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Final Draft

COMMUNIQUÉ of the Secretariat of the WPC 27-28 of May in Athens

The Secretariat of the WPC successfully concluded its meeting in Athens on 27-28 May, at the Headquarters of the WPC with the participation of the Secretariat members from Brazil, Greece, Cuba, USA, Portugal, Cyprus, Palestine, Syria, South Africa, Congo, India and Nepal and guest organisations from the peace movements in Poland, Turkey and Israel.

The main topic of the meeting was the preparations of the coming WPC Assembly and World Peace Conference, to be held in the city of São Luís, in Brazil from 17-20 November 2016. The Secretariat is looking forward to the broadest possible participation of the member and friendly organisations, of invited guests and personalities and will dedicate efforts in this direction. Brazil and São Luís will become in November the reference point and rally point for the peace loving forces of the world that fight against imperialism, its aggressions and wars, for a world of peace, cooperation, progress and social justice.

The Secretariat took note of the first regional meeting of Europe and the plans of the regions for holding the five regional meetings in the coming months, with necessary input for the Assembly itself. Furthermore the regional meetings will be the opportunity to continue to promote the Assembly, to reach out to friendly organisations around the world, to plan and propose concrete actions and initiatives of the WPC in the field of the defending peace, drastic disarmament, freedom, democracy and sovereignty and of internationalist solidarity, which is a “tool” in the hands of the peoples in its struggle against aggressions, war and oppression.

Holding the meeting in Athens/Greece, the participants of the meeting received the briefing from the host Organisation EEDYE and expressed their solidarity with the Greek people in their struggle against the anti-people’s measures and policies of the Greek government along with the EU, ECB and IMF, which are leading to further impoverish masses of the population. The WPC in particular condemns the plans to install a new US/NATO military base in the Aegean Sea and the plans for deployment of drones on the island of Crete.

The WPC witnessed in Greece the drama of tens of thousands of refugees, victims of wars and interventions, having been stuck in refugee camps in Greece, due to the policies of the governments and the EU, the Dublin Regulations and the Schengen Agreement, in violation of the

Geneva Convention and international law on refugees more generally, as the agreement between the EU and Turkey shows.

The WPC Secretariat rejects the pretexts being used to justify USA's, NATO's, EU's and their allies' imperialist operations of destabilization and wars, like the current pretext of confronting terrorism, when as it is known, the extremist religious criminal organizations, like the "jihadists" of the "Islamic State" and other similar mechanisms were created, trained and armed by the USA and powerful European states, together with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and with the support of Turkey.

The WPC expresses its profound concern about the growing imperialist aggressiveness, fed by the capitalist economic crisis, which is influencing every aspect of peoples' lives. The signs and indications for the danger of a generalized war of world dimensions are intensifying.

The fierce competition over the control of markets and raw materials, energy, pipelines, new spheres of influence carried out by imperialists that lead to wars of aggression against sovereign states are combined with the unified offensive of capital's forces against the workers'-peoples' rights. Despite the contradictions, the NATO and EU member-states are preparing new structures, new mechanisms, and new measures against the labour and people's movements that resist, defending their rights and sovereignty, challenging imperialist supremacy.

While observing the situation in the broader Middle East and Eastern Europe, as well as in the other regions, we underline our concern that the international developments are bringing us ever closer to a generalized war of global proportions. But such a war is not inevitable, the WPC is confident that the unwavering struggle of the peoples and of a broad and strong peace movement can stop this dangerous threat.

Particularly we express our serious concern about the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Libya and the competition between powerful states over the control of the region, which is sharpening. The plan for a "Greater Middle East" that has been advanced by the USA, EU and NATO and has as its first target turning over the enormous oil and natural gas reserves to the multinationals and international monopolies is being implemented with various adjustments. Characteristic features of this plan are the interference in the internal affairs of states, the violent overthrow of governments, even border changes and the dismemberment of states.

We reiterate our demand for the immediate end of all foreign interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and call upon the peace loving forces and peoples of the world to get alerted and act against the new plans to once more attack Libya, a country that has been destroyed and its people massacred from the year 2011 onwards.

As the WPC, we express our solidarity with the peoples of Syria and Iraq, as well as the other peoples in the region, who are the victims of foreign military and political interventions, which support the activity of the armed "jihadists", the "Islamic State" and other similar criminal organizations. As a result, one million people have lost their lives, while five million are refugees in neighbouring countries and elsewhere.

In addition to our categorical demand that the intervention in the internal affairs of these countries stop, we also demand that the refugees be afforded the right to settle in their destination countries, or be able to return to their own country, and that the Geneva Convention for the protection of Refugees be respected and observed, safeguarding all their rights.

Sixty eight years after the Nakba, the WPC demands and fights for recognition of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine on the pre-4th June 1967 territories, with East Jerusalem as its capital, the liberation of thousands of political prisoners from Israeli jails and the implementation of decision 194 of the UN on the right of return for Palestinian refugees. The WPC supports the actions in boycott of the products from Israeli settlements in Palestine.

The WPC expresses its solidarity with the consistent peace loving forces that are active in Israel, together with the people of Palestine who struggle in difficult complex conditions for the people's rights, democratic freedoms and social justice.

We denounce the deployment of NATO troops in an arc that extends from the Baltic countries to Bulgaria, creating in parallel the so-called anti-missile shield in the framework of the strategic targeting of Russia in order to have a nuclear first strike advantage.

The WPC expresses its solidarity with the anti-imperialist and progressive forces in Ukraine and denounces the attacks of the Ukrainian government against the population of East Ukraine (Donbass), the decision to outlaw the CP of Ukraine, the witch hunt against communists and other progressive forces in the country.

The WPC in a responsible and decisive way opposes and denounces any NATO expansion, whether this concerns Finland, Sweden and the discussion concerning Cyprus' accession to NATO's "Partnership for Peace", or in the cases of Ukraine and Georgia or Balkan countries like Serbia, FYROM etc.

At the same time we salute the struggles for weakening and dissolution of NATO at a global level as well as of our member-organizations and other peace forces in many countries for their sovereign right of withdrawal and disengagement from NATO.

The commitment of all the European NATO countries to devote 2% of their GDP to military spending, serves the aggressive plans of NATO and also the profitability of the military industry in the USA, Germany, Britain, France, Israel etc. NATO, hand in hand with the EU, with the rationale of "pooling and sharing" military equipment and personnel, the creation of EU battle groups and its Euro-army, supported by the unanimous decisions of the governments in the EU and NATO, are becoming more aggressive and more threatening to the peoples of the world and also to those who live inside their member-states.

Based on the WPC appeal against NATO, which is heading towards its next summit in Warsaw on 8-9 July, we call upon all the members and friends of the WPC, to organize multifaceted actions and protests in their countries against NATO, which has been the armed tool of imperialism since 1949. The WPC decided to organize an Anti-NATO conference under the slogan "Yes to Peace – No to NATO" on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July in Warsaw in cooperation with our friends from the Anti-War movement of Poland, and calls upon members and friends of the WPC, particularly from the NATO member States, to take active part in it.

The WPC expresses its firm and profound solidarity with the peoples of Latin America in their struggle to defend their right to determine their own path and to resist the attacks of local oligarchy and imperialism, and supports their struggle and the demands which will enable them to become the masters of their own destiny and homelands.

We reiterate our solidarity with the Cuban people and their Revolution and demand the closure and removal of the US base and concentration camp from the Cuban province of Guantanamo, as well as the lifting of the economic blockade by the USA and the “Common Position” of the EU.

We follow the developments in Venezuela with great concern, where the provocative Presidential Order of USA has been renewed, which designates Venezuela as an extraordinary threat to the security and foreign policy of the USA. The WPC denounces the reactionary opposition, supported by the USA, which intensifies its actions to destabilize the country and remove the elected President and government by promoting violence, boycott of the economy, price speculation, and obstruction of the popular access to essential commodities, utilizing the major economic difficulties that its people are experiencing. We express our solidarity with the people of Venezuela, its elected President and our member Organization “Committee of International Solidarity” (COSI), in their struggle to defend their achievements and deepen the transformations in favor of the working and popular strata.

The WPC denounces the attack on and violation of the people's choices in Brazil. We express our solidarity with the people of Brazil and CEBRAPAZ in their struggle to consolidate the people's will and the interests of the vast popular majority, denouncing the ongoing coup against the elected President of the country. We believe that the people of Brazil can defend their interests and decisively oppose poverty and exploitation and pave the way so that they can be the masters of their homeland. We condemn the new "interim" government under the Vice President and its initial announcements, which constitute an offensive against the workers'-people's rights, as well as against democratic freedoms.

The WPC follows the "peace talks" between the Colombian government and FARC-EP in Havana, which have as their aim the formation of a comprehensive peace agreement, and underlines at the same time the challenges and risks involved in ensuring guarantees for a political solution with justice and dignity that the people of Colombia can use to strengthen their struggle.

The WPC expresses its solidarity with the people of Argentina regarding their sovereign rights over the Malvinas islands that are openly being violated by the United Kingdom.

We support the right of the people of Puerto Rico, a colony of the USA in the Caribbean, for self-determination and freedom.

The presence of foreign troops of MINUSTAH also remains a matter of concern in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world.

The WPC expresses its concern about the negative developments regarding the problems among the countries in South Asia and South East Asia which in a way are trying to divide the unity of the peoples and are opening ways for external interference in these areas.

The WPC opposes the plans of the USA in Asia and notes that the “Pivot to Asia” strategy, is extremely dangerous for the peoples of the region, as it involves the transfer of 60% of the US military forces to the region.

In this context the WPC supports the peaceful multilateral settlement of the disputes in the South China Sea on the basis of the International Convention on the Law of the Sea of the UN in

1982 (UNCLOS). We express our deep concern about the accumulation of military forces, which sharpens the situation, and denounce deployment of naval forces by the USA in the region, which utilizes the existing differences for its own goals.

We support the right of the Federal People's Republic of Nepal to implement its new constitution after 10 years of civil war and 5 years of negotiations, and denounce the efforts to blockade it economically by India, as well as all other attempts to utilize the minorities in the border regions to destabilize the situation. We support all initiatives aiming to achieve good, friendly and neighborly relations between the two peoples.

The WPC expresses its solidarity with the Korean people for a peaceful reunification of the peninsula and the right of the DPRK to defend its country and borders from imperialist threats, the military exercises of South Korea-USA-Japan and the increasing military presence of the USA in the Pacific Ocean.

We reaffirm our longstanding position for the abolition of all nuclear weapons, as it is recorded in the always relevant 1950 'Stockholm Appeal' of the WPC, we salute the Japanese peace movement in their struggle against the plans for a new Military Base in Henoko/Okinawa, and demand the closure of all foreign military bases around the world.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Cyprus, denouncing once again the facts on the ground, that for 42 years, 37% of the country remains under occupation, in violation of the relevant UN resolutions. The WPC supports a just, viable and sustainable solution for its people, Greek-Cypriots, Turkish-Cypriots, Armenians, Maronites and Latins, with the withdrawal of the occupation forces, all military bases and forces, a solution that will ensure a United Cyprus and People with one sovereignty, one citizenship and one international personality, as is provided for in the relevant UN resolutions for a bi-communal bi-zonal federation, free of custodians and guarantors.

In Africa, the violent exploitation by transnational companies is continuing with the full support of the USA. The US command centre AFRICOM, the new military bases, and the French military interventions are some aspects of imperialism's strategy in this continent, together with the longstanding attempts to install "friendly" regimes to facilitate the looting of natural resources. The interventions of NATO and the EU in Somalia and Libya led to the collapse and dismemberment of these countries and the spreading of problems to neighbouring countries, while the African Union and the UN are often used for control through military operations.

On the 40th anniversary of the declaration of independence of Western Sahara, we express our solidarity with its people. We denounce the ongoing occupation by Morocco and stress the just struggle of the people of Western Sahara for their fundamental right to self-determination via a democratic and free referendum.

International Law, or what is left of it, after 1991 is being dismantled in a web of contradictions, where the principles of the UN Charter are interpreted and applied according to the imperialist plans in conditions of the negative correlation of forces as a result of the situation that was formed after the overthrow of socialism in the Soviet Union. However, there arises the need to assert and enforce the principles of the UN Charter in defence of the right of the peoples to self-determination, of national sovereignty and independence, non-interference in the internal

affairs of States, the peaceful resolution of international disputes, and equality among States, among other important principles.

The WPC Assembly in Brazil is a milestone in the strengthening of the peace movement and its action against wars and aggressions, in reinforcement of internationalist solidarity and the anti-imperialist struggle.

Today, we begin the march from Athens to our Assembly in Brazil. We march guided by the just cause of the peoples in the struggle for a world of peace, freedom, friendship, solidarity, progress and social justice, free from imperialist domination, oppression and exploitation.

We know that the enemy of the peoples is strong, but it cannot defeat the strength of the peoples, which is multiplied when it is united, coordinated and determined. The WPC will devote all its forces to this struggle.

Forward to the success of our Assembly on 17-20 of November in Brazil!

**STRENGTHEN THE PEOPLES' SOLIDARITY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AGAINST IMPERIALISM**