Why we need Kyoto

Issue 2 Volume 49

The Journal of the Socialist International

www.socialistinternational.org
3 Editorial

4 Globalising - but fairly
President António Guterres on a globalised world.

8 The Mediterranean: an area of change
José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero considers the future of this important region

12 The future for East Timor
Xanana Gusmão looks at the road ahead

16 Profile
Laurent Gbagbo, President of Ivory Coast

17 Climbing back up the ladder
Zoran Đinđić sets out the government's plan for repairing the damage done to the Serbian economy and society.

20 The Challenges that Colombia faces
Horacio Serpa Uribe tells of the difficulties in securing peace in the country

24 Fighting Poverty
Sébastien Dano Dédé of Ivory Coast tells of his country's plans for victory

27 SI News
• SI Council meeting in Lisbon • SI Council in Maputo declarations and resolutions • Meeting of the Africa Committee in Nairobi • The Nairobi Declaration • SI Committee on the Economy, Social Cohesion and the Environment meeting in Casablanca • Meeting of the SI Committee on Latin America and the Caribbean • SI Asia Pacific meeting - Tokyo Declaration • People •

45 From the archive

46 About the SI

48 WOMEN AND POLITICS
Regional Meeting, Buenos Aires, 22 March 2001
The feminisation of health, sexual and reproductive rights

Mónica Xavier examines women's sexual and reproductive rights in Uruguay

58 Environmental fact file

59 Socialist Notebook
Australia • Belgium • Burma • Cape Verde • Costa Rica • Côte d'Ivoire • Dominican Republic • East Timor • Fiji • France • Germany • Great Britain • Israel • Italy • Mongolia • Morocco • Mozambique • Netherlands • Peru • Philippines • Poland • Spain • Venezuela • Yugoslavia •

65 Book Review
Michael Freedman reviews No Logo, Naomi Klein's book on branding.

66 Last Word
Why we need a pact on global warming

The decision of the government of the United States not to honour its commitment to support the protocol to combat global warming which was painfully agreed by the majority of the world's governments in Kyoto has, not suprisingly, met with dismay around the world.

Protests have come from Europe and many other parts of the planet, not just from other rich countries but also, for instance, from those vulnerable low-lying states in the Pacific Ocean whose very physical existence would be threatened by a rise in the level of the sea which would accompany any warming of the Earth's atmosphere.

The question of climate change, a priority for the member parties of the Socialist International family, has clearly emerged as a key issue of popular concern worldwide. Governments and civil society have already given detailed attention to the warming of the planet and will not be abandoning their work because of the decision of one government, however powerful. World public opinion justifiably demands action along the lines agreed at Kyoto. These demands will not be stilled until effective action is taken.
4 Globalising - but fairly

We live in a global world facing two major problems: ours is a world which remains politically unstructured and economically deregulated.

It is politically unstructured because there are no strong political world organisations and there is just one single hegemonic power. It is economically deregulated because the development of a global market was not complemented with the introduction of adequate forms and mechanisms of global regulation.

If you look at the way national markets function, you will realise that they are regulated or overseen by the State and by the law. Furthermore, it is constantly scrutinised by an organised civil society. On the contrary, if you look at the global market you will see that there is nothing comparable to a State structure intervening as a regulatory mechanism and, perhaps even worse, that the international organisations designed to monitor this market remain too fragile to do it effectively.

Moreover, there is not a "world civil society" equivalent to the ones we cherish in our own countries although some hint of a "global conscience" on subjects - like environment protection, for instance - seems to gradually emerge.

In other words, the world political structure as it stands is not, in my view, proving to be able to guarantee everywhere stability, democracy and the respect for human rights. These are the essential values that must be fully protected and enhanced.

The picture gets even more complex if you bear in mind that our economically deregulated world is set against a scenario of increasing wealth, productivity and trade but, simultaneously, of world spread poverty and the deepening of the dualism between rich and poor regions of the globe. This is also felt in several individual societies where some regions, sectors and even individuals face the risk of lagging behind. The fact that globalisation is taking place in a period of transition to the so-called knowledge based economy worsens the situation. It seems somewhat contradictory that, while knowledge has become the main factor for creating wealth, it is also mainly responsible for deepening the gap that separates the rich from the poor and creates a new form of exclusion.

In a process with some points in common with the eighteenth century industrial revolution, we are at a time when new communication and information technologies are speeding up an incredible amount of knowledge and injecting it in the productive and social processes in an unprecedented way. This is, I believe, the state of the world. I did not qualify it because we are dealing with concrete facts, and the reality of facts cannot be discussed. However, this does not necessarily mean you should not regulate globalisation. Quite the opposite, indeed. Let me submit some ideas in this regard.

I said before that our contemporary world is a politically unstructured one. This means that if we wish to set up some kind of structured regulation acceptable by all, one of the first things we need to do is to strengthen the role of the international organisations or, at least, of some of them.

We also need to build up a political architecture that, instead of being based on the existence of one single power, should rather rest on various and mutually balanced centres of power. I am convinced that a multi-polar world will greatly facilitate the introduction of a regulatory framework to the global economy. Let
me tackle just the point related to the need to reinforce the role of the existing international organisations.

We all know that in what concerns the regulation of international relations the United Nations has a specific and particular responsibility. We all agree that since its foundation, the United Nations and its subsidiary agencies and organisations have played an irreplaceable role. Also it is no secret that the UN Security Council is now deemed unfit to fully accomplish its mandate according to the Charter. Therefore, many observers argue that the Security Council is somewhat lacking in legitimacy to act or even speak on behalf of the international community. The vast majority of UN Member States - if not all - agree that a Security Council reform is urgently needed. The big issue is the debate on how far the reform should go, which path should follow, which new members should join in, should the veto power remain on the hands of the current five permanent members. I sincerely regret that it has not yet been possible to agree on a consistent reform that can be accepted by all. But I can assure you that I am among those defending that the Security Council should be expanded to better reflect the international reality of today. And that I also strongly advocate for Germany, alongside others, to become one of the new permanent members of this body.

It is not only the UN and the Security Council that need reform. I have already said several times in the past that the role of the Bretton Woods institutions should be reviewed. It is true that some progress towards adapting these institutions to meet the aspirations of developing and transitional economies has been achieved. However, there is still some way to go in this process. A new Bretton Woods framework, must help to sustain global growth and employment, reinforce social rights and welfare, protect and enhance the environment, and ensure regulation and accountability of financial markets at world level.

There is also a social and environment dimension on the World Trade Organisation that should be enhanced. We want both free trade and fair trade. This does not mean introducing new protectionism measures or barriers, or to impose binding salary levels or working hours, rather to protect fundamental rights, namely in the labour markets, as a guarantee that conditions are in place for a fair trade. That is why I believe that the ILO also needs to be strengthened.

This point seems to me of particular importance if you bear in mind the growing revenue gap between the rich and the poor of this world. However, reforming international organisations, despite its urgency, is still far from enough. It does not fully respond, by itself, to our main objective of building up a structured world. I believe that in order to completely attain the goal of a structured political order, we need to build up a multi-polar and balanced world through the strengthening of the existent or emergent regional blocs.

However, for these blocs to function properly as part of this multi-polar world, it is fundamental that they do not restrict themselves to act economically as simple free trade organisations. They should also aim to economic, political and social integration. This is why the European Union - as the only true organised regional space in the world - plays an important role in the building up of the new political architecture and needs to be strengthened further. Indeed Europe, through its integration process, has been able to act, not only as an element of balance in the international relations, but also as an inducing factor leading to the strengthening of other regional blocs.

I hope that will be the case of Mercosur in South America, ASEAN in Asia or SADC in Africa - three specific experiences in three continents with very different political, economic and social conditions. This is why here in Europe we try to give attention and support to those fragile integration processes that are occurring in many regions of every continent, and why we like to actively participate in all debates taking place between Europe and those regions. We know, through our own experience, that an integration process is not without
hurdles and even without competition among the different participants. But the fact is that only with strong regional organisations, preserving each of them their own social and political models, will we be able to build up a multi-polar world to avoid a savage and uncontrolled globalisation which, most probably, would open the way to a globalisation of poverty and to a decrease, at its lowest level, of economic and social rights all over the world.

Now let me say something more about how Europe can and should continue to play its role. First of all, I am firmly convinced that if we want that role to continue, further enlargement of the Union should not mean dilution of the integration process. Until now, the resolution of the equation between enlargement and integration has been achieved by giving priority to the economic side of our integration process. We started with a customs union, then we moved on to a single market and, more recently, to a single currency. As a result, the political side of this process was seen as a product of the economic side or simply as reminiscent of it. In other words, the logic of the integration process was, even if progressively less so, what has been called a functional logic. However, at this stage, to follow this functional logic does not seem to be possible any more.

I think that for the first time in our integration history it is politics that must take the lead and confront us with problems that must be overcome if our integration process is to continue successfully. In my view the main problem that confronts us is a problem of democratic deficit. However, it would be naïve to think that this deficit can easily be diluted by a mere institutional reform. That is not so.

The problem has deeper roots and goes straight to the notion of a European public realm. The essence of modern democracy does not lay in the formal methods that make institutions work and on the democratic vote of the people, rather in an interactive communication flow between the political power and an organised civil society. If this is what occurs at national level, the same cannot yet be said at the Union level. Because, quite simply there is no such a thing as a European public opinion or a European civil society. The interactive link between institutions and public opinion that we experience at national level simply does not exist or may just have a rudimentary expression at European level. What is sometimes interpreted as the views of a wrongly called European public opinion is not, after all, more than the addition of 15 national views.

This is why the direct election of the European Parliament does not solve by itself the problem of the degree of legitimacy of the institutions. We should commit ourselves to the progressive building of a European civil society and a European public opinion. This is not an easy and short-term task. Should we succeed, we can then be sure that the right conditions are in place for governments not to feel constrained by what their respective national public opinion thinks or wishes, when they debate Europe. Governments and European institutions would then tend to act in accordance with the wishes of the Europeans.

A kind of nationalism still tends to prevail and Governments know that, first of all, when they go home, they have to answer for what they were or were not able to achieve. This was clearly demonstrated by the debates that took place in Nice you will recall that in the European Council in Nice we not only had to defer a decision on the final states of the "Charter of Fundamental Rights" but we also had to confront heated debates on the number of votes in the Council and the number of members in the European Parliament.

I must say that my main objective in Nice was not the protection of Portuguese specific interests, but rather an acceptable balance of power among member states in the framework of efficient European institutions.

On a positive note, we can undoubtedly claim the process of introducing the Euro as a highly successful one, with understandable fears felt here and there. In
general, the process is going on without any major troubles and in Portugal it is generating hope and contributing, I think, to strengthen our European identity.

In my view, the Euro will indeed be a success precisely because it answers to the needs and aspirations of the Europeans in face of the realities of the contemporary world. But now we have to face the post-Nice period, which raises very clear and important questions that need to be tackled. In my view, there are two main ways to address the problems of the post-Nice period: a big leap forward, which would imply the move in the direction of a federal structure of government, the second way would be to follow a gradual approach combining the progressive development and deepening of the federal pillar - with the strengthening of the Commission and the European Parliament - together with the enlargement, as wide as possible, of structured areas of inter-governmental cooperation supported by the European institution, what we have called in the Lisbon Summit an open method of coordination.

In fact, in the Lisbon European Council we were able to experience the potentialities of this formula. We agreed in a number of European objectives, correspondent national targets and methods of evaluation based on "benchmarking" to be applied to a large number of areas: education, science, fight against exclusion, employment, innovation, information society. The progressive reinforcement of the open method of coordination should add to the normal exercise of the competences by the Union's institutions, not replace it.

This second formula has obviously the disadvantage of being politically weaker and more confusing from the institutional point of view. But it has two important advantages: it allows an easier deepening of the integration process and a working system better adapted to the heterogeneity of an enlarged Union.

The same reasons that made us in Nice smooth the conditions to implement enhanced co-operation. The creation and the process of gradual introduction of the Euro process is also a good example of this kind of concept.

It should also be pointed out that both formulas must acknowledge that Europe has, or is, a civilisation, but not a culture. The culture is at the very core of our national identities which are not to be subdued in other dimensions of the integration process. This is the main factor of legitimacy of the principle of subsidiarity.

All this said, and whatever the way we may choose, there is an underlying question which, in my opinion, is of a decisive importance: the question of credibility. The Union will only attain credibility if this exercise encomasses the Common Foreign and Defence Policy, where we are still at the beginning of the road.

I can assure you that Portugal faces all these questions with an absolute peace of mind. We are a very old nation and State, our borders remain now as they have been since the thirteenth century. The President of Brazil, and my close friend, said recently that Portugal, by the way of her maritime expeditions, was the inventor of globalisation. We are geographically and demographically small. But we have a strong national identity and unbreakable unity. So you may understand that our mood is one of confidence and tranquility when addressing the "federal" debate. In any case, a special remark cannot be avoided.

Large States have a greater responsibility because for whichever the way we choose to move forward, we are deemed to fail if we try to conduct the process under a Directory logic. The problem of Directories does not lay only in a lack of political legitimacy. It is also a problem of efficiency. Indeed, experience tells us, including in the European Union that throughout European history the interests which proved to be less compatible are precisely those of the large States. In our view, the decision is already taken. We are ready for the debate. Whatever the way, Portugal will always be on the forefront of those willing to build a more united, prosperous and democratic Europe. And, of course, a more balanced, peaceful and progressive world.
The Mediterranean: an area of change

Only a decade ago the Mediterranean was considered as a region shaken by conflict and confrontation. But today the Mediterranean can best be described as an area of change. The most meaningful changes in the region have to do with the developments within its societies but also with the changing regional dynamics, which are trying to shape a new future for it with all the changes which globalisation brings. A globalised world is one where everything has an influence on everyone. A globalised world can be a more ordered and balanced world if the interdependence of and the communication between its parts works in a constructive way.

But the phenomena which promote globalisation can also bring about the exclusion of whole communities and the division of others and may open up deep differences between those who are part of the global dynamic and those who, unable to take part, are left on the sidelines. Whether inclusion or exclusion predominate or order or conflict prevail depends on there being sufficient global co-operation and on strategies being adopted which favour social cohesion in every one of its countries.

It is in this context of change and uncertainty that the Euro-Mediterranean Conference took place in Barcelona five years ago. At that moment interdependence, shared responsibility in the political and security sphere and in cultural, social and human spheres was what was inspiring the actions of the European Union and of the countries of the Mediterranean. A very ambitious programme based on political and economic co-operation was started which would favour the growth of the countries of the South and give stability to the zone. What is the result today? If I had to draw up a balance sheet of progress made to date I would be able to be very optimistic. Criticism has come from both sides: some say projects have been launched which are inadequate for member countries, others say it is very difficult to give the right aid and finance in the absence of real economic reform. It is also alleged that the countries are uninterested in discussing questions of internal politics and security.
Many people felt that Barcelona strengthened economic relations between the centre and the periphery while trade and intra-regional investment did not develop. However that may be the data at our disposal paint a very clear picture of the situation. Despite its large size the MEDA programme which is the main financial instrument of the Barcelona Process has spent only 26 per cent of its budget. The association agreements are being ratified very slowly by the national parliament of the European Union countries. Up to now the only ones which have come into force are those with Tunisia, Morocco and Israel with the rest awaiting ratification or being negotiated. Much remains to be done and accordingly it is vital to recover the consensus that there was in Barcelona if we want to offer a future to the region.

For the Socialist Party, for those who were members of socialist governments, thought about the Mediterranean reflected an idea which Felipe González often expresses, one that I share. The political plans Spain has, he says, are better defended in Europe. The Mediterranean cannot be just a Spanish, French or Italian priority but one for all Europeans.

In the Barcelona Declaration there is a central element which develops and deepens the idea of shared security and that our security, and much less our prosperity, cannot be achieved at the expense of our neighbour’s security and prosperity. But Barcelona also brings in, in a more effective and mature way than the Helsinki Final Act, a broad sense of security in which the traditional military dimension is just one more element, and not the most relevant one, to guarantee peace.

It is an effort for political co-operation among us peoples who share this geographic space; it is an act of rebellion, an unwillingness to resign ourselves to accepting the “clash of civilisations” that Samuel Huntington predicts. It is also an undertaking to promote the social and economic development on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, a bet placed on cohesion in the widest sense of that term. We must therefore undertake a critical revision of the Barcelona process without losing sight of the validity of its principle and objectives.

Although it corresponds to another Committee of the Socialist International to analyse the situation in the Near East I must make a brief reference to it. If the climate of peace and dialogue then existing five years ago made possible the Barcelona agreement with the participation of all sides, the murder of Rabin and the subsequent victory of the Likud brought the peace process down a blind alley. We know that the Mediterranean is the cradle of civilisations but it is also a zone of conflict, divisions and confrontations. This “liquid continent” as some call it, has been suffering serious confrontations, regional conflicts for reasons of cultural, ethnic or religious identity unknown up to now in the face of a lack of solidarity from a world which cares little about underdevelopment and poverty.

There is no doubt that the Palestine-Israeli conflict is the one which has been most affected by these changes, it is the one which most worries us, which has provoked most destabilisation in the zone, which has most put in jeopardy the delicate balance of the region, which has, in a word, wrecked our desire for peace.

Here I would like to call on the parties involved to recover their confidence and return to dialogue so as to offer a future and some hope to their people. It is a call to Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat but also to their parties present in this committee. Let us get down together to work to recover Rabin’s legacy and desire for peace: let us recover the drive towards the “peace of the brave”. But let us go farther, let us talk too of the “peace of the citizens”. Let us pull the whole society into the peace process since that will be the only way to achieve it. As Michel Rocard often says, “politics is repeating over and over again formulas and ideas until they impregnate society”. So it is moment for leaders to involve the citizens in this crucial and absorbing challenge.

The countries on the south side of the Mediterranean have put into effect changes which in great measure respond to the requirements of Barcelona,
emanating protectionist obstacles, starting the process of privatisation and so on. The change is affecting societies themselves and in some countries processes of transition, of democratic alternance in government have been started which moreover have gone hand in hand with a consolidation of freedoms and human rights. We must not allow this to be frustrated or discredited. We shall not abandon those who have started out along this path.

One objective which needs, more than words, an effort of will is that of boosting South-South relations which now represent less than 5 per cent of their trade. Can we think that a free trade area between the European Union and its partners is viable and desirable if it is not based on the integration of at least the subregional groups on the southern shores of the Mediterranean? Some countries have put in place the process of change but they can hardly achieve it without help and encouragement.

At the same time how long can we continue to justify the free circulation of goods and services which excludes farm products? Is a development process credible which does not contemplate the removal of the greatest obstacle to its foreign debt?

I am convinced that the creation of a common Euro-Mediterranean space is the best and most advantageous way to confront the challenges of globalisation. But as Miguel Angel Moratinos has shown, the only realistic scenario is to recast a globalisation which for the moment only looks to goods but which in the not too distant future must look to human beings. If we are to avoid globalisation bringing on injustice and inequality we must all join together to regulate flows of migrants and fight against racism and xenophobia. Migration is also part of globalisation and must occupy a prominent place on our political agenda. We must propose policies which favour development at the same time as encouraging the integration of those who come to our country. We need policies to prepare people to meet those of other countries and deal with the mixing of peoples, policies which preserve identity and favour pluralism.

The Nice European Council did not face the great challenges which the presence of new members of the EU brings in its wake and I do not think there exists a vision of what sort of Europe is being offered to new members. There are no guarantees that that Europe will be more economically and socially cohesive and more coherent in its policies. I am deeply worried that the majority of member states are sticking to financial strategies which were in Berlin shown to be inadequate and which today are simply not credible as a response to the agreement and objectives which are before us. In a word I am worried about the...
lack of political will and leadership that the Union is suffering and, consequently, its Mediterranean policy is suffering.

Spain has a clear part to play in the Mediterranean world, not just because of geo-strategic reasons but also, principally for historical reasons. In the EU Spain made a start with policies based on solidarity and co-operation. It created links with all the countries of the Mediterranean basin and set up channels of communication to bring about permanent dialogue based on mutual confidence. The 1991 Peace Conference in Madrid was no accident but rather a consequence of the firm commitment we made to the region. The paradox today is that we are absent from the region. That is why I am today committed to reviving the spirit of Barcelona and to develop the potential contained in the Barcelona Declaration.

The truth is that there are problems and solutions, rapprochement and divergences on policy but there are also many possibilities. Of the 20 countries around the shores of the Mediterranean four of them Spain, Italy, France and Greece enjoy 88 per cent of the region. As socialists we believe that all of us people and states in the region can advance together towards peace, prosperity, dialogue and solidarity. We seek a stable, prosperous and developed Mediterranean with which we can come together in a relationship of joint responsibility on all subjects which affects us, including migration. We must not forget that Europe is a continent of emigrants and that there are more than two million Spanish citizens in other countries. And I use the word citizens advisedly because we are talking about dignity and the recognition of the dignity of the human person that some, it appears, forget. And moreover as every day goes by the EU will be needing more foreign labour not just to fill empty workplaces but also to sustain a system of pensions in an ageing society which is not enjoying sufficient demographic growth. In this sense immigration ceases to be a problem and starts becoming a necessity.

When people move they take their culture with them. Let us confront the "clash of civilisations" with the dialogue of cultures. The great world religions have shown how ideas and beliefs can straddle continents and transform societies. David Held, professor of political science at the London School of Economics reminded us at a conference in Madrid that states must face up to the present challenges and find solutions to them, and one of these is immigration. The rapid spread of the media, the internet and digital technologies have allowed information to circulate rapidly in this increasingly globalised world. If it seems that globalisation may bring advantages in the economic terrain, in the cultural and social field we still have many questions to solve. Phenomena such as the resurgence of ethnic nationalism and all types of fundamentalism are just some examples. As a solution Held puts forward cosmopolitanism, i.e. "the recognition of the ties among the different cultures which live together in one country, the celebration of the difference and the ability to consider the other person's point of view". Let us learn to be cosmopolitan Mediterranean people and respect our differences.

Europe has a great responsibility in the positive and negative development of this new stage and its commitment is urgently needed. If there are two words to describe the present situation of the Mediterranean region they are imbalance and interdependence.

Nor can we forget the delays and failures in this whole process. I think again of Oslo, of the Middle East peace process. We must learn the lesson. The patience of citizens can be exhausted and we have the obligation to make the Mediterranean a zone of development and peace. Let not the necessary expansion of the EU towards the countries of the Baltic mean that unfulfilled pledges are forgotten.

We must be ambitious and have the necessary political will so as to get to the year 2010 with a free trade area in being but also so as to have better social and cultural relations. But we must first agree among ourselves.
Peace-Building:
The Challenge for East Timor

A quarter of a century after resisting the most brutal occupation of their beloved country, the people of Timor Lorosä'e finally won the right to be free from war. The first challenge we faced was to defend this right. Peace-keepers, initially led by Australia, helped us respond to this challenge. Now Peace-Keeping Forces from many nations serve in all thirteen districts of Timor Lorosä'e, and we remain truly grateful.

Following on from peace-keeping, our next challenge is peace-building. Again, through UNTAET, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, we have the assistance of many countries. We also have many international non-government organisations providing much-welcome aid. But, as with peace-keeping, the task of building a lasting peace is ultimately our responsibility.

For more than a year we have been working under the mandate of UNTAET to prepare ourselves for independence. However, there is still much to be done, particularly with regard to the involvement of the Timorese; there is still much to be corrected and much to be promoted in order to prevent a heavy bureaucracy from impeding the implementation of practical programs of reconstruction.

In addition to the establishment of a government structure and the need for the implementation of programs, there is still the political process of registration of parties, elections for the Constituent Assembly and the mechanism for the study and debate of the Constitution. All of these efforts aim at ensuring a democratic system where the rule of law is the guarantee of enduring peace and development.

What, then, are the tools we need for our peace-building?

In Timor we have a traditional house, raised up on poles, that holds those things most sacred to us. Timor Lorosä'e, the sacred house of peace, which we are challenged to build as a new nation, will also need four poles for its foundation.

The first pole is that we recognise the truth of our history.

Owning your past, your shared history, is indispensable for building reconciliation.

Today, we are uncovering the historical record of events leading to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975. Owning what happened leads us both to examine our consciences. But owning the past is not an exercise on apportioning blame. It is an exercise in releasing a truth imprisoned by silence. We allow the truths of the past to speak, and having allowed them their say, we seek better, wiser truths to emerge from future actions.

In Timor Lorosä'e we need to own the truth of our past in order to forge a strong, unified and compassionate society. This society will be unaffected to speak, and will be distinguished by its ability to tolerate and respect difference. The legacy of the failure of our political parties to negotiate, to resist provocation and to overcome manipulation in 1975 is now part of our history. But we must continue to confront this legacy. The memory of violent rivalry has burned itself into our people's minds.

In the Congress held in August 2000, the delegates from the districts and sub-districts conveyed the message from our people that they are worried about the potential for groups to resurrect and exploit the current situation of popular ignorance of democratic processes and developments at a national level.

Some people wrongly interpret the East Timorese process. Today we see emerging
numerous experts on and for East Timor who, in reality, fail to understand the Timor dossier. The reality is that CNRT is a platform of political parties and the pillar of national unity - a unity which is vital in these early and difficult years. In the absence of a policy of solid national unity, the peace-building process is an impossibility. Some parties consider themselves to have an historic mandate for the simple fact that they were established immediately following the events of 25 April 1974 in Portugal, seemingly forgetting that they caused the Maubere people great suffering.

These parties attempt to act against the desire for political stability, trying desperately to evoke nostalgia for the political monoliths of the early years which have left their marks on the minds of our people.

The CNRT is a guarantee of democratic consciousness; CNRT is the guarantee of a political process which will build a democratic society, committed to a multi-party system.

The second pole is that we realise the values that guided our struggle for freedom. We struggled for the freedom to create our vision of the new nation of Timor Lorosa'e. In establishing our new civil society we cannot betray this vision, one held by our freedom-fighters for so long. Too many valiant women and men of Falintil, the Liberation Armed Forces of East Timor, died to sink this second pole deep into the ground: that Timor Lorosa'e would be a nation exalted by righteousness. We seek to build a society that is inclusive and just, prosperous and participatory.

How can Timor Lorosa'e be both inclusive and just? To those who ask this question, I myself ask a question. How is it possible that the guiding principle of the armed fighters of Falintil has been to uphold the sanctity of human life? How is it possible that our national liberation army, together with the Church, is taking the lead in opposing the spread of a culture of violence?

Eyewitnesses to the devastation in my country ask another question. They say, how can the East Timorese continue to ignore the preposturous Indonesian monuments that litter Dili and the District Capitals? Why do these monuments remain untouched?

A society that is inclusive and just, does not feed on retribution, or repay destruction with destruction. It has its generosity disciplined by truth. For us the truth of the recent past is brutally immediate - we know what happened, it does not have to be explained to us. We know, for example, that the majority of the international election monitors who volunteered to protect our peoples' rights to vote freely in last year's referendum came from Indonesia. Indonesia is not an object of hatred of the East Timorese. We don't burn their flag and we couldn't care less about their monuments. In Timor Lorosa'e our search for justice is a quest to bring an acceptance of the truth and its consequences. What we offer to those who have done us an injustice is the gift of self-knowledge, a liberating reality that includes us both.

The need for justice is undeniable, however, reconciliation is a process which is vital if a real and forward-looking process of peace-building is to be achieved.

When we speak of justice, we are saying that those responsible for the crimes committed in East Timor must face trial. However, the process is not quite as easy as some would wish.

Our only hope is that that which is taking place with the militias through the measures taken by the Indonesian government, has an outcome which is able to satisfy all those who advocate justice as a priority issue.

Personally, I believe that reconciliation requires greater political flexibility if we are to prevent wounds from continuing to fester for many years to come, without us being capable of healing them in an honest manner. We seek to build a society that is prosperous and participatory. The true wealth of our new nation will not be its oil or its gas, but its citizens. A country only develops successfully if its citizens are educated and of sound body. Thus, education, health and agriculture represent the
most basic services which we are committed to delivering to the entire population. The third pole is that we honour those who have sacrificed most.

Firstly I wish to pay tribute to the FALINTIL. We best honour those who died by honouring those who still live - the veterans and their families, with a functional role in our new society. Their obvious first role will be to defend our State. Never again will Timor Lorosá’e be the property of another.

Many serving members of FALINTIL have already taken up the role of peace-building through peace-keeping, in defence of our sovereign territory. They have participated as scouts in UN PKF border patrols, and in combined actions against militia with Portuguese peace-keepers. They will be the core of our future Defence Force. We will honour them most by safeguarding their political neutrality. We will build peace through making sure that when our people vote for a political party, they are not voting for an army. Our Defence Force will have the people’s respect and our people will have their protection.

Not all who have been members of FALINTIL will serve in this new Defence Force. Some of our veterans, through age or injury will find it impossible to serve in the armed forces, take up paid employment or start a business. The State must extend to them, and to the widows and the orphans, the duty of care and the appreciation of our citizens.

For the other able veterans we need programmes for re-training and re-skilling. New industries such as eco-tourism could provide good matches for their qualities of discipline, loyalty and survival skills. I can assure you that any future eco-tourist, trekking through the magnificent misty mountains of Timor Lorosá’e, could wish for no better guide than a former FALINTIL fighter, for whom every bush and blade of grass is an old friend.

Indeed, it is perfectly true that FALINTIL survived because of the support given to it by successive generations of our population. I must pay tribute also to all CNRT cadres who withstood all manner of ill treatment, from persecution and imprisonment to torture. Without them, the political resistance would not have achieved the impressive degree of organisation which allowed the people to have faith in their victory and to participate so actively in the popular consultation of 30 August. For them, too, the state has the obligation to provide assistance for their future. Many people, when one speaks of the needs of CNRT cadres, immediately conjure up thoughts of political appointments and favouritism, forgetting that these were the individuals who gave generously of themselves for 24 long years of struggle, organising and mobilising the population throughout the country. Another factor to consider is that our population is now extremely young; perhaps forty per cent are under fourteen years old. Many of the youth serving in the clandestine movement did not get the opportunity to go to schools and universities. They now lack the qualifications they need to take up their chosen place in the new nation. They should not remain disadvantaged. For them we must seek to match their sacrifice with access to new opportunities.

Throughout this period of preparation for independence, the most pressing needs are those related to socio-economic problems. The people are demanding employment even at a time when we cannot yet offer jobs.

There is a need to establish mechanisms for granting more accessible and comprehensive credit. I have established a Fund for the Development of East Timor, and with the money which CNRT has received from Portuguese citizens, we will set up credit schemes for Faltintil veterans and CNRT cadres. We also have plans to train small business people as a means of ensuring that these credit schemes are successfully implemented. We have received support from individuals and organisations who are interested in backing this program in order to alleviate social and economic problems. The resolution of these problems is one of the preconditions of the peace-building process. In raising up the fourth and final pole we need the help of our neighbours, because peace-building is not just a process that happens within societies but also between them. As neighbours, Timor
Lorosae and Indonesia are both re-building their democracies, and peace-building their societies. The challenge we face together in peace-building, is to both mutually respect and mutually aid each other's efforts.

We have hope in the future, although today the demands from all quarters are excessive.

If today we are experiencing difficulties in responding to social demands and the basic needs of our people, we are certain that things will be different in the years to come. Our natural resources are well known. Therefore, provided that we plan well for our future, we are confident that we will not be overly dependent on foreign aid.

We are a small nation which continues to live in poverty. However, we are also a people who proved our nobility over 24 years throughout which many countries chose to accept East Timor’s integration into Indonesia.

We don’t wish to inherit the mistakes made in the course of the years during which the East Timorese people struggled alone. We want to continue to be true to our identity, and if people recall that for 24 years we were able to sustain a resistance on our own, they can imagine how in the future we do not wish to be a political or economic burden on anyone just because we are denied the full benefit of resources which are ours.

If not, peace-building is liable to become an exercise in dependency-building, turning Timor Lorosae into a protectorate, without the capacity to be viable.

In addition to reconciliation involving the East Timorese people, peace-building also implies an improvement in relations with the western half of the island which will in turn have a positive impact on relations with Indonesia. Indonesia continues to face tremendous obstacles to its process of democratisation. Ultra-nationalist segments continue to stand in the way of greater advances in the process and this cannot just be ignored.

In order to complement the brokering of a solution to the militia problem, the international community should consider providing extra support to West Timor as a means of promoting improved relations between Timor Lorosae and the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. This would represent a very real contribution to lasting peace-building. Just as we developed, over the past twenty-five years, the capacity to resist, we are now building our capacity to transform, to govern and to create.

Currently CNRT is participating in the UNTAET. We are learning a lot. However, there are fundamental questions that I would like to raise.

One is of the imposition of the English language. Now, it is a fact that East Timorese are very good at languages. Many speak Tetum, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesia and one or more of the country's eighteen other indigenous languages. However, only a few speak English. Competency in English now figures highly as a requirement for employment. It has the impact of artificially enhancing the job prospects of those with the ability to speak and write in English, over those unable to communicate well in English but possessing better job skills and qualifications. Wielding the weapon of language to arbitrarily disadvantage East Timorese will not build peace.

Another one comes from coping with so many different teachers. East Timorese are trying to learn from people from so many nations and cultures that the lesson itself gets confused. Our friends from all around the world come from many different cultures. Timorese can find it very difficult to know what is the right way and wrong way to do something when so many different ways are in evidence.

As we proceed to resolve division and disquiet in our society, as we move to build the independent democratic State of Timor Lorosae, we must all unite in our region to resist rearguard actions by those preferring bullets to ballots, and dictatorship to democracy. Our friends abroad have a key role in assisting all of us who are committed to regional peace-building, by aiding the forces of democracy to triumph and allowing freedom to flower among the oppressed. ♦
Socialist Affairs follows the life of the new President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo

Laurent Gbagbo, elected president of Côte d'Ivoire last October, describes himself simply enough as "history teacher, trade unionist and writer". He could with justice have added "political fighter with experience of many battles with dictatorship".

Born to a modest family in 1945 in the village of Mama in the centre-west of Côte d'Ivoire, the world's largest cocoa producer, he was a hard-working and intelligent student going first to primary school then to the junior seminary of St Dominic Savio at Gagnoa, the nearest large town to his birthplace. He had to move the Lycée Classique in Abidjan, then the capital of the country, to take his baccalaureate in 1965, going on to the city's university. His country had become independent of France in 1960 and was ruled by Félix Houphouët-Boigny who was destined to cling on to power for more than three decades till his death in 1993.

His first period of study outside the country came when he went to France, a country with which he will later become closely involved. At the University of Lyon he followed a course in Latin, Greek and Humanities but decided to go back to Abidjan to take his degree, returning to Paris and the Sorbonne for his master's degree in history in 1970. That year saw him back in the Lycée Classique teaching history and geography in a way the dictatorship did not appreciate and his attitude as a trade unionist meant that he was kept in the army for nearly two years from 1971 where one of his instructors turned out to be a certain Captain Robert Gueï who was to cross his path again later.

Free to pursue his own career once again in 1973, he blended the academic life with politics. In 1974 he joined the staff of the Institute of African Art, History and Archaeology, IHAAA, of the University of Abidjan while at the same time preparing successfully to present his doctoral thesis on "Côte d'Ivoire: Economy and Society on the Eve of Independence" for the University of Paris VII in 1978. The following year he published his first book, a life of Mandingo King Sündjata and a year later was appointed director of the IHAAA.

His new post did not put a stop to his political activities and as a member of the university teachers' union he took a prominent part in what Houphouët-Boigny called "the teachers' plot" of 1982 against the dictatorship which coincided with the first moves to found what was later to become the Ivorian Popular Front, FPI. Understandably he found it wiser to quit his native country for France again where he was accepted as a political exile.

He decided to return to Côte d'Ivoire in September 1988 founding in clandestine circumstances the FPI, of which he became the first secretary-general, two months later. In 1990 when Houphouët-Boigny was persuaded to allow parties other than his own to stand in elections the FPI, today a full member of the Socialist International, entered an alliance with other parties but while they decided to boycott the presidential election that year Gbagbo's supporters put him forward as a candidate. He did well and secured 18.3 per cent of the votes and consolidated his position as a national figure. Perhaps more importantly, he was elected with eight FPI colleagues to the National Assembly, representing his home constituency of Ouragahio.

He was in trouble once again in 1992 when, after the protests he led against military action against students, he was jailed for six months.

After Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993 the presidency was taken over by Henri Konan Bédié and when elections were held two years later the FPI staged an "active boycott" of the vote in protest against the voting regulations which Gbagbo felt were unfair. Nevertheless he was re-elected to the Assembly for Ouragahio in 1996.

In December 1999 Robert Gueï started an army mutiny about pay and toppled Konan Bédié and last year sought to strengthen his position by calling elections on 22 October in which he claimed victory. After the count revealed he had won 59.36 per cent of the votes cast, Gbagbo assumed the presidency, not before one faction within the armed forces answering to Guéi had killed many Ivorians who had come into the streets to protest against Gueï's own attempts to claim an electoral win.

The new president, who has a close political collaborator in his wife Simone, has promised that he will seek to mend the wounds that his country's body politic has suffered.
Climbing back up the ladder

The conditions that the new Serbian government faces, according to almost all indicators, are dramatically bad. The real standard of living of our citizens, the unemployment rate, the state of our technology and infrastructure, the level of indebtedness of our companies and our country as a whole, general safety and the degree of criminalisation of society - judging by all of the above indicators, we are at the bottom of the ladder of European countries.

This is not a modern and successful Serbia, not even the Serbia of our parents, the Serbia in which we grew up, where people worked and went shopping freely, where the streets, school playgrounds and national borders were safe, and where domestic budgets enabled people to go on summer and winter holidays.

Over the last ten years, Serbia has been a country without a sensible plan and management, left to the mercy of brutal interest groups at home and international interests abroad. That is now in the past. On October 5 2000 Serbia took its destiny into its own hands. We are beginning the implementation of a national consensus for radical change.

The first precondition for this is general political stability in the region. This means, first of all, regulating relations between Serbia and Montenegro in a democratic manner, then eradicating terrorism in the south of Serbia, and once and for all establishing a way for Serbia and Kosovo to live together and finally establishing real co-operation between Serbia and its neighbours.

The second is the stability of democratic institutions in Serbia, first of all, an administration immune to corruption, an independent judiciary and safety for the individual and property.

The third is good laws, primarily in the business domain.

The fourth is a high-quality transport infrastructure for people and goods.

The fifth precondition is a qualified and dependable labour force and high-quality management of companies.

The core of the reforms pertains to the economy and society. Despite urgent day-to-day problems it is important that we do not turn into a stopgap government, one that loses track of the long-term vision of the economy.

Our society and our economy need not only fresh capital but a new attitude. Our technology has been devastated by the bombing campaign of 1999; our labour force lags behind in terms of educational aptitude for a new economy.

Investments will come, but the investors' motives remain an open question. Investments are directed towards very cheap or high quality labour, where the risk and profit are very high or where the business climate is very stable. Our strategic objective is to become a country of stable institutions and a highly qualified labour force.
The Serbia we envisage is a society where the middle class would predominate, with well-to-do families, where a large number of citizens would have savings accounts and private property, with quality jobs and a solid national health service and educational system, and a dependable pension fund. That is a Serbia in its role of a regional factor of stability.

Moving towards this goal, we must resolve pressing problems, and among the most difficult ones are unemployment and a low standard of living. According to the official data, there are 2.2 million people employed in Serbia, plus about 820,000 unemployed, that is, about 27%. However, not only is there a great number of unemployed but the employment structure is problematic as well.

About 500,000 people work in permanently illiquid firms, so that they may be regarded as de facto out of work. That makes an additional 15%, bringing the total up to over 40% unemployed. About 400,000 people receive their salaries from the state budget. This is undoubtedly too great a number for scope of our economy.

It is our intention to rearrange the employment structure through a restructuring of the economy, so that those two million employed should have stable and good quality jobs. We shall reduce the number of employees in the state sector by at least 20% to begin with.

However, it will not suffice to improve the existing employment structure. Our task is to make new jobs possible by attracting investments into the country. For this to be achieved, it is necessary to renew the technology and the qualifications of labour force. The technology will come to those who know what to do and are ready to work. So the strategic priority is to train the labour force for the new economy. We should not shed tears for the old technology, we should turn to the challenges of the future instead. We must be prepared to face them, and that means we must be qualified and trained to do so.

Big investments are needed for this. But these investments are the most justified that exist - investments in people. This will also be an opportunity for the young, for all who are young either in terms of age or in terms of spirit and energy. Also, we shall endeavour, through a general improvement of living and working conditions, to get as many experts who have left our country is we can to return. We shall endeavour in a resolute manner to put an end to the current brain drain. Ireland has set aside the equivalent of half a million Deutschmarks from its national budget to get every engineer who as left the country to come back. Our top experts would come back immediately if they had decent working conditions and pay.

After many years of falling employment we undertake to make the year 2001 a year of growth in employment. This will be one of the most important criteria of the success of our economic policy. Our aim is to bring about a considerable improvement in the standard of living of our citizens. According to official statistical data, the average earnings of a four-member family are barely sufficient to cover 70 per cent of the average consumer basket of goods. Our aim is to ensure that, by the end of 2001, an average family should be able to cover the costs of at least an entire consumer basket of goods.

What we expect in the way of outside investments in the forthcoming period are investments in agriculture, transport infrastructure, and the energy generation system. By upgrading these sectors to a satisfactory level, we shall be approaching goals the likes of which we could not even dream about before 5 October. Our country will become a significant exporter of food products again and I believe that I am not taking a great risk if I promise, on behalf of this government, that we shall have enough electricity next winter, since we shall undertake in the course of 2001 an overhaul of the entire electric power industry the first such overhaul in the past 10 years.

We shall provide significant loans for small and medium-sized enterprises industries and we shall strive for balanced regional development. Also, the new
local administration law will make possible a decentralisation of power and finance. The province of Voivodina will have a real autonomy, suited to the needs of its citizens and those of Serbia as a whole.

Our economic strategy must consist in finding and attracting new investments, so that Serbia can get back to work over the next four years. After 10 years of deterioration, we need a real New Deal, the most dynamic economic development since World War Two.

The task of this government is to create through legislative initiatives conditions favourable for investment and doing business. We shall gradually harmonise our regulations with those of Europe, with a view to becoming a member of the European Union member in ten years at the very latest.

Firstly, we shall establish quite clearly the situation in Serbia concerning finances, property, obligations and rights. We shall propose an act regulating property illegally taken away from its rightful owners, which is a way of providing at least partial compensation to the people whose property has been taken away from them for ideological reasons. We expect the federal government to annul the relevant legal acts of half a century ago. Also, we expect that the Karadjordjevic family will get back its citizenship that was taken from them, and that this most famous Serbian family will finally return to its rightful home, the White Palace.

Secondly, we shall unblock the economy financially by converting debts into ownership, through reprogramming or compensation.

Thirdly, we shall establish a clear ownership structure and in connection with this, a modern management structure in our companies. There will be no more socialist type managers who managed the property of others without any financial liability.

Fourthly, we shall complete a legislative system that makes untrammelled business communication possible. In close collaboration with the federal government we shall pass legal acts regulating foreign investments, mortgage, arbitrage, concessions, donations and the securities market.

Fifthly, we shall establish a new taxation policy, which will lift part of the heavy burden from the economy and employees’ earnings. It is our intention to simplify the tax system to a great extent to lower the taxes considerably and to make up for the budget deficit thus created through the suppression of the black market in oil derivatives and cigarettes. We shall do away with other levies and taxes imposed by the previous regime.

This is our programme. The least we can promise is that this will be a government of rapid action, efficiency and transparency. We shall react to every problem immediately, we shall present it truthfully and propose a solution. We shall not lie nor steal. In all fairness, we do not have a magic wand. What we have is know-how and energy. I am convinced that, with the support and active participation of our citizens, we shall succeed. ♦
The Challenges that Colombia faces

Colombia has never faced so many challenges at the one time: saving democracy, bolstering peace, defeating the drug-trafficking, righting the economy, maintaining national unity and inserting itself in the international system.

Over the past forty years the country has lived in the midst of an acute internal armed conflict in which the state is fighting against various illegal forces, the guerrillas and the paramilitaries. The tragic balance sheet speaks for itself about the humanitarian tragedy which the nation is going through: 35,000 violent deaths a year, nearly two million people forced out of their homes, around 500 massacres a year, thousands of exiles and disappeared people, tens of blacklists. Death, despair and fear stalk our land and threaten our common future.

Thus it is that people's principal preoccupations is the search for peace. In order to find it the government is pushing forward with a negotiation process with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the FARC, which started on 7 January in the midst of a feeling of euphoria for peace which filled the national consciousness with hope.

Two years later things have changed radically. In the face of the lack of results and the arrogance of the FARC, one of the oldest Marxist guerrilla groups in the world, some 90 per cent of public opinion is rejecting this process.

The government's low popularity, where the president has the lowest rating in almost a century, is due to the general feeling that it has given much to the rebels and received nothing in return: the guerrillas administer as they please a cleared area of 42,000 square kilometres where there is no legal authority and have converted it into a military fortress and supply base while they continue to destroy villages - about 200 in the last two years - and sow panic among the civilian population which is threatened with kidnapping, extortion and forced
recruitment into their ranks.

After many false starts and a long period of uncertainty, this initiative caught its second wind on 9 February this year after a meeting between President Pastrana and the FARC commander Manuel Marulanda Vélez which attracted attention worldwide. The guerrillas had suspended the talks unilaterally on 17 November 2000.

After a rapid exchange of messages between the two sides and broad political negotiations President Pastrana extended the deadline for the maintenance of the cleared area for four days as he waited for his interlocutor in the Caguán region to agree on a new meeting at the highest level which would define once and for all the outcome of the peace process. This outcome was fixed with the signature of a joint agreement which laid the bases for progress.

The direct diplomacy put into practice by Pastrana and Marulanda Vélez uplifted hopes for the success of this effort at national reconciliation. Nevertheless, public opinion is still awaiting from the FARC peaceful actions which could confirm that it has a real intention to negotiate. The country is also looking forward to the prompt freeing of fifty sick soldiers and police who have been held in the hands of the guerrillas for more than three years. This would be the first gesture to emerge from the historic meeting.

At the same time the government has corrected the mistakes committed at the beginning of its period in office as it administered the agreements signed by the previous government with the Army of National Liberation, the ELN, which would have spared Colombia a great number of terrorist acts, violations of international humanitarian law, deaths and destruction of the infrastructure by the guerrillas.

Having overcome all sorts of obstacles and thanks to the support of organised civil society this initiative seems to be making good progress.

In fact there do already exist two agreements, signed in Havana between the parties, for the creation of a cleared area in two municipalities in the south of the department of Bolívar where a National Convention will take place to enable that organisation to leave the armed struggle and defend its ideas within a framework of democracy.

The impending agreement between the government and the ELN with the community and the local and regional authorities in that part of the country will soon allow this unique form of negotiation to be tested in which civil society and the international community will play a very important role.

Although there exist many reasons for the inhabitants of this future cleared area to distrust this initiative, pressured as they are by paramilitary forces, it is clear that once the process has started there will be no turning back.

The peace processes with the FARC and the ELN have been threatened by a third actor, the paramilitaries who support a politico-military project of the extreme right, who are present in many parts of the country, who have strong support, who are backed by radical cattle breeders, traders and landowners and who are active in the drugs trade. Their armed incursions are aimed at stopping the guerrilla advance to which end they commit a great many crimes against humanity such as massacres of villages and summary executions which cause waves of forced evictions, terror and poverty among the unarmed civilian population.

The FARC have made it a condition of their return to the negotiating table that there be a demonstration by the government that there exists a strategy to tackle these paramilitary groups who, they say, are part of the counter-insurgent policy of the state.

The truth is that although the government seems every day to be more disposed to eradicate this illegal armed group it is continue to expand and grow at a rapid rate with the help I have mentioned and backing of a few servants of the state.

It is said that there are some 9,000 men under arms at the orders of Carlos
Castañó who are willing to become the third force at the negotiating table.

The attitude of the guerrillas, arrogant and challenging has without a doubt helped the growth of these illegal expressions of private justice who are battling the guerrillas for control of large parts of the country.

In a word the map of Colombia today shows the cruel struggle for territorial, political, social and economic control in which the absence of the state and the victimisation of civil society are the principal characteristics.

The motive force for the increasingly savage war is the trade in drugs which is a source of money and support for the illegal groups in their war with each other and whose private cartels are moreover another source of threat to democratic stability.

It is in the light of this that the controversial Plan Colombia has been conceived by President Pastrana’s government and put together by the government of the United States of America, whose military component is worrying the NGOs concerned with human rights, the political parties, academics, the concerned population in the south of the country and their neighbours many of whom, including President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, expressed worries about its effects.

Although there is no going back on the Plan and it is clear that the new residents of the White House will give their own push to it, there are more and more calls, at home and abroad, for a reconsideration of its military component and its extension, with some social content, to the whole Andean region so that its benefits and potential for peace can be real.

What is certain is that this Plan has, thanks to the negotiations with the FARC and the ELN, its rejection by the European Union and the worries expressed by the affected communities, turned into a factor which will determine the future of the country.

The most praiseworthy thing would be to turn it into an Andean strategy with a strong social component to quicken the eradication of the areas under drugs.
These factors, the negotiations with the guerrillas, the solution of the paramilitary problem, and the management of the Plan Colombia are the focus of the national reconciliation. If it fails we will be condemned to many more years of sterile fratricidal violence.

The patriotic opposition, lead by the Colombian Liberal Party, has not stood idly by waiting for all this to happen because it is conscious of its historic responsibility. Consequently it has backed all the government's efforts and has stood ready to save the process when that has been needed. We understand that worsening of the armed conflict has brought irreparable damage to society as a whole and to our democracy, already weakened and boxed in by violent people and the inability of the state to rein them in.

This state of affairs which is keeping people in a state of uncertainty and has put off foreign investors has started a massive exodus of Colombians and a strong shift to the right of many in society who are calling for the crisis to be ended by violent means.

The Colombian Liberal Party, a full member of the Socialist International, leads the opposition to the government and nevertheless supports the Common Front for Peace and against Violence made up of various political organisation and movements to try and save and strengthen the talks with the FARC and bring about the drawing up of a national peace strategy in the knowledge that reconciliation is everyone's business.

The defeat of scepticism, polarisation and the shift to the right, the strengthening of democracy - through a thoroughgoing political reform, the establishment of lasting negotiated peace, the rescue of the economy, the founding of a new social contract and the achievement of the solidarity of the international community are the tasks we Colombian Liberals have set ourselves in order to pull the country out of the morass into which it has fallen.

It is vital that the Socialist International keeps us company as we overcome the ills which beset us.

It is evident that we Colombians will have to use all the imagination and tenacity which marks us out if we are to ensure a better future, but without foreign help in the context of our sovereignty this will be harder. As a nation we face many challenges but socialist ideas give us the assurance that there is a future.
Fighting Poverty

Poverty is defined as the lack or shortage of material, monetary, social, cultural, and psychological conditions for the life of an individual or group of individuals. As such, poverty looms large in the economic and social development of Côte d’Ivoire.

Since its appearance at the end of the 1970s, poverty has reached worrying proportions. The level of poverty has risen from 10 per cent in 1985 to 36.8 per cent in 1995. Thus, the proportion of poor people has tripled in the space of one decade.

This poverty is both material and psychological. The possession of goods, the ability to look after oneself, to bring up one’s children, to eat decently are no longer enough to define well-being. For many Ivorian families uncertainty, vulnerability and a sense of impotence are bound up with the state of poverty.

Poverty which was a phenomenon of the countryside spread in the 1970 to the towns and cities. The social categories most exposed are illiterate adults, women and young people. The spreading of poverty has come about rapidly.

In the face of this phenomenon of poverty, which accentuated the marginalisation and exclusion of a broad stratum of the population, government moved slowly.

A national plan to combat poverty was approved by the Council of Ministers on 12 June 1997 and the measures taken to insure economic competitiveness so as to reduce poverty have had meagre results. The events of 24 December 1999 and the transition to military control put an end to budget expenditure, reducing economic growth from 6 per cent in 1998 to minus 2 per cent in 2000. But poverty is not inevitable. That is why social policy and the fight against poverty in Côte d’Ivoire aim to reduce in the medium term the present poverty index from 33.6 per cent in 1998 to less than 30 per cent in 2005.

There are three essential causes of poverty in Côte d’Ivoire. The first is rooted in the export trade in agricultural raw materials, principally coffee and cocoa, the fall in whose prices, together with the big fluctuations in the value of the US dollar put a brutal end to the Ivorian Miracle of the beginning of the 1980s. The second, the debt crisis which has forced government to submit to the Structural Adjustment Programmes, SAPs, of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is still putting a brake on the country’s development. Among the conditions for development aid was a reduction in the staffing of public sector
enterprises, their privatisation and the reduction of civil servants' wages. Consequently, unemployment has risen notably, particularly in the mid-1980s.

In 1986 foreign businesses disinvested, raising unemployment. Poverty developed, affecting 11 per cent of the population. The austerity of the measures brought on by the PAs brought real poverty to the towns.

Debt servicing too meant that the social expenditure of the state was cut. More than half Côte d'Ivoire's export income goes on foreign debt servicing to the detriment of the building of health centres, schools and universities.

The third cause, linked to the oil shocks of 1976-79, sounded the tocsin for the Ivorian Miracle. The collapse of raw material prices because of the depreciation of the US dollar after the oil shock of 1976, the rise in transport costs and the rise in price of industrial goods has contributed to the deterioration of the terms of trade. Local causes have made the rate of development extremely slow.

Poverty made its appearance in Côte d'Ivoire at the end of the 1970s. The population of four million had tripled by 1990 because of natural increase and large immigrant flows. Today's rate of population increase, at 23.8 per cent, is one of the highest in the world. It is projected that the population will rise to 20 million by 2005 and 27.5 million by 2015.

This has brought about a growth of cities and an uneven population density within the country. The South and the forested regions of the West are subject to great population pressures. In the South in Abidjan, we have 292 inhabitants per square kilometre against 8 at Odienné in the North-West and 6 at Bouma in the North-East. Abidjan has gone from 65,000 people in 1998 to 2.5 million.

Economic growth has had mixed fortunes. Between 1966 and 1974 it was on average 9.4 per cent, then fell to minus 7 per cent from 1986 to 1990 while recovering to minus 0.2 per cent between 1991 and 1993. After the devaluation of the CFA franc it climbed to an average of 7 per cent from 1994 to 1998. In 2000 the rate of growth fell again to minus 2 per cent.

Despite the economic miracle of the 1970s, the population of Côte d'Ivoire has got to know many forms of poverty. Economic growth has had a negligible effect on the level of Sustained Human Development. The country lags in this regard. The 2000 World Development Report puts it in 154th position among 174 countries, thus one of those with the lowest level of Sustained Human Development. Despite a gross domestic product of $1,598 per head of purchasing power Côte d'Ivoire is far behind Cameroun in 134th place or Togo in 145th place despite the fact that their per caput purchasing power is lower.

This reflects once again the inequality in the distribution of the fruits of economic growth.

The present level of poverty which affects 36.8 per cent of the population is the result of past disparities, among economic groups, between the sexes and among regions. It is true many investments were made. But the massive recourse to foreign finance to cost these and the absence of any diversification of the productive process have weakened the bases of the Ivorian economy. What is more the concentration of economic development in the south of the country has resulted in a pressure on the urban infrastructure which, together with a slowing of public investment has brought poverty to town-dwellers. Studies and investigation of poverty in Côte d'Ivoire concentrate mainly on levels of consumption. If there does not exist a legal definition of poverty the manifestations of it are daily visible to decision makers. The purchase of food absorbs more than half of household expenditure. Between 20 and 40 per cent of the population cannot satisfy their daily food needs.

Between 1985 and 1994 malnutrition has greatly increased. The percentage of children between 24 and 35 months who are small for their age has gone up by two-thirds.

Shortage of food is widespread in the towns and countryside alike. Health, education, housing, access to water are important indicators of social wellbeing and the ability to escape from poverty. But there is also widespread infant and maternal mortality. Life expectancy has fallen from 54 years in 1995 to 46.9 years in 1998. With 10 per cent of its population HIV positive Côte d'Ivoire is the West African country which has the highest incidence of AIDS with 50,000 deaths registered by the World Health Organisation and 600,000 children left orphans by the disease. Such figures show that the advances of the previous 20 years are
being wiped out by AIDS. HIV/AIDS is the principal cause of adult mortality, more important than malaria or traffic accidents.

Ivorians do not consider poverty in uniquely economic terms and the fight against poverty must include the psychological dimension. For many citizens poverty means a loss of dignity. The fact of living on the margins of society in unhealthy and dangerous slums reinforces those people’s feeling of being second-class citizens. Unemployment and lack of access to the land brings on anti-social behaviour.

Without entering into detail, we must sketch out the main strategies against poverty. It is a menace at the beginning of the third millennium to human progress and democracy in our countries in the context of the thoroughgoing reform of the state.

Efficient measures must therefore be taken on the questions of schooling to give every young Ivorian a chance of education. There must, too, be a universal health service and a housing plan to allow all Ivorians to live decently. There must be thoroughgoing reform of the education system with free education from kindergarten; literacy as an aid to democratizing the schools for the benefit of the greatest number; greater efficiency within schools; free education from 2001/2002 and greater and more efficient regionalisation.

In the realm of health more people must be given access to health care with better organisation and an accent put on preventive medicine; the rehabilitation of traditional medicine; greater research and the encouragement of the pharmaceutical industry and health insurance within the context of universal social security. HIV/AIDS must be prevented and treated at the primary and secondary level with free anti-retroviral medicines provided for sufferers through a specialised ministerial office. Unemployment must be tackled by developing crafts, aiding the unemployed, promoting individual enterprise by supporting small scheme and investigating ways to foster the secondary and tertiary sector.

Similar measures must be undertaken on the housing front, promoting housing for all, urban planning, electrification and water supply. Since March, Côte d’Ivoire has been eligible for aid under the Very Indebted Poor Country initiative and could have profited from it had it not been for the military putsch of December 1999 which produced a recession.

The renewal of relations with the international financial community so as to be able to negotiate with the Bretton Woods institutions demands the preparation of a strategic plan for the reduction of poverty. This has been done and a national committee has been appointed to oversee its implementation for economic development for the benefit of all. ♦
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

"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 ways 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'etat 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 recurrence 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 community 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 leaders 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 nondemocratic 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 Lykketoft 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 help 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 Massoubodi, 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 lead 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 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 waiver 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 supports 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, voting 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.
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 the full 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 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 fulfill 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.

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 understandings that could be made in present negotiations. In this context, the SI remains supportive of all United Nations initiatives.

SI Africa Committee meets in Niamey

The Socialist International Africa Committee met in Niamey, the capital of Niger, on 1-2 June, gathering delegates from a score of parties across the continent and from other parts of the world under the main theme 'The Social Democratic Agenda for Africa'.

THE NIAMEY DECLARATION

The first meeting of the Socialist International Africa Committee for the year 2001 took place in Niamey on 1-2 June 2001. The debate on the main theme 'The Social Democratic Programme in Africa' included the three points below:

1. The advancement, strengthening and consolidation of democracy on the continent.

2. Achieving a future of peace and security for all the peoples of Africa.

3. Giving priority to the fight against poverty and securing a sustainable development for all the peoples in the region.

The meeting was hosted by the Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger PNDS, chaired by Ousmane Tanor Dieng, PS Senegal, Chair of the Committee and focused on issues of democracy, peace, security, the struggle against poverty and sustainable development throughout the region. The gathering, addressed at its opening by the leader of the PNDS, Mahamadou Issoufou, the SI Secretary General and Ousmane Tanor Dieng, brought out a strong and detailed programme for the strengthening of democracy in the continent.
Following a rich and rewarding debate, the following conclusions were drawn with regards to:

The first theme: The advancement, strengthening and consolidation of democracy on the continent:

1. Although the process of democratisation initiated on the continent a decade ago is now irreversible, it is still hindered by some key factors. These include:

   - The material and intellectual poverty of many citizens, which affects their ability and faculty to deal with civic issues and does not allow them to devote much of their time or, more essentially, skills to the management of public matters. This is highly detrimental to the emergence of a truly civil society.

2. All of these obstacles, however real, do not make democracy an unattainable goal on the African continent. They bear witness to the fact that democracy represents a major challenge, which makes the responsibility of African social democrats all the greater. Of all the existing political forces social democracy is best qualified to set up measures for ensuring the promotion of democracy as well as its development on the continent. These qualifications are:

   - The universal nature of its aims, opposing any kind of discrimination, to secure unity and cohesion within countries, particularly in these times of great upheavals.

   - Its modern approach based on openness, tolerance and integration. Openness in the sense of adhering to the ideals of a constitutional state, but also in the sense of its ability to effectively incorporate the current imperatives of the economic and institutional integration of the continent.

   - Its essentially humanistic aims, particularly in this era of ultra-liberalism, when States are literally forced to submit to the injunctions of international financial institutions. The principles of solidarity inherent in social democratic values are of considerable benefit when it comes to defining a strategy capable of combining economic rigour with social imperatives.

3. Resolutions

   The establishment of a deep rooted democracy on the continent necessitates greater involvement on the part of all socialist parties, particularly with regard to mobilising the available mechanisms and resources or their updating within the framework of the existing collaboration. To this end, the member parties of the Socialist International are expressly invited to contribute to the effective mobilisation of the support necessary for the optimum development of democratic organisations, notably with the aim of strengthening political parties and the civil society, financing the overhaul of electoral systems, etc., and supporting training programmes in order to raise the level of education and public awareness of the population.

   The establishment of democracy necessitates a modicum of material well-being. The effective promotion of development programmes also necessitates systems for the production of goods and rendering of services within the context of a newly liberated global market.

   The member parties of the Socialist International support the rethinking of all the ways and means of the mechanisms and procedures to facilitate the effective use of skilled intellectual resources of nationals of African countries.
The second theme: Achieving peace and security in Africa:

1. The armed conflicts currently taking place in Africa can be grouped into the following categories:

Conflicts relating to the transition to democracy arising from difficulties in reaching a compromise between the forces in power and the new forces claiming power in accordance with democratic principles. Countries in this category include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DROC), the Congo, Togo, Guinea, and the Central African Republic.

Conflicts relating to a sense of identity, where different ethnic groups or even tribes are pitted against each other, as is the case in Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, and Somalia. These crises centre on the question of power and the difficulties associated with creating new mechanisms for dealing with it.

Conflicts resulting from wars primarily motivated by the wish to access mining resources and control their trade. Countries in this category include Sierra Leone, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola.

Regional conflicts resulting from a context of global insecurity and leading to a geopolitical reorganisation, for example in the Great Lakes region.

2. The solutions to these conflicts must come as a result of a double effort, both on the part of every country concerned on the one hand and the involvement of the international community on the other. Both parties must aim for:

A genuine constitutional State, which will establish and respect the strict rules of democratic governance based on free and regular elections, which if implemented, will result in the alternation of governance. Such a State must also scrupulously respect the rights of the individual and implement an economic order capable of bringing about social well-being.

An institutional guarantee of the rights of minority groups.

Internationally backed measures to eliminate the factors responsible for the trafficking in mineral riches.

Dialogue and sponsored initiatives by the UN, the OAU, as well as regional and sub-regional organisations (ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD) with the aim of bringing about regional peace and controlling conflicts based on a strong consensus. The SI can play an important role in this regard, in its capacity as an advisor both to African States and to European States governed by socialist and social democrat parties.

On the third theme, the following points were highlighted:

Poverty is the biggest challenge the world faces at the start of the 21st century. The scourge of humanity, it poses the problem of survival when globalisation has become so prevalent and solidarity so rare.

Strategies for eradicating poverty must be a combination of several measures, of which the most important are, in our view, the following:

Cancellation of the debt of under-developed countries.

Working towards the ideal of sustainable human development in every respect, particularly with regard to the protection of the environment.

Establishing a more just international economic order in order to ensure a fairer distribution of wealth and work among countries in the southern hemisphere.

Promoting democracy and good governance through effective methods.

Encouraging the promotion of frameworks of economic and political integration, particularly on the African continent.

Using effective measures of solidarity to try to stem the spread of AIDS.

Promoting equality among the sexes in order to give women back their place in the development of societies.

The Socialist International must support all the initiatives of the emerging international civil societies, notably by introducing a tax on the transferral of hot money, with the aim of establishing rules on international solidarity, founded on principles other than those of globalisation with their sole aim of boosting the
profits of large multinational companies.

Specific cases

At the Niamey meeting, some of the conflicts in Africa were discussed by the SI, with particular reference to the situations in:

Chad, where it condemns the events after the last presidential election, whilst expressing its solidarity with the political parties in opposition, the victims of repression.

Mauritania, where it condemns the banning of the UFD-New Era, whilst expressing its solidarity with and support of the cause it has courageously fought. The SI is urging the authorities of this country to take effective measures, in discussion with the parties in opposition, to guarantee the implementation of free, fair and transparent elections.

Côte d’Ivoire, where it welcomes the rise to power of the Côte d’Ivoire Popular Front, FPI, and expresses its full support of and solidarity with the government in its endeavours towards national reconciliation and the democratisation of the country.

Burkina Faso, where it is urging the authorities to commence a genuine dialogue with all democratic organisations and political parties in order to strengthen democracy and banish impunity from economic and bloody crimes.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, where it supports democratic forces, notably the UDPS, in its fight to build a democratic society.

Cameroon, where it condemns the seizure of power and the violence leading to the execution of nine children in Bependa, and expresses its support of the SDF in its remarkable struggle.

Guinea, where it welcomes the liberation of Professor Alpha Condé, President of the RPG, following the major campaign of support organised by the SI. The SI demands that all civil rights be restored to Professor Condé immediately.

Togo, where it expresses its concern over the ongoing political crisis that risks developing into a conflict capable of threatening peace in the sub-region. It vigorously encourages holding the anticipated legislative elections planned for October 2001.

Africa, where it avoids interminable fratricidal conflicts, it must continue to be extremely mindful of the intervention of local forces serving foreign interests.
The Socialist International Committee on the Economy, Social Cohesion and the Environment, in Casablanca

"The planet is still increasingly divided and the gaps are widening," said Abderrahman Yousoufi, leader of the Union of Popular Socialist Forces, USFP, and Prime Minister of Morocco, as he welcomed delegates to the Socialist International Committee on the Economy, Social Cohesion and the Environment who met in Casablanca on 4-5 May. The meeting, attended by representatives of member parties from Africa, Europe and Latin America, was chaired by Christoph Zöpel of the German Social Democratic Party, SPD, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Yousouffi added, "increasing trade liberalisation over the past twenty years has ended up in a situation where less than 10 per cent of the population of the world produces and consumes more than 70 per cent of all goods and services while half that population lives on less than two dollars a day."


In his introduction, Zöpel, who chairs the Committee, underlined the need for social democrats to strengthen the social dimension of the world economy and make it respond to the agenda of the many.

The Committee discussed and adopted a paper entitled 'How to Make the World Economy more Social'. It called, among other measures, for the reinsertion of development questions into the global agenda; better regulation of the flows of goods and finance; reform of international institutions; the adoption of basic principles for a global economic system and closer consideration of the position of transnational corporations.

On the institutions in particular it called for greater transparency in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; greater political control of both of them by the Board of Directors with a decrease in the power of their bureaucracies; stronger measures of oversight of them; better definition of their tasks and a reduction of these to the role for which they were initially created.

On the question of the further reform of international institutions the paper called for a prudent approach to additional liberalisation and a strengthening of the International Labour Office.

The Committee also received two reports, the first outlining the activities of the Working Group on the WTO. The second report summarised the activities of the Working Group on the Kyoto Agreement on Global Warming and the situation following the decision of the US government to withdraw support from the Agreement. This topic, together with that of the forthcoming WTO Ministerial Negotiations at Doha, will figure on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the SI Council in Lisbon at the end of June.

The next meeting of the Committee is to take place in late September in Mexico City and will take as its main theme - Bridges across the Digital Gap: the Role of Education in the 21st Century.
A meeting of SICLAC took place in Buenos Aires on 11-12 June, hosted by the Radical Civic Union, UCR and the Popular Socialist Party, PSP.

The meeting concentrated on two main themes: 'Our International in Latin America and the Caribbean - common policies and strategies to ensure economic and social advancement and a society of opportunity for all; and 'Our commitment for democracy, peace and security throughout Latin America and the Caribbean'.

The co-chairs of the Committee, Raúl Alfonsín, UCR, a former president of Argentina, and Anselmo Sule of the Chilean

'Social Democratic Radical Party, PSDR, of Chile, chaired the meeting, which was attended by delegates from the Western hemisphere and Europe. From the host country the meeting was also addressed by Rubén Giustiniani, Secretary General of the PSP and Aníbal Ibarra, the Mayor of the capital.

'have been left, the delegates concluded, weak and defenceless.

The remedy should be found in genuinely participative democracy, the ethics of solidarity and the modernisation of social structures. There should, too, be a push for regional integration as a way of countering domination by one power and putting an end to dependency.

The document went to urge that, though it was probable
that globalisation without solidarity might increase dependency, the probable should not be accepted as inevitable. Efforts must be made to encourage co-operatives inter alia, and support non-governmental organisations.

"The future", the document concludes, "depends on our readiness to fight in all fields, leaving aside, obviously, extremism, violence and demagogy".

The situations in Colombia, Peru, Puerto Rico and Venezuela were all commented upon in separate resolutions. SIACLAC backed the idea of a revision of the Plan Colombia given the need to push forward with a strategy of peace in that country within a worldwide solution of the drug trafficking and consumption of narcotics. It went on to propose a World Anti-drug Summit to take place during the forthcoming Colombian presidential term which starts in August 2002.

On Peru SIACLAC expressed satisfaction at the holding of the recent fair, free and transparent election and congratulated Alan Garcia on his part in them while reiterating its confidence in the Peruvian Aprista Party, PAP, a member of the SI.

The Committee expressed its support for the people of Puerto Rico and its continuing opposition to the US Navy's use of the island of Vieques and support for the return of occupied lands. It also expressed its support for Ruben Berrios, leader of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, PIP, in his fight on the subject.

On Venezuela it called for the maintenance of democracy and respect for human rights, urging fraternal parties to keep vigilant in international fora on the question of the preservation of human rights in that country.
The SI Asia-Pacific Committee gave a boost to plans for the long-delayed reunification of North and South Korea when it met on 5-6 March in Tokyo. The meeting, which was hosted by the Social Democratic Party of Japan, tackled many of the principal political concerns of the region and demonstrated the new vigour that the International is showing in one of the most populous and important areas of the world.

The gathering brought together members of the Millennium Democratic Party of the Republic of Korea in the South and of the Workers' Party of Korea from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, DPRK, in the North. It was widely hailed in the region as a big step in support the process of reconciliation that began with the summit between the leaders of the two states, the South's Kim Dae Jung and the North's Kim Jong Il in June of last year.

One important concrete result of the talks is that the SI is to break new ground by mounting a high level mission to the two republics, its first-ever, later this year.

The Committee called on SI parties round the world to promote the bilateral relations with the North, provide it with humanitarian assistance and facilitate the DPRK's desire for better international links.

Both countries would take their places in the projected Northeast Asia Comprehensive Security Organisation which the Committee called for. Its other members would be Japan, China, Mongolia, Russia, the United States and Canada.

This body would play an active role in resolving conflicts, and in addressing problems that of poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation and inequality. The planned Organisation incorporates guarantees against military action.

Among other topics discussed were the withdrawal of US forces from the Japanese island of Okinawa; the racial tension in Fiji; authoritarian rule in Pakistan; the continuing plight of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma; police violence in Malaysia; the search for better democracy in the Philippines; intolerance in Afghanistan with regard to the role of women and its own cultural heritage; political transition in Indonesia; political progress in East Timor. Also discussed were Papua New Guinea and the problems in Bougainville; West Papua and the Solomon Islands.
Tokyo Declaration of the SI Asia-Pacific Committee

The Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee reaffirms its determination to achieve peace and security for all the people of this vital region of the world. It also reiterates its long-standing commitment, in cooperation with Socialist International member parties throughout the world, to support the building and strengthening of democracy in every country. Peace is a fundamental requirement for economic development, while democracy and respect for human rights are key conditions for ensuring a durable peace.

With regard to South Korea and North Korea, it continues to fully support the process of reconciliation that began with the historic summit between the leaders of the two states in June of last year. It was particularly pleasing to have representatives of the two ruling parties participating together in its meeting in Tokyo and their informative contributions to the discussion were greatly valued. It is also noted with great satisfaction the recent efforts toward reuniting Korean families that have been divided for so many years and the Committee encourages both countries to find ways to expand and make permanent this important humanitarian and confidence-building programme.

As part of its ongoing efforts to encourage greater trust and continued progress toward reunification on the Korean peninsula, the International, in line with decisions taken previously, will undertake the concrete step of carrying out a SI mission to both South Korea and North Korea later this year. At the same time, it calls upon SI member parties and its parties in government to encourage the further inclusion of North Korea into the international community by actively promoting participation in various international bodies, by establishing diplomatic relations at the bilateral level and by providing assistance in the recovery of the North, including humanitarian aid.

At the regional level, it supports the proposal by the Social Democratic Party of Japan to establish a Northeast Asia Comprehensive Security Organisation with eight member countries including Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Russia, the United States and Canada. This body would play an active role in resolving conflicts, and in addressing the common problems that are at the root of conflicts such as poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation and inequality both between and within countries. To strengthen the capability of this body, it endorses the idea of incorporating and implementing the guarantees against military action as they are stated in Japan’s peace constitution. Such an organisation would provide a framework for cooperation and dialogue between nations and, once established, could also provide a model for enhancing political and economic relations between the nations of Southeast Asia as well.

With specific regard to Japan, it recognises that the Okinawan people and others in Japan have been appealing for the deliberate, gradual realignment and withdrawal of the US bases in Okinawa. The Committee supports these proposals which aim to eliminate the threat to human rights, the environment and the lives of Okinawan people, and in this way stands together with them for the restoration of human dignity and preservation of the environment.

It also reaffirms the strong commitment of the Socialist International against nuclear proliferation and its continuing stand to avoid any arms race involving either nuclear or conventional weapons. In this regard, it supports the initiative of the Social Democratic Party of Japan toward achieving a nuclear-free zone in Northeast Asia, and repeats its previous calls for far-reaching reductions in the production and sale of conventional arms, and for the ban of all biological and chemical weapons. It recognises that securing a nuclear-free zone will require much work and patience, but already it can see some positive developments in the region and remains confident that step by step this very important goal.

At the global level, it recognises the critical role played by the United Nations in the pursuit of peace and security and in addressing such concerns as racial and religious discrimination, which are at the root of so much tension and conflict in the region and in other parts of the world. In this regard, it advocates full respect for the opinions and viewpoints of developing countries in the United Nations and, as they constitute a majority of UN members, that they be fully involved in the making of decisions by the body.

This will promote more
effective cooperation between nations and enhance the prospects for conflict resolution.

A United Nations that operates in a more equitable way is important to ensure that economic globalisation works for all people in all countries. This also means increasing efforts to address the specific needs and protecting the rights of children, the elderly and especially women. In particular, the members of the Committee call for increasing efforts as part of the ongoing International campaign to end violence against women. It also calls for renewed determination in support of the International's campaign against the death penalty. The International remains confident in the continuing struggle for peace, security and social justice because it pursues these goals with the full participation of women in all spheres of activity - political, economic, social and cultural. At the same time, it gains further strength through the continuing cooperation between social democratic parties and free trade unions, including the affiliates of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions - Asia and Pacific Regional Organisation, ICFTU-APRO.

As the International enhances its activities in the field of peace and security, it recommits itself to the struggle for democracy in Asia and the Pacific. In this sense, it is pleasing to hear of the recent decision by the Court of Appeal in favour of maintaining the 1997 constitution in Fiji, a confirmation of the position taken by the Committee at its meeting last year in Wellington. It now calls for the return to a democratic rule of law in Fiji based on the constitution.

In Burma, the Committee notes the first steps toward dialogue between Aung San Suu Kyi and the military regime. This is a significant and potentially positive development. However, the conditions of repression remain in force. It therefore advocates that the International maintain its pressure, based on prior resolutions including the 1999 Declaration of Paris, to ensure that dialogue is serious, the only way that can lead to substantial and lasting democratic change. It also calls upon international bodies to join the SI in demanding the release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi.

In Malaysia the Committee notes with concern the attempts by the government to resort to communal politics to regain its eroding public support. It is also dismayed at the recent trend of police violence and repression against peaceful political gatherings. However, it is pleased to see that the movement for democracy is gathering momentum everyday and reiterates its support for the key role played by the SI member, the Democratic Action Party, in responding under difficult circumstances to the democratic aspirations of the Malaysian people.

It also deplores the continuation of authoritarian rule in Pakistan and repeats the call of the International for the reestablishment of democracy as soon as possible through the holding of free elections.

In the Philippines the strength and purpose of citizens in the quest for better democracy and more effective democratic institutions has clearly been seen. Again they have created the opportunity for establishing truly responsive and accountable government and the Committee fully backs the role of SI member Philippines Democratic Socialist Party in the effort.

Indonesia is undergoing a very difficult transition and the Committee hopes that the constitution will remain the basis both for ensuring democratic rule and for achieving peaceful resolution to internal conflicts which have recently led to such serious bloodshed.

In East Timor, it continues to back the independence and democratisation process and notes positively the emergence of new political parties with the approach of elections.

It also has continuing concerns in the South Pacific, including in Papua New Guinea, where the civil conflict in Bougainville has yet to be resolved; West Papua, where reports of human rights abuses continue; and the Solomon Islands, where tensions linger. In Afghanistan, it remains deeply concerned about the continuation of extreme intolerance, both with regard to women's rights and the fundamental right of religious pluralism, and therefore deplores the destruction of the Buddhist shrines.

Finally, the Committee recognises that all these efforts toward achieving peace and building and preserving democracy in Asia and the Pacific are part of the overall global approach of the International. The challenges are great but it continues moving forward, confident that social democracy is the only movement that brings people together and that people are what gives the movement its strength.
Bertrand Delanôe, the first Socialist leader of Paris since the Commune of 1871, took his seat in the Hôtel de Ville in the French capital at the end of March.

Born in Tunisia on 30 May 1950 he was a former staff member of the headquarters of the Socialist Party, PS, his talent having been spotted by the late President François Mitterrand. He was elected to the city's city council in 1977 and became deputy for the XVIII arrondissement or district of the city in 1981 spokesman for the party from 1981 to 1983.

He also takes pride in his experience in the private sector as the founder and director of an advertising and public relations firm. In 1993 he was elected leader of the Socialist group on the city council.

Delanôe told a questioner two years ago that he was homosexual and his statement did him no harm in a country where few leading politicians are known to be gay. The book he published in 1999 Pour l'Honneur de Paris (For the Honour of Paris) was a fierce critique of the social and economic scandals which had dogged the city for years under the regime of the conservatives.

He is keen for Paris to become a 'greener' capital and has, for instance, suggested more limitations on the access of cars to the centre and more facilities for cyclists with bicycles for hire at the main Metro stations. He also wants to roof over the périphérique, the main road which noisily circles the centre of the city.

He has promised to greatly increase the number of crèches available for the babies of Paris. He is passionate that Paris become the city to be selected for the next Olympic Games but one and had promised that all the temporary structures and equipment that would be used for the Games would be donated after use to cities in the developing world. At the same time he has pledged he will impose no new taxes on Parisians for the next six years.

Pedro Pires, the former leader of the African Party of Cape Verde's Independence, PAICV, a full member party of the Socialist International, won the presidential elections held in February, according to a declaration by the National Election Commission on 5 March. In a close-fought race Pires, former prime minister, won 49.43 per cent of the votes cast against the 49.42 per cent gained by the runner-up Carlos Veiga.

After the PAICV victory in the January legislative elections the new prime minister is José Maria Neves who succeeded Pires as party leader in July 2000.

Neves is also defence minister.
Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Alabama Capital Resource Center, is the winner of the 2000 Olof Palme Prize. The Prize, named after the late Swedish Prime Minister, is awarded annually for outstanding achievement by the Olof Palme Memorial Fund: previous winners have included Vaclav Havel and Amnesty International.

Stevenson has worked for many years for the abolition of the death penalty. Now called the Equal Justice Initiative, the organisation he founded has campaigned for fair trial in the US state where there is no public defender and where the average trial of a person accused of a capital charge lasts three days. Stevenson and his colleagues have over the past eight years been responsible for the reduction or quashing of death sentences in 67 cases.

The Prize consists of a diploma and US$50,000.

The US, with China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Congo-Kinshasa, is responsible for the bulk of executions worldwide: 1,813 occurred in 2000.

Pierre Schori of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP, chairman of the Fund, said execution was "an ultimate form of torture" and the fact that it was still in use in the US was "a challenge to all promoters of a modern and civilised society".

Further information: www.palmefonden.org.

---

**From the archive**

**Aung San’s fight for Burmese Independence**

**JULIUS BRAUNTHAL in the 'History of the International: World Socialism 1943-1968'.**

The discussions which Aung San had initiated with Clement Attlee’s Labour government on the independence of Burma were concluded, despite Communist resistance, in January 1947. The Attlee-Aung San Agreement guaranteed Burma ‘full independence within one year’ provided a clear majority of the constituent assembly, which was to be elected, declared its support. The communist party condemned the agreement, accusing Aung San of having betrayed the country, and then attempted to set off national strikes in workshops, schools and universities.

In the event the elections to the constituent assembly in April 1947 saw them defeated; the predominately Socialist A.F.P.F.L gained 173 of the 220 seats and the Communist party only seven. On 17 October 1947, in fulfilment of the agreement, Attlee and U Nu signed the Treaty of Burma’s Independence, to be proclaimed on 4 January 1948.

Aung San was not to live to see this triumphant conclusion to the struggle he had led. On 19 July 1947, when the government met under his chairmanship, nationalist fanatics invaded the conference room and murdered him together with six of his colleagues.

Bogyoke Aung San was the father of Aung San Suu Kyi, the pro-democracy leader currently under house arrest in Burma.
The Socialist International is the worldwide organisation of social democratic, socialist and labour parties. It currently brings together 143 political parties and organisations from all continents. The Socialist International, whose origins go back to the early international organisations of the labour movement of the last century, has existed in its present form since 1951, when it was re-established at the Frankfurt Congress. Since then it has been increasingly active and grown considerably in membership, particularly in recent years with its numbers doubling in the 1990s. Labour, social democratic and socialist parties are now a major political force in most democracies of the world. Numerous member parties of the International, in all continents, are leading governments or are the main opposition force.

The International provides its members with a forum for political action, policy discussion, dialogue and exchange. Its statements and decisions advise member organisations and the international community of consensus views within the global family of socialist, social democratic and labour parties and organisations.

António Guterres, leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party and Prime Minister of Portugal, was elected President of the International by its most recent Congress, the XXI, held in Paris in November 1999.

At the Paris Congress, Luis Ayala (Chile) was re-elected Secretary General. The Congress also elected the Vice-Presidents who, together with the President and the Secretary General, make up the Presidium of the International.

From 1976 to 1992 the late Willy Brandt, former Chancellor of Germany and winner of the 1971 Nobel Peace Prize, was President of the Socialist International. Pierre Mauroy, former Prime Minister of France, served as president from 1992-1999.

The supreme decision-making bodies of the International are the Congress, which meets every three years, and the Council, which includes all member parties and organisations and which meets twice a year.

The International has established, in addition to its statutory Committee for Finance and Administration, committees or study groups on particular subjects or regions, as follows: Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Central and Eastern Europe; Economic Policy, Development and the Environment; Human Rights; Latin America and the Caribbean; Local Authorities; the Mediterranean; the Middle East; Peace, Security and Disarmament. These committees or study groups have specific programmes of work and meet regularly. The Socialist International also frequently sends missions or delegations to various countries or regions.

As a non-governmental organisation, the Socialist International has consultative status (Category IV) with the United Nations, and works internationally with a large number of other organisations.
### Members of the Socialist International

#### Full member parties
- Social Democratic Party, PSD, Albania
- Socialist Forces Front, FFS, Algeria
- Popular Socialist Party, PSP, Argentina
- Radical Civic Union, UCR, Argentina
- People's Electoral Movement, MEP, Aruba
- Australian Labor Party, ALP
- Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPÖ
- Bartholdi Labour Party
- Socialist Party, PS, Belgium
- Socialist Party, SP, Belgium
- Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR-New Majority, Bolivia
- Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SDP BiH
- Democratic Labour Party, PDT, Brazil
- Bulgarian Social Democratic Party, BSP
- Party for Democracy and Progress, PDP, Burkina Faso
- Social Democratic Front, SDF, Cameroon
- New Democratic Party, NDP/PNDP, Canada
- African Party of Cape Verde's Independence, PAICV
- Party for Democracy, PPD, Chile
- Radical Socialist Democratic Party, PRSD, Chile
- Socialist Party of Chile, PS
- Liberal Party of Colombia, PLC
- National Liberation Party, PLN, Costa Rica
- Ivorian Popular Front, FPI, Côte d'Ivoire
- Social Democratic Party, SDP, Croatia
- Movement for New Anti-Imperialism, MAN, Curaçao
- Movement of Social Democrats, Cyprus
- Czech Social Democratic Party, CSSD
- Social Democratic Party, Denmark
- Dominican Revolutionary Party, PRD, Dominican Republic
- Democratic Left Party, PID, Ecuador
- National Democratic Party, NDP, Egypt
- Convergence for Social Democracy, CPDS, Equatorial Guinea
- Mūndudke People's Party, Estonia
- Finnish Social Democratic Party, SDP
- Socialist Party, PS, France
- Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD
- The Labour Party, Great Britain
- Portuguese Socialist Movement, PASOK, Greece
- Party of the National Congress of Democratic Movements, KONAKOM, Haiti
- Revolutionary Progressive Nationalist Party of Haiti, PANPRA
- Hungarian Socialist Party, MSZP
- Social Democratic Alliance, Iceland
- The Labour Party, Ireland
- Israel Labour Party
- MERCITZ, Israel
- Democrats of the Left, DS, Italy
- Italian Democratic Socialists, SDL
- People's National Party, NRP, Jamaica
- Social Democratic Party, SPD, Japan
- Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party, LSDSP
- Progressive Socialist Party, PSP, Lebanon
- Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, LSDP
- Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party, LSAP/POSAL
- Democratic Action Party, DAP, Malaysia
- African Party for Solidarity and Justice, ADEMA/PASJ, Mali
- Malta Labour Party
- Mauritius Labour Party
- Party of Democratic Revolution, PRD, Mexico
- Socialist Union of Popular Forces, USFP, Morocco
- Frente Popular, Mozambique
- Nepal Congress Party
- Labour Party, PvdA, Netherlands
- New Zealand Labour Party, NZLP
- Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN, Nicaragua
- Social Democratic and Labour Party, SDLP, Northern Ireland
- Norwegian Labour Party, DNA
- Revolutionary Federation, PRF, Paraguay
- Peruvian Aprista Party, PAP
- Democratic Left Alliance, SLDP, Poland
- Union of Labour, UP, Poland
- Socialist Party, PS, Portugal
- Puerto Rican Independence Party, PIRP
- Democratic Party of Romania, PD
- Romanian Social Democratic Party, PSDR
- San Marino Socialist Party, PSS
- Socialist Party of Senegal, PS
- Party of the Democratic Left, SDL, Slovakia
- Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, SDSS
- United List of Social Democrats of Slovenia, ZL
- African National Congress, ANC, South Africa
- Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE
- Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP
- Social Democratic Party of Switzerland
- Constitutional Democratic Assembly, RCD, Tunisia
- Republican People's Party, CHP, Turkey
- Socialist Party of Uruguay, PSU
- Democratic Socialists of America, DSA, USA
- Social Democrats USA, SDUSA
- Democratic Action, AD, Venezuela

#### Consultative parties
- Socialist Party of Albania, SPA
- Social Democratic Party of Andorra, PS
- ARF, Armenian Socialist Party
- Social Democratic Party, PSD, Benin
- Dominica Labour Party
- Fiji Labour Party
- Gabonese People's Progress, PGP, Gabon
- Guinean People's Assembly, RPG
- Working People's Alliance, WPA, Guinea
- Hungarian Social Democratic Party, MSzDP
- Mauritius Militant Movement, MMM
- Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, Mexico
- Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger, PDNS
- Pakistan People's Party, PPP
- Fatah, Territories under Palestinian Authority, Palestine
- Democratic Revolutionary Party, PRD, Panama
- Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PDSP
- St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party
- St. Lucia Labour Party, SLP
- Unity Labour Party, St. Vincent & the Grenadines
- Democratic Convention of African Peoples, CDPA, Togo
- Popular Unity Movement, MUP, Tunisia
- New Space Party, PNE, Uruguay
- Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, SDPM

#### Observer parties
- Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA
- Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, SDS
- Belarusian Social Democratic Party (Narodnaya Hramada), BSDP
- Botswana National Front, BNF
- European Left, Bulgaria
- Patriotic Front for Progress, FPP, Central African Republic
- 8-10 Democratic Alliance, Colombia
- Democratic Party, PD, El Salvador
- Citizen's Union of Georgia, CUG
- Organisation of the People in Struggle, OPL, Haiti
- Janata Dal (Secular), India
- Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PDKI, Iran
- Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDUM
- Social Democratic Party of Moldova
- Mongolia People's Revolutionary Party, MPRP

#### Fraternal organisations
- International Falcon Movement/Socialist Educational International, IFMSIE
- International Union of Socialist Youth, IUSY
- Socialist International Women, SIW

#### Associated organisations
- International Federation of the Socialist and Democratic Press, IFSDP
- International Labour Sports Confederation, CSIT
- International League of Religious Socialists, ILRS
- International Union of Socialist Democratic Teachers, IUSDT
- Jewish Labour Bund, JLB
- Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists
- Party of European Socialists, PES
- Social Democratic Group of the Latin American Parliament
- World Labour Zionist Movement, WLZM
A meeting of the members of the Latin American and Caribbean region of Socialist International Women was held in Buenos Aires on 22 March 2001, hosted by the women’s organisations of the Popular Socialist Party, PSP, and the Radical Civic Union, UCR.

After the opening remarks of SIW President, Mª Dolors Renau, Silvia Augsburger, the Women’s Secretary of the PSP addressed the meeting. She stressed the need to review the explicit and implicit messages that stereotype women’s sexuality. Carmen Storani from the UCR informed the participants that the current government of Argentina (to which both the PSP and UCR belong) last year adopted a National Plan to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. This implies among other things the development of responsible programmes to prevent unwanted pregnancies and the promotion and monitoring of laws regarding reproduction.

Rubén Giustiniani, General Secretary of the PSP, spoke of the 25th anniversary of the last military dictatorship on 24 March 2001 and recalled the immensely important role of the ‘Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo’ who have, throughout these years, drawn attention to their missing grandchildren. They have endangered their lives, Giustiniani continued, in showing the world the practices of state
terror. In concluding, he asked for solidarity with and understanding for the young democracies in Latin America, in order to strengthen themselves and overcome the severe social and economic problems they face.

Raúl Alconada, Secretary for International Relations of the UCR, described how the lack of involvement of the general public in politics makes it more difficult for political parties to bring about change. In concluding he praised the perseverance and courage of women in politics in overcoming discrimination and difficult economic circumstances.

The first keynote speaker, Diana Mabel Galimberti, President of the Argentinian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health, President of the Latin-American Birth-Control Association and a doctor, stated that reproductive health is not only a health issue, but also a human rights issue. In Latin America it is still very difficult to separate sex from reproduction because women are valued through motherhood. In Argentina, one third of maternal deaths amongst teenagers result from clandestine, unsafe abortions and in 1996, 500,000 abortions took place in a population of 23 million people. In Latin America 50 per cent of women do not use contraception because of a lack of information or lack of access to family planning services, which are basic human rights. Denying women modern contraceptives for religious and ideological reasons is an ethical issue which should be discussed, concluded Galimberti.

The last keynote speaker, Mónica Xavier, Senator for the Socialist Party in Uruguay and also a doctor analysed the sexual and reproductive rights of women in Uruguay and outlined political strategies for improving these rights. The text of her speech is published later in this issue.

After the speeches followed a lively debate with the speakers in which many women participated. Finally, a declaration on the theme was adopted and is reproduced below:

**Declaration**

**Towards full respect of sexual and reproductive rights**

Sexual and reproductive rights have been a theme on the agenda of the political struggle of the women’s movement and in particular of feminism, for several decades. The differing positions taken with regard to these rights today, mark a clear divide between progressive parties and conservative parties and likewise between politics of the left and politics of the right. This has become evident during international meetings and particularly at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and the Conference on Beijing +5 in New York in 2000.

In defence of sexual and reproductive rights, Socialist International Women has taken a position in support of the inalienable rights of women, in this way contributing to the promotion of progress and equality. In essence, these rights include the recognition of a woman’s authority over her sexual life and reproductive capacity, free from coercion, violence and discrimination.

Central to women’s exercise of citizenship and to the possibilities and opportunities for their personal and collective development in any society are:

- access to accurate and up-to-date information on sexuality and reproduction;
- the ability to make decisions about one’s own body for full sexual enjoyment and reproduction;
- integral sexual and reproductive health care through access to health and education services; and
- equity, respect and solidarity in relations between men and women.

The obstacles to the exercise of women’s sexual and reproductive rights are the result of various conditions - from the failure of governments’ political will to develop public policies which safeguard these rights, to the conservative position of powerful groups within different religions; to the prevailing patriarchal cultural stereotypes which normalise and reproduce the
subordination and discrimination of women within the area of sexuality and reproduction. Overcoming these obstacles requires multiple strategies at the cultural, social and political level.

Socialist International Women, from its active commitment to women’s fights for their rights and with the deepest conviction of the significance of respect for sexual and reproductive rights for equality and social justice, proposes:

- the adoption of laws that promote sexual and reproductive health at all levels;
- the effective incorporation of budgetary items which will guarantee their implementation;
- the implementation of public policies with a cross-gender perspective, which incorporate inter-institutional action, prioritising health, education and social advancement;
- the inclusion of more women in decision-making bodies in legislative and executive arenas;
- the integration of specialist NGOs in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies.

Finally, SIW wishes to recall that the defence of women’s sexual and reproductive rights forms part of a wider proposition which defends new models of the family: families which constitute new schools of democracy in which the emphasis must be placed on equality, liberty, the shared responsibility of men and women and the individual respect for all members of it, children as well as adults. The first right of a child is to be wanted and loved from the beginning of its life, for which it is essential that action is taken to ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of women.
Women's sexual and reproductive rights: focus on Uruguay

Mónica Xavier

In the era of globalisation, global actors - both economic and in civil society - appear to reconstruct the spheres of expression and conflict into something that largely transcend the classic political entity of the 20th century - the nation-state. However, it is paradoxical that in the political arena, the basic human rights of half the citizens - women - should still be under discussion: because sexual and reproductive rights are human rights.

This contradiction exposes a gap between the level of scientific, technological, political, social and cultural development - of which many women have been and remain leading figures - and equal access to the products of that development. And what is most dramatic is the fact that the very protagonists of these advances experience inequality based on subtle power structures which the gender system reproduces.

**Sexual and reproductive rights from a gender perspective**

Gender expresses the differential mandates that society imposes on men and women, developing different ways of being in the world. These attitudes appear 'natural', thus rendering invisible the benefits that the dominant structures obtain from the existing distribution of roles and functions, whereby women as a social category play a subordinate role.

The conceptualisation of sexual and reproductive rights is presumed to be associated with an idea of 'woman' and her given role in society. The traditional female identity has a dual central axis: sexuality and reproduction. This perspective reduces sexuality to a question of reproduction, especially when it is a case of the formulation and exercise of rights (such as the debates over assisted reproduction in Uruguay) and the formulation of public policy aimed at promoting these rights. From this perspective, sexual health is reduced to the question of reproductive health.

The World Health Organisation defines 'sexual health' as the integration of human beings' physical, somatic, emotional, intellectual and social qualities, by means that positively enrich the individual. As a result, sexual health implies a capacity to enjoy sexual activity; to exercise freedom of choice without fear, threats, feelings of guilt and stigma, erroneous beliefs, risk, violence or other factors that inhibit the individual's full satisfaction. Reproductive health is associated with carrying out reproduction in physical, psychological, emotional and social conditions that enhance personal fulfillment in every aspect.

The position outlined, in accordance with the international commitments signed up to (the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, which restated aspects of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the Convention of Belém do Pará) treats sexual and reproductive rights as basic human rights. From this perspective a distinction is made between sexuality and reproduction, starting from the belief that motherhood is not the 'female essence', but rather should represent a free and responsible choice and not a culturally or socially imposed obligation as the fundamental role of women.

This increased separation of sexuality and reproduction is the result of the long history of women's victories in modern societies; however, there is a long way to go, both as regards the legal recognition of some of these rights and the guarantee of their being effectively carried out. In general, the portmanteau term 'sexual and reproductive health' includes aspects that are exclusively linked to
this second dimension, though it is difficult to find explicit expressions of their component parts. This is no accident; as Hobbes observed, "power is exercised when things are given names" and hence things which are not named run the risk of "not being". So, women's sexuality has been and is silenced, controlled, restricted or censored; and in many cases devalued in the worst possible way: incorporated into the commercial sphere as goods through various forms of prostitution or sexual exploitation.

Sexual and reproductive rights in Uruguay

In the context of modern liberal democracies which saw off the century, after the consolidation of civil and political citizenship, the recognition of these rights is rooted in the expansion of women's social citizenship. So, social citizenship adds to the liberal state's idea of 'formal equality', the idea of 'recognition of difference and diversity' as a political principle which needs to be established. For example, an undifferentiated health policy is unfair to women, who have specific problems, but at the same time suffer and live differently as a result of their sex, especially as regards the costs of biological reproduction. Reproduction which is carried out in a context of changing family, cultural and social attitudes, as well as the liberalisation of sexual behaviour, which bring about change in these matters.

With a view to analysing briefly the agenda on sexual and reproductive rights in Uruguay I have chosen to contrast it with the most relevant edicts emerging from the international conventions which underpin national strategies.

Uruguay has signed and ratified almost all the international and regional conventions that refer to the rights of women, with the consequent political responsibilities, with one important exception: the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the ratification of which we have demanded.

Nevertheless, the degree of compliance with these commitments and the corresponding refinement of national legislation in accordance with the agreed parameters have been timid and slow.

The creation and setting up of the Commission on Gender and Fairness in July 2000 has resulted in: the law licensing gynaecological examinations; the law that licences adoption; the correct attitude of the Uruguayan government delegation to the ILO Conference on Convention 103 regarding Maternity Protection; the doubling of the budget for the National Institute for the Family and Women. The following legislative initiatives are still awaiting approval: the National System for the Prevention of Domestic Violence; different proposals on the revaluation of housework; support for parents of multiple births; the formal definition of sexual harassment in the workplace; the modification by the legislature of the law on maternity leave; the right of every woman to be accompanied during labour, including the moment of birth; and technology for assisted human reproduction.

Dominant attitudes to sexual and reproductive health

The approach to sexual health in the context of Uruguayan public policy and its legislative agenda has been restricted to reproductive health; that is, it has been the subject of a traditional approach. Hence, as much in the formulation of programmes devoted to health as in other areas (programmes of education, public information and awareness, etc), sexual health has been put off or simply ignored. Obvious examples include:

* the express banning (a total ban up to the year 2000) of sex education for boys and girls in the formal education system;
* the ethical and political debate unleashed over the last year by the issuing of a secondary school manual containing basic sexual information;
* the banning (currently under revision) of the distribution of contraception within the public health system;
* the debate on assisted reproduction continues because it involves questioning
the ‘standard family’, the reproductive rights of the ‘unmarried woman’ or those in non-traditional relationships; and

- the controversy over the maternity rights of those under eighteen, as up to now under age women have been legally unable to acknowledge their biological children until their majority.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development which was subsequently taken up by the Fourth World Conference on Women states that the limited control that many women exercise on their sexual and reproductive life is a restriction of the ‘right to the enjoyment of the highest standard of health which must be secured throughout the whole life cycle in equality with men.’ Reproductive health is defined as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.”

The right to autonomy and self-determination in the exercise of sexuality without discrimination or violence

The promotion of full sexuality is a right that is formally recognised but one that is a long way from being free of stigma and inequalities over the roles assigned socially to either sex. The sexual choices of gays and lesbians, especially, have recently begun to surface as a result of the high profile of organised social groups. Parliamentary debates that indirectly involved questions regarding homosexual couples were quickly criticised and excluded. Another strongly stigmatised social sector in terms of sexuality relates to the situation of differently abled individuals (particularly in terms of intellectual capacity), this being an area that is not incorporated into health programmes, nor into academic debate, nor into the training of health professionals and educators. It is possible to perceive an increase in visibility - and hence in legitimacy - of the right to sexuality in older adults.

The right to sexual and reproductive health services

As regards sexual health, almost all programmes are associated with the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. The Epidemiological Report of HIV-AIDS of the National AIDS Programme of the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) - covering 1983/1998 - indicates a slow but constant increase in the percentage of females in the overall totals. Similarly the ‘heterosexualisation’ of HIV infection has been shown. HIV infection has its highest rate of incidence between the ages of 15 and 34. The population aged between 25 and 34 shows the highest rate of infection. This incidence in a sector of the population that is sexually active and of working age entails a high level of prejudice. There is broad health cover, which does not correspond to the level of actual access to either public or private services. 46 per cent of the female population is affiliated to the private health service. In urban areas private subscription is predominant (47 per cent) and in rural areas the majority of women are treated by public services. Public health services mainly treat girls and adolescents (49 per cent of those under 15 years old) irrespective of geographic area, while the private system basically covers adults.

The right to full care for mother and child

In Uruguay biological reproduction has become one of the most significant variables in the inequality of social opportunity: the sectors with the highest levels of reproduction are those with the lowest levels of income. 48 per cent of children are born to the poorest 20 per cent of households. Added to this social segmentation is geographical segmentation which allows the identification of ‘poor areas’, risks and protective factors according to area. Hence, a society which reproduces in these conditions of social disadvantage is undermining the most elemental tenets of democracy.

99 per cent of births occur in institutions. Antenatal care differs substantially according to socio-economic group. Teenage pregnancies continue to increase. In
In 1985 there were 62 births for every 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 19; between 1995 and 1996 the figure rose to 76 births.

The right to information and access to family planning resources

Limitations exist in terms of information and access to the various levels of family planning. For example: campaigns on condom use. The distribution of free contraceptives is a task carried out hitherto by the Municipality of Montevideo and by private services. For 8th March 2001, the MSP extended the distribution of oral contraceptives, condoms and IUDs in all its sectors.

The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development stipulates "that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth."

The right to safe abortion: 'The sound of silence'

Another obvious element of sexual and reproductive health - previously not accepted as an immediate political and health problem - is the question of abortion. Abortion is illegal and penalised in Uruguay; however, it represents one of the most frequent birth control methods in the country, tantamount in terms of magnitude to a genuine demographic policy. Official and unofficial sources estimate that annually there are between one and two abortions for every child born in Uruguay, which represents between 75,000 and 100,000 voluntary terminations. This silence is one of the most deafening imaginable. What does Uruguayan law say?

- Article 325 of the Penal Code establishes that "Any woman who causes her abortion or consents to the same shall be punished by imprisonment for between three and nine months".
- Article 325b penalises abortion carried out with the collaboration of a third party. "Whomsoever should collaborate in a woman's abortion with her consent by means of principal or secondary acts of participation shall be punished with between six and twenty-four months of imprisonment".
- Article 326 refers to a "serious or very serious injury" or the death of a woman during the operation and indicates a custodial sentence of two to five years or three to six years respectively.
- Article 327 deals with aggravating circumstances: violence or fraud; under age or incapable women; the husband in "abuse of his authority".
- Article 328 indicates extenuating and absolving circumstances: to save the husband or wife's honour (to be at the discretion of the judge) and as a result of rape. Clause 4 of this article orders that "In cases where the abortion is carried out without the consent of the woman as a consequence of economic hardship the judge shall be able to reduce the sentence by between a third and half and if consensual the sentence may even be exempted".

The law that introduced these articles in 1938 laid down - in article 3 - that "the doctor who participates in an abortion or in any consequences of the same shall report the fact to the Ministry of Public Health, within forty-eight hours, without revealing names", and in turn that the judge may not bring a doctor to trial for the carrying out of abortions without a prior report from the MSP, which shall be issued after hearing the doctor in question".

The 1930s saw a 'ferment' of discussion at parliamentary level on the question of abortion and was when the above norms became established.

In 1985 the Uruguayan Parliament again discussed the subject, without success. A press report shows how when a legislator, grade 5 in the Faculty of Medicine, "in favour of abortion in specific conditions", and also in favour of "implementing educational and health measures to reduce these as far as
possible" was eager to speak in the House, the session became surprisingly inquisitive. This was the last debate on abortion carried out in plenary session of the House. "There were more urgent matters", it was said.

In 1994 the subject was submitted to the Bioethics Commission of the House of Representatives. At this time, after hearing all sides and parties involved a draft was arrived at with all-party support, but on this occasion, to be sure, "the proximity of elections" convinced the legislators that it would be better to wait.

In 1998 a further attempt was made but never came to anything.

Just recently in 2001, on the initiative of a woman legislator, the subject was again placed on the parliamentary agenda. Perhaps this will be our chance to avoid letting the subject slip by yet again, of not becoming distracted and this time studying it in the knowledge that it is a difficult issue to deal with, with a view that it might be incorporated into a Bill to establish consensus on sexual and reproductive health: an approach that matches some of the solutions being discussed in Argentina.

The debate, then, has already begun. It has been argued that the existence of the Pact of San José of Costa Rica would prevent any legislation along the lines previously proposed, as article 4.1 posits: "Every person has the right to respect for their life. Such a right will be protected under law and, in general, from the moment of conception. No one can be deprived arbitrarily of life". Nevertheless, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, establishes that "All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms", as such there is no doubt that this will be a question that will involve juridical, philosophical, religious and scientific aspects and that should leave no academic sphere outside the debate.

In contrast to other countries, Uruguay has no recourse to plebiscites, as the referendum option is only available over laws which have already been passed (Article 79 of the Constitution). There could be recourse to the mechanism of the Popular Initiative Law, also foreseen in the Constitution, but it would, in the final analysis, be ratified in the Legislative Authority.

Everything suggests that the path taken will entail the formulation of a law to achieve the broadest consensus and which derives from all parts of society. This would bring Parliament into line with various opinion polls: 7 of every 10 Uruguayans think that some measure must be taken regarding this matter, and only 23 per cent think that things should be left as they are. At the current stage of debate - virtually nil - 38 per cent of citizens are in favour of legalisation.

The right to information and sex education
With particular reference to young people and adolescents, the Beijing Platform for Action gives a commitment to "meeting the educational and service needs of adolescents to enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality".
As has already been indicated, this has been one of the rights that has been totally undermined by the formal education authorities, which banned sex education programmes right up to the year 2000, when some basic information began tentatively to be imparted. However, data regarding teenage pregnancy - especially in the poorest social sectors and in working-class districts - indicate that this is an urgent requirement.

Progress has been made by specialised services as regards access and priority for adolescents, especially through the decentralised services of the Montevideo Municipal authority and private medical services. At MSP level, work is being done on a responsible maternity/paternity pilot programme which bodes well.

A particularly important and complex aspect of the real situation in the country as regards adolescents' sexual rights is the lowering of the age of 'consent' for women, which has been changed from 14 to 12. This point - which has a positive side in so far as it recognises the right of adolescents of both sexes to their own sexual activity - was introduced through the Citizens' Safety Law and has a profoundly negative correlation in that young girls of this age, subject to powerful social and family hierarchies of authority, have little chance of giving their "informed or active consent". Consequently, cases have arisen of abuse of young girls in which the abusers have benefited from this clause, where the girl is clearly the victim of her supposed 'voluntary act'.

**The right of adolescents to maternity and other sexual rights**
Teenage pregnancy is a growing social concern. While it is reasonable to aim for informed and responsible maternity where this choice is made, from the moment that the teenager becomes pregnant her status as 'mother' seems to take precedence over all other conditions and rights: her status as a young person, her sexual rights. In Uruguay the extreme situation occurs whereby below the age of 18 young women have no maternal rights. That is to say, younger women are not legally able to acknowledge their biological children.

The Beijing Platform for Action deals specifically with the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents, making particular mention of the sexual and reproductive rights of girls and adolescents and the "conditions that force girls into early marriage, pregnancy and child-bearing and subject them to harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation" sex abuse, violence and prostitution. It states that "access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for adolescents are still inadequate or lacking completely, and a young woman's right to privacy, confidentiality, respect and informed consent is often not considered."

**Sexual violence**
In addition to these aspects of sexual and reproductive rights, the Beijing Platform for Action pays particular attention to sexual violence against women in all its forms. Thus, it is deemed that sexual violence, "sexual abuse of female children in the household, marital rape, female genital mutilation, trafficking in women, forced prostitution and sexual harassment" are all acts of violence.

Since 1993 a bill has been discussed which would regulate the exercise of sexual labour and which incorporates social security, contraception, a national register, the creation of an honorary protection commission, defining areas in which the offer of sexual services could be carried out, health benchmarks and controls, which was drawn up with the participation of associations of those concerned. This bill has the approval of one Chamber of the House.

As regards sexual harassment, different projects addressing this subject have been discussed for many years. Our position is to categorise it as a serious workplace infringement.

By way of self-criticism, despite belonging to a party that has implemented 'positive action' on women's participation, getting gender questions onto the political agenda is still very difficult. There are aspects of our organisation and others that are dependent on external factors. For example, our inclusion in a
broader political coalition, Encuentro Progresista-Frente Amplio (Progressive Encounter-Broad Front) that includes organisations opposed to 'positive action' on women's participation, or the Christian tendency, which is against abortion.

Our political agenda is almost exclusively centred on debate and on how to confront overtly neoliberal economic policies. There is practically no space for 'other' matters, which even when they are included tend not to be regarded as claims for legitimate rights, but rather as smoke screens, which on occasion they may be.

How far is it possible for a political party to take decisions that impose a line on its members on subjects which appear to go against religious or philosophical beliefs? Up to what point is freedom of conscience the only possible attitude? We believe otherwise, that over questions of rights it is our obligation to legislate and oversee that the laws are carried out, thus enabling individual freedom of choice.

Possible strategies:

• That the CEDAW agreements be ratified and implemented. The Optional Protocol "reaffirms the determination of States parties to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action to prevent violations of those rights and freedoms."

• To continue with the collaboration of the regional monitoring of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In this regional strategy, women's organisations state the need to include questions of gender on the Mercosur social agenda, and particularly sexual and reproductive rights in the Health sub-group. These are thematic approaches (to influence agendas), questions of leadership (to push for women to be included so that these matters are on the agenda) etc. If these steps forward are made by unionised women and social organisations, the Joint Parliamentary Commission could be a forum for the development of a rights agenda. By the same token, it could promote mechanisms guaranteeing access to health services, without excluding guarantees to those private health service models that are being put into effect in the region.

• New forms of monitoring and some method of sanction for those governments states that do not fulfil international agreements.

• Co-operation between governments, international bodies, NGOs and the private sector.

• Agreements regarding simultaneous national strategies by the members of Socialist International Women, promoting initiatives with the aforementioned bodies and society in general.

'Will' and 'freedom': will as a condition of the individual and freedom as a social condition within a material context. An act can be chosen freely - abortion for example - but this is not a free choice for the woman, because abortion is not chosen, but rather a pregnancy occurs in material, psychological or social conditions that the woman is unable to cope with.

Policies of equality ought to be 'different for those who are different' and States cannot stop intervening to ensure conditions that bring women closer to free choice; that is to say, allow women maternity with dignity - which would doubtless be the choice of many - or allow the termination of pregnancy safely and similarly with other sexual and reproductive rights. But they cannot continue to avoid the issue because they have, like it or not, a social reality.
Approximate maximum area of the Antarctic Ozone hole\(^1\) 1979-1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area (million square kilometres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Maximum area interior to the 220 Dobson Unit total ozone contour over Antarctica during springtime ozone depletion, as measured by Total Ozone Mapping Spectrometer instruments.

Source: NASA

- Globally, it is very likely (90-99% chance of likelihood) that the 1990s was the warmest decade and 1998 the warmest year in the instrumental record, since 1861.

- New analyses of proxy data for the Northern Hemisphere indicate that the increase of temperature in the 20th century is likely (66-90% likelihood) to have been the largest of any century during the past 1,000 years.

- The atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (\(\text{CO}_2\)) has increased by 31% since 1750. The present \(\text{CO}_2\) concentration has not been exceeded during the past 420,000 years and likely probably not during the past 20 million years. The current rate of increase is unprecedented during at least the past 20,000 years.

- Emissions of \(\text{CO}_2\) due to the burning of fossil fuel are virtually certain (99% likelihood) to be the dominant influence on the trends in atmospheric \(\text{CO}_2\) concentration during the 21st century.

- In the light of new evidence and taking into account the remaining uncertainties, most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is likely (66-90% likelihood) to have been due to the increase in greenhouse gas concentrations.

- Furthermore it is likely that the 20th century warming has contributed significantly to the observed sea level rise, through thermal expansion of sea water and widespread loss of land ice. Within present uncertainties, observations and models are both consistent with a lack of significant acceleration of sea level rise during the 20th century.

- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the gases that control their concentration would be necessary to stabilise radiative forcing. For example, for the most important man-made greenhouse gas, carbon cycle models indicate that stabilisation of atmospheric \(\text{CO}_2\) concentrations at 450, 650 or 1000 parts per million would require global man-made \(\text{CO}_2\) emissions to drop below 7990 levels, within a few decades, about a century, or about two centuries respectively, and continue to decrease steadily thereafter. Eventually \(\text{CO}_2\) emissions would need to decline to a very small fraction of current emissions.

Source: Summary for Policymakers: A report of Working Group I of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
Australia

"Listening to the people"

In February Labor were victorious in State Elections, trouncing the Conservative coalition in both Queensland and Western Australia and making the prospects of a Labor victory in the expected October/November Federal elections increasingly bright.

In an interview on 12 February, the leader of the Labor Party in Western Australia, Kim Beazley, said the victorious Labor leader in the state elections, Geoff Gallop, had won because 'he was listening to the people and he had that focus on ordinary families.'

democracy movement, the National League for Democracy, NLD, have seen painstaking progress after two UN special envoy visits. The first UN visit in January coincided with the release of 84 political prisoners (including the septuagenarian democracy leader, Tin Oo). The second, in June, saw the release of a further nine prisoners.

Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the NLD currently under house arrest, continues to urge the government to legitimise political opposition, release two hundred political prisoners and to construct a 'new democratic state' in talks which are shrouded in secrecy and which have produced only small gestures of response from the military leadership so far.

Belgium

Belgium Family policy

The Belgian Socialist Party, PS, set out its ideas on the family in a colloquium organised in March by the Institut Emile Vandervelde and the Ligue des Familles.

It set out three principles: the need to support all families; the absolute need to assure equality of treatment among all families and the need to guarantee the interest of the children in every eventuality.

Also, the Party has greeted the Dutch government initiative to allow same-sex marriages (see below) warmly and has called on the government in Brussels to legislate likewise.

Burma

Junta makes concessions as EU delegation visits

The talks between the military leadership and the outlawed pro-

centres on Participation, Knowledge and Nature.

Côte d'Ivoire

Gbagbo elected President

Laurent Gbagbo has been democratically elected president of the country.

His party, the FPI, occupies 19 of the 28 cabinet positions.

(See profile on page 16)

Dominican Republic

Social Plan

The President, Hipólito Mejía, gave a national address on 6 February in which he explained the Social Compensation Programme that he has introduced as part of his government. Father José Luis Aleman, one of the President's economic advisors said in an interview with 'Hoy' newspaper that he expected to see improvements in the countries economy 'in the Spring'.

He said the early months of the year would be hard as the fall in the US economy was felt but he predicted that the economy would brighten.

Cape Verde

PAICV back in office

After ten years of being in opposition PAICV, a full S1 member party, is back in office. It won legislative elections, 14 January, winning forty seats out of seventy two. The party, which led the country to independence in 1975, saw its leader José Maria Neves sworn in as prime minister on 1 February.

Costa Rica

On 3 June Rolando Araya, a vice-president of the Socialist International, was chosen as the presidential candidate for the National Liberation Party, PLN, the Costa Rican member party of the S1.

Winning 53 per cent of the votes cast at the party convention, he beat José Miguel Corrales (32 per cent) and Antonio Alvarez Desanti (14 per cent).

Presidential elections are set for 3 February. Araya's platform

East Timor

Constitution to be drafted

The head of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), Sergio Vieira de Mello, has said that East Timor is likely to hold a constituent assembly poll on August 30 2001.

Celebrations

He said that there seemed to be a growing consensus towards mid-year elections.
November 2001 will see celebrations of the anniversary of its declaration of independence in 1975.

The former Portuguese colony was invaded by the regime of General Suharto in neighbouring Indonesia shortly after its declaration of independence.

Fiji

Unity sought

Leader of the deposed Fiji Labour Party, Mahendra Chaudhry, has called for a Government of National Unity in the wake of last year’s May coup. There is currently a climate of extreme racial tension that has seen Indo-Fijians leaving the island in droves. The Prime Minister Ratu Josefa Iloilo addressed this in a statement in which he assured Indo-Fijians ‘Fiji was their home country’ and would be so for their children and their grand children.

France

Socialists win Paris and Lyon after a century

Candidates of the French Socialist Party, PS, achieved striking victories in the local elections of 18 March. Bertrand Delanoë, won the mayoralty of Paris for the first time in a hundred years (see People, page 44).

In the second round of voting in March for the city council the Socialists won 64.13 per cent of the votes and control 12 of the city’s 20 arrondissements or districts.

In Lyon, France’s third city, Raymond Barre, the former prime minister and a leader of the conservative UDF, has had to cede the city hall to the Socialist Gérard Collomb. As in Paris the left, which now controls 42 of the 73 seats on the city council, has returned to power after a century. The Paris daily Le Monde commented that the results were a big setback for President Chirac.

73 seats on the city council, has returned to power after a century. The Paris daily Le Monde commented that the results were a big setback for President Chirac.

This victory will encourage Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister and leader of the Socialist party, PS, who recently told a gathering of colleagues to prepare for 2002. In the same speech he expressed enthusiasm and confidence, saying that 2001 was to be a year of work and that, much as he would like to announce his candidature for the next election, it was not the right time to do so. He then praised the PS not for speculating on 2002, but instead preparing for it.

Germany

SPD candidate chosen as mayor of Berlin

Eberhard Diepgen, a Christian Democrat, was removed from the post of mayor of Berlin by a coalition of parties lead by the Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD, in June after a crisis in the city’s finances. He is succeeded by the Social Democrat Klaus Wowereit. New elections for the post will be held in the autumn.

Ollenhauer commemorated

The German Social Democratic Party, SPD, has been commemorating the 100th anniversary of one of its principal leaders of the 20th century.

Erich Ollenhauer was born on 27 March 1901 in Magdeburg and joined the party in November 1918. He started life as a journalist on the Magdeburger Volksstimme.

In 1939, after rising high in the Party he was imprisoned by the Nazis, being released shortly after following the intervention of the French Socialist leader Léon Blum. He passed much of the Second World War in London where he helped to lay the foundations of the new Socialist International. He was elected to the Bundestag in 1949 where he served till his death in Bonn on 14 December 1963.

Better rights

German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has endorsed the strengthening of the employee rights law. He signed the draft law on February 13, much to the satisfaction of Labour leaders.

Great Britain

Tony Blair: another landslide

Tony Blair, leader of the British Labour Party, a member party of the ST, achieved a landslide victory over the Conservative Party lead by William Hague, in elections held on 7 June. Labour won 413 seats in the House of Commons with 40.8 per cent of the vote to the 166 seats (31.8 per cent) gained by the Conservatives. The Liberal Democrats won 52 with 18.3 per cent. Labour has a 167 seats majority in the 659-seat chamber. Hague resigned the day after polling.

Speaking on the day after the election Blair said, "It has been a remarkable and historic victory for my party but I am in no doubt as to what it means. It is a mandate for reform and for investment in the future and it is also very clearly an instruction to deliver. I’ve learnt many things over the past four years as Prime Minister. I’ve learnt, I hope, from the mistakes as well the good things but above all I’ve learnt of the importance of establishing the clear priorities of Government. Of setting them out clearly for people and then
focusing on them relentlessly whatever events may come and go. And I believe that there is an even greater obligation on us, on me, after re-election to tell people very clearly what are the difficult choices and challenges we face and how we work our way through them. And that I will try to do."

Blair, speaking on 15 June on the visit of the South African President, Thabo Mbeki, said that aid for Africa would be a priority for his second term in government. He declared: "We have always been at the forefront of attempts to open the EU to trade from outside. It is a scandal that we do not allow better access."

Tackling Africa's problems, Blair said, was "a second term priority, something I care about deeply". He added: "We can help with aid and debt relief." He singled out Zimbabwe for particular criticism, saying a lot of things had gone wrong there and the two leaders issued a joint statement calling for a democratic and prosperous Zimbabwe.

**Israel**

48 hours of ceasefire in the Middle East

Forty-eight hours after the official agreement of both Israelis and Palestinians upon the report produced by a committee headed by former US Senator George Mitchell, the security measures proposed by the director of the US Central Intelligence Agency George Tenet, were challenged by the killings of an Israeli security officer and two Palestinians on 14 June.

According to the US the ceasefire plan is to be considered a fundamental step towards more confidence for both parties to get involved in deeper resolutions that would lead to a peace agreement in the area.

So far, the Israeli army has begun to remove roadblocks in the Gaza Strip where some borders between Rafah and Egypt have been re-opened, and the maritime blockade had been modified.

**Italy**

Volkert is mayor of Rome

Walter Volkert, secretary general of the Democrats of the Left, DS, a member party of the SI, was voted into the office of mayor of Rome with 52.2 percent of the vote on 28 May after running as the candidate for the Olive coalition.

The coalition also took Turin and Naples in the mayoral elections, defeating candidates backed by Berlusconi and providing a strong base of opposition against the new right-wing government.

**Mongolia**

President re-elected

With a 57.95 per cent of the vote, President Natsagdorj Bagaband of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, MPNP, an SI observer party, won a second term in elections on 19 May.

Shortly after the election victory, the Prime Minister of Mongolia, Nambiar, Phokhhar, spoke of the party's 'duty' to press forward with economic changes reforms, suggesting that the party will continue with the democratic reforms it began implementing in 1990.

**Morocco**

Democracy, Solidarity and Women's rights

On the 29 March the sixth congress of the USFP, the SI party in Morocco, drew 1,600 delegates together in Casablanca under the motto 'For a Morocco of Democracy and Solidarity'. The Prime Minister of Morocco, Abderrahman Youssoufi
couple, including the right to adopt children. Government ministers were present and the ceremony was broadcast live on national television.

The system needs to evolve as a carefully considered social investment to lift people's capacity today, so they can look after themselves tomorrow.

"Our approach to reforming New Zealand's social security system focuses on six key components: building a simpler benefit system; making work pay and investing in people; supporting families and children; building partnerships with the community; outlining mutual responsibilities; and tackling poverty and social exclusion."

New Zealand

NZLP: "A new approach to social security"

Prime Minister Helen Clark, leader of the New Zealand Labour Party, NZLP, and her Social Services and Employment Minister Steve Maharey declared on 18 June that the government was offering a new approach to social security for people of working age in New Zealand.

Helen Clark said the government wanted to build the skills and talents of all New Zealanders to ensure they have an opportunity to succeed. "The first Labour government established the present social security system in 1938. It now falls to the Labour-Alliance government to build on that proud past and have social security make a full contribution to New Zealand's economic and social development this century."

"The NZ$5.4 billion we spend each year on benefits should not only provide security but also an investment in people's potential."

"Today's statement describes the beginnings we have made and the steps now in train to realise this goal." Steve Maharey said the government wanted to move past the unproductive "more versus less" argument which has dominated the political debate around social security. "Social security must be more than a fortnightly payment."

Peru

June 7: Toledo wins presidency

After the cleanest elections for years, Peru has a new President in Alejandro Toledo, who gained 53.8 percent in the second round of voting.

Toledo is the first 'cholo' President of Peru. He has been seen as the first President to represent those of indigenous and mixed-race descent, who comprise 80 per cent of the country's population of 26 million people.

The election was also notable for the return to politics, and to Peruvian soil, of Alan García, the former President (1985-1990). García soared from nowhere to become Toledo's main opposition, with 46.92 per cent of the second round votes. His party, APRA, a member of the Socialist International, now holds 28 seats in Congress.
Philippines

Three months after Gloria Macapagal Arroyo assumed the presidency of the Republic of the Philippines, the ousted former president Joseph Estrada was arrested, facing charges of economic plunder and corruption. He is thought to have amassed between $200-300 million of assets in his 31-month rule. Concerns for the 64 year old's health have kept him out of jail.

Russia

Vote returned to Russia by Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has restored voting rights to the Russian delegation, which were removed on the 6 April 2000 over Russia’s continuing war in Chechnya and human rights concerns.

Spain

The Socialist leader José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has been scoring increasingly highly in recent opinion polls. According to the international press he is polling above the Prime Minister José María Aznar and early indications suggest a strong candidacy for the next general elections, to be held in 2004.

Venezuela

Army against strikers

The government of President Hugo Chávez used the army at the end of March to break the strike of personnel in the oil industry who had stopped work in a bid to achieve a wage increase. Martial law was imposed in seven of the most populous states against striking oil workers, teachers, steel workers and transport workers.

The Movimiento V República, Chávez’s party which has a majority in the National Assembly, also prevented opposition parties, including Acción Democrática, a member party of the SI, staging a parliamentary debate on the situation.

Félix Jiménez, head of the oil workers’ union Fedepetró, said the fight would continue. “The resistance of the workers to government repression has been valiant,” he commented.

Yugoslavia

Milosevic summoned to The Hague.

There have been continuing calls from the UN for the former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who was arrested in Belgrade on 1 April, to be tried in The Hague.

On 5 April Hans Holthuis, registrar of the court and a senior official from the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal handed
over an international arrest warrant for Slobodan Milosevic for alleged crimes against humanity. He submitted the warrant and the original indictment to the federal and Serbian justice ministers. Milosevic was being held in Belgrade's Central Prison.

Debates in the Federal Parliament in Belgrade have shown up differences among the constituent republics about the future of Milosevic, with deputies from Montenegro vigorously opposing a draft law supported by many other members which would have opened the way to the extradition of Milosevic.

War crimes to be punished?

former Yugoslav leader being extradited to face trial in The Hague.

On 18 June, the Montenegrin Socialist People's Party, SPS, a junior partner in the ruling Federal coalition, said that all its members would be opposing the extradition of Milosevic when it came to a vote in the upper and lower house of the Federal legislature.

Dragan Koprivica, an SPS spokesman speaking in the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica, announced that the party would definitely not accept the extradition of Milosevic.
No Logo
By Naomi Klein
Flamingo.
ISBN:0-00-653040-0

No Logo is essential reading for the modern citizen. It is a detailed, measured account of the homogenisation of culture in a world where current expenditure on advertising is estimated at $435 billion - outpacing the growth of the world economy by a third, according to the UN in a 1998 report.

The book explores branding, a notion which derives from the age-old practice of farmers proclaiming ownership over their cattle by searing a symbol onto the animal’s flesh with a red-hot iron. In contemporary terms, branding applies to a different yet similar means of asserting identity. Nowadays the farmers are corporations, the cattle are the consumers and the red-hot irons are the ever-present adverts that bedeck the streets, transport and media around us.

The importance of the brand cannot be underestimated in the 20th and 21st century. As a diagram in this book demonstrates, the expenditure on advertising, in the US alone, quadrupled from $50 billion to $200 billion in the twenty years between 1979 and 1999.

All around us are graphic examples of attempts to display superficialities over essence. When there is a nuclear accident one does not dismantle the offending reactor, one instead renames it. When a company’s activities prove detrimental to the world environment, the company does not curb its activities, instead it splashes out on a new logo with a slogan proclaiming its ‘Greenness’.

These companies engaging in these expensive processes of re-branding are reminiscent of offenders clandestinely visiting plastic surgeons and remoulding their identities in order to evade prosecution.

In No Logo, Naomi Klein dissects the extent in which the Brand has affected society. Her narrative takes us from boardrooms of companies where multi-million dollar product endorsement deals are struck with celebrities to Asian sweatshops.

The appendices at the back of the book substantiate the arguments of the narrative, are grave and fascinating. In one table of ‘designer-brand’ Chinese sweatshop profiles we learn, for instance, of one factory where athletic shoes are made.

In this factory the workers earn $0.16 per hour (Klein tells us that ‘labour groups agree that a living wage would be $0.87 per hour’) and work between 77-84 hours a week. Workers are fined if they refuse to work overtime for an overtime rate which is not paid, are subject to humiliation, some corporal punishment, fines for pregnancy, talking and being older than twenty five. Approximately ten children were counted in the sewing section.

This is the reality behind the production of shoes that then sell for $100 - 160, shoes that are coveted more often than not by those who cannot afford them, as emblems of street credibility and of wealth. In the UK and the US there have been assaults and even murders for pairs of trainers.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the reality of a product and the appropriated ethos that companies buy for themselves via endorsement, tie-in and advertisement. As Klein tells us;

‘Many brand-name multinationals... are in the process of transcending the need to identify with their earthbound products. They dream instead of the brands’ deep inner meanings - the way they capture the spirit of individuality, athleticism, wilderness or community’.

The fact of the matter is that the logos of major corporations are means of identifying the product but also of distancing it from reality. They shift it into another dimension where the sign is of greater importance than the object signified.

This illustrative and well-written book is a study of branded identity, most obviously the identity of corporations and of products but insidiously the identity of the individual. This book consists of well-researched information on the realities that lie beneath the veneer of the visibly branded world around us.

Naomi Klein offers a study of the brand as a defining social factor in society. She shows the cynicism employed by companies in ensuring that their brand is proclaimed, consumed and enhanced.

Anecdotes and statistics outline, with brutal definition, the disparities of the globalised world and leave one with an impression of an Orwellian hypocrisy at work. ♦
"Everything is used against me. When I say 'guten Morgen' it becomes 'Fischer admits the day has begun'"

Joschka Fischer, German Green Party Foreign Minister

Data from United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization indicate at least 1.1 billion people get too few calories to ward off hunger. The data indicate another 1.1 billion or more take in too many calories.

Gary Gardner and Brian Halwell of the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental research organization in Washington.

A Central London parking meter makes more money per hour than a fast food worker.

The Observer, London
STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

www.socialistinternational.org
ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY