

UN International Day of Older Persons: 1 October 2024

Ita Marguet, October 2024

On December 14 1990 the **UN General Assembly** declared 1 October as the **International Day of Older Persons** that was first observed on 1 October 1991. Now into its 34th year the designated theme in 2024 is 'Ageing with Dignity: The importance of strengthening care and support systems for older persons worldwide'. Its aim is to encourage governments, policy makers and social services across the globe for a concerted and sustained action to address the physical, social, psychological and health needs. The commemoration also underscores the importance of promoting healthy living conditions for the elderly that respect dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and quality of their lives. Much is linked to the social, cultural and other norms of the country. With headquarters in Geneva the World Health Organization, and its representation worldwide, is the designated United Nations specialised Agency.

Based on the latest United Nations projections, the number of individuals aged 65 or above across the world between 2021 and 2050 will have a global share of the older population projected to increase from approximately 10% to 17%. It is further projected that by 2050 across the world they will be twice the number of children aged 12. Due to female life expectancy women will outnumber men at older ages in almost all populations and a preponderance of females is to be expected.

International Labour Organisation

The ILO has been instrumental in its own efforts to support the United Nations agenda for older persons. It has specifically addressed the particular situation of older persons (usually those aged 50 and above) as long ago as 1980, in the **Older Workers Recommendation, No 162**. It offers a constructive framework for decent and productive conditions of work for older workers who choose or need to have paid employment.

The Former Officials Section of the ILO Staff Union with its generations of newly or older retired members serves as a link between the present and past officials, many with long years of experience on the issues of promoting social justice in the workplace and beyond to uphold the basis of the Organisation's unique tripartite structure within the overall United Nations system of Organisations. It works in close tandem with the umbrella body of AFICS* within the wider UN System in the shared dedication and outreach to serve the many needs of the UN Older Persons agenda.

To mark the **Older Persons Day**, on 1 October 2024, an inter-generational event was hosted by the ILO Former Officials Section in the ILO Geneva Office that brought serving and retired colleagues together in a convivial gathering with the opportunity to greet and share between past and present. It included an on-line Round Table session in the cinema with an ILO threesome panel to share inter-generational and some wider aspects of their perceived roles and hopes for the ILO into the future.

The event concluded with the official opening of the annual **ILO Arts and Decoration Circle Exhibition** exposed in the **Hall des Colonnades** of the building **(30 September-11 October 2024)**.