

SI Council meets in Lisbon...

The Council of the Socialist International meets in Lisbon on 29-30 June hosted by the Socialist Party of Portugal on the fiftieth anniversary of the Frankfurt Congress which established the International in its modern forms.

After an opening speech by Prime Minister António Guterres, General Secretary of the Party and President of the SI, delegates will start on an agenda which includes the theme Building on our Achievements, Furthering our Ideals Carrying our Vision

forward – Social Democracy in the World Today.

Other items for discussion include the Kyoto Protocol, initiatives for peace in the Middle East and Africa and reform of the World Trade Organisation.

...and Maputo



Latifa Perry

"The way forward for Africa"

The Council of the Socialist International met in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique on 10-11 November 2000, hosted by Frelimo and its leader President Joaquim Chissano. The main theme of the gathering was, "The way forward for Africa: a worldwide commitment for development, peace and democracy" and consideration was given to the issues of ending hostilities in Africa, the International's role in promoting democratic regimes and an agenda to combat the economic marginalisation of the continent.

In his inaugural address to the second SI Council meeting held in Southern Africa President Chissano emphasised that his country was repairing the massive destruction caused by the

rains, floods and cyclones which had hit it earlier in the year and thanked the foreign donors who had contributed to the effort of reconstruction. Despite the fact that the continent had been divided, exploited and colonised, its civilisations destroyed, its natural wealth plundered and its youth, its most important resource, taken off into slavery, Africa, he said, was a continent which had to be looked at in a spirit of solidarity and not of pity.

The weight of the past was still felt in the fact that almost half of all Africans live below the poverty line, the majority of Africans are illiterate, life expectancy short and illnesses such as Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS common. Africans still tended to be victims rather than the beneficiaries of globalisation.

On the question of foreign debt he pointed out that, despite a sharp reduction in foreign debt, Mozambique was still spending US\$100 million a year on debt servicing. This sum represented 22 per cent of the state budget and more than was being spent on education, health, police and the justice system combined.

Referring to the difficulties of African agriculture and the subsidisation of European farmers he called for the International to raise its voice in favour of a fairer deal for the continent.

He went on to outline the strategies needed to be adopted to improve Africa's prospects - peace and stability, including macro-economic stability; the strengthening of democracy; the adoption of policies for rapid economic growth; the best use of human resources; the training of

personnel and a halt to the brain drain; good government, transparency and a fight against corruption; an offensive against diseases and the acquisition of the science and technology which would allow Africa to industrialise in a competitive manner. The target must be, he said an annual economic growth rate of 7 per cent.

In Mozambique's case, he reported, the economic growth rate over the previous five years had been on average 8 per cent a year and on occasion touched 14 per cent. Life expectancy had risen from 41.7 to 43.5 years from 1994 to date, adult literacy had gone from 39.5 to 40 per cent, enrolment in school went from 25 to 45 per cent of children and the gross national product per capita rose from 62 to 95.2 US dollars.

He paid tribute to the government of Angola in its fight against the Unita rebellion and called for greater efforts for peace in Congo and the Great Lakes region.

The SI, he concluded, had the opportunity to play a historic role in the task of building a better world. "We are," he said, "partners in an ideal in which we all must be the winners."

Replying to the host's welcome António Guterres, president of the SI and prime minister of Portugal, said the gathering in Mozambique gave the International a great opportunity of sending a message worldwide that we were not prepared to put up with a situation in which the benefits accruing in a globalised world meant that Africa was pushed to the margin. As it was organised today the world was not giving Africa a fair chance of

development. Consequently the SI calls for the cancellation of the international debt of the poorest countries. He went on to criticise as hypocritical the bureaucratic obstacles which prevented the more developed countries writing off poorer countries' debt.

The solution to African problems cannot be achieved if economic globalisation is not regulated and the tendency towards the globalisation of poverty is not reversed. In that context he said that the International was set on strengthening the United Nations and on making it more democratic including the establishment of a standing military force at the service of the Security Council.

He paid tribute to the electoral victory won by Laurent Gbagbo in Côte d'Ivoire mentioning, too, the defeat of the Mexican member party PRI after many decades in power as a proof of its commitment to democratic values. "Some defeats are victories", he commented. He saluted the accession to the presidency of Hipólito Mejía in the Dominican Republic and the award of a Nobel Peace Prize to Kim Dae-Jung in Korea.

He thanked Felipe González, absent for health reasons, for his work on the Global Progress Commission.

In his contribution Abderrahman Youssoufi, prime minister of Morocco, leader of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, USFP, and a vice-president of the SI, took up the theme of the worrying social conditions of a continent which included in Sub-Saharan Africa 33 of the

50 poorest countries, according to OECD calculations, and where 6 million people were refugees, two-thirds of the world total, according to UN High Commission for Refugees.

At the same time he emphasised, as Chissano had already set out, a refusal to sink into Afro-pessimism. What was needed was development, peace and democracy, none of which could be dissociated from the other two.

While the image of an Africa adrift and excluded from the world economy was not entirely false, the continent could not be reduced to wars, pandemics, coups d'état and underdevelopment. "Behind the appearances was an Africa which lived and moved, full of vitality and dynamism".

Ousmane Tanor Dieng, first secretary of the Socialist Party of Senegal and co-chair of the SI Africa Committee said that the peace, democracy and development of Africa would be prejudiced if the present pattern of globalisation continued and the gains achieved in many fields could be reversed.

He warned of a recrudescence of ugly nationalisms and called on African countries to put into effect continent-wide measures to protect democracy and safeguard human rights. He declared that the continent could not justifiably expect foreign countries to tackle the problems of African society while Africans themselves were not taking a lead in doing so.

Elio di Rupo, leader of the Belgian Socialist Party, SP,

declared that globalisation was not an end in itself but rather a tool for progress.

Turning to the Congo, he emphasised that Belgium was still closely linked to the country and closely observed events in it which were having their impact throughout Central Africa and perhaps beyond. The Congolese knew that the source of their troubles was the wealth of the country which was used for the benefit of the few. Many in civil society were dismayed at recent developments. He suggested the International could start what he called a new form of diplomacy by helping to get opinion-formers in Congo to meet influential personalities committed to peace and thus be encouraged to seek reasonable and peaceful solutions to Congolese problems.

John Fru Ndi leader of the Social Democratic Front, SDF, of Cameroon, said that the international community looked helpless before the dictators who were helping to make lives of Africans miserable in a continent which had every sort of natural resource.

He criticised lenders who were urging countries to take on more loans in order to pay off old loans when, in an atmosphere of embezzlement, there was little evidence of the benefits which old loans had brought. He urged the international community to act against bad government before there was more bloodshed in Africa.

Mohammed Issoufou of Niger said that one-party non-democratic regimes were opposed to development. Democracy was as necessary to people as bread was. In international relations the

progress of globalisation was a force for liberalism and not for socialism or social democracy and favoured the forces of international capital, the private sector and the payment of dividends. Sadly it went counter to the interests of the state. It was the state after all which had to rescue the US from the effects of the depression and the Continent of Europe after the Second World War.

He criticised the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for deepening Africa's economic crises.

Mogens Lykkesøft of the Danish Social Democratic Party and the country's finance minister for the previous eight years pointed out that Africa was in a better economic position than it had been a decade previously and Denmark would help the continent. "I regret", he commented, "that we are without competition in the whole world when it comes to the share of GDP allocated for development assistance to the third world."

He said that steps had to be taken to avoid the world suffering a digital divide - a new invisible iron curtain - between those who take part in the IT revolution and those who remain stuck in old world economics. "This demands a generation of skillful Africans making life-long education one of Africa's future challenges", he commented. He ended by calling for greater efforts, particularly within UNESCO to abolish capital punishment.

Lisa Diogo, the Mozambican finance minister, said that Mozambique had set as its target the reduction of the percentage of the population in extreme poverty from 70

per cent today to 50 per cent over a ten-year period. She recalled that in the 1980s the country's development had been held back by foreign forces engaged in a war of destabilisation of Mozambique. The government was now setting out the best ways of collaborating with the private sector, non-governmental organisations and friendly foreign governments in the reduction of poverty particularly among the rural population and those regions of the country which had not benefitted properly from the progress Mozambique had made.

Marina d'Almeida Massoubodji, minister of health, social protection and women's affairs of Benin said that her country had no gold, diamonds or petroleum and was thus at peace. In the previous ten years Benin had taken giant steps forward. African women did not want a share of power of the sort which existed at the moment with its overtones of domination. They wanted a better sort.

Turning to the question of AIDS, she said it was more and more a woman's disease. In 1985 five men suffered from it for every two women, in 1990 it was five men for every five women whereas in 2000 for every two men with AIDS there were eight women suffering from it.

In her intervention Ann Linde, international secretary of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP, declared "We do not forget the decisive contribution Mozambicans and other peoples colonised by Portugal have made to Europe. Your struggle here in Africa led to the fall of dictatorship of the

right and military rule in our continent of Europe". Aziz Pahad of the African National Congress of South Africa remarked how the International had advanced not just in Europe but also in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Referring to the uneven benefits from globalisation he wondered how it could be accepted the three richest billionaires in the world had more assets than the least developed countries with their 600 million people or that in 1997 there were more than 50 developing countries whose banking system had fewer assets than the credit union of the IMF and the World Bank. Such facts as these, he said, brought socialists together to challenge the new world order.

Numerous speakers congratulated Felipe Gonzalez, a vice-president of the SI and former prime minister of Spain for the work he and his collaborators had put into the

Report on Global Progress which the International had commissioned him to produce. In his absence the Report was adopted.

Presenting his Report the SI Secretary-General Luis Ayala commented, "We gather in Africa at a time when the challenges faced by this continent - political, economic, social and environmental - have never been greater. But rather than yield to the pessimism expressed in some quarters about the continent's future, we remain determined to find solutions, inspired by having already overcome, through sustained commitment, obstacles once thought by many to be insurmountable. The peaceful and democratic victory over apartheid in South Africa, for example, remains an extraordinary achievement and a testament to global solidarity that we were proud to acclaim at the last SI Council held in Africa, in

Cape Town in 1995."

In a message to the Council Mikhail Gorbachev, the former leader of the USSR, now chair of the Russian United Social Democratic Party, said that globalisation does not solve the new problems and challenges that mankind faces on the threshold of the new millennium, adding, "It is social democrats who can bridge the gap which exist between policy and life... We hope that the return of Russian social democrats to the international social democratic movement will contribute to its strengthening and development."

In his message to the Council Nobel Peace Prize Winner President Kim Dae-Jung of South Korea emphasised the relaxation of tensions between North and South Korea after the end of the Cold War. He pledged support for further peace efforts. ♦

Declarations and Resolutions

THE WAY FORWARD FOR AFRICA – THE SPIRIT OF MAPUTO

The Council of the Socialist International meeting in Maputo on 10-11 November 2000, under the main theme 'The Way Forward for Africa: a worldwide commitment for development, peace and democracy', declares, with regard to the future of the continent, its refusal to succumb to Afro-pessimism, even as it is aware that much hard work

remains ahead if its hopes and those of Africa are to be realised.

The Socialist International refuses to succumb to Afro-pessimism because:

- ♦ the African people remain determined to improve their lives and those of their children and future generations, despite the enormous odds they face. The inventiveness, tenacity and cooperation demonstrated by people in everyday life - for example, by the women who are the driving force of informal economies in country after country, or by the way the people

of Mozambique have persevered in building their country in the wake of disastrous floods - show that even in the worst of conditions the citizens of this continent are among the most dynamic and resourceful anywhere;

- ♦ the Socialist International itself becomes stronger and more inspired when the challenges we face are the most difficult. We did not waver during the most difficult times in the battle against apartheid in South Africa, we were resolute throughout the struggle for democracy in Eastern Europe

and today, despite unfavourable developments in the Middle East, we have stepped up our efforts towards achieving peace, and

◆ we see with great clarity and fully recognise the enormous challenges Africa faces, a necessary prerequisite for responding effectively, and because, as a global movement rooted in every region of the world and spanning North and South, we are well positioned to help advance Africa's future. Moreover, Africa is asking not for commiseration, but solidarity, the very pillar of social democracy.

As a continent, Africa has benefited the least from globalisation and has suffered the most from the injustice of this process and, in an increasingly unequal world, particularly in terms of mounting poverty, the spread of devastating diseases such as AIDS, the loss of human resources through the so-called brain drain, and the negative impact of the weight of the external debt. All of these elements then contribute to the perpetuation of political violence and ethnic conflict, which, in turn, stand further in the way of economic and social progress.

To reverse this negative trend requires a sustained worldwide commitment, preceded by sustained efforts at the local, national and regional levels, for democracy, peace and development in Africa. These objectives must also be pursued simultaneously because the preservation of each one depends on the existence and sustainability of the other two. The commitment to achieving them, not only in Africa but everywhere, is what binds us

together in our International and is why more people each day are sharing our values.

Our commitment to democracy in Africa

The Socialist International support free and fair elections and is heartened by the spirit in which the people of the region go to the polls when they have the opportunity, but in far too many countries that right continues to be denied. The SI is also encouraged by the determination with which people defend their right to vote, even in the face of violent repression. In this sense, it notes with great satisfaction the recent victory in the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire of Comrade Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Popular Front, FPI.

The Socialist International, in view of the continuation of electoral fraud in certain countries and authoritarian practices in others, calls upon all its member parties, particularly those in government, as well as all other democratic forces in the world, to act with even greater urgency and firmness when democratic rights are denied. And it supports all efforts for orderly democratic change in Zimbabwe in the face of state-inspired political violence and intimidation.

The Socialist International also condemns the parody of a trial to which Alpha Condé, of the Assembly of the Peoples of Guinea (RPG), was subjected and demands his freedom. It condemns as well the decision of the government of Mauritania to dissolve the Union of Democratic Forces (UFD) and

demands that this party's rights be reinstated.

The existing threats to democracy require careful monitoring not only of the vote, but also of electoral campaigns, vote counting procedures and other essential elements of the electoral process, including the existence of fully independent and neutral electoral authorities to conduct it. Whenever possible, the Socialist International will organise more election monitoring missions in Africa, because initiatives such as those have already proven to be effective in supporting the democratic process, the full and equal participation of all citizens including women and youth, the equal access to the media and the practice of democracy within political parties.

It calls on the Socialist International to offer technical support and assistance to member parties in Africa in order to work with them in developing their party structures in the context of consolidating their democratic institutions.

The commitment of the Socialist International to democracy includes:

◆ support for a rule of law which is fair and just and to which governments and citizens are held equally accountable. Democracy is not only about freely choosing who will rule, but also ensuring good governance, transparency, respect for human rights and the security of all citizens once those elected have taken office;

◆ increased vigilance and heightened efforts by our member parties, through the

media and all other available channels, to ensure that corruption, the violations of human rights and other unlawful acts are comprehensively denounced and subjected to international sanction, both by governments and competent regional and international bodies, and

◆ a firm belief in the universality of democracy, and the rejection of the idea that there could be some differing forms of democracy, specific to a particular region of the world, which are not based on or do not fully conform to universal democratic principles, for example, the acceptance of the alternation of power through free, just and fair electoral competition.

Our commitment to peace in Africa

The Socialist International holds a firm belief that support and acceptance of dialogue is fundamental to the resolution of any form of violent conflict. Moreover, it recognises that it is often extremely difficult to bring the two sides closer together in order to begin a dialogue, being also difficult to maintain the confidence necessary to sustain it.

It therefore calls for greater dialogue and heightened efforts on the part of international bodies - at both regional and global level, and particularly by the United Nations - in those conflicts that have proved so difficult to resolve. The Socialist International will step up its efforts and coordinate the actions of its members and of other democratic forces to ensure that

the momentum towards peace in the various conflictive areas is maintained.

With regard to the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo:

◆ the Socialist International reiterates its strong and urgent call for the comprehensive implementation of the Lusaka Agreements, which provide for the holding of talks among the Congolese, the bringing into force of a ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign forces, the deployment of a UN military force, a new constitution and the holding of elections, and

◆ the Socialist International believes that it is necessary to give more attention to the political and social forces who work towards peace and democracy in this country.

With regard to Sierra Leone:

◆ it welcomes the agreement signed recently in Abuja, to bring a halt to the conflict in Sierra Leone and to support the democratically elected government.

With regard to Angola:

◆ the Socialist International calls for greater efforts by the UN Sanctions Committee to ensure the implementation of the United Nations Resolutions on Angola and the pursuing and sanctioning of any violations.

With regard to Mauritius:

◆ the Socialist International supports the efforts of the Mauritian government for the

immediate return of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius.

With regard to the Comoros:

◆ the Socialist International supports all efforts for the resolution of the crisis in this country.

With regard to the United Nations:

The Socialist International believes in the reform of the organisation in ways that will make it more democratic, give it more authority to intervene and also make it more effective through the creation of a permanent, multi-national peace-keeping force.

The Socialist International also further affirms the importance of deeper regional and sub-regional integration in the approach to conflict resolution. Earlier and more effective responses to problems at the regional and sub-regional levels can help to keep conflicts from spreading. It therefore advocates greater and more sustained efforts among its members to strengthen regional institutions on the continent, as well as their interaction with regional bodies elsewhere, so that initial intervention in areas of conflict can be carried out in a more concerted way.

Our commitment to economic development in Africa

The Socialist International supports the integration of Africa into the global economy in ways which are fair, equitable and effective, and which will enhance and increase the opportunities for all African people to benefit.

Following a rich and rewarding debate, the following conclusions were drawn with regard to

The first theme: **Development**

This implies a diversification of the economies of the African continent, which cannot continue only as mere providers of raw materials, risking their continuing marginalisation in the global economy.

The Socialist International therefore calls for a greater recognition of and a more substantial response to the situation of Africa. Two of our four recently initiated campaigns are concretely related to this effort. First, we are working to make the fight against poverty in Africa an urgent priority.

This is being done in a number of ways:

- ◆ by our member parties individually or in the framework of co-operation;
- ◆ using to the full the media and other channels to influence international bodies;
- ◆ co-ordinating the campaign with non-governmental organisations in Africa and around the world, and
- ◆ highlighting energetic governmental and popular efforts to alleviate poverty. Everything should be done to avoid the new form of exclusion arising from the risks of digital divide, mainly by promoting considerable investment in people.

The Socialist International initiated a second campaign directly related to Africa which calls for the cancelling of the debt of the poorest countries, providing them with unrestricted market access. In Africa, the debt

at the expense of the individual as an autonomous agent can confound a democratic process founded on the principle of liberty and equality between men and women as citizens

represents nearly 60 percent of gross national product and clearly cannot be repaid, while debt servicing is year by year causing greater suffering.

The Socialist International affirms that ending the debt burden in Africa would free funds to finance basic social services, particularly education and health. These would be used as direct investments in human resources, providing the basis of empowerment so that Africans can fulfil their potential and contribute fully to the development of the continent. Consequently, the Socialist International calls for an end to protectionist policies in developed countries that also have hindered Africa's integration into the world economy. Conditionality in structural reform programmes should take into consideration the economic and social conditions of each country and not merely financial criteria.

The Socialist International recognises, with regard to health, that even debt relief will not be enough to face effectively the spread of deadly diseases, particularly AIDS which is now taking an ever greater toll of women and children. The drugs to lessen the impact of AIDS exist but are available only at a cost beyond the reach of most Africans, creating a situation described as pharmaceutical apartheid, a situation which needs to be resolved through constructive dialogue to include discussion on intellectual property rights.

Finally, the Socialist International calls for a better structured world with a global economy that

represents a major safeguard against the current corrupt practice of using a change of power as a means of taking possession of the State to exclusive ends which leads to the exclusion of others and results in serious political instability.

enhances the prospects for Africans and all the world's citizens, in which development can be shaped by people for people, rather than simply by markets on behalf of capital. There is a need for a global social consensus that ensures that priority status is given to specific groups at risk – women, children and older people – as well as regions that also are threatened such as Africa. This is an enormous and long-term challenge, but the Socialist International is a family and whenever anyone in our family is in pain, we come together in solidarity to ease their suffering.

RESOLUTION ON ANGOLA Original: English

The Socialist International Council meeting in Maputo, salutes the Angolan people, as well as the Angolan government, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of its independence.

The Council expresses its satisfaction for the general amnesty announced by President José Eduardo dos Santos on this occasion, as a positive measure towards general reconciliation for all Angolans.

The Council appeals to all Angolan citizens to work towards full integration in the constitutional and democratic institutions of the country, as well as their participation in the effort of material reconstruction and development.

RESOLUTION ON THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Original: Spanish

The Council of the Socialist International, meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, on 10-11 November 2000, congratulates the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and President Hipólito Mejía, for the splendid victory in the first round of elections last 16 May, vindicating the struggle for freedom, democracy and social justice of the Dominican people and of José Francisco Peña Gómez.

The Council salutes the victory of our member party, the PRD, and President Hipólito Mejía,

wishing them success in the difficult task ahead of the new government with the fiscal situation it has inherited, the servicing of the debt and the cost of petrol.

RESOLUTION ON WESTERN SAHARA

Original: English

With regard to Western Sahara, the Socialist International expresses its deep concern at the constant postponement of the

referendum on self-determination and reaffirms its resolution adopted by the Council in Brussels in April 2000, calling on Morocco and Polisario to cooperate fully with the United Nations and its special envoy James Baker.

The SI calls on Morocco and Polisario to open a political dialogue beyond the eventual agreements that could be made in present negotiations. In this context, the SI remains supportive of all United Nations initiatives. ♦