

Remarks by Fr. Dr. James Moultrie, Chairman, on the Occasion of the Board's Annual Leaders Conference - January 27, 2014

***“Have confidence that if you have done a little thing well,
you can do a bigger thing well too.”***

~ David Storey

The Honourable D. Shane Gibson, Minister of Labour & National Insurance and other officials from the Ministry of Labour & National Insurance; Mr. Bernard Evans, Deputy Chairman of the National Insurance Board and others of my colleagues from the Board; Mrs. Rowena Bethel, Director and other NIB Executives; Mr. Winston Moss, President of the Public Managers Union; Ms. Sharon Martin, President of the Union of Public Officers; Leaders of the National Insurance Board; invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It is, indeed, a pleasure for me to be here for the start of the National Insurance Board's 2014 Leaders Conference. In fact, I am excited. The National Insurance Board has a vision for 2014, and I fully expect that these two days of meetings will positively impact and advance that vision.

The theme of this year's conference: *“A transformed NIB – doing business smarter and better,”* is a very appropriate one. The Minister said it already: It is a powerful statement that signals the tenor of the upcoming years at NIB.

In the National Insurance Act, you have been given a common purpose, which is primarily to ensure social security protection for workers of the country and their

dependents in the form of income-replacing benefits. You have the vision and the mission which feeds into that purpose. And this vision and mission is not just for some, it is for all. The National Insurance Board is one organisation of one people, providing a much-needed social security service.

The Board, of which I am Chairman, has mapped a clearly defined roadmap for systematic transformation of NIB to a more modern public administration organisation. We have well-defined, specific goals to work towards over the next three years. This “road map” or strategic plan, has already been developed, the details of which the Director will speak to over the next two days. But, this road map is important because the National Insurance Board has evolved and grown into one of the most important institutions in our country today. As leaders of this institution, you have a vital role to play in ensuring the continued sustained growth of our social security programme and its ancillary programme, the Prescription Drug Plan; and while your performance has generally been good, we have to get better. Smarter. Your theme says it all.

Your job will become increasingly more demanding and more challenging as we seek to transform the organization into one that is primed to effectively meet the social security needs of our contributors in the years ahead.

At the end of 2013, NIB’s total cash and investments amounted to \$1.65 billion; this is money that you have collected over the years in contributions and which you are responsible for investing and safeguarding so as to guarantee future income protection by way of benefit payments to eligible claimants. This is a

tremendous responsibility for any institution; it is an extraordinary responsibility for you leaders in 2014, in view of the fact that a significantly greater proportion of our population is still under age 40 years. This means that the current demands for services in the form of long-term benefits in particular, will get greater with each passing year. In 10, 20 and 30 years' time, when most of us – sorry, most of “you” – in this room would have retired from the workforce and hopefully be spending your days leisurely fishing off the Abaco, Andros and Exuma Cays, the demand pattern for our services will have changed. I say “you” because, as you know, I’m already in my retirement. Not yet enjoying the fishing, but that will come.

But, leaders of NIB, what we do today, the plans and policies that we put in place, the actions that we implement, the examples that we set, and the culture that we help to create, will ensure that our retirement benefits will be adequate to meet the demands in 2020, and 2030, and beyond.

The National Insurance Board is, to all intents and purposes, an unincorporated bank. The commodity we deal here is money – we collect it, we secure it, we protect it, we invest it, and we pay it out. All of these activities help to make the Board a financial superstructure in this country. Each activity is vital to the success of what we do, and we cannot afford to be slack in any aspect.

As your Director shares with you the roadmap for the next three years, I hope you will come to understand the part each of you, each department and each office will play, because, you see, success rarely just happens. It takes a lot of hard work,

planning and direction from the top; but more than that, it requires organization-wide dedication to the plan.

The plan will not only allow you to align resources, it will encourage each member of the team to work toward a common goal. It will identify areas for improvement and provide direction in responding to external and internal business issues. It is certainly expected that NIB will also benefit from improved internal communication and innovation. In a nutshell, short and long-term commitment at all levels will ensure success.

Success is up to you; you are the ones infinitely equipped to set the mood and culture at NIB. You are the vanguards in your respective areas; missionaries, charged with ensuring that the persons you lead have the necessary knowledge and are sufficiently motivated to perform their jobs effectively. This means that just as our Lord commissioned His disciples to “go ye therefore and teach all nations...” you have been commissioned by NIB, and armed with the National Insurance Act and Regulations, you are commissioned to both serve and provide the leadership for your staff to effectively serve your customers in your various departments and offices.

And speaking of customer service, your Director can tell you that this is something that is dear to my heart. Responsive, effective customer service is truly the lifeblood of our social security business. Service is at the heart of all we do. Everyone will agree that we need to improve our service, but before we can improve customer service, we may need to find out what it's like at this point in time for customers to do business with us. The best way to do this is to interview

or survey our customers. I know that the Director has that high on her customer service agenda, and no doubt you'll hear more about that between today and tomorrow.

In one sense, providing good customer service is the simplest thing in the world. All you have to do is treat all your customers like you would like to be treated. But in another sense, because customer service involves human beings interacting with one another, providing good customer service is quite complex.

That's why just deciding that you will give better customer service or telling your employees to do so doesn't work. You have to be very clear about exactly what you want the people providing customer service to do.

One way of doing this is for the organization to focus on the different customer service interactions that are most common. For example, answering the phone, responding to an e-mail, or serving a customer face-to-face. Whatever part you play in the service network, you have to become more customer-centric. Customer satisfaction is everyone's business.

In the area of customer service, as with compliance and benefit processing and the like, you have to work together as one team systematically and incrementally forward to achieving the articulated vision, mission and goals. Together we are going to forge and develop a spirit of partnership and cooperation; together we are going to effectively touch the lives of every Bahamian citizen throughout the Commonwealth as we strive to carry out the mission of this great institution.

Good morning.