

**MEETING OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), Washington 1-2 December 2014**

DECLARATION

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting at the headquarters of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in Washington DC, on 1-2 December 2014, declares:

I.- Its satisfaction at the holding of this meeting in the headquarters of the Organisation of American States, an organisation that, since its creation in 1948, has worked to promote peace, democracy, justice and security in the countries of the region, calling upon the nations of the region to maintain their commitment to and compliance with international order and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

II.- Regarding international and regional economic developments of recent months, the Committee expresses its concern at the slowdown of the economy in several Latin American and Caribbean countries, a situation that could lead to a particularly difficult situation due to the fall in prices of some raw materials which are of vital importance to some of the economies of the region.

The Committee highlights the fact that the economic policies adopted by Latin American and Caribbean states in order to strengthen their economies and give them new impetus must always be oriented towards growth for their peoples, a growth that will foster the creation of new and better employment, lead to productive investments, and that maintains and improves social policies to reduce inequality by means of a fair system of taxation and that creates the conditions for greater social and environmental justice in the countries of the region.

The Committee declares its rejection of the adjustment policies which, through cutting expenditure attempt to solve public deficits with a high social cost. The improvement of the current economic conditions in the region calls for decisive action by the States, as well as more public-private alliances and gaining the trust of their citizens.

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean reiterates its commitment to policies that promote the building of societies that are more cohesive and inclusive.

As a particular action in terms of the economy, the Committee encourages in countries of the region and beyond, the adoption of the following measures against tax havens:

The Committee expresses its commitment to combat tax evasion, both by citizens in their own countries as well as by foreign individuals and companies, by not harbouring the accounts of citizens and corporations of other countries that are looking to evade their tax obligations.

To promote national legislation and adequate international agreements to eradicate fiscal opacity wherever necessary, and to guarantee transparency so that the automatic and obligatory exchange of fiscal information among countries becomes common place.

The Committee urges the strengthening of efforts by the OECD to produce a 'black list' of tax havens worldwide, so that each country may be able to suspend or cancel double taxation agreements in the regions where these exist; and to prevent access to tenders and government assistance to companies domiciled in nations included on the list.

III.- Concerning the strengthening and deepening of democracy with open, transparent governments closer to their citizens, the Committee points out that, considering that the years of darkness and dictatorships have been overcome, democracy is today widespread and present in the region. It is a political system that, in spite of its strength, it is under great stress to achieve its true objectives.

Sometimes, legitimately elected governments find it difficult to ensure that their citizens have access to goods and services which are essential to satisfy their basic needs in matters of employment, housing, health and education.

At the same time, the Committee observes that in some countries of the region constitutional reforms have been implemented to allow the successive and unlimited re-election of their authorities. These changes to the rules of the presidential system have drawn criticism in the region, given that they may lead to abuses of public resources to ensure the continuity in power of the ruling authority, thus hindering the emergence of new leaders and preventing a truly fair democratic contest.

Furthermore, the Committee underlines that the independence and autonomy of the jurisdictional and electoral organs in the region, as well as the important role of national parliaments, are indispensable for the good functioning of the rule of law. The Committee agrees that the judiciary in each of the countries of the region has the challenge to fully and in a timely manner fulfil its function of guaranteeing its citizens' rights. Personal freedom of conscience and expression, amongst other rights, must be fully guaranteed by the legal system as this is a prerequisite for the very existence of democracy. At the same time, faced with eventual weaknesses in domestic jurisdictions as regards the protection of human rights, the Committee reiterates its commitment to the Inter-American system for the protection of human rights.

The current reality shows that national states, their systems of representation and the global markets are in frequent contradiction, which results in unrest and disagreement amongst wide sectors of the population. Therefore, the political parties present in the Committee consider it is essential to strengthen the quality indicators of democracy. The full validity of the rule of law and constitutional order is the only environment conducive to achieving the goals of the disadvantaged social sectors, which are at the heart of the concerns and efforts of the Socialist International.

Within this framework, the Committee urges its members to cooperate to promote in the countries of the region policies which are active in the struggle against corruption, for transparency and for access to public information on the work of the state.

The Committee stresses the need for its member parties to strengthen an open and

participatory government administration to bring the citizens closer to public issues and to ensure that the policies to be implemented are nurtured with citizens' participation, including them in a democratic decision-making system.

The Committees agrees:

To ratify its commitment to improving the quality of democracy, in the forms and contents of social organisation;

To promote decisive action within the region, to legislate and undertake initiatives in matters of open governance, transparency, the struggle against corruption and better citizens' participation in the work of the government;

To demonstrate the commitment of the SI political parties in the region as efficient tools for social and political change, overcoming individualistic perspectives and providential leaderships;

To reaffirm its commitment to sustainable environmental policies and practices, because the calamities, the epidemics and the pollution do not stop at the Customs checks of any country. On the contrary, they rapidly expand and will only be contained with coordinated responses implemented at a global level.

To highlight that the scope of action of its parties is global, it rests upon the representation of each one of its nations and is empowered by the regions and by the whole world. The markets, the finances and the availability of science, transcend national borders, but also politics must respond at that level in order to ensure the aspirations of the progressive political forces for a society that is more open, more fair and more equal.

IV.- The Committee supports the demands of the Haitian opposition to find mechanisms that will allow a real dialogue between the Haitian government and the opposition political parties for a global agreement that will make possible the holding of free and democratic elections as soon as possible.

V.- The Committee resolves to support the process of emancipation demanded by its member party, MAN, in Curaçao, so that the people of that nation are able to consolidate its autonomy and to continue advancing towards their full independence. Within this context, the Committee denounces the undue and unjust intervention of the Dutch government to hinder this process by means of the administrative instructions of its Governor in Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten.

VI.- The Committee congratulated the election of Tabaré Vázquez in Uruguay on the eve of the opening of this meeting, representing a democratic validation of the political programme of the Frente Amplio, which incorporates two member parties of the political family of the Socialist International.

VII.- Finally, the Committee calls for substantial progress in the negotiations which opened on 1 December in Lima on the occasion of the holding in that city of COP 20 on Climate Change, and reaffirms the Socialist International's commitment to this new impetus to achieve an agreement at the Conference in Paris in 2015. This new treaty, which must be binding for all states, is crucial to put a stop to environmental

degradation and to open the perspective of real “climate justice” and the recovery of the planet for all the species that inhabit it.
