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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL**

Rome, 21-22 January 1997

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Pierre Mauroy, SI President, opened the Council meeting and gave the floor immediately to the National Secretary of the host party, the PDS of Italy.

Massimo D'Alema, Italy PDS, welcomed participants to Rome, saying this was a valuable opportunity to reaffirm the reasons for peace in the most tormented trouble-spots of the world and to discuss and analyse the Socialist International's future.

He extended greetings on behalf of the Italian Left, which after the end of communism had mostly gathered within the democratic and socialist family. The long and complex process had involved the institutions of the country and the political system itself, creating a profound crisis in parties and their leadership, he said. This vital and living Left was dealing with the delicate transition taking place in Italy with maturity and courage, and was now the largest political and government force in the country. Having avoided the idea of politics itself being obscured by the spread of corruption and inequality, they had contributed significantly to restoring dignity to government action.

His party had been a guiding light in establishing an original alliance between the Left and the secular and catholic democratic forces of the centre, he said. This alliance had been able to defeat the Right and to provide a stable government after years of uncertainty, which was a new development. They intended to complete the institutional transition, which would require establishing a framework of reforms and common shared rules on which to base a new period of life for the Italian Republic.

Romano Prodi's government, he continued, and the majority which supported him, were committed to Italy's full participation in Europe and to a European interpretation affirmed through active policies towards work, education and social rights, and this was in line with their aim of strengthening the international role of Italy, particularly in the solution of crises. They had consistently supported the peace process in the Middle East. What was needed now was to strengthen and accelerate the agreement process and the consensus around it, and bar the way to new fanaticism and new fundamentalism. It was also important to help the Palestinians to develop and grow in their own country, to have jobs and dignified ways of living. This was the best way to defeat terrorism, by providing the right to security to two peoples who had chosen - we hoped for ever - the path of peaceful co-existence.

In other areas of the Mediterranean and in Africa, efforts towards new cooperation needed to be intensified. The peace agreements already in place, as in the former Yugoslavia where Italian soldiers had been serving as part of the international peace contingent, should be strengthened. In that war-tormented region the Dayton Accords had been a major step forward that had to be further advanced along with the movement for greater democracy in the area.

The fall of the Berlin wall, and the great transformation which followed, he said, had led to a special development in the experience of Italian communism, made possible by the fact that Italian communism had already been remote from the models of totalitarianism experienced elsewhere. Since it had the cultural resources required to become part of the great democratic socialist family, the Italian Left was able to leave behind the old divisions and develop common policies so as to move ahead with vigour along the road to joint activity. His party belonged to the Left which was dealing with the most difficult challenge of how to combine globalisation and democracy, how to restore government to politics and the power of government over the major changes that were reshaping the face of work and the relationship between generations.

Although there were different approaches to changes of such scope, any attitude which discarded them out of hand was not only mistaken but also indicative of a renunciation of politics. The real problem was to fill the gap between these processes and the institutions which should regulate a new kind of development, to fill the gap between scientific, technological innovation and politics, its tool of action, its true powers. The fundamental challenge to government was to extend the potential for growth and development inherent in globalisation and to curb its negative effects, and at the heart of this challenge was democracy itself. The Left would succeed if it could confirm the reasons and instruments of democratic government in these conditions. It was not an easy challenge. Globalisation produced a single world market, it punished those who tried to isolate themselves, in poorer countries it created new intense exploitation. But it also brought a new possibility of welfare and growth in consumption. It stimulated new expectations and demands for citizenship, for aid and for social protection.

Neo-liberalism had for the last decade denied this link between politics and the social issue, suggesting that everything could be left to the workings of the market. This had left us with the heavy burden of new forms of poverty and the increased gap between the economy and the vision of politics. The theoretical primacy of the market had moved the individual's fundamental rights into the background. The Left needed brave ideas, and to be nourished by common objectives to renew the delicate balance between solidarity and individual freedom.

This was where the democratic and socialist Left could demonstrate its capacity to direct the new world towards progress and growth. We had to understand how to integrate countries and continents in their joint destiny and tap the potential for innovation without thus penalising the majority. We needed projects that would not prevent the mobility of capital but regulate it. Along with a single world market a charter of minimum social rights was needed, its first objective being to protect children from exploitation.

It was not enough, he continued, for the International to be the largest forum of democratic and left-wing forces. We had to develop as a political entity capable of making itself felt in decisions and having its point of view affirmed. This was why a non-Eurocentric SI was needed, reflecting the number of its members and the scope of its action. The democratic Left, at the end of the century, was opening up a new perspective, which others could not boast of. The Socialist International was the best place to respond to what Felipe González called the challenge of a government of the present, because the Left was once again able to raise its vision, to jettison old certainties, and deal with a world that was changing without anyone's consent. Today the SI and the Left throughout the world was building for millions of individuals a democratic future of great resource. So saying, he wished the meeting the best of success.

Pierre Mauroy welcomed participants to Rome, saying that this meeting would address the political issues that current world affairs were forcing on our attention, and would also be implementing the decisions made by Congress as to various official vacancies, and setting out the objectives of the Commission on the Socialist International of the 21st century chaired by Felipe González.

He extended special greetings to Massimo D'Alema, leader of the Democratic Party of the Left which had become the hub of Italy's political life and a major actor in the International. He congratulated all three Italian member parties on their victory against the Right and expressed good wishes for their success in carrying out their political intentions.

Mauroy said we were proud to have with us José Ramos-Horta who, like distinguished SI figures in the past, had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in East Timor. He hoped the people of East Timor would soon be able to make their own decisions regarding their destiny, and that Indonesia would succeed in achieving the rights and freedoms for which, with our solidarity, the democratic activists were struggling.

He was also particularly pleased to welcome Vesna Pesic, the president of the Civic Alliance of Serbia whose courage and single-mindedness we all admired.

Finally, he announced that Yasser Arafat, whose Fatah party had become a member of the SI at the New York Congress, would soon for the first time join our Council meeting.

Among the burning issues calling on us to mobilise our efforts, he continued, the events in Belgrade and Hebron deserved special mention. In New York Shimon Peres had told us never to let up in our efforts to achieve peace. In the months since then, there had been cause for the greatest sense of alarm. The signing of the agreement on Hebron and its adoption by the Israeli Knesset were proof that there was no alternative to the approach adopted in the Oslo agreements, but this good news was not enough to dispel all our concerns. Under Netanyahu's government, the peace process was resembling a race against time. We were looking forward to hearing the comments of Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres who both had the support and the solidarity of the Socialist International.

Bjørn Tore Godal, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Norway, whose country had played such a prominent part in concluding the Oslo agreements, he said, had agreed to chair the SI Middle East Committee.

Turning to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, he said the SI had taken a clear stance on the inviolability of borders, respect for minority rights, condemnation of Serbian aggression, the need for an international criminal court, and support for the democrats. We had observed the actions of Slobodan Milosevic with indignation and had seen the fine name of socialism pinned to a policy which was its very negation, with the whole of the Serbian population being equated with his leadership. But finally, he said, thanks to the courage and tenacity of the people, democracy was again moving forward. The opposition had managed to rally together around the essentials of vindicating democracy before the election and ensuring respect for it afterwards when the people's will had been deflected. Under the twin pressure of public protest and international opinion - in which he was sure the OSCE mission led by Felipe González had played a role - the Serbian authorities were showing signs of having to climb down, but we must not relax our pressure and our insistence that the people's verdict must be accepted.

Even after that battle was won, he continued, cooperation would be needed to enable democracy to take firm root. He therefore launched a twofold appeal, firstly that the SI Committee on Local Authorities be ready to organise demonstrations and activities in support of solidarity for the fifteen towns that had been won by the Serbian opposition. This democratic sponsorship would be the first political battle to be waged by our cities committee, whose topical relevance confirmed just how necessary it was.

Secondly, the Democratic Alliance of Serbia, which had always taken a just and courageous stance, needed our help to become properly structured and to train its people. He appealed to the European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity to mobilise a response to this urgent need, because an analysis of the current political state of our planet showed that one of the main immediate challenges was to consolidate democracy. Democratic movements could still become bogged down as they had in Africa. He focused on just two examples: Niger, where the most recent news was cause for concern, and Algeria, which was shaken by fresh dramas every day. The indignation of the international community appeared to wane as the trauma of the Algerian people became more acute. We must make it clear that we would not give in, he said. He said he had written to President Zeroual objecting to his policy of banning political parties from membership of international organisations. As we witnessed the government and the Islamic militants using each other as a pretext to stifle democracy, we expressed our solidarity to our comrades in the Socialist Forces Front.

Other countries were also slipping back, he continued. The difficulties in Russia were even greater than those in Central Europe, but he was sure we would eventually find a representative partner there. The situation in Korea also deserved serious analysis since a backward step in democracy had been taken in an Asian country that was often held up as an example. Since trade union freedom was a part of democracy and brought with it social progress, he proposed that joint action with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions should be considered.

The SI must be able to respond to the urgent demands of the present, and to project ourselves into the coming century. In such a rapidly and radically changing world, how could anyone imagine that the great schools of thought would not also feel the need to evolve as well, he asked. Capitalism had shown both its weaknesses and its dangers. It was up to us to use today's revolutions in technology, in communication, and in people's mentalities, to foster the values we claimed as our own and which were proving more topical than ever before in justifying the struggle to which so many militants were devoting their lives. In order to take the lead on these issues into the next century the SI would be setting up the Commission chaired by Felipe González. The presidency would do everything possible, he said, to assist the work over the next two years to foster a stronger influence in ideas, communications and activities. He thanked Felipe González for agreeing to chair the Commission which would receive the help not only of SI members but also those who knew what we do and wanted to work with us. The most important thing was to ensure dialogue and the continuing progress of the values which we all shared and which justified the work we had undertaken.

The 21st century should, and indeed might, be the century in which many of our expectations were achieved. Those who had shared in the achievements of the 20th century had allowed us to do everything possible to make the 21st century the century of socialists, he concluded.

Francesco Rutelli, Mayor of Rome, brought greetings from the city of Rome to this great organisation whose role had been huge and was still so today. He particularly addressed thanks and appreciation to Gro Harlem Brundtland who for a generation had represented young people who were concerned with environmental and ecological issues, and had marked a meeting point between reformist government action and many social and civil aspirations.

The organisation also had a great future, he continued, with regard to the dramatic challenge of providing work, which was a difficult concern for every country in the world and was a central issue for the democratic Left worldwide.

He said the holding of this meeting in Rome, in the heart of the Mediterranean, was an honour for the city where 40 years previously the process of European construction had begun and where today socialist parties were making efforts to enlarge the European Union while still fulfilling people's expectations. The debate on the Middle East and on the issue of peace with justice and respect for the law would be of particular interest.

Rome, he said, would be hosting the Christian Jubilee year in 2000. There was a tradition established in 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII whereby debts were cancelled out. He thought the authorities should cancel the debt of third world countries by the end of the millennium.

There had been great enthusiasm in the field of policies for international development and cooperation, and here too Rome would be honoured to be the venue for the signing of the convention against desertification at the end of the year, but enthusiasm also for any form of political dialogue which emphasised the importance of human dignity and justice worldwide. Since this was one of the International's major tasks he wished to reiterate his greetings and best wishes not only from the whole city of Rome but also from the municipal administration, a Centre-Left town council which had the same outlook as the national government and which was giving the SI a firm and fond handshake of encouragement.

Walter Veltroni, Italy PDS, deputy prime minister, expressed greetings on behalf of the Italian government, saying the world looked to this forum where the values and strategies for entering the new millennium were debated and developed. There were bitter challenges facing us which concerned men and women of social democratic inspiration throughout the world, and we were here today to listen to each other's experience.

In Italy, he said, the Left was united together with the most consistent democratic forces in government for the first time because it had been able to present a new idea of government to its citizens, combining the need for rigour and the perspective of social and political reform. It had conveyed the importance of restoring to the country the awareness of being a

single united country, and the importance of a government's active response to unemployment and new poverty.

This new experience of government had been made possible because the whole of the Italian Left had decided to open up joint dialogue and activity with other forces of national reformist tendencies rather than remain in the margins. Tolerance, equal opportunities, and the defence of basic rights were the hallmarks of the laboratory in which the government was working. It was a difficult but exciting challenge in which the Left would have to demonstrate its creative and innovative capability in a complex period of great change. Even after a few months positive results could be seen in the fall in inflation rates and the improvement in the lira's rate of exchange. The government could look with confidence at changes in the education system and the local government system and other transformations that would create greater confidence among citizens and workers.

In this work of rehabilitation the Left, represented by the PDS, the SI, the PSDI and others, had an essential role in government, after the long years when only the right-wing parties had been in a position to make changes. Today the Left was renewed in its representatives, in its values and in its programme. It had to live with other cultures and go beyond the defence of the major gains of this century, proposing a new vision of society where previously it had focussed almost exclusively on the rights of millions of workers and on freeing them from poverty. Now the thirst for justice and equality among thousands of unemployed called them to new duties. A balance must be found between the needs of those who no longer worked and those who were seeking dignified employment.

The welfare state, he continued, had been the great achievement of the 20th century. For the year 2000 the challenge for the state was to give all citizens the means to improve their daily life. In this part of the world that transformation must be accompanied by a process of economic and political transformation marking a new chapter in the history of Europe, a Europe that declared war on unemployment but was at peace and listening to the voices of other continents. The great challenge was to combat the injustices of under-development, poverty, hunger and disease. This was the main priority of left and democratic forces and was the yardstick by which to measure the government's actions. This was where they needed to launch their battle against right-wing policies, giving new strength to their old ideals. On behalf of the government he wished the meeting success in its work.

José Ramos-Horta said that as founder of the East Timorese Social Democratic Party which had been inspired by two great European leaders, Willy Brandt and Olof Palme, he was particularly pleased and honoured to be at this meeting of the SI. He also expressed appreciation for the many resolutions adopted in the past supporting his people's right to self-determination, freedom, peace and dignity. Today, he said, we were at a turning point in the history of that struggle and the struggle of the people of Indonesia for democracy and the rule of law.

The conflict in East Timor, he continued, could be traced back to the political context of the cold war. He recalled the ignominious American retreat from Indochina; the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, and the collapse of the Portuguese empire, all of which had appeared to confirm Lyndon B. Johnson's domino theory as the rationale for US intervention in Indochina. Despite the assurances of continuing US security commitments in Asia from President Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger, the invasion of East Timor had taken place hours later and thousands of East Timorese had died in the ensuing months and years, to be relegated to mere footnotes to the war in Vietnam and the cold war.

He described his own visit to Jakarta in 1974 as secretary for foreign affairs of the Timorese Social Democratic Association, and his meeting with the Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik who had acknowledged that every country and every nation had the right to independence, including the people of (East) Timor, and that whoever would govern in Timor after independence could be assured that the government of Indonesia would always strive to maintain good relations, friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both countries.

In another visit in 1975 he had met President Suharto's senior adviser, General Ali Murtopo, who had reassured him that Indonesia harboured no territorial ambitions over East Timor.

The right of the people of East Timor to self-determination, he continued, was widely recognised. Apart from the former Spanish territory of Western Sahara, it was the largest non-self-governing territory in the United Nations General Assembly decolonisation list, dating back to 1960. The UN General Assembly and the Security Council had adopted a total of ten resolutions affirming this right. The International Court of Justice had stated that the people of East Timore were entitled to it.

The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, and South Africa's transition to democracy gave renewed hope that seemingly intractable problems could be resolved if there was political will and vision by all involved. The people of East Timor remained ready to enter into a process of dialogue with the Indonesian authorities under the auspices of the UN, without pre-conditions, to explore all possible ideas towards a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

In 1992, he said, Xanana Gusmão had given his seal of authority to a plan, now known as the CNRM Peace Plan, which was formally presented to the European Parliament in Brussels. This proposal, he said, remained valid as a modest contribution towards resolving the conflict. He then gave details of the plan which envisaged a humanitarian phase of two years of confidence-building measures, a five-year phase of genuine political autonomy based on a democratically elected Territorial People's Assembly, followed by a phase of self-determination with a UN referendum to determine the final status of the territory.

He described his people's vision of East Timor's future and role in the region. Being at the cross-roads of three major cultures, its rich legacy placed it in a unique position to build bridges of dialogue and cooperation between the peoples of the region, he said. He outlined the relations East Timor would strive to maintain and cultivate with neighbouring countries and countries with whom she shared a common history. She would endeavour to build a strong democratic state based on the rule of law and respecting human rights and International obligations. Their society would not be based on revenge. Because of its credibility and standing, the Catholic Church would be expected to play a major role in the healing process of society. There would be national reconstruction and development, a voluntary resettlement plan to allow tens of thousands of displaced East Timorese to return to their ancestral lands. They believed in free education and health-care and with the cooperation of the WHO they would seek to eradicate preventable diseases within a decade.

He acknowledged the economic achievements of Suharto's 30-year regime but pointed to the failure on the civil and political rights front. The next few years would witness a transition in Indonesia, he said, and other countries could encourage a peaceful evolution by pushing for democratic reforms and the rule of law and self-determination for East Timor. His people were in favour of economic engagement rather than punitive economic sanctions against Indonesia, but they were repelled by the hypocrisy of western countries which manufactured the weapons that had killed more than 20 million people in the developing world since the second world war. Democracy and human rights, he continued, were not an invention of the West, and the thousands of Asians who had died in the streets of Asian cities had not died for so-called 'Asian values'. He expressed solidarity with the people of Burma and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in their struggle for democracy, rule of law and human rights, and he said the USA and the EU must be commended for supporting the restoration of democracy in that country but they must escalate the pressure with additional diplomatic and economic sanctions.

He commended the people of Taiwan for their commitment to peace and democracy. While there was no disputing that the country was part of China, the cause of peace could best be served if Taiwan was granted observer status at the UN, he said.

He appealed to the Chinese leaders to listen to their own people's opinions and desires for a more open society and the rights which their own Constitution granted them. China should

also listen to the voice of peace and moderation of the Tibetan people expressed by their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama in his peace proposal.

Speaking of the dramatic changes the world had seen in recent years, confounding the prophets of doom, he said he believed that the universal principles of democratic socialism would prevail as the most moral and sound alternative in the quest for more just societies throughout the world. He expressed his unreserved willingness to cooperate with the SI in fostering the rule of law, peace and democracy in the Asia-Pacific region. He concluded with renewed hope that no matter the level of brute force used against them, the people's dreams would never die.

Agenda item 2.3 - Zaïre, Rwanda and Burundi

Ousmane Tanor Dieng, Senegal PS, said people in Africa were very pleased that the SI was giving such special attention to the problems in Central Africa, as the international community had not always paid much attention to the dramatic political and humanitarian situation in that part of the continent. He wanted first to give a global overview and Laurent Gbagbo would then introduce their draft declaration.

After the civil war and genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, he said, there was an on-going situation of war which was also spreading to Zaïre. There was now the problem of the Banyamulengues - Tutsis of Rwandan origin who had long had Zaïrean nationality but were now being pressurised to leave so that ethnic groups could occupy that land - many of whom had joined the Rwanda Patriotic Front in 1994 during the Rwandan war and continued to provide military training. He described the complicated crisis among the Zaïrean army, local police forces and refugees in Rwanda. Zaïre was in a long process of political transition which was also complicated and there had been many postponed elections. The UN Secretary-General had nominated a special envoy for the Great Lakes region to establish the necessary ceasefire in order to undertake negotiations and look at the possibility of calling an International conference on the region.

African countries, he continued, had taken an enormous initiative to bring this crisis to an end. Heads of state from Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Kenya, South Africa, Egypt, and Rwanda, but not from Zaïre, had met in Nairobi and had called for respect for the ceasefire and the necessary mechanism to ensure the ceasefire. They had called on the International community to apply pressure to resolve the refugee problem, but perhaps most important was the restatement of the principle of inviolability of frontiers. But more was needed. A military solution was only viable on the basis of an International force being strategically positioned between the different forces of strife, and the holding of an International peace conference for security and stability in the Great Lakes region. The internal situation in Zaïre with many ethnic groups, a poor economy, low morale in the army and an ailing president, was also critical. The Rwandan government was seeking a redistribution of land in the region and an adjustment to the borders inherited from colonial times, which could also be a serious threat to political peace. Destabilisation of Zaïre and any risk of partitioning that country would have catastrophic repercussions on the whole of Central Africa and consequences on African stability, he said. Other complicating factors were that in both Rwanda and Burundi, rural people were drifting towards the cities as a result of war and hatred; and the president of Uganda was of Tutsi origin and owed his power to the Tutsi aristocracy; so the whole situation in the Great Lakes region was difficult to understand from outside, as International efforts to help had shown.

One of the best ideas, he said, appeared to be to guide the activities of the International community in two directions: in the short term, to help the return of refugees in Rwanda and provide support to those remaining in Zaïre and to displaced Zaïreans; and to bring together the leaders of the region thus establishing preliminary contacts for a regional conference on the situation in the Great Lakes region. And in the medium term to maintain the total integrity and sovereignty of Zaïre and stabilise her internal situation while respecting the date for elections and the democratic process, and finding a solution to the nationality problem of Tutsi and Hutu prisoners in Zaïre.

A neighbouring area where the situation could have equally serious consequences on stability and peace in Africa, he said, was the Horn of Africa. Unless an early solution was found, conditions for conflagration seemed to be present in Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. The tension in the Great Lakes region also had a negative impact on that area which, if it exploded, would have a grave impact on the development of the continent as a whole. He thought it important that the SI try to find solutions in this matter. He detailed the elements that had led to the crisis between Eritrea and Sudan, and between Ethiopia and Sudan since the assassination attempt against Mubarak in Ethiopia. The crisis in the Great Lakes region had led to a further deterioration in the situation between Sudan, Zaïre and Uganda, probably due to the suspicion with which the Sudanese regime was viewed and to the vast movement of people in the area. Urgent measures were needed to establish a situation of mutual confidence and peaceful coexistence among the countries of the region. All African countries, and all friends of Africa, he said, should work to maintain peace and for the required security for development within the framework of democracy.

The Socialist International, which had as one of its basic tenets the promotion of peace, freedom and development, should become involved in this endeavour where there had been a lack of activity due to neglect by the International community. He urged the SI to adopt a resolution to support the action of Africa to bring peace and stability to the region, and to establish a delegation to assess the situation on the spot and report back so that the SI could act together with Africans in order to save Africa from a chain of destabilising events.

Laurent Gbagbo, Ivory Coast FPI, gave a detailed report on the situation in the Great Lakes region, the confrontation between Rwanda and Zaïre, the threat arising from Rwandan refugees and members of ex-Rwandan armed forces, the threat of civil war between the central powers in Zaïre and the Banyamulenge people, and revolutionary movements for the liberation of Zaïre and Congo.

He reported on the situation in Burundi since the passing of a new constitution in 1992 introducing democracy to the country, and how the rule of law in the country had been undermined by a coup d'état, by the death of President Cyprien Ntaryamira, and by other violent incidents.

Turning to Rwanda he described the three events that had brought a comparatively stable country to crisis: the opposition to democracy that had been forced on President Habyarimana in 1990, the economic crisis aggravated by famine in the south, and the needs of Tutsi refugees demanding Rwandan nationality and to return home from Uganda. The different construction placed on an agreement by the government and the opposition, rivalries between Tutsis and Hutus, regional tension between north and south, and the reluctance of the president to implement an agreement stripping him of most of his prerogatives had led to paralysis and deepening of the crisis, further aggravated by the death of the president.

He presented the draft for a declaration on the situation in the region.

The chair thanked the rapporteurs on these African problems which, he said, would be discussed in the afternoon.

Agenda item 2.1 The Middle East

Enrico Boselli, Italy SI, first expressed his party's satisfaction that Rome had been chosen as the venue for this Council meeting. His party was fully within the reformist forces which were governing Italy and they were proud to belong to the great family of the International.

The Italian Left had always been involved with other countries belonging to the European Union in trying to find a solution to the problems of stability, security and development in the Mediterranean area at the centre of which was the issue of the Middle East. The presence of Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat confirmed the role of the International in supporting the peace process. His party were very worried about the growing difficulties following the formation of a new Israeli government under Benjamin Netanyahu. It was necessary, he continued, to implement the Oslo agreement based on mutual recognition of the two peoples

and the principle of land for peace. It was up to the international community to monitor the process and make sure it was properly applied.

Another grave concern was the economic and social situation of the Palestinian people, the extremely high levels of unemployment and their continuing impoverishment. Economic aid from various countries, including the EU, was not being targeted to plans promoting development. The Israeli government was actually hindering the best possible use of this aid so how could one expect private investment to flow into the region even if it might be available, he asked. He believed it was of the utmost importance that Europe should play a role on the lines arising out of the Barcelona conference of 1995. Migratory flows had to be governed through multilateral agreements enshrining the human and social rights of migrants. Euro-Mediterranean agreements of association had been signed with Morocco and Tunisia, Israel and the Palestinian Authority envisaging measures by the EU to help the countries to modernise their economies. For Palestine such an agreement was of basic importance, he said. Its implementation would require a different attitude from Israel with regard to the economic growth of the territories. Israel could not expect her association agreement with the EU to be respected if it was not possible to apply the same kind of agreement to the Palestinian Authority. The European Council had stated that the importance of these Euro-Mediterranean association agreements hinged on a common commitment to the peace process and had asked Israel to translate into fact its decision to implement agreements which the PLO already subscribed to. The European parliament, through actions carried out by the Socialist Group, had adopted an important resolution establishing that the EU would define its relations with countries of the region according to their activities with regard to the peace process.

A recent poll, he continued, had shown that three Israelis out of four favoured the peace process, but 45% of those interviewed accepted a Palestinian state, so in addition to those forces which were openly committed to peace, there were also many in civil society who could have an impact on the Netanyahu government. Dialogue between various parts of civil society and between religious communities, interchange of ideas and information, were of the utmost importance, so, he said, the International should strengthen its solidarity with the Israel Labour Party which carried the greatest burden of responsibility in the management of the peace which had been planned by Rabin and Peres, and with MAPAM. Likud could also have a more advanced attitude towards the peace process if it could free itself from the blackmail of fundamentalist extremists who seemed to want to undermine Israel's much admired secular nature. He was convinced that the firm action of international democratic forces represented by socialists could contribute to opening even further a new and constructive perspective to dialogue between the Israelis and Palestinians towards a just peace.

Costas Simitis, Greece PASOK, began by thanking SI members for the strong support and solidarity given for his party's electoral victory.

It was a common finding, he said, that we lived in a rapidly changing, increasingly interdependent world. Globalisation and the technological revolution required new answers. The end of the cold war had brought many positive results but also new threats to peace, justice and cooperation which challenged our responsibilities as socialists. A substantive prerequisite for the attainment of people's aspirations was the proper functioning of democracy, which needed to be reinforced by a new system of collective responsibility and new policies. The SI should play its role by promoting our central values and objectives through persistent efforts at global and regional level.

The socialist movement, he said, with its long tradition of international cooperation and solidarity, should commit itself to the struggle for freedom and fundamental rights, justice and peace. His party supported the ideas put forward for a more active role in conflict prevention, risk analysis and mediation. They were doing their utmost to promote peace, stability and progress in the volatile geographical position in which Greece was situated.

The case of former Yugoslavia showed the tension between interdependence and nationalism, between forces which tended to unite and those that pushed towards disintegration, he continued. The solution was not through weapons or violence but

peaceful negotiation and the rule of law. Their efforts had been towards suspending the war, starting a dialogue between the sides, and launching a negotiated settlement. The SI, he said, should contribute to the success of the peace process and show commitment to the International peace mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina to help the stabilisation of the area and the integration of the different ethnic communities.

Peace and stability in the Balkans were essential for development and progress in the area, he said. Greece had a contingent in the peace mission and was participating in the reconstruction plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina with a substantial financial contribution. She had taken part in all the International initiatives in the region, and supported the integration of all the Balkan countries in the new European structures which would assist their further development and stabilisation. Within the Party of European Socialists they had taken the decision to organise a meeting on the Balkans with the participation of progressive and socialist parties from the area.

Concerning the Middle East peace process, he said the Israeli government's delaying tactics had not been helpful and the recently signed Hebron agreement should be scrupulously implemented. The SI should reaffirm its strong support for the agreement signed between the Israeli government and the PLO, for a comprehensive peace in the region.

Finally, he referred to the problem of Cyprus, caused by the Turkish invasion in 1974, the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus and the unlawful Turkish claims in the Aegean. Despite numerous UN calls for withdrawal of foreign troops and for respect for Cyprus's territorial integrity, Turkey continued to flout International law. His party believed it was time for a solution based on the UN resolutions. The SI, he said, should take all possible initiatives to show its concern for the lack of progress and the continuing division of the island.

Instead of concentrating on its internal problems, Turkey was also showing its aggressive policy and defiance of international law and treaties in its nationalistic policy towards Greece. Greece had suggested a moderate step-by-step approach and hoped that Turkey would respond positively to these initiatives.

In conclusion he said the SI had a role to play in promoting peace and cooperation in the Balkans and the Middle East, based on its founding principles. The SI was at a turning point, identifying its content and role for the 21st century. As the most powerful world forum of democratic parties it was our duty to confront the challenges and take responsibility in a fast-changing world.

The chair at this point announced the arrival of Yasser Arafat whom he warmly welcomed.

Acchile Occhetto, Italy PDS, recalled the first foreign policy initiative taken by his party when it was created which was a trip to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders who were at the very heart of their negotiations. The PDS at that time had taken a position which was considered somewhat shocking: they had said that zionism should not be criminalised, but should be considered as a national movement and that a similar position should be taken towards the PLO. In this way they had been able to contribute to a left-wing approach which was in favour of the Palestinian cause but not necessarily at the same time anti-Israeli - a very important step forward. It gave them the right to criticise Israeli government actions and delays, and a year later they were able to continue to follow the road traced by Shimon Peres. One had to be cautious in speaking about decisive steps forward but at least the momentum was kept going. There were now enormous problems and the extremists in both camps had to be controlled if we wanted to achieve our true objective set out in the Oslo agreement whereby the Palestinians would control 85% of the West Bank area instead of the 5% at present. This was the reason we must not slacken in our courageous work and in our moderation. Decisive steps were needed towards a lasting and secure peace through continuous cooperation between the two sides. We were all happy with the Hebron agreement but it was essential that the Socialist International should also keep a critical eye on the role of international organisations and the need for new instruments for global governance.

In the bi-polar world there had been the natural authority based on fear and the risk of an apocalypse. The US now saw themselves as the regulators of international crises, inheritors of the political power of the bi-polar system, but Europe had started to play a role in the solution of the Middle East crisis. The Mediterranean area was a pressing issue for Europe and care was needed. The pressing request for development coincided with the EU trying to find the right balance for its monetary stability. But a monetarist, neo-liberal point of view would not be able to ensure that the Mediterranean could play its role as an area of peace and stability of different cultures. Peace in the Middle East could only have stability as part and parcel of an overall programme for the Mediterranean, so already within the EU one could see the gravity of the implicit error of favouring economics over all other issues. There was also a negative responsibility for the lack of instruments for world government and for delays in the reform of the UN which were needed to respond to new crises.

He thought the Socialist International could play a very important role by giving an international view of the instruments for world governance, not linked to the interests of individual nations. This should be the new theme for the millennium, he said. He hoped that this meeting, bringing together as it did such important political people as Arafat and Peres, would help to regulate and generate the necessary basis for peace in the future.

Bjørn Tore Godal, Norway DNA, said everyone had reason to be pleased that Israel and the PLO had reached agreement on Hebron, on further redeployments and other related issues, so after one year of frustration the peace process was back on track, one important track of the whole Middle East picture. It was now time to concentrate on essential things and demonstrate to the ordinary Palestinian and Israeli that peace meant welfare and security. Many people in the region had still not seen any significant improvement in living standards, in the things that counted, such as new schools, clean water, jobs, free and fair elections, human rights and freedom from fear and oppression. Peace meant self-determination and national sovereignty, and we must do all we could to help create the conditions for this comprehensive peace. Norway was helping to create these conditions and was honoured to have been asked to lead the team of international observers surveying the situation in Hebron. We should definitely step up our activities, he said, and mobilise further international support. He urged sister parties to do this.

Norway had been privileged to play a role, thanks to the political networks, first with the Israel Labour Party and then with the PLO. We must continue to build on such networks, he said, because the SI had a definite and particular role to play.

More courage would be required by the parties to go on to the next stage of the Oslo agreements. We must continue to break the vicious circles and trigger off a chain of positive events. That was the psychology of peace. We must lend our support and solidarity to the peace process, at home and in all international forums. Chairman Arafat, he said, frequently spoke of the peace of the brave. We should continue to join forces in the endeavour for peace, he concluded, as together we could make it.

Shimon Peres, Israel Labour Party, addressing Yasser Arafat, said this was a very moving moment. During the negotiations the Israelis had had the problem of how to address the man the Palestinians called president and the Israelis called chairman. It had become a national dispute of dangerous dimensions. With Arafat's agreement they had found the solution by calling him 'Raiz' which meant president in Arabic and chairman in Hebrew. Today, Peres said, he was very happy to call him by the new title of comrade.

When he had taken over the Israel Labour Party twenty years previously, he continued, the problem of Palestinian/Israeli relations had seemed like a permanent and insoluble one. Those great figures who had fought so nobly and tenaciously - Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky, Olof Palme and François Mitterrand - would be the happiest people today to see Yasser Arafat a member of this great civilised organisation. It showed that nothing was impossible.

For his party, and probably for all those in socialist parties, what had happened between them and the Palestinians was first of all a moral victory. When people became cynical and

sceptical, this was not the winning of a war, but a return to basic civilisation. From that point of view it had been a moving moment for all, he said. It had also shown that realities could occasionally be stronger than government, and that peace could be stronger than politics. Perhaps what had happened in Hebron was not exactly the choice of the current government but he was glad they had submitted to the call of a new reality, a reality of peace that had shown tremendous strength, as when 87 members of parliament had voted for the agreement and only 17 had opposed it. He commended comrade Arafat's speech in Hebron which was in many ways a speech of conciliation, of renewal of their relations. Everything would have to continue and build up trust and a bridge of new understanding. Addressing Gro Harlem Brundtland, he said that Oslo was coming so near to Jerusalem and promises were becoming realities that nobody could really stop. It had the Labour Party's support because peace was at the top of their agenda.

There remained a long list of decisions which could not be treated lightly. One concerned the implementation of redeployment in the West Bank, of which the timing had been unnecessarily extended. Then there was the need to reach a permanent, just and durable solution with the Palestinians. This had to be done soon as there were threats to Palestinian and Israeli lives from the fundamentalist movement which was trying to acquire nuclear bombs and using terrorist actions. But that was not enough. It was no good having a collection of separate islands of peace in the Middle East: it had to become a continent of peace where evil winds could not blow between them creating dangerous storms. Like it or not, he said, they would have to negotiate with the Syrians and arrive at a comprehensive peace. It would be difficult, but seeing what had been achieved they had reason to believe it was possible.

Peace was a breakthrough, he continued, but one had to ask what was behind the breakthrough. It was not enough to get rid of the hatred and the threats. They had to offer people a different way of life. The Labour Party believed that the best they could do was to introduce science, technology, information and above all, education as a common heritage for all the children of Hebron. These subjects recognised no borders, nor did they distinguish between black or white skins, but heralded a world where borders, distances and differences were disappearing.

A week earlier, he said, he and comrade Arafat, meeting in Paris, had arrived at an idea which symbolised what he meant. The Weizman Institute had very much advanced the cause of science in Israel. Now they might create a similar institute that was a Palestinian/Israeli one, on the borders between Palestinian-controlled territory and Israeli-controlled territory, and in the vicinity of Jericho, whose walls had once fallen in battle but would now disappear in the face of this new hope and new cooperation. They would not stop at the political line in making peace. but go ahead and build a new society and new relations.

Finally, concerning the European role in the Middle East, he said, it could be tremendous. Europe had decided to invest in the coming five years seven billion dollars in donations and an equal sum in loans to the Middle East. This was a very effective amount but he urged that this money should not go to individual countries and governments which would be like handing it over to the rich people in the poor countries. The money should be invested in just two regional issues: education and irrigation, because capital today was not money, but knowledge. Education could be computerised as had been done in Israel with superb results. There were still many illiterate young people in the Middle East who must be given a chance. This was the socialism of our time, he said, the distribution of knowledge and the equipping of the young generation to understand the future, not to continue the past. As for irrigation, since the population had grown and water had become scarce, they needed to organise irrigation, conserving and recycling water by various means. What they intended to build in Jericho would be based on bio-technology and modern agriculture. They would provide the irrigation needed for the land, and the education needed for the children.

Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, expressed his people's appreciation for this movement which had devoted special attention and care to the Palestinian problem and to the just cause of the Palestinian people. He saluted the memory of the pioneer leaders, Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky, Olof Palme and François Mitterrand, of the Socialist

International, an organisation that remained faithful to its principles and sincere in its aspiration to defend people's rights to self-determination, freedom, equality and democracy. He thanked the hosts of the meeting and extended greetings to President Scalfaro, to the government of Prime Minister Prodi and to the Italian people.

It was not by accident, he continued, that the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (FATAH) had become a member of this leading political movement which occupied a central position in the life and history of the Palestinian people and in their just struggle for freedom and national independence. They were present today side by side with the Israeli parties who were their partners in the historical peace process that had started in Oslo and culminated in the signing of the Washington agreement. That historical handshake with his deceased friend Itzhak Rabin, and with his dear friend Shimon Peres, had helped their two peoples to end a painful period and open up a new phase of cooperation, understanding and dialogue in order to build the peace of the brave in their region. That peace still required good intentions, strong persistence, and a solid will to continue towards the goal which included security, stability, welfare and prosperity for all the peoples and states of the area and a just, comprehensive and lasting peace for future generations.

Referring to the recently signed agreement on Hebron, he said this had been concluded after protracted negotiations and the most welcome efforts of those concerned with the success of the peace process, besides the decision taken by Mr Netanyahu himself. He thanked President Clinton, the European Union, President Mubarak and King Hussein for their personal efforts or good offices in this regard. He hoped the protocol would be implemented accurately and honestly in accordance with the timetable. The materialisation of these measures would create a new atmosphere of mutual confidence and cooperation and thus contribute to resumption of the final-status negotiations and the success of the whole peace process, he said. They were looking forward to achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East and needed the efforts of all those who believed in the peace process to move it ahead on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

The Palestinian leadership, he continued, had entered the Madrid negotiations on the basis of resolutions on international legitimacy and the principle of land for peace. They had signed the Oslo agreements to establish the peace of the brave with their Israeli neighbours on the basis of mutual recognition, fairness and equal rights for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. They had accepted the interim period idea partly to prove their good will towards the peace process. Peace was their irreversible strategic option. Everyone knew the flexibility, the self-control and commitment to the agreements that they had shown. He urged all friends, the forces of justice, peace, freedom and democracy to exert every possible effort to maintain the huge achievements already realised and to embody this tremendous aspiration. They were looking forward to building together the monument of a just and lasting peace in the region. That peace would not be complete and secure while there was support for settlement activities all over the Palestinian territories, and attempts to impose de-facto policies from one side on some of the major issues to be discussed in the final-status negotiations.

Finally he expressed his people's high appreciation for support received in this critical moment in which a new era of peace was being built based on co-existence, cooperation, justice and equality.

Pierre Mauroy intervened to say he had just heard with some surprise of the resignation of Chancellor Franz Vranitzky of Austria. Not knowing what comrade Vranitzky's plans for the future were, he asked the Austrian friends to forward to him our appreciation of all that he had done for the Socialist International.

Kamal El Shazly, Egypt NDP, referred to the latest situation in the Middle East peace process. Egypt, he said, had been the first country to have peace with Israel, after 1973, and was still playing a leading and effective role in the Middle East. They were determined to assist all the parties to overcome any obstacles to the negotiation process in order to establish a solid foundation of the just and secure conditions necessary for regional development.

His party was optimistic about the agreement signed by Arafat and Peres which had been described as a positive step towards finding a solution to the Palestinian problem, but in recent months there had been a crisis owing to Israeli government policy. The Egyptian leader, he said, was among those who were playing an active role between the Palestinian leader and the Israeli government. On behalf of his party he congratulated Yasser Arafat and the Israeli government on reaching agreement concerning Israeli redeployment and Hebron which reinforced the march towards a comprehensive and just peace in the region. His party hoped that on the basis of land for peace and Palestinian rights to self-determination further progress could be made towards opening up the other tracks in the peace process as a whole.

Security and stability in the Middle East, he continued, depended on a balance of power among the countries in the region. This was why President Mubarak in 1990 had demanded that the Middle East be free of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear or chemical.

Terrorism was an international phenomenon threatening the security of the region and of the whole world. He hoped the international community would respond quickly to President Mubarak's call for an international conference to deal with this dangerous matter. Egypt would be a real partner in efforts to eliminate this disease.

Finally he thanked the SI and said he hoped we could participate together in solving the problems which were confronting the international community.

Kamal Abu Jaber, Jordan, said that in this great and historic city of Rome, with its immense spiritual and cultural heritage, it might be easy to forget that the world continued to have problems, and very serious problems. He had listened, he said, with great interest and respect to the inspiring speeches that stressed the need to find global solutions to the problems that continued to beset humankind. This humanitarian approach, combining democracy and socialism, was faithful to the SI's traditional search for justice and equality.

No man alive, he continued, had worked more for peace than King Hussein, and Jordan now needed the SI's support and good offices to continue the peace process more than ever. Jordan had always believed in solving problems through dialogue and peaceful means, thus sustaining the forces for peace throughout the region. Following the election of Prime Minister Netanyahu, Jordan, like the rest of the world, had held its breath in fear. Despite the recent conclusion of the Hebron agreement, the forces for peace in the entire region, and especially in Israel, needed to be encouraged and supported.

The Madrid peace process had presented the world with a historic opportunity, he said. Since the dawn of history the region had known mostly violence and strife. He hoped the SI would help them to build a different future through cooperation, education and socio-economic development. They needed help to rebuild not only damaged economies but also confused mentalities, the occupation of minds being sometimes more sinister than the occupation of land. There remained many problems still to be resolved. Above all there was the need to eradicate intransigent ideologies that still believed in resorting to violence. Only by working towards these noble goals could the region live at peace with itself and with the rest of the world. They had to convince those who remained unconvinced that only through peace could security be achieved, and a basis in international law was the only way towards peace and co-existence, cooperation and the chance to build for the future. Only peace could bring justice, and if the Socialist International was about anything it was about justice, both domestic and international.

In closing, he expressed greetings and good wishes from Crown Prince Hassan, hoping the meeting would be a fruitful one and a further step along the difficult road towards peace and brotherhood.

Christoph Zöpel, Germany SPD, said that Peres and Arafat had again shown that even particularly difficult problems affecting the co-existence of people of different nations could be resolved without military violence, through dialogue. Perhaps the most important

international political principle, supported by the democratic Left, was that of talking with one another as opposed to acquiring arms.

Europe was taking an active interest in the Middle East peace process and showing itself willing to provide practical help which, as Shimon Peres had said, included education and irrigation. Peace between Israel and the Arab states was of historic importance and could help to remedy the many wrongs that Europeans in the course of history had committed against the people of the region. But peace between Israel and the Arab states was also a requirement for and a key to solving the many different conflicts and problems in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. Peaceful co-existence of all the peoples around the Mediterranean was possible only if there was peace between Israel and the Arab states.

The SI, he continued, must endeavour to find solutions to these problems by pursuing the process it had advocated in New York. It must contribute to solving many problems, including the respect for the right to self-determination for western Sahara and the peaceful co-existence of the peoples there; an end to the violence in Algeria; the involving of Libya in the community of states bordering the Mediterranean, which would require her renunciation of biological and chemical weapons; defusing the tensions between Greece and Turkey and solving the Cyprus problem; ensuring the success of negotiations between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon; safeguarding the rights of all Palestinians; involving Iran in lasting peaceful arrangements in the Middle East; and putting a stop to the threat to peace posed by Iraq and relieving the unspeakable suffering endured by the people affected by the embargo, especially the children.

If the SI could help resolve these problems, acting in accordance with its essential principles, it would show itself to be a key player in a policy of peaceful co-existence in the Middle East.

Deniz Baykal, Turkey CHP, said the International had survived many important challenges in its history including wars, drastically changing social and economic conditions and a series of regional conflicts. At times we had been hurt but we were the oldest surviving international organisation in the world. We had expanded from being an essentially eurocentric organisation to one which covered the globe and in which the word 'International' had acquired its full meaning. We now had to address ourselves to the truly international problems of our new global world and the dichotomies between East, West, North and South; between rich and poor, secular and religious; and between Muslims and Christians, democrats and totalitarians. We could succeed only if we were able to create, as Felipe González had aptly put it, a New International for the New World. His party thus welcomed the formation of the special commission under Felipe González to develop the future orientation and structure of the Socialist International. They would support it and would like to take part in it. He congratulated González on his comprehensive report which successfully outlined their common viewpoints on all major issues. He drew attention however to two points: firstly that it was important to define the aim and scope of the Commission so as to avoid any possible confusions as to its position within the organisational structure of the SI; and secondly, concerning ideology, we had been very successful during the past century in gaining support for our ideas and policies among nation states. Now we had to transcend territoriality and create a system of collective responsibility to strengthen global civil society. There was another issue, that of Islam, which needed our careful attention as a major question of our time. This, he said, was a key issue also for peace in the Middle East. Speaking not as an adherent or advocate of Islam, but as a social democrat representing a country with a secular state structure despite having a 99 percent Muslim population, he had to draw attention to the fact that we were living in a world in which the role of Islam was increasing and the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism was giving new impetus to the politicisation of Islam.

Although globalisation and modern developments were creating a more rational and prosperous human society, he continued, a large part of the world's population was falling under the influence of Islam organising itself as a radical political force. With 53 countries belonging to the Organisation of Islamic Countries plus the Muslim populations of another 31 non-member countries, there was a total of 1.5 billion Muslim people, more than 30 per cent of the world's population and a large majority of the total number of independent

states in the world. When one tried to analyse the factors behind the increasing influence of radical Islam one saw the common factor of exclusion from the main stream of development and economic, social and political problems. In many cases political Islam was developing as if it was an ideological substitute for social democracy. It was unmet popular demands for social justice that prepared the ground for Islamic ideology, he said. The SI must recognise this phenomenon as one of the major questions of our time and include it in our agenda so as to prevent the search for a new identity ending up in the adoption of Islamic fundamentalism.

The 70 years of secular democratic experience of the Turkish socialists and social democrats, he said, could contribute to the correct understanding of this problem. They had succeeded in forming a secular democratic state from a fully Muslim population when there had been no example to learn from. Today there were many Muslim countries that might choose secularism, democracy and emancipation into the world, or political Islam and the wilderness. The SI had a duty through this new collective responsibility to be all-embracing, and to fight all exclusion which was the breeding ground for resentment and the search for an alternative identity. This was our task in the 21st century.

Before concluding he wished to clarify two points on the issue of Cyprus. The problem had started in 1963, he said, not in 1974. Cyprus had always been the home of two distinct peoples, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, who, according to the international treaties signed in 1960, were equal partners each with their own language, religion and ethnic origins. This partnership republic of Cyprus had been destroyed by the Greek Cypriot's armed onslaught in 1963 when all the Turkish Cypriot elements in the state organs had been forcefully ejected. This attempted take-over of the bi-national partnership state had not been accepted by the Turkish Cypriots so since then there had not been a joint administration on the island. He detailed the events leading, as he said, to the emergence of the democratically formed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which was recognised by Turkey as having full jurisdiction.

His second point related to the present state of affairs. He described the efforts between 1974 and 1995 to find an overall settlement. Since 1995 and the decision of the European Council to start membership negotiations with the Greek Cypriot side, the latter appeared to have hardened its position, avoiding negotiations under the auspices of the UN Secretary General. They were aiming to achieve a solution by realising economic *Erosis* through membership of the EU and completing it through military integration with Greece. They had embarked upon an ambitious armament effort about which the UN Security Council in its resolution of December 1966 had expressed grave concern.

The UN Secretary-General had repeatedly confirmed that the relationship between the two communities in Cyprus was not one of majority and minority, but that the two communities were politically equal. The world, he continued, had turned a blind eye to the realities of the situation and had listened to the propaganda of the Greek side. The Turkish Cypriot political parties were being given the opportunity to be heard at the committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, so he suggested the SI should give the social democratic parties a similar opportunity to be heard. In concluding he urged Costas Simitis to accept the method he had advocated for the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and start a dialogue immediately.

Vassos Lyssarides, Cyprus Edek Socialist Party, said he had been especially moved to see Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres in this meeting because he and his country were an integral part of the Middle East tragedy and had played their role in the reconciliation. We knew the obstacles, we knew the protagonists were firmly committed, but we must pledge to offer every help because unless all the partners, including Syria, were involved the process might not be irreversible.

Referring to the problem in his own country, he said it was a long established principle that permanent peace and socialism were incompatible with foreign occupation, oppression, and the violation of human rights. It was the first time that in a meeting of socialists he had heard someone suggest that these principles should be violated and that we were asked to countersign the crimes committed by a country of 56 million against a country of just

over half a million. If people witnessed foreign occupation and violation of principles and remained silent he believed they might be considered guilty by omission. Our role must be an active involvement in promoting proper solutions.

Mr Baykal, he continued, seemed to have forgotten that for 22 years the Turkish army had maintained occupation and imposed a division against repeated UN resolutions demanding withdrawal of foreign troops and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Cyprus. This sad phenomenon was part of the Turkish politico-military establishment whose expansionism now included the Aegean sea and was a source of anomaly for the whole region.

Cyprus, he said, had no quarrel with the Turkish people and had expressed sorrow that their human rights and those of the Kurds had been so blatantly violated by a semi-fundamentalist regime. He had expected Mr Baykal to report on conditions in his country and to ask the SI for support in ameliorating them, but instead he had referred to the Turkish Cypriot 'people'. Greek and Turkish Cypriots had lived in completed harmony for centuries, he said, until 1974 when Turkey had invaded the country and killed 1.5 per cent of the population. Since then the situation remained unchanged. The Cyprus problem, he insisted, had started when the ex-colonial power imposed an unworkable and partitionist regime on the island. Of course there were two communities, like many multinational states, and a partnership, but there was also democracy and 82% did not equal 18%. There was partnership in that all citizens of Cyprus had equal rights, but one-man-one-vote was something the SI had always fought for.

He apologised for speaking frankly but said he had heard a lot of lies. The Turkish Cypriots had not been forcefully ejected but had walked away under Turkish oppression. Their vacancies in parliament had not even been filled. He recalled that the UN Secretary-General U Thant had said that the question was between Turkey and Cyprus because Turkey wanted to use the Turkish Cypriot community to create a geographic homogeneous entity in the North.

He reminded Mr Baykal that the UN Secretary-General had repeatedly blamed the Turkish Cypriot leadership - not the Turkish Cypriots - for the failure to make progress during 32 years of intercommunal dialogue. Referring to the accession of Cyprus to the EU, he said Europe was an independent entity and the decision would not depend on Mr Baykal or Mr Erdogan. As for Mr Baykal's assertion about Greek Cypriot armaments, he said they had a few missiles so that they would not be defenceless in the case of an attack by what was claimed to be the biggest army in the world. This was considered an offence by Mr Baykal but not the fact that the Turkish army kept 35,000 troops and hundreds of tanks on the island.

He thanked Mr Baykal for opening people's eyes to the general national policy of Turkey, independent of regime. In conclusion, he warmly requested parties in government and in opposition to find a proper solution to the Cyprus problem without which the Middle East problem could not really be solved.

Leo Brincat, Malta Labour Party, saluted the two men of peace who had addressed the meeting earlier - Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat - and the SI itself which had acted as a catalyst in bringing the two together once again within the same organisation.

He believed that the signing of the document on the White House lawn almost three and a half years previously had marked a turning point in Israeli/Palestinian relations. That document had been intended as the beginning of a real and final peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Perhaps even more significant was the idea that mutual recognition between two fierce opponents would open up a new era of prosperity and democracy in that region. The fact that there had sometimes been a risk of the process leaving the rails had more to do with domestic politics in the region than with anything else, he said. Time had shown that the real enemies of peace were extremism and terrorism, and that there was no room for unprincipled distortions of the realities of this chequered scenario.

The biggest lesson that had been learned was that no kind of military solution to the conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians was possible. It was now more opportune than ever that we foster a humanistic vision of the region. Only then could hope, trust and confidence in the future be developed, he said. The days leading up to the Hebron agreements showed that a dangerous game had been played when even minor incidents could have snowballed into international crises. A similar situation could arise if the accords already agreed were not honoured. Caution was needed to prevent any collapse in the peace negotiations and an explosion in the occupied territories. The coming months would be a testing time for the revived peace process. It was sincerely hoped that the Oslo accords would continue to be seen as a process that strengthened both Israeli and Palestinian security rather than jeopardising it, he concluded.

Abderrahman Youssoufi, Morocco USFP, said that despite the fact that Morocco had recently been preoccupied with elections that might result in the first democratic alternation in power in her history, the fate of the Middle East peace process and the dramatic situation in the region had taken priority as a source of major concern both to USFP activists and to the Moroccan people.

He referred to an article in the International Herald Tribune in which the US expert in international relations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, pinpointed the Middle East and Central Africa as areas of trouble in 1997. The documents recently signed by the Israelis and Palestinians tended to modify this pessimism but there remained among other things the large gap between Palestinian hopes of recovering 95% of their territories, and the Israeli prime minister's apparent figure of around 35-50%. The only things the Israelis were committed to was negotiations, and they were implying that they alone would be the judge of what was necessary for their own security.

The Palestinians were committed to a new charter recognising the state of Israel and to the struggle against terrorist organisations, he continued. Netanyahu's policies were apparently designed to further his own objectives - including the 'depalestinisation' of East Jerusalem - and were clearly flying in the face of history. Their dynamic was contrary to the Oslo accords and the will of the Israeli people which had been enlightened by the left-wing forces and the movements for peace, one of whose illustrious leaders, Shimon Peres, was present. Netanyahu's policies risked encouraging the development of radical fundamentalist movements in both camps, and provoking destabilising confrontations in the region, he said.

The deteriorating situation would be fed by the worsening of conditions for the Palestinian population through the failure to implement the economic measures stipulated in the Oslo I and II accords. The living standard of the mass of Palestinians had fallen constantly since the signing of the Declaration in Washington in 1993 while that of Israeli citizens had climbed steadily. The average Palestinian wage was estimated at one-sixth of that of the neighbouring Israeli, while the unemployment rate for Gaza was about 45%, for the West Bank 35%, and for Israel 5%. The stalling of the peace talks with the Syrians and the Lebanese and the escalation of military operations in southern Lebanon also had their negative effects on the peace process and on the political climate of the whole Arab world.

The latest reactions of the Israeli prime minister concerning Golan had brought back tensions that one had hoped were passed, and the strangely lenient attitude of the US towards Israeli settlements in the occupied territories raised questions about the impartiality of the principal sponsor of the peace process.

In closing he said that the peace process which had been relaunched thanks to the goodwill of certain actors - among them eminent members of the SI - needed to be safeguarded and strengthened by efficient initiatives not only towards the Israeli government but also that of the United States. Only the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East would allow the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean area to concentrate on the democratisation of their nations and societies, the pre-condition for their genuine development within a framework of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The chair said that this brought the debate on the Middle East to an end, and a draft declaration on the region would be put before the Council the following day.

He then read out a message from the President of Italy in reply to one he had sent earlier, which stressed the close link between socialist ideals and fundamental human rights which formed the only basis of civilisation and democracy. It also affirmed the importance of the SI Council meeting's focus on peace and solidarity when these were so often threatened as they were in many areas of the world today. He sincerely hoped that the SI's call for freedom, justice and peace would have the widest possible hearing.

Pierre Mauroy then handed the chair to the SI's First Vice-President, **Gro Harlem Brundtland**.

Agenda item 2.2: Implementing the Dayton Agreements

Piero Fassino, Italy PDS, pointed to the close link between three recent events: the celebration in Sarajevo of the first year of peace; the demands of the citizens of Belgrade that Milosevic respect the outcome of the November vote; and the opposition filling the squares in Zagreb to defend free and independent information. All of south-eastern Europe and the Balkans were in a state of flux, he said.

The Dayton agreements had put an end to the most severe conflict since the end of World War II, the international community had deployed 60,000 NATO soldiers and since 1995 had spent one and a half billion dollars on reconstruction, with the aim of reaching five billion by 1999, in addition to enormous amounts of humanitarian aid. The positive outcome of these efforts for Bosnia were visible, he said. Obviously there were still difficulties with the return of refugees, with the slow rate of reconstruction, and there were risks, for instance if local elections were postponed indefinitely.

A number of delicate issues remained to be settled, he continued, such as the definitive normalisation of eastern Slavonia. Peace, after four years of war, suffering, death and hate, would be a gradual process of reconstructing the bonds of trust and mutual recognition that ethnic cleansing had destroyed. One heard people speak of the inevitable splintering of Bosnia but he warned against being too fatalistic about this possibility. A division of Bosnia would open up very severe problems, not least the fact that it would probably split into three rather than two entities. Muslims had co-existed with Orthodox Serbs much more than with Catholic Croatians. The Muslim-Croat Federation could probably only survive in a united Bosnia. If Bosnia ever broke up, a Muslim-run state would be vulnerable to outside influences and the situation could be less reassuring than it was today, he said.

It was not enough to have islands of peace: we wanted a continent of peace. Although the Dayton peace was fragile it was the only peace possible. It was up to the Bosnians and to us all to consolidate and strengthen the Dayton process to make it irreversible. He believed that this required that the entire international community, and especially the European Union, should feel bound to use every political activity and economic resource to guarantee the possibility of Bosnia growing as a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and pluralist state.

Stability in Bosnia was even more important in view of the political developments in Serbia and Croatia. The end of the war had changed the political situation in those countries too, and we could now see how war had deformed our image of them, as if Serbia were represented solely by Milosevic, Croatia solely by Tudjman, and Bosnia solely by Izetbegovic. Now that peace had returned one saw that reality was more complex. Social and political dialectics were coming to the fore in those countries. What other countries had gone through in 1989-90, Serbia and the former Yugoslavia were now experiencing. A democratic transition was under way, but following on from a war made everything more complex and difficult.

The opposition forces in Serbia and the students' movements had shown maturity and intelligence, presenting a modern and European image of their country. The Orthodox church had come out into the open, and increasing sectors of the army seemed resistant to

following the regime. Broader sectors of society were demanding greater political and economic freedoms, he said, even within Milosevic's own Socialist Party.

The application of the recommendations of the OSCE mission led by Felipe González - born of an Italian diplomatic initiative - and recognition of the November elections were at a crucial point. Respect for the popular will was a pre-requisite for two processes needed to bring democracy and stability to the former Yugoslavia: dialogue between government and opposition and the definition of the next stage of democratic transition so as to achieve elections by 1997, and the start of re-integration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into international institutions. These essential objectives were impossible without recognition of the November elections and minimum democratic conditions.

The political crisis in Croatia was less visible but equally deep, he continued. Croatia was no longer simply Tudjman's. The opposition, including the SDP, had a strong political following which could be very positive for the democratic development of the country. The local elections in March would be a key moment in that evolution.

Looking beyond the former Yugoslavia to other countries in the Balkans, he said, the recent elections in Romania had opened up new prospects for democracy there. He congratulated the parties of the Social Democratic Union and their leaders Petre Roman and Sergiu Cunesco.

In other countries the difficulties were increasing. There was an acute crisis in Bulgaria made more serious by being rooted in the failure of the Videnov government's economic programme. The international community and the SI must encourage a dialogue between government and opposition in order to reach agreement on an early date for elections and on how to deal with the financial, economic and food emergency affecting the whole of Bulgarian society.

The situation in Albania was different but no less complex, he said. The municipal elections and their results had signalled the first step towards democratic normality. Further steps were needed now, starting with a new constitution based on consensus between all parties. Such a dialogue could also encourage the opposition to return to parliament. But democratic stability in Albania depended also on the government's realisation that Albania now had the highest influx of illegal funds which were being laundered in huge speculations and were a veritable cancer eating up resources and destabilising the economy and democracy; and also on the continuing prudence of the Albanian leaders in not interfering in Kosovo. Relations between Macedonia and Albania were inspired by dialogue and cooperation.

Strong political activity was needed to stabilise the whole of South-Eastern Europe, he said. The European Union should exercise special responsibility with regard to a strategy for regional integration based on agreements for cooperation and association so as to allow economic growth and democratic stability, bearing in mind that European integration had been devised so that cooperation and common growth would replace the wars that had ravaged Europe twice in less than thirty years. To now anchor central European countries and the Balkans to Europe was a key condition to prevent new nationalistic adventures and provide real democratic stability.

These were the objectives the SI should concentrate on, he said: to consolidate the post-Dayton process in Bosnia; to strengthen democratic institutions in Croatia and open up the way to democratic transition in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia based on the OCSE recommendations; to encourage dialogue between government and opposition to resolve the political crises in Bulgaria and Albania; and to strengthen the integration strategy of the European Union and other regional institutions. To achieve this it was also essential to strengthen democratic, progressive and social democratic forces in the region. The SI's decision to admit parties from Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Romania was a strong and concrete help. Cooperative relations had also been established with the SDP and other social democratic forces in Croatia, with the progressive and social democratic forces in Yugoslavia, with 'Eurosocijalist' forces in Albania and reformist sectors in Bulgaria. Together with all these forces the SI must contribute to the

strengthening of economic growth and democratic stability through the ideals and values of democratic socialism, he concluded.

Vesna Pesic, Serbia Civic Alliance, said that the political crisis in her country had begun after the ruling party had decided to annul the results of the November elections and the victory of the opposition coalition. She and her party had been astonished at the insistence of Serbians on their political rights and the energy they had displayed in demanding that their voice be heard. That crisis, she said, was deeply rooted in the five or six years of irresponsible politics which had destroyed the country's economy and led to people living in fear. There were difficult internal problems, and after the Dayton peace accord they realised what a poor condition Serbia was in and how many questions had to be resolved.

The main demand of this movement was for legal and democratic procedures because they had found it was not enough to belong to the Serbian or Croatian nation if you had no political rights. She considered this a positive sign and she hoped that all the parties attending the Council meeting would support this movement for democracy and change in Serbia.

Many people, she continued, had asked what type of coalition it was. For a long time there had been very different deeply rooted positions in Serbian society. One was the old-fashioned stalinist communist position found in their Socialist Party, that used the war in former Yugoslavia to revitalise the organs of the previous system and avoid democratisation, to encourage extreme nationalism and retain power. There was also a patriarchal conservative tradition especially amongst the rural population which feared the rest of Europe and was very xenophobic.

The parties forming the coalition had realised that they should start to build a new way, that stability, peace and democracy could not be divided. They were very determined that their first goal was the democratisation of Serbia, that the economy must be revitalised and new and friendly relations established in the region. Her party also wished to see respect for minorities and a resolution of the Kosovo problem through free and open dialogue that was satisfactory to both Albanians and Serbs. She added that economic reforms in eastern Europe must go hand-in-hand with democratic and social reforms.

They were also insisting, as a matter of principle, on a clarification of the November elections. They could not open up a dialogue on further democratisation or creating new conditions for free and fair elections until this was achieved. This was what they were fighting for. For that they needed first of all freedom of expression without which there could be no equal chances; without debate and without objective and truthful information about one's own country and other countries one had no way to make a real choice, so these conditions were necessary for an equal competition in the next elections and for resolving some very difficult problems. Certainly new election laws were needed and some control so that the disaster was not repeated.

She congratulated Felipe González and the OSCE commission on the very good job they had done and on the recommendations made to her country and to the international community. Although the commission had been invited by President Milosevic, the report was now not mentioned at all, as if it did not exist. Nor was the people's desire for further progress towards democratisation officially acknowledged by the ruling party or the media. Even her own trip to this meeting would be reported as treacherous in her country. She therefore reiterated her appeal to every participant to use their influence to put pressure on the Serbian government to recognise that peace and stability required democracy, and economic and social reform.

She added that for Balkan countries it was not good to have the possibility of dictatorship. They too required democracy for stability, to help prevent their fighting against each other, to maintain peace in Bosnia and avoid new wars in the south, in Kosovo and Macedonia. Only through democratisation and full and open discussions could all the problems be resolved.

With this in mind she said she would not like to see the disappointment of all those people who had demonstrated their energy and hopes for the future. She was sure we would give them the support they needed to succeed not only in getting recognition of the November elections but also in their actions for democratisation, peace and stability in the Balkans.

Thorbjørn Jagland, Norway DNA, agreed with what had just been said about peace and democracy being interdependent, and therefore the development in South-Eastern Europe still gave us cause for concern. Bulgaria was in a state of political turmoil; there was a severe crisis of confidence between Milosevic and major segments of Serbian society; the situation in Bosnia was slowly improving, but our ambitions went beyond the absence of war. Bosnian institutions, he said, must assume the main responsibility for the country's peaceful and democratic development. He thought it should be made clear to the political leaders in the region that we supported them but they must build democracy, that they alone could rebuild a peaceful civil society based on respect for human rights. Whilst many of our countries were contributing to the stabilisation force - Norway with some 700 troops - that must not be a substitute for building confidence, new institutions and democracy. The main focus had to be on civilian tasks. Strict coordination in setting the priorities for reconstruction would be of the utmost importance, and the role of those responsible for coordinating civilian efforts should be enhanced, he said.

Free and independent media would be essential elements in the building of democracy, he continued. We needed more interaction with political leaders, and must build networks as we had and still did in the Middle East. He believed the Socialist International had an important role in this context.

People all over Europe were asking what should be done about the war criminals. We must never let them rest, said Jagland. Dayton had made that clear. Everyone charged with war crimes by the international criminal tribunal should be arrested and sent to The Hague. He regretted the continual lack of cooperation with that tribunal and said we should press on with the agreement reached in London the previous year to increase pressure on those parties who had failed to comply with the arrest warrants. This should also be our message from this meeting.

We should also insist, he continued, that Serbia would never be considered a member of the civilised world if it went on neglecting the most obvious of all democratic rules, the role of the people. Felipe González's findings had left no doubt on this issue. Our position must be clear. Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must act to promote democracy, human rights, and free and independent media. We should step up our contacts with the leaders of the opposition in Serbia so that they felt part of the larger European context in which they had rights as well as obligations. Peace was democracy and democracy was peace, he reiterated. Therefore we should emphasise the building of democracy, of confidence and of civil societies in this region.

Felipe González, Spain PSOE, said that in late December he had been asked by the OSCE to visit Belgrade to appraise the situation there. He had not been given a mandate to enter into mediation, nor to convert the delegation into an international tribunal of justice, but to speak to the authorities, the opposition and the independent press, the governing party, the electoral commission and the courts, and to collect the data and issue a report on that data.

He had accepted because he had felt he could not refuse, but he had done so with considerable concern, remembering the people who had previously gone to the Balkans in times of crisis with peace proposals or settlements and whose efforts had been lost in the diabolical labyrinth that this region had become. He added that he agreed completely with the analysis presented by Piero Fassino which he thought was very accurate.

He had asked the organisation to allow him to present his own report without trying to reach consensus with the rest of the OSCE delegation which might have taken many months, so it was on this basis that he had conducted his mission. It had certainly not been a comfortable visit.

He had held talks, he said, with all the parties and actors involved in the situation. The problem of the November local elections had not been a decisive one in terms of power relations, but they had unleashed the demonstration of the people's aspirations for freedom and civil dignity and had thus become a symbol for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Therefore we had to understand that the solution was not to hold the elections again, despite various international resolutions to that effect. He had tried to explain to the OSCE, he continued, that 17 November had become a problem but was also an opportunity, and if this Gordian knot could be cut then there would be a chance to democratise the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

To agree to the proposal of the authorities to repeat the elections in Belgrade with observers from the OSCE and other European organisations was no solution, he said, because the judicial system could again quash the results, rejecting them for some minor incident and bringing us back to the same problem in three or four months. What was needed was for the election results to be recognised which would be the democratic option. In his report, he said, he had listed some recommendations and conclusions. He wanted the Socialist International to make a clear appeal to the Belgrade authorities to accept and implement these conclusions which provided a procedure by which the authorities could begin the process of democratisation, involving the opposition and its parliamentary representatives, involving the coalition which had won the elections and applying an adequate procedure. The opposition were providing the legal formulae for solving the problem of implementation but the Yugoslav authorities were rejecting them without good reason, he said. If they truly believed that there was no legal way to respect the 17 November results, then there could be no legal way to annul the elections held ten days later. It was a problem of political will - the will to recognise the problem and grasp the opportunity for the democratisation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

He urged the representatives of the opposition who were attending this meeting to strongly and clearly defend his conclusions and recommendations so as to maintain the support of the OSCE, and also the European Union, which would certainly strengthen their position.

He also wanted our message of solidarity to be conveyed to the young people who had demonstrated in such an exemplary, peaceful and joyous fashion their demand for something different, because they were aspiring to the recovery of human dignity, they wished to live in freedom and identify themselves with the young people of the European community.

It was often said, he continued, that the international community was against the Serbian people and saw them as criminals, but the Serbian people must know that they are part of our community, that we respected and needed them. He thought the international community should realise that a stable Yugoslavia was very important to guarantee the Dayton agreements, and this could only be done if we had a democratic Federal Republic. The old traditional balance of terror with stability on one side and democracy on the other was no longer plausible. In this case stability meant democracy. He thought young people were sick of the nationalistic message that had led to such a fierce and bloody war. They wanted democracy, freedom, peace and human dignity. This was the message coming to us from the streets of Belgrade.

Speaking with the authorities, he said, had not been easy, even though they had been able to meet anyone they wished to. He told how President Milosevic had said there was an international conspiracy trying to criminalise the Serbian people, and it had been pointed out to him that he, González, was not part of any conspiracy. González had also told Milosevic that in Madrid there were some young refugees from the former Yugoslavia with whom he had spoken and whose two concerns were the whereabouts of their parents or siblings, and their failure to understand what was continuing to happen in their country. Among these young people were Serbians, Croats and Muslims, from Orthodox families, Catholic families and from mixed-marriage families and he had been unable to tell them apart. He had also informed Milosevic that he did not know which ethnic group he was referring to when he spoke of ethnic conflict. These young people spoke the same language, they had the same aspirations and they shared the same bitterness because they could not understand why ethnic cleansing and disappearances occurred.

An excellent historian, González continued, had said that the 20th century began in Sarajevo, a little late in 1914. It could have ended in Sarajevo in 1991. It was a short and terrible century of totalitarian fundamentalism, both fascist and communist. If it had ended in 1991 we had the opening of new hope, and this had many symbols such as the Middle East, the region of the Great Lakes, the former Yugoslavia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which needed the international community as much as the international community needed it, if it wanted the region to be a stable one, but it also had to be democratic. Our appeal must be an urgent and firm appeal to the authorities that they implement the role of citizens as expressed on 17 November as an issue of democracy and dignity, and that they begin a process of negotiation with the parliamentary forces of the opposition. He had chosen his words carefully so that no strange tricks should occur, and he had requested the opposition to maintain an open and democratic attitude, upholding the recommendations of democratisation. In his own country, he added, he had experienced a democratic transition so he understood that Yugoslavia had not had the opportunity for such a transition, but the Dayton peace accord was certainly a decisive ingredient which could open the way to the hope of democracy and dignity for the people of the region.

Finally, he said, the OSCE had also asked him to look into the problem of minorities, but he had been unable to do this and had therefore not presented any report on that question. He had only been able to speak to the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. He wished however to call attention to the fact that, as mentioned by Piero Fassino, what was demanded in terms of the treatment of minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was what we demanded in all the republics of the former Yugoslavia. Equal treatment was extremely valuable for future democratic co-existence in the region, and a contribution to peace. And peace in this region was a key element for the peaceful co-existence of the whole of Europe which was trying to recover from the dramatic events of the 20th century. He had therefore met the foreign minister again in Belgrade concerning the implementation of his report, rejecting any alternative formulas and insisting on recognition of the 17 November results and the beginning of a democratic process as the only way to provide stability and democracy to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which would also contribute to the stability and democracy of the whole region.

Gianfranco Schietroma, Italy PSDI, said the problem of the Balkans was a very dangerous one. It threatened the peace of Europe, and without that peace one could not foresee any enlargement of the European Union towards the east, and this was an essential objective if one considered the great economic areas which would be the protagonists of the forthcoming century. Europe, he said, had not played a very positive role in the problems of the Balkans. The chain of ethnic hatred had to be broken and this would only be possible if proper economic investments could succeed in raising the potential of the Balkans in a strong economic Europe. Moreover the problem of the Balkans could only be addressed within the framework of regional policies which Europe must develop by giving greater responsibility to the industrialised countries which could also help in those areas.

Given the complexity of the problem owing to its ethnic, historical and religious connotations, he thought that due weight must be given to the right to self-determination, envisaging among other things a confederation able to respect autonomies and the right to development.

He was convinced that the Socialist International could play a very important role in achieving peace in the Balkans. Moreover the blood already spilt and the criminal behaviour of those responsible for crimes against humanity meant that we must show full support for those bodies trying to enforce law and order in the region.

László Kovács, Hungary MSzP, said that as a socialist he was committed to the cause of economic and social stability; and as a Hungarian he was deeply interested in the stability and development of neighbouring former Yugoslavia. The stability of the separate sub-regions was closely interdependent, and there could be no stability in the region without democracy, the rule of law, full respect for human rights and the rights of national minorities, and also bringing the war criminals to trial.

In order to achieve stability in the former Yugoslavia we had to identify the problems jeopardising that stability, the first of which was the enormous number of refugees and displaced persons. An additional problem was that in certain sub-regions the influx of displaced persons altered the ethnic proportions to the detriment of national minorities. A second problem was that the economy of the former Yugoslavia, and especially that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was in complete chaos.

If we wanted to address these problems properly, he continued, we had first to concentrate on humanitarian issues like the return of refugees and displaced persons, and then to establish democratic institutions and the rule of law, so as to have democratic local elections and respect for human and minority rights. Then we had also to focus on economic reconstruction and revitalisation of the economy of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, and to further promote the process of arms control. It was the duty of the international community, governments and international organisations to promote the implementation of the Dayton peace accord. The same applied to the international social democratic movement.

But there were some issues that were beyond the competence of government, he said. If we wanted peace, security and stability we should help socialist values to gain ground in the former Yugoslavia by indirectly supporting the social democratic and socialist parties of the region.

We had just heard the very interesting report by Felipe González giving details of the situation in Serbia, he said. We all knew that the ruling party was not prepared to accept the outcome of the elections and that they were violating the principles of democracy, and we had to make a stand explicitly on this issue. The Hungarian socialists strongly endorsed the adoption of the resolution that was being circulated.

In conclusion he said it was also important to make it absolutely clear that the SI had nothing to do with the Serbian Socialist Party which had nothing to do with socialist or social democratic values, because in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, right-wing parties made use of the name of the ruling party in Serbia to denigrate the democratic Left, the genuine socialist parties, who did respect the rules and principles of democracy.

Paraskevas Evgerinos, Greece, PASOK, said that the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the Balkans had been followed by a period of euphoria, the euphoria of democracy, and the west had expressed great satisfaction at the end of the cold war and the Yalta period. However the west had not shown sufficient interest in the real problems of democracy and development in those new states, and especially in the Balkans where those problems were particularly acute. From the outset they had emphasised that the dissolution of Yugoslavia would not be a peaceful one but the beginning of a long war, costing many lives, a war that the west watched on its television screens.

Greece's policy had been based on the conviction that the only way to peace in the Balkans - an essential requirement for his country - was to respect the frontiers as they existed. The Dayton agreement had imposed the peace that Bosnia-Herzegovina needed, but whether this would be the end of the crisis in the Balkans was as yet unknown. It would be truly disastrous, he said, if the final act of the Yugoslav drama were to unfold in the south. The region of Kosovo was a powder-keg waiting to explode. A conflict in that region would involve a number of neighbouring states and lead to the internationalisation of the crisis.

Greece, he continued, had very close relations with the people of the Balkans and thus had a special interest in their development. The west, he said, must take immediate and effective action to break down the barriers that had caused the great poverty in the region. Unemployment was an explosive issue in those countries and economic development so negative that people were flooding into the EU countries to find work and a welfare state. We socialists must give priority to the problem of the Balkans and not leave it to the Americans alone.

The problems of democracy and of institutions in those countries were huge, he said. Nationalism was flourishing and threatening to put them back to the beginning of this

century, all as a direct consequence of poverty. National fanaticism must worry us all as we knew it led to war and nothing but war.

As socialists, subscribing to the principles of human rights, democratic freedoms and social solidarity, we had an obligation to help find definitive solutions to the problems of democracy and development in the Balkans, because any extension of the current situation could not lead to a durable peace.

He concluded by expressing the hope that in the very near future the entry of these countries into the European Union would be considered.

Bogdan Denitch, USA DSA, said his party supported the resolution that was being circulated with some minor amendments. He did not wish to repeat the excellent points that had already been made, but thought two complexities needed attention. Whilst we had focussed on the authoritarian regime of Milosevic, there was a regime in Zagreb that was also stealing elections and had prevented the opposition from running the capital in which it had won even more convincingly than in Belgrade. It also repressed the press, broke union strikes and probably allowed even fewer media rights than the Serbian regime.

He referred to the difficult problems of nationalism feeding off itself, refugees being kept out of Croatia, the guilt of the government, and the Albanian majority in Kosovo whose oppression had begun the entire process of segregation. If all the opposition in Serbia had been like the excellent Vesna Pesic, he said, he would be filled with joy, but three of the four opposition parties were nationalist and he thought we should tell them in an amicable and fraternal way that we backed their legitimate demand concerning the municipal elections, but that we required clear statements from them on the issue of minority rights in Serbia, and on war criminals and guilt, which would not be easy to get. This latter was important because people were continuing to use the principle of collective guilt, and unfortunately the main criminals were precisely the people who had negotiated the Dayton agreement, Milosevic, Tudjman and to a lesser extent their equivalents on the Bosnian side. We needed to be aware of the temptation to accuse the perpetrators of the crimes rather than those who had ordered them. He thought the Dayton agreement was in grave danger from the possibility, mentioned by Piero Fassino, of Bosnia being divided up into three parts because the Croat republic of Herzegovina had shown not the slightest respect for democratic rights of the minority and had carried out a total ethnic cleansing.

In conclusion he said we must keep up the pressure on the authoritarian regime in Zagreb and tell our friends in Bosnia that being victims did not entitle them to attack secular values or repress the media. Being victims did not necessarily mean being virtuous. He urged the Socialist International to give adequate support to social democratic forces in the region because until we did that we would not be contributing to a solution, and we needed to do it in a visible way because in the long run, nationalist regimes were not going to be the solution for Milosevic and Tudjman. He added that the latter was dying and we should already be worrying about who would replace him because the right wing of his party was even worse.

Jarko Korac, Serbia SDU, said that the ongoing political crisis in Serbia was a very difficult one that was still raging on the streets of Belgrade and other Serbian cities with the legal demands of the people for their local elections victory. But the issue here was the awakening of the Serbian people after years of intoxication with chauvinism and nationalism.

On a personal note, he added that the students had been in the streets for 60 hours and among them were many of his students and his son. He thought this meeting should stress the importance of the student protest, because in truth the students were the only innocent ones. These young people had had nothing to do with the war; they were fighting for a democratic Serbia. If we were going to support something that was the future of Serbia, then this was the students, the people of the streets, and it was their future that was at stake.

The principal problems in Serbia, he continued, were the support for the Dayton peace accord - which had brought a truce but much of which had not been implemented - the

question of stabilisation of Bosnia as a state, and the question of refugees and cooperation with the high tribunal. There was also the problem of practical relations with Albanians in Kosovo and the very disturbing signals from all sides including recently Albania. So there were huge obstacles to the process of democratising Serbia. The democratic forces within Serbia, he said, needed our support in their internal battle.

There were many lessons to be learned from the Bosnian crisis, he added, one of which was that it was better to prevent such crises than to try to mediate later on. But Serbia had taken that first step towards democracy as shown by what was taking place in the streets of Belgrade and other cities. The draft resolution was expressing the hope that Serbia would continue in the right direction, and his appeal was that the SI would continue its interests in what was happening in his country. There were grave dangers ahead and the constant attention of the SI could perhaps prevent further destabilisation of the whole area.

Dragisa Burzan, Montenegro SDPM, said he thought the Socialist International should take a very firm stance on the interpretation of democratic socialism and he proposed some amendments to the draft resolution. He urged the SI to take a very careful look at the elections in Montenegro in November.

Willy Claes, Belgium SP, said he thought the draft resolution was rather weak and risked being misinterpreted by Belgrade - and certain parties in Bosnia too - as our believing that the Dayton agreement was in fact being applied, which in his view was not the case. Local elections were being ignored, the international tribunal was being made to look ridiculous, and Karadzic and others were still out there in the streets. The plight of the refugees was not being addressed - on the contrary, ethnic separation was gaining ground.

He thought there were still many problems in the relations between Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia, even insofar as telephone lines were concerned. Many reconstruction projects were sabotaged if they did not respect the nationalist criteria. He emphasised that the US troops had been sent there with the plan to leave in 18 months, so if the peace process was not accelerated the European Union risked finding itself facing the dilemma of whether to leave with the Americans in unsatisfactory conditions, or to keep their troops in the area for longer.

As far as Bosnia and Serbia were concerned, he felt the draft resolution tended to back Milosevic. He said he had often negotiated with Milosevic and his friends and they belonged to the hard school, the ex-communist camp. He thought he would not cede easily and that the SI must clearly tell him that we were not ready to go even one step in his direction if he did not respect the election results and the rules of democracy including the respect for minorities. He thought it was not enough to underline the decisive role of the European Union. Governments and socialist parties had taken a very weak role vis-a-vis the Belgrade authorities. Our line should be no aid for reconstruction until the Dayton agreements were implemented.

Piero Fassino said he wished to underline two important points that Felipe González had stressed. The first concerned the quest for recognition of the 17 November elections by the Belgrade authorities - which had become a symbol and should not be negotiable - in order to open up a well advanced phase in the peace process and the possibility of dialogue between government and opposition to draw up the rules for the transition period leading to elections for the Serbian assemblies at the end of the year. Clearly those elections must take place under different conditions from the local elections held in November.

Secondly, he said, we should give serious consideration to the subject of minorities, restate our principles and follow that up with positive political suggestions on the reconstruction of the conditions for a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious basis for the protection of minority rights. One lesson that could be learned from the crises in Yugoslavia was that one could not make ethnic origins a basis of state because that would put into question two centuries of historical and political change. These were two principles that we should bear in mind as we looked at any political solution to ensure the application of the peace agreements and the implementation of democracy.

Concerning the draft resolution, he thought the amendments suggested improved the text which would be distributed before the next session. He stressed the importance of avoiding two risks. Firstly, that of implying that the Dayton process would never go through, and that ethnic division was inevitable. We should maintain a policy of supporting the peace process despite the difficulties resulting from a long and bloody civil war, hoping to gradually build up peace and encourage a feeling of living together that the ethnic clans had destroyed. Concerning the section on Belgrade, he thought it responded fully to the request from Felipe González to be very precise and clear in our call for recognition of the November 17 elections which was an essential step towards democracy in Serbia.

Pierre Mauroy asked all those who were not representatives of SI member parties to leave the room for the closed session on the SI's draft budget for 1997.

Gunnar Stenarv reported on the SIFAC meeting the previous Monday at which five points had emerged. The first concerned voting rights in the Council. Fifty-five parties carried full voting rights, and 24 parties did not have the right to vote because they had failed to pay their fees for the previous year. SIFAC had discussed the draft budget for 1997 including membership fees for the year. The SI's income for 1997 was estimated at one million, one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. They had presented a very limited but accurate budget proposal that would allow the SI to carry out its activities during the year.

He reminded the Council that in order to carry out its important work the prompt payment of membership fees was needed. They had tried to propose membership fees that member parties could meet, and had minimised the number of fee levels, the smallest being two thousand pounds, and the highest £105,000. SIFAC recommended that the Council adopt the proposed budget, he said.

SIFAC, he continued, had kept the Council informed about some parties' failure to meet their financial commitment to the SI. To implement the Statutes in this regard was a very serious matter. According to the Statutes a party that failed to pay its membership fees for three years would cease to be a member, and SIFAC had decided to inform the Council about those parties and demand that they should deal with this matter before 1 April next in order to avoid suspending their membership. The parties concerned were: Barbados, Benin UDFP, Benin MDPS, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Greenland, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti PANPRA, Jamaica, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, New Zealand, Peru, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Tunisia MUP, Venezuela MEP. He hoped this would be resolved by 1 April.

He said SIFAC recommended the admission of the Union of Bosnia & Herzegovinian Social Democrats as observer members of the SI, in accordance with the mandate of the Congress.

SIFAC also recommended that the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, SDS, currently an observer party member, be expelled from the SI following a statement of intention at a press conference in Ljubljana on 6 October 1996, to form with unidentified political parties a new Socialist International. He asked the Council to adopt this recommendation.

In closing he thanked the staff of the SI for their work.

Pierre Mauroy confirmed that the meeting accepted the exclusion of the SDP of Slovenia, and accepted the report of Gunnar Stenarv. He thanked him for having wonderfully performed a very difficult task.

He reminded the meeting that at the Congress there had been talk of increasing the number of alternates in SIFAC. Certain areas, such as Africa, Latin America, Asia, and eastern Europe, were not sufficiently represented. It was important to take into account this lack of regional representation. He suggested putting this on the agenda of the next Council meeting. Although the number of members had been established by Congress we could change the number of alternates.

Bogdan Denitch, USA DSA, pointed out that North America was not represented in any of the bodies of the SI, and whilst it was true that the party he represented was a small party, North America was a rather large continent and he thought one of the North American parties should be represented in SIFAC.

The chair suggested that this meeting agree to add alternates to SIFAC and leave it to the next Council meeting to decide who those alternates should be, giving no preference - as a democratic organisation - to old or new member parties. He asked parties who wished to be considered to inform the SI secretariat.

Agenda item 2.3 continued

Jacques Baudin, Senegal PS, said he wanted to comment on the need to ensure judicial security also in these areas, to ensure proper international reconciliation, peace and development. With the return of refugees there were enormous legal problems concerning property rights, especially in Burundi. If we were to send a mission we must consider how to ensure that the rights of refugees were respected and the possibility of a compensation system. Then there was the problem of people claiming Rwandan nationality which could not be ignored. We must also look at the different competences between the national system and the international tribunal in Rwanda, he said. In the national systems the death penalty was recognised, but not in the international tribunal. At the national level, the rights of women were completely ignored, he added. So this sad spectacle masquerading as justice was extending the genocide and revenge. All the Great Lakes countries must address this problem and the overlapping competences of the international tribunal in Rwanda and the national courts in the three countries affected.

The chair said that this was a very interesting comment and could be studied further at a future meeting of the Africa Committee or Council.

Manuel Tomé, Mozambique Frelimo, hoped that the SI would be able to adopt resolutions that could contribute to the new dynamics with the possibility of intervention in these problems facing the world, politically, economically and socially.

In the past year, he said, there had been marked changes in Mozambique's political scene, thanks to a growing democratic arena. After 17 years of destabilisation and civil war, which had come to an end in 1992, they had finally found some tranquility. Democracy had taken firm root in an irreversible process. A permanent forum on development had been established by the government with all the forces of the country's political, social and religious spectrum because they believed that only in open dialogue could a stable and prosperous democracy be based.

This fraternal coexistence gave them optimism in facing the challenges of 1997. For the first time Mozambique would be having local elections as part of the party's programme of decentralisation and strengthening democracy. The establishment of town councils would allow greater participation by local people and thus bolster national unity, stimulate economic and social development and improve living conditions. There was a growing will among Mozambicans to take a full part in responding to the challenges of national reconstruction in its many forms.

Among the significant events of the past year he mentioned his great concern at the continuing resistance to change on the part of certain regimes and governments, and also the generalisation of terrorist activities and regional tensions which often led to fratricidal wars, the disintegration of sovereign states and the aggravation of social and economic inequalities. In Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and Somalia the battle for political, economic and even racial supremacy had led to fratricidal wars and immense damage to innocent people. The great majority of conflicts in the world were occurring in Africa, he said, so it was up to the international community to respond and make use of every mechanism which had been established at international level to address these problems.

The deep polarisation of wealth and poverty was aggravating the gap between the countries of North and South and the whole African continent was being increasingly marginalised

from economic and social development. While globalisation of the economy and of communications encouraged major advances in science and technology, these were generally confined to the industrialised countries and third-world countries were increasingly excluded. It was almost like a process of re-colonisation with globalisers on the one hand and the globalised on the other. Without sustainable indigenous development, he said, the underdeveloped countries could not emerge from their situation. Suggestions made at this meeting could alleviate but not solve the problem. The Bretton Woods organisations' measures had stifled economic development, giving priority to exports without enabling a strong domestic market to be established. Mozambique needed a total cancellation of her debt.

The country would need more than 200 years just to reconstruct what had been destroyed during the civil war, he continued. So countries like Mozambique had no hope, and any negotiations with the World Bank were almost impossible. But a short-term solution had to be found. When Europe had been developing, African had been destroyed, enslaved and colonised. Africa now ran the risk of being re-colonised, so the SI must demonstrate its solidarity in concrete help to face these crucial challenges. We had to work together and together face the challenges of today and the future, he concluded, our struggle for a better future was continuing.

The chair said he thought this a strong and very just presentation, and that the SI must surely respond to the appeal for solidarity.

Giangiaco­mo Migone, Italy PDS, said it was a good thing that we were debating the Great Lakes region. This area happened to be the litmus test of our commitment to human rights at this time. We all knew that when great economic interests were at stake it was difficult to stand up for human rights. China was a good example, and Hong Kong would be another acid test. At the other extreme it was equally difficult to focus international attention on unfortunate countries like Rwanda and Burundi except momentarily when a great tragedy occurred, and then it was too late.

The SI should be aware that the danger of genocide in that part of the world was far from over. Hundreds of thousands of refugees had returned to Rwanda with all the attendant problems. A slice of Zaire's territory had been taken over by the Rwandan army and those interests that supported Mobutu were about to contribute to a war of succession that would impose new hardship upon the population. Rwanda and Burundi were ruled by thinly disguised ethnic minority governments who had only partial control of their armies. The commitment of the international community, however, had decreased dramatically. Armed humanitarian intervention had been cancelled, there were very few international observers, and humanitarian aid was insufficient.

Since there was now a recognised international responsibility concerning human rights, and the principle of self-government was universally accepted, these problems had to be dealt with. He thought the draft declaration provided good guidelines.

It was one of the most important tasks of our organisation, he concluded, to give continuity to our commitment to human rights, a commitment that went beyond positive but ephemeral emotions dependent on the attention of the media.

There followed a discussion of the draft resolution with amendments suggested by **Ellen van Koppen**, Netherlands PvdA, and **Piero Fassino**.

The chair then said Tanor Dieng, van Koppen and Godin would meet privately to work on the resolution and report back later.

Rosie Douglas, Dominica Labour Party suggested an amendment to the draft resolution on the Middle East the adoption of which was postponed until later.

Agenda item 2.4: the Work of the Socialist International in the coming period

Felipe González, first congratulated the SI president and secretary general and the Council itself on the very high level of debate, and on the resolutions that had been put forward with their indications for practical action by the Socialist International.

He then described how he intended to carry out the brief entrusted to him by the Congress to chair a Commission of the SI and put forward new ideas in two basic areas of activity. Firstly, to look at any changes that might be needed in order to respond to the growth of the organisation and the crisis brought about by such a large amount of aspirations in all continents of the world. All the Commission's work, he said, would be done in coordination with the secretariat and subject to overseeing by the presidency. He considered this very important in order that it be very clear that the work was carried out by the SI.

The Commission was to have twelve to fourteen members, selected so as to establish some kind of balance. Clearly not all the people who would be able to make key contributions could be included in such a small commission. Nevertheless he hoped that these people would still work in developing the platform for this new frontier of ideas for the SI to confront the 21st century. He hoped everyone would contribute.

He then explained how they had gone about deciding on the membership of the Commission. With the idea of balance in mind they had decided to include IUSY and SI Women. For geographical balance and to show clearly that we represented a worldwide organisation, he had suggested two western Europeans and one eastern European - as representing a new reality with completely different types of development - two Africans, two Latin Americans (and he was considering the continent of America as one whole), two from the Asia-Pacific region - one from Asia and one from New Zealand - and a representative of the Middle East. The list of names, he said, had been circulated. Having worked for 25 years with European comrades and with Latin Americans he wanted to show symbolically that this task belonged to all and was a worldwide job for the Socialist International.

Another balance he had tried to strike - and it too had not been easy - he said, was to have a true representation of women. He had seen that the normal working of the SI did not encourage the presence of women, so he had made an effort to have a strong representation of women, who were of great value and had a valuable contribution to make.

As to the tasks of the Commission, he said some of the members had considerable experience in international work, such as the first SI vice-president who had made an extremely significant report. He thought the Commission should provide impulse to debate ideas and receive input from that debate, which could then be summarised and presented to the Council which would decide what should be done.

He believed the Commission should be ambitious but there were some boundaries, and he had made a list of subjects that were of interest to people in Dakar, Copenhagen, Brasilia or anywhere else on the planet. These were just suggestions to be considered, he said; obviously not all the issues that concerned us could be included and he had chosen to omit some topics. One such was the reform of the welfare state because that was specifically a European matter; in Mozambique it was not a matter of reforming the welfare state but rather of building one. For some regions it was important to discuss the external debt and its effects on development. This problem was not on the list but certainly needed to be addressed in the areas where it was a prime concern, he said.

So the basic idea of his proposal, he continued, was to consider our response to issues of general concern worldwide, and to complete this debate with proposals on points which were of specific concern to each region of the world in which we were present, hence the seven points in the proposal. He recalled Willy Brandt's message to the Berlin Congress, which represented also his own view, that our age had many possibilities, for good and for evil, that we could do nothing on our own, and that very few things lasted for ever. Each age therefore required its own response, and we needed to find the response for this age. We were already providing answers to the problems of our age in our resolutions, he said, but if there

was a single message he felt it important to convey, it was to reject the idea of a single stream of thought, as if the fall of the Berlin Wall meant that one type of thought had won the day for all time. He saw that as a sign of a new fundamentalism in the international debate, an attack against liberty and plurality of thought.

Alternative forms of thought were needed and this was our prime objective. We wanted to pit our ideas against this fundamentalist hegemony of neo-liberalism which would drag us back to the 19th century and the denial of the importance of political power and the state, and which believed that market forces could spontaneously solve every problem. He felt repelled when people equated markets with democracy because he had never seen democracy without economic freedom, but he had seen dictatorships with free and open markets. So the market and democracy were not the same thing.

Considering the crisis of the Great Lakes, we had to solve this, he said. It could not be left to the market. Nor could the confrontation in the Middle East. Could the market solve those problems or the explosion of war in former Yugoslavia, or the right to healthcare? Our positive response should be to demonstrate that there was a viable alternative form of thought.

His list of seven topics, he continued, was not a resolution. He would like us to analyse globalisation, the technological revolution and its impact on employment, competitiveness and the reform of the productive system. We should analyse the worldwide importance of healthy macro-economic policies - which were not identical for countries with differing conditions - because inflation was the very worst thing for those of lower income. We had to defend healthy macro-economic policies in order to defend our societies. And we needed to defend the technological revolution at the service of humans rather than humans at the service of the market or the technological revolution.

The fourth point he suggested for analysis was the reform of the role of the state. We did not want a national populist state, nor a fragile state dependent on vested interests or subject to the whims of pressure groups or the decisions of international groups. We needed a state which provided services to its citizens.

His fifth point was what kind of political power and authority we wanted and how it should be legitimised. Politicians seemed to be losing legitimacy and public esteem at the moment, he said. We needed to promote physical and intellectual resources for our countries, to guarantee such basic resources as education, health, and public services. These were things that went beyond the issue of whether they were managed by the public or the private sector and should be considered a citizen's basic right.

The sixth point was the need to discuss developments in the world of international finance. It was impossible for us to acquiesce passively in uncontrolled speculation. The Left and the SI should make an analysis and come up with a regulatory framework for capital movement. This was something that concerned also people in government - conservative and centre-right parties - because they had seen how capital movements had completely wiped out some countries' capital currency reserves in the space of one or two days. In the face of economic globalisation we needed a mechanism to prevent such financial conflicts. Perhaps it was too ambitious to consider a world economic government, he said, but certainly we needed to re-establish rules and an appropriate mechanism.

The seventh point concerned the United Nations which was currently in crisis. A former vice-president of the SI had just left the post of UN Secretary General and González thought his only fault - since he was an intelligent and dynamic person, and a good manager - was to have had some ideas of his own which appeared to be incompatible with that position. The organisation was also in financial crisis because some members did not pay their contributions, so certainly the UN needed reorganising, both politically and financially. We had moved away from a bi-polar world and a balance of terror but we had not found an alternative order. People spoke of multilateralism but we did not live in a balanced multilateral world, and we knew why. He suggested an analysis coming from the Left to generate ideas for the reform and transformation of the United Nations in subjects as important as conflict-resolution, crisis areas, population issues and political issues.

He asked everyone to understand what the restrictions meant in that these seven points applied from Japan to Australia, to Africa, Latin America, North America, Asia and Europe. We needed a basic analysis throughout the world and in each region further items that were specific to the regional situation.

There was an eighth point, he added, which went back to the idea of there being many other problems which he had not included. The full participation of women was one, and the Middle East problem another. International solidarity was important for alleviating poverty in order to stimulate development. As Shimon Peres had said, if one wanted to invest it should be in education, in intelligence which was the raw material of the 21st century and something we should give our attention to. Where there was poverty of intellectual resources, people would remain in poverty.

Many other points could be added, he said, among them the issues of cultural identity, of foreign debt and reform of the welfare state. The Commission would work specially on some of these topics which were important to specific regions.

He said he wanted to create a highway of progressive thought which could be a channel for the ideas of our whole organisation and of representative progressive thought outside the SI, from academia, sociology and from experts who were willing to cooperate in this debate. Obviously our organisation would have the final decision but he wanted to open the debate up to other sectors of society. In each region we could hold a meeting, he continued, allowing us to analyse these topics, and some that were of great importance regionally, in order to understand the issues of development and democratic socialism.

In a meeting in Europe we would discuss the reform of the welfare state, employment policies and the expansion of the European Union to central and eastern Europe, he continued. Obviously a meeting in Dakar would have a different agenda but the seven points would be discussed there plus other regional issues.

He wanted the Commission also to organise specific seminars on individual points which might lead also to articles and texts on such topics as international security, the international world of finance, globalisation and its effects, employment and the technological revolution, and the reform of the state. Again he would want to involve expert intellectuals, and people outside the SI whose experience could help us. He stressed again that the SI would make the final decisions. He wished to invite possibly a hundred people from all over the world so as to establish a kind of world senate to support the Commission and provide impetus during the process.

He said the debate would be as important as the conclusions. The essential thing was to manifest this great highway of social democratic thought for the 21st century and compare it to the single thought with which we did not agree, showing that we had an alternative based on the deep conviction of solidarity, social justice, and humanism - values which came from the enlightenment and from the very roots of the Socialist International.

He reiterated that he was not interested in the discussion of principles; not that he was not concerned about the onslaught against universal values, or uninterested in such principles as solidarity. But he wanted to find answers to questions by applying these principles which in themselves did not need to be changed. These were the things we committed ourselves to in politics, the things which led to activity. Arafat and Peres shaking hands and Peres calling Arafat comrade had been an answer. An answer was something that would continue to be given, even at the price of one's life, as Yitzhak Rabin had given his life for that answer.

He said he would be convening the Commission and asked for everyone's support. He would be asking many comrades to take part in regional or specific subject seminars, and he invited those who published articles to remember to add them to this highway of ideas which would strengthen the organisation, provide impetus to the debate, and demonstrate to the world that the SI was capable of responding to worldwide aspirations. This, he concluded, was our obligation and could be said to be a testament to Willy Brandt. He

himself felt a particular obligation towards Willy Brandt and wanted to show that what he had left to us was still alive even though Willy had died.

The chair said the floor was open for discussion, and that the list of suggested membership of the Commission had been circulated.

Oskar Lafontaine, Germany SPD, said he thought it was good to put the problems posed by globalisation at the centre of our discussions in the coming months. Although the world economy had always been subject to change, these changes now affected even the role of the state as an economic and political actor, within national frontiers and internationally. So what role could and should the state still play in preserving a fair society and monitoring social and macro-economic balances? How should international economic relations be organised?

Technical and social progress, growth and employment were no longer produced by the state but mainly by the market, or rather competition between private enterprises. And this functional competition was to be encouraged, he said, because it brought well-being and improved living conditions. The problem was in the devaluation of the real economy by nation states which was a mistake of economic and political orientation. Dumping distorted international competition, he said, prevented the best distribution of resources and undermined the economic, social and ecological bases of our societies. It also brought into question a society's values and cultural base because without enough resources the state was unable to respond to its citizens' basic needs, leaving the way open for many ills and, in the end, political extremism.

Conservative economic policies, he said, reacted to the increasing internationalisation with a retreat to nationalism. Fear of unemployment and deteriorating social conditions were exploited to the detriment of the great majority.

This devaluing of the real economy by nation states was by no means a logical consequence of globalisation, he continued. It was a mistaken political reading. We had to offer a new political response to globalisation of the economy: international cooperation. The world market, like national markets, needed a politically established regulatory framework. This required international agreements defined by organisations like the European Union, the G7, the OECD, the IMF and the new organisation for world trade, the WTO.

With this in mind, he suggested seven priorities on which international collaboration should focus: stabilisation of exchange rates; interest rates policies aimed at stability and growth; budgetary policies aimed at employment; harmonisation of fiscal policies; a joint technological policy; an international social charter; and a concerted effort against the destruction of the global environment.

This, he concluded, was the real international response of socialists if we wished to regain the political terrain for a just and humane society based on solidarity.

Umberto Ranieri, Italy PDS, agreed with the objectives outlined by Felipe González to ensure that the SI was a vital political body intent on playing a decisive role in the political agenda.

He stressed two guidelines for our work: firstly we must look at the complex multipolar world that had replaced the bipolar world of the underdeveloped and the industrialised. New regional and trade dimensions were changing the hierarchy of development. It had taken the UK and Germany about 58 years to double their GDP, which South-East Asian countries had achieved in just ten years. This was an enormous transformation, he said, brought about by the technological revolution and affecting production, communication, and relations between economies and between human beings. One could see the dangers in this multipolar world, but he thought the approach of democratic socialists should be constructive, rejecting the idea that the international community of the future must inevitably be ungovernable, dominated by predatory capitalism or reduced to mere markets.

The history of this century, he continued, gave strength to the idea of international relations being democratically governed. He therefore wished to stress the reform of international bodies such as the UN and institutions dealing with economic matters highlighted by González. In his view the important objective of democratic socialism must now be to contribute to the writing of the new rules of the world economy. This would be the challenge at the beginning of the next century, he said.

He also wished to comment on the 'single thought' mentioned by González. He was not sure this reading was entirely correct since in the countries noted for neo-liberal successes, the conservatives were on the defensive because after a decade of complete hegemony, the liberalist choices had not succeeded in achieving their objectives of stable growth, low interest rates, high employment, low tax pressure etc. Ranieri thought these conditions provided an opportunity to re-launch the social democratic role. The most difficult temptation that social democrats had to resist was that of feeling sorry for themselves, which would be to underestimate the depth of the new aspect introduced by the neo-liberalist revolution. We should recognise what had been achieved and, in order to be convincing, we should not be on the defensive. He thought González's document took this on board.

A painful self-examination had solved some of the problems of European countries, such as the reform of the welfare state and social policies. He thought it was not enough that the European Left defended the system it had inherited from its governments. Socialist parties had a future if they could combine re-thinking their welfare policies and re-placing social democratic culture within a framework of innovation. One could see that in the great tradition of social democracy, the stabilising factor of the social state had been achieved, but not the role of development and innovation. He proposed that the expansion of the innovative role of social democracy should be another theme for reflection.

He referred to the positive dynamics in the United States, saying this was due not only to the flexibility of the labour market, but also to their higher rate of investment. Although the US could not be a model for Europe, the Left should reflect on their culture of innovation and dynamism, he said. In trying to reduce social differences and improve the lot of the disadvantaged, the Left must not abdicate its role as a driving force. We must shorten the distances by looking at innovations, growth and increasing opportunities. both on the struggle to ensure a cooperative basis for international relations, and on responding to the challenge of innovation. Social democracy had responded successfully to such challenges in the past, and if we measured ourselves with an open mind in the face of current challenges, we could have an innovative platform for the social democracy of the future, he concluded.

Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, Mexico PRD, said that twenty years earlier, the SI's process of growth and universalisation had begun. In Caracas in 1976, Felipe González had put forward a text aiming to coordinate the points of view of European and Latin American countries. Since then many eminent personalities of the SI, including Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky, Michael Manley, François Mitterrand, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Jacques Delors and Ingvar Carlsson had each shown their vocation for globality in major endeavours, the common denominator being their global vision of world reality. Our perspective went beyond economic and commercial events to the entirety of international processes. The proposal put forward by Felipe González was not for a new programme: there was already consensus on our Declaration of Principles. What the González Commission was proposing was a political process to stimulate a global and regional debate, a communications and marketing programme to re-define the characteristics of the SI and its parties, and of interaction between parties, independent personalities, NGOs and academics from the progressive field.

He understood this to mean waging an ideological battle against the dominant values of money, the monopoly of communication, and neo-liberalism. It was not enough to say that the work of the Left was not to dream but to govern, because our parties had been governing for a long time in many parts of the world. We had to define how we should govern, for whom we should govern, and whether we could change the course of action carried out by neo-liberals, or paleo-liberals as they should be called for the anachronistic ideas. The SI

could not simply dispense first aid to those who had suffered under such policies, he said. We needed to aim for change in government action and political action so as to establish a new coalition of forces capable of realising our values of a welfare state, social justice, integration and social equality, sustainable development and the extension of human rights and public freedoms. None of this was possible unless we succeeded in overcoming current tendencies which were a straightjacket on national states, preventing their conducting any alternative policies. This not only discredited the Left as a power option, but also politics itself. The change needed was not just a cosmetic one, he said.

He made three suggestions. First, to re-define the process of globalisation from our perspective, not confusing globality with various processes such as the internationalisation of services and trade, but focusing on the most significant of those processes that affected the whole of the world population and its environment, those that affected society, like unemployment, extreme poverty and lack of women's rights, and those affecting the world of politics, like the re-emergence of ethnic divisions, amongst other issues.

Second, to re-define what instruments we had with which to address these problems. As Pierre Mauroy had said, we needed an adequate and responsible state, capable of facing up to the problems of long-term development. The market could not be responsible for this. We had to reconsider the major topics of world governance, reform of the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, foreign debt, economic sovereignty and collective security.

Thirdly, he said, we should consider a new system of work, for if this programme of work moved forward we would be clearing the path and finding new forms to embody our efforts in. He proposed regional meetings that did not deal only with regional issues, and that we abandon the tradition whereby only representatives of each region discussed that region's problems. We should all speak of each and every problem, and thus construct the new globality among ourselves.

This was not a new challenge for the SI, he said. We had pioneered globalism before the League of Nations. The SI had been one of the major compensating factors during the 20th century, reducing the abuses of capitalist expansion, expanding knowledge and well-being. The modern world owed a great debt to the parties of the SI. But in the 21st century we should not be simply a compensating power. We should be the emerging and alternative force, re-defining the tasks of national states and the interaction of societies so that people could take charge of their destinies. This was the mission we had been entrusted with, he said, and for this it was not enough to be a powerful forum, we needed also to be competent and knowledgeable in our ideas, our politics and our morals.

Guillermo Estévez Boero, Argentina PSP, thought we were at an important juncture of our organisation's life; having been on the defensive in the battle against neo-liberalism we had probably lost ground, so this was a time for analysis. Some of the things Felipe González had said, for instance concerning working hours, might not have sounded very pleasant because we had no answer to them. But the only way to solve unemployment was to move towards a redistribution of working hours. We had to come up with practical and rational solutions.

Globalisation could not be denied, he continued, but we had to discuss whom it favoured and how it could be democratically governed. Concerning the reform of the UN, he thought the issue of regional forms of integration should be added to the list. Such groupings were a step towards a new world with different frontiers and we had to strive for their democratisation as they could help alleviate the negative effects of globalisation. In Latin America they had Mercosur, with its agreement with the European Union, but the countries had to continue acting effectively to guarantee its democratisation. Speculative capital flow was one of the basic issues they faced and they subscribed to Delors's proposal for supervision of the IMF and the World Bank in a democratised UN system as a way to regulate such flows.

His party also considered external debt a global issue, of importance to both debtors and creditors. It had generated severe problems even in politics and was as important as the damage deriving from wars. Their huge debt burden and its servicing made it impossible to

have any social policy to promote jobs or protect regional economies or enterprise. Unless this problem was solved it would be impossible to move towards the democratic governance of globalisation.

We needed a great debate on all these issues, he said, and dialogue without fear of disagreement. We needed more dialogue within the socialist family than there had been in the past. He mentioned the failure to resolve problems between Chile and Argentina and the paucity of contact even between SI member parties from these two countries. This needed to be corrected, he said. The great debate generated by the González Commission should be a comprehensive one in which everyone took part, one which provided socialism with the tools to put before the world and the possibility of true growth that would improve the conditions of men, women and children in the North and in the South.

Michael Beahan, Australia ALP, congratulated Felipe González on an excellent paper, and also the people who had made such good contributions concerning the substance of what should be discussed in relation to reform. He was confident that this process was in the right hands. He wished nevertheless to take a slightly different approach and express his party's concern about how the SI went about its internal operations.

Although the SI spoke a great deal about democracy, when it came to the operations of our own organisation everything seemed to be from the top down. Things seemed to be secretly conceived and information dispensed on a need-to-know basis. There was little transparency, he said. Even with González's excellent paper, there were delegates who did not have a copy.

The initiative for reform, he continued, had come from a number of member parties who saw little value in an organisation which focused on large gatherings such as this meeting where, despite the fine resolutions carried, little of practical value was achieved. In this regard he applauded the willingness of the president and the secretary general to respond to that initiative. But his party was concerned at the way the establishment of the Commission had been announced in New York without discussion.

His party had written to the president, the secretary general and the chair of the Commission concerning representation of the Asia-Pacific region, and he was pleased that this had been responded to. The ALP, with its knowledge of the region, was well placed to try and develop alliances with emerging political parties of the area which, while not calling themselves socialist, had expressed liberal or democratic values. It was important, he said, to establish links with these parties even if they did not become members of the SI.

We also needed to talk and establish links with communist parties such as those of China and Vietnam which had approached the ALP and probably other parties too.

He said there might be good reasons for choosing New Zealand rather than Australia to be represented on the Commission, but his point was that it had not been debated. He also found it interesting that none of the parties that had sought reform in the first place was represented on the Commission. He assured the president that he did not wish to cast a shadow over a process that he and his party supported, but he was concerned that this process, which had been undemocratic in its formation, should be given responsibility for the democratic reform of the International. He asked those involved in the process to make a real effort to engage the membership and get their ideas on what was needed to prepare for the challenges the organisation faced in the 21st century.

He felt encouraged by some of Felipe González's comments that showed that he had some of these concerns at heart, he said. Nor was he criticising either the SI staff or the Commission. He had great respect for the capacities and the analytical skills of Felipe González and Gro Harlem Brundtland and other members of the Commission. He hoped they and the officers of the SI would heed his party's concerns about the involvement of the membership and make this one of the focus-points of the process.

Luis Ayala, SI secretary general, said Congress had taken the decision to name Felipe González as chair of the Commission and to discuss its composition and terms of reference at this Council meeting, which he understood was happening now.

But he wished to express - from a technical point of view - a certain frustration. The secretariat worked very hard to help as efficiently as possible this large and growing family, but member parties had to do their share in this collective efficiency. The secretariat sent out documents to each member party but the parties themselves did not always ensure that the delegates had these papers when they came to meetings.

He said he had received the draft paper from vice-president Felipe González - which the latter had been kind enough to discuss with him personally - and the secretariat had carefully translated it into English and French and sent the three versions out to our member parties all over the world. The staff and the fax machines had been constantly occupied to ensure that it went to our 140 organisations. He stressed that, as in the case of draft resolutions and other documents, we had to break the communications barrier within our own parties and make sure that what the secretariat sent out was passed to the people concerned.

Ayala said he had to say this because he could not fail to react to what had been said, as the Commission document had been sent to each member party of the SI before the Council meeting.

Audrey McLaughlin, SIW President, thanked Felipe González for the work he had done, and said that SIW very much supported the initiative of the Commission. SIW would take responsibility for participating in the Commission's meetings and would ensure that themes were discussed broadly and that they included a feminist socialist perspective. She thought those who had been at the Beijing conference would be aware that it was important to have this perspective on all issues and it was especially incumbent on the Socialist International to ensure that this was incorporated into our themes and into our meetings. SIW would make sure that this happened, she said.

SIW had just held a meeting of its Bureau on the theme of women and the globalisation of the economy. They had prepared a very good resolution which she hoped member parties would take to their own party congresses. SIW did not just believe in making resolutions, but in taking action. Pia Locatelli and the Italian Socialists, she said, would be helping them to develop a delegation to the World Trade Organisation, the ILO, and the World Bank to present their views on the globalisation of the economy from the feminist socialist perspective.

In terms of the Commission, she said SIW also did not want to lose sight of one of the objectives of the Commission, to look at the ways decisions were made and structured in the SI. They knew that with the inclusion of many more parties this was the intention of the chair of the Commission. She would also make sure that SIW was involved in discussing structure and decision-making and the implementation of the many resolutions the SI had made about gender parity. In order to make a positive contribution to the process, SIW had decided to prepare, with the vice-president from Mapam, a paper on the thematic and organisational themes of the Commission. SIW intended to be a positive contributor in addition to her own participation as president of SIW within the Commission itself, she concluded.

Pedro París Montesinos, Venezuela AD, said his party had received the Commission document and they were in general agreement with the ideas contained in it. Felipe González had said he would also take into account new suggestions produced by this Council, and the AD believed the SI should play a greater role in writing off external debts in countries of the third world, especially those facing dramatic situations.

He said that as a basic theme, we should also look at the subject of corruption, which had caused people to lose faith in governments and political parties. The Right was taking advantage of this situation and trying to harm us both electorally and politically. We should take a very strong and decisive position on corruption, he said. In Venezuela they

had already promoted a convention against corruption which was soon to be discussed, and the matter had already received attention at the meeting of parliamentarians in Warsaw. His country had fought hard against widespread corruption. The SI should also be concerned about the growing power of the media in just a few hands which allowed financial groups to push through a single idea. He said this subject should be debated. His party was willing to cooperate in initiatives to promote regional meetings as had been proposed so that there could be a worldwide discussion on the problems the SI had to address as we entered the next century.

Pierre Mauroy said he wanted to express his views on the important decisions we were taking. He was sorry there was not time to have a broader debate and hear every comrade on this subject. He had been interested to hear what previous speakers had said, especially his Australian comrade.

The decision on the Commission had been taken by our Congress, he said. After the extraordinary and exceptional events that had occurred over the last few years, when the bi-polar world in which we had lived for nearly a century had come to an end, we had begun to understand the consequences and that it was the end of a certain history involving communism, socialism and social democracy. It had seemed that there would be a single idea, just capitalism - or liberalism - and in that way the world would be simple if not very democratic. Without holding an extraordinary Congress, this had been in the SI's thinking when he had been chosen as president in Berlin. The SI had wanted to involve many parties throughout the world who perhaps followed other ideologies but expressed the will to defend workers, and if they wanted to become democratic and adhere to our main ideas, then they could come into the fold. This real phenomenon should be taken into account, he said, because this movement was worldwide. Starting with the Italian PDS, which had gone through such a process of change, he had always supported the entry of ex-communist parties. This was a characteristic of his presidency. We were welcoming new parties and another 30 new ones would probably join us within the next few years.

By the year 2000, he continued, there would be 180 or 200 parties in the Socialist International, which was an exceptional success, so we should not think that this organisation lacked flexibility. We had achieved a tremendous victory and remained the one universal organisation defending workers' rights and prepared to fight against the domination of capitalism.

We all knew about globalisation, he said, and the movement between those who gathered in their own interests behind capital, and those who gathered to defend workers. Social democratic parties brought together the working class and the middle class. He agreed that some parties in Africa and Latin America had a sociological makeup like that of Europe 30 or 40 years previously, but the technological and communications revolution was completely transforming the world and accelerating the pace of change. In these conditions it was clear, he said, that we had to have a broad debate and not let the chosen few decide the ideas, and that we must start a discussion amongst ourselves, which was basically the idea behind the Commission. The question had been whether to call an extraordinary Congress to debate the SI's future in view of these changes, and how to cross the imaginary border of the year 2000. He had thought that that was not really the way forward so they had looked at other possible solutions and opted for a Commission that would be close to the SI but independent. He thanked Felipe González for pointing out that he would associate himself with the president and said he thought he would have something to contribute to all this.

Felipe González had thus been chosen, he said, and had sufficient independence and margin for manoeuvre to be able to set up his Commission as he thought best. Mauroy had thought that a vote would not be necessary. It was good to have experts, including some who did not belong to our parties, involved in the work of the Commission. There was no attempt to violate SI members' rights, and González had made it very clear that the SI would have the final say. The Commission would report to Council on what had been done, and Council could question him on this at each stage, but we would leave him the necessary margin to manoeuvre and launch his discussions.

He thought they had done the best thing and now we should wait and see what ideas and resolutions the Commission came up with. We had to move forward. Some systems were breaking down because of financial complications and these issues needed to be studied. The Commission would be free to organise the debate as it saw fit and this could be useful for us all but we would never take decisions of the Commission as decisions of the SI. We would review what it did and then, at an exceptionally important Congress, take stock of the results of its work and thus examine the broadening of our doctrine towards the next century. He thought we were in a very democratic process. Each time the SI had looked at its future it had done so within the SI, but it had also used reports from outside, such as that by Gro Harlem Brundtland, and these had enriched our work.

In his own party, he continued, of which he had been one of the animators, they had moved to innovation but had remained a socialist party in doctrine but with specialists to guide them to change.

Socialists and social democrats had ideas to put forward and were part and parcel of progress. We must be stronger than ever in our regional and thematic committees, we must see what the Commission did and then at the proper time and in the way it wished to, the SI could benefit from its work. He therefore thought we should confirm what the Congress in New York had decided, thank Felipe González and indeed congratulate him on accepting the chair of this Commission which would do us all a lot of good. (applause)

Continuing as **chair**, Mauroy said there would be a vote on membership of the Commission and an overall vote to apply the decision of Congress. He then read out the list of members of the Commission as proposed by Felipe González: Audrey McLaughlin (president of SIW), Nicola Zingaretti (president of IUSY), Shimon Peres, Martine Aubry, Milos Zeman, Ricardo Lagos, Rolando Araya, Fathallah Oualalou, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Takako Doi, Kamal Azfar, and Helen Clark. This decision was approved by the Council.

Turning to the question of SI committees, he said it was important that the Council should appoint the chairs of the thematic committees as it had been authorised to do by Congress. As for the regional committees, these could be appointed by the parties of the region, in some cases appointing also co-chairs or a number of vice-chairs. He said he and the secretary general would try to be present at the establishment of these committees during the next few months.

He then mentioned the considerable effort being made to involve women in the activities of SI parties, and to increase the number of women elected to party positions. The SI presidium was largely male, with a first vice-president who admirably represented women. Generally, socialist and social democratic parties had male leaders at the moment but this might change in time, he said. The SI presidium had suggested that women should be included among committee chairs and appealed to the parties to make this effort to adapt to a changing world and give women a more substantial role.

Peter Jankowitsch (SPÖ, Austria) chair of the Committee on Human Rights, he continued, was stepping down from his position so that a woman could take over that responsibility. As Austrian ambassador to the OECD he was an excellent choice as vice-chair of the Committee on Economic Policy, Development and the Environment, which was chaired by António Guterres (PS, Portugal). Maria Carrilho (PS, Portugal), Pertti Paasio (SDP, Finland) and Mario Didò (SI, Italy) had been nominated as vice-chairs of the Peace,

Security and Disarmament Committee with Günter Verheugen (SPD, Germany) as chair. All these were approved by the Council.

Moving on to the Finance and Administration Committee, he said Gunnar Stenarv (SAP, Sweden) had been proposed to continue as chair. Member parties were Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy PDS, Japan, Senegal, Spain, and Venezuela. Mapam/Meretz of Israel were alternates and SIW and IUSY were observers. This was approved.

The Committee on Human Rights, which in French was called 'rights of man' should be re-named '*droits de la personne humaine*', he said, especially since a woman, Clare Short

(Labour Party, Great Britain) was proposed as chair. Daphna Sharfman (Israel Labour Party) was proposed as vice-chair. These were agreed.

Bjørn Tore Godal (DNA, Norway) was proposed as chair of the Middle East Committee, with Christoph Zöpel (SPD, Germany), Pierre Guidoni (PS, France), Israel Gat (Israel Labour Party) and Mohamed Abdellah (NDP, Egypt) as vice-chairs. Balance was needed in this important committee, he said, and these were approved.

It was agreed that Piero Fassino (PDS, Italy) and László Kovács (MSzP, Hungary) should be co-chairs of the SI Committee for Central and Eastern Europe with Jan Kavan (CSSD, Czech Republic) as vice-chair.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng (PS, Senegal) was appointed chair of the Africa Committee with Aristides Lima (PAICV, Cape Verde) and Laurent Gbagbo (FPI, Ivory Coast) as vice-chairs.

Luis Ayala reported that there had been a request from the Greek delegation to appoint one of their party as vice-chair of the Mediterranean Committee. As there was also the intention to give women responsibility, Monica Pollack from Mapam/Meretz, Israel, had been suggested.

Raimon Obiols, Spain PSOE, chair of the Mediterranean Committee, said that these proposals for vice-chairs of the Committee had been received recently. He supported the president's view that decisions concerning vice-chairs of regional committees should be left to the committee chair and members themselves. This was agreed.

The chair then sought approval for the chair of the Asia-Pacific Committee and Makoto Tanabe (SDP, Japan) was appointed, with the decision on vice-chairs being left to the Committee.

It was agreed that the same procedure would apply for the Committee on Local Authorities under the chairmanship of Philippe Busquin (PS, Belgium) and for the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean which would continue to be chaired by José Francisco Peña Gomez (PRD, Dominican Republic).

Luis Ayala said we could be proud that we had succeeded in confirming all the committees in the various continents as authorised by Congress. With 33 new member parties, there were great hopes for what the International could achieve in each region of the world, and these expectations were focused on the work of the committees and their programmes for carrying out the aims that were central to the SI's agenda. Congress had provided the framework and today we had set in motion the machinery by which the International would carry out its work.

He had been in touch with many people in connection with the committees and they were all ready to start immediately after this meeting, because there were a great many things to do. From Central and Eastern Europe alone there were 14 new member parties, so SICEE would be holding a meeting soon. A meeting of the Asia-Pacific Committee was being planned to set up its programme of work. The economic committee would have at the centre of its agenda the development of regional economies within the global economy. Plans were already under way for meetings of the Mediterranean Committee and SICLAC. After the previous day's debate on developments in the Middle East there was a great deal of work to be done by our renewed International. He had also been discussing with Philippe Busquin how to implement Council's decisions about involving socialist mayors in the work for democracy and support to the new municipal authorities in Serbia.

This, he said, was of brief summary of the work that had been set in motion for the period now commencing.

Pierre Mauroy reiterated his appreciation - already expressed in New York - of the way the secretary general performed his duties, and he thanked him again.

The meeting then continued with the adoption of resolutions on the following subjects: Algeria, Burma, the Great Lakes region of Africa, the Middle East, Nicaragua, the situation in Niger, the Nobel Peace prize awards, Puerto Rico, and the situation in South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

Brenda Etchells, Great Britain Labour Party, said she had been very pleased to attend this two-day meeting of the SI Council but she had been disappointed to have heard only two women speakers, despite the SI's declared support for the representation of women. She welcomed the president's initiative on vice-chairs of committees, even though there was only one woman among the eleven chairs. Quite a number of socialist parties, including her own, she said, had increased women's participation by using the quota system. After the general election, her party would double the number of labour women in parliament, and the national executive and the committee chairs now had a 50% gender balance. She hoped that after the previous day's talk of political will for change, and the establishment of the González Commission - 30% of whose members she was happy to see were women - these concerns would be taken up and acted on in the future.

The chair commented that the SI was a reflection of the political parties that made up its membership and so it was that the composition of delegations reflected the current situation. His own French party, he said, would have some areas where only women were standing in the forthcoming elections. Certainly the problem was not being ignored. He commended her appeal and relayed it to all the parties present.

Anselmo Sule, Chile PRSD, said that as there was so little time left and he had been asked by SICLAC to report on certain important issues, he had made a written text and this was available. SICLAC would be meeting in Chile in May, he said, and everyone was invited to participate.

He wished to briefly mention one point, however. The people of Latin America and the Caribbean were today facing enormous challenges following the adoption of an economic model which had created great inequalities. Among the problems were drug barons, the effects of greater consumption in the western world, and very sophisticated forms of terrorism. They were trying to face up to these challenges and had already set up the Mercosur organisation in order to be part of the new globalisation and they were trying to establish greater contacts with the countries of all the other continents. As had already been said at the Congress, and stressed by Felipe González, these problems had to be addressed if conflicts in the region were to be avoided. These matters had to be discussed seriously and responsibly, he said. The economic model of Chile, for example, had brought very positive results. There was new wealth, but it was as if it was locked away and unavailable; people were not able to address the problem of distributing these funds, or using them to resolve problems of health care and education. He assured the Commission that the Latin American parties would do everything possible to contribute to the effort for solutions not only to the question of the SI's structure but also to the problems of justice in their continent.

The chair said the meeting was coming to the end of its work. The Council would next meet in October or November and probably in New Delhi. One of the invitations received had been from the Janata Dal Party, and in view of our efforts to develop our Asian contacts and the fact that the SI had not had very close relations with India recently, it seemed a wise choice. This party was one of the parties in the ruling coalition and our positive reply would have political implications as well as being in the spirit of the new universality we were trying to adopt.

He added that someone had wanted to make an intervention on Algeria, but that as the meeting was already running over time and the resolution had been approved, he hoped they would understand that the meeting now had to be brought to a close.

Luis Ayala proposed that, consistent with what the SI had been doing throughout the years in Central America, the whole Council should welcome and support the peace agreements that were being signed in Guatemala. This was agreed.

The chair expressed thanks to the Italian parties for the way they had hosted the meeting and to our secretary general. Like Felipe González he thought it had been an excellent meeting. The number of high-level delegates, the symbolic presence of people like the Nobel Peace Prize winner Ramos-Horta and Vesna Pestic, the very significant participation of Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres, and the decisions that Council had taken had all made it a very impressive meeting. He thanked everyone for participating and contributing, and especially Gro Harlem Brundtland for assisting him in the task of chairing the meeting. Hoping that at the next meeting we would be even stronger and more numerous, he declared the meeting closed.

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