Govt still working out asset tax, says insurance executive

CEO of Pan-American Life Insurance, Winston Williams

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Pan American Life Insurance Group (PALIG) is closely monitoring T&T's evolving regulatory landscape—including the Government's proposed asset tax and planned reforms to make private pensions tax free—as the company ushers in a new era of leadership with the appointment of Winston Williams as CEO for T&T and the wider Caribbean.

In a wide-ranging press conference which took place at the Hyatt Regency yesterday, company executives confirmed that while the full impact of the asset tax is still unclear, ongoing discussions with authorities have been productive.

Asked about the impact that the asset tax could have on the company, Williams said, “One of the things we’ve been talking through ATTIC (Association of T&T Insurance Companies) to the Government is which assets are going to be considered for this asset tax and it appears as though they’re still working through how it’s going to unfold. So I guess the real impact would be better felt when those assets are quantified, and then we’ll know how it’s going to impact us.”

He said the company would try not to change around too many things for it to impact its clients, but the asset tax would affect the cost of doing business.

Regarding the goal to make private pensions tax-free and the impact on the company, Williams said this move may not affect PALIG “per se” but moreso the people who are receiving the pension.

“So if we have to pay you a pension of $10,000 a month, the current law says you need to take the tax deduction out of that and remit the difference to the client. Now, what is supposed to happen is that you take no tax, you just remit the entire pension to the client.

“So when we spoke to Inland Revenue, think about a week or two ago, and we asked if we should desist from deducting those taxes, and they said, no, not yet, we have not received the Cabinet note to enforce that.

So for the company, nothing, for the client, 25 per cent more in your pocket,” Williams added.

Bruce Parker, PALIG’s president for global life insurance business further stated that this could encourage more people to get private pensions, knowing that their income someday would not be taxed. He said that this could also result in a sales boost long-term for the company.

These regulatory shifts come as PALIG continues to expand in one of its most important regions.

PALIG’s Daniel Costello, executive vice-president of international markets, shared details about the company’s financials.

Asked to give a general sense of the revenues and profits for the company in 2025 compared to the previous years he said, "We will grow in the total Caribbean revenues, which will approach US$140 million ... at the end of the day the profitability of the company has been strong."

Looking beyond revenue and profit, the organisation's asset base is expected to increase in line with premium growth, with forecasts indicating an eight to nine per cent rise.

Williams identified distribution growth as his top priority for 2026.

"We have excellent products, excellent advice, and excellent people," he said. "Now it's time to take that message to more communities."

Technology upgrades represent another major pillar of the company's strategy. PALIG is transitioning towards fully digital customer communications and is preparing to launch a paperless, electronic application system by mid-2026.

The system would simplify processes for both agents and customers and significantly reduce the company's carbon footprint.