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Fax:**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENCY OF  
THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL  
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Pierre Mauroy will attend tomorrow, February 13, the General Assembly of the Italian Left. This event constitutes the culmination of a long process of change, of efforts which have been crowned with success both at the electoral level as well as in the exercise of government.

The parties of the Socialist International, whose rich history spans over a century, have always been able to transform and adapt themselves to current reality, which explains their longevity and their very evident attractive force today, to the extent that they hold nine prime ministerial posts and participate in twelve governments of the European Union. The Socialist International, in constant expansion, comprises no less than one hundred and forty one representative organisations throughout the world.

The attractive strength of our parties is such that Tony Blair, the new British Prime Minister, has begun to take steps which seem to indicate that the American Democrats appear to be interested in opening a dialogue with us. This dialogue would, in fact, resume an old tradition, established from the time of the great economic crisis in 1929 and the common struggle pursued during the second world war. This tradition continued for a long time even though it was interrupted in the 1980s at a time when the Democratic Party was in relative decline. However, the two American parties of the Socialist International, both linked to the Democratic Party, have continued to play a role within the Socialist International just as the AFL-CIO, currently headed by John Sweeney, has always played its role within the International Confederation of Free Trades Unions.

Indeed our last Congress was held in New York in September 1996 both to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations and to maintain a dialogue with the American progressive political forces.

Should this dialogue become more concrete, as we hope it will, it will prove that social-democracy at an international level has become inescapable. It could be rich in education for both sides as we are often confronted with the same problems, even if the solutions we try to apply are sometimes very different.

But there is no way that this dialogue will throw into question our own identity, particularly as the strong appeal of our ideas is increasing constantly. The influence of social democracy, strongly rooted in the traditions of our peoples and even in the collective subconscious of our nations, has not ceased to expand after the fall of the Berlin wall. Naturally, we remain open to any dialogue with those who seek to combat all the forms of conservatism, past and present, and to work for democracy, liberties and social justice.