

## Response to Parliamentary Committees and External Audits Secretariat to the Social Security Tribunal

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2015 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada

### **Report 6 – Canada Pension Plan Disability Program**

The fall 2015 Auditor General's report examined whether Employment and Social Development Canada assessed applications for Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) benefits in a consistent and timely manner. The audit also examined whether the Social Security Tribunal of Canada (SST), supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC), decided disability appeals in a timely manner.

The Report notes that this is important because Canadians who have contributed to the Canada Pension Plan and cannot work because of a severe and prolonged disability may have to rely on the CPPD program as a source of income. The Department and the Tribunal must manage the applications and appeals as efficiently as possible to ensure the timely provision of the benefit to which applicants are entitled.

The Auditor General recommended that the SST, supported by the ATSSC, should collect and accurately capture robust data to allow better monitoring of the CPPD program and accurate reporting of results. The Auditor General also recommended that the SST, supported by the ATSSC, should review its policies and practices to ensure they adhere to the intent of the *Social Security Tribunal Regulations*, to ensure the most expeditious appeal decisions.

The SST and the ATSSC agreed with those recommendations and will continue to address those issues as part of their 2016-17 priorities. Recommendations 6.57 and 6.101 and the SST's response follow.

**6.57** – Employment and Social Development Canada and the Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, should collect and accurately capture robust data to allow better monitoring of the Canada Pension Plan Disability program and accurate reporting of results.

Response: Agreed. The Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, will continue to identify its statistical requirements and improve its case management system to collect better and more robust data that will ensure complete and accurate reporting of the Tribunal's workload and performance. One of the challenges that needed to be overcome in meeting this requirement was the limited state of preparedness of the Tribunal's new

case management system when the Tribunal opened its doors. Furthermore, the transfer, from the former tribunals, of a high volume of backlog cases and related data from the former tribunal's case management system also created significant difficulties since very few staff had the knowledge of the former systems. Since April 1, 2013, eight releases of the Tribunal's case management system have enabled the Tribunal to develop operation dashboards and other performance reports. The Tribunal will continue to enhance its case management system to ensure effective decision making and monitoring of performance standards.

[6.101](#) – The Social Security Tribunal of Canada, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, should review its policies and practices to ensure that they adhere to the intent of the *Social Security Tribunal Regulations*, to ensure the most expeditious appeal decisions.

Response: Agreed. Since its first day of operations, and notwithstanding the numerous challenges resulting from the lack of preparedness it faced at inception, the Social Security Tribunal of Canada has processed and decided CPPD appeals, incoming and those inherited from the Office of the Commissioner of Review Tribunals, as efficiently and expeditiously as the circumstances allowed, while respecting the legislation, the regulations, and the rules of natural justice. The Tribunal expects its Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) caseload to reach a steady state later this year. This will allow the Tribunal to implement its service standards of completing 85 percent of CPPD appeals within five months of when both parties are ready to proceed. Furthermore, the Tribunal, supported by the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada, will continue to

- develop practices and policies that respect the legislation and regulations and that adhere to their intent;
- review and improve its operational processes;
- implement quality control mechanisms for registry operations;
- further develop its case management system and improve the quality of statistics;
- improve its website to better inform parties and potential appellants of the Tribunal's processes and procedures; and
- listen to its stakeholders to improve the quality of its services.