

INTERVIEW

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FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNION



Interview No 8

ILO Staff Union 100 1920 2020
A century of struggle and solidarity

PRESIDENT 2005 2006

Question 1

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

It is a long-term success story. Our Union has persevered against all odds and pursued its objectives of defending the interests of the staff and those of the organization.

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 was elected President of the Union Committee, that is, representative of a group of elected people. The aim was to promote and defend the objectives and projects of this group as validated by a general assembly.

After more than 20 years of union activities, both at the Office and in Swiss unions, my motivation for this position was the culmination of a career path and the assurance that my experience, my knowledge of the Office and the needs of its staff would enable me to make progress on issues.



Question 3

What did these years of presidency bring you, do you have an anecdote that remains in your memory?

It was a beautiful experience, a human one, with my colleagues in the secretariat of the Union. Without their daily help, the work of the Union cannot succeed and I relied a lot on Brigitte and Johanna, without forgetting Nicolas, to assume this function. I also worked with a very efficient Committee in a difficult period of conflict with the Director-General.

Challenging but rewarding. Above all, I remember a year rich in encounters, especially during the regional meetings, as well as a warm working atmosphere.

An anecdote: one day I had to replace the President of the Sports and Leisure Section at short notice for a ceremony to present a cheque to an association of civil servants who were victims of AIDS. Not having prepared anything, I drew on the memory of a painful experience. I believe that this 'improvisation' was certainly the most sincere and moving speech of this year of presidency.

Question 4

What are the two main challenges and successes you have faced during your term of office?

The major trade union challenge that year was the negotiation of the collective agreement on recruitment and selection, which was a multi-year trade union struggle to finally lead to a strike. It was a personal challenge to speak in public, especially before the Board of Directors.

Question 5

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

The Office is the place where the contradiction between Labour and Assets is essentially expressed. Trade unionism is the basis of solidarity of workers. It is not just a question of joining an organisation; it is also a question of participating in general assemblies and be an actor in the struggles led by this institution.

