

Summary Minutes of the SI Council meeting in Mexico City

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OPENING

Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the SI opened the meeting. He warmly thanked the host parties, the PRI and PRD, their leaders, César Camacho and Jesús Zambrano, and all those who had worked to make the meeting a success. He identified Mexico as a country of particular historical significance to the International, with a tradition of great social movements for justice and freedom. The SI member parties in Mexico were the carriers of those traditions.

He referred to the challenges facing the world; the ongoing effects of the financial crisis and the goal of greater equality, conflicts and the search for peace, achieving free and fair elections and the desire for democracy, and the need to safeguard the freedoms and rights of migrants. The Socialist International was full of initiative, enthusiasm and activity in many parts of the world, and would focus on these major issues and challenges of the day over the course of its two-day meeting.

César Camacho Quiroz (Chair, PRI, Mexico) welcomed all delegates on behalf of the PRI and wished them success in their work for a more equal and free world. This would be achieved through social democracy. Social injustice and inequality were derived from an economic model in which financial deregulation had benefited a few and harmed far too many, and the neoliberal crisis had opened a window of opportunity for social democracy.

He outlined the programme of action of the President of the Republic and the PRI, which centred on an effective state able to enforce the political, social and economic rights of its citizens. The goal was the culmination of the democratic transition and economic growth that would generate quality jobs, reducing poverty and social inequality.

He concluded that only with freedom was equality possible. The government was without question inspired by its social democratic convictions to implement ideas, programmes and actions that would bring equality, freedom and peace.

Jesus Zambrano (Chair, PRD, Mexico) welcomed those present to Mexico on behalf of the PRD, which had contributed to strengthening democracy, stability and democratic governance. At the centre of this was the Pact for Mexico, a national agreement for democratic transformation to change the economic model and to achieve a society of rights and social equality. This reflected a fundamental need to strengthen the Mexican State against monopolies, corruption and organised crime.

He expressed concern at the economic performance of the country, which he attributed to similar economic and social policies implemented by successive governments, despite an increase in political pluralism. He hoped that the path of constructive dialogue between the PRI and PRD could be regained.

The PRD's participation in the work of this Council sought to obtain the best results in favour of democracy, social equality, gender equality, solidarity and peace among peoples, the defence of the environment, for societies to achieve a better quality of life. He expressed his hope for a successful Council.

George Papandreou (SI President) thanked the host parties and their leaders and greeted the delegates with a warm welcome. He referred to Mexico as a strong actor for peace in the region and globally, with the SI's Mexican member proponents of the ambition for peace.

He reflected on the prevailing financial situation in the world, as although there was some optimism and signs of growth, this was not reflected across society as a whole. A growing divide was evident between the most wealthy, who were becoming wealthier, and the middle class and poor. The prosperity of countries could therefore not be measured by GDP alone but should take into account inequality as an index of a healthy society. With this in mind, he announced that the Socialist International would launch a new commission on the issue of inequality, working with prominent politicians and advised by respected progressive intellectuals.

The organisation would equally continue its work on climate change in the run-up to the Paris Summit in 2015. It would remain the movement searching for more cooperation and understanding at a global level to ensure the common values for a global citizenship. This work was epitomised by the stance taken on migration and the development of a charter for the rights of migrants. He concluded by emphasising that the SI was a movement to humanise and democratise globalisation, standing for universal values that transcend the politics of fear, to bring to the world a new politics of hope.

FIRST WORKING SESSION

FIRST MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“Our priorities in the global economy”

Adrián Gallardo (PRI, Mexico) noted that in recent years the world had seen financial instability, low growth and increased social inequality. The main causes of the crisis were rates of return on capital higher than growth, inadequate regulation of financial markets, the limited capacity of national states to respond to challenges, the fiscal crisis of the welfare state and challenges to democracy. The vision of the PRI was to propose three axes for the social-democratic strategic agenda – values of freedom and equality, economic policies against poverty and inequality and effective democracy.

The chair announced that the meeting was being transmitted live in English, French and Spanish on the website of the Socialist International.

Richard Parker expressed his regret that the US Democratic party was not a member of the SI, which preserved the traditions of serving the improvement of basic conditions for human beings. He reflected on the common history and shared future of his country and Mexico.

He sought to address the misunderstanding that economic law were inescapable natural laws. Social democracy needed to continue to challenge capitalism, paying particular attention to five things. These were the globalisation of production, worldwide consumption growth, advertising and promotion, the global dissemination of information, and the nuclear weapons of global finance. The task was to use the coordinated political will of progressive forces to tame the destructive forces of capitalism, to ensure that prosperity was shared.

He summarised the main elements that would be discussed as priorities in the global economy as inequality, corruption, big data and the environments. Inequality within and between nations was expanding, and political and economic systems were being undermined by the cancer of corruption. Big data was simultaneously a danger and an opportunity, as its power could be harnessed to gather critical information on tax evasion or other financial irregularities. Parties on the left needed to continue to raise their voices on the environment and the damage done by capitalism to the earth.

Eero Heinäluoma (SDP, Finland) identified income inequality and its social effects as an extremely important theme for social democrats. Under the decades of neoliberalism, these inequalities have grown. These policies needed to end, as growing inequality was completely unacceptable. Financial markets must work for the citizens and not vice versa, and tax havens must be abolished through international cooperation. Such cooperation is also necessary for reducing the strength of financial markets through a tax on transactions.

Svetlina Yolcheva (BSDP, Bulgaria) remarked that the global financial and economic crisis required a new relationship with the capitalist system, which in its present state could solve neither any of humanity's problems nor environmental problems, the fight against hunger or the struggle for work. In the recent European elections, social democrats had not been able to convince the people that capitalism had reached its limits and the social democratic ideals needed to be imposed as a global phenomenon.

Hermes Binner (PS, Argentina) referred to the difficulties faced by democratic societies in sustaining policies that allowed the full satisfaction of the essential needs of human beings. The common task of all socialists would always be the defence of basic social rights. Argentinians, like the rest of the emerging world, were preoccupied with the economic situation and faced by economic persecution in the form of the vulture funds pushing the country towards default. The global economy needed more transparency and action against organised corruption.

Ouaffa Hajji (President, SIW) reported on the meetings of the executive and council of SIW on 26-27 June, thanking the women's organisations of the PRI and PRD for their organisational contributions. SIW had debated the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and asked member parties to work towards this, nearly 20 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women. More action was also needed in relation to inequality and women's rights, in particular an end to all gender discrimination. SIW had also launched an international campaign against violence towards women.

Saúl Escobar (PRD, Mexico) referred to Thomas Piketty's thesis that capitalism is structurally unjust and produces growing inequality. This inequality was a central intellectual theme of the day – in Mexico low growth and ineffective policies had led to more insecurity and less well-being. To combat inequality, financial capital had to respect the law, and trade liberalisation needed to be combined with other means and not seen as a solution in itself. The state needed to participate in the regulation of the economy, and international institutions were needed to combat inequality and capital flight.

Alfred Gusenbauer (SPÖ, Austria) noted that while money was cheaper than at almost any moment, individuals and small businesses were experiencing a credit reduction. Banks were using cheap money to clean up their balance sheets and make new profits, and investing directly in the stock market. We were reaching the point where another bubble would burst, as financial trends were not supported by the real economy. The role of governments was to change this behaviour. The SI would establish a new international commission to fight against inequality, a vital task for socialists.

End of the morning session.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Pedro Boscoso (PSOE, Spain) portrayed the SI as the democratic alternative to the right, which defends social rights, well-being, social justice, democracy, human rights, freedom, equality, development, development, the fight against poverty and many more. But the left had less of a common message on an international level than the right in recent years. He identified three areas on which particular clarity was needed – fiscal responsibility, corruption and equality.

Bernal Jiménez (PLN, Costa Rica) stated that it was impossible to talk about the economy of a country or a region without touching upon the global economy. But for developing countries, development depended not only on global growth but also on domestic policies and transformational structural changes. He identified some of the tools necessary for redistribution in Latin America as a minimum wage, an education policy centred on technological aspects and policies focused on industrial development and modernisation of the labour market.

Umut Oran (CHP, Turkey) explained that for a strong economy countries needed to build a strong democracy in order to obtain a strong society. Social democrats were creating such functional democracies, with fair economies. He explained that Turkey's fragile economy showed that without a functional democracy there was not economic prosperity. He called for the SI to look into the potentially harmful effect that the TTIP would have on world trade.

Ma Hui (CPC, China) shared Chinese perspectives on the global economic situation and economic governance. He called for responsible macroeconomic policies from the major economies, an open and cooperative global economic and trade system and the reform of international economic, financial and monetary systems. He echoed the SI view that global financial crises should be overcome in progressive, comprehensive ways through solidarity among different countries.

Gia Jorjoliani (SDD, Georgia) called for new approaches, more decisive action and increase in the intellectual level of social democracy. Within this scope fell the resolution of international conflicts, international solidarity among social movements and the eradication of inequality. He reported on developments in Georgia and the challenges faced in overcoming the neoliberal and authoritarian legacy of the previous regime, in order to take the first steps towards the creation of a social state.

SECOND MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“Our efforts for peace and the resolution of conflicts”

Pendukeni livula-Ithana (SWAPO, Namibia) reported that though her region of southern Africa was enjoying relative peace and democracy, in other parts of the continent this was not the case. The largest casualties of conflicts and terrorism were women and children. Ongoing conflicts needed dialogue and consultation for peaceful and mutually accepted solutions. She called for women to be allowed to play a more significant role in public affairs, in particular in the field of conflict resolution.

Colette Avital (Israel, Meretz) reported that the bodies had been discovered of three Israeli students kidnapped two weeks earlier, and expressed the sadness and incomprehension felt faced with their brutal assassination. With each murder, bomb or missile against Israel, fewer Israelis believed in an opportunity for peace. Peace in the Middle East remained a key concern of the SI, but the optimism of the Arab Spring had been replaced by sadness at the hundreds of thousands of deaths in Libya, Iraq and Syria.

Luis Sánchez (Mexico, PRD) spoke of the need to avoid a return to the levels of war and barbarism experienced during the 20th century. He called for an end to an era of catastrophes and for peace, identifying non-violence as the most effective principle of social action, responding to human aspirations for peace, justice, freedom and dignity. Peace, he concluded, was not possible without social cohesion and the respect of human, political, social and economic rights.

Carolina Diaz (Mexico, PRI) stated that foreign policy should be consistent with domestic policy, as respect for the state of law, improving public security and achievement of justice represented values of peace in those regions threatened by instability and confrontation. Mexico's foreign policy supported regional peace processes in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, with a commitment to peace and respect for international law. The SI Council was an occasion to redouble common efforts for a better world with permanent development, social justice, security and peace.

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) observed that the period since the last Council had seen the aggravation and intensification of many conflicts. External interference, intolerance, social injustice and violations of fundamental rights were at the origin of the majority of conflicts in the world. Indispensable for their resolution would be the elimination of external factors aggravating the conflict and the engagement of all concerned parties in favour of peace and national reconciliation.

Purificación Causapié (Spain, PSOE) spoke of the role of social democracy in confronting the economic crisis, working for greater social cohesion, equality, job creation and well-being. She drew attention to the ongoing struggle for women's rights, in particular sexual and reproductive rights which are fundamental in a secular state. The SI had an important role to play in guaranteeing gender equality and equality regardless of ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Olena Schomorochenko (Ukraine, SDPU) reported on events in Ukraine and the protests leading to many civilian deaths. She rejected claims of a civil war in Ukraine as Russian propaganda and called for the restoration of the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state. The people of Ukraine were the victims of a war waged by the Kremlin against a sovereign state, but as a result of the revolution the people had once more become powerful in Ukraine.

Alexander Romanovich (Russian Federation, A Just Russia) responded to the accusations against the government of Russia by drawing delegates' attention to audio-visual material prepared by his party on events in Ukraine. He referred to a coup d'état by a pro-western nationalist minority, which had violated universal human rights. He expressed the view that Moscow was seeking to stabilise the situation in Ukraine and bring peace.

END OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIRST DAY.

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SECOND DAY – THIRD SESSION

Report of the Ethics Committee

Gilles Mahieu (PS, Belgium) delivered a report on the work of the Ethics committee, which had examined the various applications for membership and adopted a position based on established criteria and the Ethical Charter of the SI. The committee had decided to propose that Republican Turkish Party (CTP), Cyprus be upgraded to full membership of the SI, and the reinstatement of consultative status for the Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan (SDPA). Membership status was maintained at the same level for parties in Belarus (BSDP-NH), Central African Republic (MLPC), Kenya (LPK), Kazakhstan (OSDP) and the Polisario Front. On the new applications for membership, the recommendation of the Ethics Committee was to grant consultative status to the People's United Party (PUP) of Belize, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), and the People's Harmony Party of Latvia, and observer status to the National Union for the Development and Renewal (UNDR) of Chad, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the Swazi Democratic Party (SWADEPA).

The report was adopted unanimously by the Council.

Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD) reported that the first part of 2014 had been financially very difficult. Income for the year was £300,000 a mere 20% of the expected income and more than 135 parties had not paid fees for the current year. Though some parties had genuine financial difficulties, others were refusing to pay unilaterally after losing elections at the last Congress. Parties with more than three years of outstanding fees would therefore be given the opportunity to agree a payment plan in line with their financial capacities, or lose their membership of the SI. He presented the audited accounts for the year 2013.

Abdramane Sylla (Mali, RPM) expressed concern that a small group of parties had responded to losing democratic elections by a refusal to pay fees and suggested that efforts be made to bring them back into the organisation.

The chair noted that though the parties refusing to pay had a debt of £800,000, the 120 parties actively participating in the activities of the organisation also had a combined debt of £1,400,000. He urged those present to ensure that their parties paid their membership fees.

The report of the committee was adopted unanimously by the Council

The audited accounts for 2013 were adopted unanimously by the Council.

THIRD MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“Our work to strengthen and deepen democracy”

Ahmed Ould Daddah (Mauritania, RFD) recognised that democracy in Africa was advancing very slowly, but identified great advances in certain countries in western Africa, such as Ghana, Niger, Senegal and Mali. In Mauritania, however, the situation was critical as recent elections were a masquerade, with only 20% participation. Mauritania needed the support and solidarity of SI member parties in its struggle for democracy.

Jesús Ortega (Mexico, PRD) noted that the crisis of capitalism in 2008 had caused many to question liberal democracy and the market economy as the ultimate solution to the problems of humanity. For socialist, the question was about the economy, state and democracy necessary to build just and free societies. Socialists needed to go beyond representative democracy towards more direct and participative democracy, and forms of democratic representation beyond national borders to tackle supranational problems.

Arturo Huicochea Alanís (Mexico, PRI) considered that social democracy was searching to regain its leadership in the public debate and assert its electoral strength. The shared challenge was to regain interest in politics. He proposed an efficient state for a democracy that not only governs but also transforms, as expressed by the President Peña Nieto. Here as in the whole world, social democracy required democrats and he proposed a social democratic alliance to make best use of ‘big data’ to build collective intelligence from a social democratic perspective.

Gwede Mantashe (South Africa, ANC) outlined the experience of democracy in Africa, and the support of the ANC for democracy no matter what the situation. The SI needed to engage with individual countries and review its guiding principles for when democratically elected governments lose power in different ways. He called for the SI Council to dedicate more time to the discussion of the philosophy and principles of social democracy.

Ebrahim Ebrahim (South Africa, ANC) considered the challenges to democracy in the face of conflict around the world. Democracy could not be imposed, and he called on the SI to intervene where there was conflict, taking a solid position in condemnation of any attempts at regime change by the great powers.

Henry Ramos (Venezuela, AD) reported on the situation in Venezuela, where the Mesa de Unidad Democrática had suspended dialogue with the government as conditions relating to governing based on the constitution, an end to repression and violence and the disarmament of armed groups. He called for the adoption of a declaration calling for dialogue, liberation of political prisoners, respect for human rights, the formation of a truth commission and renewal of the expired public authorities.

Edmonde Supplice Beauzile (Haiti, Fusion) 1658 spoke of the challenges of respecting the human right to alimentation, which was violated more than any other. Conflict was a major cause of hunger, and multilateral efforts were needed to bring peace and stability. She further noted that in Haiti democracy was still in its infancy, and the greatest priority was that political power should be exercised taking into account distribution of wealth and the weakest in society.

Shafqat Tanweer (Pakistan, PPP) expressed the sentiment that democracy is the best revenge, as was the case when Benazir Bhutto was elected prime minister in 1988. Though the non-democratic forces in Pakistan had carried out assassinations and terrorism, the country had seen a democratic transfer of power for the first time in 2013, and democracy was a means with which to combat terrorism.

María de Lourdes Santiago (Puerto Rico, PIP) called the persistence of colonialism one of the great challenges to the protection and strengthening of democracy. Following the decision of The SI Council in Turkey, the SI President had attended the most recent meeting of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation. In Puerto Rico, vast majority of the population had voted no to the colonial regime in November 2012, and a deep economic crisis had resulted from the model of dependence and perpetuation of poverty that was colonialism.

Francisco Rosales (Nicaragua, FSLN) spoke of the need for the SI to be more active in the resolution of the problem of poverty on a global level that the market had been unable to solve. In this society losses had been socialised, but profits privatised. He also alluded to the problems with installing democracy as seen in Iraq and Libya. What was needed was a reinvention of the United Nations and the rewriting of the universal social contract.

Felipe Jeldres (IUSY) gave the position of the socialist youth on the uncertainties facing the world – the crisis of capitalism and advance of the extreme right in Europe, multidimensional inequality and lack of security in America and need for greater support for cries for democracy and self-determination in Africa. IUSY's vision was for the SI to be a permanent motor for change with influence in international society, with the help of IUSY, who represented the generation which would build the future of the International.

MIGRATIONS: defining an SI Charter for migrants

Habib El Malki (Morocco, USFP) emphasised the importance of migration to development, stability and peace around the world. He drew attention to the plight of migrant children and the multiplication of conflicts which was at the origin of major population movements in different regions. He reported on the previous meeting of the SI Migrations Committee, which had adopted the Tangiers Declaration, which invited all SI members to contribute to the drafting of a Charter of Rights of Migrants. The charter would express the SI doctrine, recording the principles and values of the organisation.

Amalia García Medina (Mexico, PRD) underlined the relevance of the theme of migration in Mexico and the surrounding region. She reflected on the humanitarian crisis associated with the mass movement of young people to the United States and the need for a humanitarian response from the government of that country. She stressed the need to work for the rights of all migrants, as regardless of their migratory status they remain human beings.

Gerardo Hernández Tapia (Mexico, PRI) proposed the strengthening of links between communities of origin, transit and destination of migrants, recognition of their contribution, promotion of migrants' human and civil rights and ending the criminalisation of those without documents. He expressed support for the Charter of Rights of Migrants and hoped that the SI could be the light at the end of the tunnel for all the migrants of the world.

Sandra Torres (Guatemala, UNE) identified migration as a central theme, affecting many of the countries represented at the meeting with the exodus of Central American and Mexican children to the United States. These children faced great risks to be reunited with their families and rapid action was required to prevent further deaths and tragedies on the US-Mexican border. She called for urgent steps to be taken to resolve the humanitarian crisis and provide for family reunification.

Abdramane Sylla (Mali, RPM) asked how migration could be humanised. In west Africa, it was a theme at the centre of development policy, and Mali was simultaneously a country of origin, transit and arrival. He stressed the need for the Charter of Rights of Migrants to grant greater rights to migrants, in particular in their country of arrival, as part of a road with more solidarity and humanity.

The **chair** closed the discussion on migrations by reading a proposed declaration from the PRI (Mexico), PRD (Mexico) and UNE (Guatemala) on family reunification.

Adoption of declarations and resolutions

The **declaration on family reunification** was adopted.

The **declaration on Argentina** was adopted.

The **declaration on Puerto Rico** was adopted with one amendment for the purposes of clarity proposed by the RPM, Mali.

The **declaration on democracy in the Arab World** was adopted.

The **declaration on the insurgency in Iraq** was adopted.

Saúl Escobar Toledo (Mexico, PRI) made some clarifications and read additional phrases to be incorporated into the declaration on the global economy.

The **declaration on priorities in the global economy** was adopted.

The chair referred to the conflict in Western Sahara, that had been treated by the international and its committees, emphasising that the plank of work of the Mediterranean Committee needed to be followed. In the light of a draft resolution presented by parties from Mexico and Morocco, he underlined the importance of listening to all the actors and hear their views, which as it had not been possible at the committee level should be granted in the plenary. He gave the floor to a representative of Polisario in accordance with the spirit of the International to hear all views.

Fatma Mehdi (Western Sahara, Polisario Front) addressed the meeting on the situation of the Saharawi people, who had been living in exile for 40 years. She called for the right of self-determination to be supported by the SI with regard to the Saharawi, and to send a delegation to see what the situation was in Western Sahara to see the situation in the refugee camps.

The chair clarified that the SI had taken a position on the situation in Western Sahara, at various meetings. The XXIV Congress had adopted a new vision committing the International to work on this in a joint effort. He proposed that the mission to the region previously agreed by the SI Mediterranean Committee would be carried out as early as possible and report to the next Council meeting. Should that prove difficult within the timeframe between now and the next Council, then the SI President and Secretary General would undertake such a visit.

José Antonio Espejo (Spain, PSOE) reported that the PSOE had been in the camps the previous year.

Rubén Berríos (Puerto Rico, PIP) stated that it should be avoided that the position of the SI could be interpreted as denying the right to self-determination.

José Rosales (Nicaragua, FSLN) called for a rejection of the draft resolution as it was and a redrafting in accordance with the agreements in Cape Town and Cascais.

Gwede Mantashe (South Africa, ANC) expressed the opinion that the resolution could not be adopted, but the discussion could take place at the next Council after a visit to Morocco and Western Sahara.

The chair recapped the proposal for a mission to Western Sahara before the next Council, in the absence of which the SI President and Secretary General would visit. He also proposed that as secretary general he would formulate the position of the International in line with the very clear positions on self-determination and commitment to the resolution of the conflict.

The proposals were accepted.

Closing

Luis Ayala noted that the discussions of the Council had proved that the International was of importance to those fighting for fundamental values and principles. The International remained extremely active, with many initiatives including committee meetings and missions to conflict areas, undertaken with few resources but much enthusiasm. The task ahead was to continue empowering the SI to respond to all the expectations of its members.

George Papandreou expressed his appreciation for the important interventions heard over the two days of the meeting, and thanked once more Cesar Camacho, Jesus Zambrano, the PRI and the PRD for providing a solid platform with their warm hospitality. The process by which the International worked, and its efforts to reach a common position, led to an environment in which a step could result in a step forward where others had not succeeded.

The responses to the great challenges of mankind were not limited by technical capabilities or resources, but a matter of policy, the quality of which was deeply influenced by power imbalances. Those gathered also bore the responsibility of creating a world based on fundamental rights, and not determined by the rules of the powerful. Decisions taken by the SI on migration, inequality, climate change and conflict were important not just for the movement but the world, and he expressed his

confidence that the progressive movement and the world would overcome those challenges by working more closely together.

The meeting was declared closed

End.