



ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION - DASHNAKTSUTYUN

(ARMENIAN SOCIALIST PARTY)

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ARF-D Participates at the Socialist International Council's Meeting in Luanda

November 29, 2015

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The [Socialist International](#) held its second Council meeting of 2015 on 27-28 November in Luanda, hosted by MPLA, its member party in Angola. Delegates converged in Angola's capital representing SI member parties and organisations from across Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. The one-and-a-half-day meeting addressed the main themes of "Working for global stability, peace and security in times of crisis", "Struggling for equality and common progress in an interdependent world", and "COP21 – Our goal for a universal binding agreement, common commitments, differentiated demands and precise objectives".

The meeting opened with a minute of silence, in memory of all those who had recently lost their lives in acts of terror around the world. This support and solidarity was also reflected in a [declaration](#) later adopted outlining the SI position with regard to the terrorist threat.

Another major [declaration](#) was addressed at the COP21 conference in Paris, due to open just two days after the Council. In it were set out the aims and priorities of the International for a universal binding agreement, with common commitments, differentiated demands and precise

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The meeting was opened by Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the SI, who highlighted that there was no issue of global significance that was not part of the agenda of the International. The Council meeting was a manifestation of the commitment of the SI to find responses to global challenges, to secure peace, democracy, equality and human rights and to tackle terrorism and climate change.

George Papandreou, SI President, in his opening address, also paid tribute to the people of Angola on the fortieth anniversary of their country's independence. He reflected on the interdependence of humanity's problems, with the refugee crisis linked to terrorism, insecurity and inequality. He underlined that military action against terrorists could only be effective in tandem with a plan for peaceful transition.

Delegates were warmly welcomed to Angola by Julião Mateus Paulo, MPLA secretary general and a vice-president of the SI. He recalled the 500 years of colonial history that had preceded independence in Angola, and the long civil war that followed, and outlined the path taken by the government for development since 2002.

The main themes on the agenda were: "Working for global stability, peace and security in times of crisis", "Struggling for equality and common progress in an interdependent world", and "COP21 – Our goal for a universal binding agreement, common commitments, differentiated demands and precise objectives".

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Mario Nalpatian on the floor of the Luanda SI Council meeting

President Mario Nalpatian (ARF-D) was one of the speakers to elaborate on global stability, peace and security. It is worth mentioning that Armenia has a special place in the SI since ARF-D is the only organization from the region of South Caucasus and the first from the CIS region with a SI full membership status.

The latest meeting of the [SI Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea was convened in Yerevan](#), in June 2015.

Manuel Augusto, secretary of state for international relations of the government of Angola, outlined the engagement of the country in the international sphere in favour of peace processes, in particular in Africa. During the discussions, delegates representing countries recently touched by terrorism spoke with great dignity and solemnity.

In addition to the detailed declaration of the Council on this theme, a separate [declaration](#) on the refugee crisis was adopted, which acknowledges the link between conflict and terrorism and the flows of migrants seen across the world today. The declaration urges the international community and European Union to fulfill their ethical responsibility faced with almost unprecedented refugee flows.

On the theme of equality, a broad range of views was heard advocating equality in many forms – both between the richest and poorest within societies, between developed and developing countries, and between

different genders and social groups. The meeting underlined the important work that will be undertaken by the SI Commission on Equality, which will meet during 2016 to define approaches and priorities of the social-democratic movement in the struggle to eliminate inequality in the global economy.

The timing of the Council just days before the opening of the COP21 Summit in Paris gave an opportunity to address a strong message for an outcome to the climate negotiations built on social democratic ideals and the move towards a sustainable world society. Fátima Jardim, environment minister of Angola, gave an introduction to the debate, underlining the commitment of her country to a positive result at the summit and the steps it was taking in regard to its own emissions reductions. The secretary general reported that the SI would have a presence at the Paris Summit.

The Council gave a particularly warm welcome to the recently released political prisoner Mikalai Statkevich, who was incarcerated in Belarus for four years and eight months on false charges, following the fraudulent presidential election of 2010. He recounted the circumstances of his arrest and imprisonment to the Council and thanked the Socialist International for its sustained efforts to secure his release from prison.

The Council adopted a [declaration](#) marking the historical struggle and civil war in Angola, and the progress made towards peace and reconciliation since it was brought to an end. A [statement](#) was also adopted in relation to the upcoming legislative elections in Venezuela.

The Council heard a report of the meeting of the SI Ethics Committee and approved the upgrading to full membership of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party (BSDP), Egyptian Social Democratic Party (ESDP), Nationwide Social Democratic Party (OSDP, Kazakhstan), Progressive Democratic Party (PDP, Paraguay) and A New Era (UNT, Venezuela). The new member parties admitted to the organisation were the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP, Iran), as a full member, and the Social Democratic Party (TDP, Cyprus) and Democratic Union Party (PYD, Syria) as consultative members. The Arab Social Democratic Forum

became an associated organisation of the Socialist International.

At the closing of the meeting, the secretary general thanked the host party for their hospitality and closed the meeting by stating that in a time of paradox and contradictions, politics must be inclusive. There was no way to solve problems by hiding behind walls, and it was the task of all those present to continue to work together for a better world.

The Socialist International is the worldwide organization of social democratic, socialist and labor parties. It currently brings together 170 political parties and organizations from almost 140 countries.

In 2003, ARF-D was the first one among CIS political parties, to hold a SI full membership status.

ARF-D Bureau member, Mario Nalpatian serves as SI Vice-President while ARF-D Bureau member Armen Rustamyan is Co-Chairman of the Committee for the CIS, the Caucasus and the Black Sea. ARF-D is also a member of the Statutory Committee on Finance and Administration of the SI.

The ARF-D Women's Group is a full member of the SIW (Socialist International Women). The youth organization of the ARF-D, the Armenian Youth Federation, is a full member of the IUSY (International Union of Socialist Youth).

Below is the text of the Declaration on Climate Change and COP 21, as adopted by the Luanda SI Council meeting.

Declaration on climate change and COP 21

Following discussions on climate change and the COP21 Summit at the Council meeting of the Socialist International in Luanda, delegates recognised the growing acknowledgement of climate change as the single greatest threat to the future of humanity, and the need for urgent and meaningful action from all the nations of the world. The Paris Summit may well be the last opportunity to avert a global catastrophe and the Council outlined the vision of the Socialist International for a universal binding agreement, common commitments, differentiated demands and precise objectives, calling for:

1. More ambitious emissions targets to restrict global temperature rise to 2°C;
2. An outcome centred on climate justice;
3. Financing for the Green Climate Fund to 2020 and beyond;
4. Extra assistance for adaptation measures in countries already suffering the effects of climate change;
5. An end to fossil fuel subsidies;
6. Concerted action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation;
7. Initiatives in favour of more efficient agriculture and responsible consumption;
8. The introduction of a global carbon tax;
9. A climate agreement in harmony with the Global Goals;
10. Robust measurement, reporting and verification of progress towards emissions reduction targets;
11. The Socialist International, its member parties and Council delegates to take concrete actions to reduce their own environmental impact;
12. Representatives of SI member parties to take the lead in Paris.

1. Current commitments are not enough

The UN has received emissions targets in the form of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) from countries responsible for more than 90 per cent of global emissions, which indicates a willingness from the majority of nations and governments to work towards a global agreement in Paris. However, the pledges made are only enough to limit the global rise in temperature to 2.7° to 3°C, a level far in excess of the goal of 2°C set out in the Copenhagen agreement. Ambition needs to be raised, and any agreement in Paris needs at a minimum to include mechanisms for the upward revision of emissions targets if we are to have any chance of meeting the 2°C target for global temperature rise. This means the establishment of a five-yearly cycle under which countries have an obligation to ratchet up their commitments, making progressively tighter emissions reductions. Countries need to supplement their commitments by developing and adopting Deep Decarbonization Pathways (DDP) in order to guarantee a zero carbon future for the

planet.

2. Climate justice and common but differentiated responsibilities

The principle of climate justice originates within our movement and has always been at the heart of our climate policy. The SI continues to support the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in recognition of the duty of developed countries to do more and go further in their commitments as a result of their historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions.

3. Financing and the Green Climate Fund

One potential obstacle to ambitious targets is the issue of finance. The Green Climate Fund (GCF), which sets aside finances for climate change mitigation and adaptation, is therefore a crucial plank of any climate agreement. Though important steps have been taken to secure initial funding for the GCF, the total pledged is nowhere near enough and the agreements reached in Lima at COP20 do not set out a clear time frame for the scaling up of funds. The gap between the amount currently pledged and the \$100 billion per year promised after 2020 needs to be bridged. The lack of a clear pathway has been interpreted by some developing country partners as a sign of a lack of commitment to the GCF by Annex I parties. Without significant progress, the negotiations in Paris will take place in an atmosphere of mistrust from those countries that will be depending on the fund in the years to come. An agreement on where the funding will come from post-2020 is therefore indispensable for an agreement with the necessary level of ambition.

4. Extra help for adaptation where it is already needed

It is important to recognise that the effects of climate change are already being felt in many countries, and disproportionately so in the world's least developed economies. It is therefore necessary to ensure that adequate funding is given not only to climate mitigation, but also adaptation. The regrettable need to invest in costly measures to mitigate against the effects of climate change in vulnerable areas should serve as a wake-up call that failure to act now, while there remains a chance to avert extreme climate change, will prove much more costly in the long-term.

5. End fossil fuel subsidies

If goals to reduce carbon emissions are to be met, it is imperative that our dependence on fossil fuels is ended. For this to be achieved, it will be necessary to begin the process of systematically abolishing all fossil fuel subsidies, which encourage over consumption of energy and are a great obstacle to progress. This needs to be a carefully managed process, implemented in such a way as not to harm development. The objective should be to replace fossil fuel subsidies with clean energy subsidies, through investments in the green economy that will provide long-term benefits both economically and environmentally.

6. Reduce emissions from forestry (REDD+)

The agreement reached at COP21 must bring about reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors, including deforestation and forest degradation, which account for nearly 20 per cent of the global total. We reiterate our support for the REDD+ mechanism, which aims to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, and offer incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands through investment in low-carbon paths to achieve more sustainable development. REDD+ further includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

7. Reduce emissions from agriculture

Reducing emissions from agriculture has a significant environmental benefit, as the sector is directly responsible for more than 10 per cent of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions reduction measures can also improve efficiency, which reduces costs and saves money. Work also needs to be done on public awareness of the importance of emissions from the production of the food we eat, in order that consumers are able to make better and more environmentally sound choices.

8. A global carbon tax

A global tax on carbon would encourage governments, businesses and citizens to reduce their reliance on carbon emitting resources. The proceeds of such a tax could be used to enormous benefit, for reducing

the cost of energy from alternative sources, financing climate change mitigation and adaptation measure and promoting sustainable development as a route to ending poverty. Creating a relationship between the carbon cost of the food we eat and its monetary cost would also be an effective tool to encourage the switch to a more environmentally sustainable diet.

9. An outcome that reflects the Global Goals

Our vision of a sustainable future equally includes the pursuit of the Global Goals, which were agreed at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September. Achievement of goals on eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, achieving gender equality and building a more secure world go hand in hand with a willingness to tackle climate change, which can exacerbate many of the difficulties faced in the developing world.

10. Measurement, reporting and verification

Previous attempts to reach an agreement have met difficulties in part because of a lack of confidence that countries are sincere in their commitments to reduce emissions. For this reason a robust system of measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) is needed, Where developing economy nations lack the capability to effectively and accurately measure their emissions, technological and logistical resources and expertise should be shared to enable MRV.

11. Individual responsibility

The SI Council feels that the fight to prevent irreversible climate change is important from a personal as well as a political and governmental perspective. For this reason, SI member parties resolve to take concrete actions to reduce their impact on the environment and encourage their members to do the same. In this way, our movement can lead by example in its actions as well as its policies. In line with this commitment the Socialist International will seek to reduce the environmental impact of its own meetings, exploring ways to reduce the use of printed materials through electronic distribution of documents.

12. Taking the lead at COP21

Without strong commitments in Paris, the future of the planet looks bleak. We believe that by following the above framework, COP21 can be the moment when the world unites to move towards a sustainable world society. The Council therefore particularly calls on SI member parties who are in government to work tirelessly at the summit for an outcome built on social democratic ideals.

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