



## PRESS RELEASE

### Inauguration in Ferraz of the 'African Progress' International Conference

#### **Manuel Chaves notes that the link of Spain with the African continent is “more and more foreground and strategic”**

- ***Pajín appeals to the need to “knit a progressive and common progressive” to address the challenges to be dealt with based on multilateral politics”***

The President of the PSOE, Manuel Chaves, affirmed today –in his inaugural speech of the African Progress International Conference, at the headquarters of the socialist party in Ferraz- that the Spanish foreign policy for Sub Saharan Africa “is a stronger action line we wish to place at the same level as other international priorities of our country like the ones we have with Europe or Latin America and the Mediterranean countries”.

Chaves explained that the Spanish Government is convinced that “the great problems and challenges of the world cannot be addressed without the full collaboration and participation of the African countries” and the proof is that our country, as the ninth world power and member of the G-20 and a neighboring country, “understands and has transformed its relation with Africa a foreground which is more and more strategic”.

Besides, he added that, with this “effort” of the foreign policy of the Spanish Government in Africa, “we have not but satisfied to a great extent a demand from important and large sectors of Spanish society, who agree on paying more attention, to the problems and challenges of the African continent as well as to the many and real opportunities offered by these countries.”



At this point, the socialist president reviewed the main policies with Africa fostered by the Zapatero governments and which have specially taken into account aspects like gender equity, the defense of human rights, the support to democracy, peace and security or the global address of migration processes based on integration and the pillars of the organization of legal migration.

Finally and after citing an excerpt of Nelson Mandela's autobiography, he affirmed that "the duty of world progressive parties today is to not stay behind, to not yield to those who are in favor of the single system of values and not to leave the political arena for those who do not want to change society because they are the ones who have the power." In the opinion of Chaves, "if we fulfill this, if we commit to continue and face our responsibilities, we will know that we are progressing on the path of freedom and progress."

## **LEIRE PAJÍN**

The secretary for Organization of the PSOE, Leire Pajín, recognized that "the challenges faced by the African continent are borderless challenges which are shared by the society worldwide and require collaboration and agreement to deal with them." For this, he appealed to the need to "knit a progressive partnership, a common agenda in order to address borderless challenges which need to be tackled from a multilateral policy."

He defended the need to put an end to speculation on food on international markets because "we cannot allow speculators to make non productive money while millions of human beings are left behind, thousands of boys and girls do not have anything to eat and African farmers are ruined due to the rules of the game which are set without them."



She also claimed for the fulfillment of the Doha Round so “there equal international trade rules for all countries” and he recognized that although official aid for development is necessary, “it is not enough because we need equal and fair to allow African products to compete on European and international markets in equal conditions”. “We cannot give with one hand what we take with another”, he concluded.

Pajín, who insisted on the commitment of the socialist government with the development of Africa in the last seven years, cited different joint lines of action, among which, the strengthening of African states, a common migration agenda, the training of young people, the fight against poverty, equal opportunities for men and women and regional and sub regional integration on the continent.

The socialist leader noted the development capacity of Africa and rejected the stereotyped image people have of the continent as a “place where 28 out of the poorest countries of the world leave; a place exhausted by pandemic, famine and drought”. She affirmed that “Africa is not a group of poor countries; in any case it would be a group of countries impoverished by bad political practices we must acknowledge in western countries.”

The last person of the panel was the South African Deputy President, Kgalema Motlanthe, who, among other things, advocated for the members of progressive organizations to “continue working together so the current effects of the economic crisis do not deter us from our will to be an important partner” of Europe and the rest of the world.

The “African Progress” International Conference, organized jointly by the PSOE, IDEAS Foundation and the African National Congress (ANC), will see the participation of socialist political leaders, decision makers and representatives of progressive think tanks worldwide, mainly from African countries. During the whole day, they will discuss



the challenges facing Sub Saharan Africa in order to overcome the deficiencies of the current “developmentalist” system, mainly sustainability and the distribution of wealth.

It is the first event of this type organized in our country to help create a permanent dialogue forum among African progressive socialist political parties and the PSOE, and will strengthen the relations between IDEAS Foundations and progressive think tanks from Africa, laying the foundations for the promotion of coordinated answers to common problems. The main objective is to set an innovative and progressive agenda.