

Minutes of the meeting of the Council
United Nations, New York

6-7 July 2015

Summary Minutes of the SI Council meeting at the United Nations, New York, 6-7 July 2015

Opening

Luis Ayala welcomed all delegates and guests to the Council in New York. He underlined the importance of the UN for the SI, and recalled the Council of 2010 that also had taken place at the UN headquarters. The UN was a part of the work of the SI, which took pride in the common commitments, principles and values shared between the two organisations.

He presented the agenda of the meeting, which reflected the commitments and priorities of the International. Those at the forefront of the battle against terror in the Middle East, Africa and other regions of the world would be present to address the meeting. Attention would be given to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which he hoped would be on the agenda of governments throughout the world. Climate change would also be a main theme, and he reflected that the SI had long been engaged in the struggle for climate justice. The Council would also hear the report of the SI Mission to Western Sahara. He also noted that the Council would be addressed later that day by Helen Clark, administrator of the UNDP and Jan Eliasson, deputy secretary general of the UN.

George Papandreou (SI President) underlined the symbolism of holding the meeting at the UN, showing the SI's belief that global solutions were required to the world's problems, based on values, principles, the rule of law and basic rights. He addressed the referendum in Greece and called for respect for the "No" vote and an agreement between Greece, the Eurozone and creditors, with flexibility needed to find a way forward. He announced that the SI Presidium had made a statement on the result the previous night, which was being circulated among Council members.

The situation in Greece reflected wider issues in the global economy, of people who felt they were losing out and a need to empower citizens, and give them hope and prospects for the future. The challenge for the SI was to humanise a global capitalist system, with rules and regulations that protect citizens. Europe needed to be not simply about numbers but a vision of sustainable growth, for youth, for employment.

He further touched on the importance of a united global society to prevent climate change, and to find a universal set of development goals for post-2015, endorsing the SDGs as social democratic goals for the world. He added that global values were also important to tackle other issues such as the rise of extremism, conflict and the fragmentation of societies. There was a need to condemn terrorism and violence of any form but also look at the deeper social and political roots of these elements. He also reflected on the plight of migrants and refugees, emphasising the importance of standing up for the rights of all humans regardless of origin, race, colour, ethnicity or gender, through a process of global governance and global values.

First working session

FIRST MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA:

“Security and the fight against terror”

Hemin Hawrami (Iraq, KDP) reported on the security situation in the Kurdistan region, and the great challenges faced in the thirteen months since ISIS took control of large portions of land. A humanitarian

crisis was underway in Iraqi Kurdistan, where approximately 2 million refugees had fled in a matter of months and required immediate response and support.

The KDP perspective was that ISIS was the product of the failed government system in Iraq and Syria, including the disenfranchisement of Iraqi Sunnis and a failure to implement political agreements for Sunnis and Kurds. A comprehensive military strategy in combination with a collective international strategy was required to defeat ISIS. The Peshmerga were engaged in military operations to take back territory, but a more collective response was required to defeat ISIS, which was not only a regional threat but also an international threat. He called on the international community to join the coalition against ISIS and to allow the Kurdish people the democratic opportunity to decide their own fate, ending the one Iraq policy, which was contributing to instability in the region.

Mustafa Ben Jaafar (Tunisia, Ettakatol) expressed his belief that the SI was built upon the values of socialism, democracy and freedom and that whatever the moment or the crisis faced, these values should always be present in our response. He spoke of two worlds, one in which crises were resolved around the negotiating table and the other in which bombings, civil wars and chaos were the result. In Tunisia, a barbarous act had one week before taken many lives, both of Tunisians and tourists who had come to support Tunisian people in their democracy, showing that terrorism has no borders. Tunisia had been targeted because it was the exact counter-example to the perspective of the terrorists, and it was vital to have a global strategy against terrorism. At the same time, all democrats needed be vigilant against the use of terrorism as a pretext to restrict liberties, which would go against fundamental socialist values.

Ibrahem Muslem (Syria, PYD) asked those present to express their support for Rojava, the Kurdish region of north Syria, which had been established as a democratic, non-sectarian, ethnically plural and gender equal society for three years. He called for international recognition of the democratic administration there as the legitimate governing body and of the right of the people of northern Syria to autonomous self-determination, and asked the international community to guarantee the safe passage of humanitarian aid, food and medical equipment.

Carme Chacón (Spain, PSOE) spoke of the tragedy of the increasing number of migrant deaths at sea. Migration was not a new phenomenon in the Mediterranean and as long as scandalous inequality continued people searching a better future would continue to come. This loss of life also represented the death of the values that should represent the human condition. She proposed massive investment to tackle youth unemployment in the region, channelling migratory flows in the best conditions possible, fighting mafias and human traffickers, a fair allocation of asylum seekers and reinforced cooperation against jihadist forces.

Anand Sharma (India, INC) underlined the commitment of the INC to democracy, development and an end to inequality, poverty and injustice, and expressed the party's desire to work with the SI on these issues. On security he reflected on the strengthening of forces of terrorism in recent decades and called for the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism by the UN. He underlined that terrorism in all its forms needed to be condemned, rejecting the premise that terror and violence represented any values, tenets or religion, adding that determination to work together was needed to ensure that the forces of terror and violence were defeated.

Horacio Serpa (Colombia, PLC) described the internal armed conflict that had been taking place in Colombia for 51 years. This had brought about many deaths, injuries, disappearances and internal

displacements, and was the cause of poverty due to the high percentage of the budget invested in the war. Efforts were taking place to reach a political agreement with the FARC, but in recent months there had been a return to instability. He underlined the importance of international presence to the peace process and called on the SI to express its solidarity with the Colombian people in their efforts to achieve peace.

Abdramane Sylla (Mali, RPM) recalled that the recent meeting of the SI Africa Committee in Bamako had considered the question of security. This was complex, linked to poverty and the increasing number of unemployed, who were vulnerable to being recruited into terrorism. The response needed to be global, and the situation of total instability in Mali, when the country had been divided in two, had been overcome thanks to the support of the international community. Peace accords had now been signed and he thanked the SI for its support and its positions adopted towards Mali.

Julião Mateus Paulo (Angola, MPLA) spoke of the violent conflicts in different regions of the world, which were causing instability on a global scale, and the need for a common strategy for a successful solution. The response needed to take into account technologies that allowed rapid communication and coordination across borders, combined with a determination to protect human rights. Forty years after the independence of Angola he declared the search for and preservation of peace in Africa and the world was an absolute commitment, and one of the highest values of the SI.

Ahmed Ould Daddah (Mauritania, RFD) noted a tendency to combat terrorism only militarily, which was an error without action on the political and social front. He also considered that it was the wrong approach to tolerate dictatorships that were seen to keep terrorism under control, as terrorism knows no borders. It needed regional solutions, and in this regard, the security of Mali was also the security of Mauritania. He called for solidarity, democracy, education and good governance in order to better combat terrorism and its causes.

Abdullah Abdullah (Palestine, Fatah) recalled recent terror attacks in North Carolina, Lyon and Sousse, and in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen stating that terror knows no boundaries, ethnicity, nationality or religion. A strong, consolidated front was needed against terrorism. He pointed to the use of injustices carried out by the strong powers of the planet as a recruitment tool for terrorists and stressed the need for unity in confronting the root causes of terror. In Palestine, he called for an end to occupation and support for the non-violent struggle for self-determination of the Palestinian people. He asked SI members to recognise the Palestinian state and boycott all products from settlements.

Colette Avital (Israel, Meretz) stated that the Middle East had fundamentally changed, destabilised by wars in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. The war in Syria had killed hundreds of thousands and ISIS was now getting close to the Israeli border. While disapproving of the current government's policies, she called for acknowledgement of the realities and the dangers to Israel. She reflected on the recent elections in Israel, which had returned a right-wing coalition, which rejects the two state solution and stated that the creation of a Palestinian state was a moral choice and a moral obligation for the international community and a necessity also for the Israeli people, that could contribute to lessening tensions in the area.

Mustafa Barghouti (Palestine, PNI) expressed his view that the lack of resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli issue had led to an explosion in the region, while a lack of democracy and opportunities for young people was a main motivator for the terrible violence seen. He drew attention to the Israeli occupation, illegal settlements, siege of the Gaza strip and 22 years of peace negotiations

without a result. He called for the use of boycott, divestment and sanctions as an activity not against the Israeli people but against occupation, for the recognition of the Palestinian state and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Kenneth Bob (Israel, Labour Party) expressed his party's concern about the terror threat, with Israel surrounded on its borders by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Daesh and Hezbollah. He called for a two-prong approach to the threat – a strong military response and an equally strong diplomatic response. Diplomatic coordination at the state level of unusual alliances could provide unity against non-state terrorist threats such as Daesh. He explained that the ILP had refused to enter a right-wing government and remained committed to a two-state solution, searching for constructive elements on which Israelis and Palestinians could work together.

End of the morning session.

Second working session

SECOND MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA

"Our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals"

Helen Clark (UNDP Administrator) spoke of a new development agenda that was ambitious and transformational. There had been a lot of progress in poverty reduction during the time frame of the MDGs, but there remained much unfinished business. Inequality was a huge issue in countries rich and poor, and a determination to get more equal development outcomes was necessary. Environmental challenges were mounting, with too little collective ambition and insufficient commitments on reducing emissions. The new global agenda needed to take on all those challenges of poverty, inequality and environmental degradation.

She identified means of implementation of the development agenda and access to finance as vital, calling for a bold and ambitious outcome from the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa and underlining the importance of advanced economies meeting the international target of 0.7 per cent for aid, stressing that this needed to be smart aid. She further called for international policy coherence on trade, taxation and migration, and the engagement of the private sector. This was a universal agenda, relevant to all countries at all levels of development.

She outlined the contribution of the UNDP to the new global agenda, working alongside countries to integrate MDGs into national agendas, strengthening capacities, transferring knowledge and supporting access to finance. Work was already ongoing on the rollout of the SDGs, prioritising whole of government approaches across economic, social and environmental strands of policy. She concluded that 2015 was an opportunity to set an inclusive and sustainable course, to work together to meet citizens' aspirations for peace, prosperity and well-being.

César Camacho (Mexico, PRI) endorsed the need for an enthusiastic commitment to the sustainable development objectives. He outlined policies of the PRI in line with these goals, namely universal education to guarantee opportunities for all, labour reforms to strengthen growth and provide decent employment, political reform in favour of gender equality, the eradication of poverty and the fight against hunger, and energy reform aimed at increasing the percentage of energy from renewable

sources. He placed particular emphasis on the objective of peaceful societies with justice for all, and the elimination of corruption.

Ouafa Hajji (SIW) outlined the importance of two meetings – the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the post-2015 agenda. She presented two documents produced by SIW on this theme and the future conditions of women within this framework. She identified priority areas of eliminating violence towards women, educating to liberate and eradicating poverty. In parallel with this, SIW was working on female emancipation and development, focusing on equality, political participation, the culture of democracy, access to the media and the equal distribution of income and resources.

Miguel Vargas (Dominican Republic, PRD) stressed that sustainable development had a particular importance in Latin America and the Caribbean, where there was stable democracy in most countries, a rising quality of life, achievements in political, social and economic rights and where poverty had been greatly reduced. He identified actions necessary for the success of the SDGs, including reform of the state with clear and consistent rules, decentralisation to create better contact between the state and the citizen, respect for the environment and minorities, the guarantee of liberties and an international alliance for sustainable development.

Felipe Jeldres (IUSY) reported on the IUSY Council held in May in Armenia, when the organisation had recognised the Armenian genocide and offered support and solidarity to the Armenian people, and adopted a new resolution updating its position with regard to the SI. He outlined the perspective that the post-2015 agenda was a great opportunity to advance the fight against poverty and inequality, but also to reflect on the role and objectives of the UN in preserving global peace and security, which he felt was not being achieved.

Pendukeni livulu-Ithana (Namibia, SWAPO) explained the focus of Namibia on its vision 2015, a national development plan anchored on the MDGs. Progress had been made in the areas of poverty reduction, education, gender equality, health and environmental sustainability. She noted the great threat posed by climate change and that it was undermining efforts to achieve development goals globally, regionally and nationally, as resources needed to be diverted from key development programmes to deal with the social and economic challenges posed by climate change.

Gorgui Ciss (Senegal, PS) spoke of the phenomenon of illegal migration, which Senegal had experienced as a coastal country. Each day thousands tried to reach the northern coast of the Mediterranean, with approximately 15,000-16,000 losing their lives at sea between 2005 and 2012. The cause was the attraction of Europe for the populations of ex-colonies and inequality of development. The solution therefore needed to come in the countries of departure, by global action to reduce inequality between rich and poor countries, manage security problems, eradicate poverty and provide opportunities.

THIRD MAIN THEME OF THE AGENDA "Climate change and the COP21"

Elio Di Rupo (Belgium, PS) described climate change as an existential crisis for humanity, which would affect the most vulnerable of Earth's citizens first. For this reason, a binding agreement in Paris that fixed quantifiable goals was necessary, and developing countries needed access to funding and technologies. The climate crisis was also a political alarm signal to adopt a different economic strategy

from the capitalist model dominating the planet. He called for SI member parties to be at the forefront of global climate justice.

For progressives, the challenge was to show that there was an alternative to the neo-liberal model of privatisation and deregulation, which had hindered the fight against climate change. He proposed a new economic framework centred on revitalising local economies, liberating democracies from the hold of the private sector, ending free trade agreements that were harmful to social and environmental protections, and investment in public infrastructure. These measures could be financed by a tax on financial transactions generating 650 billion euros per year. Concluding, he expressed his belief that the fight against climate change was a struggle in favour of the most deprived and a battle for a more just world for all.

Mohammed Waheed (Maldives) described climate change as an issue close to his heart and critical to the existence of his country, outlining how a social democratic vision of the future needed engagement in the climate change debate to protect the most vulnerable in society and the planet. The challenges facing the Maldives were shared by many small-island states, compounded by geographical isolation and exposure to extreme weather. For people in those states, climate change was already making life more difficult.

He outlined the expectations of the Alliance of Small Island States from the COP21 summit, for an agreement balancing mitigation and adaptation by taking steps to limit global warming while upholding commitments to financing of the Green Climate Fund. He also highlighted the need to invest in renewables and for a mechanism for compensation to those suffering irreversible damage, and made a call to take on powerful interests in order to serve the needs of the most vulnerable with respect for basic rights.

Special address

Jan Eliasson (UN deputy secretary-general) spoke of the influences on his life. He had worked closely with Olof Palme and Anna Lindh, both social democrats who had been tragically assassinated, and later with Swedish prime ministers Ingvar Carlsson and Göran Persson. Now serving the international community, he acknowledged that the UN was in an unprecedented period of turmoil and turbulence, and that classic diplomatic tools were not working as they did in the past. This presented a problem, as when international organisations and nation states could not satisfy people's aspirations for peace, development and human rights, it became easier to divide humanity by ethnic or religious background.

The key was that a good international solution to any of the global issues should also be a national interest. This required a three-fold agenda of no peace without development, no development without peace and neither without respect for human rights. On peace, he acknowledged the damage done to the UN by the war in Syria and the inability to stop the killing, expressing frustration that the Security Council had not given UN negotiators the tools to do their job. He was hopeful that financing for development would be secured in Addis Ababa, paving the way for agreements later in the year on the SDGs and climate change. He then related to his personal experiences in Sweden, which instilled his strong belief in the power of institutions, the power of rule of law and the rights perspective.

He concluded by referring to the UN Charter, which always reminded him that the UN was there to serve the peoples of the world, and expressing his hope that those present would continue to believe in multilateralism and the principles of the organisation.

End of the second session of the first day

Second day – third working session

Adoption of the minutes of the previous Council

The minutes were adopted.

Report of the Finance and Administration Committee

Maurice Poler (Venezuela, AD) reported on the membership fees received so far in the year, highlighting that in accordance with the organization's statutes, fees were due for payment by 31 January. He also reminded participants that in accordance with the statutes, those parties with three years fees outstanding would cease to be members. He gave details of the extensive schedule of work undertaken by the Secretary General over the previous six months, despite the financial restraints on the organisation. He called on delegates to give support to the Secretary General and his team by paying membership fees on time and honouring financial commitments to the SI. He asked for delegates' help in raising this issue with the person in charge of financial matters in their party.

The report was accepted by the Council

Report of the Ethics Committee

Gilles Mahieu (Belgium, PS) apologised on behalf of the Ethics Committee which had not held a meeting between the two Councils, and furthermore had not achieved the quorum of eight member parties fixed by the statutes at its meeting on the eve of the Council. The Committee had therefore carried out preparatory work for the next meeting at which it would re-examine a series of proposals to be presented at the next Council.

The report was accepted by the Council

Third main theme (continued)

Svetlina Yolcheva (Bulgaria, PBSB) referred to climate change as the major threat to nature and humanity of the 21st century, noting the risks to the planet and the effects that were already being felt in Bulgaria. She called for the SI to be actively engaged with the UN on climate change and to participate in the COP21 summit, and suggested opening a debate on the construction of a new generation of nuclear reactors as a clean and secure source of energy.

First main theme (continued)

Sadi Pire (Iraq, PUK) called for all those present to offer more support to the Kurdish Peshmerga fighting against ISIS in Iraq and Syrian Kurdistan. He also referred to the refugee crisis in Kurdistan, which had in combination with the low oil price brought about a financial crisis. He nonetheless stressed that ISIS could not be defeated only through military support, nor could the refugee crisis be solved only through humanitarian aid. What was needed was a political solution, achieved through peace talks. He also expressed his belief that peace talks could solve the problems between the Kurds and the Turkish government.

Dahan Alnajjar (Yemen, YSP) called for international support for Yemen, which was going through a civil war he believed could threaten peace and stability in the whole world. The process of national dialogue had ended abruptly with the breakout of violence but the YSP remained committed to the political solution and was working for an end to the conflict. What was needed, he concluded, was to lay the foundation for a comprehensive and sustainable government and the building of a democratic and civil state.

Abdelkader Messahel (Algeria, FLN) stated that terrorism called for a response from countries, societies, individual citizens and the international community in its entirety. Though not changing its mode of operation, it was trying to consolidate and permanently occupy territories and control populations. He spoke of a need to come to a consensus on how to best tackle the threat, identifying security and protection measures, deradicalisation and cutting off finance as steps that could be taken, adding that SI members needed to work together to combat all forms of terrorism and promote universal values of peace, tolerance and dialogue.

Mostafa Shalmasi (Iran, KDP) outlined the struggle of the Kurds, in particular in Iran, where people lacked basic civic rights and the principles of democracy and human rights were not respected. He spoke of the KDP's struggle against a totalitarian regime to advance Kurdish rights and asked the SI to support their case as the biggest stateless nation internationally. The Kurds expected that the international community would support and help them in their defence of freedom, democracy, political stability and human rights, including the battle to defend humanity against ISIS.

Behrooz Khezri (Iran, KPIK) referred to the phenomenon of state terrorism, naming Iran as a supporter and sponsor of terrorist organisations outside its borders. The resources of the state were also used to harm opposition groups that posed a threat. He outlined the discrimination against Kurds in Iran and how political leaders and activists there and abroad had been victims of state terrorism. Now Kurds were taking a stand against the terrorists of ISIS and he expressed hope that through collective action a peaceful Kurdistan and Middle East could be achieved.

Olexandr Antonov (Ukraine, SDPU) presented the latest situation in what he defined as a Russia-Ukraine war that began with the annexation of Crimea by Russian armed forces and continued with military operations in eastern Ukraine since May 2014. He described Ukraine as the only country opposing the power of the aggressor, with people there continuing to die despite peace initiatives in Berlin. He called on Europe to move from sanctions against Russia to economic and military assistance to Ukraine.

Svetlana Vukovic (Montenegro, DPS) underlined the role of her party in maintaining peace in Montenegro during the two decades since the intra-ethnic conflict in the Balkans, and spoke of the complexity of peace and stability challenges, which were issues on the global stage. She identified

permanent cooperation between countries and regional and international security agencies as tools to manage uncertainty and bring peace and security, which needed strategies taking into account a broad vision of the uncertain situation faced with terrorism, corruption and organised crime.

José Francisco Rosales (Nicaragua, FSLN) spoke of the need to condemn terrorism but also examine its causes, as the transnational industry of war had prepared the way for terrorist organisations. He criticised the influence of the media, and reflected that in a globalised world, terror had also been globalised and the conflict was not east-west but between poor and rich. He called for the SI to organise a global conference on peace to advance reform of the internal democracy of the UN and to seriously discuss the future of the planet.

Samad Alizada (Azerbaijan, SDPA) spoke of the threats posed in the world by terrorism, before turning his attention to the situation in Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh. He defined the conflict as an occupation by Armenia with the help of the post-Soviet government, stating that his party wanted a peaceful solution but not under aggression and calling for implementation of UN resolutions and the settlement of the conflict to be returned to the UN Security Council.

Additional point in accordance with decision of the last Council: Would a Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide allow for genuine reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia?

Luis Ayala introduced the agenda item on the Armenian Genocide by announcing an agreement reached following discussions with SI member parties and vice-presidents from Armenia and Turkey, to organise a hearing or round table with both parties and others represented, under the title, “Would Turkish recognition of Armenian Genocide allow for genuine reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia?” He expressed the belief that this would be a positive chance for the Socialist International to contribute along the path to reconciliation.

The Council adopted the proposal

Giro Manoyan (Armenia, ARF) responded to the previous intervention on Nagorno Karabakh by stating that UN resolutions had not been implemented due to violations of the ceasefire by Azerbaijan. He further welcomed the initiative on the issue of the Armenian Genocide and hoped that the SI would adopt a proactive position, which would help Turkey come to terms with its history. This would be consistent with the position of some NATO allies of Turkey who had recognised the genocide as an expression of friendship.

Charter of the rights of migrants (Migrations Committee)

Habib El Malki (Morocco, USFP) reflected that 2015 had been a macabre year in the history of migration, in the Mediterranean, Southeast Asia and on the Mexico-US border. This had brought a new perspective to the SI project for a Charter on the Rights of Migrants, a social democratic contribution to the international debate. The Migrations Committee had concluded that the history of humanity was one of migrations, but that the proportion of migrants in the global population was very small. Nonetheless, the spread of armed conflicts and civil wars had contributed to the amplification of the phenomenon, and the SI needed to campaign for a new generation of human rights, which incorporate the migratory dimension.

He identified three practical applications of the charter, the first of which was an appeal to mobilise, as socialists and social democrats, for different governments to respect the rights of migrants. The second was to ensure that the next generation was well educated in the history of migration and its positive impact. Finally, he called for the inclusion of the question of migration in the post-2015 development agenda. He underlined that the charter was a document to enrich, extend and update that which already existed in the sphere of human rights.

The chair thanked Habib El Malki and all those who had contributed to the document.

Ahmed Ould Dadda (Mauritania, RFD) asked if there could be a declaration or a paragraph in a declaration on migrants on Burma, where there was a case of ethno-religious genocide.

The chair noted that a spokesperson of the Rohingya people in Burma had been present in Rabat to report on the difficult conditions they faced, and this was mentioned in the statement issued in Rabat. These concerns had already been incorporated into the conclusions of the committee and in the future work other concerns and other regions would also be examined.

The **Charter for the rights of migrants** was adopted.

Western Sahara – Report of the SI mission (Mediterranean Committee)

Carme Chacón (Spain, PSOE) recalled the declaration of the XX SI Congress on Western Sahara, and the commitment of the SI to advancing in the search for common solutions alongside the UN negotiation process. As chair of the Mediterranean Committee, she reported the decision taken by the committee in Valencia on 13-14 February to send a mission to Western Sahara, chaired by Juan António Yáñez of the PSOE. Other members of the delegation were Mustafa Ben Jaafar (Tunisia), Adélia de Carvalho (Angola) and Claudio Herrera (Chile). The mission visited Rabat on 4-5 May, Laayoune on 6-7 May and Tindouf on 8-9 May. She thanked all the members of the delegation, the committee and all those she had worked with as committee chair for their generosity and spirit of cooperation.

Juan Antonio Yáñez (Spain, PSOE) presented the report of the Mission to Western Sahara on behalf of all its members, whom he thanked for their work. He equally extended his gratitude to the two SI member parties, USFP and Polisario Front, and those who had welcomed the mission as hosts.

He presented the contents of the report, which began with an account of its origins and mandate, followed by an outline of the Western Sahara question on the international level, from the perspective of the UN, African Union and Arab Maghreb Union. He reported that the most extensive section concerned details of the meetings and other activities of the mission during the three stages of its visit, noting that in particular in Laayoune and Tindouf, the mission met not only with officials and parliamentarians, but also with diverse civil society and humanitarian organisations, including MINURSO and UNHCR. The final parts of the report were its evaluation and conclusions, and suggestions and recommendations.

He summarised that the mission expressed its concern over the humanitarian and security consequences of the prolonged conflict, considering that the status quo was unsustainable. The mission suggested that the SI call the attention of the international community to the situation in order to

restart the peace process, searching for a just and durable political solution that was mutually acceptable to the parties and would allow for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. He concluded that the SI was set to play an active role in searching for a resolution as three of the major parties interested in resolving the conflict were represented within the SI.

The chair thanked the members of the mission on behalf of the Council, noting that it was the role of socialists and social democrats to be party of a fair, peaceful and durable solution to the conflict. He highlighted that the key message was that this political family had the capacity to work together, to listen and to act.

Mohamed Sidati (Western Sahara, Polisario) thanked those involved in the mission and the report. He expressed his belief in the inalienable right to self-determination for the Saharawi people, and reminded delegates of the seriousness of the situation in Western Sahara, describing it as a problem of decolonisation. He endorsed the recommendation of the report for more engagement from the SI in search of peace and hoped that the SI would renew its engagement for a solution to the conflict in order that the people of Western Sahara could exercise their basic rights to freedom, democracy and self-determination.

Mohamed Bénébdelkader (Morocco, USFP) thanked the members of the mission and welcomed the steps taken by the SI to go into the field to better understand the complexity of the conflict. He described the conflict as a geostrategic conflict between Morocco and Algeria, and referred to the testimony of free Saharawis in the report, who he said had discovered this reality and been able to rejoin Morocco. He expressed some reservations about the report but supported it and welcomed its presentation of a different vision of the conflict, congratulating the Mediterranean Committee and the mission for their engagement.

Ahmed Ould Daddah (Mauritania, RFD) congratulated the members of the mission and the delegations of the USFP and Polisario on their work, hoping that this problem could be advanced within the SI framework.

The chair gave his understanding that there was the will to adopt the report by consensus, and to encourage the parties concerned to work within this political family towards a fair and durable peace. This was agreed.

The **Report of the Socialist International Mission on Western Sahara** was adopted.

Adoption of the minutes of the previous Council

The minutes of the previous Council were adopted.

Adoption of resolutions and declarations of the Council

The **declaration on security and the fight against terror** was adopted.

The **declaration on the Palestinian question** was adopted.

The **declaration on the sustainable development goals** was adopted.

The **declaration on climate change and COP21** was adopted.

Carlos Vecchio (Venezuela, VP) highlighted the deteriorating social and economic conditions in Venezuela, and emphasised the two elements in the resolution to be adopted. The first was that opposition politicians needed to be free to campaign during the electoral process and not behind bars, and secondly, that the parliamentary elections should have a qualified international observation to guarantee that Venezuelans could express themselves freely.

Felipe Jeldres (IUSY) wished to add a point to the resolution calling for a dialogue between all actors from the government and opposition, and from all social and political sectors.

Luis Florido (Venezuela, VP) agreed with the proposal, underlining that the electoral process should be the result of a dialogue between all Venezuelans, without political prisoners.

The chair announced that a small line corresponding to the comments from the floor could be added to the resolution.

The Council adopted the **resolution on Venezuela** with this addition

Chantal Kambiwa (Cameroon, SDF) raised the case of Marafa Hamidou Yaya, imprisoned in Cameroon since 2012. She carried a message from his solicitors, who had called on the SI to support calls for his release, in line with the struggle of the organisation for human rights.

The Council endorsed an **appeal for the release of Marafa Hamidou Yaha in Cameroon**

Election

The chair announced that Driss Lachguar, leader of the USFP (Morocco) had been nominated by the party to replace Nouzha Chekrouni as a vice-president of the SI.

The Council elected Driss Lachguar (USFP, Morocco) as a vice-president of the SI.

The next Council meeting

The chair announced that there was a proposal to hold the next Council meeting in Luanda, Angola, hosted by the MPLA. The meeting would take place in November in advance of the forthcoming COP21 Summit to be held in Paris.

The Council agreed.

Closure

The meeting was declared closed.