

Thabane Miya of the Right2Know Campaign discusses unpaid benefits

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Unpaid benefits can potentially play a pivotal role in human and economic development especially when unemployment is so high in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa, about 18 million people are grant recipients.

It has been discovered that for the past years and even now, there are billions of rands from different funds that were never claimed by their rightful recipients or beneficiaries. There has been a lot of emphasis on government scandals like state capture but very little about corporate secrecy. According to a high panel on illicit flows of capital, government corruption only accounts for 6% of illicit flows out of Africa while corporate (e.g. tax invasion) accounts for 64%. 30% of illicit flows is criminal, including fraud.

Civil society organizations are vocal towards government corruption but so far the issue of unpaid benefits has not been adequately highlighted. Thanks to Rosemary Hunter though, former Deputy Register of pension funds and Deputy Officer of the Financial Services Board who blew the whistle to ensure that beneficiaries receive what is due to them. About R41, 9 billion is accumulating in different funds / financial institutions instead of reaching the relevant beneficiary. There are probably more funds in schemes like the Road Accident Fund (RAF), the Unemployed Insurance Fund (UIF), Compensation Commissioner and Mine-workers Compensation funds that are unclaimed. Furthermore there are probably funds unclaimed from bank deposits, insurance policies and unclaimed processes from correlative investment schemes that are still due to beneficiaries.

Following Rosemary Hunter blowing the whistle South African non-governmental organizations met and agreed to be part of a campaign to assist communities in claiming the money due to them and on behalf of deceased family members who did not claim their funds. Our organization Right to Know (R2K) strongly condemns the criminality around this matter and forms part of the coalition in a fight to inform communities of their potential claims.