

Over 71,000 informal sector workers on Tier 1 pension scheme

BY CLAUDE NYARKO ADAMS

MORE than 71,000 informal sector and self-employed persons have been enrolled by the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) on the state-run Tier 1 pension scheme.

According to Dr John Ofori-Tenkorang, the significant increase in contributors from 14,200 as of May last year, was due to the implementation of the Self Employed Enrolment Drive (SEED) initiative.

Speaking during the public hearing of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament in Accra yesterday, he said the initiative had made it possible for artisans including carpenters, masons, tailors, auto-mechanics and traders to contribute towards their pension.

To a query on what SSNIT was doing to improve net contributions, he explained that, the SEED, launched in 2023, was an aggressive campaign deployed by the Trust to rope in persons within that bracket onto the scheme to guarantee them a better future in retirement.

In this regard, he stated that, within

the short term, SSNIT had targeted to enrol about 10 per cent of the 3.6 million self-employed Ghanaians who were yet to join the scheme although they fall within the required contributors' age of 15 and 45.

Currently, he noted that, the deployment of SEED was informed by the fact that, only 630 representing 0.3 per cent of the 245,000 pensioners on SSNIT monthly payroll were self-employed.

This, Dr Ofori-Tenkorang said, showed the existence of a retirement insurance gap for more than the 6.7 million persons engaged in the informal sector and self-employed as captured in the 2021 national population census.

"Per the 2021 population census, 6.7 million Ghanaians are working as self-employed. Out of this figure, 3.6 million fall between the age bracket of 15 and 45 years and can join SSNIT. One of the activities to ensure pensions scheme grows and covers all Ghanaians is the SEED.

We need to change the narrative on pensions and that's why we have through SEED undertaken an aggressive approach to get as many as possible onto the scheme. We are targeting to enrol 10 per cent of self-employed persons within the short term," he added.

The Director-General said SSNIT was working to provide competitive benefits to all persons who enrol on the scheme saying that, "we are determined to give you unprecedented benefits on monthly pensions with annual increases."

This year, he stated that, SSNIT would extend its enrolment campaign to include education of the public to whip up their interest in pension.

He noted that the Trust was also engaging the Controller and Accountant General's Department (CAGD) on regular remittance of public sector workers contributions.

Making a case for Tier 3 pension, Minister of Employment, Labour Relations and Pensions, Ignatius Baffour Awuah, said, the government introduced the scheme to enable all workers including those not enrolled on Tiers 1 and 2 to save towards their retirement.

He said that, currently, more than 800,000 including public sector workers had enrolled on Tier 3 pension schemes.

"There are so much opportunities in that area and

we want to encourage more Ghanaians to enrol on it. You can use that as your savings," he added.

Chairman of PAC, Dr James Klutse Avedzi, urged the Trust to dedicate specific budget towards the sensitisation of Ghanaians to ensure that all were prepared for their retirement and old age.

"I know as an MP what pension can do for our constituents. It put them in a position to resolve their daily challenges. These artisans earn some money so if they are encouraged to save something towards their pension, it will help. We urge you to intensify the sensitisation efforts," he added.



• Dr John Ofori-Tenkorang