

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 23-24 November 2009**

Main Theme: "AT A TURNING POINT FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE"

OPENING

Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the Socialist International, thanked the Dominican Revolutionary Party and all those who made it possible to hold the Council in Santo Domingo, in the country of one of the great figures of our Social Democratic movement, José Francisco Peña Gómez.

He gave the floor to the leader of the host party, Miguel Vargas Maldonado, for his opening remarks.

Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Leader of the host party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party PRD, recalled the early contacts with individual Social Democratic parties since the 1960s that finally lead to the PRD membership in the Socialist International in 1974. He further recalled how José Francisco Peña Gomez, as the SI representative for Latin America, struggled for true democracy together with international leaders as Willy Brandt, Olof Palme, Francois Mitterrand, Mario Soáres, Pierre Mauroy, and Felipe González.

These relations of the PRD with the SI, he underlined, has been extraordinarily fruitful for the development and modernisation of Dominican democracy. We are proud of their democratic socialist traditions, heritage and commitment to freedom, justice and solidarity.

I want to take the opportunity to talk about security and peace, he continued, but security today cannot be treated with the logics of the Cold War. The relations and dynamics are different. We live in an inter-connected world where what happens in the East has an impact on the Caribbean and what happens here affects other points of the planet.

Crime, he said, is internationalised, with global networks working as the tentacles of fundamentalist terrorism and illegal trafficking of drugs, arms and persons.

Immigration overflows; climate change is a reality; conventional energy resources dwindle; many states rearm and cultural "integrationalism" threatens to isolate societies and communities.

A new gap is appearing between the connected and disconnected in the digital era.

Deforestation, erosion and water shortage affect the food production and the sanitary situation.

Inequality, poverty and marginalisation is growing in many countries as well as the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, together with speculation, the illegal economy, drugs trafficking and corruption.

All this is a serious threat to peace, he underlined, and more than military and geopolitical, security is today a social and human issue.

This, he continued, calls for new reflection about security and active, integrated, creative and transversal conduct in order to redefine the social dynamics of the planet.

In line with the basic principles of the Socialist International, he said, in order to create a new climate of confidence, one must eliminate the social and economic roots of the conflicts.

We will never, he stressed, achieve peace through arms, violence, fear, repression or the elimination of all possibilities to practice democracy.

Peace, he said, calls for streets, sidewalks, schools, public hospitals, electricity and water for everyone, and above all, popular participation and control over public spending together with administrative transparency, efficiency and honesty. The road to peace demands equality and social inclusion and a new way to govern our societies.

To secure human development, he underlined, it is not enough to administrate the financial crisis or to promote macro-economic stability. To change direction we must transform the character of the institutions and redefine the economic and social role of the State. We must also work for peace in our private lives and in our communities.

He proposed the establishment of an International Social Democratic Centre for Security Studies and also a Permanent Office for Follow up and Strengthening of Security in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti.

Concluding, he welcomed the Council to the country of José Francisco Peña Gómez.

George Papandreou, President of the Socialist International, thanked the Dominican Revolutionary Party, PRD, its President Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Peggy Cabral, and all party members who had worked hard to make the Council possible. He stressed the special relation with the Dominican Republic which, like a number of European countries, had suffered dictatorship. He particularly mentioned PRD's historic leader José Francisco Peña Gómez as a symbol of the struggle against authoritarianism and for democracy.

He expressed thanks for all the support, solidarity and inspiration in the struggle for change in Greece. I am honoured, he said, to have been given the task of leading the Greek nation after the recent elections.

We progressives, he underlined, have a great responsibility to make things happen and to be the agents of needed change:

Democratic change - In the past years we have seen the failure of our democracies as our political and democratic institutions were captured by big business corporations and by the lack of transparency in the banking and financial system, and in some places even by authoritarian forces.

Social change - Today's global economic system has not delivered social justice. Increasingly we face inequality, poverty, migration, rising unemployment and the alienation of the younger generation.

Green change - Change of the model of development, to protect our environment, traditions, cultures and people.

Here, he continued, we witness how the market, driven by the forces of capital, cannot take into account the public and common good or the common wealth of humanity of our planet. The market failure has created an environmental apartheid between those who have access to water, to oxygen and clean environment and those that have become the dumping ground for our waste. Green development for us, he said, is linked both to democracy and social justice and, unlike the conservatives who consider that people must serve the market, we recognise that the market must serve people.

It is in our core values, he stressed, to put human beings at the centre of our politics. This will today be the force of change that allows us to deal with some of the most complex and difficult problems humankind has ever faced.

In a global society where we are all interdependent, he underlined, we need global democratic governance, social justice and a partnership of respect between humanity and our environment. In this global society, he continued, there is and an immediate link between local, regional and international issues forming a common agenda. And the Socialist International is so important and relevant today, because our agenda for national, regional and local politics is the same as for global politics.

We share the consequences of the crisis and our movement, he stressed, must have a strong voice so that we also can share the solutions and the recovery of the crisis, guaranteeing that we do not have new crises looming in the future.

Faced with the upcoming UN climate conference in Copenhagen, he continued, an immediate action is needed to establish a framework of policies for the coming years and the following generations. The issues pending are too important to be allowed to fail.

However, he pointed out, different countries and regions have their own concerns and interests to be considered and we have to be very sensitive to all these concerns. Developing countries are much more vulnerable to the impact of climate change and there is a need for cooperation in order to support developing countries and emerging economies, to face the consequences of climate change. Developed countries must effectively help, providing sound financial and technological support.

We need, he continued, to talk about measures at national and transnational level as for example a redistributive global carbon tax, the adoption of green bonds to finance environmental protection and a transformation into a low-carbon economy. We also need to look at new forms of revenue, such as the Tobin tax, the transaction tax, which will help us to free resources both for the green economy but also for aid to the more poverty-stricken parts of the world.

He commended the detailed report, produced by the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society and presented at the UN a few weeks earlier, which unfolds the path from a high-carbon economy to a low-carbon society.

Socialist and Labour parties, he stressed, must be at the forefront of this debate. The issue of new models of development is ours and not only an issue only for the green movement.

This green movement has provided much help in ideas and impetus, but now it is our time to incorporate these ideas into our thinking, so that they link with the issues of democracy, social justice and a new model of equitable development he said.

The financial crisis, the food crisis, the energy crisis, the environmental crisis, he continued, are all factors that threaten global stability and become major factors for new global conflicts. Most developing countries, he pointed out, were hit by a succession of crises that have undermined their already deteriorating national economies and now threaten to completely derail the path paved by the UN Millennium Development Goals.

The International Labour Organisation, the ILO, he said, warns that world unemployment in 2009 could increase with 18 to 30 million people, in comparison to 2007 and the worst-case scenario is that 200 million workers could end in extreme poverty. Women and young people will suffer mostly

from this situation, we will have more and more economic refugees and increased exploitation and inequality will be the consequence.

The IMF, he said, predicts that growth in developing countries will slow down sharply and the World Bank estimates that only a one per cent drop in growth could push another 20 million people into poverty. To face the consequences of the financial crisis in the developing world, major global actors must honour their aid commitments and improve aid effectiveness.

All these factors, he continued, that threaten world stability and security make it even more urgent to coordinate our efforts for international disarmament, for peace, for non-proliferation. Next May the review conference on the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will take place in New York. We need to see a successful conclusion and there are some positive signs that this could be achieved.

In the coming months, he said, the Socialist International will step up its efforts to contribute to the process of achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world. Global security and stability is a prerequisite for promoting our other goals, because conflicts are always used as a pretext for authoritarian governance and social inequality.

The election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, he observed, generated certainly new possibilities for constructive global cooperation. This was his stated purpose and the first year of the Obama administration showed important and positive signs.

However, he emphasized, the greatest challenges are still ahead of us and we need to bring together all the major actors of this increasingly interdependent global economic order, to achieve consensus and make progress in resolving issues pending and we must provide a voice for the small and medium-sized countries.

To promote a just society with equality of opportunities, we need democratic and open societies. And democracy is a main theme of our agenda. We have the responsibility to show solidarity with all who suffer from repressive regimes, and where democracy is consolidated we must engage in ongoing efforts to improve the quality of our democratic institutions.

For us, he continued, democracy is not simply elections. Democracy means that our parties represent the people and not the few, that we represent the liberation of the oppressed, that if one individual is suffering injustice we all suffer with him or her, that we find solutions through dialogue, not through violence, that we empower everyone to participate, that we want to see women, youth, migrants strongly involved in our parties. Our democratic tradition means that we have an aversion to and condemnation of dogmatism, fundamentalism and authoritarianism. The core of our values is that we seek the human being in all of us.

But, he pointed out, we also need to find innovative practices that can help us open up our parties to more democracy, for example like the primaries that the PRD here and also our party in Greece organised to elect its leaders. We also have electronic media such as Internet, which now is being used in Greece to govern the country, putting out the problems to the citizens, asking for their views.

In the Socialist International, he said, parties with very different historical, geographical, cultural and political backgrounds, but with the same values, can share experiences. We can use them as best practices – or bad practices if we want to learn from our mistakes. We can thus become a movement, which can understand the complexities, but also look through these complexities to our core values and our core goals.

Finally, he stressed the importance of the real presence the Socialist International in different parts of the world. So we are proud to be here, in the Dominican Republic, today, he said.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the Council Meeting was adopted

Adoption of the minutes of the previous Council Meeting

The minutes of the previous Council Meeting were adopted

First Session, Morning November 23

Main Theme: "AT A TURNING POINT FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE"

In his introduction to the agenda of the Santo Domingo Council "At a Turning Point for a Sustainable Future" SI Secretary General **Luis Ayala**, underlined that the meeting was taking place at a decisive moment, when the international community, in the coming weeks and months, faced very significant decisions, determining the type of society we were to live in for the coming years.

The first theme that the Council will discuss, he continued, is what we call the *new pact with nature* which should be reflected in the commitments made by the international community at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

The Socialist International Commission for a Sustainable World Society, he said, has after two years of intensive work, expressed in its report the consensus of Democratic Socialism about sustainable development as the only possible alternative. The work of the Commission reflects both the positions of developed and developing countries and presents scientifically-based, politically responsible solutions. The deliberations at this Santo Domingo Council have as an objective, to ensure that the Social Democratic positions are more clearly heard at the Copenhagen Conference.

As a second theme, he continued, the Council will examine the current international financial situation and the consequences of the economic downturn affecting the planet since 2008, and to present progressive alternatives on how to counter inequality, generate employment and reduce poverty.

Soon after the beginning of the crisis, he pointed out, the Socialist International established a special Commission on Global Financial Issues under the chairmanship of the Nobel Economy Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, in order to formulate recommendations to build a new international financial architecture with citizens at its centre. The Commission meeting at Columbia University last September has among other things stressed the importance of not prematurely declaring the crisis to be over, and to keep up the reactivating measures by the State. As Social Democrats, he added, we pay more attention to the slow recovery of employment than to figures from the Stock Exchange.

In the financial crisis, he underlined, we sustain that it is time for politics and the activities of the State to return to being the source of security for people. Together with losing their money, many people have lost their faith in the banking institutions. We Social Democrats did not cause this crisis, but we want to be in the front line of the work for the recovery of decent living conditions for all.

To work for a world free from nuclear weapons and for arms control, he continued, is a concern of the Socialist International that goes far back. During the Cold War the SI was the International of Peace, and the legacy of Willy Brandt will always be part of our organisation's identity. This is why we observe with expectation the new orientation regarding nuclear proliferation of President Obama. This has returned viability and dynamics to the task of disarmament. We are also hopeful that the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference could become a significant advancement. We follow with satisfaction the Obama-Medvedev negotiations on a reduction of the nuclear arsenals and we welcome the adoption of the Security Council Resolution 1887 (2009).

The quest for solutions to conflicts and for peace, he underlined, are always part of our meetings. This time we will, among others, listen to voices from the Middle East – a region where we always were committed to contributing to the advancement of peace and security.

Our last theme on the agenda - securing democracy and reaffirming people's rights - he continued, is a continuation of our constant reflection and commitment to democracy. From Honduras to Burma, Belarus to Guinea, the SI reiterates its constant support for the development and consolidation of democracy and continues to react and denounce political abuse and violations of fundamental rights.

Today, he said, in a globalised world, democratic standards have adapted to new realities and become more present due to the efforts of political forces such as ours. We are in favour of a decentralised democracy and a balance between authorities at different levels. We are aware of new forms of participation offered by new technologies to confront the great challenges of our time. We also sustain the need for more global democracy in international institutions.

For the Socialist International, he added, the meaning of democracy is unchanged: to work together to create better conditions of life for the people and to make it the central protagonist in a project that provides more freedom, social justice and security for all.

Environment, economy, peace and democracy, the four themes we are discussing, are crucial challenges in which one can see the double dimensions of continuity and actuality in our debates. We have qualified the present global situation as a decisive moment for a sustainable future and when we Social Democrats take up the challenge to deal with the problems of today, we also do this in spirit of solidarity, he concluded.

FOR A NEW DEAL WITH NATURE AND A NEW TREATY IN COPENHAGEN

Beatriz Paredes, Mexico, PRI, SI Vice-President, greeted the host party PRD and congratulated George Papandreou and PASOK on the electoral victory in Greece.

In continuation, she recommended the careful reading of the report produced by the Socialist International Commission for a Sustainable World Society, which, she said, well reflects the extensive work and conclusions of the Commission.

In the first meeting of the Commission in 2007, she recalled, the British Labour Leader Gordon Brown had said that the Earth needed the attention of all its inhabitants and that it was time for decisive action that makes a difference, as global warming is an undisputable fact as well as the substantial negative effects of human activity on the atmosphere. With this as a reference, efforts that now culminate at the Copenhagen meeting were initiated by the UN. The focus of the discussion has been the demands upon the governments to diminish their carbon emissions and the reluctance, particularly from the more developed countries, to assume their responsibility.

Based upon our Commission's Report, she pointed out, we as members of the Socialist International have three main lines of action: Those of us who are in government must make an effort so that Copenhagen does not end up in frustration; the parliamentary parties must follow up on how their governments act in Copenhagen; but above all, we must turn climate change into an issue of all citizens. It is obvious that added to what the governments can do we must all change our attitude and relation to nature.

For the Caribbean region and Central America, she continued, the problem with climate change is crucial. We have seen how the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and cyclones has increased and how the seasons have changed. A number of islands and other countries in the region suffer immensely from natural disasters which are caused by climate change.

In the Kyoto Protocol, she pointed out, reforestation did not figure. However, particularly for developing countries in the tropic region, it is very important that reforestation is taken up as a priority and a strategic measure against climate change. Politics of reforestation should also be rewarded with a carbon bonus.

Finally, she stressed that the problem of climate change is closely related to a revision of policies in relation to industry, urbanisation, water and energy production. But, as the SI Commission Report underlines, we will also have to basically reconsider the philosophy regarding the human presence on our planet and we need a new pact with nature, which goes much further than the decisions to be taken in Copenhagen, she ended.

Martín Torrijos, Panama, PRD, SI Vice-President, underlined that the Council meeting is a demonstration of the concern of the Socialist International to be in the forefront regarding the relevant issues of the world. Issues such as climate change, the international financial crisis and its global effects, the rising poverty, employment, a world free of nuclear weapons, to overcome inequality, achieve economic growth and secure democracy do not merely invite our parties to discussion but to action to find new solutions and establish a new order.

Climate change, he continued, did not happen by chance but is the result of the fallibility of man, the lack of respect for nature, and the absence of institutions that could have avoided us being in the present situation.

Independently from the origins of climate change, he said, the problem is global, and developed and developing countries share the responsibility to mitigate its effects. For the Socialist International family it also offers an opportunity to consider what kind of future we want for the planet. We will have to understand that the present problems are inter-related and that we need new mechanisms and global transparent institutions.

Quoting the UN Secretary-General, he underlined the importance of the activities of the civil society and the corresponding adequate education of the citizens.

The economic crisis, he continued, has demonstrated the vulnerability and incapacity of national and international institutions to rise to the problems we face. We must create a minimum system of basic social protection that is permanent and not dependent on whether or not there is a crisis.

He congratulated the Socialist International Commission for a Sustainable World Society on its excellent report, which clearly underlines the seriousness of the situation and the need for prompt action and concrete goals. The report indicates how we can control the Greenhouse Effect and the differentiated responsibility of developed and developing countries. It reflects upon alternative energy sources and how we can move towards a low carbon society. It also shows how the market

has been incapable of controlling the problems with emissions and global warming. It further takes up issues such as deforestation. The document shows how the Socialist International is at the forefront of this crucial topic.

Luis Salvador, Spain, PSOE, underlined the fact that both the economic crisis and climate change require urgent action. In Copenhagen we will need to establish a commitment that goes further than in Kyoto and effectively incorporates USA and China. Another important issue to be included is to stop the deforestation of the planet.

We also need, he continued, to protect the more vulnerable societies in the world and establish a model for sustainable development based upon a green economy.

This development model, he pointed out, must be based on science and for this Spain has, together with other countries, taken the initiative for a common Euro-American research space. It is here especially crucial to work with the establishment of new forms of alternative energy production.

As Social Democrats, he underlined, we must continue to show North-South solidarity and more than ever uphold the fight against poverty. It is thus important that the resources offered for the fight against climate change are additional and not detracted from the other resources destined to development.

In order to reduce emissions, he informed, in Spain we will continue to use nuclear energy and for the transport strongly invest in the technology for electrical cars. We also believe in a general reduction of our energy dependency.

The Socialists of Spain believe, he said, that a better world is possible and we believe in the Socialist International as a forum to work in that direction.

The world economic crisis, he underlined, has demonstrated the failure of the recipes of the Right and it is our responsibility to build a green society. And we must all work hard together to achieve these objectives.

Spyros Kouvelis, Greece, PASOK, congratulated and thanked the SI Presidium and Secretariat for the specific symbolism of the fact that global warming is the first item on the agenda of a Council held in part of the world which could be called the inside engine room of the global climate.

He underlined that we are at a critical stage for the world, not only in an abstract sense, but at a time when it has been proven that the side effects of climate change, like droughts, floods and storms, affect everyone's life very heavily through. A particular human problem is the climate refugees, which added to hunger-, geopolitical- and other refugees add up to hundreds of millions of people.

We Socialists, he continued, are the only ones who are able to present a different proposal to tackle the problems with climate change and all the related global challenges as the food crisis, energy crisis, poverty and migration.

The results, he said, presented here by the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society are unique. While conservative governments reduce the issue of climate change to who will have to pay, we talk about more commitment, basic values and the human potential to tackle the problems. We talk about the management of natural resources and new technology and the transfer of this to those who cannot afford it, and about education for people to be able to become a part of the solution. It is also crucial how we as Socialists look upon development aid.

An important result of George Papandreou becoming the Prime Minister of Greece, he continued, is that we can make green development one of the pillars of the government programme.

Finally, he stressed, it is the day after Copenhagen that is the most important day, because that is when we as Socialists must start to mobilise the social forces for the new paradigm of green development. We Socialists must stand at the centre of the efforts that begin after Copenhagen and we are the ones who can change the way this world is going.

Adrián Peppino, Argentina, PS, referred to the report of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society, underlining that even though the concept of a sustainable development has a relevance in Argentina, not much will happen if one leaves this to the market forces that continue with practices and modes of production that are totally contrary to sustainability.

In Argentina he continued, with its great original bio-diversity the consequences of global warming are noted in many ways in daily life. The situation is aggravated through monocultures and deforestation, which has led to 90% of the country experiencing a serious drought.

The issue of the environment, he said, has thus turned into an economic and social necessity, where we must involve all progressive forces in society.

Everywhere, he ended, where we socialists have a political responsibility, the issue of the environment is also considered in all political and society activities.

Alf Eriksson, Sweden, SAP, expressed the hope that future generations will be able to look upon Copenhagen as a turning point in climate policy and the agreements made as tools that prevented the globe to fall victim to the disaster of climate change.

He underlined the need for a decisive political leadership that also is able to take uncomfortable decisions.

The report of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society, he said, is an excellent example for how one can convert knowledge into political activity, highlighting the key issues necessary for success. It stresses the importance of equality and justice, because without a fair world it would be extremely difficult to make the needed commitments. It highlights the importance of sharing competence and the fact that development and the struggle against climate change go hand in hand, both saving the environment and creating a fairer world.

The Social Democrats of Sweden, he continued, want our country to focus upon three different issues during the Copenhagen meeting: 1. The introduction of an international tax on emissions from aviation and shipping, where the revenues could contribute to finance the environmental commitments of developing countries. 2. A global emission trading system for energy intensive industries. 3. The creation of a climate fund financed by the rich countries also with emission revenues from aviation and shipping to be used to finance sustainable development in poorer countries.

We cannot know, he said, what comes out of Copenhagen, but we can be sure that the last country that will take the necessary steps towards environmental conversion will lose financially as they will not be able to sell their new technology to anyone else.

It is time for action. No one wants to see this wonderful Caribbean destroyed because of our inability to sign agreements, he concluded.

Manuel Laguarda, Uruguay, PSU, SI Vice-President, informed that after the first round of elections in Uruguay where the Left gained the absolute majority in parliament and with the small margin of 1,5% failed to win the presidential elections in the first round, the second round was due in 6 days. He also expressed the conviction that the candidate of the Frente Amplio would win. He asked for a declaration of support from the Council.

He explained the fact of his presence at the Council, in spite of the pending elections, was due to the conviction that Socialists should both act on national and international levels and with the urgency of the issues of climate change and economic world crisis, both caused by predatory capitalism.

He expressed his support, both for the report of the SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society, and for the draft declaration: *For a new deal with nature and a new treaty in Copenhagen*. He particularly referred to the central aspects in this draft resolution that mentioned an absolute reduction of the emissions on behalf of the developed countries and a just and socially equitable transition to a sustainable society.

In summary, he said, we give priority to democracy over the market and to politics over the economy and strive for a free and equal future. Democracy, he continued, is another central issue. He condemned all assaults against democracy as in the case of Honduras.

Finally, he expressed his satisfaction over the increasingly decisive action of the Socialist International. He reiterated the importance of seeking direct dialogue with the new US President.

OVERCOMING INEQUALITY, CREATING JOBS AND DEFEATING POVERTY IN THE WORLD ECONOMY

Alfred Gusenbauer, Austria, SPÖ and SI Vice-President, the first introductory speaker, referred to the common work in the SI Committee on Global Financial Issues under Josef Stiglitz and underlined that from the start Socialists, in difference to others, had a holistic understanding of the economic and financial crisis as part of a multi-layered crisis including the climate crisis, the food crisis and the social crisis.

A second difference, he pointed out, between Socialists and Conservatives is that the latter think that all other crisis layers disappeared due to the financial and economic crisis. A third difference is that Conservatives suggest that sooner or later the crisis will be over and we go back to pre-crisis neo-liberal policies. Here we Socialists say that if we do this, the time-span to the next crisis will be shorter and that this next crisis will be much more serious than the present one.

Many say, he continued, that the crisis now is over, but our research shows the apparent recovery of the stock markets to be a mere asset bubble. This is not backed up by developments in the real economy, and in many parts of the world there is still an ongoing recession with a negative growth and unprecedented unemployment. And even if there is a return to growth in 2010 this will be unevenly distributed over the world, and very modest both in the US and in Europe. This will mean a continuing rise in unemployment and the expected growth in 2011 will not be enough to reduce the unemployment. As long as unemployment is rising, one cannot talk about an end to the crisis.

Many countries, he underlined, have, through pumping in money into the financial institutions, reached such debt levels that they could not do this again. And if there is no recovery in the real economy, there is an imminent risk of a second bank crisis when people and SMEs cannot pay their loans.

In order to really solve the crisis, he continued, the SI Commission also talked about an international package deal involving different layers. There is particularly a need to address and put right the existing imbalances in the world, for example between those with trade surplus and those with trade deficits and the enormous discrepancies in wealth distribution within the societies and between the poorer and the richer nations. There is also an imbalance between the market and the institutions that should regulate the market, in the distribution of power between capital and the labour force in the economy, and between the individual and the market.

Social justice, he underlined, is not only an idealistic target for Socialists and Social democrats, but an economic necessity. Without a fairer distribution of wealth within and between societies all over the world, there is no chance to create the demand that the world economy needs to gain the pace required to overcome the crisis. The needed additional demand can only come through a more just distribution of our common resources.

We must also, he continued, consider patterns of sustainable development, where the future demand should come from stronger dedication of resources to health care, education, care for elderly, research and development - More resources must go to the caring part of the economy and quality of life and into those sectors that are most important for innovation.

The sustainable answer to the present crisis, he stressed, which combines job creation, increased equality and sustainability is also challenging the economic models in most parts of the world. Our task as Socialists and Social Democrats is not to limit ourselves to debates about regulations and technicalities of the financial market. We have to start the debate about a new paradigm, how the new model of development can be more equitable, sustainable and give more chances to people all around the world.

Never miss a good crisis that you can use in favour of mankind, he ended.

The second introductory speaker, **Portia Simpson**, Jamaica, PNP, underlined that the Council was meeting at a time when a crisis had rocked the world economy and particularly the fate of the poorest and most deprived have shown the relevance of the values that bind our parties together. The chosen theme is also very relevant for all of us.

For a period our movement has been on the defensive, when the ideologues of the Right proclaimed the dominance of the market. These beliefs also dominated the international financial institutions on which most of the developing world depends. The mantra was the minimalist State. Recent developments, however, have clearly demonstrated that in times of crisis this doctrine is not valid as in such a situation it is only the state that can respond to the vulnerable and defenceless.

I have chosen, she continued, four priority areas: Increasing employment, improving housing conditions, expanding educational and training opportunities and increasing health services.

Regarding employment, she said, it is not sustainable for anyone to support employment projects that have no productive outcome and we recognise that the private sector has a critical role in expanding employment opportunities. Especially in times of crisis it is important that the State invest in basic infrastructure. Encourage employment-generating initiatives such as assistance to small-scale enterprises through access to credits, training and market intelligence, the expansion of agriculture and the agro-industry for job creation as well as for food security, the role of information technology and the enormous potential in sport, music and culture.

Regarding housing, she continued, a characteristic for most low-income households and regions are subhuman housing conditions. This also has a negative impact on development efforts. Housing projects can take many forms, for example to provide legal entitlement to the plot where their housing unit is located.

Regarding education, she underlined, while short-term State activities can provide employment and thus reduce poverty, it must be recognised that the only long-term solution to poverty is the systematic improvement in the level of education and training of the total population. But it is not enough to provide the institutions - One must also support the children of the poor to attend and fulfil their education potential.

Regarding adequate health care for all, she continued, the present debate in the US shows that a country's wealth is not a sufficient guarantee. Poor, developing countries must however build cost-effective service provisions for a primary health service system for the entire population.

Comparing arms expenditure with development assistance, it is clear that the commitment to improve the situation of the poor is wanting. A fraction of the arms expenditure can make a fundamental impact upon the quality of life for the poor worldwide.

I am convinced, she stressed, that the world must invest in peace as a means to end the cycles of poverty. Last year military expenditure was 1.3 trillion dollars and only 40 billion dollars could provide universal access to water and sanitation, basic education and basic health and nutrition for all developing countries. If this represents less than 0.03% of the military expenditure - then imagine what 1% could do. Peace thus not only saves lives, but facilitates quality development.

We in the Socialist International, she underlined, must engineer a new kind of economy and a new social order that allows us to balance peoples' lives when we balance the books. My party stands ready to work with the Socialist International to invent a new order.

The present world economy, she continued, has proven that the invisible hand that regulates the market only caresses a minority and shuns the overwhelming majority of the people of the world. And it is clear that this present world order has not created prosperity for the world's inhabitants. The Socialist International has always stood in the forefront in the struggle for peace and an equal society and it remains an indispensable organisation. The poor of the world call on us today for action - and delay is not an option.

President **Papandreou** thanked the keynote speakers for their clear message about how we have to deal with the economic crisis. After the crisis we cannot go back to business as usual, he said, but must change the world economic order to create an economy that provides at least a minimum living standard, basic quality of life, human dignity, employment, health, housing, education and a true redistribution of wealth. This is not only a question of social justice, but also of innovation and cooperation to create a new economic order around green development placing people and society in the forefront.

The first session was declared closed. The Council would resume at 15.00 hrs.

Second Session, Afternoon November 23

Election of new Vice-Presidents:

Responding to proposals by the PRD, Dominican Republic, and the SPD, Germany, both of which had undergone leadership changes, the Council elected *Miguel Vargas Maldonado* and *Sigmar Gabriel*, respectively, as new Vice-Presidents of the International, in place of Ramón Alburquerque and Franz Muntefering.

OVERCOMING INEQUALITY, CREATING JOBS AND DEFEATING POVERTY IN THE WORLD ECONOMY – Continued.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Mexico, PRD, and Honorary President of the SI, commented that the American continent is one of the regions in the world with most inequality and where lately there had been a strong negative growth in a number of countries: for example in Argentina 2.8%, Brazil 1.3%, Ecuador 2%, Mexico 8%, but also in Canada with 2% and USA with 2.8% negative growth. There is also a strong concentration of income to very small groups, he said. Comparing the 10% of the population with highest income with the 10% with lowest income you find that in Paraguay this is 87 times higher, Brazil 68, Mexico 32, Dominican Republic 18 and in USA 16.9 times higher. The countries where the situation is better is Uruguay with 15.6 and Ecuador 15.3 times. In the Caribbean we have countries as Trinidad with 14.2, Guyana with 13.3 and Jamaica with 11.2. Comparing the 1% of those who have most with the 1% that has least, in Mexico the relation would be 131 times. And looking at those with less than a dollar income per day we have 24% in Honduras, Venezuela 23%, El Salvador 21%, Ecuador 20.2%. Among those where the situation is better there is Jamaica and Dominican Republic with 3.2% and Chile and Uruguay with 2% with less than a dollar income per day.

The various existing regional conflicts of the continent, he continued, are also closely related to existing inequalities. It is absolutely inadmissible to have governments resulting from coups d'état, as for example in Honduras, that de facto government and the upcoming elections must not be recognised by the Socialist International.

Another problem of the continent, he underlined, is the extensive migration from various countries to the USA, and it is necessary that the US government recognises the economic, social and cultural contribution of immigrants and also opens up a dialogue with their countries of origin in order to address the reasons for the migration.

In relation to the SI Commission on Global Financial Issues, he underlined the specific recommendation to the G20 on concrete reforms of the international financial system and different funds and control instruments and institutions, as for example the establishment of an Economic Council within the framework of the UN.

He also spoke of the proposed movement on the American continent from free trade agreements to a continental plan for sustainable development that goes further than the economy and includes issues of inequality and environment. This plan should also include instruments in line with the European Union, for instance an investment fund to reactivate the economies.

Other necessary measures for the continent, he continued, are to elevate the levels of education, especially for the indigenous population, to strengthen health and social security systems, establish educational development and other support for SMEs. Corresponding programmes should also be established at national level, including those for employment generation both in the private and the public sectors.

Concluding, he appealed to the parties of the Socialist International to support these suggested measures at international level as well as in the policies of their respective countries.

SI Vice-President **Victor Benoit**, Haiti, Fusion SD, suggested that in Copenhagen, the Socialist International present a united strategy with those countries most affected by climate change, particularly in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

For the time after Copenhagen, he proposed that the Socialist International should work for the establishment of a multilateral control commission to follow up the agreements made.

The economic crisis that hit the world, he continued, was the result of neo-liberal politics and it is that political vision that we must fight. We must establish another economic model based upon our socialist and social democratic values of social justice, he said. We must struggle against the politics that put money before human beings. The economy must be regulated by a socially responsible State.

We must, he said, mobilise the youth, women and others for our values and the Socialist International must here form its own activists to counter the reactionary forces, organising seminars or other activities on topical issues.

In Haiti, he continued, the general situation is not good. The environment has heavily deteriorated and the country has been hit by number of cyclones. Politically, there have been advances since 2006, but since 2009 Haitian social democracy has suffered from the increasingly anti-democratic policies of the authorities. One can even say that the democratic system based upon political parties is under threat by the activities of the President and members of the military.

Worried about the planned elections in 2010, he asked the Socialist International to remain vigilant in regard to the situation in Haiti and to be present with international observers for those elections.

Christoph Zoepel, Germany, SPD, Chair of the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources, congratulated George Papandreou on his electoral victory.

In Western and Central Europe, he said, sometimes social democrats seem to be of the opinion that losing elections is a kind of natural law. The electoral victory in Greece, as well as those in Norway and Portugal refutes this. Maybe to lose elections is the responsibility of the parties that are losing.

He thanked Alfred Gusenbauer for the new idea about a coordinated global demand policy, underlining that it might not be easy to implement. But, he stressed, to coordinate the global demand in favour of consumption by the poorer, the global common good, the development of new technologies and a better use of energy, is a splendid idea that should be developed by the SI into a concrete strategy.

He thanked Portia Simpson for raising the topic of disparity between the incredible military expenditure of 1.7 trillion dollars and the expenditure for development assistance. Social Democrats in Europe are somewhat reluctant to discuss the fact that 60% of this expenditure is made by NATO. The present discussion between the new US President and the European NATO states is about how to increase this expenditure. My question, he said, is for what?

I am absolutely convinced, he declared, that if we could shift 10% of this military budget to development assistance then the world would not only be better but safer.

At the Council meeting in Budva, he said, the SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources had announced that it would draft a resolution on sustainable development for every Council, and, he informed, this had also been done for this meeting in Santo Domingo.

At present, he continued, there is reason to give attention to a global fiscal strategy for 2010 and a coordinated global policy. The fact that many States have assumed large debts for bank guarantees in order to avoid a deepening of the crisis has contributed to their growing deficits. But it is important that when governments respond to these deficits with cutbacks, services for the poor and basic investment in social infrastructure and new technology are maintained.

Regarding labour, he continued, it is not enough to say that we need more jobs. We must give attention to the income differences and to the situation with informal labour – it is unacceptable that 80% of the working people of the world work without any security system. The Committee he chaired had been working on an information paper on this issue, which was available to the Council.

He mentioned the lack of progress in the so-called DOHA Round. But it is not enough to fight for free trade, he said, we must fight for fair trade.

We should also be aware, he added, of the growing connection between financial speculation and speculation on the commodity market. Instruments to control this had thus far not been included in the rules for a viable economic order. We must here repeat our demand for state funds to secure long-term revenue for commodities, and a world fund for commodities should be considered. The purchase of land in developing states by more developed states is another cause for concern.

We should, he continued, take into account the social dimension of sustainable development and the fact that without strong efforts in the field of education, no development is possible. We had a G8 and now we have a G20, but it still leaves out a third of the world population. We must find a way for representatives of all people in the world to contribute to shaping the political order in a globalised world society, he concluded.

Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Spain, PSOE, in reference to the fact that the Santo Domingo Council was taking place 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, said that some Euro-centrists had called this the end of the 20th Century and others the end of seven decades of war. But for us Socialists, as Willy Brandt had said, this meant the end of a bi-polar world.

There were those, he continued, who then sustained that it was the market that should be the solution to everything and offer growth and opportunity to all citizens. In the present crisis this has been shown not to be true. The most sophisticated investment banks on Wall Street have disappeared.

We cannot, he underlined, return to the pre-crisis society. We know that globalisation should not be the unsustainable globalisation of the market, so we must consider what is the new social pact we need for a global society.

Spain assumes the Presidency of the European Union for the next six months, he continued, and the Spanish Socialists consider that we, at this moment, have three interconnected great tasks: recover from the crisis; reform the financial system, and correct the global imbalances.

The crisis, he underlined, is in no way over and for the recovery it is necessary to keep up measures to stimulate the economy and create growth.

But, he said, it is also necessary to restructure the financial systems. One of the central objectives for the six months of Spanish European presidency is to establish new European financial control authorities.

The third task is to correct global imbalances, he continued. The countries that are deep in debt cannot be the motors for development so we must establish a new cooperative international order. This is why Prime Minister Zapatero introduced the concept of an alliance of civilisations.

To really put an end to the inequalities, he stressed, there must be a social approach, which means that in a moment of crisis you cannot abandon the most vulnerable. It also means that we need a fiscal reform that distributes the load fairly between citizens. To invest in public services and social security systems it is not only an issue of justice, but also of efficiency. Europe has important responsibilities, he continued, and we must continue to invest in development aid.

If we want a sustainable world we need an economy that is respectful of limited natural resources and is based upon the unlimited human and cultural resources. We are the key resource for a sustainable future, he concluded.

SI Vice-President **Carlos Vieira da Cunha**, Brazil, PDT congratulated George Papandreou on his electoral victory, highlighting its importance for the whole Socialist International.

During the month of October 2009 Brazil generated 230,956 new jobs in the formal sector, he said, and the projection for the whole year was to create more than a million new jobs in the formal sector. International analysts also predict 5% GIP growth for Brazil for 2010.

The main reasons, he continued, why Brazil has turned into a positive reference given the enormous difficulties in the world is the role of the Brazilian State as a motor for development and its policies of social inclusion. Other reasons are the massive investments in public infrastructure and the application and valorisation of the minimum salaries. The value of minimum salaries has grown by 60% during the Lula presidency.

Millions of formerly marginalised people, he underlined, have turned into consumers and this was an important contribution for the internal market and helped to overcome the crisis.

Another programme, he continued, is "My Home-my life" which means that until the end of 2010 a million new social housing units will be built in order to combat one of the most serious problems of the country.

The oil company Petrobras, he informed, found enormous reserves of petroleum off the Brazilian coast. The Brazilian Parliament voted for the creation of a fund, fed by the income from oil exploration, with the objective to finance projects within the fields of education, culture, technology and the environment.

Another important factor, he underlined, to overcome the crisis has been the growing volume and diversification of Brazilian export to all continents.

He finally invited all comrades of the Socialist International to visit a Brazil with even more social justice and opportunities in the context of the Football World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games of 2016.

Alexander Tomov, Bulgaria, BSD, congratulated PASOK on its electoral victory, which was also a victory for the entire region.

We Socialists and Social democrats, he continued, have in a time of global crisis the responsibility to take the strategic political initiative for global governance. The present crisis is a crisis of the neo-liberal system of unregulated market. Our targets as a movement are to stop casino capitalism, to reach full transparency of the financial institutions and a democratisation in public control of the financial sector.

It also means, he said, a new package of social protection measures. As it stands now, it is the average person that is paying for the financial crisis.

The predictions for 2010, he continued, foresee a certain recovery of the stock markets and a slow but unbalanced growth, which could put the world into new difficulties. This growth does not mean a better life for people, as unemployment is expected to continue to rise considerably.

The next two years, he stressed, we will also face hundreds of thousands of bankruptcies of SMEs. In Bulgaria 42% of the registered companies are in danger – a picture repeated in the whole of Eastern Europe. The answer is, he pointed out, a Social Democratic policy for new jobs and reforms of the labour market.

Regarding inflation, he said, this is probably only postponed and could very well come as a second phase of the crisis.

Finally, he echoed the belief that one should not miss the opportunities presented by the crisis to create a better world.

SI Vice-President **Nouza Chkrouni**, Morocco, USFP, congratulated, as a representative of the Mediterranean region, George Papandreou on his electoral victory and on the prominent role of women in his government.

The present international context, she continued, is marked by a multiple crisis – the financial crisis, the food crisis and other crises – all affecting developing countries in particular.

But also developed countries are hit by an unprecedented low, she underlined, and the situation cannot be solved without an audacious global reform in order to re-establish the functionality of the financial sector.

For us Socialists, she pointed out, the positive role of the public sector is important in the present situation. The social consequences are felt everywhere on the Planet, but especially in the developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia where millions, especially women, are forced into poverty and unemployment.

In this situation of unprecedented crisis, she continued, Social Democracy must mobilise to create a system that preserves social justice without hypothecating the future of coming generations.

The Social Democratic road forwards, she said, is not merely a reform of the capitalist system but a true vision of human relations in the struggle against all forms of exclusion, precarity and inequality.

In all this, she underlined, the situation of women is not a side issue, but a crucial one. There is much in the present situation that also threatens to create regression in the status of women. Socialist International has here a special responsibility to globalise the struggle for gender equality.

She greeted the representatives of Socialist International Women and their continuous struggle for the women of the world. However, she emphasised, the issue of equality is not an issue exclusively for women, but a something that concerns everyone.

We must together, she continued, face the great challenges of climate change and global warming and particularly help developing countries to deal with these threats. As Socialists we also must work for the de-nuclearisation of the world and struggle against nuclear proliferation.

As a part of the quest for peace, she said, the USFP appeals to the Socialist family to work for a positive, final and negotiated solution of the problem with Saharan region.

She finally called for support for the Moroccan initiative for an autonomous status for the Sahara, which was qualified by the UN Security Council as credible and serious.

Petroula Nteledimou, Greece, IUSY, President of ECOSY underlined that erasing inequalities and poverty in the world is a main issue within IUSY. This will also, together with climate change, be the central concern at the upcoming IUSY Congress in Sweden in March 2010.

Inequality is not only something on paper, she stressed, but an existing reality affecting possibilities and chances. The crisis, she said, has not only made the situation worse for poor people, but has also pressed our voters in the middle class, particularly women, towards poverty. We started with a financial and economic crisis and now we are facing a social crisis, and those directly affected will not allow politicians and governments to pretend that they do not know how deep this crisis is.

The only solution we have, she underlined, is a green growth with social justice. This means to create new distance jobs and support quality agriculture especially in developing countries and regions, to make fair trade a rule and priority, to invest in education, to establish financial obligations and taxation of industries and polluters.

But, she said, the cost of restoring the environment and of preventing further catastrophes should be paid by the heavy industries that actually make a profit and of the wealthy that have a choice. We should at the same time provide the poor with the knowledge and the possibility to have the choice of supporting green growth to their own advantage.

Green growth, she concluded, means a sustainable environment, society and economy. And at the end of the day, a really sustainable democracy. Equality also does not mean a mere mathematical division of the financial burden but a fair proportional share of the responsibility.

The President thanked the many speakers on the financial and economic crisis for the analysis and many suggestions and ideas. He underlined the linkage of the financial crisis to the energy, environmental and food crises, and the need for a viable, comprehensive, holistic and just approach.

Pia Locatelli, *President of SIW*, reported on the Council meeting of the Socialist International Women in Santo Domingo on November 20 and 21. She thanked the host party for their generosity. She particularly thanked the party President Miguel Vargas Maldonado and the International Secretary Peggy Cabral as well as the President of the PRD's women organisation, the Federación Dominicana de Mujeres Social Demócratas (FEDOMUSDE), Yanet Camilo.

She underlined that disasters do not discriminate, but that people do, and the existing socio-economic conditions might lead to the most vulnerable groups and particularly women being hit the hardest. An example is the cyclone in Bangladesh some years before, where the death rate among

women was five times higher than men. Another example, she said, is that after an earthquake there is an increase of premature births. Therefore, gender mainstreaming is also needed when dealing with the issues of climate change. The full consequences of the financial crisis, she continued, for example in form of rising unemployment, have not yet been fully shown.

Regarding the issue of the food crisis, she said, the UN was unable to raise the estimated 44 thousand million dollars needed to reduce hunger in the world and has transformed its original objective to end the hunger until 2025 to “as soon as possible”. At the same time, three million million dollars were raised to deal with the bank crisis.

The political leaders are mistaken, she stressed, when they try to treat the problem of hunger as marginal. The poverty of the South affects the entire world in form of instability, increasing migration and environmental disasters. These problems must be solved, not only due to humanity or solidarity, but also out of strategic interests.

The SIW Council, she informed, discussed and adopted a resolution on migration, especially stressing the rights of migrant women to employment, secure housing, medical assistance, psychological assistance and other forms of service. It also calls for a gender sensitising regarding the consequences of migration on behalf of the International Organisation for Migration, IOM.

The SIW Council, she continued, has also expressed its solidarity with the PRD women’s organisation, FEDOMUSDE, and recognition of its long and historic struggle for the rights and democratic participation of the women in the Dominican Republic. In view of this positive role of the PRD it is regrettable that a number of PRD parliamentarians voted in favour of a change of the Dominican constitution that says that “...the right to life is inviolable from the conception...”. In consequence, this rules out all forms of abortions, also on medical grounds, and thus presents a death sentence for many women. This is also a violation of the women’s right to reproductive self-determination and to their rights to health and personal integrity.

We have talked about this issue, she informed, with the party President Miguel Vargas Maldonado, the International Secretary Peggy Cabral and the President of the PRD women’s organisation Yanet Camilo. We have suggested a legislative initiative on behalf of PRD to change this regrettable situation and we also direct the same message to the other SI member parties, especially in Latin America. This is not only a problem of the Dominican Republic. Many of our member parties in Latin America are under strong pressures from conservatives and religious fundamentalists to also accept a total penalisation of abortion.

The SIW, she said, has decided to develop common global strategies to deal with this and other ethically sensitive issues. We must not give up our principles of freedom and self-determination due to electoral considerations.

WORKING FOR A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND FOR ARMS CONTROL

Konstantin Woinoff, Germany, SPD, first of all thanked the SI member parties for holding the first meeting of the SI Committee on Disarmament in Berlin in April 2009. He pointed out that SI always had been at the forefront in the struggle for peace and disarmament. He recalled past contributions of SIDAC under Kalevi Sorsa and of other Socialists and Social Democrats to break out of the Cold War in favour of détente, paving the way for different disarmament and cooperation agreements as SALT and the Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT.

During the last decades, he continued, the space internationally for treating issues of disarmament and arms control had deteriorated dramatically. We had among other things the denouncement of the ABM treaty, the arms race instigated by the Bush administration and the US failure to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty followed by other key states, new nuclear powers, the conflicts around the nuclear programmes of North Korea and Iran, and the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

But, he underlined, President Obama, has created a new momentum for disarmament for the 2010 NPT Review Conference in New York. A new momentum is much needed with the simple objectives that countries with nuclear weapons should disarm, countries without nuclear weapons should not acquire them and all countries should be able to access peaceful nuclear energy.

However, during later years, he continued, nuclear powers had not lived up to the ambition to disarm and more non-nuclear weapon states could consider acquiring nuclear arms if the NPT fails and the threshold of countries for the use of nuclear energy is set increasingly higher.

With this background, he underlined, we must overcome the many obstacles to strengthening the NPT regime and set positive political signals to reverse the negative trends.

Three elements, he pointed out, were crucial for the extension of the NPT agreement in 1995: The promise of substantial disarmament; the assurance from nuclear weapon states to not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states; and the promise to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And the same three elements could also pave the way for a new consensus in 2010.

We welcome, he continued, the positive steps taken towards the 2010 NPT Review Conference, among them the negotiations between Presidents Medvedev and Obama to cut the nuclear arsenals, the intention to replace the START treaty and the cancellation by President Obama of the ABM in Poland and the Czech Republic.

But, he concluded, there is not much time left for us to fulfil our obligations to influence and support a positive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Nikolay Levichev, Russian Federation, A Just Russia Party, underlined that the present crisis had revealed the overall lack of global stability and that today's world order largely ignores the inter-dependence between the different regions.

At the last G20 Summit, he said, a new format of inter-governmental relations was formed that brought new players into the decision-making process, adopting the principle of a multi-polar world. But unfortunately, political rhetoric is far from the reality and while the G20 talked about liberalisation of markets and money-flow, a number of countries took protectionist measures.

In spite of the stabilising measures taken by governments in the present crisis, he pointed out, unemployment has continued to rise. A Social Democratic solution however, must primarily aim at the elimination of inequalities both within countries and between countries and regions.

Socialists in the Russian Federation, he informed, have demanded the introduction of progressive taxation in the country as a means to finance an improved social welfare system and job creation.

When we talk about sustainable development we must also consider political and military factors, he continued, and today the different arms control treaties are either not in force or ineffective. Quite the contrary, we can observe an arms build-up and increasing tensions all over the world. We are

therefore grateful to our Czech colleagues who did not ratify the deployment of the ABM system on their territory.

But, he underlined, the nuclear weapons issue is not so fatal as the approaching ecological disaster that threatens with the extinction of the human race. The ecological situation and climate change also influence the economic and social spheres.

The option of going on as before, he continued, is extremely dangerous, and countries must be prepared to give up their short-term interests and unite in efforts to the benefit of mankind. Social Democracy must here play a role in coordinating the world's decision-making processes.

He expressed the hope for a positive outcome to the upcoming Copenhagen Climate Conference. He specially stressed the importance of the proper management of natural resources and the reduction of energy consumption, and suggested the establishment of a special agency for the environment and climate change under the United Nations.

The predicted GDP growth of Russia in the coming years, he informed, is not less than 40%, but the country is unfortunately still behind Europe in the development of ecologically friendly industry. The major challenge here is the establishment of a public ecological awareness.

Russia however, he underlined, fulfils its international obligations and is committed to the formation of an ecological agenda. We believe that developed countries have a stronger responsibility to counter climate change and it is necessary to give assistance to the countries most vulnerable to it.

For the sake of global security and stability, he continued, mankind must solve its economic and ecological problems in a balanced and fair way. Global priorities should prevail before national interests. Only nature provides us with everything for nothing, he ended.

Xoan Manuel Cornide, Spain, PSOE, underlined that the conservatives use the popular concept of security to introduce policies that lack even more in solidarity. For us, however, security and peace are always related to social justice. In consequence, the primary key to security is to reduce inequality. If we want to achieve a fairer world we must also develop instruments that work in that direction. We must support measures to reactivate and strengthen the United Nations as a forum for dialogue and make the UN more efficient as coordinator of different efforts through its various agencies. We must also strengthen the International Court of Justice.

It is also important, he stressed, to develop the different treaties regarding nuclear weapons. But not less important is to develop efficient instruments to control the arms trade that obviously contributes to generate conflicts.

Additional to insufficient social justice and economic inequality, he underlined, a lack of mutual cultural understanding can be a problem of security. That is why Spain, together with Turkey, took the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, to strengthen mutual confidence and avoid new conflicts.

Heliodoro Quintero, Venezuela, UNT, congratulated Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Leader of the host party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party PRD, on his election as Vice-President of the Socialist International. He also conveyed greetings to everyone from his Party Leader, presently in exile in Lima in Peru.

The global economic crisis, he continued, has given opportunity to generate a new sustainable, social, ecological, equal and liberating development model. The world economy seems, according to figures from OECD, to be recovering but this expected recovery does not appear to result in the

growth of secure and dignified employment, development or the reduction of poverty and inequality that we Social Democrats work for in our respective countries.

During the present crisis, he informed, the number of poor people in Latin America grew to 189 million individuals and there are no real signs that this situation will improve during 2010 and 2011. The public economic stimulating activities must be maintained as long as the recovery of employment does not equal the recovery of the financial markets. The governments must invest in infrastructure, social services, education, technology and access to investment capital.

The poor and developing countries and the emerging economies, he said, suffered most from the economic crisis and it is important that the developed countries do not fall back on protectionism. This would not only hamper the recovery of the world economy but also the struggle against poverty. A new economic order must not only be free but also fair.

Regarding the arms race, he continued, for the sake of future generations we must reduce the destructive capacity. We have a commitment to act against the arms trade and to go from non-proliferation policies to a total nuclear disarmament. In spite of different treaties, the threat of nuclear war still exists.

We also, he stressed, reject the emerging arms race in Latin America where many countries dedicate a substantial part of their budgets to military expense. New forms of authoritarianism and the return of political personalism also threaten weak democratic institutions in many parts of the world. Our party is very concerned about the tensions between Colombia and Venezuela or Peru and Chile.

Social Democrats, he underlined, cannot ignore the new forms of political oppression and political authoritarianism. In a number of countries in Latin America, hidden behind rhetoric of political transformation and social claims, processes of systematic destruction of democratic institutions together with oppression and political persecution, have taken place. We Social Democrats, he said, must reject both the increasing militarism and authoritarianism in Latin America and we must continue to struggle for a more equal and just society free from oppression.

In view of the upcoming Climate Conference in Copenhagen, he ended by stressing the importance of increasing investments in replacing the predominant oil and coal with renewable forms of energy.

The President, ending the deliberations on the theme “Working for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and for Arms Control” underlined that the struggle for peace always was central to the Socialist International and that this difficult and sometimes frustrating struggle was to continue. He also stressed the importance of world peace, and of a solution to the Middle East/Palestinian issue, before giving the floor to the representative of Fatah.

Nabil Shaath, Palestine, Fatah, expressed his pleasure to be in Santo Domingo and Latin America, and welcomed the fact that 23 Latin American countries, including the Dominican Republic, had voted in the UN General Assembly in support of the Goldstone Report about the human rights of the Palestinian people and also for a resolution supporting the national and political rights of the Palestinians.

Latin America, he said, is changing and we are happy to see a more independent and democratic continent that supports freedom, human rights and international cooperation for a better world.

Fatah, he continued, is a democratic, progressive revolutionary movement that has led the Palestinian struggle for freedom and independence and to end the Israeli occupation. But Fatah is

also committed to peace and justice through negotiations, non-violence and peaceful resistance. This struggle, based upon international legality and a two-state solution has been going on for 18 years.

Fatah, he pointed out, chose to build its institutions and government upon Democratic Socialism and is proud to be a member of the Socialist International, enjoying its support in the quest for peace and freedom.

He underlined the importance of the serious inter-related issues of the world economy, environment, peace and democracy taken up by the Council. But, he pointed out, the real risk to the Palestinians and the world is the continuation of the occupation with its political consequences and possible armed conflict. He stressed the negative effect and risks of regional conflicts on the global stability and world peace.

President Obama, he continued, emphasised in his speech in Cairo that the grievances of the Arab and Islamic world against the West and America primarily emanate from the Palestinian tragedy and the way America dealt with it and that a solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will go a long way to create a new climate. Obama also indicated, as immediate remedies, to stop the building of Israeli settlements and through rapid negotiations proceed to establish an independent Palestine. However in face of the Israeli resistance Obama retracted.

In spite of the declaration on a six months moratorium on building settlements by the extreme Right government of Israel, there will be more settlements built during 2009 and 2010 than any time since 2001.

The EU Presidency, he said, has also condemned this policy as violating international law and international resolutions and agreements and as a threat to the viability of a two-state solution. But apart from declarations, the EU did nothing.

It is difficult, he continued, to envisage how a process based upon the Madrid principle of land for peace leading to a two-state solution could succeed while Israel devours the negotiated land by building colonies, destroying 25,000 Palestinian homes in Jerusalem alone since 1967. In 1978 there were 6,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza and today there are 540,000 settlers in the West Bank alone. It is impossible to have negotiations on a territory that is shrinking by the day and to administer a state broken into 41 pieces and with a 700 km long wall of separation snaking through the West Bank. The settlements must stop before proper negotiations are possible.

When President Abbas announced that due to the impasse he would not run again for office, he still declared that peace based on a two-state solution is valid and do-able, and stated 8 points for its success.

We commit ourselves to continue the non-violent struggle to achieve freedom and independence, to create a democratic society and government in Palestine and finally to never lose sight of the need to create peace with the Israeli neighbours. We think this is possible and we need your help, he concluded.

The President underlined the solidarity of the Socialist International with the Palestinians, assuring every possible support. The second session was declared closed. The Council would resume the following day at 10.00 hrs.

Third Session, Morning November 24

Secretary General **Luis Ayala** pointed out that the Council was taking place on the eve of a symbolic date. On the 25th of November 1960 the three sisters Minerva, Patria and María Teresa Miraval were cruelly assassinated by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. Subsequently the international community marked November 25 as a day against violence and on December 17, 1999, the United Nations General Assembly declared November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women ([Resolution 54/134](#)). With us, he continued, we also have the husband of one of the sisters.

Minute of Silence

The President asked the Council to stand for a minute of silence as a statement against violence, particularly against women who often fall victim to dictatorial regimes.

Report of the SI Finance and Administration Committee, SIFAC

Secretary General **Luis Ayala**, in the absence of SIFAC Chair, *Pertti Paasio*, reported on the Committee's meeting which had taken place on the eve of the Council, and on the preparations for the Committee's discussions which had been held with Pertti Paasio two weeks before in Finland.

The report, he continued, would consist of two main parts: first the financial situation and second the budget for the coming year.

The current financial situation is not good, he said. Of the 158 member parties and organisations which had statutory obligations to pay fees, 95 of them were not up to date with their membership fees. This meant that the organisation towards the end of the year had received only two thirds of the expected income foreseen in the budget for 2009. Adding this outstanding sum to that for previous years, gave an amount of close to £ 800 000 in unpaid fees.

The main problem, he pointed out, is not the parties that momentarily could not pay, as this was taken into account when drawing up the respective budgets, reducing those contributions to the minimum fee of £ 1000 per year. The real problem lay with those who consistently paid late. The finances of the International could be in good order if they paid in line with the statutes.

The budget of the International was today at the same level it was 12 years ago, he informed, while the ambitions, commitments and activities of the organisation have constantly and considerably expanded. The capacity to carry out activities also increased with the growing number of member parties prepared to co-finance meetings they host. Taking into account the investment made by the member parties all over the world when hosting Councils and other meetings, the common total is much higher than the budget of the International alone.

He underlined the fact that when he started at the Secretariat in London there were 15 persons working and that presently the SI staff amounts to only 5, of which only 3, including the Secretary General, were available to coordinate and carry out all activities of the International. This situation is not satisfactory, he said, neither for the International nor for its members.

If we wish to maintain the same level of efficiency and respond to the growing demands from member parties, he underlined, we will also need more available resources. There is an immediate need to fill at least four basic vacancies at the Secretariat.

SIFAC, he informed, had taken a unanimous decision to elaborate and make public a list of the member parties that were not up to date with their fees before the next Council. Sanctions were also foreseen for those in breach of the statutes, in the sense that those which had not paid their fees would lose their right to speak and vote. In accordance with the statutes, those which have not paid for three years or more would face suspension or loss of membership status.

He appealed, on behalf of SIFAC and its Chair Pertti Paasio, to the member parties to take these issues seriously.

SIFAC, he continued, had prepared and unanimously adopted a budget for 2010, defining the level of the membership contributions in line with previous years. A division of labour was also agreed between the members of SIFAC to contact those parties identified as having financial problems, in order to find a solution.

The envisaged income for 2010 amounts to GB£ 1,426,000 and the envisaged expenditure is calculated at GB£ 1,355,000. This requires, he pointed out, that certain, comparatively modest, fund raising activities be implemented, allowing for individuals to contribute a minimum of US\$ 100 or GB£ 60 and a maximum of US\$ 5,000 or GB£ 3,000 a year. With these limited amounts no one could be said to have bought a piece of the International and the contributions will be made in a transparent way where the contributors' names and addresses are registered. The idea is to set up a system where contributions can be made through the website of the International, and where people also can use their credit cards.

Concluding his report, he thanked the members of SIFAC and all others for their constructive contributions and underlined that to come to the end of our difficult situation, everyone will need to make an effort to fulfil their statutory obligations and pay their membership fees on time.

The Council approved the report of SIFAC.

Report of the SI Ethics Committee

The Chair of the SI Ethics Committee **Maurice Braud**, France, PS, reported on the Committee meeting on the eve the Council, where no immediate recommendations had been made for change of status or for the admission of new members. The committee had, however, in some cases suggested a mission to the involved country before a decision is taken.

Regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina, he recalled that the SI already had sent a mission two years before. The Ethics Committee now recommended that another mission be sent in order to prepare for possible necessary measures to be taken.

He explained that there were a substantial number of applications for membership of the Socialist International or for change of status, and the Committee therefore would try to hold, if possible, an extra meeting during the spring of 2010.

The Committee, he continued, also recommended the definition of a development strategy for the International, particularly for those regions where the International so far had not many members. The Committee also had a long discussion about future procedures and work methods.

After a report made by the Secretary General of Socialist International Women about the situation of women and women's rights in the world and particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean region,

the Ethics Committee had recommended that the SI Presidium discuss this situation which had in fact happened.

Paulo Jorge, Angola, MPLA, took up the difficult situation of in Western Sahara and asked about the current membership status of the Polisario Front.

Maurice Braud, France, PS, informed that the Polisario Front had received the status of observer party at the Socialist International Congress in Athens.

Iqbal Jhazbay, South Africa, ANC, informed that the African Union had recognised Western Sahara and that there might be reason for the SI to consider a change of status of Polisario Front as a demonstration of solidarity with the country's quest for self-determination.

SI Vice-President **Nouza Chekrouni**, Morocco, USFP, pointed out that the United Nations was fully engaged in a process for a peaceful negotiated solution of the Western Saharan situation, which also involves neighbouring countries. She also said that there did not exist any internationally recognised Western Saharan state. She appealed to the SI not to take any measures that might lead to discord within the International.

Secretary General **Luis Ayala** informed that with the decision of the Athens Congress to grant observer member party status to Polisario Front, the role of the SI on the issue of Western Sahara had changed. As an observer party Polisario Front does not only participate in the SI Council meetings but, in the same way as the USFP of Morocco, in the SI Africa Committee and SI Mediterranean Committee. This means that within the International there now existed a very useful common platform to address this issue. SI also supports the UN initiatives, he informed.

Ann Linde, Sweden, SAP, pointed out that if Polisario Front wished a change of status from observer member to full member it is up to them to make such an application. The Ethics Committee cannot do anything about a status issue without a formal application.

She further informed that the Swedish Social Democratic Party at its Congress two weeks before had adopted the position to fully recognise Western Sahara as a state, thus following the example of South Africa and 80 other countries in the world.

Alexander Tomov, Bulgaria, BSD, pointed to the complicated situation in his country and recommended that the International should discuss the region in depth at a future Committee meeting.

The Council approved the report of the SI Ethics Committee.

SECURING DEMOCRACY AND REAFFIRMING PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Tony Raful, Dominican Republic, PRD, underlined the long tradition of his party in the struggle for democratic rights. PRD, he said, was also the party that took the initiative to create the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean.

It was, he continued, under the leadership of Dr. José Francisco Peña Gomez that the crusade had taken place to establish a unity of American parties representing the ideas of Democratic Socialism during the period of military dictatorships and non-recognition of human rights and freedoms in most countries in the Southern Cone and Central America. Those were years of violent confrontation and resistance with a great need for democratic solidarity.

In the Dominican Republic, he said, the democracy which been established in 1963 after the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship, was interrupted by the American invasion in 1965. The years that followed were to be very difficult for the PRD with great internal contradictions, particularly on issues of democracy, that finally lead to a division of the party when its original leader Juan Bosch left and founded a new party, the PLD.

When the PRD under José Francisco Peña Gomez joined the Socialist International it was an affiliation to a family and network of democratic forces struggling for freedom and social justice. And when attempts were made to hinder the electoral victory of PRD in 1978, stopping the counting of votes by military intervention, a wave of telegrams and other expressions of solidarity with the Dominican people demanded the recognition of this PRD victory. This was so impressive that even the President of the Republic said that he was overwhelmed by the sheer number of telegrams and other expressions of solidarity with the PRD coming from all over the world and especially from the members of the Socialist International. This was a great victory for the PRD and José Francisco Peña Gomez, which also lead to further constitutional reforms.

Since then, he continued, great changes have taken place in the world. The Berlin wall fell but other walls came up in the Middle East. On the border of Mexico the wall of shame tries in vain to stop Mexican workers to leave in the quest for better conditions of life. We also have the crimes against human rights in Guantanamo, the arms race in Latin America and the drama of the people in Haiti.

Never before, he underlined, was the role to be played by the Socialist International in shaping a better world more important. This is perhaps not the best of worlds, but it is the only real one we have and we can improve it with substantial reforms.

The Council, he said, had critically examined the present global crisis and stated that the year 2009 confirmed that neo-liberalism and casino capitalism do not function or respond to the needs of the people. The real alternative is the Social Democratic policies of social justice, social cohesion, social guarantees, green development, investments in education and alternative energy, as formulated in the draft declarations of the Santo Domingo Council. The Socialist International also had stressed the importance of a dialogue and cooperation between cultures in defence of universal human rights.

The PRD, he continued, is presently in a crucial and decisive moment of its political history. The party under the leadership of Miguel Vargas Maldonado is endeavouring to further develop and modernise its policies and criteria based upon the ideas and principles of the Social Democracy and with the viable perspective to win the presidential election in 2012.

Finally, he underlined that José Francisco Peña Gomez would have taken great pleasure from this Council.

Ahmed Ould Daddah, Mauritania, RFD, congratulated George Papandreou and Greece on the electoral victory of PASOK. He also congratulated Luis Ayala on his successful efforts to strengthen the presence of the Socialist International in the international arena. He thanked the host party PRD for their heartfelt welcome.

He underlined democracy as the only possible framework for human dignity and the respect for the human right for freedom, proper nourishment, clothing, shelter, proper education and to employment – all essential values of Social Democracy.

In a democracy, he continued, legitimacy can only come from the people and not from armed groups, individual parties or tyrants. In a democracy there must be freedom to speak and criticise

and freedom of the press, and a division between the legislative, executive and judicial power. The justice must be independent and there must be equal access to public services.

In a democracy, he underlined, there must be free, fair and transparent elections. The question is, however, what role money plays in electoral campaigns. The issue here is whether a poor person can have the same opportunities as those with access to vast fortunes, and the difference between parties with limited resources and those supported by big capital when it comes to carrying out their visions of a future society.

The Socialist International, he said, must take a clear position regarding these problems.

Socialist International member parties, he continued, sometimes forget their socialist values and solidarity when they come to power. We are presently living a number of challenges and we are accountable to our citizens and the world for what do or do not do.

We Social Democrats must at least be able to sustain that we did all what we could, he concluded.

The President thanked Ahmed Ould Daddah for his life-long commitment to democracy, for which he was also jailed. He promised the continued solidarity of the Socialist International in the struggle for democracy in Mauritania.

Henry Ramos, Venezuela, AD, underlined that the themes of the Council take on new meaning when related to actual situations. We have heard about Palestine, he said, and we also have the case of Venezuela.

There is no doubt, he continued, that the only way for us Social Democrats to reach our essential goals is peace and the rejection of all forms of war, militarism and arms race.

In Latin America, 250 million poor and destitute live under terrible conditions, while 50,000 million dollars are spent on arms every year. And his country, Venezuela, is in the forefront of this madness.

The government of Venezuela, he said, is legitimate but takes actions which are outside legitimacy. It is not a dictatorship but is also not a true democracy. President Chávez does not respect the constitution, he said, he surpasses public will as expressed in referenda and has even managed to surpass the legislative assembly, gaining the right to dictate his own penal and civil code. The constitutional division of power has completely disappeared and there are no public recourses to demand a respect for the constitution.

Venezuela, he continued, was since its liberation in 1823 always a peaceful country. It was a country that received a great number of refugees and a country without racist persecutions. The present government constantly transmits racist, anti-Semitic and anti-religious statements. President Chávez also openly uses the petroleum as an instrument of pressure.

During the Chávez government, Venezuela has had problems of varying intensity with USA, Colombia, Peru, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Argentina, Uruguay, the Organisation of American States-OAS, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights – IACHR, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Vatican, Spain, Germany, United Nations and others. And on the other hand Venezuela maintains privileged relations with Iran, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Belarus, Libya, Botswana, and with some dictatorships in Africa and with Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia who receive petroleum from Venezuela. From Russia Venezuela receives sophisticated arms.

The most serious however, is that the Venezuelan government takes actions that could lead to an armed confrontation with neighbouring Colombia which has denounced the risks presented by Venezuelan military mobilisation at its border.

In Venezuela, he informed, there are also political prisoners, among them Social Democrats and journalists. At present, 16 students are on hunger strike demanding the acceptance of a mission from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights – IACHR.

We Venezuelans do not want any war and under any circumstances with our Colombian brothers. What has so far impeded this war is the complete rejection by the Venezuelan people. We reiterate our appeal to the Socialist International to give a special attention to the case of Venezuela, which has turned into a problem for the entire Latin American continent, he concluded.

Rubén Berríos, Puerto Rico, PIP, recalled how José Francisco Peña Gómez since 1975 had contributed to making the case for the last colony in the world, Puerto Rico, an issue for all Latin America.

He also expressed the hope for support from all members of the Socialist International for the envisaged recommendation by the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization that the case of the colony of Puerto Rico is to be taken up by the General Assembly.

In regard to events in Honduras, he stressed, there was an urgent need to take appropriate measures so that something of that nature does not happen again. No democratic government in Latin America can feel safe until the issue of Honduras is resolved. Here the International must send a clear message against all putschist behaviour.

Both colonialism and coups d'état must be clearly rejected, as being the direct negation of democracy, he concluded.

Maria Xosé Porteiro, Spain, PSOE, pointed out that more democracy means more and improved citizenship at a global level and we must see how we can advance forms of democracy that are complementary to formal democracy, with the objective of further general welfare and dignity for all individuals. In the new global framework we also need global democracy and participation.

All this, she continued, is a reconfirmation of our commitment to the progress of human, social and civil rights. We need to take measures for more transparency, against corruption and for a freely organised civil society based upon dialogue, respect for dissent and the quest for consensus and social cohesion and the permanent defence of civil liberties. We also need to secure basic social services such as education, housing, health and greater attention to the more vulnerable and needy. In this democracy, she underlined, citizens must assume their shared responsibility and themselves adhere to the values they demand of governments and leaders.

The countries with a consolidated democracy must help others with more fragile societies on their way to democracy. Development assistance is a useful instrument and Spain, in spite of the crisis, allocated 0.51% of its budget to development cooperation.

We must, she continued, reinterpret the concept of globalisation in a positive way, moving from a globalisation only for the markets to a globalisation of social justice and global solidarity. We must also use the opportunity of the crisis to build a new international order where global solidarity is part of the agenda of governments and international organisations and work for more efficient multilateralism, involving emerging countries in the solutions.

The Spanish Socialists consider that we cannot accept any backward movement in the field of social rights, only a move forward. We cannot renounce any of the social achievements made. The concept of sustainability applied to economic development must be widened to include social sustainability, which also leads to increased social stability.

We also cannot accept, she underlined, any backward movement in the advancement of equality between men and women. In Spain we have come a long way in the last thirty years following forty years of dictatorship where many of the achievements made during the Republic were abolished.

It was also first during the Socialist government in the 1980s that we regained the right to divorce and we also brought in the first law on voluntary interruption of pregnancy. This law was approved after more than twenty five years of tough discussions and now, twenty years later, we discuss a new law with new extended rights for women and men regarding reproduction and sexual life. It is noteworthy that Spain is a Catholic country and even though we respect religion, we also feel that the norms that rule the life of the society cannot be confessional.

It is also noteworthy, she said, that those who criticised the first law did not change anything when they were in government and it will be the same with this new legislation.

The same issues, she continued, were taken up yesterday by our comrade from Socialist International Women, and the PSOE wishes to thank SIW for their efforts. We also support the SIW resolution which for formal reasons could not be included in the present debate.

She finally suggested an amendment to be included in the draft declaration on securing democracy and reaffirming people's rights as follows: 'In effect, a democracy without this content, which is inbuilt in the fundamental human rights, is nothing but an illusion of freedom'.

Our commitment is to advance the cause of democracy in the world, to contribute to the spread of democratic governance based on the system of norms and guarantees of a substantial democracy – a democracy for citizens with political, human, social, economic, cultural and environmental rights.

We wish to work for the consolidation of democracies in countries that have recently arrived at such a political system, favouring active and efficient policies of international cooperation. We believe in transforming the current world financial crisis into an opportunity for global solidarity, as a consequence of new global governance moving to a new framework for international relations, where emergent countries and the new regional powers have their place. We affirm the need for consolidating citizen's rights and to working for their extension, fighting any kind of regression.

Felipe Mujica, Venezuela, MAS, pointed out that the theme of democracy is permanent and central for the Socialist International and all Social Democratic parties, and goes back to the historic distinction between the authoritarian and the democratic socialism.

There have been discussions, he continued, at the more general level in line with the Ethical Charter of the Socialist International, that Social Democrats pursue democratic institutions and solutions and economic growth in favour of the most vulnerable in society. But there were also discussions about the different conditions for democracy in different parts of the world. It is not the same to talk about democracy in the European Union and democracy in Africa or Latin America. It is in this context that the actual discussion about the situation in Venezuela falls.

The discussion on Venezuela inside the International started more or less immediately after the election of Hugo Chávez, he said, and the Venezuelan member parties and others continuously

reported on developments. We warned of the risk of authoritarianism and of the policies leading to gradual limitations of the democratic space in Venezuelan society. We also warned of subsequent developments, that the government would not respect regional and local elections, that the protests against the government would be criminalised and that there would be political prisoners.

Venezuela, he continued, has a democratically elected government that, through its actions, gradually converted into an authoritarian regime. We now live in a situation of state terrorism, where all the public institutions are openly used to diminish the political, economic and social rights of the citizens and their rights to participation.

Now, he pointed out, ten months from the next elections a new electoral majority system has been approved that could result in that with 51% of the votes, 80% of the parliamentary mandates could be gained. However, he underlined, the Venezuelan opposition is determined to search for a democratic solution to the situation.

The risks of an armed conflict between Venezuela and Colombia is primarily dependent upon whether Hugo Chávez has negative figures in the political opinion polls towards the elections. He could very well try to use war and patriotism in his favour.

We are very aware that the solution to the problems of Venezuela must primarily be the task of the Venezuelans, but we also need the solidarity of the Socialist International and its member organisations, he concluded.

SI Vice-President **Mirjana Feric-Vac**, Croatia, SDP, thanked the PRD and its women's organisation for hosting the SI and SIW Council meetings. She congratulated Papandreou on his political victory, stressing the importance for the countries in Balkan region to have partners committed to democracy.

Until now, she continued, millions of people have died and are still dying for democracy and peace, and our role is to not let this struggle to be forgotten.

Different forms of neo-liberalism, she said, have crept into our parties. In Croatia, liberalism was perhaps even good as an instrument when ending the one-party system. But liberalism should not be allowed to reduce everything to goods and bargains. The pillars of democracy are human rights, and they are not negotiable and the human being is not for sale.

Democracy, she pointed out, is the common denominator of all the topics dealt with by the Council meeting and we particularly need democracy to respond to inequality.

A special issue for Social Democrats, she continued, is the equal right to education based upon democratic values. A special part here is the opportunity to have life-long learning and not least re-training for those who have lost their jobs.

Democracy, she stressed, is also affordable health care for all.

When we talk about nuclear weapons, she said, it is closely related to the right to live without fear of war. We have already paid respect to the day against violence and for us in Croatia with its recent experience of war, the concern about violence is also a distinguishing feature for democracy. When we look at expanding economies, such as China, we must not neglect the possible influence on human rights.

It is obvious, she ended, that when we are in opposition we want free and fair elections, where the people can decide to change government. But to maintain democratic continuity we must not forget this when we are in power.

Mario Nalpatían, Armenia, ARF Socialist Party, stressed that the electoral victory of George Papandreou also meant an expansion and visibility of our common Social Democratic themes and values.

We discuss democracy, he said, in face of the global crisis where we as an organisation try to draw a picture of the possible impact, based upon values and principles and not on personal or nationalist interests.

In Latin America today, he pointed out, we have an unprecedented situation, practically without any military dictatorships, and with democracy nearly everywhere on the continent. But while most countries are basically progressive with diminishing poverty, we also have situations where the progressives turn to populism, resulting in diminished freedom and with newly rising poverty.

In the financial crisis, he continued, it has been said that politics of solidarity must replace the logics of the casino market. Unfortunately the citizens have not all followed us and in some places where we thought that democracy was stable, the extreme right has won elections.

In the area of the former Soviet Union, he said, we cannot only look at the impact of the financial crisis. We must also look at how tensions and insecurity from re-emerging conflicts are causing setbacks in fundamental human rights. As members of the Socialist International we must reject and condemn these developments.

Where we have recently seen politics of inclusion, he stressed, we can now often observe an increasing process of exclusion against groups and individuals, but even more serious, as in the case of Armenia, against entire nations. In the Caucasus region, this country is expressly excluded from a number of infra-structural projects.

This vulnerable situation has forced the Armenian President into signing protocols with Turkey which include unacceptable concessions for the Armenians. We wish to break the Turkish blockade of the Armenian border and open diplomatic relations with Turkey, but not at the price of the status quo and of non-recognition of the genocide committed against the Armenian people, he concluded.

SI Vice-President **Chantal Kambiwa**, Cameroon, SDF, stressed that the electoral success of George Papandreou was not only a victory but also a sign of hope for all Africans and African member parties both of Socialist International Women and the Socialist International.

It is however difficult, she continued, for me as an African and an African woman to talk about democracy and the rights of the individual, as this is still not a reality for me. Unfortunately there are still some people who wish to stay in power at any price.

Democracy, she underlined is still in danger in Africa with manipulated, un-free and un-transparent elections. There also those who wish to stop all dialogue through military power. We must all work together for the peace without which nothing is possible. But peace must be more than the absence of war.

How can we be at peace, she said, when more than half of the population in Africa is not taken into consideration and when women are exposed to multiple types of violence?

How can we be at peace, she said, when we know that we risk our lives when we give birth because there is not the equipment at the hospital or the last village midwife fled into immigration?

The presence of women in the decision-making bodies in our countries is another problem but also within the member parties of the Socialist International.

It is important, she continued, that we work together to promote a real culture of democracy and to strengthen the rights of the individual, also within the member parties of the Socialist International.

To further this it is important that we keep up the spirit of Solidarity within the Socialist International, she concluded.

Abdollahi Khosrow, Iran, PDKI, pointed out that the Mullah regime in Iran incessantly continues its brutal repression and use of arms against peaceful demonstrations with mass arrests, imprisonment, torture, rape, show trials and the closure and monopolisation of the media and modern means of communication.

In the Kurdish parts of Iran, he continued, this repression is particularly severe and in the last three months, the security forces of the regime killed sixty civilian Kurds and injured a further twenty-eight. Eighty human rights activists were arrested with trumped up accusations about activities against the state security and the integrity of the nation. We see prison sentences of up to thirty years. Since August 2009, five Kurdish prisoners have been executed and eight other Kurds, among them a woman, were sentenced to death and await their execution.

The terror campaign, he stressed, against all Iranian ethnic groups surpasses all comment, but will not break the aspirations for freedom and democracy.

A positive change in the political reality in Iran, he underlined, will have influence upon the geopolitical situation in the entire Near and Middle East region, but the aspirations for change need solidarity from the democratic and progressive forces all over the world.

The people of Iran, and particularly the Kurds, look to the Socialist International for hope and expressions of solidarity. There is also a draft declaration, which I hope will be adopted, he concluded.

Sadi Pire, Iraq, PUK, brought the greetings of the PUK Secretary General, President Jalal Talabani with a wish for a successful Council meeting.

In this moment, he continued, Iraq is preparing for parliamentary elections, which will be held in a new and different way. The electoral system was changed from a closed list system, where people primarily voted for political parties, to a more transparent open list system where the electorate can vote for individual political candidates.

Today, he said, the political environment in Iraq is moving forwards, leaving sectarianism behind. Iraq is however still engaged in a war against terrorism and anti-democratic elements which continue to seek the destruction of the country. But their efforts will be in vain, as the Iraqi people wish to keep the democratic freedoms they gained since 2003. Iraq is now a constitutional country.

Iraq, he continued, is no longer a threat to its neighbours, or the region, and in spite of there still existing security problems, the international community looks upon Iraq as a venue for investment. The Kurdistan Region is the federal region that has become a gateway for safe investments for hundreds of foreign companies.

We call upon our friends of the Socialist International to urge their countries to come to Iraq and make use of its investment opportunities.

Today, he underlined, Iraq is free from dictatorship and the people are able to decide their own destiny. The PUK was one of the parties that participated in the creation and development of the new democratic process in Iraq, he said, and in the Kurdistan region the PUK promotes social democratic politics.

We are proud to be members of this democratic Socialist family. Jalal Talabani is Vice-President of the SI while at the time he is the President of the Republic of Iraq and the people have a great confidence in his capacity to strengthen the International relations of Iraq.

Maria Jonas, Austria, SPÖ, thanked the Secretary General for the initiative to commemorate the Miraval sisters, observing a minute of silence.

We should also, she continued, not forget the solidarity with San Suu Kyi in the hope that she soon will be free. The recent talks the mediators had with the military may not only eventually lead to the freedom of San Suu Kyi, but also to the tumbling of yet another military dictatorship. A message could be sent from the Council meeting reiterating our continuous support, expressing our confidence that San Suu Kyi, one day soon, will be with us in person and not only in our thoughts.

It was unanimously agreed that President *George Papandreou* and the Secretary General *Luis Ayala* would send the message on behalf of the Council meeting.

Andres Paéz, Ecuador, PID, denounced the new legislation in Ecuador on water, which involves the confiscation of private property and enterprises using thermal water.

He further denounced the law on higher education, which, he said, will lead to the subordination of the universities to the government.

He finally denounced the law on communication that not only criminalises journalism, but also is an attempt to stop the free press.

All this, he continued, is done under the label "Socialismo 21", which has nothing to do with the Social Democracy that upholds the principles of freedom. For us every abuse of freedom is contrary to any form of Socialism.

On behalf of his party, he finally appealed to the international community to unite forces against these slogans that try to hide the authoritarian attempts to undermine democracy in Ecuador. No one should think that the label "Socialismo 21" has anything to do with social democracy, he said.

Enoé Uranga Muñoz, Mexico, PRD, denounced the attacks against women's rights in Latin America, made by reactionary forces together with the churches, especially the Catholic Church, - attacks that form part of a strategic action against the forces of the Left.

Unfortunately, she continued, this also means the return of the Right in the worst possible way, which is through social democracy. Member parties of the Socialist International have both initiated and participated in these aggressions where women are being criminalised and sometimes also persecuted only for being feminists.

These problems, she underlined, do not only exist in Latin America but also in Africa and Asia.

This, she said, is a direct attack on the most poor and vulnerable women in an attempt to take control over them and over their bodies. The women of the bourgeoisie, also the daughters of the Rightists functionaries, still have access to safe abortions.

The Council, she demanded, must take note of what is happening inside its own organisation in violation of its Ethical Charter. It must make an active follow up, and subsequently take the appropriate measures. If we lose our ideology we have lost everything.

End of the discussions on democracy.

Report of the Secretary General

Secretary General **Luis Ayala** underlined that the deliberations of the Council were a reflection of the recent activities of the Socialist International.

He said that he felt proud at what the *SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society* had achieved during its two years of intensive work for valid alternatives and in building the authority, legitimacy and visibility needed to get responses for its arguments.

The Commission had held a number of meetings with central leaders in all regions of the world and at the United Nations. It brought new concepts such as 'climate justice' into the debate and created a vision of a low carbon society and a common stand on the use of nuclear power.

The Commission created its basis for Copenhagen, and independently of the outcome of the Copenhagen conference, the Commission will have a mandate to continue its work towards a post-Kyoto Protocol.

After Copenhagen, a meeting of the *SI Commission for a Sustainable World Society* is foreseen to take place in Mexico.

SI Commission on Global Financial Issues held its first meeting in Vienna and has since met twice in New York. It will meet again in 2010 before the G20 meeting.

The mission to Venezuela, agreed at previous meetings, will visit that country in early 2010. The SI will also follow developments in Côte d'Ivoire and send observers to the upcoming elections, and he underlined the SI's commitment to follow the electoral process in Palestine.

The meetings of the SI regional Committees, such as the October meeting of the *SI Mediterranean Committee* in Barcelona, are essential in order to elaborate a common stand on difficult and complicated issues, for example on Western Sahara. For the first part of next year, a meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean is planned for Buenos Aires, and together with the President of the Austrian Parliament, Barbara Prammer, a meeting of the *SI Committee on Social Cohesion, Poverty and HIV/AIDS* is planned to take place in Ghana. A meeting of the *SI Asia-Pacific Committee* is also envisaged, along with meetings of other regional committees, such as those for the Mediterranean, South-Eastern Europe and the Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea.

The SI Disarmament Committee, which met in New York in November, will meet again to discuss in particular the issue of small arms and light weapons.

The *SI Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources* chaired by Christoph Zopel, will continue its work and its next meeting is planned to take place in Russia before the next Council, hosted by our members, A Just Russia Party.

The SI Migrations Committee will take up its work, chaired by Amalía García Medina, PRD, Mexico. A meeting is envisaged to take place in 2010.

The next Council Meeting should take place in six months time, preferably in May or June 2010, with the following one in November. For the venues of those meetings, there were a number of suggestions and after consultation within the presidium the venue for the next meeting will be decided.

Regarding Honduras, he continued, the SI took a very clear stand at the Council in Montenegro. In Honduras the agreement with the OAS was not respected and elections are to take place on November 29, without previously reinstalling the constitutional bodies. This situation is very disquieting for all democrats. In line with what was decided in Budva, the SI President and Secretary General will follow-up the situation in Honduras on behalf of the organisation.

SI President and SI Secretary General will also send a message to the Frente Amplio in Uruguay, wishing it success in the elections there on November 29.

In line with what was discussed in Guatemala, the Committee will continue to act regarding the issue of Puerto Rico.

Regarding the *Rules of Procedure* agreed at the Budva meeting, these have already contributed to positively guiding the work of our International. The Secretariat is receiving suggestions and contributions for the final version of these Rules.

He concluded by reporting that the day before the Council opened, he had lectured at the University of Santo Domingo, a university that he had first visited as a young student during the time of the dictatorship in Chile. That was the beginning of his long relationship with the Dominican Republic and the PRD, which he once again thanked for their warm hospitality in hosting this Council meeting.

Adoption of Documents and Resolutions of the Council

The Declaration *For a new deal with nature and a new treaty in Copenhagen* was adopted.

The Resolution *The Challenges of Global Development at the End of 2009 and the Perspectives for 2010 – The Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Dimensions* was adopted.

The Declaration *Working for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and for Arms Control* was adopted.

The Declaration *Securing Democracy and Reaffirming People's Rights* was adopted.

The *Resolution on The Middle East* was adopted.

A draft *Resolution on Iran* was read to the Council and adopted.

The *Resolution on Western Sahara* agreed by the SI Mediterranean Committee in October 2009 in Barcelona was adopted by the Council.

Closure

Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Leader of the host party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party, PRD, thanked the Council for his election as Vice-President of the Socialist International and for the fact that the International had chosen Santo Domingo as its venue for the Council meeting.

The PRD, he continued, is going through a period of consolidation with the opportunity of advances in the parliamentary and municipal elections in 2010 and a victory in the 2012 elections.

We have hopes to gain power, and from there to be able to realise the social democratic concepts of equality and social justice, strengthening human rights and not least the rights of women and their possibilities of participation, he said.

Thank you all for coming, he concluded, and we hope that you have all felt well in the Dominican Republic.

President **George Papandreou** thanked the PRD for their hospitality, expressing the hope that the presence of the International also was a support for their struggle in the Dominican Republic for democracy and social justice. He wished PRD all the best, good luck and success in the upcoming elections.

He thanked all those who once again had congratulated him on his electoral victory. He underlined that it is a great honour to be the President of the Socialist International and that he will continue efforts to strengthen the International, and hoped that him being the Prime Minister of Greece would contribute to this objective.

The relevance of our movement, he continued, is greater than ever in the present situation, where our importance is also measured by the immense problems of the multiple crises of climate, finances, the economy, energy, food, poverty the resulting social and political crisis, migration, pandemics and inequality.

We are witnessing, he underlined, a crisis in the model of how we govern and manage the world, take care of our resources, our Planet and our societies. The post-cold war multiple crises have revealed flaws in much of the economic systems we so far experienced. Neo-liberalism and the other side of the Berlin Wall have both failed us with their lack of transparency control, marginalising the citizens, concentrating wealth and power in the hands of the few. This lack of responsibility for the public good is also behind the present multiple crises. We social democrats must bring back the words *social* and *democracy* into world politics.

The present multiple crises, he continued, now even endangers our own civilisation, the human beings and the planet. It will not just go away after a couple of months and we cannot go back to business as usual. The present situation could rather become the breeding ground for more regional conflicts, arms races, conflicts around energy, food and water, conflicts because of the huge inequalities and injustice in our societies and more polarization. It could also lead to the deepening of existing crises like the Palestine conflict.

And this, he stressed, could lead the people to look for saviours or authoritarian leaders who promise utopias, security, law and order. The crisis could thus be the breeding ground for absolutism, fundamentalism, racism and xenophobia.

The problems we have discussed regarding women's rights, reproduction rights and right to abortion is one sign of how freedoms and rights are attacked and undermined by conservative and fundamentalist policies.

The crisis, he continued, does not only attack political life but also our everyday life, families and citizens with poverty, oppression and lack of freedom.

The political developments, he stressed, will be crucial in the next years. Either we will govern the world in a just and viable way or we will go down the road of deeper conflict and suffering. How we govern the world is crucial and the SI Commission on the Environment is here in reality a Commission on Sustainable World Governance.

Governance, he said, includes the democratic questions about who governs and how we decide at different levels. We stand for the protection and strengthening of our democratic institutions and against those who try to capture our democratic institutions through authoritarianism, populism, corruption or elitism. An important point is here that we need the democratic participation of the people, mobilising its human potential to creatively face the new challenges.

Governance also begs the questions of: governance for whom? Where do we allot our resources? Which are the priorities we make? And are the resources for the few and powerful, or are they for all? Our Committee on Economic Policy, Labour and National Resources discusses regulation of our financial systems, redistribution of wealth around the world and within our societies. Also, do we invest in people or do we invest in weapons? This is one of the reasons why our Disarmament Committee is also so important.

Governance further begs the question of how we create the basis for common understanding in the world and of where humanity and the planet is heading. We are talking about a new green model for development towards a green economy. For this we need an educated, safe and well-informed citizenry.

Governance also means the multilateralism that we have stood for in the work of the United Nations. When we create institutions these must be based on a common understanding of values and the Socialist International can provide these common values to govern in a peaceful and viable way. The democratic core values of the Socialist International is the only sound basis to guarantee peace, cohesive societies, coherence, freedom, non-violent resolution of conflicts and equality.

How do we promote these values? How can we be effective and also true to our principles? Conservatives and fundamentalist forces are targeting the weak and marginal as scapegoats for our real problems. Therefore, the issues of women, migrants and other marginalised groups are being used in an attempt to divide us and our constituencies and undermine our support and power basis, polarising through alleged ethical issues. But what they want is to establish their hegemony, undermining social and human rights and the advances our movement has achieved over many decades of struggle.

Women, he pointed out, will increasingly become the target of authoritarianism and fundamentalism in this world.

Going back, he informed, he was going to meet with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and will talk about a number of issues in face of the coming six-month Spanish EU Presidency. One central issue is the situation of women.

Zapatero has more than 50% of women in his government and in the new Greek government it was possible to reach 30%, which is a record for the country, but the standards must be put even higher. We need more participation of women in our parties, in our delegations, among our speakers and in the discussions. Our women are a huge potential. This is not only an issue of respect for all individuals and human rights, but that we so far have not properly used this huge potential in our movement. We heard Portia Simpson yesterday, but we will never get the Portias if we do not start from the basics in our parties. We have also discussed this issue in the Presidium and how we can learn best practice from each other and strengthen our movement.

The financial situation of our movement, he underlined, is an important issue for each member party. We want to be autonomous parties, representing the voice of our citizens and not the voice of special interests and big business. Even progressive parties are being targeted by big business and money in attempts to capture them. It is a question of democracy for us to have autonomous financial resources. We also must be able to stand up to the international corporations of the conservatives coming with their private jets to their meetings, while our resources are comparatively very scarce. So we must find our own means. It is important that our movement strengthens its presence around the world.

Finally, on behalf all, he once again thanked the host party for its hospitality.

The Council was declared closed.