

Summary Minutes of the SI Council meeting in Istanbul

11-12 November 2013

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OPENING

Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the SI opened the meeting. He remembered Pierre Mauroy, former SI president who passed on 7 June 2013 and Yasser Arafat on the 9th anniversary of his passing. He also spoke of the human tragedy taking place at that time in the Philippines, and the Radio France journalists killed in Mali. A minute's silence was observed to remember those lost.

The Secretary General informed the meeting that SI President George Papandreou had returned to Greece for a parliamentary vote and would be joining the meeting later. On behalf of the SI, he thanked the host party, CHP and its leader Kemal Kiliçdaroglu.

There were many reasons to hold the meeting in Istanbul. To serve as a platform of social democracy and to extend political and human solidarity to those struggling for freedom in the Arab world. There were challenges and opportunities in Syria, Egypt, Yemen, the commitment of the SI to peace in Israel and Palestine and the need to keep abreast of developments in Iran.

The meeting would also discuss the global economy, upon which the organisation has taken a stand for people, not for markets. There was a need for a centre-left response. The organisation has a message of hope and commitment to solidarity, to freedom and to democracy.

Kemal Kiliçdaroglu (Chair, CHP, Turkey) greeted participants and welcomed them to Istanbul on behalf of the Republican People's Party. He outlined the commitment of the CHP to the SI and its principles of social democracy, justice, freedom, equality and pluralism – in Turkey and the world.

Major changes have been happening in the world. Demands for equality and freedom now spread rapidly, but the process of the Arab Spring has seen worrisome recent developments and ongoing conflicts. Turkey is geographically near and politically in the midst of these conflicts.

The problems facing the democratic struggles are extremist groups and reactionary forces opposed to equality and freedom; ethnic, religious and sectarian fault lines; and the possibility of foreign intervention, which might provide legitimacy to oppressive regimes and encourage extremist groups.

The SI must play an active role and oppose violence and conflict, promoting dialogue. The Working Group on Syria must become active.

The impact of the global economic crisis continues. Neoliberal economic policies have caused millions to pay for the failure of the markets. Global coordination and cooperation is needed to tackle unemployment and raise salaries and standards of living. Sustainable polices take individual human beings as their focus.

Quoting Willy Brandt, "Peace is more than the absence of War. A durable and equitable peace system requires equal development opportunities for all nations."

Elio Di Rupo (Belgium, PS) thanked the SI for the organisation of the meeting and the host party for their warm welcome.

The SI covers the entire world, active both in government and opposition to resolve important problems in each country. We come together to confront the challenges facing the world and promote our values of solidarity, freedom, democracy and gender equality.

All injustice and inequality is unacceptable and in Europe the politics of austerity brought on by the financial crisis is not working. The crisis must not be used to destroy the social security systems we have built over many years. Europe must also have a foreign policy which does not prioritise security above the legitimate aspirations of those suffering tyranny at its frontiers.

We have faced similar battles at different moments in history. I want to recognise the efforts of the SI in support for those who want to advance democracy and a society free from extremism. Democratic governance and help for refugees in Syria, peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine, and an end to the nuclearisation of Iran are concerns for all of us.

GEZI PARK PRESENTATION

Umut Oran, Vice-President of CHP, Turkey, presented a video of the demonstrations in Gezi Park.

The Secretary General, in the Chair, expressed the solidarity, support and encouragement of the SI to the citizens of Istanbul and Turkey who had protested at Gezi Park and thanked the Gezi Park activists for their participation in the meeting.

FIRST WORKING SESSION

FIRST MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“Current crises related to the struggles for democracy, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, and conflicts threatening peace and security in that part of the world”

The chair expressed hope for end of the war in Syria and the recovery of the path to bring true democracy through a political solution. He welcomed the President of the Syrian National Coalition for the Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to address the Council.

Ahmad Al Jarba (Syrian National Coalition for the Revolutionary and Opposition Forces) presented the situation in Syria.

As an organisation that defends democracy and freedom around the world, your organisation is working for the same end as the Syrian opposition. Though we are wary when we hear the word ‘socialist’, we need your support to overcome the dictatorship.

The revolution is not currently going well. The Syrian people are asking the international community for justice to fight against the regime, and there will be consequences if you close your eyes to the situation. From all Syrians, we also extend our gratitude to our neighbours in Turkey.

The chair thanked Ahmad Al-Jarba, and expressed his feeling that the victory of the opposition in Syria would put an end to the falsehood of the regime wrongly calling itself socialist. True socialism is about freedoms, human rights and democracy.

Driss Lachguar (Morocco, USFP) addressed the popular movements in the region, regretting that they had not led to democratisation and economic progress. He noted developments in Mali and the threat posed by Islamic terrorists in North Africa and the Sahel. He commented on efforts underway by social democratic parties in the Arab world to advance our common goals.

Mohamed El Fatah Naciri (Arab League) greeted participants on behalf of the Secretary General of the Arab League. He expressed the support of the Arab League for Geneva 2. The Syrian government had failed and the people would no longer accept dictatorship, he stated.

The chair thanked the Arab League, with which the SI will continue to collaborate. He reported that the SI President had returned from voting in the Greek parliament to ensure the continuity of the government, and would address the meeting.

George Papandreou (SI President) thanked the host party and observed that such a warm friendship between Greeks and Turks was unimaginable a few years ago.

The crisis in Europe is a political one, political divisions are challenging our democratic tradition. Citizens don't feel like the solutions to the crisis are fair. We need to work together for the values our movement represents: democracy and human rights; social justice and sustainable green growth; and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Democracy is now a struggle on many fronts. There is the fight to overthrow authoritarian dictators and make the transition to democracy, but there is also those struggling to reclaim democracy, to democratise globalisation.

Socialism is still relevant to bring about the respect of basic values and change that is so badly needed, both at the national and global level. Global peace and the existence of our civilisation are at stake and we can and must make a difference. Our strength comes from the unity of progressive, democratic, socialist forces from around the world.

Equal opportunities for all are vital, and an end to discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religious affiliation or sexual orientation – a key principle of democracy. In Turkey citizens are fighting to protect their democratic values. Our movement needs to fight for a democratic socialist Europe, where we are facing a crisis of democratic legitimacy. To do this effectively we must be exemplary in accepting the democratic processes within our movement and respecting the outcomes of our democratic procedures.

Democracy is connected to all the topics on our agenda. The Syrian people expressed desire for democracy and must be allowed to decide the future of their country through a political process. We continue to work for Middle East peace. When talking of peace, Africa must be the top of our agenda, and we need more positive developments like the recent democratic presidential elections in Mali.

We have a lot of work to do. And if we are to succeed, we must stand united.

End of the morning session.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Wael Abou Faour (Lebanon, PSP) outlined the support of his party for those calling for democracy, rights and freedoms in Syria, openly expressed since the beginning of anti-government protests. He expressed concern over the indifference of the international community and growth of extremist elements in Syria, which are hindering progress to a political solution, which represents the only way out of the crisis. He further called for a unified Syrian opposition and assistance from the international community with the refugee crisis in Lebanon.

Hursit Günes (Turkey, CHP) noted the ethnic and religious differences that had been brought to the fore as a result of socio-political uprisings in the Middle East and the need for a system to enable the coexistence of these different cultural identities. Socialists should condemn all armed foreign intervention, all human rights violations and the absence of free elections. Despite the recent deterioration of human rights, Turkey still seems to be the closest to a model as a democratic regime for the Middle East. The CHP recommends educational reform and propagate democratic secularism for the stability and modernisation of this region.

Hussein Gohar (Egypt, ESDP) reported on developments in Egypt, and the failure of the former president Morsi to practice democracy or be inclusive once in power. He outlined the efforts of his party to ensure human rights were upheld in the new constitution and that no civilian would be tried in front of a military court. The democratic future of Egypt is at a decisive moment, needing plurality and inclusiveness in order to move forward and have fair parliamentary and presidential elections by early next year (2014).

Nazmi Gür (Turkey, BDP) drew attention to the suffering of the Kurdish people and the importance of the peace process in the Middle East for them. In Turkey, the Kurdish people were asking for the right to identity, education in the mother tongue and democratic autonomy. Kurdish people were directly affected by the turmoil in Syria, where the Kurds are neither on the side of Assad's regime nor allied with radical Islamist groups. The Kurds both in Syria and Turkey were committed to a peaceful solution in Syria through diplomatic means.

Sayed Radhi Almoosawi (Acting Secretary General of Wa'ad party of Bahrain) extended the greetings of the party secretary general, Ibrahim Sharif from his prison in Bahrain, where violence and human rights abuses continue. The Bahraini opposition has clear and simple demands – an elected parliament and government representing the people of Bahrain, equality in electoral districts; a civilian judiciary system; security for the people of Bahrain.

Mohamed Ghaleb (Yemen, YSP) gave greetings from Secretary General Yaseen Said Noman, who carried the responsibility of the rotating presidency of the conciliation committee in the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference. The YSP was working within this conference to make progress towards progress towards democracy and the building of modern Yemeni state with the values of justice, freedom, equality and human rights. The success of the conference would lift the country out of conflict and ensure the survival of a united, federal Yemen.

Osman Korutürk (Turkey, CHP) spoke about the role of Turkey in the region in light of a perceived failure of the Arab Spring to fulfil its initial promise. The CHP sees the role of Turkey as a source of regional stability which faces both east and west, protecting values such as democracy, basic rights and

freedoms, supremacy of law, independence of judiciary, gender equality and secularism. The party is engaged with regional partners to promote peaceful solutions and prioritises dialogue and ceasefire over external intervention in Syria.

Bahia Amra (Palestine, PNI) raised the Israeli occupation and continued settlement activity in Palestine, coupled with increased settler attacks on Palestinians. She asked for support for the struggle to bring freedom and dignity through non-violent resistance, leading to an end to the occupation, which isolates Palestinians and hinders developments. Future generations need a just peace based on equality between Israelis and Palestinians.

Abdallah Abdallah (Palestine, Fatah) summarised recent attempts to advance the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, taking the form of nineteen rounds of negotiations centred on security. Despite negotiations Israel is continuing the building of the illegal security wall and the occupation of Palestinian territory. Attention was also drawn to human rights in Palestine and Israel as a prerequisite for security. He expressed his gratitude for the initiatives of the SI and called on the organisation to continue its work for peace-making in the region, for the sake of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Colette Avital (Israel, Meretz) spoke on behalf of the Israeli opposition fighting for peace. The conflict was a long one going back almost 100 years during which the Jewish people had undergone extreme suffering, which they did not wish to see inflicted on another people. But opportunities had been missed and Israelis were starting to lose faith in the peace process, having been let down by leaders on both sides. She called for support to be given to the peace camp in Israel, for a just and permanent solution, respecting the rights and dignity of both sides. It was time for action rather than mere declarations, without which an opportunity would be lost.

Ahmed Ould Daddah (Mauritania, RFD) summarised the democratic situation in Mauritania where the united opposition (COD) would not contest forthcoming general elections declared unilaterally by Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz. The crisis of democracy was threatening the party, which needed support. He expressed support for Middle East peace, through which efforts for peace in the whole region would be advanced, and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Khayam Turki (Tunisia, FDTL) explained the actions of his party since the revolution, during a period of uncertainty and a polarisation of society. The FDTL was not a part of either camp, but acting in favour of dialogue and consensus between all forces.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng (Senegal, PS) emphasised the connection between the Middle East and North Africa, where violations of democracy required the attention of the international community. There was not one single country in the region that was suffering, but rather events were linked – arms used to oppose Gaddafi in Libya were later used to destroy stability in Mali. In light of the shooting of two French journalists it was also vital to stand up for freedom of the press, closely linked to democracy.

Mario Nalpatian (Armenia, ARF) called for a political solution to the crisis in Syria with the involvement of all actors. One group living in Syria under very difficult conditions was the Armenian minority. His message from Armenia was of the need for stability in the entire region, from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea, and a dialogue with Turkey to bring a solution to their conflict. The creation of employment and access to education would be a valuable tool in the solution of regional problems.

Obed Bapela (South Africa, ANC) greeted the Council on behalf of President Zuma and expressed sympathy with the people of the Philippines. He called on the SI to openly and freely engage to find solutions to fundamental problems facing the world, to advance peace, friendship and democracy, characterised by social, economic and political transformation. Conflicts were ongoing in the Middle East and North Africa, and Africa was confronted daily by war. He highlighted the situations in Libya and Western Sahara and spoke of a belief in African solutions to African problems, with respect for the international rule of law.

Emmanuel Golou (Benin, PSD, Chair of the SI Africa Committee) reported on the threat to democracy in the Sahel and Central African regions. Work was needed to prevent conflicts from spilling over into neighbouring lands. In Africa as elsewhere there was a need for closer cooperation between political parties in government and opposition, for the advancement of the common goals of the SI and to aid the development of small parties.

Fatma Mehdi (Western Sahara, Polisario Front) extended the thanks of the Western Saharan people for the efforts of the SI. She outlined the daily struggles faced by those living in refugee camps without peace and security, people divided from their families by a wall, without control over their lives or full human rights. The peace process had gone on 22 years without results, and the people wanted the right to self-determination and the opportunity for statehood. She asked for the solidarity of the SI in this ambition.

Manuel Laguarda (Uruguay, Socialist Party) expressed support for a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine and commented on the armed conflicts that had followed the Arab Spring. He spoke in favour of universal democracy achieved within the framework of the UN, with intervention only to take place in accordance with international law for the sake of a ceasefire and ensuring peace.

Alexander Romanovich (Russian Federation, A Just Russia Party) spoke of humanist values of his party, and the role of Russian foreign policy in removing the threat of direct armed intervention in Syria. Russia was ready to connect with all political forces in the Middle East to find just solutions to the Syria problem and Israel-Palestine conflict.

The chair spoke **on behalf of Marina Adamovich** (Belarus, BSDP-NH) of the ongoing incarceration of Mikalai Statkevich, still imprisoned three years after the violent repression that followed the Belarusian presidential elections. He read a message from Statkevich:

“Dear friends. I greet you on behalf of the struggling Belarusian social democracy. Unfortunately, the places of our struggle are not only electoral meetings and ‘scenes’ in the street, but also prison cells. When a society is mortally afraid the courage can be returned not only with the help of words but rather with the help of a personal example. And primarily these should be examples of leaders and the public attention is drawn to them. The situation in our country forces us to use this method of struggle and to assume the consequences. Your solidarity with our struggle helps to realise that our support from many people all around the world and that the truth is on our side. Thank you for this, *Mogliblok prison number 4, Mikhalai Statkevich*”

The chair reiterated the solidarity of the SI with all those fighting for a free Belarus.

SECOND MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“Reaffirming the centre-left vision for the global economy with an emphasis on growth, jobs and equality, and for a new development agenda”

Marian Lupu (Republic of Moldova, PDM) addressed the lessons learned from the financial crisis, that strong governments were needed to protect vulnerable citizens against economic downturns. Social democracy emphasised the need for policies which stimulate growth, create jobs and ensure a harmonious society. Well-integrated international structures such as the European Union have an important role to play, in order to stimulate the growth of smaller and less prosperous states. We live in an interdependent world, and economic growth is a global target rather than a matter for individual states. Trade imbalances leave countries without strategic resources most vulnerable. For Moldova, escaping poverty is the most important challenge, requiring constant economic growth. A growth rate of over 5 per cent is positive, but the public interest needs protecting – we must place an emphasis on education and training.

Alfred Gusenbauer (Austria, SPÖ) reflected that rallying in the stock markets was merely benefitting a few, while the global economy was in the same vicious cycle that caused the outbreak of the financial crisis. Cheap money printed by central banks was going into the stock markets rather than creating jobs in the real economy, because investors have no confidence that the real economy had recovered sufficiently to provide demand for goods. A high priority is to change unacceptable inequalities in income distribution for which a financial transactions tax is not enough. Real wages and incomes must be increased, and decent jobs provided. A more equal global distribution of wealth means giving developing countries control over their own growth processes and investments, in order to get out of the current vicious cycle. It is therefore vital to provide an alternative to neo-liberalism, to develop a better economic concept for growth and equity and social solidarity.

Report of the chair of the Ethics Committee

Gilles Mahieu (Chair of the Ethics Committee, Belgium, PS) presented his report on the activities of the Ethics Committee.

The committee had met both in London in September and in Istanbul the previous day. The new committee was geographically representative of the organisation and was working to transparent procedures and the criteria for membership.

The decisions and recommendations of the committee were:

Observer status to be granted:

Somaliland, Justice and Welfare Party

Applications to be rejected:

National Congress of Afghanistan, Convergence Citoyenne of the Republic of Congo, Conseil national pour la defense et la democratie of Burundi, Democratic Party of Cyprus, Frontas of Lithuania, Partido Socialista Reformista of San Marino, Ligue des Masses of Senegal, Social Democratic Union of Serbia and the Socialist Party of Serbia.

The committee further decided to continue with inviting two Kurdish political parties in Iran and to encourage them to reunite with the SI member party in Iran.

The recommendation to admit the JWP of Somaliland as an observer was unanimously accepted by the Council.

The Chair made procedural announcements: We have now six resolutions. Some of them have been worked on since September. There was a decision of the Presidium to take here a resolution on espionage and surveillance, cyber security for some other people, different names. That text has been distributed and tomorrow it will be voted. We have a text that has been distributed as well on the economy and tomorrow will be voted at the end of the sum of that theme. There is a text on Syria which he had worked on with the President's contribution, as entrusted by the Presidium. Then we have a text from Egypt, it has been worked by ourselves the Secretariat together with the representative of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party. There is also a text we have been working with the Yemeni Socialist Party on developments there. Then good news, we have been working together with our Palestinian and Israeli member parties on a text on the Middle East and we have agreed a common text that tomorrow will be voted and launched this call for action to our members for the Year of Peace for the Middle East-2014.

I hear it is the intention to present a text announced by the Chair of the Africa committee. It will be absolutely necessary, on conflict, crisis. And it is absolutely necessary that we should receive this text this evening as early as possible. There cannot be new texts presented at any other time, and so far there are 6 and there will be one more that has been introduced by the Chair of the Africa Committee. That's it, we cannot introduce more texts.

There will be a text that we will distribute tomorrow on the Gezi Park, also we need to work with our friends from our member party in Turkey on this text this evening.

The chair announced that following the election by the Committee for Latin America (SICLAC) and the Caribbean of a new chair, Miguel Vargas, the Council would have the opportunity to elect a vice-president from that region to occupy the vice-presidency left by the chair of SICLAC as a new ex-officio vice-president.

Both Bulgarian member parties wished to sit on the Ethics committee. If no agreement were reached on which party should take the one remaining post an election would be held.

END OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIRST DAY.

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SECOND DAY – THIRD SESSION

Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

The **Chair** announced that the SI Finance and Administration Committee (SIFAC) had elected as co-chairs Maurice Poler (AD, Venezuela) and Janos Veres (Hungary, MSzP).

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD)

As of Friday 8 November 2013, 59 member parties had paid their membership fees, leaving close to 100 parties and organisations that had not. The SIFAC co-chair called on delegates to make it an issue in their respective parties to pay fees on time in order that the organisation could function effectively. He also called on those who had withheld membership fees following the congress to settle their outstanding fees.

The SIFAC co-chair presented the audited accounts for the year 2012, as approved by the committee, and drew attention to the fact that the SI Secretary General had personally guaranteed loans in order to pay the salaries and bills of the organisation.

For the budget for 2014, six membership categories had been proposed to determine fee levels:

- parties Category 1, £2,000 – very small
- sized parties in developing economies Category 2, £3,000-5,000 – medium-
- sized parties in middle economies, larger parties in developed countries suffering from exceptional financial circumstances Category 3, £5,000-10,000 – medium-
- parties and governing parties in developing countries. Category 4, £10,000-20,000 – large
- parties in developed economies, long-time parties in government. Category 5, £20,000-40,000 – larger
- established large parties in government in developed economies. Category 6, over £40,000 – well-

The overall budget expenditure remained the same as for 2013.

The report of SIFAC was approved by the Council.

The audited accounts for the year 2012 were adopted by the Council.

The budget for 2014 and the new membership fee levels were adopted by the Council.

Questions to the committee co-chair

Thomas Carlhed (Sweden, SAP) expressed the reservation of his party, which had decided to scale down its engagement and lower its membership fee from 1 January 2013. A letter had been sent to the

Secretary General in October 2012. The party received a reply in November 2012 that it would be brought to the committee's attention. The party had not received any further communication and did not agree with its membership fee level.

Maurice Poler replied that the proposal of his party, which had been considered by SIFAC, had not been accepted by the committee.

Karl Duffek (Austria, SPÖ) stated that his party had also reduced its fee, due to a reduction in public funding.

Maurice Poler replied that unilateral reductions of fees were not acceptable.

Konstantin Woinoff (Germany, SPD) stated that the party had communicated its decision to lower its membership fee and the sum of £5,000 had been paid for 2013 without an acknowledgment of fee receipt.

Maurice Poler reiterated that unilateral decisions made by member parties over membership fees were not acceptable.

Luis Ayala said that the co-chair was responding in accordance with the decisions made in the SIFAC meeting yesterday when the new budget had been agreed. In conjunction with this Council, as reported this morning, the decisions on fees and the new budget had been taken, and they were adopted by the Council ten minutes ago. Therefore these decisions could only now, and not before, be reported to members.

Henry Ramos (Venezuela, AD) stated that the SI depended on fees from both parties in power and opposition. His party, an opposition party, had paid all the contributions it owed, despite financial problems. No single party can take a unilateral decision to decrease its contribution amount.

Obed Bapela (South Africa, ANC) clarified that the ANC would never be a part of a force calling itself the Progressive Alliance, and it was paying its membership fee and committing to the SI. He agreed that those who had written to SIFAC should receive a letter explaining that in accordance with the decision taken by the Council, the fees would not be reduced.

Ahmed Ould Daddah (Mauritania, RFD) stated that a political answer was needed for those parties with concerns over membership fees. He clarified that his party was not a part of the Progressive Alliance.

Francisco Rosales Argüello (Nicaragua, FSLN) stressed the importance that all parties contribute to the SI and support each other. A political answer should be given to parties not able to pay their contributions, but parties must not decrease contributions unilaterally.

George Papandreou explained that it was not possible for parties to change figures in the budget out of a desire to unilaterally reduce fees, as it undermined the collective nature of the organisation. The figures in the SIFAC report were the correct ones.

Unilateral changes to membership fees were not a finance question but a political question, and should not undermine the unity of the organisation. An aggressive stance towards the SI did not strengthen the organisation, and creating a new movement would not strengthen our voice or make it more credible. It

was time to go beyond petty power politics and work together in the spirit of the SI. The movement needed to be united, as its voice was needed.

Continuation of second main theme on the Economy

Pendukeni livula Ithana (Interior Minister, Namibia, SWAPO) noted the progress that was being made in Africa, with the normalisation of the situation in Zimbabwe and elections across southern Africa. SWAPO was consolidating democracy in Namibia, working for gender equality and leading the fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria. The financial crisis had a great impact on Namibia's economy, and a national emergency had been declared due to drought. She expressed support for the peoples of Palestine and the Polisario Front in their quest for self-determination.

Ouafa Hajji (President, SI Women) expressed concern over the lack of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and presented seven recommendations of SI Women: gender equality; prioritising the fight against infant and maternal mortality; gender equality in access to education; elimination of gender-based violence; prevention of child labour and early marriage; open data on gender equality to be made available; sustainable development requires peace. Considering the situation of women in the Arab Spring countries, any transformation in the region would require the participation of women.

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) spoke of the need for a new agenda for development, with the global economy still suffering from the crisis. Angola was restructuring following a long war and needed the state to be the coordinating leader of all the social and economic activities of the country. Angola's challenge was to diversify its economy, become more sustainable and give employment to those who have the least. A development strategy focussed on a fair society and egalitarian society could only be based on the basis of a good relationship between the state and the private sector.

Miguel Vargas (Dominican Republic, PRD) named global growth, equality and employment as priorities for a centre-left organisation. Equality and employment were the two important pillars of sustainable development. Political parties needed to adapt to the pace of change, be open and transparent. Social democrats in Latin America and the Caribbean needed to form alliances to resolve issues specific to the region. He proposed the establishment of a regional think-tank to find new ways meet the challenges of employment, equality and development.

Hermes Binner (Argentina, PS) explained that progressive ideas were needed in Argentina, Latin America and the world, with inequality widespread in South America. Sustainable growth and development were not the same thing. Tax havens around the world were reducing tax revenues and thereby opportunities and structural reforms were needed to ensure that growth would bring development. The way to a better society was to give sufficient opportunities to people to work. Only through solidarity could societies and countries solve their problems.

Carlos Eduardo Vieira da Cunha (Brazil, PDT) spoke about the economic realities in Brazil, where 36 million people had been freed from poverty in a decade. Nonetheless Brazilians were taking to the streets to demand better education, decent health care, efficient public transport and an end to corruption. The government was to invest revenues from the country's biggest oil fields to education and health, without which the country could not be free from underdevelopment. The Brazilian people would be closely watching to ensure this historic opportunity was not wasted.

Rubén Berríos (Puerto Rico, PIP) reported that the status of Puerto Rico was being seen as an impediment to political and social development, with a referendum to take place in the near future. He asked the President or Secretary General to attend the meeting of the UN Committee on decolonisation in June 2014.

Chantal Kambiwa (Cameroon, SDF) thanked the SI for accompanying the recent election process. The elections had resulted in an increase in the number of women parliamentarians from 23 to 36. Women's voices needed to be heard in conflict zones, and solidarity with them was needed, which is why SI Women had launched a campaign against violence.

Constantinos Estathiou (Cyprus, EDEK) called for immediate, effective and well-coordinated action to break the vicious cycle of recession, budgetary constraints and acute unemployment, the negative side of globalisation. To counter this democracy and good governance, finding a balanced approach away from neoliberal and state planned models. The disintegration of Cyprus's economic structure had meant a vicious circle of unemployment, lack of resources and poverty. He also noted that the political situation and division of the island of Cyprus remained unchanged, with a solution needed.

Svetlina Yolcheva (Bulgaria, PBSO) identified inequality and poverty as the most important problems facing the world, a problem ignored by neoliberal and right-wing parties. Social democrats needed to draft a new development plan, to revitalise the global economy through industrial investments and providing education, rights, social security and ensuring equal access to resources and means. An important principle was equal pay for equal work to ensure social equality and improve living conditions.

Gülsün Bilgehan (Turkey, CHP) highlighted the situation of women, who represent 70% of those living on less than one dollar per day, and two-thirds of illiterate people. In Turkey, women had low representation in politics and participation in economic life. From a macroeconomic perspective this was an extreme waste of potential. Violence against women, an important obstacle to participation, was on the increase. She also drew attention to the imprisonment of seven parliamentarians and 60 journalists in Turkey.

Ricardo Navarrete (Chile, PRSD) spoke of the need for public policies that would tackle problems faced by the people, without the market economy at their centre. Neoliberalism was the wrong policy to solve the problems of Chile – democratic and progressive countries needed to come up with creative and effective solutions to social inequality. Education and health services for all were at the top of the agenda. He looked forward to the forthcoming elections, as Chile needed parties and leadership which believed in social democracy.

Viviana Piñeiro (President of IUSY) spoke of the need for a fair system for the world, sharing the values of equality and solidarity. Global development and international solidarity were important, and there was no socialism without democracy, no democracy without socialists. A small group had benefited from the financial crisis at the expense of the rest. For these global problems, global solutions were required. The 30th meeting of IUSY would have the slogan "15 years, 15 proposals and 15 solutions" and target the eradication of poverty from the world.

Adoption of resolutions and declarations

The Resolution “Reaffirming the centre-left vision for the global economy with an emphasis on growth, jobs and equality, and for a new development agenda” was unanimously adopted by the Council

The minutes of the previous meeting in Cascais were unanimously adopted by the Council.

The Chair welcomed the presence of a delegation from the South Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, SPLN, for the first time at an SI Council meeting.

The Chair communicated the decision of the chair of the Africa Committee that the proposed statement on Africa would be produced by the membership of the committee at its next meeting.

The declaration on peace in the Middle East was unanimously adopted by the Council

The declaration on Egypt was unanimously adopted by the Council

The resolution on Syria was unanimously adopted by the Council

The declaration on Yemen was unanimously adopted by the Council

The declaration on espionage and surveillance was unanimously adopted by the Council

The declaration on Gezi Park was unanimously adopted by the Council

A proposal to reaffirm the statement on Puerto Rico adopted at the previous Council meeting was accepted

The Council elected Rafael Michelini (PNE, Uruguay) as vice-president to fill the vacant position on the presidium

Election of remaining member of the SI Ethics Committee:

Bulgarian Social Democratic Party, 15 votes

Bulgarian Socialist Party, 4 votes.

The Bulgarian Social Democratic Party was elected by the Council to take the seat on the Ethics committee.

Statements

Wenceslao Mansogo Alo (Equatorial Guinea, CPDS) requested the help of the SI in the struggle for democracy in a country that had never known freedom. Equatorial Guinea was the third richest country

in Africa but one family held all the wealth with the citizens oppressed. He expressed gratitude to the SI Secretary General for his efforts to visit during local and parliamentary elections. He urged governing parties in particular to support the party, which was facing extreme difficulties and wanted to be able to raise its concerns on international platforms.

Victor Benoit (Haiti, Fusion SD) spoke of the tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic due to a decision taken by the Dominican constitutional court to remove the nationality of Dominicans who were born after 1929 people with Haitian parents, which would affect 100,000 people. This problem was brought about by ruling nationalists, and progressives from both countries had decided to hold a meeting to address these tensions, on the initiative of the PRD and Haitian social democrats. SI member parties would be invited to attend and show political support.

Francisco Rosales (Nicaragua, FSLN) summarised the socio-economic situation in Nicaragua, characterised by strong growth and reductions in poverty but a high rate of crime. He highlighted the importance of new investment projects to the country. He also proposed an international peace conference to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the death of Jean Jaurès.

The chair explained that due to constraints of time, the report of the Secretary General would be presented only in writing. He noted a request from IUSY to present a report and indicated that any paper presented would be circulated and made available to all delegates, as was the case with declarations of SI Women.

Beatriz Talegon (IUSY) presented a video from the IUSY presidium. Since the previous Council meeting IUSY had met in Burma and Jerusalem, and prepared a delegation together with colleagues in Morocco and from the Polisario Front. A school of politics had been established by IUSY, which would start in the Mediterranean and move on to Asia, and America.

Closing

Luis Ayala made his closing remarks, in which he described the SI as a unique institution, clear and transparent in its work, that gives all its members the opportunity to be heard. During the Council, delegates had also had the opportunity to listen to civil society.

The International belonged to all of its members, not to one party or a group of parties, and it would continue to be here after those present had left politics. The Council had delivered on democracy, on Syria, on peace, on the economy, on the Middle East and the organisation had much to implement over the next six months. The finances were difficult due to a lack of contribution from some parties, and the organisation was very grateful to those who contributed with donations, or by supporting our meetings. He thanked the CHP for their generosity and hospitality.

George Papandreou underlined that the SI differed from other international organisations as it offered an alternative, uniting disparate groups in conflicts, coming up with proposals on Africa, Syria and climate change. Its voice was also carried by its member parties, the largest such organisation, a voice of solidarity and cross-border cooperation, of logic, debate and deliberation, of equality and transparency, of dialogue and peace.

The SI is more and more necessary and we need to work together for our voice to be heard. Only a united SI can play an effective and important role, and as we don't have huge resources we need to pull together and not splinter the movement. We want to see our member parties be engaged and of course our citizens. I planted a tree in Gezi Park this morning symbolising that politics is a word originating from the capacity of citizens to collectively make this world a better one.

The meeting in Istanbul was an occasion to help and support those that shared the SI's democratic values, and Turkey was also undergoing a struggle to strengthen and deepen its democracy. He extended thanks to Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the CHP and all the volunteers and interpreters, and invited Faruk Logoglu to say some closing words.

Osman Faruk Logoglu (Turkey, CHP) thanked all those present, staff and interpreters. The debate had been rich, touching on present and historical events and the CHP respected all the views expressed, even when not agreeing with everything said. Like the SI, the CHP stood for solidarity, justice, dialogue and resolution of past and current conflicts. He thanked SI Women for the resolutions they had adopted and expressed appreciation for the declaration on Gezi Park, which was relevant and important to the host country.

The meeting was declared closed

End.