

First Session of the Union Day for Africa

The first Union Day in Africa, which took place on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, via Zoom for 2 hours, was a resounding success, exceeding all expectations and surpassing the initial forecasts. This historic day was marked by an unprecedented mobilization, bringing together over 200 colleagues and becoming the largest union demonstration ever organized in Africa. This unexpected triumph demonstrated the determination and strength of solidarity within the African region.

Initially, very few people believed in the possibility of holding such a large-scale Union Day in Africa. However, against all odds, the mobilization was successful, reflecting the commitment and will of colleagues to make their voices heard. The massive participation was surprising and seen as a tangible sign of the importance given to union issues and the well-being of staff within the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Africa.

The presence of the ILO Director-General, the Regional Director for Africa, and the President of the ILO Staff Union added an exceptional dimension to this day. Their active participation and support enhanced the legitimacy and scope of the event. Their presence also testified to the institutional recognition given to the concerns and demands of colleagues in Africa.

The opening speeches emphasized the crucial importance of this Union Day and expressed deep gratitude to all colleagues for their valuable contributions. They praised the determination and courage of the participants, who dared to believe in the possibility of creating meaningful change. The organizers, namely the regional titular member for Africa (**Remy Bertrand Kama Kama**) and the substitute member in Geneva (**Leillah Abdallah**), were warmly congratulated for their brilliant initiative and their ability to mobilize colleagues from the region. As an African proverb says, "**Alone, we go faster; together, we go further.**" These organizers truly embodied this wisdom by bringing staff together to create meaningful and lasting change. Their exemplary collaboration paved the way for strengthened solidarity and a more powerful collective voice for ILO staff in Africa.

During the two-hour Union Day, an open and constructive dialogue was established, allowing colleagues from the region to ask questions and receive precise and concrete answers. Concerns regarding salaries, restructuring, mobility, and other important subjects were addressed with seriousness and commitment. The members of the Geneva Staff Union Committee played a key role in providing practical solutions and alleviating concerns.

In conclusion, this Union Day in Africa will be etched in the annals of the Staff Union and the African region as an unimaginable success. As emphasized by the regional titular member for Africa, **Remy Bertrand Kama Kama**, "**This day was a historic turning point, proving that when we unite, we are capable of achieving the impossible.**" Despite initial doubts, colleagues have proven that mobilization and solidarity can create tangible changes. This day has strengthened the voice of ILO staff in Africa, showcasing the crucial importance of union issues and the rights of ILO personnel. The success of this historic event serves as a reminder of the importance of perseverance and belief in the possibility of making a difference.