

Meeting of the Socialist International Africa Committee
Luanda, Angola, 12-13 December 2017

LUANDA DECLARATION

Original: Spanish

The member parties of the Socialist International meeting in Luanda on 12-13 December, hosted by the MPLA, the member party in Angola, declare:

1. Their total satisfaction and pleasure to see that the MPLA, through the work undertaken by the government of President João Lourenço, is implementing an ambitious programme and a set of priorities that respond to the aspirations of the Angolan people, within the framework of a democracy fully consolidated and strengthened by the voice of the people in the elections that took place last August, elections that were totally free and fair.
2. We appreciate and support the objectives set out by President Lourenço to reaffirm political institutions and democracy by strengthening the rule of law, the fight against corruption, the diversification of the economy and policies that will lead to the improvement of the living conditions of the Angolan people.
3. We welcome the commitment undertaken by President Lourenço to put first the interests of the Angolan people in the construction of a country and a society of opportunities for all citizens, giving priority to social progress, to inclusion, to the fight against poverty, to economic growth and to future advances in the benefit for all.
4. We unanimously express our gratitude and pride at the task that our comrades in the MPLA and the President of the Republic of Angola have undertaken today in this new phase of their country's history, wishing them every success in their work.
5. At the same time, we congratulate President Lourenço on his efforts and initiatives in regard to the stability and democratic certainty in the Great Lakes region following his recent meeting with his fellow Heads of State of Congo Brazzaville and of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which formalised the holding of elections in the DRC agreed to take place on 23 December 2018, a fundamental factor for the stability in the whole of this region.
6. We will continue to count on the contribution, enthusiasm and support of the MPLA to the work of the Socialist International at the regional and global level, in favour of peace, democracy and the freedoms and rights of all, to face the challenges that are common to our political family in the search for a world with more justice and more solidarity.

In relation to the expectations of our political family in regard to Congo:

1. We call on the government of the DRC and the state institutions to guarantee and create all the necessary conditions for the holding of free and fair elections in order to ensure the participation of the different political forces, from the government as well as from the opposition and all the citizens, capable of leading to a peaceful transition and to a democratically elected government within the time limit prescribed and established at the meeting of the three Heads of State of Angola, Congo-Brazzaville and the DRC.
2. The Socialist International, directly and through its members, is ready to contribute in an open and honest manner with their presence and participation in order to accompany and to support this electoral process during its different stages, assuming that the authorities of the country and the electoral institutions will be prepared to open their doors to international observers.

Concerning the serious developments that have been occurring in Togo during the last four months:

1. We support and express our sympathy and solidarity to the people of Togo who have been demonstrating peacefully and continually throughout the country in favour of their freedom that has been confiscated for more than fifty years by the same biological family. These peaceful demonstrations led by a coalition of fourteen opposition parties, including the SI member party, the CDPA, demand: (a) the return to the Constitution of 1992 adopted by more than 97% of the votes in a referendum that is ignored by the regime, perpetuating their permanence in power despite the will manifested in the ballot boxes to limit the number of periods of mandates in the government of the country; (b) the liberation of all political prisoners and all those detained in the demonstrations that have been taking place from 19 August 2017.
2. We observe, with consternation and regret, the obstinate rejection of the Togo government to accept the legitimate demands of its people and we condemn the disproportionate use of force by the illegal regime to suppress the people's aspirations. At the same time, we reaffirm that the democratic alternation of power is a natural right that cannot be indefinitely denied to the Togolese people and we call on our members to act in their respective countries in support of the Togolese people.

With respect to Western Sahara:

1. We express our support for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his newly appointed Personal Envoy in their efforts to achieve a political, peaceful, fair and lasting solution, mutually acceptable for both sides in the conflict, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In relation to the dramatic and worrying evolution of the crisis affecting the English speaking population in Cameroon:

1. We deplore the loss of human lives within the civilian population as well as within the ranks of the defence and security forces. We urge President Biya to open a frank and

sincere dialogue with the different credible actors in Cameroonian society, in order to avoid the radicalisation of populations in the English-speaking regions of the Northwest and Southwest that would benefit the secessionists and other opportunists. We give encouragement to the Social Democratic Front (SDF) in their search for a lasting solution to this crisis by means of a dialogue at every level and under any shape or form.

In what concerns the efforts for achieving peace in the African continent:

1. We reaffirm our full commitment and support to the Heads of State and to the leaders of the SI parties in the African continent, like those in Mali and Niger, or Burkina Faso, that today work to ensure peace, to stop the terror and to provide a secure environment for all their citizens. At the same time, we wish to state our firm solidarity with all the peoples and nations of Africa that suffer the impact of terror and the consequences of the painful conflicts that affect the nations of the continent from Nigeria and South Sudan to Somalia.

Our appreciation to the MPLA and to our comrades in Angola:

1. Finally, we wish to express our profound gratitude for the fraternity and warm hospitality extended to us by our comrades of the MPLA during the course of our work in Luanda.
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