

**AAFI** - ASSOCIATION DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX - Genève

**AFICS** – ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS – Geneva

# Edition spéciale

**AAFI-AFICS**

8 October 2025

70th anniversary

aafi - afics

1955–2025

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# AAFI-AFICS

8 October 2025

## Table of contents

	Page
A word from the President.....	2
History.....	4
Those who made the AFICS.....	6
The concept of retirees.....	8
The Bulletin.....	10
What does the AFICS do?.....	12
Sister associations.....	14
FAFICS.....	16
The AFICS today.....	18
Humour.....	20
Conclusion.....	22

### AAFI-AFICS

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## A word from the President

### **Celebrate, yes, but celebrate what?**

Our association is an old lady. If it were a bank obligation, one could say that it has reached its maturity. For its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, three newsletters have been published, which are available on our website. And yet every year it tries to reinvent itself. It has never been so present, so active.

In 2024, it organised two seminars:

- On 27 June, to welcome the Pension Fund, which explained the facial recognition procedure for beneficiary certificates
- On 30 September, the seminar "Preparing for the future"; the numerous participants were able to review succession matters and the necessary steps to ensure a peaceful future.

This year, it will participate in the retirement preparation seminar, which will once again be organised jointly by UNOG and the ILO. This will allow future retirees to appreciate our action.

We are very active in Geneva, as many retirees have chosen to settle there.

Our general assembly will therefore focus on the evolution of International Geneva so that participants can see an association in full swing..., active but respectful and proud of its heritage. If the use of artificial intelligence was possible, we could collect fascinating testimonials live from those who have shaped the history of the AFICS.

This brochure gave me the opportunity to revisit our archives, which, incidentally, contain issues of the Bulletin dating back to 1940. I took great pleasure in plundering Aamir Ali's excellent articles. I found them to be very straightforward, almost military in spirit. The articles were concise and written with seriousness on serious subjects: pensions and health insurance. And yet there was a section called "HUMOUR", with a story about how to make a cat swallow a tablet. I laughed about it all evening, it hasn't aged.

This year also marks other major anniversaries, and we in particular participated in the 50th anniversary of FAFICS. The 80th anniversary of the UN is already within reach.

**And in fact, if you look at it closely, our association is celebrating its 85th anniversary, if you count the years we have shared with the ILO.**

This is an opportunity to escape a little from the anxious atmosphere that world leaders enjoy fuelling in order to go down in history.



Aamir Ali



Anders Tholle



Roger Eggleston and Mohammed Sebti



Gerald Walzer and Jean-Jacques Chevron



Clemens Adams and Gilbert Ferrari



Odette Foudral and Pierre Adama Traore

## History

### **Note from Aamir Ali:**

The Second World War was, in a way, the midwife that presided over the birth of our association: originally, the ILO Alumni Association. In 1940, the League of Nations and its counterpart, the ILO, found themselves surrounded by the Axis powers. It was clear that they could no longer function normally and, of course, their resources plummeted. As a result, a large number of civil servants were laid off or had their contracts suspended, and Geneva suddenly found itself with a substantial population group: former civil servants, many of whom had no residence permits, no jobs, meagre pensions and covered by pension and health insurance funds with an uncertain future, to say the least.

There was greater solidarity among former ILO civil servants than among those of the League of Nations: fewer in number, they felt like a family. They had had a charismatic leader in Albert Thomas, admired by all the staff, as well as a dynamic union. On the League of Nations side, the efforts of the former civil servants to unite were unsuccessful.

Former ILO officials met on 19 July 1940 to adopt the statutes of an Association of Former ILO Officials. This was a start.

### **Speech by Dr Halfdan MAHLER on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the association:**

Milan Kundera wrote in one of his books: "The struggle against the oppression of man is the struggle between memory and forgetting. " Unfortunately, I do not have the historical knowledge of what the creation of AAFI-AFICS in 1940 was like, but having lived under occupation in my own country during the Second World War, I can well imagine the ambiguous feelings and hesitations felt in the corridors of the League of Nations in 1940. It undoubtedly took a great deal of courage and imagination to create AAFI-AFICS at this turning point in world history. Let us not forget the boldness and vision of those colleagues who, in the past as in the present, have invested themselves deeply in keeping AAFI-AFICS alive and full of energy. Thank you very much for that.

## Participants



Mr Ordzhonikidze Director-General UNOG



Mr. Blanchard Director-General ILO



Dr. Mahler Director-General WHO



Mr. Witold ZYSS President, FAFICS



## Those who made the AFICS

### The Presidents

- Mr Kordon (1942-1943)
- Mr O'Davoren (1944–1946)
- Mr. Thudicbum (1947)
- Mr Nixon (1948–1949)
- Ms. Macrae (1950–1952)
- Mr. Desplanque (1953-1954)

### And following officialisation

- Mr. de Brancion (1955-1965)
- Mr Hirschwald (1966–1969)
- Paul Blanc (1969–1977)
- Mr Petit (1978–1986)
- Mr Grabe (1986-1993)
- Aamir Ali (1993–2000)
- Anders Tholle (2000–2003)
- Jean-Jacques Chevron (2003–2008)
- Roger Eggleston (2008–2012)
- Gilbert Ferrari (2012–2013) Honorary President
- Odette Foudral (2013-2025)

### But above all, the secretaries who handled the office duties and administrative work. Among them:

- Juliette Bérard, who also oversaw the publication of the Bulletin
- Cosette Marrache
- And, of course, Elisabeth Belchamber (who wore out more than one president)

### And a host of other willing volunteers:

- Roger Fontana
- Ventura Garcia Garnateo
- France Henry
- Margarete Hahnen
- Christiane Kind
- Douglas Helland
- Nana Leigh
- Laura Morros
- Mohammed Rharha
- Leda Valencia-Guidi



**Roger Fontana with  
Stéphane Birchmeyer (Cité seniors)**



**Elisabeth Belchamber**



**France Henry and Ventura Garcia**



**Nicole Yersin and Christiane Kind**



**Pierre Vangeleyn and Jocelyne Déruaz**



**Jocelyne Déruaz, Juan Mateu, Odette Foudral**

## The concept of retirees

The Assembly of the League of Nations had recognised the right to a pension for officials of its General Secretariat, the International Labour Office and the Registry of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The ILO already had a concept of rights of pensioners with a specific Pension Fund common to the League of Nations, which would continue until the creation of the UNJSPF.

**The first SDN retirees (also the last) who lost their jobs formed an association.**

You will find a wealth of information via this link:

<https://archives.dordogne.fr/a/559/zoom-sur-l-histoire-des-caisses-de-retraite-par-la-bibliotheque-des-archives/>

The creation of the Pension Fund in 1948 formalised the status of retirees but, unfortunately, not their place within the governing bodies.

**The 1974 statutes provide a history of the association**

ASSOCIATION  
DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX  
(A.A.F.I.)

Annexe de l'ONU, Bureau 212, 05, rue de Lausanne, 1202 Genève, Suisse

## STATUTS

adoptés par l'Assemblée générale ordinaire du 12 mai 1970

### CHAPITRE PREMIER

*Nom, nature et but de l'Association*

#### Article premier

L'Association des anciens fonctionnaires internationaux, ci-après dénommée l'Association, reconstituée dans les traditions de l'Amicale du B.I.T., fondée en 1940, a pour but :

1. d'étudier, de proposer et de prendre toute mesure tendant à sauvegarder les intérêts des anciens fonctionnaires internationaux, sous réserve de la compétence des associations ou syndicats des membres du personnel des organisations auxquelles ils ont appartenu, ainsi que de la Fédération des associations de fonctionnaires internationaux dont l'Association fait partie en qualité de membre associé;

2. d'assurer le maintien et le développement de relations amicales entre ses membres, de tenir ceux-ci au courant des initiatives administratives ou autres les concernant, notamment par l'intermédiaire d'un Bulletin;

3. d'apporter dans la mesure de ses moyens son concours à l'œuvre des institutions internationales, surtout dans les domaines qui intéressent plus particulièrement les fonctionnaires en activité ou retraités.

4. de représenter les intérêts des membres de l'Association, et des pensionnés en général, auprès des administrations tant des Nations Unies que des institutions spécialisées ainsi qu'avec les associations de personnel de ces organisations;

5. de porter à la connaissance des organes compétents des fonds de sécurité sociale des N. U. et des institutions spécialisées les suggestions des pensionnés concernant l'amélioration des prestations.

#### Art. 2

L'Association a son siège à Genève. C'est une association sans but lucratif, régie par les articles 60 et suivants du Code civil suisse.

#### Art. 3

Le Comité peut autoriser la création de Groupes locaux lorsqu'un nombre suffisant de membres en fait la demande.

Les Groupes pourvoient eux-mêmes à leur organisation, dans le cadre des présents statuts.

### CHAPITRE II

*Membres*

#### Art. 4

L'Association recrute ses membres exclusivement parmi les personnes :

- a) appartenant depuis au moins trois ans  
ou
- b) ayant appartenu pendant au moins trois ans au personnel de l'ONU ou des institutions spécialisées.

#### Art. 5

L'Association peut admettre comme membre le conjoint survivant d'un membre s'il bénéficie de prestations servies par une Caisse de pensions d'une des organisations internationales mentionnées à l'article 4.

#### Art. 6

L'admission à l'Association est prononcée par le Comité sur la présentation d'une demande dûment remplie et signée. La candidature doit être parrainée par un membre de l'Association. En cas de décision négative, l'intéressé peut en appeler à l'Assemblée générale.

#### Art. 7

Tout membre de l'Association ayant versé en une fois une somme au moins égale à dix fois la valeur de la cotisation annuelle pour l'exercice en cours, devient membre à vie.

#### Art. 8

Le titre de membre d'honneur peut être conféré par l'Assemblée générale à des personnalités ayant rendu à l'Association des services éminents.

#### Art. 9

Toute démission doit être adressée par écrit au Comité. Une démission acceptée ne prend effet qu'à la fin de l'exercice en cours.

# The Bulletin

## History of the Bulletin

- The original format was a small booklet published and partially funded by advertising. The most active member was Jean Desplanque, legal advisor and member of the Committee.
- After the official creation of the association in 1955, it became Bulletin -Botel'in
- Issue No. 2 of 1960 was published at our expense under the title Bulletin AFICS.
- Printing in A4 format by the Palais des Nations coincided with the removal of advertising.

## Assistance from the administration services with printing and mailing:

There were sometimes a few difficulties, but the AFICS was able to count on its sister associations to publish its bulletin.

Today, we are able to publish three issues per year in colour (colour was discontinued in 2010 for budgetary reasons and was reinstated in 2024) and send them to our 3,000 members in paper format.

The sections have evolved, and some have unfortunately disappeared, such as Aamir's message, Yves Beigbeder's analyses, Pierre Vangeleyn's tourism sections, and articles by Dr. Chen. However, Evelina Rioukhina, Christian David, and Odette Foudral still contribute and the humour section is still there and hasn't aged at all.

However, news from other associations have disappeared, as each association publishes its own newsletter, often available online.

The AFICS also publishes other documents to inform its members. It has also published a collection of texts by Aamir Ali: "Petits riens et grands moments" (Little Things and Big Moments).

It has also published texts relating to various themed seminars:

- Guide to Retirement
- Wills and Estate Settlement
- Planning Ahead...

Association of Former International Civil Servants      Association des anciens fonctionnaires internationaux      Asociación de ex funcionarios internacionales  
(Ancienne Amicale du B.I.T.)

# Bulletin A.A.F.I.

Paraît quatre fois l'an • Abonnement annuel : 10 fr. s.

PERMANENCE DE L'ASSOCIATION, RÉDACTION ET ADMINISTRATION DU BULLETIN  
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SOMMAIRE. — Changement d'adresse de l'AAFI. — Comité de l'Association: compte rendu de séances. — Le point de vue des pensionnés internationaux. — XX<sup>e</sup> session du Conseil de la FICSA. — Assemblée générale du Syndicat du BIT. — Nouvelles: BIT; ECAFE; ONU (Genève); ONU (New York); WHO (New Delhi); CAFIG; A.I.T.C.; Santé du Monde. — Nécrologie (Otto Jenny, Camille Métraux). — Interfon: coopérative de consommation. — Voyages d'étude collectifs. — Permanence. — Souper amical le 26 septembre.

## CHANGEMENT D'ADRESSE DE L'A.A.F.I.

Le 2 octobre 1967, le siège de l'A.A.F.I.  
sera transféré au Palais des Nations  
à Genève.

Notre nouvelle adresse est donc:

A.A.F.I.

(Association des anciens fonctionnaires  
internationaux)  
c/o Palais des Nations  
CH 1211 Genève 10  
Suisse

## CHANGE OF A.A.F.I. ADDRESS

As from October 2, 1967,  
A.A.F.I. Headquarters are located  
at the Palais des Nations at Geneva.

Our new address is:

A.A.F.I.

(Association of former International  
Civil Servants)  
c/o Palais des Nations  
CH 1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

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*H. Fauconnet, directeur*

Même direction :

**RESTAURANT DU B.I.T.**

## What does the AFICS do?

AFICS provides future retirees with information to help them prepare for retirement.

- It has been participating in retirement preparation seminars for years and took part in the first seminar held in Africa in 2012 in Ouagadougou.
- It provides ongoing support.
- It actively participates in UNSMIS health insurance meetings.
- It helps the Pension Fund locate retirees who have failed to return their beneficiary certificates.
- It provides assistance to people who have difficulty completing their reimbursement claims.
- It is a source of information for its members through its bulletin, newsletters and website.
- Above all, it organises themed seminars:
  - Wills and Inheritance 2010
  - Isolation, 2014, in collaboration with the ILO Alumni Association, the ITU Alumni Association and the AOMS
  - Ageing well, 2018, in collaboration with the ILO Alumni Association, the ITU Alumni Association and the AOMS
  - Planning Ahead, 30 September 2024

It also maintains close ties with the city of Geneva.

Nearly a third of our members reside in Greater Geneva. Over the years, the association has opened up to external activities to better integrate retirees into their place of residence.

It was our late President, Roger Eggleston, who initiated the rapprochement with the city of Geneva.

- **Cité seniors, every first Wednesday of the month**
- **Geneva Senior Citizens' Network Platform**
- **AVIVO:** some members of the Committee are involved, such as Evelina Rioukhina, who campaigns for the participation of retirees in Swiss sporting and cultural activities.

## ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2024, THE AAFI-AFICS ORGANISED A SEMINAR AT THE CIGG ENTITLED "PLANNING AHEAD"

Jocelyne Déruaz and Christian David prepared this seminar.



Maître Emmanuelle Barralier, Maître Mathieu Barralier, Maître Laurent Besso, Denise Gustin-Gardella, Gilles Fado, Jocelyne Déruaz, Odette Foudral, Mohammed Sebti

A seminar on the same topic was organised in 2010, but the AFICS deemed it necessary to:

- Update the information
- Allow those who were unable to participate to do so

Of the 330 people registered for the seminar, 175 participated in person and 67 online via ZOOM.

The participants found the seminar very interesting and stayed until the end.

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### A NEW TREE AS A TESTIMONY TO THE AAFI-AFICS' COMMITMENT TO UNOG

On the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in 1995, the Associations of Former Officials felt it was only natural to mark the occasion.

AAFI-AFICS donated a sequoia tree for the park, AFICS New York donated a dogwood tree, BAFUNCS (England) donated rose bushes for the International Maritime Organisation, and ARSCI (Vienna) also donated a tree.

AFICS New York also contributed financially to the purchase of the sequoia for Geneva.

The choice of the sequoia was based on its reputation for longevity, reflecting the desire to see international cooperation continue.



Do not be surprised if the words of Aamir Ali, taken from the newsletter article reporting on the event, are still very relevant today:

*"Doesn't it seem to you, as it does to me, that this tree also symbolises the struggle to protect our planet's forests, which are essential to its health and that of all its inhabitants?"*

In 2013, greed continues to put our planet under severe strain and many species are disappearing silently, such as elms and giant sequoias. The one in the park has perished and has been replaced by the AAFI-AFICS in order to honour the commitments of our predecessors and not give up in the face of adversity.

We did not want a big ceremony, we just wanted to see things back as they were by giving back a sequoia to the United Nations Park in Geneva.

We had chosen to take advantage of the presence of Roger Eggleston, President of FAFICS and initiator of the tree's replacement, to pay a little visit to "our godchild".

## Les Associations Soeurs

An important event was the creation of associations of former civil servants of organisations based in Geneva: a situation unique to the city of Geneva. While "AFICS" are usually founded in cities where a United Nations system organisation has its headquarters - New York, Paris, Rome, Montreal, etc., Geneva has hosted no fewer than seven organisations and four autonomous programmes. The first of these associations was the Section of Former Officials of the ILO Staff Union. Then came the associations of former civil servants of WHO, ITU, GATT/WTO, ICC and WMO.

What should their relationship be with AAFI-AFICS? And with FAFICS? While it was perfectly normal for colleagues who had worked together to be able to form their own association, it was equally important that the concept of solidarity among all former international civil servants of the United Nations system, dear to FAFICS, remain a fundamental value. On the issue of pensions, which is one of the primary concerns of retired officials and AAFI-AFICS, it was important for all former officials to work together. The Pension Fund does not differentiate between retirees based on their original organisation. A pensioner is a pensioner.

It was this solidarity that formed the basis of FAFICS' successes in the Joint Committee and gave strength to its voice.

The trick was then to combine the existence of associations bringing together former officials within the same organisation with that of a unified association to deal with essential issues, such as pensions and, on occasion, to deal with the Geneva authorities. I hope that the many years of sometimes heated discussions have made it possible to reach a *modus vivendi* that is in the best interests of the entire community of former civil servants. The associations specific to the organisations each operate in their own specific field. They are statutorily represented on the AAFI-AFICS Committee. They may attend FAFICS meetings, if they so wish, as part of the AAFI-AFICS delegation, with the right, where appropriate, to put forward their own views. The unity of all former civil servants is maintained.

Let us say that the Spirit of Geneva has prevailed.



Peter Williams WTO-GATT



Claude Briand ITU and  
Abdoulaye Diallo ILO Alumni



Fabio Bigi ITU



François Kientzler ILO alumni



Catherine Tiberghien, Pierre Sayour and  
François Kientzler ILO alumni



Jean-Paul Menu  
and Sue Tyrrel-Bloch AOMS

## The FAFICS

**Creation:** in 1975, local associations in Paris, New York, Rome and Geneva created the Federation with the aim of becoming a full member of the Pension Fund, a request made as soon as they participated in the Joint Committee for the first time. The Federation now has 63 members spread across the globe who meet in Council to determine the issues that deserve to be defended in terms of pensions and health insurance for retirees.

The last Council meeting was held in Vienna from 14 to 18 July 2025. The Federation celebrated its 50th anniversary in style on 18 July.

### **Federation headquarters:**

The Federation has its headquarters at Villa Bocage, where the archives are kept.

**In this way, the interests of retirees are defended at Fund meetings (Joint Committee and working groups).**

**The organisations in Geneva each have an association or a retirees' club. All defend the interests of retirees and come together to form the AAFI-AFICS Committee. Only the AAFI-AFICS can be a member of the Federation.**



Clemens Adams,  
Dashak Shah (AFICS NY), Anatoli  
Kondrachov, Mohammed Sebti,  
Odette Foudral



Odette Foudral, Jay Sundaresan,  
Jerry Barton (FAFICS President),  
Ann Van-Hulle, Mohammed Sebti



AAFI-AFICS déjeuner 9 avril 2024



Odette Fouchal



Juan Mateu



Monique Eid



Assad Omer



Jack Merlin



Edouard Dommen



Jocelyne Deruez



Jean-Bernard Celestin



Mohammed Sebti



Caroline Jourd



Gabriela Andrei



Louis Bernard Sacrel



Gerald Waizer



Clemens Adams



Wolfgang Mizow



Patricia Beussert

## AAFI-AFICS Committee as of 27 February 2025

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	Margarete Hahnen		
	Douglas Helland		
	Vitalija Gaucaite	NGO Ageing	
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# HUMOUR

## HOW TO GIVE YOUR CAT A PILL?

Hi there!

1. Hold your cat under your arm like a baby. Press its cheeks with the fingers of one hand while holding the tablet in the other. When its mouth is open, put the tablet in it, hold its mouth closed and let it swallow.

2. Retrieve the pill from the fish tank and the cat from the top of the wardrobe. Call the neighbour.

3. Kneel on the floor, holding the cat firmly between your knees and holding its front and back legs. Ignore the cat's growling. Ask the neighbour to hold the cat's head firmly with one hand while pushing a wooden ruler into its mouth. Slide the pill along the ruler and rub the cat's throat vigorously.

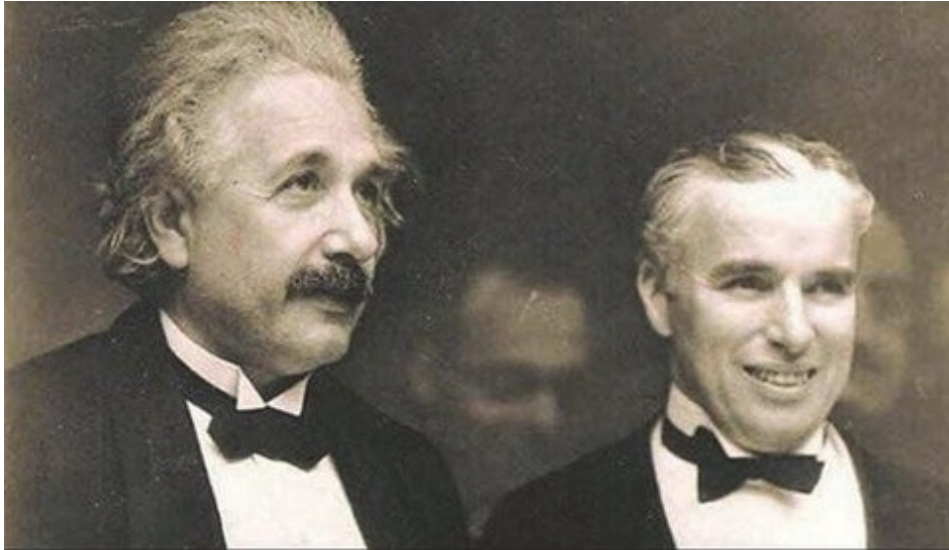
4. Wrap the cat in a large towel and ask the neighbour to lie on top of the cat, leaving its head sticking out from under their arm. Put the tablet in a straw, open the cat's mouth with a pencil and blow into the straw.

5. Put a bandage on the neighbour's forearm and clean the blood off the carpet with cold water and soap.

6. Tie the front legs to the back legs with string and secure everything to the leg of the dining room table. Put on thick gardening gloves and open the mouth with a 13 mm spanner. Push the tablet into the mouth, followed by a good mouthful of veal delicacies with vegetables. Hold the cat's head in an upright position and pour 250 cl of water down its throat to wash the tablet down.

7. Ask your neighbour to drive you to A&E to get stitches in your fingers and forearm and to remove the pill residue from your right eye. On the way home, stop by at your furniture shop to order a new table.

8. Call the RSPCA to have them collect the cat and then the pet shop to ask if they have a hamster.



**Quand Einstein a rencontré Chaplin en 1931,  
Einstein lui a dit :**

**« Ce que j'admire le plus dans votre art, c'est son  
universalité. Vous ne dites pas un seul mot et  
pourtant, tout le monde vous comprend. »**

**« C'est vrai », répondit Chaplin, « Mais votre  
renommée est encore plus grande. Tout le  
monde vous admire alors que personne ne  
vous comprend ».**

When Einstein met Chaplin in 1931, Einstein told him : « What I admire most in your art is its universality. You don't utter a word and, however, everybody understands you ». « It's true », replied Chaplin, « But your fame is even greater. Everybody admires you while nobody understands you ».

## Conclusion



A chaque jour son défi

A challenge for each day

### Let us remember Aamir Ali's message in 2005

Associations derive glory and prestige from their additional years, claiming that they add to their maturity and wisdom. But to those who would be quick to claim that our association, at 70 years old, is the oldest and therefore the wisest, our former president Paul Blanc would be sure to issue a warning.

When we congratulated him on his 90th birthday, he replied: there is really no merit in that. All you have to do is wait.