

Minutes of the meeting of the SI Council
United Nations, Geneva

12-13 December 2014

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OPENING

Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the SI, opened the meeting, expressing the welcome felt at the UN which represents values central to the political identity of the SI. Goals such as sustainable development, eliminating poverty, protecting human rights, fighting climate change, gender equality and protecting children were central goals of both the UN and Socialist International. He added that it was especially pleasing to welcome both the Director-General of UNOG, Michael Møller, and the High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres.

Michael Møller (Director-General UNOG) welcomed with great pleasure all delegates to the Palais des Nations. He outlined that he was a strong advocate for closer relations between the UN and parliaments, parliamentarians and political parties and was glad for the opportunity to exchange views. He spoke of the progress needed in injecting the UN with parliaments and political parties, connecting at a global and local level to mobilise support for global action in an inter-connected world.

On the subject of international peace and security he considered that the multiple crises had generated a sentiment that current structures and approaches were insufficient and potentially ineffective. A close look at crisis-response mechanisms and conflict resolution tools was needed. Violations of human rights in many places had created conditions where conflict and instability were more likely to occur.

He acknowledged the need for a deeper discussion on shared values and principles, and how to ensure respect for them. The multilateral system was created to avoid might equals right, and a world was needed where universal values and solidarity were respected by everybody everywhere. Only a strong multilateral system, fully supported by all, could respond to threats to international peace and security.

António Guterres (UN HC for Refugees) reported on the staggering number of people displaced in the world, which had reached 51.3 million. The number of people displaced on a daily basis by conflict had risen from 14,000 in 2011 to 32,000 in 2013 and would rise again in 2014. The mega crisis in Syria and Iraq, a multiplication of new conflicts in Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ukraine and Nigeria, and old crises that went on without a solution for Palestinian, Somali, Afghan and Congolese refugees had created a situation with no parallel since WW2.

He underlined the need for strong multilateral institutions without which a multipolar world could be a very dangerous thing. The humanitarian system was reaching its break-up level, with the volume of humanitarian resources insufficient for the needs faced. Humanitarian organisations could not clean up the mess created by political leaders. To make matters more complicated, climate change, population growth and urbanisation were also the origin of humanitarian problems.

It had become clear that the root causes of conflict needed addressing, as humanitarian organisations could not deliver at the necessary level. He concluded that the solutions needed had a political root and could only be addressed from a political perspective.

George Papandreou (SI President) thanked António Guterres and Michael Møller for their messages. The SI felt very much at home when hosted by the UN, as it shared the goal of good governance based on the rule of law, shared values of peace, human rights and democracy, social justice and sustainable

development. The movement represented global values bridging nations, ethnicities and religions, and the challenge was to protect the rights of each and every individual and their collective societies.

He commented on the new challenges faced in an interdependent, globalised society. A lack of a globalised governance system resulted in the faster spread of crises. Inequality was evident in concentration of wealth and power in media and politics. The lack of action to end poverty and injustice had created fear, anger and frustration, and the reaction had been a politics of fear and populism and the further splintering of our societies. The challenge for the SI was to show an alternative vision.

There was a need for solidarity, with refugees, those suffering from Ebola, those persecuted and those fighting fundamentalism and intolerance. The strength of the SI was its ideas and values, which were stronger than any form of violence. At a difficult time, the Council was gathered to show a different vision, for a more humane, democratic and sustainable world.

FIRST WORKING SESSION

FIRST MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“International peace and security: the resolution of conflicts and countering terrorism”

Elio Di Rupo (Belgium, PS) reflected on the development of war and terrorism in the world and difficulty of refugees and displaced people due to war, climate change and demographics. Tribalism and nationalism were unbearable threats, and he underlined the need for stronger international institutions, such as the UN, to tackle global problems. The SI was also a place where socialists and social democrats could achieve determined international action. If leaders did not pay attention to international problems, these could overtake national issues and threaten stability everywhere.

Hadi al Bahra (Syria, National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces) thanked the SI for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Syrian people, who were facing the largest humanitarian and security crisis since WW2. The people wanted a free, democratic and inclusive society without the threat of a tyrannical regime or a small group of terrorists, where all ethnicities, religions and sects have an equal voice. He called on the international community to help to create the conditions for a political solution, by supporting the moderate opposition, isolating the Assad regime and addressing the humanitarian crisis.

Hemin Hawrami (Iraq, KDP) greeted the Council on behalf of President Masoud Barzani, who was on the front line of the war against ISIS, which posed a regional and international threat, requiring an international response. The Peshmerga were protecting all of the society, including Kurds Christians, Arabs and Turkmen, but lacked the weapons to outgun ISIS. Their priority was to protect the Kurdistan region, based on the principles of co-existence and respect for human rights. His message was that the KDP supported and welcomed support from all those who were against ISIS.

Aziz Othman (Syria, KYP) spoke on behalf of Kurds in Syria, who were proud to be represented at this international meeting of democratic parties. He related how the Assad regime had controlled the lives of the Kurdish people for 50 years. The Kurds, who were living in their historic land, now faced the new threat of ISIS and were proud to be fighting those terrorists on behalf of the whole world.

Salah Mohamed Muslim (Syria, PYD) described the resistance of Kurds in Kobani, his home, against brutal attacks. Syrian Kurds had for years been subject to assimilation but since 2011, a democratic administrative system had been under development. This could be a model for a future Syria but was under threat from both the old regime and ISIS. The YPG and other forces were defending humanitarian values in Syria, and its political party the PYD was seeking the support of the SI and membership in the organisation. He thanked delegates for their support in the struggle.

Baban Eliassi (Iran, PDKI) stated that the threat posed by ISIS to regional security required a global response. In Iran, the regime was also responsible for repressing peaceful attempts by national and religious minorities to gain rights, with the Kurds having suffered 40 years of constitutionalised threats. He called for initiatives in support of people from ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East.

Khalid Azizi (Iran, KDP) spoke of his pride that Peshmerga fighters were engaging ISIS in the name of international security and stability. The Kurdish issue could no longer be denied, in particular as the Kurds were establishing peace and security in the region. He identified Iran as a source of instability in the Middle East, with its influence in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. The international community had not been active enough, and he called for an SI meeting on the crisis in the Middle East to define its role and discuss micro- and macro politics in the region.

Sadi Ahmed Pire (Iraq, PUK) identified some very serious problems, namely the ISIS ideology of tyranny and extremism and the question of refugees. A political solution was needed in Iraq to the problem of refugees and it would be necessary to unite Sunnis and Shias. Action was needed to switch off the financing of ISIS and terrorist groups, and to prevent any logistical and economic support from donor countries. He invited delegations to visit Iraqi Kurdistan to gain a first-hand impression of the situation, thanking them for their solidarity against terrorism and tyranny.

Umut Oran (Turkey, CHP) explained the views of his party on Syria, Iraq and the Turkish Kurd situation, underlining the urgency of the global and regional threat posed by ISIS. He called for Turkey to join the international coalition against ISIS. He stated that the Kurdish problem could be resolved only through a transparent dialogue among all the actors, and ensuring the equality of all Turkish citizens.

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) reflected that peace was at the centre of the SI, in particular in light of an escalating in regional and sub-regional violence. Terror had spread in Nigeria and the Sahel, and efforts for peace had been undermined in the Great Lakes region. He expressed continued hope for a long-lasting solution to the Israel Palestine conflict, and called for a UN peace-keeping force in Central African Republic.

Carme Chacón (Spain, PSOE) agreed with previous speakers that the threat to regional security affects the whole world. She proposed measures that the SI could take on the issue, such as members recognising Palestine as a state, rejection of both the Islamic State and Assad regime, and a demand for a higher priority on fighting jihadist terrorism. Members could also demand more action against tax havens which allow public money to be stolen.

Radhi Almoosawi (Bahrain, Wa'ad) greeted the Council on behalf of Ibrahim Sharif, a prisoner of conscience detained by the authorities in Bahrain, who had rejected all calls for his release. On the subject of conflict and terrorism, he reflected that the absence of sustainable development in the GCC countries had created the conditions for ISIS and other terrorist organisations to thrive.

End of the morning session.

AFTERNOON SESSION

FIRST MAIN THEME (continued)
International peace and security

Nabeel Shaath (Palestine, Fatah) paid tribute to the important role of the SI on the question of Palestine and search for peace. However it was 22 years since the Oslo Agreement and Palestine was still occupied. It was impossible to wait any longer and Palestine was therefore seeking recognition. He expressed his hope that elections in Israel would see progress for the peace camp, and a greater role for the SI. He spoke in favour of maintaining a united SI including those seeking to build a better and more progressive Arab world.

Colette Avital (Israel, Meretz) assessed that international politics were badly in need of brilliant new thinking. The Middle East conflict had lasted for seven decades during which an agreement had not been reached despite awareness of what was needed. Fear and mistrust of Palestinians were now prevalent in Israel. Those within the SI fighting for peace often felt powerless, but needed to continue the fight. She described the imminent elections as a struggle for the soul of Israel, with a real effort made to regroup all progressives in Israeli society on the path to peace.

Mustafa Barghouti (Palestine, PNI) described the situation in Gaza during the last war, and the destruction and loss of life. He held the Israeli government responsible for the increase in violence and destroying the peace process. The struggle was not between two equal sides and he called on those present to encourage steps to clearly recognise Palestine as a step forward.

Avshalon Vilan (Israel, Meretz) considered that instead of counting who had suffered more in the conflict, both sides needed to get serious about reaching an agreement. He spoke of the Israeli elections and his hope that Netanyahu could be replaced, so that moderate Palestinians and moderate Israelis could work together to bring change.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng (Senegal, PS) expressed support for recognition of Palestine and a two-state solution and called for sustained measures against ISIS. He reflected on conflicts due to bad governance, inequality and corruption in Africa. Upcoming democratic processes could be challenging if results were not respected and the International should remain available to support those countries. Internal differences within the SI also needed resolving.

Zlatko Lagumdžija (Bosnia & Herzegovina, SDP) gave details of the rise in terrorism and increase in deaths caused by hostility between different ethnic and religious groups. Terrorism was also caused by state sponsored violence. Poverty and injustice were at the root of the crisis. He considered that the best way to deal with terrorism was to promote the values of shared societies and united people.

Hermes Binner (Argentina, PS) stated that there were no easy solutions to ongoing conflicts. Some still perceived force and violence to be the answer, but the challenge was to respond with democratic means, using existing institutional channels to build consensus. He reflected that though Latin America was the most peaceful and stable region of the planet, the challenge of economic and social inequality remained.

Ebrahim Ebrahim (South Africa, ANC) agreed that conflict could and must be resolved through engagement, dialogue and consensus. The ANC rejected a military solution to the problems. He expressed support for the recognition of the Palestinian state, Palestinian unity and non-violent resistance. He noted the struggles of the Saharawi people, the crisis in Burma, and the heroic struggle of Peshmerga against ISIS.

Manual Laguarda (Uruguay, PS) considered that security goes beyond ending wars and countering terrorism, but was also about human rights. He called for peace to be the major cause for the SI, and for a campaign for negotiated solutions to civil wars. Solidarity was needed with the victims of ISIS and international relation within the framework of the UN and international law.

Xu Lyuping (China, CPC) stated that the world was undergoing profound changes, facing the challenges of conflict and underdevelopment. An innovative and responsible attitude was needed, safeguarding security through peace, development, cooperation and multilateralism. The CPC hoped to deepen dialogue with the SI on areas of common interest to contribute to peace, security and development.

Ahmed Ould Daddah (Mauritania, RFD) spoke of the great potential of Africa, but also the major challenges it faces, in particular the Ebola virus. The Sahel region was full of wealth and riches but its potential was yet to be realised. He described Mauritania as bottom of the class due to a lack of democracy and transparency. The SI could play a special role in preventing crisis by tackling its causes.

Nicos Hadjistephanou (Cyprus, EDEK) expressed alarm at the increased level of conflicts and threats to peace in the world. He reported that Turkey's actions were preventing Cyprus from gaining the benefits of natural gas fields and had violated international law. He asked that the SI express support for the government of Cyprus, condemn Turkish actions and call for respect of sovereignty of Cyprus's economic zone.

Kutlay Erk (Cyprus, CTP) reflected that there were enough problems in the region of Cyprus without further conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. He called for restraint from unilateral actions and peaceful negotiations for a comprehensive solution, expressing the view that both Greek and Turkish Cypriots have legitimate political rights, adding that conflict could not be resolved by more conflict.

Special report on Venezuela

José Antonio Viera-Gallo (Special Envoy to Venezuela) reported on his visit to Venezuela as special envoy of the SI in November 2014, in order to verify the situation of Leopoldo López, the leader of the opposition party Voluntad Popular (VP), imprisoned since February. During the visit requests for a meeting with the Venezuelan authorities had been denied, and the SI delegation, together with the wife and parents of López, had been refused permission to visit him in prison. Guards responded to attempts to greet the prisoners by the use of a loud siren to make communication impossible. Following this he had declared to the media present that, "There is no reason whatsoever to keep Leopoldo López in prison. The charges against him have no legal basis. Neither are there any motives to justify the refusal of visitors."

The mission also comprised meetings with SI member parties, representatives of the Mesa de Unidad Democrática, the Venezuelan Episcopal Conference and other relevant actors in the public life of the country.

The mission had concluded that the trial against López had seen constant violations of the principles of due process. Like the international organisms that had previously made pronouncements on the case, they considered that the charges were a form of judicial retribution for a crime of opinion or of conscience and his detention was arbitrary. The report calls on the Venezuelan authorities, in particular the judiciary, to ensure his immediate release.

Lilian Tintori (Venezuela, VP) spoke of the admiration her husband Leopoldo López had for the SI and its fight for democracy and human rights, and thanked the SI for its presence in Venezuela. She outlined the circumstances of his arrest and imprisonment. She condemned the repressive and authoritarian government, and the persecution and psychological torture it carried out. She called for an end to arbitrary detention and political imprisonment and expressed her determination to liberate Venezuela from the regime.

Ramón Guillermo Avelado (Venezuela, MUD) explained that MUD was a coalition of many parties working for peaceful, democratic change in Venezuela. It had gained the support of 42% of the population, despite anti-constitutional discrimination. They were fighting for a Venezuela with respect for human rights as set out in the constitution and he called for solidarity from democrats of all countries for their struggle.

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, relating to the applications for membership of the Socialist International and changes of membership status. In terms of changes of status, the request of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS, DR Congo) was rejected. The committee would continue to review the requests made by the Belarusian Social Democratic Party, the Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC), Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI, Iran), Nationwide Social Democratic Party (OSDP, Kazakhstan), and the Palestinian National Initiative (PNI).

Applications for membership were rejected from the Democratic Movement for the Future, MDA (Comoros), Popular Workers' Movement (Comoros), Assembly for Democracy and Development (Congo), Eritrean People's Democratic Party (Eritrea), and from the Movement Social Démocrate, MSD, the Rassemblement du Peuple pour la Démocratie et le Renouveau, RPDR, the Congolese Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Union du Peuple pour le Développement, and the Parti Travailleiste Congolais (all from the DR Congo), the Sandinista Renovation Movement, MRS, (Nicaragua), and the United Left and Peasants Party of Ukraine. The committee would continue to review applications made by the Renaissance du Bénin (Benin), Parti pour la Liberté et le Développement (Chad), Alliance des Forces Démocratiques du Congo (DR Congo), Parti Républicain Malagasy (Madagascar), National Unity Party (Maldives), Democratic Union Party, PYD, (Syria), Social Democratic Party (Tajikistan), Alliance

Nationale pour le Changement (Togo), the Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan, PSK (Turkey), and the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party.

In terms of new members, the recommendation of the Ethics Committee was to grant full member status to the Indian National Congress (INC, India) and Voluntad Popular (VP, Venezuela), consultative member status to the All Progressives Congress (APC, Nigeria), observer status to the Unified Lumumbist Party (PALU, DR Congo), Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KPIK, Iran) and Komala Party of Kurdistan (KPK, Iran) and to admit the Euro-Latin American Forum of Progressive and Socialist Parliamentarians as an associated organisation.

The report of the committee and its recommendations were agreed by the Council.

Luis Ayala made a statement clarifying the relationship with different member parties in Venezuela. The Voluntad Popular (VP) had been welcomed as a full member, joining Democratic Action (AD) and Movement for Socialism (MAS). However, A New Era (UNT) was also seeking to be a full member and both AD and VP had declared their support for this to happen at a future meeting, to help to assist and encourage the unity of progressive political forces in Venezuela.

Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD) reported that 2014 had been a difficult year financially. He reported that in accordance with the decision of the previous Council, a number of parties would cease to be members of the organisation, having made no attempt to settle membership fees owed for three or more years. Those parties were: Social Democratic Party of Albania (PSD), Antigua Labour Party (ALP), People's Electoral Movement (MEP, Aruba), Australian Labor Party (ALP), Barbados Labour Party (BLP), Botswana National Front (BNF), Party for Democracy and Progress / Socialist Party (PDP/PS, Burkina Faso), FRODEBU (Burundi), Alternative Democratic Pole (PDA, Colombia), Dominica Labour Party (DLP), Democratic Left (PID, Ecuador), Siumut (Greenland), Ata Meken (Kyrgyzstan), Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party (LSDSP), Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), Labour Party (PL, Malta), Congress of Democrats (CoD, Namibia), Labour Party (PvdA, Netherlands), New Zealand Labour Party (NZLP), País Solidario Party (PPS, Paraguay), Akbayan (Philippines), Philippines Democratic Socialist Party (PDSP), Labour Union (UP, Poland), Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D Group, European Parliament), Saint Kitts and Nevis Labour Party (SKNLP), Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLLP), St Vincent Labour Party (SVLP, St Vincent and the Grenadines), Social Democratic Party (SDP, Serbia), Social Democrats (SD, Slovenia), Democratic Convention of African Peoples (CDPA, Togo).

The chair of the committee next addressed the case of parties who had unilaterally decided not to pay their membership fees. These parties would not be permitted to attend meetings of the SI. He appealed to all parties to do all possible to pay their fees. He then presented the budget for 2015 as approved by SIFAC.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng (Senegal, PS) considered that it was essential to bring an end to a situation where parties had stopped paying contributions and attending meetings. He suggested the establishment of a committee to find a solution.

George Papandreou stated that a small number of parties had unilaterally withdrawn and this behaviour could not be accepted, as everyone needed to abide by the rules. Contact had been made

with parties that had unilaterally not paid their dues, and he did not think a separate body was needed to deal with them.

Nabil Shaath (Palestine, Fatah) expressed the importance of uniting the social democratic family. Fatah did not want a parallel organisation, and offered to help the leadership share the burden in this regard.

George Papandreou agreed that two organisations would weaken the voice of the progressive movement. Everyone could work to convince those parties to come back but the decision had been taken by the leadership to say they were welcome as long as they fulfilled their obligations.

Hussein Gohar (Egypt, SDP) apologised for the delay in paying the fee and asserted that the place of his party was in the SI.

Luis Ayala reminded the Council that the SI has a collective, legitimate leadership, elected by the Congress. Despite the withholding of some membership fees, the SI had continued to deliver and get stronger.

The report of the committee was adopted by the Council

The budget for 2015 was adopted by the Council.

Report of the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean

Miguel Vargas (Dominican Republic, PRD) gave a brief report on the meeting of SICLAC in the Dominican Republic on 9-10 May 2014, and the meeting held in Washington on 1-2 December prior to this Council. Significant decisions and resolutions had been produced at these meetings, the details of which were distributed in a leaflet to the Council.

FIRST MAIN THEME (continued)
International peace and security

Olena Skomoroshchenko (Ukraine, SDP) stated that conflicting versions of reality would be presented by Russians and Ukrainians and outlined her perception of the conflict in Ukraine, referring to military intervention by Russian regular troops. She stated that Ukraine was at war despite not invading anybody, and was fighting for its right to live and determine its own destiny. Ukraine needed territorial integrity, peace and justice and she asked for solidarity from the SI.

Alexander Romanovich (Russian Federation, SR) stated that there was not conflict between Russia and Ukraine, but a civil war between various political and ethnic parties in Ukraine. He proposed an extraordinary meeting on the conflict to establish a joint viewpoint from the SI, having travelled to areas of conflict and seen the situation on the ground. He proposed to remove language comparing the Assad regime to ISIS and calling for its removal from any declaration on Iraq and Syria.

Samad Alizada (Azerbaijan, SDPA) claimed that with the help of Russia, 20% of Azerbaijan's territory was under the control of Armenia. He felt that internationalism had been left aside, with wars, suffering and poverty widespread across the globe. The world was silent when Azerbaijan's rights were violated,

calling for a peaceful resolution when it was suffering from aggression. He called for a world without terror, and the continued fight against injustice and violations.

Mario Nalpatian (Armenia, ARF) commemorated the 100th anniversary of the genocide against the Armenian people and called on Turkey to assume responsibility. He reported that Armenia had been blockaded by neighbouring Turkey and Azerbaijan since 1993 and described Nagorno-Karabakh as an historic territory that had always belonged to Armenia. He compared the arms budgets of Azerbaijan and Armenia and argued that in such an unequal situation Armenia could not be considered an aggressor.

Svetlana Yolcheva (Bulgaria, PBSB) reflected that 25 years after the end of the Cold War many conflicts were active in the world. Global terrorism had grown in strength, and the so-called 'Islamic State' acted outside of human law and was a threat to the entire world. She called for combining the efforts of the United States, the EU, BRICS countries and other UN member state against global terrorism.

Javier Salinas Narváez (Mexico, PRD) reported on conflict in Mexico, where territorial disputes of criminal gangs linked to drug trafficking had become the most serious threat to peace and security. Increased violence, disappearances, extrajudicial executions and violations of human rights showed that the rule of law was absent in Mexico, which lacks legitimate opportunities for development and growth.

SECOND MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA

"Our work to gain new democracies and strengthen democratic governance"

Carlos Vieira da Cunha (Brazil, PDT) spoke of the trust in democracy in Brazil, where President Dilma Rousseff had recently been re-elected. Recent corruption had shamed Brazil, and those who had plundered the public coffers needed to be punished, which could strengthen Brazilian democracy. Political reform was also needed to ban private sector financing of election campaigns.

Mustafa Ben Jaafar (Tunisia, Ettakatol) reported on the role played by his party in Tunisia's transition to democracy without major crises, finding the right compromise to adopt a new constitution and electoral law. Following recent elections there was now a new political landscape in Tunisia. He also referred to the role for the SI in mobilising parties to support the Tunisian model for democracy in the Arab zone.

Sher Bahadur Deuba (Nepal, NCP) communicated the difficulties faced for democracy in Nepal, where the NCP had struggled for seven decades. Despite the abolition of the monarchy in 2008, a number of changes were still needed to consolidate democracy. A stable democratic environment with a multiparty system was key for economic growth.

Gwede Mantashe (South Africa, ANC) reflected that Africa needed African solutions for African problems, with a key role for the African Union. This had been seen in the quick solution to the military coup in Burkina Faso. Democracy should not be taken for granted and attention should be given to conflicts and war in the continent. He also called for greater interest to be taken in SI member parties that are losing power.

Salif Diallo (Burkina Faso, MPP) reported on the popular uprising in Burkina Faso following the plans of the former president to take power for life. Presidential elections would be organised in 2015. The goal

of the MPP was peace and international security, which were inseparable from democracy, socio-economic progress and the defeat of poverty. The world shared a collective security, he added.

Marina Adamovich (Belarus, BSDP-NH) noted that it would be four years since the imprisonment of Mikalai Statkevich, who had made his choice to fight for freedom and democracy. He was arrested on the day of the last presidential elections in 2010 and spent three years in isolation, but democrats in Belarus planned to make him a candidate again in 2015 to show the absence of democracy in Belarus.

Tuyakbai Zharmakhan (Kazakhstan, OSDP) noted that 23 years after Kazakhstan's independence, the process of democratisation had not been completed. The challenge was to transform the regime into a system of independent branches of government, and the goal of his party was to consolidate all democratic forces in Kazakhstan, in the name of genuine democracy and justice.

Andrés Esono Ondo (Equatorial Guinea, CPDS) described the situation where a totalitarian regime characterised by corruption, nepotism and political stagnation had ruled for over 35 years. There was no possibility of peaceful alternation of power and poverty was worsening, leaving a risk of social explosion. He called for support for the values of freedom, democracy and social justice in Equatorial Guinea.

THIRD MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“The human dimension of migration and the plight of refugees”

Marco Di Lello (Italy, PSI) highlighted the importance of migration for most countries, with a need to identify ways to make migration more human and simplify access to education and health. In Tangiers and Catania, the migrations committee had discussed the right to mobility, dignity and the search for a better life. Migration was a problem only if considered a problem, and should be seen as a resource.

Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana (Namibia, SWAPO) noted that conflicts around the world were the major causes of humanitarian suffering and displacement. She noted that despite anti-refugee sentiment in industrialised countries, 80 percent of the world's refugees were hosted in developing countries. The only viable solution was a political one based on good governance, democracy and respect for human rights.

Adoption of minutes of previous meeting, elections, declarations and resolutions

The minutes of the previous council meeting were adopted.

The chair announced that two vice-presidents of the SI had left their positions, namely Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba (Spain, PSOE) and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (Turkey, CHP). Their respective parties had nominated candidates to fill the vacant positions.

The Council elected Pedro Sánchez (Spain, PSOE) as a vice-president of the Socialist International.

The Council elected Umut Oran (Turkey, CHP) as a vice-president of the Socialist International.

The chair referred to the commitment made at the previous Council to send a mission to Western Sahara. This would take place through the Mediterranean Committee, for which a new chair needed to be elected.

The Council elected Carme Chacón (Spain, PSOE) as the chair of the Mediterranean Committee.

The **declaration on peace in the Middle East** was adopted.

The **declaration on terror in northern Iraq and Syria** was adopted.

The **resolution on Venezuela** was adopted.

The **declaration on resolution of conflicts** was adopted.

The **declaration on Belarus** was adopted.

The **resolution on Ebola** was adopted.

The **declaration on democracy** was adopted.

The Council endorsed a **petition for the release of Ebrahim Sharif in Bahrain**.

The **declaration on elections in Uruguay** was adopted.

The chair read a **declaration of solidarity with the students of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, in Mexico**, which was adopted.

The Council agreed that the issue of the Armenian Genocide would be included on the agenda of the next Council.

The chair invited comments on a draft that had been circulated on democratic transitions in Africa

Pendukeni livulu-Ithana (Namibia, SWAPO) stated that it was difficult to support the document as it addressed a particular situation in a particular country, rather than democratic transitions in Africa.

The chair proposed that the issue be included for a debate in the first Africa committee meeting the following year, which would then report back to the Council. The Council agreed.

The delegation of the **CPDS, Equatorial Guinea** made a request for an amendment on Equatorial Guinea to be added to the declaration on democracy, as it could no longer be included in the declaration of democratic transitions in Africa.

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) reiterated that as the document had not been discussed at the level of the Africa committee, it could not be adopted.

The chair noted that as the draft document had been withdrawn it was difficult to discuss an amendment, but that the situation in Equatorial Guinea should be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Africa committee.

Closing

Luis Ayala announced that there were plenty of activities already planned including a meeting of the Mediterranean Committee and a mission to Western Sahara, meetings in Latin America, Asia-Pacific and Central and Eastern Europe.

He concluded that no party had been sent away from the International and the doors remained open for everyone who wanted to be there, working under the rules of democracy. The democratic struggle was part of the identity and history of the International and its member parties and the organisation should continue to live under the rules of democracy.

George Papandreou reflected that it was a wonder to be able to sit with members from different parts of the world, to meet, learn and discuss, dealing with difficult conflicts through new approaches to find solutions or a framework by which they can be found. He spoke of the need for shared values to combat sectarianism, fundamentalism and authoritarianism and to be in solidarity with those persecuted around the world, paying tribute to Lilian Tintori and Marina Adamovich.

He concluded by underlining his belief that the organisation need to continue to promote values for multilateral governance based on common and shared ideas of human rights and democracy and peaceful resolution of conflicts. In order to do this it needed to be united, to present a vision for a world of peace, social cohesion, justice and respect for the environment. He thanked all the delegates for their contributions to a rich discussion, positive result and effective statements over the two days of the meeting.

The meeting was declared closed

End.