

Speech by Hon. Pendukeni Iivula Ithana, Vice President, Socialist International, at the occasion of the Council Meeting in Mexico, 30 June-1st July, 2014.

Mr. Cesar Camacho of PRI;

Mr. Jesus Zambrano Grijalva of PRD;

Mr. George Papanreou, President of Socialist International;

MR. Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the Socialist International;

Members of the Presidium

Dear friends.

It is with thanks and appreciation that I record our gratitude to our hosts, Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) and the Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD) for the hospitality accorded to us since our arrival here in the historic city of Mexico.

Our thanks further goes to President George Papandreo and Secretary General Luise Ayala, of the Socialist International for the energy in spearheading the activities of our organization. Hardly a year has past since the Council meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. Taking the Council meetings to different parts of the globe is another way of mobilizing the international community around issues of concern.

Mr Chairman, I bring to you fraternal greetings from Southern Africa, a region currently enjoying relative peace and democracy. This year, many countries in Southern Africa will hold regular national elections. South Africa and Malawi just concluded theirs and once again, congratulations to our brothers and sisters of the ANC of South Africa for the landslide victory. Namibia, Mozambique, and a few others will hold their elections during the remainder of the year.

While Southern Africa is enjoying relative peace and democracy, the same cannot be said about other parts of the continent and beyond. The civil war in the Central African Republic, the war tearing apart the new nation of the Southern Sudan, the ongoing terrorist attacks and kidnapping of innocent civilians in Nigeria by what is called Boko Haram, the Kenya terrorist attacks and the unending rebel attacks in the Congo Democratic Republic are a cause for concern on the continent and beyond.

In all these conflicts, by far, the largest casualties, are women and children. As we meet here the families of the kidnapped school girls in Nigeria are still waiting in agony for the safe return of their children.

It is not long ago when the Socialist family heralded the new spirit brought about by what was called " the Arab Spring." Libya, Syria and others are still in the state of ungovernability long after the revolution had taken place. Libya in particular, was once upon a time considered a prosperous country on the African continent. Today as we speak, Libya is in ruins levelled to the ground and no tangible alternative government to replace the over thrown government of Muamar Gaddafi. Instead a civil war is ranging unabatedly and the world is watching helplessly. The aftermath of this revolution is yet to bring relief to the ordinary masses of those countries.

The world has become such a boiling pot of conflicts, the source of which varies in type and magnitude. Inequality and uneven distribution of the national resource, bad governance, deprivation of basic human rights and freedom, poverty and unemployment, particularly among the youth and women, are some of the causes of conflicts in the world today.

Each conflict has its own long history which some times is not properly diagnosed before a solution is offered. It was interesting to listen to Mr Tony Blair the then Prime Minister of Britain, in an interview on CNN a few days ago, confessing that the war in Iraq failed to address the core problem as those who waged it—did not understand what kept Iraq together as a state.

-While democracy can bring a measure for good governance for a country, it is not the only means of achieving harmony in all situations. Different countries have peculiar problems which may call for peculiar solutions. Dialogue and consultation for peaceful and mutually accepted solution can be the alternative to confrontation with resultant loss of life and the destruction of properties as it happened in Libya and elsewhere.

-Women kind, Mr Chairman, is a resource the world has in abundance and which is yet to be put to maximum use. While I do not have figures to support my argument as to how many women play a role in public affairs, allow me say that they are playing an insignificant role in that regard. Our resolve as Socialists to establish a Commission on Equality cannot but mainstream gender equality in the general philosophy of this agenda. The world needs love and healing and women are natural love and life givers and healers at the same time. Let us make good of them in conflict resolutions. I am sure they have the skill, inborn and acquired to do so. Let us give peace an opportunity through peaceful resolution of conflicts.

I thank you.