

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF PTAD, DR. CHIOMA EJKEME AT THE SOUTH-EAST STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT FORUM, HELD AT AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE ON JULY 13TH - 14TH, 2023.

ABIA

ANAMBRA

ENUGU

EBONYI

IMO

I warmly welcome you all to this Stakeholders Forum which we periodically organize to meet and interact with our pensioners and Stakeholders in all the geopolitical zones of the country.

Let me start by expressing my appreciation to you all in the South-East Zone for making out time to journey from your various states to honour our invitation. We are truly grateful, and it is my sincere belief that our interaction here will be of immense benefit to us all.

At the Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate, we are aware of the importance of carrying our pensioners and stakeholders along in what we do; and this is why we organize this kind of forum to interact with you, keep you updated on our activities as well as our future plans, and most importantly, get your feedback.

PTAD's determination to change the narrative as far as pension administration under the Defined Benefits Scheme (DBS) in Nigeria is concerned is irrevocable. It is pertinent to note that PTAD has intentionally and consistently been working on achieving positive and sustainable change in the DBS Pension management for the almost 10 years of its operation. It is worthy to mention that PTAD would be ten by August of 2023.

You may recall that the Defined Benefit Scheme in the past was fraught with allegations of fraud, corruption and inefficiencies prior to the establishment of the Directorate. However, the processes and controls that have been put in place since the establishment of PTAD have contributed immensely to the

change being witnessed today in the management of the Defined Benefit Pension scheme.

The hard work of PTAD over the years is now paying off and in the course of the presentations we are going to make here today, you will get to understand the enormity of the challenges inherited by PTAD at inception. You will then subsequently appreciate the sheer volume of overhaul that PTAD has had to carry out, in order to get to where we are today.

Our journey from field verifications, mobile verifications, to putting together a solid database of pensioners, benefit computation, ensuring the regular payment of monthly pensions and paying long overdue pension arrears to pensioners, has been a progressive one filled with creativity, dedication, commitment, persistence and resulting in milestone achievements. It is not yet a perfect situation, but PTAD is committed to continuing to make giant strides.

Since our last Stakeholders Forum for the South-East held in Enugu, Enugu State in January 2022, PTAD has carried out a series of activities which include:

- Complete payment of arrears arising as a result of the consequential adjustment to pensions as a result of the increase in minimum wage of April 2019 to the four operational departments in the Directorate.
- Complete liquidation of the 126 months outstanding liabilities due to ex-workers of Nigeria Reinsurance Corporation
- Complete payment of the 219 months of inherited liabilities to Ex-workers of New Nigeria Newspaper Limited
- Complete payment of the 100 months of inherited liabilities to Ex-workers of NICON Insurance
- Complete payment of the 96 months of inherited liabilities to Ex-workers of Delta Steel Company (DSC)
- Implemented the 9.7% increment to Ex-PHCN workers with attendant arrears paid.
- Payment of a total of 48 months of the 84 months inherited arrears owed NITEL/MTEL pensioners, leaving a balance of 36 months for complete liquidation. With these payments, we are glad to inform you that PTAD

has completely liquidated the inherited unfunded liabilities of all the Defunct/Privatized Agencies handed over to PTAD in 2017, with the exception of NITEL/MTEL with a balance of 36 months, which we are fully committed to liquidating.

- Recently, we also commissioned a Mechanized filing system, put in place to safely store pensioners' physical verification and departmental files. Apart from securing and archiving these documents, this device will make it faster and easier to recall pensioners' files to reconcile and resolve any complaint.

You may recall that on the 12th of October 2021, PTAD launched the "I AM Alive" Confirmation Solution and successfully completed the Pilot Phase where we tested the application on 50,000 randomly-selected pensioners from the four (4) Operational Departments and the six (6) Geo-political zones. Following the success of the Pilot Phase, on the 14th of April 2023, PTAD fully rolled out the solution for the use of our Pensioners.

However, to ensure an efficient and effective delivery, and prevent a heavy flow of traffic on the website, we have staggered the use of the Confirmation Solution according to departments as follows:

S/N	Department	Start Date	End Date
1.	Police Pensioners	14 th April, 2023	13 th October, 2023
2.	Customs, Immigration and Prisons Pensioners	1 st June, 2023	31 st December, 2023
3.	Civil Service Pensioners	1 st July, 2023	31 st January, 2024
4.	Parastatals Pensioners	1 st August, 2023	28 th February, 2024

Pensioners are to kindly take note of the above scheduled dates as they concern their respective departments. Any changes to these dates will be duly communicated through the Press and other appropriate channels.

PTAD has provided a six-month grace period for each department and their pensioners to complete their "I Am Alive" Confirmation (IAAC) Solution. Kindly note that PTAD has trained Pension Desk Officers from the Ministries, Departments and Agencies our pensioners retired from, as well as the various Representatives of Pension Unions on the use of this application,

and they will and have been assisting pensioners who are unable to carry out the confirmation on their own.

So far, three operational departments, namely: Police Pension Department, Customs, Immigration and Prisons Pension Department, and the Civil Service Pension Department have commenced their Confirmation process, and the reports have been encouraging.

On this note, may I commend the Pension Union Executives who have disseminated information about the I Am Alive Confirmation Solution to their members and have provided assistance to those who need help with confirming their aliveness. However, more needs to be done and we plead that you help us spread this message to all the nooks and crannies of the Zone and beyond. No pensioner who is alive should be left out of this very critical and important exercise that would determine a pensioner's eligibility to continue to receive pension.

As part of our resolve to ensure that no eligible pensioner is left out, PTAD wishes to inform all our pensioners in the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, that a Survey is being carried out by the Directorate to ascertain the number of pensioners we have in these countries and their various locations within the countries. We have a good number of unverified pensioners in these locations. The information gathered during the survey will enable us plan accordingly for Diaspora verification. I therefore enjoin you to inform your members who are living in these countries to visit the PTAD website and take part in the survey. It is very important. They should log on to our website - www.ptad.gov.ng to access the link for the survey.

Furthermore, as we did with the Civil Service Pensioners, PTAD is currently carrying out the re-computation exercise on thousands of files in the Parastatals Pension Department, with a view to resolving their deluge of complaints.

We have held meetings with representatives of Federal Parastatals and Private Sector Pensioners Association of Nigeria (FEPPAN), The Electricity Sector Retiree Welfare Association (ESREWA), and Concerned Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) pensioners to inform them of the outcome of the Back-End Computation Project carried out for the defunct PHCN pensioners under PTAD. At the end of the meetings, all the parties agreed that the implementation of the outcome should take effect from June

2023 payroll, which we have done. Some of you may have noticed an increase or a decrease in your pension, which means you were either being overpaid or underpaid, and the Computation project has placed your pension where it rightfully belongs.

The project is ongoing and as we have also informed their representatives, the outcome of the Back-End Computation Project for the Power, and Transport Sectors will be implemented this July 2023. Other Sectors will follow suit as we go along.

The commitment of PTAD to the welfare of our pensioners remains sacrosanct, and we shall continue our meetings and engagement with the various Pension Unions to ensure quality service delivery. We are confident that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, given his well-known and commendable antecedents in pension matters, will continue to make pension payment a first-line charge, albeit unwritten, this we have already started witnessing with the continued prompt payment of monthly pensions to our esteemed pensioners. We cannot afford to go back to the time when the DBS pensioners were owed months of pension arrears and their needs pushed to the back-burner.

May I also use this opportunity to continue to sensitize our pensioners against patronizing pension fraudsters. They seem to have kicked off their activities again as we are beginning to get reports of pensioners being called by people pretending to be PTAD Staff and soliciting funds from pensioners to enable their entitlements be paid. No staff of PTAD will call or send any message to you requesting for payment or ask you to call a certain phone number before your arrears or gratuity will be paid. Once you get such messages, you should know that PTAD did not send them and will never do so. Kindly share this important information with your members so they do not fall victim to these fraudsters.

PTAD is grateful to the Federal Government and all our other major stakeholders who have made the modest successes achieved by PTAD possible.

Once again, I welcome you all and wish us a fruitful deliberation.

God bless our pensioners.

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria