

Speech by François Kientzler, Reception for Retirees, 16 October 2025

Mr Deputy Director-General, Mr Chief of Staff, Madam Director of Human Resources,
Dear colleagues,

First of all, I would like to thank the Director-General for this invitation. This year's reception for retirees is being held at a time of great uncertainty for the future of the ILO. Pressure is being exerted on the Organisation to undertake far-reaching reforms, and this is compounded by a significant shortfall in financial resources due to the non-payment of contributions. Although the 2026-2027 budget has been approved, the ILO's cash flow does not allow us to look to the future with confidence.

In view of this situation, the Bureau of the Section des Anciens has repeatedly expressed its solidarity with ILO officials following the suspension of numerous technical cooperation projects. Retirees took part in the May Day rally at Place des Nations and the rally during the ILO Governing Body meeting in June. Séverine Deboos, Chair of the ILO Staff Union Committee, attends all our Bureau meetings and keeps us informed of the situation.

We have just learned that the staff invited to this reception were concerned about the expense involved.

But perhaps he had misunderstood the message, which was precisely to encourage civil servants to meet their elders and exchange ideas with them. This has been one of the objectives of these receptions since their inception. But it is true that we are in a context of spending constraints.

The receptions for retirees at the invitation of the Director-General thus demonstrate the attention paid by the Director-General to retirees who, for decades, have shaped the ILO and contributed to its history. We have actively participated in transformations for greater social justice in many countries around the world. We are very attached to the Declaration of Philadelphia, which in 1944 reaffirmed the objectives and *raison d'être* of the ILO. It is on this basis that the ILO has worked for decades.

Dear colleagues, today, to our great regret, multipartyism is being called into question by the selfish prioritisation of bilateral relations.

Despite everything, let us resist and remain confident in the future of our organisation.

Thank you for your attention.