



## **Gamble responsibly urges South African Responsible Gambling Foundation**

The South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) has declared the month of November as National Responsible Gambling Awareness Month as part of its public awareness and prevention programme.

National Responsible Gambling Awareness Month seeks to educate the public about the potential harmful effects of gambling. November is a significant month as a large portion of employed South Africans will receive either their 13th cheque or bonus during this period.

With tough economic conditions and slow economic growth in South Africa consumers have less disposable income for necessities like school fees, groceries and other household amenities and many consumers may be looking for alternative ways to grow their income over a short period of time. "Taking a risk and gambling to increase your income quickly when you can't afford it often leads to devastating consequences. We are encouraging South Africans to gamble responsibly and to think about the potential harm caused by excessive gambling. During the National Responsible Gambling Month we want to inform people about practical ways to gamble responsibly without harm so they are able to make informed decisions. We also want to tell those that are experiencing problems with gambling that help is available from the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation." says Executive Director of SARGF, Sibongile Simelane-Quntana.

The SARGF has a 24 hour, seven days a week toll-free counselling helpline 0800 006 008 to help problem gamblers and their immediate families. Trained counselling professionals treat and support problem gamblers through a number of telephonic and face to face sessions which are also completely free of charge. The public can also make use of the SMS line 076 675 0710.

Under the theme: "**Make Your Christmas A Merry One! Dice Wisely and Don't Bet On Your Winnings**" SARGF together with industry regulators and other stakeholders will be embarking on a month's worth of community roadshows across the Country. The Foundation



will also be launching a targeted radio campaign to communicate the responsible gambling message to local communities.

More information on gambling responsibly is available on the SARGF website ([www.sargf.org.za](http://www.sargf.org.za)) and Facebook page but some tips for people wanting to gamble responsibly include:

1. Set a time limit when you gamble and stick to it
2. Keep track of amount of money you are spending and set a limit on the amount you are prepared to spend on gambling
3. When you are gambling take regular breaks and think about when is a smart time to stop

“Illegal gambling in South Africa is on the rise with internet gambling increasing and gambling activities like fafi, dice, cards, and dog betting gaining popularity in peri-urban and rural areas. Gambling is very visible in all our communities and we want people especially those from vulnerable communities to be informed if they are planning to gamble”

Research by the SARGF indicates that problem gambling numbers have remained stable over the past three years at between about 3% and 5% of the South African adult population experience problems of varying degrees of severity at any one time with gambling too much and about 0.5% experiencing severe problems which can reasonably be labelled “gambling addiction”. This is broadly in line with international trends, although the instruments for measuring problem gambling in whole populations yield only approximations, and thus have to allow for quite large margins of error, which means that comparisons between jurisdictions are at best approximations. In 2013, ‘Pathological Gambling’ was reclassified from an Impulse Control Disorder to an Addiction and renamed a ‘Gambling Disorder’. The criteria for the diagnoses of gambling disorder were modelled on the diagnostic criteria for substance dependence. Gambling Disorders cannot be detected by a physical examination or blood tests. A psychiatric evaluation and history can be used to diagnose a gambling disorder. The past 2 quarters SARGF has treated 372 problem gamblers and lifted 172 self-exclusions

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Issued by Kaelo Engage on behalf of the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation

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**Editor's notes:**

The SARGF is a non-profit company, public-private initiative between Government and the gambling industry that is committed to promoting responsible gambling in South Africa and provides sustainable social solutions to the gambling Industry. The SARGF directs out a number of activities related to responsible gambling, including integrated treatment and counselling; public awareness; education; and training and research. The National Responsible Gambling Programme (NRGP) under the pay offline 'Winners Know When to Stop' is an initiative of the SARGF and The Foundation works closely with operators, regulators and civil society providing training to casino staff and operators to enable them to identify problem gamblers and direct them towards treatment and counselling.

- Website: <http://sargf.org.za/>
- Facebook: South African Responsible Gambling Foundation
- Twitter: @SARGFoundation
- Toll Free counselling line – 0800 006 008
- SMS line 076 675 0710