



Remarks

by

Hon. D. Shane Gibson, M.P., J.P.,

Minister of Labour and National Insurance
and Minister for The Public Service

at

Press Conference
Announcing the Launch of
NIB Registrants Self-Service Facility

Clifford Darling Complex
National Insurance Board

Monday, 17th March, 2014 at 2:00p.m.

- Reverend Dr. James Moultrie, Chairman of the National Insurance Board,
- Ms. Cecile-Williams Bethel, Sr. Deputy Director, and Acting Director of the National Insurance Board (in the Director's absence),
- Executives of NIB,
- Other Senior Officers of the National Insurance Board and Senior Officers of the Ministry of Labour and National Insurance,
- Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

Good afternoon

I welcome you and thank you for coming. We are grateful for the efforts you, the members of the Press, will expend through the medium of your radio and television stations and newspapers to help us spread the good news of the important innovations being made by the National Insurance Board (NIB) that we have come to announce today. After 40 years of assisting Bahamians from all walks of life, I am more than pleased to inform, that National Insurance, the country's social security programme that Bahamians turn to when in need, is still growing strong and is still determined to remain relevant.

You would have seen published in the newspaper last week a proclamation by the Right Honourable Prime Minister declaring the official start of activities that will commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the National Insurance programme and organization. National Insurance has been around for four decades – that's 40 years! Its impacts and contributions to the country – indeed, its very existence – have been so pivotal that hosting a single “National Insurance Week” in October would not be sufficient to do it justice. And so, as the Prime Minister proclaimed, NIB has organized an extensive schedule of activities that begin this month and will culminate in October.

The goal of the commemorative activities is to build public awareness of the rich history of our social security programme, to inform and update contributors and the general public about their benefits, rights and obligations under the National Insurance

programme, and to emphasize the programme's impact upon, and continued role in, the sustained socio-economic growth and development of the nation. You will be hearing more in this regard in the days and weeks ahead.

This afternoon, we have invited you here to share with you and the Bahamian people how NIB is using Information Technology to make doing business with your social security organization easier and more satisfying.

Today, NIB as a part of its on-going commitment to improve the level of service afforded to the Bahamian people is pleased to introduce the facility that will allow all registered persons to access their personal information – i.e., name, date of birth, address and contacts, etc. – and to view and download their Contribution Statements from NIB's website (www.nib-bahamas.com). This exciting state-of-the-art self-service facility increases the number of channels through which customers interact with the organization. You have always had the walk-ins and the phone-ins, but starting today there is greater flexibility.

This self-service optimization facility has many benefits, chief among which will be that of making NIB's services more accessible to its valuable customers, particularly in New Providence, which is the hub amongst the offices in our service network. It will decrease in the short and long term the need for customers to actually come in person to one of our offices.

This innovation is but the first step for a transformed organization that is committed to doing business better and smarter in the 21st Century. In the future, customers will be able to submit a retirement benefit claim online, log on to see how a claim is progressing through the process and, most importantly, see when a payment is ready. Employers and self-employed persons will be able to register, request letters of good standing, submit their monthly contribution statements, and pay contributions online. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the way of the future and your social security organization

is on the cutting edge of innovation. Indeed, this is commendable, and marks a significant milestone for NIB and The Bahamas.

In addition to improving customer service, it will also positively impact the ongoing effort to reduce administrative costs and improve compliance.

As the Minister responsible for National Insurance, it gives me great pleasure to be able to foreshadow the exciting future that is in store for NIB. I'm excited because I understand that NIB is very much an integral part of the Bahamian landscape.

In fact, for 40 years, National Insurance has been a bedrock and bulwark for Bahamian workers and their families. Its benefits and assistance have kept seniors going in their golden years; it has sustained mothers and fathers through lay-offs and injury and pregnancy and sickness; and it has stood in the gap for widows, widowers and orphans in the absence of their breadwinner.

It is, therefore, gratifying and reassuring that in this 40th year of its existence, the social security organization and programme remains committed to the mandate it was given in October 1974, and to its mission to “demonstrate visionary and compassionate leadership in the advancement of the economic security of our people as we continuously shape and manage the National Insurance programme.”

I wish at this time, to admonish NIB's Board, management and staff to continue to excel in providing the highest level of service possible to our customers. I also take this opportunity to commend Reverend Dr. James Moultrie, Chairman of NIB and the Board Members; and Mrs. Rowena Bethel, NIB's Director and her Executives and staff for their sterling leadership and guidance.

On behalf of NIB, I thank the Bahamian people, NIB's loyal customers, and I invite you all to join in the anniversary celebrations to come!

Thank you.