

## **SI Council 26.6.2018 Keynote speech Eero Heinäluoma**

FIRST MAIN THEME: “The contribution of social democracy to the resolution of conflicts and to international peace and security”.

**Honored delegates, members of the presidium,** Historically Social Democracy is a movement for solidarity, cooperation and justice. In international politics, this has meant a commitment to a rules-based international order. An order where conflicts are resolved peacefully and co-operation is more important than competition.

Social Democrats have always rejected a cynical might-makes-right approach to international politics. We recognize that imposed settlements, gained through threats of violence, rarely lead to lasting peace. In the long term, peace requires justice. Justice, in turn, requires moderation and co-operation. These together form the basis for the rules-based international order. An order that has for the last 70-years led to an historic decrease in open warfare.

But the world is not yet ready. Many tragic conflicts still plague the world; there is work to be done. Today, the rules-based international order is increasingly being questioned. Multilateral co-operation is being undermined by new threats: The America first policies of the Trump administration are now being copied by other countries. The disregard for rules and old norms is spreading. An old narrow-minded form of nationalism is gaining ground. Even in the established democracies, nationalism and division are being used to gain power.

**Honored delegates, members of the presidium,** We Social democrats must resist these trends. Our answer is to strengthen international organizations and treaties. We also seek to address the root causes of conflicts: poverty and inequality. In these tasks, the United Nations plays a unique role as the sole global unifying organization. The UN is vital to maintaining the rules-based international order. It is also vital for coordinating global sustainable development. We cannot hope to maintain peace or to limit climate change without global cooperation.

We should seek to strengthen the UN and its programmes, funds, and specialized agencies. However, we should also recognize the need for reform. The role of developing countries and women within the UN should be strengthened. Efficiency

should be improved. In all this, the fine work done by the Secretary general António Guterres deserves our full support. Yet more reform is necessary. The world has changed and the UN must change to reflect that. The conflict in Syria has revealed a deep dysfunction at heart of the global security order. When action was needed the most, the Security Council was paralyzed. The Security Council must be reformed. There are many possible ways to reform the Council. One way would be to limit the veto power of the permanent members. Perhaps it should take two permanent members to block a resolution supported by the majority. Combined with an expanded membership, this could lead to a more representative and functional Council. Certainly not an easy goal, but change is urgently needed.

Social Democrats worldwide should press for reforming the UN and the Security Council.

While there are challenges, there are also reasons to be hopeful. The Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Board on Mediation has started working and has several prominent Social Democratic members. Including, I might add, the former president of Finland, Tarja Halonen and Kirgizian ex-president Rosa Otunbayeva. Crisis management and mediation are fields where we Social Democrats can really make a difference. The international character of our movement gives us unique possibilities in this regard.

**Honored delegates, members of the presidium,** Climate change is a critical challenge for humanity and it is also a security issue. There is today wide spread agreement that climate change is real. It is manmade and a grave threat to the future of our children and grandchildren. It has also become obvious that sustainable development and security can no longer be separated. Scientists predict that climate change will lead to more extreme weather. Droughts and other weather phenomena can spark conflicts and force people to flee their homes.

Climate change is already contributing to the global refugee crisis. The challenge will only get harder. It is deeply ironic, and tragic, that the political parties that are most opposed to immigration do not support measures that might help people in their countries of origin. Climate change denial is often combined with protectionist trade policies and cutting foreign aid. This is not acceptable.

The Paris Agreement is a great achievement of international cooperation, and sadly, inadequate. We Social Democrats must struggle to see it implemented and expanded. As hard as it will be to meet its targets, we must exceed them. The science is clear; we have no time to waste.

Our task is made harder by the fact that not all countries are fully committed. Unfortunately, the United States has shown no leadership on climate change. Regardless, we must press on.

Honored delegates, members of the presidium, The rules-based international order is a vital asset in maintaining multilateral security and peace. The UN plays a crucial role, but it is supplemented by other important bodies. Among other organizations worthy of our support, I wish to mention The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization.

The OSCE was established during the cold war, in 1973. It enshrined the important principle that treatment of citizens within countries is not purely an internal matter. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and fair elections. All issues Social Democratic parties have always supported.

Signatories of the OSCE treaty also pledged themselves to respect international borders. They committed themselves not to change them unilaterally or by force.

Unfortunately, this principle was broken by one of the signatories. Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea and the conflict in the Ukraine is poisoning relations between countries in Europe and the world. The Minsk agreement must be implemented by all parties and OSCE-rules have to be honored.

**Honored delegates, members of the presidium,** We are confronted by critical challenges. And we social democrats and have a unique responsibility.

Ours is a movement that has been international from its very birth. We have always recognized that the narrow nationalism of nations, without solidarity across borders, will never lead to a better world.

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“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

I doubt if anyone will ever surpass Martin Luther King Jr. in how beautifully he expressed this simple truth. And never has it been truer than it is today.

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In a world riven by new conflicts and anxieties there are any who would seek to exploit divisions. Our movement must be the counterforce that upholds international rules and cooperation. We cannot abdicate this responsibility.

And so this task falls to us and our allies in the world. The multilateral rules-based world order must be preserved. Only through it can peace be maintained and sustainable development be secured. Thank you.