

## **Ondo Govt Pays N48B Benefit To Retired Workers**

Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko on Thursday rued the pitiable condition of retired workers in the nation with a solemn assurance that his government would do all in its power to ensure that retired workers in the State get the best treatment from his government with the prompt payment of their pensions and gratuities as at when due.

Dr Mimiko who made this disclosure while flagging off the distribution of cheques of N350 million to retired officers during the 2010 Pensioners Day Forum in State disclosed that his administration had in the last twenty months of his government paid over N4 billion on retirement benefits for the retired elders.

The Governor who lamented the pitiable condition of the retirees regretted that before his government decided to pay the retired pensioners a whopping N1.4billion in one fell sweep last year disclosed that more than 466 out of 1,551 retired staff died while expecting their gratuities, a development which he described as regrettable and unaccepted for those who served their fatherland with their vigour.

According to him, “Far too long in our nation, the management of retired benefits had long remained a nightmare. The problem ranges from huge arrears of pension and gratuities to the hardship pensioners go through whenever they have to collect their retirement benefits. The situation had been pathetic. We found for example that a retired Head teacher who was supposed to be paid a gratuity of N2.6 million was only given a sum of N50,000 and had to wait indefinitely for the next installment.

“On assumption of office, petitions, appeals and prayers flooded my office from retired individuals as well as organisations on arrears of gratuities and pension of retired workers at the primary school and the Local Government levels. Although the arrears were supposed to be paid by the Federal government, our administration could not turn a deaf ear when the people needed us most to assist them.

“This was the situation when the State Executive Council approved the immediate payment of the arrears of gratuities of N1.4 billion for the retired workers. That decision was fully implemented. It is pertinent to mention that apart from this, we had also paid over N4 billion in retirement benefits in the last 20 months that we took over the reins of government in the state” Mimiko explained.

The governor said the state government is taking steps to commence the Contributory Pension Scheme, adding that “the State Implementation Committee headed by the Head of Service to seed to the quick implementation of the scheme has also been put in place. In the meantime, the state government has appointed and mobilised an Actuarist to value the past services of workers in the state as provided for in the Act”.

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