38 Years
Of Protecting Workers And Our Future

On January 5, 2025, the National Insurance Services (NIS) proudly celebrated 38 years of service to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). Since its inception, the NIS has been a pillar of financial security and social protection, safeguarding our livelihood. Today, it is more than an institution; ***it is a promise that in times of need, the NIS will be there for you***.

This milestone highlights our longevity and signifies our unwavering commitment to workers' welfare. From economic crises to natural disasters, we have been resolute in protecting workers from poverty through income replacement programmes, investment in socio-economic development projects and temporary income support measures.

Our Journey: Protecting Workers Since 1987

Establishing the NIS represented a bold step toward strengthening our nation's social protection framework, marking a transformative moment for workers' rights and social security. Replacing the narrowly-scoped National Provident Fund, the NIS introduced a more comprehensive social insurance system to provide workers with reliable income protection from the cradle to the grave.

From its inception, the NIS aimed to protect workers from poverty and financial insecurity by providing benefits such as sickness, maternity, retirement, invalidity, death, and survivorship, as well as employment and injury. Over the past 38 years, we have delivered significant results:

- **Expanding Coverage -** We provide social security coverage to approximately 46,321 insured persons and their families.
- **Supporting Pensioners -** Steady growth of pensioners from 54 in 1990 (first year of payment of pensions) to 10,226 pensioners as of December 31, 2024.
- **Enhancing Maternity Benefits -** Thousands of mothers have received maternity support, enabling them to focus on their families without financial stress.
- **Addressing Sickness and Employment Injuries -** The NIS has provided workers with 9,634 sickness benefits and 380 employment injury benefits.
- **Building Financial Strength -** Our asset base now represents over 15% of the national GDP, ensuring the system's long-term sustainability.
- **Bolstering Financial Sustainability -** The recent parametric reform measures have fortified the NIS' financial health, moving the Fund's exhaustion date from 2036 to 2060.

The institution's workers-centric programme also provides mandatory coverage for employees and voluntary coverage for self-employed workers and voluntary contributors.

Investing in Workers and Communities

Beyond its income replacement mandate, the signature initiatives under our people empowerment and development agenda include, but are not limited to:

- **Healthcare -** Supporting medical infrastructure.
- **Education -** A critical financier of the National Economically Disadvantaged Student Loan Programme.
- **Housing -** Partnering with BOSVG to enable homeownership.
- **Job Creation -** Investing in agriculture, tourism, and other industries.
- **Community Development -** Supporting local initiatives that enhance the quality of life for workers and their families

The NIS has also stood as a stabilising force for its workers during economic and social uncertainties. For example, the NIS maintains consistent and timely benefit payments during economic crises. During natural disasters like the La Soufrière eruption and the pandemic, we offered citizens targeted financial and non-financial assistance.

Challenges Ahead and Our Commitment to Securing the Future of Workers

Although the NIS has made notable strides, we are cognisant of our fiduciary duty to maintain the life of the Fund, protecting it from emerging challenges like our ageing population, economic vulnerabilities, high informality and unemployment, and cybersecurity threats that can jeopardise workers' security. With a strong commitment to financial prudence, we are actively addressing these concerns through a range of reforms and initiatives, such as:

- **Adjusting Contribution Rates:** Gradual increases from 10% to 15% between 2024 and 2027 to stabilise the Fund.
- **Raising the Retirement Age:** Increasing the retirement age from 63 to 65 by 2028 aligns with global trends and ensures sustainability.
- **Investing in Digital Transformation:** Implementing a new management system and self-service options to enhance efficiency and accessibility.
- **Promoting Investment Diversification:** Strategic investments in local real estate (e.g. Ju-C property, Peter's Hope Development) and diversification into international stocks and bonds to strengthen financial resilience.
- **Enhancing Corporate Governance:** The NIS will continue to strengthen oversight and accountability.

As we look toward the next 38 years, the NIS reaffirms its commitment to protect and empower workers of SVG. Our achievements were made possible by the trust and partnership of the Vincentian people, and we are determined to maintain this relationship by building an even stronger social protection system for the future.

Thank you for being part of this journey.