

[Home](#)

## Meeting of the Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee, Kuala Lumpur, 11-12 June 1999

### Declaration of Kuala Lumpur

#### Full list of participants

#### **PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

The Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 11-12 June 1999:

*recognises that*

- at the heart of the hopes and expectations of the people of the whole region are the establishment and strengthening of democracy and the defence of human rights, justice and freedom;
- it is urgent to address the issue of globalisation, the need to limit its negative aspects and improve its positive effects so that it does not further deepen inequalities in and between our societies: to contribute to the global betterment of economic and social well-being, and to preserve the environment;
- the world must not be divided up into globalisation winners and losers in a lasting world order;
- the poorest sectors of Asian societies, who benefited least from the so-called 'boom' years, are suffering most from the 'bust';
- the Asian economic crisis highlighted the need to address the inequities of the international financial system, where everyday about one trillion dollars move across the foreign exchanges, and to discourage speculative capital flows;
- the Asian financial crisis has finally exposed the extreme vulnerability of economies subjected to cronyism, corruption and nepotism, which are standard practices in authoritarian and dictatorial regimes;
- the fallacy of so-called Asian values should not be used as a justification for authoritarianism;
- the immediate challenge for social democracy in the Asia-Pacific region is the empowerment of social democratic forces in the region to collectively become the primary political force in regional affairs and in international relations: and
- the social democrats in the region need to work together in ending the remaining vestiges of authoritarianism and dictatorships in this part of the world.

*reaffirms that*

- our commitment is to make the next century the century for social democracy in Asia and the Pacific in response to the aspirations of the people in the region for democracy, human rights and justice;
- the ideals of social democracy are pursued with the full participation of women in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres and by addressing specific issues, needs and concerns of women:

*supports*

- the democratisation process which has led to the establishment of democracy in South Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Nepal and many other countries in the Asia-Pacific region;
- the increasing demand and struggle towards democratisation in Malaysia, Indonesia and Burma;
- the initiatives of Filipino social democrats to preserve, protect and further the democratic gains in that country; and
- the reestablishment of stability and peace in Cambodia.

*calls* for the peaceful negotiations and settlement of disputes

- between India and Pakistan over their borders in Kashmir;
- between the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China over the Spratly islands; and
- between North and South Korea.

*considers* that the new security arrangements in the region such as the new defence guidelines between the United States and Japan, and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in the Philippines, highlight the need for the development and establishment of new common security policies in the region.

Specifically, the Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee:

*states its concern* about the political situation in Malaysia as manifested by among others, the flawed implementation of the separation of powers of the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary;

*deplores* the continued incarceration of Lim Guan Eng who is deprived of his status as an elected Member of Parliament and Deputy Secretary General of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) of Malaysia, a party which plays an active part in furthering social democracy and is a member of the Socialist International;

*condemns* the promulgation of all draconian laws such as the Internal Security Act;

*is aware* that the former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was injured during detention and that the charges against him were amended, which is inconsistent with the practice of justice:

*takes note* of the groundswell of disaffection and discontent especially among the Malaysian youth;

*is alarmed* about the ominous warning of the Prime Minister that the forthcoming general elections will be the "dirtiest" in the history of the country;

*appeals* to the King of Malaysia to pardon Lim Guan Eng;

*calls* on the Malaysian Government to :

- uphold the rule of law and to make sure that Anwar has a fair trial;
- repeal all draconian laws;
- ensure true independence and separation of powers between the Legislative, Executive and

Judiciary:

- ensure that the forthcoming general elections are clean, fair and democratic; and
- allow international observers during the elections.

The Socialist International AsiaPacific Committee is *equally concerned* by

- the continuing lack of progress in the democratisation process in Bhutan; and
- the expulsion of large numbers of its citizens and legally settled inhabitants from its territory which has forced families, particularly of Nepalese origin, to leave behind their ancestral homes, lands and properties and suffer the indignity of living under very difficult conditions as refugees in Nepal and some parts of India.

The Committee, therefore, *urges*

- His Majesty the King and the Government of Bhutan to view this situation as a serious humanitarian problem for which the international community feels legitimate concern; and
- that appropriate steps be initiated to allow the evicted families to return to their respective homes.

On Burma, the Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee:

*urges* all SI member parties to fully recognise and staunchly support the Committee Representing the People's Parliament (CRPP), formed by the absolute majority of the elected members of parliament through free and fair elections in 1990, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory;

*strongly urges* the junta to hand over power to the NLD and the representatives elected by the people of Burma who have the validity and legitimacy to govern the country;

*strongly condemns* the sweeping and continuous human rights violations committed by the military government and supports the UN Human Rights Commission resolutions, which catalogued a long list of such violations by the junta in the year of the 50th Anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights;

*demand*s the cessation of these violations starting with the release of at least 150 detained members of parliament and all other political prisoners;

*demand*s an end to the genocidal war being waged against the non-Burman ethnic peoples especially in the Karen, Karenni, Shan and Chin states;

*calls on* the ASEAN member countries to put strong pressure on the military junta to hold substantial political dialogue with the NLD and the non-Burman ethnic nationalities in order to resolve the long-standing conflicts in the country and reach acceptable and peaceful solutions to the suffering of the people of Burma;

*reaffirms* the Socialist International's unswerving encouragement and support for Burma's democratic movement in general, and the NLD and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in particular.

On Indonesia and East Timor, the Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee:

*welcomes* very warmly the current democratisation process in Indonesia;

*urges* the new democratic forces in Indonesia to pursue the transition government's policies of negotiations over East Timor;

*is concerned* at the latest events in the territory of East Timor and deplores the loss of human lives;

*reaffirms* the international community's concern for the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination and urges the Indonesian authorities to:

- facilitate the access of human rights and humanitarian organisations to the territory; and
- respect human rights and the outcome of the proposed referendum.

*welcomes* the clear statement by the United Nations' Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) that Indonesian military and police support for militias is in violation of the agreements signed by Indonesia in May 1999;

*notes* that the Agreement on Security states that: "the absolute neutrality of the TNI (Indonesian Armed Forces) and the Indonesian Police is essential."

*reaffirms* all the International's previous resolutions on this matter.