

Final Communiqué of the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting of the World Peace Council Vientiane / Lao PDR 24th November 2019

The Asia Pacific Regional Meeting of World Peace Council took place successfully in Vientiane Lao PDR on 24th November 2019, hosted by the Lao Committee for Peace and Solidarity (LCPS). The regional meeting was combined with the WPC Secretariat meeting on 25th and 26th November and in total participated by 31 delegates from eighteen (18) countries (Laos, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, DPR Korea, Philippines, Australia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam from the region along with delegates from Brazil, Greece, USA, Portugal, Cyprus, Palestine, Syria, Cuba and South Africa).

The meeting was warmly welcomed by the President of LCPS Somphane Phengkhamy with the presence of the WPC Secretariat and in particular of the WPC President Socorro Gomes, the General Secretary Thanassis Pafilis, the Executive Secretary Iraklis Tsavdaridis and other prominent leaders of the WPC.

The meeting expressed deep concern over the continuing and growing imperialist aggressiveness internationally as well as in the region. Asia&Pacific has as region the second largest contingent of Nuclear weapons deployed, after Europe and after the withdrawal of the US from the INF treaty, the dangers for new arms race and new threats to peace and security are on the rise. Additionally the WPC expresses its serious concern for the bilateral military agreements of the US with almost all countries from South Asia, to South East Asia, Far East Asia and Australia.

We stressed the importance of continued peaceful dialogue amongst all concerned parties in order to realize lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula by all concerned parties and the complete denuclearization of the Peninsula. We urged the US and South Korean authorities to take a proper stand and attitude on the Panmunjon, the Pyongyang Joint Declaration and the DPRK-US Joint Statement and continue working towards the realization of lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We welcomed, although being cautious, the recent dialogues with the aim to reach a peace accord in replacement of the Armistice agreement of 1953. We support the Korean people in their just cause for peaceful and independent reunification of their fatherland. The participants of the meeting stated clearly their demand for the end of the military exercises of USA and its allies on and around the peninsula and for the withdrawal of the US-troops and their weapons from Korean soil.

The participants of the meeting expressed their deep concern about the growing religious fundamentalism, extremism and all kinds of terrorism in the region. These dangerous developments are influenced by sectarian and fundamentalist ideologies which are weakening and undermining the unity of the people and thereby hindering the united struggle of the peoples against imperialism.

The meeting expresses serious concern about the more than one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which constitute a humanitarian crisis which has to be dealt by the International community and the UN with adequate humanitarian help and with respect to their

rights to decent life and repatriation to their homes with civil and political rights. At the same time we object any efforts to instrumentalize the crisis for religious purpose and geostrategical aims by imperialist forces and their allies.

The WPC is following with concern the developments in the South China Sea, particularly about the territorial and maritime disputes between several neighboring countries. We support the peaceful settlement of differences bilaterally and multilaterally between all involved parties. Meanwhile, we reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea and recognized the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability and prosperity. We reaffirmed the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoid actions that may further complicate the situation and pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, especially the 1982 UNCLOS. We emphasized the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea. We underline our objection to the military presence of non-regional powers in the region, namely the USA, which have their own agenda.

The meeting observed that despite the economic development of many countries in significant level there also exists immense poverty, illiteracy, curable deceases, malnutrition and underdevelopment resulting in the sharpening of social and economic contradictions in this most populated area of the world.

The enlarged Regional meeting of Asia&Pacific of the WPC condemned the recent massacre of dozens of Palestinians in the Gaza strip and expressed its solidarity with the people of Palestine in its desire and right for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine in the borders of pre-4th June 1967 and with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the right for the return of the refugees and the release of all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails.

Likewise the meeting expressed its solidarity to the Syrian people, who are suffering for more than 8 years an imperialist aggression with hundreds of thousands of victims and millions of refugees. We note with concern that despite the significant victories of the Syrian people and its army, the situation has not been normalized fully. We denounce the invasion of the foreign army into the North of Syria and the violation of the sovereignty of Syria. We demand the withdrawal of all foreign occupation forces from Syria along with their mercenaries.

The meeting underlined its strong condemnation to the recent Coup d' Etat in Bolivia and the fascist attacks and assassination of leaders of political and social movements which took place after the legitimate re-election of President Evo Morales and the military/police Coup which was clearly sponsored by the USA and the EU. We express our full hearted solidarity also to the people of Venezuela who are defending their achievements and fighting back the imperialist maneuvers of the USA, the EU and the Organisation of American States which are aiming with the local oligarchy at the control of the rich energy resources of the country. We salute the brave people of Cuba which is serving for more than 60 years as symbol of inspiration

for the peoples of the world and demand the end of the US blockade along with the sanctions and the efforts to impose new obstacles in trade and tourism.

The regional meeting expressed its solidarity with the people of Cyprus, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, for the end of the Turkish occupation and for the reunification of their country and the closure of the British Bases on the island.

Last but not least the WPC meeting expressed its respect to the brave Lao people for their resistance during the US aggressive War in the Indochina and the suffering from the bombing of 3 million tons by the USA on the Lao people which were not more than 3 million people at that time. The Unexploded Ordnances (UXO) are causing till today heavy injuries to peasants and children in Laos. We demand the appropriate compensation and measures to end the cause to this problem by the ones who have created it.

The meeting emphasized that all the above developments make it incumbent on WPC member's organisations to realize the multi dimensional, comprehensive and interconnected nature of these challenges which threatens not only world peace but the very survival of the planet. The peace movements in our region cannot proceed in any meaningful way without assimilating the seriousness of these challenges and without evolving appropriate responses to them. After detailed discussions the meeting identified areas where the Peace movements in this region have to strengthen their activities.

Future activities for the coming period:

- To observe the centenary of birth of the historical leader of the WPC Romesh Chandra in Raipur/India in January 2020
- To endorse and support the "Kathmandu Conference for Peace, Friendship and Co-operation" on 27-28 Feb 2020 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- To support and participate in the International Anti-imperialist Conference against the global imperialist war machine to be held in Cyprus on 28-29 March 2020
- To explore the possibility of holding an international event commemorating the 70th anniversary of WPC (1950 Warsaw) in Dhaka/Bangladesh along with the 47th anniversary of the "Joliot Curie WPC Award" to the founder of the country Bangabandu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for May 2020
- To observe 6th and 9th August 2020 as Hiroshima and Nagasaki day and to popularize the demands for total abolition of nuclear weapons in Asia free of all foreign military bases
- To explore with the Japanese Peace Committee to hold a WPC event in Hiroshima on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the bombing of the martyr cities.
- To observe international day of solidarity with the people of Palestine on 29th November in appropriate manner.

Finally, the meeting extended sincere thanks to the people of Laos and the Lao Committee for Peace and Solidarity (LCPS) for hosting the meeting and providing warm hospitality.