution to the conflict in Western Sahara and was concerned that the SI was avoiding naming the two parties to the conflict – Polisario Front and Morocco. The SI needed to support the UN process by referring to them by name. He referred to rulings in the European and African Court regarding the sovereignty of the Saharawi people over their natural resources, and called for the SI to refer to this, and continue calling for negotiations for the issue to be resolved in a peaceful and just manner.

Abdessalam Eddebbagh (Morocco, USFP) spoke about the history of the region and conflict, which went back to the Spanish occupation in the 1860s. He stated that Polisario was formed in the 1970s as a direct result of the Cold War but the situation was now completely different. He expressed concern over reports of women and children being used in military operations, and wanted the SI to take the initiative to find out what is going on in the camps in Tindouf. He considered that the only way to overcome the conflict was through the truth, which the SI had always sought.

The chair noted that there was an agreement on a text on Western Sahara based on proposals received in Luanda and a new text from the South African delegation, which would be included in the text on conflict resolution in Africa.

Second main theme (continued)

Joakim Mukuasa (DR Congo, UDPS) explained that the DR Congo was facing enormous troubles after the passing of Etienne Tshisekedi and there was a catastrophic situation and the risk of civil war. The incumbent president was trying to ensure elections could not be held, having served his two constitutional terms. The UDPS was getting ready for elections but was not sure they would happen – this was a question of life or death due to the suffering in the country.

Daher Ahmed Farah (Djibouti, MRD) described how a dictatorship had endured in Djibouti since independence in 1977, though its suffering was rarely mentioned. All the domestic media were controlled by the regime, and little international attention was paid to the fate of Djiboutians despite the presence there of permanent military bases of a number of world powers. The MRD had been consistently persecuted since its founding in 1992 as the first legalised party in the country, and he asked for the support of delegates in their struggle for a free, fraternal and prosperous Djibouti.

Faisal Farah (Somaliland, JWP) described the history of Somaliland and its struggle for independence. It was a peaceful country, which since 2002 had six political parties and he asked for support for its independence from Somalia.

Third main theme: Responding with our values and principles to migration globally and to the current plight of refugees

Pia Locatelli (Italy, PSI) described migration as a defining issue, whether it be the inhumane family separation by the US administration or as a decisive factor in elections in Europe. The SI had to face this situation as a family, and the difference between the right and social democrats was exemplified in the humanitarian response by the Spanish government to a refugee ship that had been denied permission to dock in Sicily. She underlined the hypocrisy of categorising migrants based on their country of origin, and called for SI members to defend their values and invest in long-term policies. She supported proposals for an SI platform on the topic of migrations to coordinate its global activity.

The chair noted that the SI had its own migrants' charter. He added that by the end of the year the UN would have concluded its work on a global compact for migration, and the SI should be a part of the debate.

Mustafa Ben Jaafar (Tunisia, FDTL) commended the proposed resolution on migration, and underlined the importance of counteracting fake news, such as the manipulation of language to sow fear and disinformation about millions of migrants in Europe threatening security. He noted that refugees in Lebanon made up 25 percent of the population, and that Africa hosted more refugees than any other continent. The SI must reject a security-based solution that presented migrants as not only undesirable but also petty criminals, instead treating them with respect in a humanitarian manner.

Carlos Lupi (Brazil, PDT) considered that mankind had been made out of migrations, and Americans knew well that all peoples had moved across continents. The first responsibility of political parties was to basic human values, which should be defended without limitation. Human beings should not be categorised based on profit or costs. Without migrants the economy would grind to a halt, and the SI needed to defend the right of migrants as citizens of the world to choose where to live and pursue their happiness.

Eyra Ruiz (Panama, PRD) expressed her party's support for the reunification of migrant families who had been separated on the Mexico-US border as a result of the 'zero tolerance' policy of the US administration, denouncing a clear violation of human rights. Family separation could be catastrophic for children at a critical stage of development, and could lead to chronic mental health problems. She called for the international community and the SI to express their clear opposition to this policy, which disregarded basic human rights.

Victor Benoit (Haiti, Rasanbleman) noted that Haiti had received many migrants in its past, then as the situation worsened under the dictatorship many had left. The overall environment in the countries of origin was the main driving factor; in Haiti young people lacked confidence and did not trust what was happening to their future. He called for the SI to mobilise on a particular day with all parties organising peaceful demonstrations in favour of migrants' rights in order to put pressure on conservatives and the right to reverse their hostility towards migrants.

Alexander Romanovich (Russia, A Just Russia Party) described migration as a natural thing for all human beings and spoke of the need to resolve conflicts and improve living standards. He criticised the US and the global west for past military actions in Iraq, Libya and Syria which had caused instability and led to increased tensions and created more refugees. The Syrian conflict could not be solved in Geneva and he proposed the establishment of a special commission.

Muradyl Mademinov (Kyrgyzstan, SDPK) thanked the Council on behalf of President Sooronbay Jeenbekov for admitting the party to the SI. He described a century of struggle by socialist and social democratic parties throughout the world and the support of the SDPK for social justice and democracy in the difficult post-Soviet era. Kyrgyzstan faced challenges that were not unique and he felt that joining the SI would help the party to contact others that share a common ideology and work together to achieve its goals faster.

Adoption of resolutions and statements of the Council

Declaration on overcoming challenges to democracy around the world

The Declaration on overcoming challenges to democracy around the world was adopted

Declaration on global migration and the plight of refugees

The chair noted three amendments to the draft text, including the proposal of Pia Locatelli, a reference to Pedro Sanchez proposed by Spain, and the proposal of Panama on Latin America.

The Declaration on global migration and the plight of refugees was adopted

Declaration on the Palestinian Question

Eero Heinäluoma (Finland, SDP) drew attention to the amendment in the text that made it clear that the call to boycott and sanctions was targeted at the institutions of the occupation.

The chair also noted that there were two further amendments, one stylistic and another for the purposes of clarity.

The Declaration on the Palestinian Question was adopted

Resolution of support for democracy and for the MRD in Djibouti

The Resolution of support for democracy and for the MRD in Djibouti was adopted

Declaration on the Kurdish people

The chair announced that amendments had been received to remove references to President Erdogan from the text.

The Declaration on the Kurdish people was adopted

Declaration on Nicaragua

Rafael Michelini (Uruguay, PNE) proposed to condemn the 150 deaths caused by the repression

Margarita Zapata (Nicaragua, FSLN) did not object to condemning deaths but did not want to portray that all violent deaths were caused by the state.

Rafael Michelini reiterated that SICLAC had said there were deaths and condemned them. Without a condemnation of the deaths it was not right.

The chair proposed that the final text could be drafted in the spirit of the proposals made.

Isabel Allende (Chile, PS) noted that the SI should be aware of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission report, which included a figure of 212 deaths and 570 people deprived of freedom. Condemnation of the deaths should be included at the very least.

The chair announced that the final draft would take into account SICLAC, Nicaragua and the commission report.

Eero Heinäluoma proposed removing some problematic language about social media giving orders to ordinary people.

The chair received the approval of the Council for the amendments proposed

*The **Declaration on Nicaragua** was adopted*

Resolution on Venezuela

*The **Resolution on Venezuela** was adopted*

Declaration on the Korean Peninsula

*The **Declaration on the Korean Peninsula** was adopted*

Declaration on Mali

*The **Declaration on Mali** was adopted*

Declaration on conflict resolution in Africa

Western Sahara called for at least a text based on the UN Security Council calls for the exercising of self-determination by the people of the Western Sahara. This was occupied territory where human rights were being violated and they insisted on a correction.

Morocco responded that only full member parties could amend the declaration and it should be enough that it was accepted by the USFP and the ANC (South Africa).

The chair noted that the original text was adopted by all parties in Luanda, where delegations from both Western Sahara and Morocco were present.

The Declaration on conflict resolution in Africa was adopted

Closure

Luis Ayala raised the case of a member of one of the Kurdish parties in Iran who had been sentenced to death. The SI had taken part in the campaign to save him and he asked delegates to look at those details on the SI website.

He thanked all those who had participated in the Council, and reflected that the SI held legitimacy insofar as it was consistent with its values. The SI was the left, labour and social democrats. It was a self-governed organisation where the members had the last word, everyone could speak, was democratic and was self-sustained by its members. To raise its ambitions and strengthen its goals the SI needed all parties to do their share. Member parties present could leave the Council now with a mission to apply and implement its decisions, to transform them into change and reaffirm their confidence and belief.

The meeting was declared closed.

End of the Council

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