



Socialist International Women

Council Meeting

Madrid, Spain, 21 and 22 February 2024

Women: present and future of socialism

RESOLUTION

Since we entered the 21st century, embracing the transformative technological advances that accompanied it, we have seen an encouraging rise in women's voices in socialism and left-wing parties, against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving global political landscape. At the same time, however, we are witnessing the dangerous rise of a new wave of populist authoritarianism driven by the media and social media. The emergence of this new model of authoritarianism, marked by nationalism and hate speech that divides our societies, poses a significant threat to women's rights and freedoms and, in some areas, has already caused a reversal of the progress achieved over the years.

The global family of the Socialist International Women has fought since 1907 to develop policies and measures for the protection of women and girls around the world, and to improve the status of women in politics, thus ensuring that fundamental gender-based policies are implemented in all regions and continents. As socialists, we have continued to defend societies based on the values of equality, freedom, solidarity and peace, while striving to eliminate hunger, poverty, conflict and war. As women in socialism, we have sought a platform to address issues such as gender representation and equality, political, civil, sexual and reproductive rights, and the prevention of violence against women. Today it is evident that women have not only played a fundamental role in the development of socialism and its effectiveness, often in the face of great adversity, but that in doing so they have also created a safer place for women and girls, improved their opportunities and amplified their voices.

More women now identify with the left, with Socialism or social progressivism than in previous years, particularly those who have completed higher education, underlining the critical importance of ensuring that girls around the world have unimpeded access to education and new technologies. Recent studies have found that left-wing parties are better at increasing the proportion of women in parliament and government structures. In Europe, multiple studies have found that there is a higher proportion of female MEPs and that women are elected to parliaments by socialist and left-wing and socialists parties, and that there are often more women in parties with a female leader. In Africa and Latin America, studies have also found that it is mainly left-wing and socialists parties that apply gender quotas.

The 21st century is laying the foundations of a culture of female empowerment, as women occupy a central place in global struggles to defend human rights, fight racism, protect refugees and raise awareness in the face of climate change. In recent years, our younger

generations have undertaken campaigns to denounce workplace abuse and harassment, promote the closing of gender gaps in the different areas of our societies, which shows how feminist values are rooted across the planet, as demonstrated by the #MeToo movement or the movements deployed by women in Africa and across the Middle East. Notably, in January 2017, in response to President Trump's inauguration, it was estimated that up to 5.5 million people attended the women's march in the United States alone, approximately 1.6% of the population. This was the biggest march in the history of the United States. On the same day, 673 marches were held around the world in solidarity and to highlight the numerous incidents of femicide, kidnapping and domestic abuse around the world.

While we have welcomed and celebrated this remarkable empowerment, much more remains to be done if we are to achieve gender equality and gender parity in all decision-making positions, starting with governments around the world, stopping violence against women and girls and protecting their freedom and their human rights. In 2023, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres warned that gender equality is “disappearing before our eyes” and could take up to 300 years to achieve. Socialist International Women reiterates that only by working as equals can men and women establish a decision-making process and political agenda that reflects the best interests, rights and common needs of all. To achieve that equality, that requires courage and action, leaders, particularly male leaders, must leave behind the outdated misogyny and build governments that fully represent the societies they serve. It is up to the member parties of the Socialist International to take the first step in this fight, creating the conditions for more women to access more positions of power in their respective organisations, as well as joining in the feminist struggle within each country.

As such, women should be seen as equals in the paid workforce. The IMF, among others, has shown that abolishing discriminatory laws and granting women equal job opportunities boosts national economies by up to 35%. This progress is desperately needed to counter the serious cost of living crisis we are currently suffering.

Right-wing populism and authoritarian rhetoric have increased in all regions of the world and pose a significant threat to women, challenging and eroding sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality while increasing workplace discrimination and the marginalization of minority groups. Furthermore, it highlights a worrying disappearance of democracy and a breakdown of trust in national governments and international institutions.

These challenges must revitalise our new agenda. We have seen what we can achieve and witnessed our capabilities in action. Today it is clear that women and socialism are inextricably linked, strengthening the commitment to gender empowerment, parity and peace. As new challenges arise, Socialist International Women will rise to meet them, and we are deeply proud to be stronger today than we have ever been.

On the occasion of its Council Meeting in Madrid on 21 and 22 February 2024, Socialist International Women calls on governments and the international community, NGOs, grassroots organisations and the global family of the Socialist International:

- to commit to achieving gender equality at all levels and in all sectors;

- to promote and encourage the incorporation of women into politics and positions of power, with the member parties of the Socialist International taking the first step within their organisations to guarantee these spaces for women, as well as implementing programmes, courses and training so that women can access political and business institutions more easily;
 - to ensure that legislation is in place to ensure that girls can access school and higher education and therefore have the skills to participate in politics and business;
 - to challenge governments which: have not implemented gender quotas in their structures and public policies; have not implemented strong protective policies to prevent violence against women; are implementing regressive policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in order to encourage them to promote pro-women policies.
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