

THE XX CONGRESS

THE WORLD ECONOMY: A COMMON RESPONSIBILITY

The Socialist International held its Twentieth Congress at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York on 9–11 September 1996. More than one hundred and fifty parties and organisations from every continent took part.



Some seven hundred delegates represented the political parties and organisations which belong to the Socialist International

together with other parties of social democratic orientation invited to take part in the Congress. Additional guests from

the United States and elsewhere and from the UN diplomatic community brought the numbers to around one thousand. Our venue, the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations, lent a particular solemnity and symbolism to the debates.

The XX SI Congress, which was opened by our president, Pierre Mauroy (see page 4), had on its agenda three main themes: 'Markets serving people, not people serving markets', 'Making peace, keeping peace' and 'A human rights agenda for the twenty-first century'.

Debating those themes were social democratic leaders from around the world, some of whose reflections are printed on the preceding pages. They included heads of government: Gro Harlem Brundtland, first vice-president of the Socialist International and then prime minister of Norway; António Guterres, prime minister of Portugal, who introduced the first Congress discussion on the World Economy; Chancellor Franz Vranitzky of Austria; Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen of Finland; Prime Minister Gyula Horn of Hungary, and Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam of Mauritius.

Other distinguished figures attending included Shimon Peres, former prime minister of Israel; Felipe González, former prime minister of Spain; Raúl Alfonsín, former president of Argentina; Rodrigo Borja, former president of Ecuador; and Pedro Pires, former prime minister of Cape Verde, as well as the leader of the Party of European Socialists in the European Parliament, Pauline Green. Among the many guests were Bill Jordan, general secretary of the ICFTU, Yvan Rybkin, since appointed secretary of the Security Council of Russia, and

DECISIONS OF THE XX CONGRESS REGARDING MEMBERSHIP

CHANGE OF STATUS TO FULL MEMBERSHIP

ALBANIA: Social Democratic Party, PSD
 ALGERIA: Socialist Forces Front, FFS
 CAPE VERDE: African Independence Party of Cape Verde, PAICV
 CHILE: Party for Democracy, PPD
 CHILE: Socialist Party of Chile, PS
 HAITI: Party of the National Congress of Democratic Movements, KONAKOM
 HUNGARY: Hungarian Socialist Party, MSzP
 IVORY COAST: Ivory Coast Popular Front, FPI
 MONGOLIA: Mongolian Social Democratic Party, MSDP
 NICARAGUA: Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN

FULL MEMBERSHIP

ESTONIA: Mõõdukad
 MEXICO: Party of Democratic Revolution, PRD
 POLAND: Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland, SdRP
 POLAND: Union of Labour, UP
 SLOVAK REPUBLIC: Party of the Democratic Left, SDL
 SLOVENIA: United List of Social Democrats, ZL

CONSULTATIVE STATUS

ARGENTINA: Radical Civic Union, UCR
 CAMEROON: Social Democratic Front, SDF
 DOMINICA: Dominica Labour Party
 EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Convergence for Social Democracy, CPDS
 GABON: Gabonese Party of Progress, PGP
 MALI: African Party for Solidarity and Justice, ADEMA-PASJ
 MAURITIUS: Mauritius Militant Movement, MMM
 MEXICO: Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI
 MOZAMBIQUE: Frelimo Party
 NIGER: Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger, PNDS
 PANAMA: Democratic Revolutionary Party, PRD
 ROMANIA: Democratic Party, PD
 ROMANIA: Romanian Social Democratic Party, PSDR

OBSERVER STATUS

ANGOLA: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA
 ARMENIA: ARF Armenian Socialist Party
 AZERBAIJAN: Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, SDPA
 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SDP BiH
 BOTSWANA: Botswana National Front, BNF
 EL SALVADOR: Democratic Party, PD
 GEORGIA: Citizens' Union of Georgia, CUG
 HAITI: Lavalas Political Organisation, OPL
 INDIA: Janata Dal
 IRAN: Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PDKI
 FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA: Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDUM
 MOLDOVA: Social Democratic Party of Moldova
 MONTENEGRO: Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, SDPM
 TERRITORIES UNDER PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY: Fatah

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATION STATUS

International League of Religious Socialists



leading representatives of the US Democratic Party and trade union movement.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, secretary-general of the United Nations, addressed the Congress (see page 6).

The delegates adopted detailed Declarations on the three main themes, as well as a Resolution setting out the International's perspective on current developments in every continent and region, on the question of local authorities and in support of the United Nations. These major policy documents, which are printed in full at the end of this report, will guide the Socialist

International's work and commitments in the coming years.

As the highest statutory body of the International, the Congress decides on the admission of new member parties and organisations. In the period since the XIX Congress in 1992 an unprecedented number of applications for membership has been received from parties in every continent. The Congress admitted 33 new parties to various categories of membership, as well as a new associated organisation. Full membership was also granted to a number of consultative and observer parties. (see page 24).

In elections to the SI presidium, Pierre Mauroy was re-elected president and Luis Ayala was re-elected secretary general. Twenty-five vice-presidents were also elected. The members of the new presidium are listed overleaf.

An important initiative of the XX Congress was the establishment of a new, high-level commission, to be chaired by Felipe González. The commission will examine the aspirations of social democracy and the role of an expanding and increasingly global Socialist International in today's fast-changing and interdependent world.

PRESIDIUM ELECTED BY THE XX CONGRESS

PRESIDENT

Pierre Mauroy

First elected at the XIX SI Congress, Berlin, 1992, in succession to Willy Brandt. Mayor of Lille. Former first secretary of the Socialist Party, PS, France. Former prime minister of France.

VICE PRESIDENTS

Gro Harlem Brundtland (First vice-president)

Former leader of the Norwegian Labour Party, DNA. Former prime minister of Norway.

Rolando Araya Monge

Leader of the National Liberation Party, PLN, Costa Rica.

Tony Blair

Leader of the Labour Party, Great Britain.

Leonel Brizola

Leader of the Democratic Labour Party, PDT, Brazil. Former governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Philippe Busquin

Leader of the Socialist Party, PS, Belgium.

Massimo D'Alema

Leader of the Democratic Party of the Left, PDS, Italy.

Ousmane Tanor Dieng

First secretary of the Socialist Party, PS, Senegal. Minister of state.

Felipe González

Leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE. Former prime minister of Spain.

António Guterres

Leader of the Socialist Party, PS, Portugal. Prime minister of Portugal.

Gyula Horn

Leader of the Hungarian Socialist Party, MSzP. Prime minister of Hungary.

Erdal İnönü

Former leader of the Republican People's Party, CHP, Turkey. Former foreign minister and deputy prime minister of Turkey.

Lionel Jospin

First secretary of the Socialist Party, PS, France. Former minister of education.

Oskar Lafontaine

Leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD. Prime minister of the State of Saarland.

Paavo Lipponen

Leader of the Finnish Social Democratic Party, SDP. Prime minister of Finland.

Wim Kok

Leader of the Netherlands Labour Party, PvdA. Prime minister of the Netherlands.

Alexa McDonough

Leader of the New Democratic Party, NDP/NPD, Canada.

Pedro París Montesinos

President of Democratic Action, AD, Venezuela.

Jaime Paz Zamora

Leader of the Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR, Bolivia. Former president of Bolivia.

Shimon Peres

Leader of the Israel Labour Party. Former prime minister of Israel.

Göran Persson

Leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP. Prime minister of Sweden.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen

Leader of the Social Democratic Party, Denmark. Prime minister of Denmark.

Costas Simitis

Leader of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK, Greece. Prime minister of Greece.

Anselmo Sule

Leader of the Social Democratic Radical Party, PRSD, Chile.

Makoto Tanabe

Former Leader of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, Japan.

Franz Vranitzky

Leader of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPOe. Chancellor of Austria.

Ex-Officio:

Pauline Green

Leader of the Group of the Party of European Socialists, PES, European Parliament

José Francisco Peña Gómez

Chair of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, SICLAC

Audrey MacLaughlin

President of Socialist International Women, SIW

Rudolf Scharping

President of the Party of European Socialists, PES

Nicola Zingaretti

President of the International Union of Socialist Youth, IUSY

SECRETARY GENERAL

Luis Ayala

First elected at the XVIII SI Congress, Stockholm, 1989. Re-elected at the XIX Congress, Berlin, 1992

DECLARATIONS

THE WORLD ECONOMY

The Need for a New System of Collective Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

'We believe quite simply that markets must serve people and not the other way around.' (John Smith)

1. A new age is emerging based on globalisation of the world economy. This has positive aspects such as increased economic efficiency, a new impetus to world trade and output, more and better products and services to consumers at lower prices as well as new market opportunities.

The Socialist International welcomes this development. But we also need a new system of collective responsibility offsetting the negative effects of globalisation such as financial turbulence, uneven development, increasing inequality, high levels of unemployment, social exclusion and social unrest. Globalisation has increased the power of multinational corporations, manipulators of foreign exchange markets and international organisations at the expense of governments, electors and the democratic process.

We have a positive view of the development of society and the potential for sustainable growth and development with high levels of employment. But crucial choices have to be made. Political democracy must prevail over economic and financial oligarchy. We need a new system of collective responsibility to restore effective decision-making powers to elected governments and thereby reinforce their accountability to their electorates.

2. In the last decades we witnessed a manifold multiplication of world wealth. But progress has been at high social cost. From the early 1980s the ultra-liberal model, based on the gospel of economic deregulation and disregard of social concerns, was disseminated worldwide. The lack of modernisation of state institutions and their unfitness to deal with the economic and fiscal disturbances in many nations helped to create the

conditions for conservative ideals to gain prestige. The neo-liberal ideas acquired such a universal character that some considered them the main result of the global information age. Underlying the ultra-liberal model of development there is the idea that money and the budget are all that matter.

Fifteen years later, these conceptions have failed to deliver their promise and have led to unprecedented imbalances, frustrated expectations and widespread injustice:

- inequality and poverty are ravaging the developed and developing economies - over a billion people are now living in absolute poverty and the gap between rich and poor has widened to unprecedented dimensions;
- technical progress has generated new jobs but also technological unemployment, and many skilled and well trained people are nowadays working in less qualified jobs, often part-time, without security and at minimal pay. In many countries unemployment has reached levels unprecedented since the period between the two World Wars;
- despite a higher per capita income in many parts of the world and the advances in medicine during this century, millions of people die each year from avoidable and curable diseases;
- in Central and Eastern Europe transition has been accompanied in the short term by drastic falls in income, employment and life expectancy;
- local armed conflicts, reflecting ethnic disputes or control over local resources, are causing massive casualties, mainly among unarmed civilian populations;
- the widening gap between rich and poor, both within and among nations, has hit women and children especially hard.
- environmental degradation and ecological disasters have become commonplace, while decrepit and

unsafe nuclear plants could easily replay the Chernobyl catastrophe.

3. Facing these new realities, we stand at a crossroads:

- either we mobilise our traditions of solidarity, justice and cooperation to tackle the problems we face today and in the foreseeable future;
- or we disregard our values and traditions and leave global resource allocation only to the invisible - and often insensitive - hand of the market.

Democratic states should direct their policies to benefit their people without sacrificing efficiency gains from the markets. The SI rejects the inevitability of unemployment and under-employment, and supports national and multilateral efforts in the search for full employment, including joint international action for a high level of effective demand, the social negotiation of working time and employment creation in the social sphere and preservation and enhancement of the environment.

We should recall that promoting the values of democracy, justice and redistribution in every country and among countries has always been the top priority of the SI since its inception.

TOWARDS A NEW SYSTEM OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

4. Globalisation in an age of networked intelligence is the main trend in today's world economy. This is unavoidable and in some respects positive:

- information technology allows an economy based on knowledge, the key assets being intellectual assets. What matters is a company's ability to attract, retain and continually increase workers' knowledge, innovation and creativity;
- information is more and more

handled in digital form, compressed and transmitted at the speed of light, creating information highways. Through these highways a vast web of relationships is taking shape, innovating every aspect of economic and social life;

- relations between producers and consumers are becoming interactive. In some areas the old corporation is being disaggregated, replaced by dynamic clusters of individuals and entities. The new enterprise, in order to succeed, must adjust to changing business conditions in real time.

Globalisation has disintegrated the former bipolar world, giving way to a more volatile geopolitical environment. It has brought gains to the advanced countries and several of the developing economies of Asia. But not all countries have been included in such gains. Most of Africa, much of Latin America and a significant part of Asia have been excluded. Also, the gainers have not won through globalisation alone. Most of the newly industrialising economies of the Pacific rim have succeeded through policies for governing markets and variants on a mixed economy which have rejected the neo-liberal path.

There are two ways to conceive the political approach to globalisation:

- the responsible way, taking into consideration diverse regional realities, and the social cohesion of different societies, thereby contributing to the global improvement of economic and social wellbeing and preserving the environment. This is the SI approach: globalisation, in order to be an element of progress, must be politically regulated.
- the ultra-liberal way, without social and environmental concerns, which will globalise poverty, not only in the developing countries but also and increasingly in the developed countries, tending to standardise social rights at their lowest level;

5. The responsible way, allowing for a fairer functioning of the trade systems, requires stronger international cooperation and a comprehensive review of the Bretton Woods institutions and the rules and disciplines of the WTO.

With reason, at the Naples G7, President Clinton called for a multilateral review of the functioning of the IMF and the World Bank, on the grounds that they had failed to help Africa, Latin America and Russia to achieve the success of the Pacific rim economies.

This failure has been due in part to a dogmatic insistence on deflation.

In this context, such a multilateral review should address the related issues of trade, investment and the re-cycling of surpluses. International trade is increasingly determined by foreign direct investment. At the same time, the combination of high technology with the least cost labour has qualified the assumptions of conventional comparative advantages theory, to the exclusion of sub-Saharan Africa and much of Latin America. Re-cycling of surpluses should be not only between the developed and newly industrialising countries but also towards a wider group of developing countries.

Due to its nature, its world range and its long-standing commitment to the cooperative principles of the post-war Bretton Woods system, the SI is well placed to address these issues and make a decisive contribution to their solution.

The SI recognises the inspiring work by the Commission on Global Governance, chaired by Ingvar Carlsson and Shridath Ramphal. Its report, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, is based on values which we fully share and offers concrete proposals on how the world can run common affairs. Without improved global economic governance, human security will be endangered.

TEN MAIN TASKS

6. For the SI, ten main tasks lie ahead in the second half of the 90s:

- consolidation of democracy;
- promotion of employment and better living standards;
- coordination of national policies;
- promotion of free and fair trade - the case for a WTO social clause;
- strengthening of financial assistance;
- reviewing the functioning of Bretton Woods institutions;
- regional and global cooperation;
- reinforcement of social rights;
- achieving equality and enhancing women's rights;
- sustainable development and protection of the environment.

The consolidation of democracy

7. The universality of representative democracy is a key value both to the SI and to all democratic parties. But the end of the Cold War and the spread of representative democracy created expectations which cannot be fulfilled without a new

framework for regional and global cooperation.

The SI cannot adopt the approach of the neo-liberals, who preach democracy for the developing and reforming economies yet deny them the basic economic conditions for development and social welfare, thus making their democratic experience extremely fragile. That is why democracy needs to be reinforced by a new system of collective responsibility, and new policies to reinforce democracy itself.

Democracy means the right to alternation of power. But effective democracy means that political parties must be able to implement alternative programmes in government. The main reason for voting is the real possibility of changing policies. Indefinite austerity, permanent poverty and mass unemployment devalue and discredit democracy itself. Changing this depends substantially on the international economic framework and the behaviour of international institutions. Both should provide the macro-economic environment in which new economic and social programmes become possible. But democracy also means that the political system must ensure that political reform, sound policies and economic development benefit all social groups and is not put into jeopardy by social inequalities or corruption.

Globalisation has promoted the dominance of economic over social interests, devaluing the political process. As the process of globalisation has limited the role of the nation state, cooperation has to be strengthened and legitimised by more efficient international institutions. We need an effective international system of collective responsibility to safeguard the market economy and the environment. At the same time we need to promote the active participation of people with their own structures of representation and organisation, contributing to a global civil society at local, regional and national levels.

Promotion of employment and living standards

8. The SI approach envisages the promotion of a new model of sustained and sustainable development, as well as adapting the welfare state, the most important achievement of democratic socialism in this century. The new model must take account of the evolution of society, scientific and technological progress, demographic trends,

environmental constraints and migration. This implies:

- a permanent decrease of the unemployment rate, enabling the young and the long-term unemployed entering the labour market to undertake proper training and to attain to a better life;
- national and multilateral efforts in the search for full employment, including joint international action for a high level of effective demand, the social negotiation of working time, employment creation in the social sphere and preservation and enhancement of the environment;
- a sustained rise of living standards, which involves the improvement of living conditions to acceptable levels.
- national and multilateral initiatives on migration, to regulate flows, to guarantee the social rights of migrant workers and their families, and to support the economic and social development of low income countries.

Improving living standards, together with a more just distribution of income and wealth, are of crucial importance for political, economic and social reasons. In particular, they strengthen confidence in democratic institutions, give a new impetus to external relations and improve the efficiency of policies. Moreover, the highest growth economies have the least unequal income distribution and unemployment.

High unemployment, underemployment and social exclusion constitute the most serious problem of our time, and a significant threat to democracy. The policy of 'laissez-faire, laissez-passer' has failed in this area, as it failed 60 years ago during the great depression. This issue has to be addressed by international co-ordination of national economic policies, through a global recovery programme promoting trade, income, welfare and employment.

Reducing unemployment without facing the danger of inflation requires more and better investment, both in material and in human capital.

Small and medium enterprises account for more than two out of three jobs. They are vital for new job creation in both industry and services. Also in some cases globalisation can be successfully realised at micro-level, with the transfer of technology, more likely through networks of regional, local and associative enterprises.

New technology creates new job opportunities but at the same time it

eliminates low-skilled and/or routine jobs. Of all the new technologies, information and communication technology (ICT) is the most pervasive and transformative.

Therefore, we must concentrate on industries, infrastructures and technologies of the 21st century in order to remain competitive and to meet economic and social aspirations. The quality and the quantity of the new technologies will be decisive for the productivity of the global economy.

Too often a mismatch between demand and supply of labour has prevented placing 'the right people in the right place' and significant investments in education and training, especially in the less and least developed countries. Technical assistance programmes also have to be stepped up and upgraded. But if it is crucial for developing countries to invest in human capital, this by no means implies that the effort undertaken by developed countries can be slackened. Improvement in qualifications and skills is crucial to improving job security and remuneration without endangering competitiveness. It is also effective in helping to prevent long-term unemployment, to the degree that it promotes job mobility.

Co-ordination of national policies

9. The globalisation of the world economy has strongly reduced the effectiveness of national economic policies. A cooperative approach is required to launch a global economic recovery which implies the need for:

- a framework to stabilise and control international financial flows, render the functioning of international markets more transparent, and avoid the destabilisation of the economic policies of elected governments. Serious consideration should be given to a turnover tax on purely speculative foreign exchange transactions. Such a tax, proposed by Nobel prize winner James Tobin, should include all major financial markets;
- co-ordinated action in the reduction of the level of interest rates worldwide to reduce the cost of capital and borrowing and stimulate investment;
- joint action to control operators in off-shore markets, in particular to fight against tax evasion, corruption and money laundering;
- fiscal policies which encourage employment and penalise pollution of the environment and depletion of non-renewable natural resources;

- sustained levels of public investment in infrastructure, technology and skills, aiming at more economic efficiency and the creation of more and better jobs;
- creation of international financial instruments to correct temporary payment and fiscal imbalances and to offset speculative capital flows.

This requires a close co-ordination of the international effects of national economic policies. The G7 group has not been able to adequately fulfil this coordinating role. In addition, G7 economies represent a diminishing share of the world economy and trade.

We support the creation of an Economic Security Council (an enlarged G7) within the UN framework, as a way to effectively co-ordinate international economic policy and to address global issues such as the stability of exchange rates and international capital flows, the avoidance of fiscal competition and the creation of global programmes to reduce unemployment and stimulate economic recovery. This forum is also required to increase the cooperation of international financial institutions within the UN framework.

The form of such an Economic Security Council could combine a given number of additional permanent members with a variable membership of smaller countries. A new structure on these lines would both be more representative of global realities and constitute a manageable forum for the exercise of collective responsibility.

Promotion of free and fair trade - the case for a WTO social clause

10. Trade through full utilisation of the concept of competitive advantage represents the way to significantly improve welfare without jeopardising progress in the reduction of inflation and budget deficits. Moreover, trade is clearly the first level at which cooperation becomes critical. Thus we have to ensure a system of collective responsibility that avoids protectionism.

But it is also clear that if trade is to contribute to world welfare, it must be consistent with a rise of living standards. In particular, import barriers (quotas and duties) as well as subsidies regarding the production and export of agricultural products by the developed countries, which impose significant costs on developing nations, should be reduced. On the other hand, the generalised system

of preferences (GSP) providing for lower tariff rates for some exports of poorer countries should be made more flexible and efficient.

Trade should generate cooperation for jobs, not competition for jobs. Wild competition decreases remuneration levels, qualifications, social protection, safety and environment quality. It ultimately reduces product quality and aggregate demand through low pay and uncertainty, thus preventing efficiency gains from trade.

Cooperation for jobs also implies strengthening the vestigial provisions within WTO by a proper social clause. This should under no circumstances prevent the developing and reforming economies from competing on a comparative cost basis. But it should mean a ban on forced and child labour and the enforcement of social rights, trades union freedom, collective bargaining and the right to strike and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Free trade must translate into fair trade, without hidden administrative barriers, with adequate social legislation and free trade-union activity. The question is not to challenge the ability of less developed countries to compete through lower wage costs. What we cannot forever disregard is any process of wage formation from which free bargaining activity is excluded.

Further, the link between trade and environment calls for an environmental clause in the WTO with binding international commitments.

Strengthening financial assistance

11. Most of the less and all of the least developed countries rely on financial assistance to overcome development problems. Aid has to be strengthened and reoriented if some degree of convergence is to be achieved. There must be an absolute obligation for the rich countries to help the poor through programmes aimed at the relief of poverty so as to create the conditions for real and sustainable development.

Aid should be diverted from projects of the 'white-elephant' kind, frequently linked to corruption and diversion of funds. More attention should be given to the need, particularly in the poorer countries, to finance:

- the 'software' of democratic institutions - the requirements of the basic functioning of the state;
- rural development and other programmes aimed, in an integrated

way, at the basic needs of the population ensuring 'minimum standards... in nutrition, housing, health, the environment, education, social services and basic income'. (Stuart Holland)

In addition, a close monitoring of aid programmes is needed to ensure effectiveness and the inclusion of a social conditionality, together with traditional financial conditionality.

Funding of such programmes (and the increase in overall funds available to developing countries) would not endanger economic stability and growth in the developed (donor) countries. Rather:

- these programmes would significantly increase world trade and consequently exports from donor countries;
- some funding could be raised through regional financial institutions, without consequences for individual countries' budgets;
- as a temporary measure, part of this could be financed by new taxation on the main sources of pollution and on scarce resources, bearing in mind that the more successful the fight against pollution is, the less revenue this kind of tax would bring in;
- a larger number of developed countries should share the burden of funding, including newly industrialised countries. The UN target of 0.7 percent of GNP as development assistance should be reached by all donor countries.

No literate and healthy population is poor. No illiterate population in ill health is other than poor. Priority should be made for the funding of health and education, with a special focus on programmes for women and girls. In terms of health there is an urgent need for a vaccination and remedial diseases fund for the poorest countries.

At its present level, debt service is an unbearable burden to heavily indebted low-income economies, negatively affecting the level of public and private investment, and requiring very restrictive fiscal policies. To address this issue the following measures should be adopted:

- rescheduling of all debt service due to Paris Club and other bilateral creditors, including a substantial debt write-off for heavily indebted low-income countries;
- increase in the maturities and interest subsidies of the debt due to international financial institutions financed by gold sales by the IMF, part of the profits of the World Bank and other regional financial institutions and by grants from bilateral donors;

- increase in the amounts lent by international financial institutions, financed if necessary by an increase in their capital subscription;
- new allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), in favour of developing countries and countries in transition.

Reviewing the functioning of the Bretton Woods Institutions

12. International financial institutions were created more than 50 years ago, in a macro-economic context that has drastically changed. They are not equipped to deal with the challenges that the developing countries face today, and accordingly, they have not served their needs adequately. This should be remedied by a substantial review of the functioning of the Bretton Woods institutions. This should include:

- a different framework for structural adjustment programmes with a different type of conditionality, taking into account social needs;
- a change in the capital quotas in the IMF and World Bank, with the more equitable share in voting procedures for developing countries;
- new or reinforced regional financial institutions, more clearly serving the needs of local economies;
- improved cooperation among international financial institutions and other international donors, thus consolidating the policy-making efforts of the international community within the UN;
- creation of new financial instruments with international macro-economic potential (such as regional and world bonds) to facilitate the recycling of financial surplus in favour of politically-defined international objectives;
- a mechanism for the orderly adjustment of balance-of-payments disequilibria to facilitate the maintenance of stable but flexible exchange rates.

One of the key issues in any fundamental review of the functioning of the IMF and the World Bank is their relation to the new WTO, and whether this in practice is to prove able to fulfil the opening paragraph of its Preamble that 'the signatories to this agreement recognise that their relations in the field of trade and economic endeavour should be conducted with a view to raising standards of living, ensuring full employment and a large and steadily growing real income and effective demand'.

A multilateral commission reviewing the functioning of the IMF and the

World Bank in relation to the WTO needs to recognise that the paradigm of comparative advantage in international trade has been overtaken by cumulative advantage for multinational investment and trade, to the exclusion of many of the lesser and least developed countries.

Regional and global policies

13. The SI urges increased monetary co-ordination, and in particular the enhancement of monetary regional cooperation. The SI also favours an approach that introduces measures ensuring more transparency and accountability of operators, and that avoids competitive devaluations.

A less monolithic global system also needs more plural multilateral institutions and financial instruments.

The regional organisation of the United Nations broadly coincides with a potential framework for such pluralism, with a variable geometry of regional trade and economic groups within this framework. The European Union has a key role to play not only within a wider Europe for example in the Baltic Sea region, but also with the Lomé Convention countries; likewise with the Mercosur, the Rio Group in Latin America, SADCC, the Maghreb and other regional groupings within Africa, and with the follow-up of the Barcelona Conference. But progress to a more plural framework also means that the regional agencies of the UN such as the Economic Commissions for Africa and Latin America and some specialised agencies and subsidiary organs, should be reinforced, better resourced and given greater relative autonomy.

There is a strong case for reinforcing the power of the regional development banks and matching them by regional monetary funds. This macro-economic conception lies behind the establishment of the European Investment Fund, paralleling the micro-project finance of the European Investment Bank.

Reinforcement of social rights

14. Intolerance, inequality, racial or religious segregation, sexism and social exclusion undermine the solidarity and cohesion that are the cement of today's societies. Many of the social problems we face today have their roots in one of these forms of discrimination, whether on grounds of race, gender or religion as do the symptoms of unemployment, urban violence and drug abuse.

The functioning of a deregulated

market economy under such constraints creates an explosive situation, aggravating exclusion and leading to social unrest and political extremism that may, in turn, disrupt the democratic process.

The SI therefore strongly advocates the need for the adoption of policies and measures that contribute proactively to eliminating any form of ethnic, gender or social discrimination or the constitution of ghettos, hence promoting the participation of citizens in decisions which particularly concern their fate.

Social rights are inevitably linked to the existence of democratic institutions. They can only be guaranteed where fundamental human rights are fully respected, including free trade union activity, collective bargaining and the right to strike.

Trade unions activities have played a key role in developed societies, not only in the defence of workers' rights, but also for the modernisation and efficiency of the economies.

Achieving equality and women's rights

15. Equality between women and men is a basic condition for the equitable development of modern society. Deep discriminations against women still prevail in large parts of the world, assuming absolutely inhuman forms. Even in developed countries, judicial equality does not prevent open or hidden discriminatory practices at both social and cultural levels.

The labour market, in particular, does not allow real equality of opportunities, since women are usually offered low-paid part-time jobs and are greatly affected by the new forms of structural unemployment. The eradication of poverty cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone but will require democratic participation and changes in order to ensure access for all women to resources, opportunities and services.

The effective delivery of basic social services, efficient implementation of support mechanisms like housing, healthcare, childcare and education, coupled with positive changes in anti-poverty programmes, will significantly lessen the burden of poverty on women.

Political action to promote equality in education and job opportunities, must become a

reality. Men and women must have the same possibilities to combine professional and other responsibilities, both in society and in the family environment. In the poorest countries, demographic explosion has been a major impediment to real development. Family planning and parental responsibility will not be possible without a strong investment in women's role in society, and increased education and participation in the decision-making process. We also should focus on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families.

Action programmes are needed in order to enact legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources including the right to inheritance, to ownership of land, and equal access to credit. Action is also needed in order to pursue and implement sound and stable sectoral policies, designed with the full and equal participation of women, that encourage broad-based sustainable growth geared towards eradicating poverty and reducing gender-based inequality.

Further action is needed to restructure and target the allocation of public expenditures to promote women's economic opportunities and equal access to productive resources and to address the basic social, educational and health needs of women, particularly those currently living in poverty. Macroeconomic policies have to be generated that have a positive impact on the employment and income of women workers in both the formal and informal sectors.

Sustainable development and protection of the environment

16. The solution to the environmental problems threatening the future of the planet is a critical challenge for humanity as a whole.

A healthy and sustainable local environment is a basic right, both for today's and future generations. Public authorities and public initiatives have an essential role to play filling in the gaps left by free competition, looking to fulfil environmental needs that have a social impact and are ignored by private enterprise, or to guarantee democratic access for all to environmental goods and services within an integrated and balanced development perspective.

The Rio Summit rightly established a link between environment and development:

'wealth creates over-consumption, but poverty destroys nature as well due to the fact that too many have too little to share'. (Svend Auken)

The answer to environmental problems cannot be divorced from the totality of global concerns. It must be viewed not as an isolated issue or trend, but rather within a framework that encompasses all the problems that beset the economy and society.

Concern for the environment must not be seen as a barrier to economic growth. It must be increasingly considered, on the contrary, as an opportunity to generate jobs based on new technologies with meaningful employment for high-skilled professionals and low-skilled workers alike. Energy-saving and the restoration and preservation of nature, being labour-intensive, also offer major job opportunities.

The required change towards sustainable economic growth in our societies, given the supranational nature of the environment, itself demands international treaties, but also supranational institutions and associated policies able to contribute decisively to a sustainable development guided by principles of mutual interest and cooperation.

The necessary aid to and cooperation with developing countries has to be translated into specific financial assistance, training and transfer of technology in such a way that the development of the nations who receive those benefits is not subject to medium-term constraints because of the short-term destruction of its resources.

On the other hand, the enormous environmental deficits bequeathed by the totalitarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe call for an increase in aid such as the European Union is already giving.

The environment reflects what a society is as a whole. This entails the joint responsibility of the whole of society for resolving its problems. We need a better match between problems and answers. The principles of prevention and restitution - 'the polluter pays' - are central to this.

Environment costs must be internalised. For this to be achieved it is necessary to seek the application of new standards, the signing of voluntary agreements with specific industries and the undertaking of educational programmes. We also should fulfil the potential offered by a new fiscal system that would include environmental taxes on pollution.

CONCLUSIONS

The new era of globalisation of the world economy is a challenge for us all. The socialist movement is prepared to accept the challenge.

Globalisation undermines the old links of solidarity in local enterprises and deregulates sectors which previously guaranteed a large number of jobs. Globalisation can lead to irreparable damages to the environment. Not least, globalisation, while putting in question the regulatory role of the nation state, calls for integrated economic institutions at both regional and global levels.

We reaffirm that the democratic decisions taken at national and international level have an irreplaceable role in correcting distortions generated by the functioning global markets and in the search for social justice and full employment.

Recent cooperation in the field of economic policies among developed countries has mainly aimed at reducing inflation and budget deficits, especially in Europe. Employment, social issues and the environment have clearly become secondary. The SI approach is not only more fair, but also more efficient, as it takes into account long-term perspectives, offsets negative externalities and promotes social inclusion.

Confronted with international economic and monetary disorder, we socialists and social democrats express our determination to promote a new system of collective responsibility within the following strategic framework:

- a global recovery programme coordinated by an enlarged G7 or an eventual Economic Security Council of the UN to promote world development and to fight poverty. This programme should be financed through new instruments and increased official development assistance, including substantial debt write-offs for heavily indebted low-income countries;
- the creation of employment and the rise in standards of living (involving both the economic and social dimensions) at both the domestic and world levels, thus strengthening cohesion between North and South, East and West, with action of global and local significance implemented at the appropriate level;
- a review of the functioning of the IMF and the World Bank recognising that diverse problems for different economic systems

need to be addressed and resolved through greater diversity in ideas, policies and institutions, rather than constrained by a single paradigm of structural adjustment and gains from trade, or a single model of governance;

- a reform of the international monetary system that will contribute to reducing exchange rate volatility and foster cooperation aimed at a sustainable growth of the world economy;
- a better transparency and accountability of international financial markets with measures addressing the need to reduce speculative transactions and thus contributing to the stability of international currencies and capital markets;
- a strengthening of the multilateral trade system whereby each country has to comply with the obligations arising from the agreements now covered by the WTO and contribute to the success of further market opening, reinforced by negotiation of a social clause, and with strengthened preferential treatment for the poorer countries;
- a reinforcement of women's rights, political participation and equality of opportunities, remedying the lack of autonomy and access to economic resources, including credit, land ownership and inheritance, offsetting the inadequate access of women to education and their minimal participation in the decision-making process. The release of women's productive potential is pivotal to breaking the cycle of poverty so that women can both fully share in and contribute to the benefits of development;
- strengthening within the framework of the United Nations those agencies concerned with environment, such as the Sustainable Development Commission and the Environment Programme, and the financial institutions associated with such development;
- international agreements to improve the quality of continental waters and the air, neutralising the negative consequences of climate change and desertification, and enhancing the overall quality of the global environment.

MAKING PEACE, KEEPING PEACE

Peace, freedom, justice and solidarity have always been the central values and objectives of the socialist movement.

The Socialist International takes pride in its tradition of persistent and successful work for peace and security.

Throughout the Cold War the SI, true to its principles, maintained dialogue with major powers, consistently appealing for nuclear disarmament, for radical cuts in nuclear weapons, for non-proliferation, for a test ban, for confidence-building measures, for openness and transparency, for the solution of regional crises, for common security, for preventive diplomacy, for security and cooperation - for peace. Through such policies which also inspired member parties, the SI contributed to the end of the Cold War.

While the Cold War is now over, and the related arms race and the threat of a nuclear war seem to have subsided, the post-Cold-War experiences have not been only positive. While negotiations have brought peaceful solutions to many Cold War regional conflicts, new crises and armed conflicts have emerged elsewhere. While major breakthroughs have been made in disarmament, huge stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons are still there, and the world still wastes its scarce resources in excessive military spending.

Therefore, the sustained powerful action for peace, security and disarmament must continue even in the post-Cold-War world. The Socialist International - and its regional and special committees - will explore new ways and means to play a constructive role in the new situation. We reaffirm our conviction that the end of the Cold War has created conditions for a just and peaceful world order. Such an international order must be built on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

A peaceful world order also requires the revival of the commitment to the UN Charter to maintain international peace and security 'with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources'.

Such changes do not come by themselves. Persistent efforts to change the world in accordance with

our ideals and objectives are needed both at the global and regional levels. The concepts of common, cooperative and comprehensive security provide basic guidelines and directions for such efforts. The Socialist International reaffirms its appeal to all governments, social movements and individuals to work together for a just and peaceful world order.

TOWARDS COOPERATIVE SECURITY

A fundamental change has occurred in the course of the last decade. The strictly bipolar international system and the ideological antagonism between the blocs has given way to a more cooperative world order.

The change in the international system is still going on, and its impact is being felt in East and West, North and South. With the predictability of the bipolar system disappeared, the present situation is characterised by uncertainties. The Soviet legacy continues to be a factor affecting security policy in Russia and elsewhere.

The United Nations is and remains the most important forum for security cooperation. The Security Council, responsible for international peace and security, cannot be replaced by anything else in the foreseeable future, but its role can be further strengthened.

Besides being global in membership, the United Nations also deals with all aspects of security, including various new threats to security, such as political upheavals, social distress, poverty, environmental degradation, ethnic unrest, uncontrolled migration, terrorism and drug abuse. Future security policies should take this comprehensive security concept as their foundation.

The global agenda of the United Nations permits it to be utilised in a flexible manner. Development and peace go hand in hand. Concern for the global environment is concern for peace. Social progress is a precondition for welfare, stability and peace. The United Nations conferences on important global issues focus on problems to be resolved by all states together.

The 'Agenda for Peace' of the Secretary-General of the United Nations contains important

considerations about the changing role of the organisation.

Last year, when the UN turned 50, another important report was published. The Carlsson Commission stressed a strong commitment to global cooperation in the service of peace and progress and rejected unilateralist approaches to global problems.

If preventive diplomacy fails and traditional peacekeeping is insufficient, then the United Nations may call on other organisations to restore peace. This is perhaps the greatest innovation in recent times in this field, and it is still being tested in Bosnia.

The concept of 'overlapping institutions' provides regional organisations and even military alliances a role while keeping the political decision-making role of the United Nations Security Council intact.

Regional organisations, acting on the basis of the UN Charter, play an important complementary role. In Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has changed from a traditional forum for East-West negotiations, to an international organisation concentrating on preventive diplomacy and conflict-management. The OSCE has played a useful role in many post-Cold-War conflicts such as the former Yugoslavia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechnya.

Forms of cooperation between such regional organisations as the European Union (EU), the Western European Union (WEU), the Council of Europe, OSCE and NATO are being developed in order to find a meaningful division of labour for them in the emerging European security architecture.

TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE UN SECURITY SYSTEM

The world has faced more than a hundred severe armed conflicts since 1945. The role of the United Nations in crisis-management has increased dramatically following the end of the Cold War. Between 1988 and 1995, the UN has launched twenty-three peace-keeping operations, as compared to the thirteen established between 1948 and 1988.

The Council of the SI, at its meeting in Tokyo in May 1994,

approved the report of the special working group of the SIPSAD on UN reform. On that occasion, while acknowledging the existing limitations in procedures, operational capabilities and resources for the UN to perform its role in maintaining peace, we stressed the need to maintain the notion that the UN is the sole legitimate body where measures to introduce and maintain peace can be adopted on behalf of the international community.

The Socialist International remains committed to these principles and calls for a further extension of the means and resources at the disposal of the UN Secretary-General. We also express our satisfaction at the progress of the Secretary-General's 'Agenda for Peace', whose efforts to create a new conceptual framework, in order to respond to new challenges beyond the scope of traditional peacekeeping, will require the support and commitment of the member nations.

Conflict-prevention appears as an area in which the UN should broaden its role, either through preventive diplomacy or through a preventive deployment of UN forces in the early stages of a crisis. This will require reinforcing the authority of the Secretary-General, speeding-up the decision procedures and allowing stand-by forces to be deployed at early call. Conflict-prevention is the most appropriate means to prevent crises spreading, thus avoiding loss of life and saving enormous effort and resources. Successful conflict-prevention and crisis-management also reduce the risks and the amplitude of any prospective use of force.

Regional cooperation in the area of security has increased during the last years. The possibility for regional organisations to act in their areas of responsibility should be encouraged and facilitated. The experiences in Europe and, most recently, in Africa should allow a most efficient action in conflict-prevention and management when the UN Security Council cannot guarantee the availability of the means required.

The UN cannot act today as the world policeman, but this should not be in contradiction with the need to define as clearly as possible the criteria upon which the Security Council, on behalf of the whole international community, makes its decision whether or not to intervene in a conflict.

In the world of today, the role of the UN in maintaining peace cannot be restricted to peace operations. The impact of non-military factors on global and regional security

underlines the need for an enhanced UN capability to effectively contribute to assess and solve them. Economic imbalances and poverty, food and water shortages, and cultural divides are at the root of many existing and potential conflicts. Cooperation between agencies and with NGOs as well as interaction with the affected populations are among the requirements for maintaining peace in the future. This cooperation appears also as a prerequisite in those cases where peace has been achieved but must yet be consolidated. These new challenges will require a greater democratisation and transparency in the decisions of the Security Council and increased collaboration with the General Assembly, whose role should be enhanced.

TOWARDS ENHANCED REGIONAL SECURITY

A major aspect of present security developments is strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and regional organisations in peace and security issues, under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. While this opportunity has been in the Charter, it is only in this decade that it has come under closer scrutiny and in more frequent use. Cooperation includes diplomatic support, consultation, and division of labour in co-deployment or joint operations. Positive experiences have already been gained in many crisis areas, in Europe, Africa and Central America.

The contributions of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Cambodia, the OAS and the Contadora Group in Central America, the European Union, the OSCE, NATO and the WEU in the Former Yugoslavia, have pointed to a tremendous potential.

The linkage between the UN and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was formally established in the beginning of the 1990s, but of course the regional approach in Europe has been under way for a quarter of a century. Europe was also centrally in the focus of SI activities for a long time, which was well rounded, because Europe was so deeply divided by the Cold War and because Europe was the primary scene for military confrontation, with the two opposing military alliances confronting each other.

Against that historical background it may be argued that particularly in Europe the end of the

Cold War has been felt most dramatically and that there the challenge and need for establishing cooperative security arrangements to overcome the Cold-War divide are most urgent. That need has been recognised by all European governments.

The CSCE history, and now the institutions and procedures of the OSCE, have created the basis for such wide European security arrangements. Fruitful experience in confidence-building and cooperation as well as the mechanisms developed for crisis-prevention, for the promotion of democracy and of minority rights give direction to further efforts.

Yet, today's OSCE is still too weak an organisation to be able to deal with severe political or military crises alone. The necessity to find adequate roles for various international organisations and the best possible forms of cooperation between them is guiding the present efforts in Europe. The European Union, the Western European Union, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), NATO, and the UN are all exploring their potential contribution to European security architecture. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), Partnership for Peace as well as the ongoing Implementation Force (IFOR) operation in Bosnia are all examples of such new forms of security cooperation, where old adversaries as well as neutral states are acting together to build a new and safer Europe.

In post-Cold-War conditions, the most probable challenges are related to crisis-management and peace-keeping. Therefore the primary focus of European discussions and negotiations - whether in NATO, EU or WEU - is on these issues. The IFOR operation also sets a potential example in providing a framework for civilian and military elements in new peace-keeping operations. Such a comprehensive peace-keeping approach has been fruitful already in former UN operations, e.g. in Namibia, Central America and Cambodia.

The Socialist International has on various occasions referred to the possibility of exploiting the European experience in other regions of conflict. While it is not feasible to reproduce such experiences elsewhere - because every crisis and conflict has its unique characteristics - some central features of the CSCE approach seem worthwhile, such as the inclusion of all relevant parties in the negotiations, the adoption of a

comprehensive security agenda and the beginning of the journey if necessary, even with modest results to make it start.

The validity of such a thesis has been underlined by similar recent experiences in many conflict-ridden regions like Central America, South Africa, Middle East and Asia. The capital created through confidence-building is needed to overcome protracted hostilities and to assure everyone the benefits of peace.

TOWARDS NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Nuclear non-proliferation

The Socialist International remains committed to achieving the real goal of nuclear non-proliferation: general nuclear disarmament. With the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1995 and in view of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the international community should restate its priorities. The Socialist International will continue its work to lessen the role of nuclear weapons with the ultimate aim of a nuclear-free world.

Non-proliferation is more than just setting the agenda for nuclear disarmament or improving the NPT safeguards system. It is necessary to address the political and/or regional security perceptions and motives evoked in order to keep a nuclear arsenal or to develop a new one. It should become clear that there is no credible strategic need or rationale for nuclear weapons in a world with a sharply reduced risk of a global conflict, without antagonistic military blocs. With all the means available we should tackle the tension in certain regions which tempt states to become nuclear, and support consistent initiatives in order to favour the settlement of substantial security confidence-building measures, disarmament agreements, etc, while enhancing our global support for the elimination of the presence and the threat of any kind of weapons of mass destruction.

All states should strictly adhere to the Resolution on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, passed by the NPT Review and Extension Conference. A number of countries have taken important steps to renounce their aspirations to acquire nuclear weapons. South Africa has dismantled its nuclear-weapon-making capability. Argentina and Chile have joined the NPT, and

Argentina, Brazil and Chile have become full parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. France has engaged in procedures to sign the Treaty of Rarotonga. With Africa's Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, established in 1996, nearly all of the southern hemisphere now constitutes a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

A new era of cooperation among nuclear-weapon states has made it possible to reach agreements on tangible reductions in nuclear stockpiles and on the elimination of entire classes of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have been completely withdrawn from many countries where they had been deployed during the Cold War.

The Socialist International opposes the deployment of nuclear weapons and related delivery systems in new member states in the case of NATO enlargement. This would be against the spirit of the NPT.

The main concerns in the coming years are the huge remaining stockpiles of the nuclear-weapon states, the refusal of some so-called threshold countries to renounce the nuclear option, and the risk that nuclear know-how and material end up in the hands of states or groups which are beyond international control.

Under these conditions, the existence of important nuclear arsenals still presents the risk of their use, with the very serious effects which this would mean for the populations and the environment. The situation created by the disappearance of the USSR has brought about new dangers in the nuclear field which are just as important.

The first is the possible access by new states to nuclear armaments. And the second is the possibility for non-state terrorist or mafia groups to acquire by purchasing, trafficking or theft, nuclear materials capable of producing bombs. This is why action aiming to rid the planet of nuclear risk must be conducted simultaneously in four fields:

1. that of reducing the existing arsenals - the START II Treaty must now be ratified by the Russian Duma, but it is necessary to begin without waiting to negotiate a new step which could take the form of a START III Treaty;
2. that of reinforcing non-proliferation and the test ban - it is essential that the NPT be signed by all the states of the world and that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty be signed soon on the basis of the zero option;
3. that of forbidding the production of nuclear material for military use

or the capacity for its possible use for terrorist purposes. The so-called cut-off treaty negotiations must be initiated as soon as possible under conditions which would not legitimise the arsenals of the threshold states;

4. that of the extension of the powers of supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is an important condition for the implementation of the policy of nuclear material control, without which any policy directed against proliferation will fail.

The trade in plutonium and highly enriched uranium for economic, scientific or other reasons should be placed under strict international control. In the same way, the IAEA must be allowed to follow the evolution of radioactivity levels of all the now closed-down nuclear facilities or test sites and to keep track of all the undeclared activities which may lead to the production of nuclear weapons.

A register of nuclear weapons should be established at the United Nations. Registering the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons will enhance the confidence of non-nuclear countries in the readiness of nuclear countries to disarm and will thereby strengthen the will to adhere to the non-proliferation policy.

The Socialist International strongly urges all the governments which take their inspiration from SI principles to simultaneously pursue the legal and political battle along these four guidelines.

Negotiations on a treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free world must start in the Conference on Disarmament immediately.

Nuclear testing

The Socialist International has consistently insisted on a definitive end to nuclear testing as an effective and indispensable means to achieve real progress in nuclear disarmament. These efforts should be continued until the CTBT is signed and ratified by all relevant states.

There is no technical justification for the continuation of nuclear testing. Scientific studies have shown that a very small number of tests is needed to ensure the safety of certain types of nuclear weapons; yet in no case will tests be needed after 1996. France and China - after two more test explosions in 1996 - have finally stopped testing and joined the moratorium by the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom. While it is positive that China has given up the concept of so-called peaceful nuclear

explosions, any conditions attached to the decision are out of place.

The Socialist International has consistently supported the conclusion in 1996 of the CTBT. We therefore welcome the resolution passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 September 1996, adopting the text of the CTBT. The immediate goal now is therefore to secure signatures of all states for the CTBT and the early entering into force of the Treaty. When in force, the Treaty will be a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament together with the NPT, the IAEA safeguards system and the agreements among the nuclear-weapon states.

The ultimate objective, however, must remain the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

In this regard the SI welcomes the recommendations of the recently completed Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

TOWARDS CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL

For fifty years the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament have been primarily aimed at promoting nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of other means of mass destruction. Such emphasis has been justified, because the future of mankind was long jeopardised especially by these very weapons. That task remains unfinished, and further efforts are needed to enhance nuclear disarmament by all means, the ratification and implementation of the convention prohibiting chemical weapons as well as further measures to effectively abolish biological weapons everywhere.

However, it is becoming more imperative than ever to take measures to cut down the so-called conventional weapons as well. These are the weapons with which most present wars are being waged, they constitute the arsenal of most armies and they assume the greatest share of global military expenditures.

In fact, the concept of conventional weapons has long been misleading, because many weapons of this category can result in destruction comparable to that caused by weapons of mass destruction.

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), as the most far-reaching treaty on major conventional weapons, is an encouraging example in many respects. While it was negotiated in the final phases of the Cold War in Europe, it still shows how favourable

political conditions and arms-readiness of all parties to the treaty to adapt its stipulations to the realities of the post-Cold-War world makes it relevant also for today's world. The Socialist International demands the strict implementation of the treaty. We emphasise the necessity of reducing the number of forces and arms also in regions where they seem to have temporarily increased, and encourage all parties to explore ways for further reductions of major conventional weapons. It would seem useful for OSCE to open a revision process where all states concerned could participate.

Another positive development in recent years has been the increased openness and transparency in arms transfers. The UN Register on Conventional Arms is a most valuable instrument in this respect and should be further developed. Openness in issues dealing with arms transfers is a necessary ingredient in confidence-building, which again is a necessity for any peace process.

As a consequence of the end of the Cold War and the solution of many long-standing regional conflicts, the volume of international arms trade has notably decreased. This positive development can be further supported by unilateral restraint, by agreements between major arms suppliers as well as by cooperation of arms importers at regional level.

Recently, more attention - particularly at the regional level, especially in Africa - has been paid to so-called micro-disarmament, i.e. measures taken to destroy small arms piled in certain conflict areas. Such an approach can be of considerable help in the solution of regional conflicts, and should therefore be further developed by the UN in cooperation with regional organisations.

A balanced and effective solution must be found to the indiscriminate use of landmines which cause injuries and loss of human life to the civilian population.

As conventional weapons take the greatest share of global military expenditures, their reduction is a key factor in bringing them down, closer to the goal established in the UN Charter of maintaining peace and international security "with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". While the transition from the Cold-War expenditure levels towards that legitimate goal implies major conversion at all levels, the Socialist International encourages all states to reaffirm their commitment

to that goal. Conversion at global, national and societal levels will release huge resources to constructive purposes both in developing countries and industrialised countries.

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL IN CONFLICT-PREVENTION

As preventive action in the post-Cold-War period is becoming more important, there is an increasing role not only for preventive diplomacy but also for non-governmental organisations.

The Socialist International has a valuable record of dialogue between major powers as well as other conflict partners, and in new - more favourable - conditions, its role in conflict-prevention should be further explored.

From this point of view, it is recommended by the Socialist International that the member parties make a common effort in the fields of conflict-prevention, risk-analysis and mediation.

1. The role of the parties in conflict-prevention

1.1 Security today requires a global approach to the problems; in conflict-prevention the political, economic and social dimensions of the crises must be taken into account. Respect for human rights and democratic rules in a perspective of development facilitate conflict-prevention. SI member parties are called upon to work for an efficient prevention of conflicts.

1.2 The parties have a sensitising and educating role vis-à-vis public opinion. The method of preventive diplomacy requires that the peoples concerned and international public opinion are involved. Today, all armed conflicts touch civilian populations, which are the principal victims of modern wars. Preventive action can only be used in a political climate which is convinced of its necessity and of the promotion of a culture of peace, which must be the main objective of the SI member parties.

1.3 In government or in opposition, our parties have the obligation to join their efforts in international as well as regional organisations. Under their influence, states can prefer a policy of prevention, taking in the long-term action which prevents crises beforehand or prevents them from reappearing.

2. The role of the Socialist International in analysing risks of conflicts

2.1 The International, with its regional and specialised committees, could be used for centralised efforts and the exchange of information.

The SIPSAD and regional committees could deal with these issues more flexibly and faster than international organisations.

2.2 Following the example of the European Parliament conflict-prevention centre, regional expertise in conflict-prevention could be organised. Their main task could be to work out crisis indicators (social tensions, economic hardships, disintegration of state structures) and to analyse their different forms.

2.3 Thus the SI should be prepared to give an early warning and pass it on to competent international organisations.

3. The role of Socialist International member parties in mediation

3.1 SI parties should be able to avoid accusations of interfering in the internal affairs of a state. Support given beforehand can provide the concerned parties more efficient means to act in their own country.

3.2 Diplomacy can advance when disputes are studied and regulated through political dialogue, which channels tensions and helps the parties to find peaceful solutions together.

3.3 Thus, mediation which brings about a rapprochement of the parties to the conflict can become a central task of the Council.

In particular, our parties can help preventive efforts to be successful thanks to their knowledge of the local situations and their capacity to set up a mission of good offices in a relatively short time.

Thanks to this 'citizens' diplomacy', discretion and confidentiality - necessary conditions for preventive diplomacy - have a better chance to be fulfilled and a compromise is easier to reach between the parties concerned.

The originality of the SI Statutes allows it to find its place in preventive diplomacy. Its role must be seen as parallel and complementary to the activities of international organisations.

It provides a forum for political dialogue and an opportunity for informal meetings which are indispensable if a rapprochement is sought.



A HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

No other period in human history has been so strongly linked to the quest for human rights as the 20th century. It will stand out as the century of human rights as well as the century of the most abject denials of these rights and freedoms.

At the end of this century it is therefore necessary and legitimate to draw the lessons of one hundred years of human progress, and of human failure, in one of the most noble objectives of political endeavour: to provide to the men, women and children of this planet an equal degree of human rights and freedoms as expressed in so many instruments and declarations and found wanting in so many dramatic and tragic failures and shortcomings.

More than at any time in the past, human rights have mobilised not only academics and specialists, government experts and lawyers but also large numbers of ordinary people who have organised, in a now huge field of NGOs, what is today the vast international human rights movement. Moreover, human rights concerns today have also created a vast number of institutions and occupy the workings of many national and international organisations, beginning with the United Nations.

While periodically pushed to lower rank on the international agenda and from the minds of international decision-makers, while constantly discriminated against in favour of more worldly and also material concerns of states and governments - not least in favour of economic advantage - human rights are here to stay, moving higher and higher in world political concerns, not least thanks to a new degree of international awareness in a global information society that leaves few spots in the international arena unexplored.

But there is no doubt that despite this dramatic advance in consciousness and awareness, in sensitivity and concern, the overall balance sheet in the promotion and defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide remains bleak.

While human ingenuity and technical progress have been successful in many instances in fighting the evils haunting mankind - such as illnesses and ignorance or the risks of unforeseen disaster - it would

be hard to say that human rights abuses could be definitively eradicated. In particular, there remains a major contradiction between the norms adopted internationally and the practices tolerated at the national level.

This fact is amply documented by the growing volume of reports issued by national and international authorities, governments, international organisations and major international human rights NGOs, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or the International Commission of Jurists. It thus appears imperative to draw up, after the experience of decades past and present, a new human rights agenda for the 21st century.

This agenda must build on the challenges and threats of the past as analysed and identified by a host of international conferences and meetings, not least the 1993 Vienna International Human Rights Conference and some other UN mega-events such as the Copenhagen, Cairo, Beijing, and Istanbul Conferences on Social Affairs, Population, Women and Human Settlements.

The following analysis and proposals will not depart from the now universally accepted view of human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely their indivisibility and interdependence, without privileging any category or generation of human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political or social.

On the basis of past experience and current trends it will endeavour to establish the elements of a human rights agenda for the 21st century that should build on the idea of a universal set of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It will include a considerable body of human rights concerns that dominated the 20th century and that will remain relevant in coming decades.

A human rights agenda for the 21st century, while not fundamentally different from the current one as far as the human rights content is concerned, should however also be bolder and more ambitious. It should be aimed towards a much higher level of awareness and preparedness in their defense, introducing new systems of much refined and safer procedures, thus creating a new and unprecedented degree of human rights security.

A new universal human rights order: general principles

Any new universal human rights order, as indeed past efforts to create such an order amply demonstrate, must be based on a number of general principles to be universally acceptable and accepted.

Universality

Human rights standards, although rooted in many cultures, are universal. Through their universality human rights must afford protection to all of humanity, including special groups such as women, children, minorities and indigenous peoples, workers, national minorities, refugees and displaced persons, the disabled and the elderly. Whilst recognising cultural pluralism, we must not tolerate cultural practices which derogate from universally accepted human rights, including women's rights.

As human rights are of universal concern and are universal in value, the advocacy of human rights cannot be considered to be an encroachment upon national sovereignty.

Indivisibility and interdependence

Human rights - be they civil, cultural, economic, political or social rights - are individual and interdependent. For that reason, neither set of rights can be accorded priority over the other. Nor can it be argued that one set of rights is, in practice, a prerequisite for the enjoyment of others. Such arguments are without legal or empirical foundation but can easily destroy the basis on which to build an international human rights consensus.

Human rights, however, are interdependent, as can be exemplified by the fact that economic rights demand a fair distribution of resources and income, and the right to freedom from hunger and poverty. These can only be protected where people are able to exercise their civil and political rights, for example, the right of workers to organise and form unions to protect their economic rights. Poverty arises from wrong development in the face of systematic denial of human rights.

There must be a holistic and integrated approach to human rights. Once set, those rights cannot be used to bargain for others.

Solidarity

The North-South dimension of the human rights agenda is of fundamental importance. Solidarity as understood in the Declaration on the Right to Development is 'solidarity between industrialised countries and their developing partners and solidarity in every country with the most disadvantaged'. The right to development is universal and inalienable.

In the year 2000 and beyond, four fifths of the people of the world will be living in the developing countries, the number in absolute poverty and despair will still be growing.

Solidarity with the people of all countries requires a community of interests and values to manage problems that respect no borders - from environmental degradation and migration, to drugs and epidemic diseases. All people are made less secure by the poverty and misery that exist in the world. Development matters: properly applied in propitious environments, aid works.

The international community needs to sustain and increase the volume of official development assistance in order to reverse the growing marginalisation of the poor and achieve progress toward realistic goals of human development.

A global development partnership should work to achieve early in the next century:

- a massive reduction in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty;
- universal primary education in all countries;
- gender equality,
- access through primary health care systems to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate age.

Development policies should also ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels.

The success or failure of poor people and poor countries in making their way in an interdependent world will have a profound influence in shaping the 21st century and the place that human rights and fundamental freedoms will occupy in it.

Integration

Human rights activities should not be treated or pursued in isolation but should be integrated into other activities, such as development cooperation, peace-keeping and other forms of conflict settlement. Careful distinction should be made however, between authentic human rights fact-finding and monitoring on the one

hand, and advisory services or technical cooperation on the other. The differences between the two types of activity are fundamental and the distinction must be retained. Similarly, while peace-keeping, the exercise of 'good offices' functions and conciliation efforts are of major importance, and should as far as possible reflect integrated human rights components, they cannot be seen as substitutes for human rights monitoring, nor will it be appropriate in many instances to combine responsibility for the different functions in the same entity. Rather, in many situations, human rights monitors are needed to scrutinise the promotion of human rights and other activities of technical advisers, peace-keepers and others, rather than being replaced by them.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Democracy, freedom of thought and expression:

Democracy

Democracy is more than a legalistic or formal process. Democracy is more than the ritual casting of a ballot at multi-party elections. True democracy involves participatory democracy by the people at all levels so that they have a voice in the discussions and decisions by which they are governed. But democracy must not only govern the political process, but should pervade all spheres of society, including economic and social life. It is also a dynamic concept that needs constant development and movement towards ever stronger foundations.

It must be realised in the form of people's empowerment and participation at the grassroots and other levels with responsive and accountable processes and institutions both locally and nationally. It demands good governance, freedom from corruption, and accountability of state and other authorities to the people. It involves the protection and participation of those groups which are not in the majority, namely minorities and disempowered groups. It is intertwined with the issue of land and social justice for rural people and other disadvantaged groups.

Democracy is a way of life: in the home, in the workplace, in the local community and beyond. It must be fostered and guaranteed in all countries.

Democracy, development and good governance

Democracy and development are linked in fundamental ways. They are linked because democracy provides the only long-term basis for managing competing ethnic, religious, and cultural interests in a way that minimises the risk of violent internal conflict. They are linked because democracy is inherently attached to the question of governance, which has an impact on all aspects of development efforts. They are linked because democracy is a fundamental human right, the advancement of which is itself an important measure of development.

Therefore, to an increasing degree the problem of the form of government in the members of the international community, the nation states, has become part of the international political agenda. In particular, progress towards a universal democratic order and good governance is more and more seen - not least in the words and philosophy of Boutros-Ghali's "Agenda for Peace" - as the ultimate goal of all international efforts of peace-making and peace-building.

Holding elections is only one element in democratisation. Member states have sought and received United Nations assistance in facilitating decolonisation, thereby implementing the right to self-determination in designing procedures to smooth and facilitate transitions to democracy and in building democratic alternatives to conflict. United Nations support has also been provided for activities such as drafting constitutions, instituting administrative and financial reforms, strengthening domestic human rights laws, enhancing judicial structures, training human rights officials and helping armed opposition movements transform themselves into democratically competitive political parties.

While democracy is not the only means by which improved governance can be achieved, it is the only reliable one. By providing for greater popular participation, democracy increases the likelihood that national development goals will reflect broad societal aspirations and priorities. By providing appropriate mechanisms and channels for governmental succession, democracy provides incentives to protect the capacity, reliability and integrity of core state institutions, including the civil service, the legal system and the democratic process itself. By establishing the political legitimacy of governments, democracy strengthens their capacity to carry out their policies and functions efficiently and

effectively. By making governments accountable to citizens, democracy makes particular governments more responsive to popular concerns and provides added incentives for transparency in decision-making.

Sustaining democracy and development within states is closely linked to expanding democracy in relations among states and at all levels of the international system.

Democracy in international relations provides the only basis for building mutual support and respect among nations. Without true democracy in international relations, peace will not endure, and a satisfactory pace for development cannot be assured.

Democracy within the family of nations is a principle that is integral to the system of international relations envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. It is a principle that means affording to all states, large and small, the fullest opportunity to consult and to participate. It means the application of democratic principles within the United Nations and other international organisations, global or regional, themselves.

Democracy in international relations also means respect for democratic principles in interactions taking place outside the United Nations and the modern system of international organisations. It means bilateral discussions instead of bilateral threats. It means consultation and coordination in addressing problems of mutual concern. It means cooperation for development.

Self-determination

The right to self-determination is well established in international human rights instruments and international law. However, it is well understood that self-determination does not necessarily imply secession or statehood. Pluralistic political structures, permitting greater autonomy to distinct groups, may often be a better way in which self-determination can be realised.

What is essential is that all peoples have the right to cultural, political, social and religious self-expression, taking into consideration also Resolution 1514 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

In that regard, the United Nations seems best suited to create a specific body to consider the issue of self-determination and to produce criteria by which claims to self-determination can be judged according to objective, universally acceptable standards.

Freedom of expression and thought

Freedom of expression and thought, necessarily interrelated with the call

for civil and political rights as well as with democracy, is severely constrained in many countries. In many parts of the world there are no media independent from governments or powerful economic monopolies. People cannot express themselves without fear. Journalists and also ordinary citizens are persecuted, jailed and even killed because they express their thoughts or write the truth.

Sometimes the truth is suppressed by economic lobbies and cartels - including the evil power of drug barons - but more often than not the pretext for curbing freedom of expression is national security or a presumed system of 'law and order'. This is mostly a façade for authoritarianism and for the elimination of democratic aspirations.

Militarisation

There is a growing concern over the increasing militarisation of many countries and the diversion of resources for this purpose. Militarisation has led to the destruction of civil society, undermined the right to self-determination, and denied the people the right to liberate themselves and to be free from fear. At times, militarisation has taken the guise of civilian groups, such as vigilantes.

It has particularly harmed indigenous peoples and national minorities and has resulted in forced migration. It is interrelated with violence against women, such as sexual slavery, rape and other crimes committed in armed conflicts. It has particularly harmed children. They suffer from physical health problems, emotional disorders and social maladjustments due to traumatic events such as arrest and torture, evacuation, massacres, disappearances, and other forms of human rights violations.

To deal with this problem effectively, richer countries should exercise particular responsibility and restraint in relation to the export of arms. Regional and international codes of conduct should govern the export, import and transfer of arms. Such codes of conduct should prohibit the export, import and transfer of arms to regimes that would use them for purposes of repression.

Rule of law

The rule of law must be based on the existence of an independent judicial system, providing justice and non-discriminatory treatment for all citizens. Trials need to be in public and people's rights need to be clearly stated as well as the means of redress if they are undermined. In many countries the continuing existence of

torture and inhuman and degrading treatment gives rise to increasing concern. These practices must be eradicated.

In many countries, suspects are tortured by law-enforcement personnel in order to extract confessions. This inhuman practice is officially encouraged by some authorities as a cheap and convenient method of crime control. These so-called confessions are used as evidence in court cases.

The action needed to counter such practices needs to be both preventive and curative. The latter implies prosecution of those responsible, as well as rehabilitation assistance for torture victims.

Abolition of the death penalty

One of the most fundamental amongst human rights is every individual's right to life. Universal abolition of the death penalty therefore contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. No one should therefore be condemned to such a penalty or executed. States should, in accordance with universal or regional human rights instruments, abolish the death penalty and no state that has already done so should reinstate it. When deprivation of life forms part of the crime of genocide, the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide shall fully apply.

Racism, racial discrimination, antisemitism, xenophobia and ethnic violence

Racial discrimination is now understood as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life'. Racial discrimination, particularly in its vicious manifestations, is a matter of criminal behaviour and should be dealt with accordingly in terms of legal action. At the same time, the term 'racism' indicates a state of mind which is regrettably too common to be called an aberration, but which reveals a perversion and sickness of the mind. As the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice states: "racism hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practise it, divides nations internally, impedes international cooperation and gives rise to political tension between

peoples". The struggle against racism, racial discrimination and antisemitism requires a broad strategy of action, ranging from legal and political measures, including measures of conflict-resolution and confidence-building, to policies in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information. Victims of racial discrimination are entitled, individually and collectively, to effective measures of protection as well as to remedies and, as the case may be, to affirmative action in the economic, social and political fields in order to repair and to make up for the adverse and often degrading and disgraceful situations in which they find themselves.

Minority rights

The most frequent victims of racism, xenophobia and ethnic violence are minorities, whose rights need particular protection, especially in the development process.

Minorities are characterised as representing a smaller portion of the population, having non-dominant status and in some respect differing from the total population: there are national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious minorities and international minorities (such as the Sinti and the Roma). They can either be scattered or live relatively close together in one region.

Amongst minority groups, there is a higher proportion of the rural poor, urban migrants and in particular, women and children who are often doubly vulnerable.

Intolerance towards minorities and refusal of the right to be different are also apparent today in the proliferation and violent behaviour of fundamental religious movements and political extremists. Therefore respect for religious and philosophical freedom must be guaranteed. This objective can be promoted through cultural exchanges and learning about people of different origins, particularly through youth exchange programmes and the teaching of different religions and philosophies in public and private schools.

The broadening and deepening of the democratisation process is crucial for minority rights, minority participation and stable development. This will imply greater transparency and dialogue regarding this delicate issue. Minority rights are to be developed also by means of new international legislation. Sufficient effective rules of international law have to be created to give individuals the right to claim their rights as members of a minority.

An important instrument to promote the rights of minorities should be the participation of

minorities through a truly effective democratisation process. There should also be funding for support to civil society, including NGOs' action research projects, information and education programmes on inter-racial justice and projects that empower vulnerable minority communities.

Indigenous people

The world is home to many indigenous peoples. A basic issue among these indigenous peoples is the fact that many are not recognised as indigenous by governments and as such are denied the right to self-determination.

They are denied their specific cultural identity and entitlement to protection under relevant international human rights instruments. They are victims of the ethnocide and genocide perpetrated by certain governments - whether from the North, the South or together - international financial institutions and transnational corporations. International legal instruments presently available are weak in ensuring collective human rights protection.

In many parts of the world their right to land and other rights are not respected. Among the consequences are the expropriation and despoilation of their lands, armed conflicts and displacement as refugees. This has been accompanied by persecution and suppression by force. On another front, tourism has at times led to the degradation of indigenous lifestyles through commercial exploitation.

The activities of the United Nations aimed at resolving the problems of indigenous peoples should be stronger and the efforts to elaborate a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people should be expedited.

Refugees and displaced persons

The problem of refugees and displaced persons is widespread and growing: it is becoming a permanent phenomenon. It is intermingled with political repression, armed conflicts, ethnic discord, and natural disasters.

Inadequate attention is paid to their plight. Their position is compounded by the lack of effective national and international machinery to ensure their protection and assistance.

The safety of refugees and displaced persons is often jeopardised by restrictive state policies and discrimination. The basic right of refugees not to be pushed back to the frontiers of danger is violated on many occasions. The procedures established to determine refugee status are often defective, and voluntary

repatriation to the country of origin is not always guaranteed. The human rights of refugees and displaced persons, including freedom of expression, are violated in the name of restrictive national policies.

Few countries have acceded to the relevant refugee instruments. This displays a reticence to recognise international human rights standards and to render the situation more transparent internationally.

The rights granted in the Geneva Convention should be carefully observed by the international community and a set of additional rights should be adopted in the light of recent experience, including 'de facto refugees', persons who are displaced because of civil wars, ethnic persecution and natural disasters.

Measures are also required to ensure fundamental rights for the increasing number of migrants and their families, who face long periods of their lives as "guest citizens" in a foreign country.

Children's rights

A variety of abuses and exploitation of children persist. These include child labour, children in bondage and sexual slavery, child prostitution, sale and trafficking of children, children in armed conflict situations, children in prison, children in situations of poverty and other deprivations, and child abuse in families compounded by family break-up and breakdown. Basic needs, such as physical and mental health, nutrition, education, shelter, and participation are often unsatisfied. The advent of AIDS has increased the plight of children; discrimination is increasing both against children with AIDS and orphans of AIDS-affected families.

Children's rights are endangered in a wide variety of situations. At a very early age, they are exposed to violence in many forms by governments - poverty, malnutrition, disease, and lack of education which stultify their growth and deprive them of their childhood.

The scenario is much linked with discrimination against the girl child, militarisation, and the distorted development process. Although many countries have now acceded to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, implementation remains weak, with much lip service rather than effective action to protect children and to assist their families.

The human rights of women

Women continue to be discriminated against all over the world as regards the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of their individual rights in public and in private life and they are

subject to many different forms of violence. Violations of women's human rights should be combatted with greater efficiency in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender is a part of all human rights instruments. Underdevelopment, certain social and traditional practices and cultural patterns, and all forms of violence and extremism create obstacles to the full realisation by women of all their rights. Human rights are universal and should apply to women and men equally. Violations of the human rights of women have not been fully dealt with by the overall mechanisms of human rights instruments, the avenues for redress in the case of violations are not adequate and the process of achieving de facto equality has been slow.

In spite of the ratification of international and regional human rights instruments, states still maintain laws and practices which discriminate against women. Selective traditions and customs are used by states to perpetuate discrimination against women and to condone it in the private sphere, contrary to obligations freely assumed by states and to the expectations of the international community. This is particularly true in the field of access to land and other economic resources, legal status and capacity, and rights within the family.

The issue of women's rights has not been visible in the human rights discourse in human rights institutions and practices. Patriarchy, which operates through gender, class, caste and ethnicity, is integral to the problems facing women. Patriarchy must be eradicated. Women's rights must be addressed both in the public and private spheres of society, in particular in the family. To provide women with a life of dignity and self-determination, it is important that women have inalienable, equal economic rights (e.g. rights to agricultural land, housing and other resources and property). It is imperative for governments and the United Nations to guarantee these rights. Crimes against women, including rape, sexual slavery and trafficking, and domestic violence are rampant. Crimes against women are crimes against humanity, and the failure of governments to prosecute those responsible for such crimes implies complicity.

Indigenous women experience the impact of colonialism and racism as well as sexism. Women who come from countries which were colonised by western powers also experience the continuing effects of colonisation when living in the West, as well as

discrimination and exploitation based on their sex. In general, western women experience systematic discrimination in employment and education, in the justice system, in political life, and in access to adequate health care. Violence against women is of epidemic proportions. Also, despite living in so-called developed countries, many women are poor, and both they and their children suffer the complex and damaging effects of poverty on their health, education and self-respect. In western societies women are subordinate to men in both the public and private spheres. They have less power, less status, less income, less security, and less control over their bodies and their lives.

In all regions it has been found that the United Nations and governments have, by and large, failed to promote and protect women's human rights, whether civil and political or economic, social and cultural. Women's subordination throughout the world should be recognised as a human rights violation with due account to those structures of oppression that intersect with and compound such subordination.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual human rights

Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals experience abuses of their human rights on a daily basis. They continue to be unequal to heterosexuals in law. Homophobia contributes to the violation of human rights and is a matter of criminal behaviour and should be dealt with accordingly in terms of legal action.

Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals do not currently enjoy the same freedoms and treatment before the law as heterosexuals. For example, discrimination at work on the grounds of sexuality is lawful in most countries (unlike discrimination on the grounds of gender and race) and same-sex relationships are not afforded the same legal recognition as opposite-sex relationships in most countries. The struggle against homophobia and sexual discrimination requires a broad strategy of action, ranging from legal and political measures to policies in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information. Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are entitled to the same human rights as heterosexuals. Those rights must be enshrined in law through the enactment of legislation to ensure equal treatment, regardless of sexuality, in all areas of political, social and economic life.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE NEGATIVE BALANCE SHEET

To sum up one might register as most important the following concerns regarding human rights violations:

- failure to adopt international human rights instruments (as well as too many 'reservations' upon accession) and refusal to implement them at national and local levels;
- lack of regional and national intergovernmental mechanisms to protect human rights in an independent and accessible manner;
- lack of access to information to empower people to protect their human rights; discrimination and national oppression of minorities and indigenous peoples, and inadequate protection of tribal peoples;
- governmental action undermining the universality and indivisibility of human rights;
- lawlessness on the part of governmental authorities;
- proliferation of armed conflicts enmeshed in ethnic discord, with threats to civilians;
- political repression by means of killings, disappearances, torture, particularly of political prisoners, and suppression of civil and political rights, including self-determination, freedom of expression and assembly;
- harassment of persons, including health and church workers carrying out their humanitarian functions;
- attacks on the rights of workers, particularly migrant workers;
- threats to agrarian and rural communities;
- increasing number of threats to refugees and displaced persons, particularly through lack of fair and effective refugee screening procedures, violations of their human rights, and menace to their right to seek asylum and safety;
- impunity of those who commit human rights violations;
- religious intolerance mixed with extremism, and other forms of discrimination on the basis of religion;
- numerous constraints imposed upon the mass media;
- non-recognition of and continuing violations of women's rights, due to patriarchy, including economic rights and the inadequacy of processes to enhance the empowerment of women and gender equality;
- widespread sexual exploitation;
- discrimination against and oppression of sexual minorities (i.e. lesbians, gay men and bisexuals);
- breaches of children's rights due to economic needs, socio-cultural constraints, criminality, consumerism, discrimination and militarisation;
- insufficient protection of the

disabled, whether physical or mentally impaired;

- lack of services and assistance for the elderly;
- escalation of AIDS and related exploitation;
- violation of the right to health, and underdeveloped health care systems, characterised by unequal distribution and inaccessibility of resources to the poor majority;
- denial of health services to survivors of human rights violation;
- increasing environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources;

ELEMENTS FOR A HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

In 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted as a 'common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations', the standards it contained were said by virtually all governments not to be legally binding upon them. At that time, no specific human rights violations, apart from genocide, were effectively proscribed. Virtually all states shielded behind article 2(7) of the UN Charter in arguing that any other human rights matter was strictly an internal affair for the state concerned. While a UN Commission on Human Rights was set up, its work was dominated entirely by governments, with independent experts being accorded no role whatsoever, and NGOs being restricted in formal terms, to stiff ad hoc appearances. The Commission's mandate was largely confined, in practice, to the drafting of new treaties and other legal instruments.

Today, however, less than fifty years after the adoption of the UN Charter, very significant progress has been made. The standards contained in the Universal Declaration are, in practice, applicable to every state, whatever its formal attitude to their legal status. The view that human rights violations are essentially domestic rights matters, while still put forward in an almost ritual manner from time to time, receives very little credence from the international community. The Universal Declaration has been supplemented by a vast array of international standards, the most important of which are the six 'core' human rights treaties. In addition to the six expert treaty bodies created by the UN to supervise the compliance of states parties with their obligations under those treaties, regional human rights conventions and implementing machinery have been set up in Europe, the Americas, and Africa. The UN has also created a complex array of other, additional monitoring

mechanisms.

In brief, the international human rights system has developed to an extent that would have been considered inconceivable by the vast majority of observers in 1945. Even at the time of the first World Conference on Human Rights, not a single treaty monitoring body was in existence, there were virtually no procedures for the investigation of violations, and states were simply not held accountable, except when egregious violations coincided with the short-term political interest of geopolitical blocs. In the space of the last twenty-five years the United Nations system has made immense progress. Of course, it is by no means sufficient and enormous inadequacies remain.

They include such facts as:

- many serious situations have been neglected by UN bodies, either completely or for many years;
- the techniques available to them and country rapporteurs to encourage or compel an end to specific violations are extremely limited, and the procedures that have been developed leave much to be desired;
- the follow-up measures that accompany these procedures are too often ineffectual and many of the governments targeted have succeeded in ignoring them, or made only token gestures in response;
- the UN system, broadly defined, continues to isolate human rights concerns within a narrow range of its activities, despite some recent breakthroughs;
- in relation to certain issues very little progress has been made; they include most notably economic, social and cultural rights, minority rights, and women rights; and
- the financial and human resources available to carry out the various UN mandates are lamentably inadequate.

But, despite the many shortcomings of UN human rights endeavours, there are grounds for optimism. International public opinion and the work of international and domestic NGOs can make an enormous difference to the positions taken by governments and can create conditions in which international organisations are able to become more effective.

In order to further promote the cause of human rights and fundamental freedoms a call should be made to all the component parts of the present international system, international organisations, governments, NGOs and civil society as such to give priority attention to the following general and specific recommendations.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote and protect the universality and indivisibility of human rights by:
 - recognising and guaranteeing the interrelationship between human rights, development and democracy, as propounded by this NGO declaration;
 - guaranteeing the rights of collectivities, such as minorities, indigenous peoples and the unorganised sectors of labour as well as individual rights;
 - eliminating the root causes of human rights violations - civil, cultural, economic, political, and social.
- Human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent, equal attention and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights.
 - Review and reform of laws, policies and practices which are detrimental to the full realisation of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of their people.
 - Ensure that development strategies are sustainable, equitable, people-based, and in a balance with the natural environment, with the aim of assuring equity and enhancing the freedoms and the dignity of all women and men.
 - Develop guidelines for assessing the human rights impacts of the policies, actions and omissions of the Bretton Woods institutions and to establish appropriate mechanisms of accountability.
 - Counter socio-cultural practices and extremism which constrain human rights, particularly women's rights, and in particular to reform laws, policies and religious and cultural practices that tend to deny women's independent existence and to take measures, such as community mobilisation, mass education and long-term development, to initiate and enhance the process of empowerment and equality.
 - Lift - wherever they exist - constraints on political rights imposed under pretext of national security and law and order, by repealing repressive laws, ending arbitrary arrests, and releasing all political prisoners, liberalise political systems so as to democratise the decision-making process, guarantee people's participation at all levels of government, and abide by good governance.
 - Address the root causes of armed conflicts.
 - Reduce arms purchases and re-allocate arms expenditure to

development needs; no arms exports to countries that violate human rights.

- Ensure that human rights have the first call on state resources, by reducing arms purchases and diverting the funds from militarisation to human rights promotion and protection, and by re-allocating from other sources.
- Stop the sale of certain weapons and security know-how to military and police forces that would use them for repressive purposes. In particular education about interrogation techniques which include torture should be outlawed.
- Respect the work of human rights activists/defenders and social and legal movements, including non-governmental organisations; cease harassment, intimidation and other malpractices against this sector, and facilitate, rather than obstruct, the operations of these catalysts of social change.
- Guarantee the independence of the judiciary, while nurturing a commitment to responsibility to the people, providing adequate remedies for human rights violations through judicial and other channels, including the availability of legal aid and assistance, and to counter the impunity of violators by effective legal and other measures.
- Promote comprehensive human rights education and training, including an increase in the provision of information, the development of awareness and of skills. Participatory learning methods will enrich the process and contribute to the promotion and protection of universal human rights standards by utilising the cultural wealth of the region.
- Introduce or amend domestic legislation.
- Ensure compliance with these international obligations, in particular with the standards of equality and non-discrimination, and to resolve conflicts between the customary laws of a group of people and those of the state in conformity with the universality of human rights, according priority to those which conform to the spirit of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.
- Ensure the protection of the rights of women, children, indigenous peoples, national minorities, peasants and workers and all marginalised groups.
- Guarantee the freedom of religious and philosophical expression.
- Abolish forced evictions to guarantee the basic human right to a place to live in peace and dignity, today actively denied to millions throughout the world.
- Develop human-rights-based relocation guidelines, eviction-impact statements and codes of conduct for use in exceptional circumstances.

- Abolish the death penalty.
- Cease all forms of political repression, including organised sexual violence, torture, enforced or involuntary disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and arbitrary detention.
- Ensure protection of the rights of all victims of human rights violations, particularly torture victims and prisoners.
- Provide the basic needs of political prisoners, torture victims, refugees and displaced persons.
- Ensure the right to object to armed military service.
- Provide compensation, indemnification and total health services, including rehabilitation to survivors and families of victims of organised violence sponsored and sanctioned by the state, including torture, sexual slavery (including victims of the devadasi - slaves of god - system), forced labour, involuntary disappearances, summary executions, police and military oppression, political repression, unjust detention and internal displacement.
- While welcoming new initiatives by governments to set up regional mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights, to subject such measures to the following conditions:
 - if a regional commission is set up, it should be mandated to apply without reservations the International Bill of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture, the Declaration of the Right to Development and other relevant human rights instruments;
 - member states of any regional commission must ratify or accede to the above international instruments prior to their membership;
 - the right of individuals and NGOs to petition the regional commission must be guaranteed;
 - such petitions or appeals should not preclude concurrent appeals to the various UN mechanisms for the protection of human rights;
 - no member of this regional commission should concurrently hold an official position in government, and members should be appointed in consultation with NGOs;
 - there should be a regular reporting system by states on their implementation of human rights standards domestically with NGO participation in the drafting of the reports;
 - meetings of this regional commission and its deliberations should be generally open to the public;
 - no aspect of government operation and no official should be immune from scrutiny or investigation,

- including the military and security forces;
- the regional commission should have full investigative powers;
- a separate body should be set up to adjudicate complaints;
- member governments must be required to disseminate information on the regional commission and how it operates.
- Adopt, following public consultation, a gender-sensitive national policy on human rights education and training which provides, among other things, for specific programmes designed for government officers and employees, and law enforcement officials. There should be programmes - both formal and informal - on human rights in the curricula of all educational institutions, for which governments should be held primarily responsible, and effective use of the mass media. Particular emphasis should be given to programmes designed specifically for marginalised members of the community. NGOs should be assisted and encouraged to conduct human rights education and training.
- School and college curricula should involve teaching about different religions and cultures. All must have the same access to education, including being educated within the local community. All educational institutions must have clear policies on equal opportunities, including how to deal with racism and sexism.
- Education exchanges are needed to reduce the lack of understanding of other countries. Young people should have the opportunity of experiencing life in another country for part of their education. Learning another language should begin in elementary or first school and continue for everyone throughout their school life.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Wider acceptance of international instruments and procedures

The centrepieces of international action to combat human rights violations should continue to be the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

States which still have not done so should be encouraged to become parties to the conventions. All states

parties to the conventions should also be encouraged to make declarations on individual petitions. The existence of individual petitions procedure and its potentials as an international recourse for victims should be duly publicised. All states should also be encouraged to become parties to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Member of their Families as a matter of priority, in view of its possible early entry into force.

International standard-setting

Many important human rights instruments have been internationally agreed upon but the work on standard-setting must continue. There is a special need for instruments to improve the protection of individuals and organisations working actively for the defence of human rights, an international ban on capital punishment, and for the protection of refugees - not least in relation to those who have fled from war situations or are displaced within their own countries. There is a need for further international agreements to combat terrorism, both by private groups and by states.

In armed conflicts people have little or no protection. Children are particularly victimised in modern wars. Some are recruited as child soldiers; others suffer from indiscriminate attacks since weapons and military tactics are used which do not spare children or other innocent civilians. Humanitarian law needs strengthening on these points, and such improvements must be combined with a dramatically increased vigilance for the implementation of agreed standards.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child should be followed up by more precise standards for the protection of children in specially difficult circumstances.

While regional human rights conventions have been agreed in America, western Europe and Africa, no similar initiatives have been taken by the governments in Asia and eastern Europe. Such instruments have proved to be valuable not least because they allow for more detailed and culturally relevant approaches than the UN texts.

In that regard, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should be authorised to propose the adoption of new standards.

Better monitoring of agreed principles

There is a strong need for measures to enforce agreed standards. Governments which have ratified international conventions are among

the worst violators of human rights. The efforts of supervisory bodies established under the conventions to monitor the practice of states should be supported. The ad hoc monitoring systems set up by the UN Commissioner on Human Rights - with observers, rapporteurs and working groups - should be developed into more permanent and independent procedures, involving also the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In particular, the time is ripe to adopt an individual complaints system for the international monitoring of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, similar to the procedure established by the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. If all human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, then there is no more convincing reason why the monitoring procedures under both covenants should remain different. That economic, social and cultural rights are less justiciable than civil and political rights has proven to be an argument which does not even hold true any more at the domestic level.

An individual complaints procedure will definitely be the best opportunity, by means of developing case-law, to define the precise meaning and the limits of economic, social and cultural rights. Furthermore, since international complaints may only be submitted after the exhaustion of all available domestic remedies, such a procedure will actually become one of the most effective means to put pressure on states to develop relevant domestic remedies and thereby make economic, social and cultural rights justiciable or at least enforceable by quasi-judicial remedies such as complaints to national human rights commissions, ombudspersons, parliamentary commissions or similar institutions established by domestic law.

Establishing permanent international courts on human rights

A permanent international court on human rights with compulsory jurisdiction over all cases of human rights violations as well as a permanent international criminal court, to which individuals have direct access, to provide both criminal sanctions and civil remedies against war crimes, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity including gender-specific abuses in international, internal and armed conflicts should be established at the global as well as at the regional level.

Promotion of interaction between national and international levels

National and international NGOs involved in efforts to combat human rights violations should become more closely associated with the work of relevant Committees of the United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms. Exchange of insights and information, monitoring developments at national and international levels and assistance to persons wishing to make use of national and international recourse procedures are forms of interaction and cooperation between national and international levels.

Protection of human rights in times of war

Stronger mechanisms are needed to enforce humanitarian principles during armed conflicts. Modern armed conflicts entail enormous human costs. Civilian casualties are high not only because modern wars have no clear-cut front lines, but because civilians are often deliberately targeted. Such acts of terror are forbidden by international law. The 1949 Geneva Conventions ban military attacks against civilian targets. This norm has been violated repeatedly, not just by insurgents but also by governments, sometimes in raids against other countries. In particular strong support, financial and otherwise, should be given to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

A structure for humanitarian initiatives should be created within the UN Secretariat - in collaboration with UNICEF, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and for Human Rights, as well as the International Red Cross and other voluntary agencies - in cases where warring parties refuse to make provision for the most basic human needs.

Prevention of racial and ethnic conflict and violence, including early warning and urgent procedures

National and international bodies and authorities should give more attention and priority to preventive measures in order to identify and cope effectively at the earliest possible stage with situations that can produce conflict. Fact-finding, good offices, mediation, advisory missions, requests for special information, permanent monitoring, promotion of dialogue, and urgent relief actions have to be introduced as additional means to promote and protect human rights in potential and actual conflict situations. Monitoring bodies, such as CERD, should be encouraged to assume such tasks or to

advance such activities in addition to their regular supervisory duties.

National institutions and NGOs

National institutions are effective fora and instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular also in the area of combating racism, racial discrimination, antisemitism, xenophobia and ethnic violence. They should also be involved in early warning activities, whenever a threat of such activities appears. All efforts should be made to strengthen national institutions and to establish such institutions where they do not yet exist. Non-governmental organisations should play an important role in cooperation with national institutions, notably also by promoting interaction between national and international levels.

Law enforcement

Whether states are parties to the Human Rights Convention or not, they should take the necessary steps to fight human rights violations and eliminate racial discrimination. Such measures should include more stringent penal provisions against human right abuses and expeditious enforcement policies and practices to prosecute those who violate these principles.

Members of the police and prison personnel, as well as other law enforcement officials, must be made aware by better training and understand the social and psychological situation of the different ethnic and cultural groups in society. This is needed with a view to taking special precautions in law enforcement and preventing excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies.

Effective recourse and redress for victims

Victims of human rights violations must be assured effective protection and remedies, including the right to seek and receive just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for damage suffered as a result of those violations.

Put human rights issues on the agenda of globalisation

In the effort to create more transparency and accountability in the ongoing process of globalisation and subject it to the same principles that apply in economic and social life at the national level, human rights and fundamental freedoms should occupy a prominent place.

This is particularly true as far as the protection of working people is

concerned, where globalisation today has increased the incidents of forced and child labour, and threats to the freedom of association and the right to organise or bargain collectively. The respect for decent, internationally recognised labour standards should therefore figure high on the agenda of future international trade negotiations as well as other relevant negotiating processes.

Extend the UN role in technical assistance for human rights

With the creation of the post of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN should now extend its role as the world's principal agency to provide technical assistance for the promotion of human rights, including a comprehensive UN programme for human-rights-based development cooperation. Within the framework of this programme, provision should be made for technical and financial help in establishing and consolidating national institutions charged with the protection of human rights (e.g. legislative bodies, reform of the penal system) and of democracy (preparation and conduct of elections, multi-party systems, independent media), and for comprehensive measures in the field of human rights education, training and public information.

Human rights programmes should include the translation, printing and dissemination of key documents through UN Information Centres, cooperating with NGOs in the distribution and promotion of a basic Bill of Rights. This information programme should deal with specific issues such as torture, racism, discrimination against women, or violations of the rights of children.

Efforts should be made to create broad awareness of the UN complaints systems. Courses should be organised for lawyers, local human rights groups and others on how to put forward complaints. The role of UNESCO in the field of human rights education should be defined. A major focus in these promotional programmes should be assistance to governments for creating preventive safeguards against violations of human rights. Models of infrastructures for the protection of human rights should be developed. This is particularly important for new democracies and countries which have just emerged from a period of heavy repression. Support to the mass-media - and media structures - should also be an important element in UN aid programmes for human rights. Such aid should be directed at encouraging the right to freedom of expression. Non-governmental groups in the field of development aid and/or human rights should be invited to participate

in the implementation of a UN aid programme for human rights.

Teaching and education

It is important that teaching materials and teaching aids be widely available to promote teaching, training and educational activities against human rights violations, in particular with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and antisemitism. Special attention has to be given to the multicultural education of teachers. It is essential that teachers be aware of the principles and essential content of the legal texts relevant to human rights violations and of how to deal with these problems of relations between children of different ethnic and cultural groups in society.

In history and text books children and young people should be made aware in an accurate way of the inhuman and criminal policies and practices carried out by nazi, fascist, totalitarian and other non-democratic regimes, and more particularly of the crimes of genocide and apartheid and the crimes related to 'ethnic cleansing'.

In this context, the UN should:

- pursue a 'People's Decade for Human Rights Education and Training';
- implement mechanisms for the review of Human Rights Education and Training, possibly by the relevant treaty-monitoring bodies;
- establish an International Fund for Human Rights Education and Training activities for states and NGOs.

Information and media

Freedom of the media is difficult to achieve but essential. The ownership of the media should be diverse and free to express different views. Local use of the media is also important. Many people's views can be manipulated by the media and freedoms in this area are essential to prevent government propaganda maintaining in power the people already there.

It is important to raise the awareness of media personnel of the importance of their role in eliminating human rights violations.

The participation of journalists and human rights advocates from minority groups in the mass media should also be encouraged, as well as multicultural activities of the media, inasmuch as they can contribute to the suppression of racial and ethnic prejudice and xenophobia.

RESOLUTION

THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

The XX Congress of the Socialist International, held at the United Nations headquarters, is dedicated to addressing today's global challenges through greater international cooperation. Four years since our last Congress in Berlin, where we undertook the tasks of sustaining the democratic revolution and ensuring that its benefits are extended to all, it is clear that now more than ever the challenges of securing peace, democracy and development require an international effort.

The world is changing rapidly and is increasingly interdependent. We therefore must find new ways to live - both within our own countries and at the global level - that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. Only by reinforcing a sense of common responsibility and solidarity can humanity survive and realise its potential.

Clearly, the role of the United Nations must be central if the goal of greater international cooperation is to be achieved. Since Berlin, the Socialist International therefore has deepened its support for and its relations with the United Nations. The convergence of our International and the United Nations, based on the shared goals of peace, democracy and sustainable development, and on cooperative activities and efforts, makes it more than fitting that our Congress be held in New York.

The Socialist International, with member parties in nearly every country on every continent, and with regional and thematic committees active throughout the world, promotes better understanding and greater cooperation among nations that face common global problems. The vision of the Socialist International and our adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guide and inform our work, as is evident in the sections of the Congress Resolution that follow.

Moreover, our ideals of liberty, justice and solidarity, which placed the Socialist International at the forefront in the triumph of the democratic idea, are more vital than

ever because they link together all sectors of increasingly complex societies. Social democratic solidarity is based on a shared commitment to the fundamental principles reasserted and refined at the Stockholm Congress in 1989. It derives strength from diversity, both within and among nations.

Democracy as we define it - with political rights, social justice and equal economic opportunity - is the only form of democracy that will endure. While it is true that market mechanisms are required for economic growth and development, it is also true that free markets do not ensure justice. Democratic socialism therefore recognises the state as a necessary servant of the people in guaranteeing a just and equitable society and a critical agent in democratising economic change in an era of globalisation. The preservation of rights - and the reconciling of individual rights with the collective rights of workers, women, young people, ethnic groups and indigenous communities - depends on responsibility shared by governments and citizens.

The Socialist International remains a leading voice in asserting the link between disarmament and development. More constructive and equitable use of the world's resources depends on achieving international peace. The United Nations therefore must be given full support in its efforts to resolve regional and civil conflicts, to promote reductions in nuclear and conventional weaponry, including the proposed ban on the use, production and stockpiling of landmines, and to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons testing for all time.

We democratic socialists are confident in our approach to the urgent tasks before us. Our long-held commitments to freedom and fundamental rights, and to justice, peace and human well-being, have been our strength in overcoming obstacles in the past. Today, the promise of lasting democracy and the aspirations of all peoples for a better life depend on unwavering solidarity and greater international cooperation among nations to

establish an effective system of global responsibility and security. The Socialist International, with its long tradition of international cooperation and solidarity, and with renewed determination and initiative, commits itself to remaining at the forefront in achieving a more secure and democratic world.

AFRICA

1. *Strengthening the democratic process*

Given the process of democratisation currently under way on the African continent, and in view of the urgent need to respond to the many needs of Africa, particularly the challenge of its own development, the SI not only confirms its support for the respect of individual rights, but also - and more specifically - for the advancement of economic and social rights at the continental level, in other words for the right to development - the right to education, health, employment and social welfare.

The SI is pleased to observe the democratic progress which is today significantly changing the political and institutional landscape of Africa, under the impetus of progressive forces: political parties, trade unions, and civil organisations.

The phenomenon of democratisation is historically very significant and it is important to recognise its true value. It is vital to support the forces involved in the African democratic process. If not, the process runs the risk of being weakened, all the more so since it is encountering some disturbing violations and challenges in certain countries.

The SI undertakes to do everything in its power to strengthen democratic culture, particularly by intensifying its role in observing electoral processes and by supporting the socialist and social-democratic movements in the establishment of new initiatives, training and restructuring programmes.

Among these, the women's

movement must play a central role, alongside the labour and youth movements.

The SI asks that the results of transparent and official elections be democratically accepted by the existing political powers.

In this way, strengthening the democratic culture is seen as the best way to guarantee the development of democracy in Africa, where there remain some disturbing pockets of resistance to the democratisation process. This opposition manifests itself in the form of unfair and non-transparent elections, military coups, and an increase in extremist movements and ethnic persecution, which all threaten and challenge constitutional and democratically established laws.

The SI states that these abuses - retrograde steps imposed by force - mean that populations must struggle just to survive day to day, and therefore the SI must devote particular attention to supporting them.

The SI calls resolutely for the establishment of democracy in such countries as Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Zaïre.

It is becoming more urgent than ever not only to reinforce the democratic progress made at institutional level, but to promote real social and economic democracy. Without this, it is impossible to maintain peace and security.

II. Peace and security

After stressing, once again, that peace and security are vital to the success of development initiatives, the SI expresses its grave concern with regard to the continued existence in Africa of a number of areas of tension, for example, in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Somalia.

In this connection, the SI welcomes initiatives on the part of African countries to defuse tension in these areas and to promote preventive diplomacy, via the structures for the prevention, management and control of conflict created by the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) in accordance with international law and UN resolutions.

The SI urges the entire international community to give its full support to these initiatives designed to maintain peace in Africa, and thereby preserve international security.

Similarly, the SI urges the African countries to continue to promote a policy of peace, by utilising their culture and allowing women to fulfil

their role in this effort.

In this respect, the SI urges its members, and the African political parties in particular, to assume the central role that is rightfully theirs.

III. Ensuring development

Africa is becoming increasingly integrated into what is known as the logic of globalisation, marked by an unprecedented increase in ultra-liberalism and the increasingly important role played by international financial institutions, particularly since the collapse of the communist bloc.

The introduction of these influences, within the context of the drastic changes that have taken place in the world economy, is at present deeply affecting the economic and social structures of the African countries.

These new structures, imposed by the requirements of the liberalisation process and the Bretton Woods institutions, have resulted in greater and more widespread poverty among the African populations. Structural adjustment policies have been imposed without the corrective social measures that the social democratic movement was fortunately able to introduce in most of the industrialised countries, where the demands of the market economy were tempered by the introduction of social laws which aided the development and stabilisation of political democracy.

If Africa is to experience a smooth and non-violent transition towards the establishment of a new democratic order, adapted to its own particular circumstances, it is essential to construct an international system based on more equitable economic and commercial relations.

Such a system must be founded on a respect for greater social justice and ensure that industrialised nations and developing countries have equal access to the world market. It must therefore not be based solely on competitive criteria.

In this way, the new system will enable the African economies to be integrated into the world market.

Given the specific responsibility of the European Union towards Africa, the SI asks Europe not to become a closed bloc focusing exclusively upon its own prosperity, but to remain open, particularly in its relations with its African partners and associates.

To this end, the SI asks that the following basic principles be incorporated into the European

Union treaty:

1. The principle of equal partnership and cooperation (to be incorporated into Section XVII of the EU treaty);
2. Greater cohesion in EU policies and interventions, especially in the field of commerce, agriculture, industry and fishing;
3. A positive commitment to an equitable economic and commercial cooperation which respects the rights of the individual and the right to development.

The SI makes the same appeal to other industrialised nations and welcomes the initiatives already introduced, in particular the special UN initiative for Africa.

The SI expresses the wish that these initiatives make a practical contribution to the peaceful and lasting development of the African countries.

To this end, the SI urges the African countries to pursue and increase their efforts through greater solidarity and through the promotion of economic integration at the continental, regional and sub-regional levels.

The SI notes with concern the lack of progress in resolving the conflict in Western Sahara, which is an obstacle to bringing peace and improving the political, social and economic situation in the Maghreb. The partial withdrawal of MINURSO is an unfortunate development and again brings closer the possibility of renewed hostilities. We must demand that the parties involved comply fully with the United Nations Resolutions and make a new effort to establish stable and permanent mechanisms for negotiation to resolve the conflict, with renewed support from the international community.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Asia-Pacific region is the most dynamic area in the world. In the past it was called a 'dormant Asia', but today it is a 'thriving Asia'. Developing countries in Asia are growing twice as fast as the world average. Also in the past it was an 'Asia asunder' in both security and economic terms, but it is now an 'Asia integrated'. On the economic front, the APEC is thrusting forward the process of economic reform and integration, while on the security front the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is successfully developing regional security dialogue.

But Asia is also a region of contradictions. Rapid economic growth, certainly benefitting many

countries in the region, is also causing such problems as environmental destruction, energy crises and food shortages. Rapid population growth, which will continue into the 21st century, together with environmental destruction, energy and food shortages may seriously threaten the security of the region. It is encouraging to see democracy thriving, especially in newly industrialised economies, but authoritarian rule is still dominant in many parts of the Asia-Pacific region.

Peace is more than the absence of war. Just as war claims human lives, poverty, starvation, environmental destruction and violation of human rights threaten people's lives, deprive them of the means to live, undermine human dignity and in the worst cases cause death. Therefore military deterrence and diplomacy are not the only means to guarantee peace. The promotion of social development, the elimination of poverty, the protection of human rights and the preservation of the global environment should be considered priorities in the effort to secure peace.

Against these backdrops, social democrats in the Asia-Pacific region must apply multilateral rather than unilateral and a comprehensive rather than a single-issue approach to the problems of the region.

Security and disarmament

The priority with regard to regional security and disarmament is to stop nuclear testing. The French conservative government carried out six rounds of nuclear tests before announcing an end to further testing in January 1996. As for China, it recently conducted a nuclear test and made clear that another test was expected before September. From the viewpoint of both nuclear disarmament and environmental protection, we firmly reject the use of our land and ocean as nuclear test sites. Therefore we strongly urge that Beijing refrain from more nuclear testing. And we also urge redoubled efforts towards achieving a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, the decisive movement towards time-bound total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes more important for international peace and security than ever before.

The restriction of conventional weapons is also an important issue. In particular, in connection with the revision of the Protocol on the use of

mines, efforts should be made for the prohibition of the production, storage, use and transfer of mines in the future. At the same time we call upon all governments in the region to take voluntary measures to cease the use of all mines until an international agreement is reached to ban them.

Another important issue in the region is curbing the arms race. Many developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, whilst growing economically, are also growing militarily. We do not consider the present level of arms build-up to pose an immediate threat to the stability of the region, but unless properly controlled it will develop into armed conflicts. To deal with this issue, we recommend all countries in the region to accede to the UN weaponry registration system, which needs to be upgraded.

As in Europe, new regional security frameworks are taking shape in Asia and the Pacific. Among these the ARF is a core regime which is expected to play a pivotal role in formulating confidence-building measures.

Sustainable development

The APEC has been praised for its 'open regionalism' and its efforts for gradual liberalisation. But the policy of trade liberalisation alone is unable to solve issues like population growth, food shortages, environmental degradation and energy crises.

The choice should not be between absolute poverty and unbridled economic growth. What is needed is a socially and environmentally sustainable community in which growing wealth can be properly distributed and people can live in harmony with nature.

Therefore we call upon all countries in this region to share the common perception of the fundamental security issues, namely environmental destruction, energy crises, population growth and food shortages, and to launch an intra-regional initiative that aims to encourage joint efforts for the common goal of sustainable development.

Democracy and human rights

Social democrats and socialists in the Asia-Pacific region solemnly declare that human rights are universal in value. We respect cultural diversity but not at the sacrifice of human rights. Already in Europe, the Americas and Africa, regional

mechanisms to protect human rights have been set up. However in the world's largest continent there is not yet the possibility of creating a similar human rights institution. Every effort should be made to establish such a human rights mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region.

In Burma, as the recent arrest of NLD parliamentarians shows, the gross violation of human rights under the military regime is still continuing. We strongly demand that all those arrested be immediately freed and the result of the last general election respected.

Furthermore, the rapes routinely perpetrated against Burmese women by SLORC soldiers as well as SLORC's cynical use of rape as a tool in their campaign of subjugation and oppression of the civilian population constitute a blatant violation of human rights and must cease.

The United Nations, governments and humanitarian agencies must do their utmost to prevent the trafficking in Burmese women to Thailand.

The Socialist International calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to urgently implement the December 1995 General Assembly resolution to find a political solution in Burma. The SI also calls on the governments of Japan, the ASEAN and other nations to support Aung San Suu Kyi's efforts to promote national reconciliation in Burma.

The international financial institutions and governments, including UN agencies, should refrain from renewing ODA assistance, development and assistance programmes and loans until SLORC begins a political dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Socialist International reiterates its intention, first declared at the Manila meeting of the SI Asia-Pacific Committee in February 1995, to continue efforts to carry out the planned SI mission to Burma which has, to this date, been denied entry by the Burmese authorities.

Attention should also be given to the situation in East Timor. Considering the continuation of oppressive rule by the Indonesian army and the massacre in Dili, we need to increase efforts to support the Timorese fight for self-determination.

The human rights situation in both Bhutan and Tibet remains serious and we reaffirm our solidarity with the people from these areas struggling for democracy.

As regards China, authoritarian rule remains in place, but its open and reformist policies seem to

continue. Whilst monitoring its attitude toward human rights, we must help Beijing to further promote the present course of open and reforming policies.

The Korean Peninsula remains unstable. Due to the flood last year and the ensuing food shortage, North Korea is said to be barely surviving. To alleviate the plight, Pyongyang is now accepting aid from abroad. Whilst extending such humanitarian aid, we need to encourage them to accept the idea of a four-party meeting and to gradually integrate them into the international community.

With regard to Fiji, the gross violation of human and trade union rights is also a cause for much concern to the Socialist International. Fiji's racially weighted Constitution has marginalised the Indo-Fijian population and confined them to third-class citizenship in the country of their birth. The Indo-Fijian community, who are the main victims of the Constitution, are denied equal access to education, the civil service and to welfare provision - despite paying 80 percent of national taxes.

The SI will be closely following the recent political developments in Fiji vis-à-vis the findings of the Constitutional Review Commission report and calls on the government of the day to accept and implement its findings, which would put Fiji back on the path to democratic elections and towards a just and fair society.

Women's rights in the Asia-Pacific region

Asia, specifically Beijing, played host to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women which was the biggest ever UN meeting. Yet women in much of the Asia-Pacific region are generally more marginalised in all aspects of life than their sisters in the developed world.

Issues of security, sustainability, democracy and human rights impact differently on men and women. In the light of this there is an urgent need for the social democrats of the region to look closely into the situation of women and put more effort into strengthening their participation in discussion and action on these issues.

EUROPE

The series of events starting in the autumn of 1989 that completely changed the world suggested that the

age of confrontation between the major political blocs had finally come to an end. However, it simultaneously created new challenges.

The Berlin wall has fallen, the Soviet bloc has collapsed, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been finding their - sometimes contradictory - way towards democracy. Europe has emerged from an age of ignominy and has finally been able to devote itself to the task of its total and full construction. But serious problems remain.

For the first time in over forty years, Europe has again experienced war, without there being any indication of its ability to resolve the conflict. The phenomenon of extreme nationalism has reappeared, threatening the political stability of the continent, and the serious structural problems experienced by our societies are reflected in unacceptable levels of unemployment.

The European states cannot deal with these new problems in isolation. European socialists who work together within the framework of the Party of European Socialists (PES) believe that their option offers solutions to these new situations at the European level. Furthermore, the SI considers that the European Union not only represents an opportunity but also has a responsibility to ensure peace, welfare and justice within society. And since the PES is the most widely represented political group throughout the European Union, we should be able to claim, without deluding ourselves, that we represent the only political power capable of offering a combined solution to economic, social and environmental problems.

The objectives of socialist action within the European framework are as follows:

- Work and prosperity: to create a fully employed, efficient and safe society, in which unemployment and poverty have been eradicated;
- To create a balanced programme of economic, social and ecologically sound development that protects the environment and promotes a better quality of life;
- To promote the development, reform and expansion of the European Union. In the light of the Inter-Governmental Conference currently under way, the SI and the PES maintain that the institutional reform of the European Union should be based on three objectives: to establish an effective decision-making process, which significantly

extends the field of application of the qualified majority vote; to invest European policy with greater transparency and openness, and ensure that decisions are adopted at the appropriate level; and to introduce greater democracy into EU procedures, by increasing the powers of the European Parliament and strengthening the participation of national parliaments;

- To develop a common foreign and security policy, with a view to promoting international peace and development;
- To create an open society, prepared to demonstrate its solidarity vis-à-vis the rest of the world;
- To ensure equal opportunities for men and women;
- To promote inter-personal, inter-generational and international solidarity.

Employment has been and always will be the guiding principle of European socialist action. Policies for economic growth that generate job opportunities and are environmentally sustainable constitute the principle economic and social challenge faced by policy makers. Large-scale unemployment is adversely determining the future of our societies.

In December 1993, the PES launched the European Initiative for Employment, an ambitious programme of action containing the key elements of an economic policy designed to generate employment. Looking towards the next (i.e. the third) PES Conference, to be held next spring in Malmö, Jacques Delors is directing work on a new development programme that builds on the work of the European Initiative for Employment.

We believe that there are as yet unexplored possibilities for the stimulation of an active and sustained economic policy at the European level. For example, it is possible to release vast growth potential by transcending the boundaries of national economies and making use of the very real possibilities of the common European economy, while a concerted initiative of macro-economic policies at the European level can guarantee stable and sustained growth and a steady increase in job creation.

Investment and employment in the private sector are a priority objective which must be developed through public investment in research and development, infrastructure, housing and management of the environment with a view to ensuring satisfactory

levels of long-term competitiveness. Investment in education and training must also be a priority objective.

European socialists are working to establish a new social contract in Europe between unions and management, with the support of the public authorities, that will open the way for a new and positive balance between ensuring job security and the need for change. The re-organisation of the existing employment structure can and should be achieved through negotiations that safeguard competitiveness and involve a reduction in working hours with a view to improving the distribution of existing employment.

Another way of maximising the number of job opportunities would be to make use of the vast potential in the field of new activities linked to the service sector, as well as the stimulus provided by the social economy and local initiatives sector.

The political priority of employment does not prevent European socialists from asserting their commitment to Economic and Monetary Union as an essential concomitant to the home market and a means of ensuring that those countries which join the single currency meet the required timetable and common criteria. The third phase of the EMU should begin with the participation of the largest possible number of member states. The implementation of monetary union should be accompanied by an improved co-ordination of economic, budgetary, fiscal, employment and social policies, with a view to ensuring that the EMU is socially compatible and that the common criteria can be maintained on the basis of economic re-organisation. Whatever the case, it is essential to promote sound economic and social relations between the states who join the EMU and those who do not.

European socialists are actively working to ensure that the European Union has real capacity to voice its opinions at the international level, through a Common Foreign and Security Policy. A European Union equipped with the necessary and appropriate foreign policy and security instruments would have been more effective and more able to provide an initial energetic response to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

The SI and the PES maintain that Europe should promote solidarity by developing a policy of active cooperation within its immediate sphere of activity. With regard to the less developed countries, it should

help to reduce the inequalities between the northern and southern hemispheres and, to this end, should maintain the present level of aid to the countries of the Lomé Convention.

Democratic socialists in the EU work with their counterparts in non-EU countries to promote the protection of human rights and respect for democracy and the legitimately established state, both within the EU and in other countries. Unlike the conservative parties, we believe that social and economic rights form an integral part of human rights.

European socialists are continually working to ensure that the European Union promotes the development of Central and Eastern European countries and facilitates their entry into Europe. These new democracies are currently undergoing a process of reform and need help with regard to their reconstruction and access to EU markets, and clear indications concerning their full integration into Europe. We also support the creation of a space for association and cooperation, in all fields, with the countries of the Mediterranean basin, and pledge our support for all efforts designed to ensure the success of the peace initiative in the Middle East.

With regard to the environment, the PES has extended existing action programmes by establishing a new development programme that links environmental management and job creation. The European Union must lead the world in the field of environmental protection, and ensure the implementation of legally binding and clearly prioritised environmental agreements - regarding climate, the protection of forests, desertification, biodiversity and waste - in line with the World Summit in Rio.

We believe that the European Union should increase and improve environmental aid to the developing world. Adequate environmental management can only be achieved if the necessary economic and social bases have been established. To this end, the European Union must support the opening up of world markets to the less developed countries (LDCs) and the transfer of the appropriate technology and financial resources so that these countries are not forced to choose between short-term economic benefits and long-term environmental issues.

European socialist action is directed towards the creation of a programme of cooperation and environmental management which

opens up new areas of job creation, reduces the depletion of natural resources and develops sustainable systems of production and consumption.

A strong, committed Europe which promotes democracy must combat racism and xenophobia. The racist violence and attacks that occur in our societies are an extreme manifestation of deep-rooted social problems. These phenomena are partly produced by unemployment among young people, recurrent recessions and a general feeling of hopelessness, which is regrettably exploited by the anti-democratic politicians of the extreme right.

The only way forward is to construct a prosperous Europe, based on mutual commitment, where the rights of the individual are respected and where the citizens of non-EU countries have the opportunity to become socially integrated through training and employment opportunities, and to participate in the political life of Europe.

Last, and by no means least, European socialists are striving to achieve an equal society. There should be a significant increase in the number of women at all levels of participation and decision-making. In the political field, the PES is committed to promoting the representation of women in all EU institutions and, within its own sphere, to attaining a balanced representation of men and women in all PES bodies and areas of activity. In the economic and social field, this commitment is focused on overcoming discrimination, correcting the de facto inequality between men's and women's pay and finding a solution to the problem of greater unemployment among women, who are also more susceptible to the consequences of social and territorial inequality.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the communist system have signalled the end of an epoch in the history of Europe and of the world. The attempts to affirm justice without liberty and democracy have been revealed as a tragic illusion.

Democracy and justice are inseparable values and it is precisely the events of these past years which have shown us the relevance and validity of the values and ideas of democratic socialism.

Willy Brandt saw in the affirmation of social democracy in

Eastern Europe the crowning of the Östpolitik to which he dedicated his political career and his life itself. The events of these years have proved the courage and clear-sightedness of Willy Brandt.

We reaffirm today that what Europe will become in the next few years will depend in large part on what happens in that enormous region which extends from the Polish plains to Siberia, from the Balkans to the Caucasus.

1. The war in the former Yugoslavia has constantly been at the centre of our attention, and our thoughts are first and foremost with the women, children and men in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Bihac, Goradze, Brcko, Tuzla, and in all the villages and cities hit by the horror of the bombardments and ethnic cleansing.

We have always been convinced that no solution was possible as long as weapons, violence and arbitrary power had the upper hand. Peace was and is built only through negotiation. This is why all of our efforts were directed towards suspending the war, starting a dialogue between the sides and launching a negotiated settlement.

This is also why we greeted with satisfaction the signing of the Dayton Accords which enabled the sides to put a halt to the hostilities and an end to the suffering of the civilian population, and to begin a peace process which has as its objective the peaceful coexistence on the same territory of distinct ethnic communities. The successful elections in Mostar and the beginning of activities of the city's municipal council were an important step in view of the forthcoming elections throughout Bosnia.

Clearly, the road to peace is still a long one, and there will no doubt be difficulties. In the first place further steps are needed to enable refugees to return to their homes, and allow the free circulation of every individual within the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the full application of the Dayton Accords under whose mandate the military forces of the Implementation Force (IFOR) are acting.

The SI asks the international community to reconfirm the international IFOR peace mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to contribute to the stabilisation of the peace process and to support the integration of different ethnic communities.

One of the principal conditions required to carry out these objectives

is the need to bring to justice those responsible for the massacres and crimes committed in Bosnia. We express our full support for the work being carried out by the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, presided over by Professor Antonio Cassese.

The SI holds in high regard the work done by the NGOs and humanitarian agencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and calls on the international community, the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the other UN agencies to intensify their efforts for a full reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

No one should forget the major political objective: that of rebuilding in the entire territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina and in all countries of the region a democratic society which is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious.

For this reason we believe that the electoral deadline of September is of extraordinary importance, and we ask all the member parties of the SI to assist by all possible means those parties of social democratic inspiration which are fighting for a multi-ethnic society: the Bosnian Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats (UBSD).

There need to be further decisive new steps aimed at establishing a fair and stable peace which guarantees the rights of all the parties in the region and of all its ethnic and religious communities. The elections in Serbia and Montenegro also should be such that they affirm fully democratic principles and rules in those two countries.

The SI reaffirms its position in support of autonomy for the population of Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina within the current territorial and legal framework of the Yugoslav federation, and hopes that a final accord can be reached on good neighbourly relations and cooperation between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

With respect to the elections in neighbouring Albania, the SI disapproves of the manner in which the vote in May 1996 was held, and the serious political and institutional crisis which the elections provoked. The only way to emerge from the current crisis is through a political dialogue between government and opposition, aimed at achieving an agreement on the political and electoral steps required to return to

constitutional rule. New general elections must be organised as soon as possible with full respect for international democratic standards, and precise conditions and guarantees of democratic legitimacy.

2. The democratic and economic changes in Central and Eastern Europe are of truly historic significance and strongly affect the stability of the entire continent. The Socialist International hails the achievements of the citizens of this region in building up democratic institutions and in bringing about modernisation, economic growth and political stability. The process of systematic transformation has opened up new prospects for social democrats in this region of Europe.

Today's situation is quite different from that in 1989.

During a first phase - in the period immediately following the fall of the Berlin wall - there was a widespread expectation throughout the region that a market economy would be able to satisfy quickly the demand for welfare and prosperity that decades of communist rule had not fulfilled.

This is why public opinion was swayed towards neo-liberal and free-market forces.

This hope, however, very soon revealed itself to be an illusion. The transition to a market economy has indeed entailed high economic growth rates and a modernisation of society, particularly in some countries of Central Europe. Nevertheless the shift to a market economy has occurred without appropriate rules, often in an entirely unregulated fashion, thereby causing acute social inequities. Small groups of the population, in some cases belonging to the establishment of the past regimes, accumulated vast amounts of wealth, while a large number of citizens continued to live in precarious and insecure social conditions.

For this reason, there developed a second phase in the transition, during which a vast number of citizens turned to those political forces which proposed a more balanced and fair relationship between the market and the need for social solidarity.

The SI welcomes this striving for a social market economy in Central and Eastern Europe.

This explains why in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe parties which explicitly declared themselves to be social democrats have won elections in recent years.

The vast majority of citizens in those countries certainly do not yearn for the political oppression and greyness of daily life under communist regimes. Those electoral results demonstrate, rather, that there is an undercurrent of protest against economic inequality and unregulated free-market policies, and against those who fed the illusion that the market would resolve all the contradictions inherent in the transition.

3. The recent elections in Russia have been a significant step forward in consolidating democracy and in the establishment of political pluralism. This should not make us forget, however, that there continue to be huge problems and growing difficulties.

The transition to a market economy in Russia has continued to be marked by insufficient foreign investment and by uncertainty and confusion in overall policy. There are, however, signs of a recovery in terms of economic productivity. But this continues to take place in a context of generalised uncertainty, characterised by the absence of clear rules, by the onslaught of speculative forces, by the growth of the illegal economy and, above all, by the increase in extremely acute social inequalities.

In Russia today there is a major risk. While in Central Europe public opinion has been disappointed by the inequities caused by the market and has shifted to the left, in Russia it runs the risk of following those whose authoritarian programmes are unable to channel this widespread protest into a democratic dynamic which is both reformist and modernising. Clearly, this risk is disquieting both for Russian democracy and for the future of Europe and the world.

In the post-bipolar era, Russia still plays a decisive role in the development of policies of cooperation and development in our continent. Europe and the world have a fundamental interest that in Russia and the other states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) the transition towards democratic institutions, the consolidation of the rule of law and the stabilisation of a market economy are not halted. We all need Russia's full insertion into the pan-European institutions.

This requires more incisive action from the European Union, from international institutions, and from the individual industrialised countries aimed at a more efficient

mobilisation of human and entrepreneurial resources and of the financial means needed to back the economic transformation of Russia, Ukraine and the other states of the CIS.

An important aspect of this commitment is the financial and technological support for the reconversion of the industrial and military apparatus, thereby favoring the development of civil production aimed at rebuilding the basic infrastructure and at satisfying internal consumer demand. The ongoing Chechen crisis has demonstrated the weakness of Russia's democratic institutions, has resulted in widespread human rights violations, and proves that a military solution cannot resolve the crisis. Moreover, the conflicts in other areas of the Caucasus show how strong are the risks of instability and swings towards authoritarianism.

We support the end of the military action in the Chechen Republic. We welcome the latest peace initiatives and believe that they must be developed further in order to achieve a lasting peace in the southern region of the Russian Federation.

In the current situation, the growth of progressive and democratic forces which can offer proposals and programmes of a democratic nature is of decisive importance. There is a strong need for social democracy in Russia.

The forces within the Socialist International must, therefore, be committed in their support for the progressive groups and must favour their merger, because only a new group of leaders who are truly democratic and progressive can ensure the establishment of political and economic democracy in Russia.

4. We cannot forget that the major contribution to democratic stability in all of Central and Eastern Europe lies squarely in the positive evolution of economic reforms. In this field today's main challenge is to set up a framework of clear and transparent rules as an alternative to an unregulated, laissez-faire market and which prevents the economies from becoming dominated by new nomenklaturas, and which can counter the attempts by speculators and criminal organisations to influence state power for their own purposes.

The 'market' itself cannot resolve problems and conflicts. On the contrary, a 'social market economy' needs to be developed, where economic development and a truly

competitive market can be established, while at the same time equitable, safe and respectable living conditions can be guaranteed for all. It is not a question of returning to forms of statism which have by now been completely rejected by public opinion in those countries. It is rather a question of combining modernity and solidarity, efficiency and equity. This is fundamental in order to guarantee the establishment of a fully fledged, firmly rooted democracy.

To achieve such objectives, international aid is needed not only to supplement the resources of the state, but also to stimulate the flow of private investment, just as the foreign debt of each country needs to be renegotiated taking into account the specific needs of each country.

5. The Yugoslav tragedy indicates that the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of a bipolar balance of power have not, taken alone, resolved the problems of security and of democratic respect for human rights.

The end of a bipolar world has led to an unresolved tension between interdependence and nationalism, between forces which tend to unite and those which push towards a disintegration, such as that shown by a war in the heart of Europe. Moreover, what we are witnessing is not so much the break-up of the old order, but a more complex process of 'decomposition' and 'recomposition', each facet of which needs to be worked out democratically.

We want to encourage the European Union to pursue a strategy of integration by launching within six months of the end of the Inter-Governmental Conference negotiations for the enlargement of the Union, by extending the 'association' status to new countries, and by establishing new bilateral 'cooperation links' between the EU and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe while intensifying specific EU projects aimed at those countries.

The SI backs all political and military integration efforts which can favour policies of cooperation and security in the region: the strengthening of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its conflict-prevention mechanism; a more widespread involvement of countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the Western European Union (WEU) and in the European Union's Common

Foreign and Security Policy; NATO's Partnership for Peace in many countries in the region; and the prospects of the expansion of the Alliance to some of those countries.

The prospects for the enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe need to be defined in terms of three objectives: that of maintaining NATO's decision-making capacity and high level of efficiency in its actions; that of providing a positive response to the demand for integration and security coming from all Central and Eastern European countries through the strengthening of the Partnership for Peace, through their integration into the Euro-Atlantic security structures and through full membership in the Alliance; and thirdly that of fully involving Russia in the region's security policy, thereby avoiding on the one hand the risk of the rebirth of surreptitious forms of bi-polarity - a new grey zone of insecurity and instability - and on the other the emergence in Moscow of suspicion and a prejudiced outlook towards the role of NATO and its enlargement.

6. Faced with the claims to national self-determination which have gradually emerged in Eastern Europe, the problem for social democrats is not simply to agree or disagree. On the one hand we cannot ignore the fact that the shapes and borders of the states in Central and Eastern Europe today are the result of two successive World Wars and do not necessarily correspond to national, ethnic or religious identity. Concurrently though, we cannot accept the position that each state's identity should be based on ethnic or religious homogeneity. The future will be marked everywhere by multi-ethnicity and multi-culturality.

This is where the task of social democracy lies: principles and methods for the birth and recognition of new state entities need to be established. In particular, three preconditions appear to be of essential importance:

- the full recognition in each state of human and political rights on an individual level and for each ethnic, cultural and religious community;
- the inviolability of borders, as stated in the charter of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which establishes that changes to borders can result only from consensual agreement between the states involved;
- the acknowledgement that in today's modern societies there are two

dimensions which coincide less and less: that of the market - which is ever more supranational and transnational and requires political entities and institutions of an analogous dimension - and the national dimension. This means that the eventual birth of new states cannot avoid taking into consideration their willingness to be part of supranational institutions.

We therefore believe that the major problem is to provide these processes with a democratic outlet, keeping them securely within the process of European integration in order to avoid those errors committed by the international community which weighed negatively on the Yugoslav drama.

Linked to this is the need to develop a European strategy on immigration which can confront the problems connected with demographic growth and development in the region, and which can regulate and rationalise the flow of immigrants, bearing in mind that the formation of multi-ethnic societies in Europe is today an irreversible process.

With the disappearance of ideological confrontation between antithetical systems, the true threats to peace and security come from the emergence of ethnic-national conflicts and from sharp economic contrasts. And we should not ignore the dangers inherent in the establishment in some countries of fundamentalist religious rule.

Ethnic and religious conflict can be avoided mainly by affirming, defending and developing the rights of persons belonging to minorities and the full acceptance of multi-ethnicity. The SI reaffirms its commitment to opposing all ultra-nationalistic, racist, xenophobic and antisemitic political movements and parties.

7. The creation of the Socialist International Committee for Central and Eastern Europe (SICEE) at the SI Council Meeting in Athens in February 1993, following the Berlin Congress in 1992, underlined not only the extraordinary historical changes which began in 1989 but also the enormous opportunities which opened up for the SI to strengthen all those movements and parties which based their platform on social democratic principles, in contrast to neo-liberal policies, and in order to play a key role in directing the democratic transition which is still taking place along reformist and progressive lines.

Since its creation SICEE has

established growing cooperative ties with an increasing number of parties in Central and Eastern Europe, thereby favouring the growth of the SI's presence in the region and supporting the strengthening of social democratic parties.

With each meeting, the number of parties has grown. SICEE meetings now include the participation of 50 parties, 30 of them from Central and Eastern Europe. We believe this underlines the growing presence the SI has gained throughout the region. At the Congress in New York many parties from Central and Eastern Europe joined our International.

SICEE has been collaborating closely with the European Forum for Solidarity and Democracy which has been working successfully to support the development of democratic political parties in Central and Eastern Europe through seminars on political education, communication, and training in electoral campaigning.

The Congress opened up a second phase towards the widening of the presence of the SI in Russia, in the CIS, and in the Caucasian and Eurasian region.

What Europe will be in the future will depend in large part on the evolution of the transition processes in Central and Eastern Europe. Whether democracy, progress and solidarity will be achieved in these countries will depend in no small part on us, on our ability to spread and strengthen the values and ideals of democratic socialism and in this way connect them to the hopes of millions of men and women.

THE MEDITERRANEAN

Considering that the Mediterranean is one of the regions of our world in which a plurality of cultures, languages, religions, and traditions have historically co-existed, with different degrees of tolerance and confrontation; that it is an area of great potential and at the same time a focus of serious conflicts, in which the weight of history and tradition must have their place in our analysis, but must not prejudice our commitment to building a region of peace, cooperation and mutual understanding;

Recognising that the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona represents a big step forward for the aspirations of the progressive sectors in the region and gave rise to legitimate hopes that inequalities and injustices could be corrected through mechanisms of

cooperation freely entered into by the different countries attending this historic meeting;

Noting that we see reflected in the resolutions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference many of the elements of socialist thought such as, for instance, arms limitation and disarmament, which can transform the bases of regional cooperation, in order to secure greater peace, welfare, respect for human rights, freedom, democracy and education; and that this common project has the support of socialists and social democrats, who bring energy and dedication to the full implementation of the agreements;

Conscious that the Mediterranean region stands at a historic crossroads, where there are still profound inequalities and disjunctions of an economic, social, political, cultural and religious nature, together with a new positive spirit of which the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona was an occasion and a symbol; that the Conference served to create a positive spirit and was an exceptional opportunity for the participants to commit themselves to a new phase of cooperation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean;

Underlining the importance of the contents of the Barcelona Declaration, because of the multi-dimensional character of the partnership established around the three axes - political, economic and social - which stands as a basic point of reference for cooperation in the region; that it signifies a real change, especially in terms of the relationship between the EU member countries of the northern shore and the countries of the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean;

The SI considers that this new phase in Mediterranean cooperation is not only possible but necessary and must be based on dialogue and mutual trust. This challenge is a political one, a question of the political will to avoid fatalism or the passive contemplation of the existing imbalances, together with a determined effort to overcome inequalities. Conscious of the difficulties which must be overcome, we are for the introduction of a social democratic agenda for the region, based on a market economy which can generate balanced development and correct inequalities.

Europe has a great responsibility for the positive or negative evolution of this new phase of cooperation based on more than 30 countries and 800 million people. It must have a

political vision appropriate to the new times, to a new age of change, with its particularities and its risks of polarising tendencies: the implementation of ultra-liberal policies conducive to even greater inequalities, or tendencies to state domination and centralism for fear of some external enemy. In order to combat such tendencies we need to develop the concept of subsidiarity and move towards sub-regional integration and making partners of local authorities and civil society.

The end of the East-West confrontation has led to profound changes in the very complex field of Mediterranean security. There are more than enough elements present to envisage an uncertain future, if the structural injustice affecting the southern shore and also preventing a balanced relationship with the north persists. Security requires stability and stability requires balance. Europe can and must contribute to this balance, and must try, in its own interest, to ensure that it is a harmonious balance. The European Union must make clear to its Mediterranean partners that the borders of its member states are its external borders and that it does not accept that they be put into question.

Insecurity is born of instability, and this is always caused by socio-political and economic factors. We must therefore be more careful not to confuse risk factors with a real military threat - these are much better tackled with money than arms. It is fundamental that European public opinion avoid the erroneous idea that now the 'enemy' in the East is no more we must invent one in the South in order to justify a continuing system of security.

The phenomena of radical religious movements cause logical concern but it is naive to believe that a policy of repression can put an end to fundamentalism. The strategy of isolating those who espouse violence, and pursuing dialogue with all democratic forces is a good starting point but there will not be stability in the societies directly affected by fundamentalism until a strong civil society emerges, and this will only be possible if there is tolerance, respect for human rights and in particular real emancipation of women.

We are concerned that the economic development programmes of the Declaration have not developed as planned. The implementation of the agreements entered into by the Mediterranean countries and the European Union must be respected. The unblocking of the funds destined for the

Mediterranean Development Assistance (MEDA) programmes is essential. Equally, we must be sensitive to the factors holding back the process, especially the chapter referring to full respect for human rights, creating the mechanisms necessary so that such factors do not affect the execution of the programmes.

The third 'pillar' - that referring to social and human partnership - must be strengthened and promoted. Mobility and exchange among the citizens of the countries around the Mediterranean, as an apprenticeship in multi-culturalism, is a fundamental stepping stone to real, multi-dimensional cooperation which will foster common values, respect and understanding of differences, and put an end to the fear produced by ignorance and lack of contact. This is what is needed to guarantee balance and integration between economic, political and social partnership.

We consider it indispensable to offer new opportunities to our citizens, especially to the young - who, concentrated mainly in the South, make up 60 per cent of the region's population - guaranteeing them access to education and professional training so that they can take a full part in society. Also to offer equal opportunities, an indispensable condition for combatting poverty and social inequality and preventing the advance of fundamentalism. Only by the strengthening of social cohesion can we create a more just and egalitarian context.

The SI expresses its concern at the consequences for society and for public health caused by the traffic in drugs and by the high level of consumption by young people which is affecting their futures. In the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership we appeal to the European Union to make the fight against drugs one of its priorities, working jointly with the countries of the southern shore and furnishing the necessary technical and financial assistance for the substitution of crops.

The SI also expresses its concern at the worsening of the situation of violence and terror in Algeria and manifests its solidarity with the Algerian people who have the right to a life of peace and democracy and to real economic and social development. It considers that a push towards peace is possible if there is a real political will. The opening of a true dialogue is an urgent necessity to set in motion a peace process which

is indispensable for the holding of credible elections for a legislature and for economic recovery.

We express our full support to the member parties in the Maghreb in all those initiatives in favour of the relaunching of the political, economic and social construction of a democratic Maghreb.

We are faced with the historic necessity of taking a step forward in the consolidation of a new relationship between the Mediterranean countries, with the principal aim of correcting the historic inequalities which have kept us apart, so that we can offer a more balanced region to the present and coming generations. We must put the Mediterranean on the Socialist International's map, in a very visible way, making it a priority, and move towards a renewed level of activity which can generate new political proposals.

The role to be played by the European Parliament and the parliaments of the Mediterranean in the follow-up to the Barcelona Conference are very important. In this context, the SI gives its support to the proposal of the European Parliament of 13 October 1995, seeking the creation of a parliamentary forum of the Mediterranean region formed by the parliamentary delegations of the parliaments of the Mediterranean countries and of the European Parliament.

The SI supports the accession of Cyprus to the EU and expresses its concern for the lack of progress and the continuing division of the island and calls for the implementation of the UN Resolutions which demand the withdrawal of foreign troops and elements, the respect of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cyprus and the safeguarding of the basic freedoms of its people.

The SI calls on the United Nations to continue the efforts to reach an agreement based on justice and the respect of international law, and calls on the government of Cyprus and the Turkish community in Cyprus to show goodwill.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The Socialist International champions the peaceful co-existence of all peoples in the Middle East. This requires the observance of the following principles:

- Respect for human rights
- The right of peoples to self-determination, in conformity with

the UN Charter

- The willingness for peaceful conflict-resolution

- The commitment to pluralism in political, ethnic and religious issues.

The SI expresses its concern about the violation of human rights as well as the political, ethnic and religious intolerance in many countries of the Middle East.

Only if the governments of all states in the region respect and actively put into practice the resolutions of the United Nations and the international treaties, can conflicts and crises be reduced.

The struggle against terrorism cannot be credible and successful unless there is respect for pluralism and democracy, freedom of opinion and human rights. Violence may not be answered with violence against innocent lives.

The SI emphasizes the need for a new framework for the establishment of closer relations between all countries in the Middle East and their neighbours in Europe. The Barcelona Declaration between the European Union and its Mediterranean neighbours is a nucleus for such a framework.

Within this framework especially, economic relations and foreign trade between the countries of the Middle East have to increase.

One possibility for a framework providing for increased common security in the Middle East may be a Permanent Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East along the lines of the OSCE.

I The Middle East Peace Process

Momentous events have taken place in the Middle East since the XIXth Congress of the SI in Berlin. Mutual recognition between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993, the subsequent interim agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of September 1995, the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, as well as the process of regional economic cooperation initiated at the Casablanca and Amman Conferences have transformed the reality of this region, making global peace an attainable objective for our generation. This considerable and historic progress is a result of the policy of the Israeli governments of prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, and of our member parties, the Israel Labour Party and MAPAM. It is also the result of the courageous decisions of the PLO and its President Yasser Arafat, as well as

the work of many members of the international community.

The Congress welcomes the admission of the Fatah movement as an observer party to the Socialist International, a decision which opens a new chapter in the relations between the SI and the Palestinian people.

Since the elections in Israel in May 1996, the peace process has entered into a difficult period. The SI reaffirms its strong support for the agreements signed between the Israeli government and the PLO, and for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

On the Israeli-Palestinian track, the most important thing is to honour the agreements achieved between the two sides, to fulfil all the obligations of the interim stage, including the removal of the closure of the Palestinian territories and redeployment from Hebron. Negotiations on the permanent stage of the peace process must start again.

The SI reaffirms its opposition to the continuation of settlement activities in the Palestinian territories.

The SI reaffirms the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood, as well as the need to find solutions to the complex and difficult issues of settlements, Jerusalem and refugees.

Aware of the gravity of the economic situation in the Palestinian territory, and of its negative impact on the Palestinian political scene, the SI calls upon the international community and the donor countries to fulfil their pledges and face their own responsibility. The SI urges member parties, both in government and in opposition, to emphasise the need for urgent and increased economic assistance to the Palestinian territories. In this context, the SI salutes the partnership pact contracted at the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Summit of 1995 as an important opening towards prosperity and cooperation between all the peoples of the area.

It is of crucial importance to renew the talks between Israel on the one hand and Syria and Lebanon on the other. Those talks should be based on the principle of Land for Peace and on UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425, which must lead to peace agreements.

Particular attention must be paid to the issue of terrorism, which has not only exacted a heavy toll in innocent lives, but has also effectively disserved the cause of peace. This terror is supported by some political forces and states in the area. Terror, which is to say violence

against civilians, wherever it may come from, must be fought relentlessly, in an international coordinated effort of all governments.

II The Kurds

a) The Kurds have serious problems in Turkey.

The Socialist International:

firmly supports all national and international demands for rapid progress in the democratisation process in Turkey. Needed in particular are far-reaching constitutional reforms and substantial improvements in the human rights situation;

demands the release of all political prisoners, including the DEP parliamentarians;

appeals to the Turkish authorities to open a constructive dialogue with the country's Kurdish citizens and their representatives who renounce violence;

reaffirms its conviction that a stable and democratic Turkey is of utmost importance for the future development of the region and of Europe, believing that the more democratic Turkey becomes, the more it can be part of democratic European institutions;

supports the Republican People's Party of Turkey in its struggle to ensure equal rights to the members of all ethnic, cultural and religious communities, including the Kurds.

b) The Kurds are oppressed in Iran. The Socialist International protests against the continuing persecution of the Kurdish population in Iran, and specifically of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI). The assassination of PDKI leaders Ghassemloo in 1989, and Sharafkandi in 1992, took place directly after their participation in SI Congresses. Their presence at the SI meetings had underlined the SI's solidarity with the cause of the Iranian Kurds.

Since 1993, systematic ethnic cleansing, artillery attacks and other hostile actions along the Iraqi borders have forced the Kurdish population there to seek safety in Iraqi Kurdistan. Even in this area, however, Iranian troops and aircraft have managed to carry out attacks, despite the existence of the no-fly zone that is supposed to be enforced by the powers which took part in the Gulf War.

The SI protests against these constant violations of the human rights of the Iranian Kurds and their representatives, the PDKI, by the Iranian regime.

We support initiatives to improve the human rights situation in Iran, such as the manifesto of the 134, which demands the lifting of censorship in Iran. Such initiatives are aimed at improving living conditions in that country.

c) The Kurds are oppressed in Iraq. The SI advocates the continuation of international guarantees for the Kurds in northern Iraq, as they were introduced by the imposition and monitoring of the safe-haven zone north of the 36th parallel.

d) The continuous problems and oppression of the Kurdish people do not justify the violent conflict between the Kurdish factions. These conflicts serve as a pretext for violence against them.

The SI appeals to all politically responsible leaders of the Kurds to cooperate in a peaceful and pluralistic way.

The new military conflicts in the area inhabited by the Kurds show that a lasting peace settlement in the Middle East which does not also enshrine in international law the rights of the Kurdish people would be incomplete and would only provide a breeding ground for permanent crises.

The SI calls upon all states involved to contribute to the peaceful solution of the Kurdish problems. The SI condemns all terrorist actions by them committed against the Kurds or by Kurdish organisations.

The SI is deeply concerned about military actions in Kurdish-populated territory of northern Iraq. The SI supports all efforts undertaken by the United Nations to bring about a peaceful solution to this conflict.

III Iran and Iraq

The SI calls upon all states in the Middle East, especially Iraq and Iran, to be peaceful members of the international community, to implement the resolutions of the United Nations, to take part in the fight against international terrorism and to respect the human rights of all their citizens.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

After a long struggle against dictatorships and military regimes, democracy and free elections are now a reality in the vast majority of Latin American countries. The Socialist International and social democratic parties have played a leading role in this victory, a role which has kept

them - individually or in association with other democratic movements in the region - at the forefront of the struggle to establish and develop political democracy, respect for human rights and peace in Latin America.

Latin American democrats have fought for decades against authoritarian regimes, military coups and the economic and social underdevelopment imposed under the rule of military juntas and local oligarchies. The region's social democrats have been fighting to change this state of affairs and promote development and social justice.

Democracy in the region is currently facing new challenges. Control of traditional institutions is now being disputed. The media, once in the hands of a powerful few, are now playing an increasingly influential role in the democratic process. Public opinion, nourished by a greater supply of information, is beginning to give an added dimension to democracy that the political party organisations have yet to absorb. The inability of traditional political structures to meet popular demands for social reform has resulted in adverse reactions to the political parties. This is a clear indication of the need to introduce political reforms that will open the way for more participatory forms of democracy. The problems of democracy are resolved by even greater democracy and true socialism is democracy extended to all areas and levels of society.

Harsh structural adjustment programmes accentuate the disenchantment among the people. The appearance of dangerous symptoms of instability in some countries is a cause for concern and could have negative effects on developments elsewhere in the region. Democracy is the fundamental basis of our strategy and that is why we are fighting to establish democracy in all areas. Our opposition to the economic sanctions against Cuba is based mainly on the need to remove barriers and facilitate a peaceful transition towards multi-party democracy in that country.

In facing the challenge of globalisation and the emergence of a new economic culture, Latin America is at a considerable disadvantage with regard to human resources. The lack of training in this field means that globalisation will give rise to the denationalisation of companies in many Latin American countries. At the same time, the slow rate of economic recovery will aid anti-

democratic elements who wish to undermine the credibility of political parties.

The Socialist International shares the Latin American people's concern over worsening social problems, the result of inadequate economic systems based on primary products and the imposition of unfair international conditions. We recognise the need to develop a strategy based on developing human resources. It is impossible to maintain people's faith in democracy when they are suffering from hunger and poverty. An overwhelming national debt keeps many countries in a state of economic weakness. This debt, combined with increasing poverty, is an obvious symptom of the fact that the production base and the international price regime restrict the economic and social progress of the Latin American nations.

Better social conditions are vital for economic development, which today depends more than ever on the education of the population. For this reason, the social democrats of Latin America reject the neo-liberal monetary strategy, which is limited to controlling macro-economic variables, thus maintaining the low level of local production. This leads to the decline of local economies, perpetuating ignorance, fomenting violence and other social evils, increasing external dependency and threatening the region with ungovernability.

The reduction of the state and the dismantling of welfare programmes in most countries in the region is a severe contradiction in view of the need to improve the educational training of the Latin American people which they need to function in the new culture of information. Programmes for public spending cuts therefore should not include education, since this forms the very foundation for the creation of wealth.

The people of Latin America - who must develop the conditions to be competitive at international level - have recognised the need to improve and strengthen regional alliances. Progress has been made in opening up trade between countries in the region and, in this respect, we confirm the importance of Mercosur, whose dynamism sets a standard for the orientation of commercial policies. Our aim is to create a true community of nations so that regional cooperation is transformed into another means of achieving sustainable progress and development.

Regional cooperation must be

complemented by permanent efforts to improve the technology of the region's productive base. The value of goods is increasingly dependent on the amount of technical know-how involved in producing them.

Technological progress in regional production is vital for the development of democracy and the establishment of social justice in Latin America, a task which is virtually impossible with the semi-feudal production systems still existing in many parts of the region.

The Socialist International, which has worked to improve North-South relations, supports the long-standing efforts of its Latin American members for economic cooperation and for more fair distribution of the surplus generated by the more developed economies. This means making a determined and substantial reduction in military spending in order to release more resources for investing in people.

The trend towards decentralisation - which has arisen as a result of the new culture of information and has even affected the more marginal areas of the region - will require greater civic action and more involvement on the part of citizens at the community level.

In the same way, we believe in the advantage of the greater involvement of women in the political process. Some of our parties have made progress in the struggle to break down the old prejudices that are delaying the valuable inclusion of women in political and economic life.

As social democrats, we reaffirm our support for the re-establishment of the ethical principles of democracy in order to combat the major problems and meet the challenges of Latin America, and especially in combatting the detrimental effects of drugs - in every field and at all levels - on institutions, safety and public health.

Sustainable development is an important issue in Latin America, where major battles are being fought to protect the environment. The deforestation of the Amazon Basin, over-fishing and pollution are the consequences of economic policies based on economic ultra-liberalism, the social irresponsibility of certain companies and the profit motive as the overriding criterion of the economy.

The Socialist International is pleased by the progress made in the peace negotiations in Guatemala and the resumption of the democratic process in Haiti. It is also pleased that the efforts of the Central American

people have resulted in the establishment - for the longest period in their history - of freely elected governments. During the accomplishment of this task, the Socialist International has maintained its active support for the movements committed to the promotion of democracy and social justice throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Half the world's population will soon be living in towns and cities. For urban populations, the municipality is both the place in which they live and where they confront the basic problems of everyday life. But because power is at its most accessible and most easily identifiable at the level of the municipality, this also makes it the ideal place to promote contact between citizens and their elected representatives.

In countries throughout the world, there is an increasing preference for socialist-run local authorities. In many countries, the strength of the socialist movement is largely based on well-established local organisations. But this strength is also a major responsibility and it is essential that elected representatives prove they are worthy of the trust placed in them.

In response to our changing societies, modern socialism must be based on a simpler and more 'horizontal' system of organisation and concern itself with the problems of everyday urban life. Because it is strongly committed to freedom, peace, progress and development beneficial to all, the Socialist International is determined to approach the 21st century with a heightened awareness of the problems faced by ordinary citizens.

To this end, the SI organised a major conference on the theme of 'The Urban Face of Socialism', held in Bologna, Italy, on 28-29 January 1995. The two-day conference was attended by 300 mayors and other delegates from 53 countries who, after much debate, adopted the 21-point Bologna Declaration. They also agreed to pursue the issue and to take positive steps to humanise the urban environment. One such initiative was the launching in Istanbul, on 5 June 1996, of the SI Committee on Local Authorities, within the context of HABITAT II, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

The Bologna Declaration considers urban problems within the general context of the momentous changes

that are taking place worldwide: the world economy, the age of information, the dissolution of political and military blocs, the strengthening of international institutions. Unfortunately, all this has not necessarily resulted in the creation of more equitable economic and social balances between the regions or between the inhabitants within regions. On the contrary, the gulf continues to widen between those who have prospered and those left behind by these changes.

At the same time, local and regional authorities are becoming much stronger, as economic entities and in terms of their collective identity and political involvement. But towns and cities also provide the most visible manifestation of the contradictions within our societies: the contradiction between development and protection of the environment, between waste and poverty, between the concept of freedom and the reality of exclusion.

Towns and cities have the potential for developing democracy at local level, for involving citizens in the management of public affairs and strengthening an integrated and collective identity. This aspect of democracy and citizenship formed the subject of a special report at the Committee meeting in Istanbul.

The Socialist International demands that local authorities worldwide be democratically elected by the people and not appointed by central governments.

The men and women living in the world's towns and cities have and must have equal political and social rights. The true affirmation of citizenship is legal equality regardless of nationality or ethnic origin, the right of all inhabitants and their families to participate in the political life of the local community, and equal access - in real terms and for all citizens - to the basic services offered by the town or city in which they live.

Towns and cities are ideally suited to democratic innovation, since this is where the direct relationship between electors and representatives has the greatest potential, where public administration is much more accessible and where direct consultation is more easily achieved.

Of course, it is the responsibility of individual states to introduce policies that ensure social cohesion and the protection of the rights and freedoms of the population. But the local authorities must be given the powers and financial resources necessary to introduce practical policies that are beneficial to their

citizens, for example, in the fields of health, education, environment, safety, housing, and public transport and to combat poverty.

It is essential to promote solidarity between rich and poor towns and cities. It is also fundamentally important to design and promote models for development that encourage a more sparing use of resources and mutually supportive relations between rich and poor towns and cities.

It is unfortunately all too obvious that unemployment, social marginalisation and the informal economy create an obstacle to the rights of citizenship. While national and regional governments are responsible for promoting economic development, for bridging the gap between the official and unofficial economies and for creating greater job opportunities, local authorities can usefully intervene in the field of job-creation by introducing active policies in such fields as local services, urban ecology, the maintenance of infrastructures and equipment, public works policies, etc.

During the HABITAT II Conference, the SI clearly expressed its support for the right of every individual to reasonable accommodation.

The housing problem is particularly relevant since, along with health, employment and family structure, it is central to the preoccupations of urban populations. It is also of direct concern to the public authorities within the context of their development and planning policies. Housing plays a crucial role in the creation of a good-quality environment, in the attractiveness and therefore the image presented by a particular town or city.

The Socialist International welcomes the holding of the World Assembly on Cities and Local Authorities in Istanbul, as well as the participation of local authorities in the HABITAT II Conference. These initiatives open the way for new courses of action at the international level that recognise urban populations and local authorities as part of the system of the United Nations and other international organisations.

The Socialist International intends to promote the dialogue between local and regional socialist representatives, and their federations, in the context of international events.

Following the Bologna Conference, the Socialist International will also be periodically organising major conferences for local and regional socialist representatives.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND OUR INTERNATIONAL

This Congress is meeting in New York in recognition of the crucial role of the United Nations in today's world. Four years ago the Socialist International held its Congress in a newly reunited Berlin, a symbol of freedom for people around the world. Today, the United Nations is not only a symbol of the global yearning for peace, it is the principal institution for promoting international cooperation at a time when it is needed most. Our International is pleased and grateful for the opportunity to hold its Congress at UN headquarters and we stand ready to continue supporting and strengthening the United Nations in the spirit of a common effort to secure a better world for all.

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