



Speech Delivered by the Executive Secretary of PTAD, Dr. Chioma N. Ejikeme at the South East Stakeholders' Forum, at Enugu, Enugu State on Thursday, 13th January, 2022.

PROTOCOLS

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this two-day Stakeholders' Forum which we have organised to keep our esteemed stakeholders informed of what we have done, what we are doing, and the next steps we intend to take as we work hard to ensure that the welfare of our Pensioners is sustained.

I wish to commence by expressing my appreciation to you all for honouring our invitation and it is my sincere belief that our interactions here will be of immense benefit to us all.

In the past two years, the whole world has been thrown upside down by the Corona Virus pandemic which virtually grounded all activities all over the globe, and Nigeria was not an exception.

Bearing in mind that the safety of our Pensioners is of utmost importance to us, we opened up more channels of communication and complaints resolution to enable us serve you better while the country battled to contain the Virus. We are not completely out of the woods yet, with the various variants springing up here and there, but the situation has greatly improved, especially with the Covid-19 Vaccine. I do hope that you all have availed yourselves of the opportunity of the free vaccination being offered by the Government.

However, despite the lockdown, PTAD continued to pay monthly pensions promptly, resolve complaints, cleared arrears, paid death benefits to some Next-Of-Kin and one-off payments of some Defunct Agencies such as the Nigerian Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO), Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON), as well as Ex-workers of Savannah Sugar Company who have submitted themselves for verification.



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Most recently, on the 14th of December, 2021, PTAD completed the payment of all outstanding inherited liabilities due to Ex-workers of two of the Defunct Agencies; namely Nigeria Reinsurance Corporation (total 126 months of inherited liabilities completely liquidated). New Nigeria Newspaper Limited (total 219 months of inherited liabilities completely liquidated). We also settled a significant portion of the outstanding inherited liabilities due to Ex-workers of another three (3) Defunct Agencies:- NICON Insurance, Delta Steel Company Limited and NITEL/MTEL.

Also in December 2021 we implemented the approved 9.7% Pension Increment for Pensioners of the Defunct PHCN. This Increment took effect from June 2016. The accrued arrears were paid along with the 6months balance of the arrears as a result of the consequential adjustment to pensions. The total amount paid to this sector was N6.9B

In the year 2020, I declared a state of Emergency in the Civil Service Pensions Department and approved the commencement of an expanded re-validation and re-computation exercise in a bid to on-board verified Pensioners not on payroll, clear all outstanding pension arrears and resolve all complaints of short payments and outstanding gratuities for the Civil Service Pensioners and their Next of Kin (NoK). At the end of the project, the Directorate was able to review, compute, re-compute and pay over Seven Billion Naira (₦7B) to over Twenty-Four Thousand (24,000) Pensioners. This computation exercise has been ongoing leading to the computation of a total of 25,950 files so far with total payment to date at ₦8.1B.

The post verification validation for the Parastatal Pension Department is ongoing. Over 21,000 unverified Pensioners were dropped from the payroll in October 2020. So far, 4,069 of the October dropped have been verified, restored to the payroll with the attendant arrears paid. The on-boarding of verified and not on payroll Pensioners is ongoing. So far 358 verified, not on payroll Parastatals Pensioners have been brought on board.

Some of the accrued and inherited arrears paid by the Directorate include:



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- ✚ Cleared the 33% increment arrears owed Pensioners in the Parastatals Pension Department in December 2019.
- ✚ Completion of the one-off payment to Six Hundred and Three (603) verified ex-workers of the Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (ALSCON).
- ✚ PTAD also completely made a one-off payment to Six Hundred and Twenty (620) Ex-workers of the Nigerian Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO).
- ✚ Added Ex-workers of Assurance Bank to the payroll and paid their arrears.
- ✚ Paid part of the arrears owed ex-workers of NITEL/MTEL and some Next-Of-Kin.
- ✚ We have completed the payment of arrears accrued as a result of the consequential adjustment to pension as approved by President Muhammadu Buhari to three out of the four operational departments. The Civil service pensioners have three months of arrears left and we will clear that very soon.
- ✚ Most recently in December 2021, PTAD completed the payment of all outstanding liabilities due to Ex-workers of two of the Defunct Agencies namely: Nigeria Reinsurance Corporation (total 126 inherited months completely liquidated) and New Nigeria Newspapers Limited (Total 219 inherited Months Completely liquidated).
- ✚ We also settled a significant portion of the outstanding liabilities due to the Ex-workers of another three Defunct Agencies: NICON Insurance Corporation, Delta Steel Company Limited and NITEL/MTEL.
- ✚ Implementation of 9.7% increment to EX-PHCN workers with attendant arrears paid.

We have continued our meetings and engagement with the various Pension Unions such as the Association of Retired War Affected Police Officers (ARWAPO) which we held here in Enugu in 2021, the Federal Parastatals and Private Sector Pensioners' Association of Nigeria (FEPPAN), NITEL/MTEL Pensioners Association, NICON Insurance Pensioners Union, Civil Service Pension Unions, etc.



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We have also expanded the frontiers of our collaboration with stakeholders including the National Assembly, the newly established National Senior Citizens Centre (NSCC), National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission, The Military Pensions Board, PENCOM, our Regulators, and of course, the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, our Supervisory Ministry. All this is geared towards ensuring that we deliver optimal services to our esteemed Pensioners.

Following the increment made to salaries of some Federal Government employees in 2019 as a result of the review of the National Minimum Wage, a committee was set up by the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission (NSIWC) to review the pension and come up with an appropriate and realistic measure to increase the amount paid as pension to pensioners under the Defined Benefit Scheme. In May 2021, we got approval from Mr. President for the implementation of the upward review and we commenced payment immediately. We have successfully completed payment of the 24 months Arrears to the Parastatals Pension Department, The Customs, Immigration and Prisons Pension Department and the Police Pension Department. The balance of 3 months arrears for the Civil Service Pension Department would be defrayed very soon.

Bearing in mind that some of our Pensioners missed the field verification exercises previously conducted by PTAD across all operational Departments due to one reason or another, PTAD embarked on a Mop-up verification across the six geopolitical zones. We have gone to the South-South, where we had centres in Benin and Uyo, North-West in Kaduna and Sokoto, South-East in Enugu and Umuahia, North-East in Yola and Maiduguri, South-West in Ibadan and Akure, and Lagos State. We intend to visit other geopolitical zones in due course and ensure that all eligible Pensioners are duly captured and placed on our payroll.

I also wish to use this opportunity to inform you all that our quest to recover the pension assets with some Insurance Underwriters has been yielding some positive



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results. We have fully recovered the pension assets with two insurance underwriters, namely: AIICO Insurance Plc, and African Alliance Insurance PLC.

The icing on the cake was the receipt of the repatriated sum of Twenty-Six Million, Five Hundred and Five thousand, Eight Hundred and Sixty-two Pounds, Ninety-Seven Pence (£26,505,862.97) from the United Kingdom, which were pension funds under investment with Crown Agents Investment Management Limited, United Kingdom. The funds have been used to settle the liabilities of the Defunct Agencies I earlier mentioned.

On another happy note, on the 12th of October 2021, PTAD formally launched the "I Am Alive" confirmation platform, an online application to confirm that Pensioners on our monthly pension payroll are alive and should continue to receive their pension.

This is a web-based platform designed to enable our Pensioners easily confirm their aliveness from the comfort of their homes or neighbourhood using either a smartphone or a computer system.

This solution takes the Pensioner through a three-step confirmation process that ends with a text message response.

The Directorate has decided to deploy the application in phases, starting with fifty thousand (50,000) Pensioners cut across the four operational departments and the six geo-political zones, selected to participate in this pilot phase. On the successful implementation of this pilot phase, we will deploy the application on a full scale at predetermined intervals on a continuous basis for all verified Pensioners on the payroll.

We will conduct the exercise here on all of you as you have been informed, so you can see and understand how it works. Other Pensioners who are part of this pilot phase have equally been notified by PTAD via SMS.

We earlier promised that the era of bringing out our aged Pensioners for field verification is over, and we stand by our promise.



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Furthermore, the Government, under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Health has established a Ministerial Committee to look into the issue of providing Health Insurance for senior citizens. PTAD and representatives of the Nigerian Union of Pensioners are members of this Committee. We are consequently in collaboration with some of our stakeholders including the National Health Insurance Scheme, the National Senior Citizens Centre, and Federal Ministry of Health, to see how making health insurance available to our Pensioners can be a reality.

We will continue to prioritise the welfare of our Pensioners and we call on all the Pension Unions under the Defined Benefit Scheme, and other stakeholders for their support in achieving this feat.

I wish us a fruitful engagement.

“May the labour of our heroes past not be in vain”.

**Executive Secretary,
PTAD**