

INTERVIEW

JEAN-VICTOR GRUAT,
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNION



Interview No 1

PRESIDENT 2002-2005

Question 1

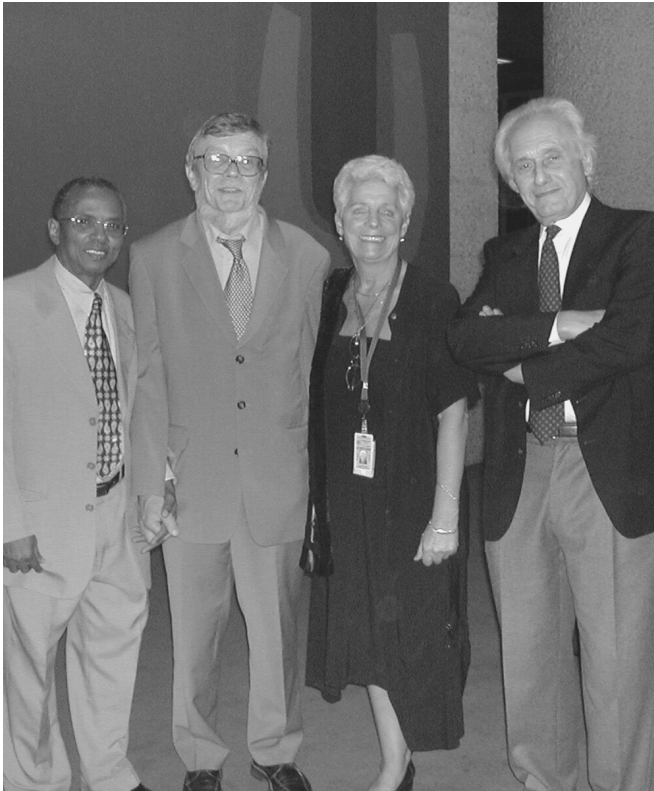
What does the ILO Staff Union, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, mean to you?

It's a no-brainer. How could the staff of the only tripartite international organization not be unionized?

Question 2

What motivated your commitment to run for President of the Union and what message would you like to convey to future Presidents?

I had trade union experience in "real life" before I joined the ILO. When I was approached, it seemed natural to me to put it at the service of all. I knew that it would work, having appreciated the quality of the secretariat and the vitality of the institution. For the future presidents, let us wish them to never forget that we are only here to serve those who elected us.



Question 4

What are the 2 challenges and 2 major successes you have faced during your mandate?

Two challenges: weighing in as a Union of the ILO in a context of globalization where the real levers of control were in the hands of a handful of technocrats above individual organizations; to combat the gloom and scepticism generated by the distancing of decision-makers who were virtually unaccountable to anyone.

Two successes: to have been able on various occasions to mobilize staff, even beyond the ILO itself, to fight against the inevitability of deteriorating employment and working conditions; to have succeeded in keeping social dialogue alive within the organization created to promote it; and to have been able to mobilize staff in a number of ways beyond the ILO itself to fight against the inevitability of deteriorating employment and working conditions.

Question 3

What have these years of presidency brought you; do you have an anecdote that remains in your memory?

These years have brought me a lot in terms of relationships with others, discipline, self-control and perseverance. They were years of warmth, solidarity and fraternity, far removed from the bureaucratic image often attached to the civil service, even if it was international. A memory, since you have to choose one of them - to accompany a colleague who has been unjustly dismissed until his last hour at the office, and to welcome him back six months later, after he has won his reinstatement in the court thanks to legal assistance financed by the Union.

Question 5

In closing, what would you say about motivating ILO entrants and especially young people to join the ILO Union?

The ILO is an organisation based on respect for the right to organise. It is fortunate to have a Union where all sensitivities and categories of staff work together harmoniously for the progress of each and everyone. Not joining such a Union is in fact acting against the legitimacy of the organisation that employs you.

