



Media Release

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The South African Responsible Gambling Foundation Charts a Bold New Course

The South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) recently adopted a dynamic new brand identity the organisation considers to be the outward expression of important structural changes that it has made internally. The new direction was launched to stakeholders at the 2016 Gambling Indaba at Emperors Palace 10 October 2016.

The Foundation implements an integrated programme widely known as of the National Responsible Gambling Programme (NRGP) which is SARGF's flagship programme and the appointment of a new board and new management, as well as the realignment of its business and communication strategies, will enable it to create an even greater impact on South Africans exposed to problem gambling and gambling disorders.

The first initiative of its kind in Africa, the NRGP has assisted 16 000 problem gamblers over the past 16 years and has earned international recognition for its integrated approach to providing free treatment and counselling programmes. The SARGF's newly appointed independent Chairperson, Advocate Joe Nalane, however, believes there is still work to be done. Together with Sibongile Simelane-Quntana, who joined as Executive Director in February 2016. Simelane-Quntana is committed to further developing the SARGF's already extensive programmes and service suite related to responsible gambling.

The first step to achieving this is by creating clearly defined roles within the organisation. The SARGF will adopt a more central role, under the umbrella of 'Sustainable Social Solutions for the Gambling Industry'. Weighted equally below are the Foundation's three core programmes, i.e. prevention; treatment and counselling; and research.

Advocate Nalane explains, "Many South African's are already familiar with our prevention programme, which uses the tag-line 'Winners know when to stop'. What they may not be aware of is that our treatment programme provides anyone who feels they are in the grips of a gambling problem with free, expert treatment and counselling."



Building on the 'Winners Know When To Stop' , the treatment programme will move forward using the message 'When You Want To Stop' which will focus on Problem Gamblers who have taken the first step in seeking help . The prevention programme using the message 'Taking Risks Wisely' will focus on public education and prevention on harmful effects associated with irresponsible and illegal gambling.

Research will also enjoy more attention under the banner 'Providing Social Intelligence'. The SARGF aims to continue being a leader and the foremost authority on the effects of gambling in South Africa. Recently a memorandum of agreement has been signed with the University of the Witwatersrand to assist the Foundation in conducting various research studies on better understanding problem gambling and new treatments trends for those who are already addicted to gambling.

The South African Responsible Gambling Foundation not only adds value to the gambling industry but should also be considered essential for the sustainability of the sector. The Foundation's leadership team is determined to not just deliver on their mandate but to create a legacy that will help manage and minimise the potential harmful effects of gambling in South Africa. It is to this end that, for the first time, the SARGF will lay claim to the month of November with the introduction of National Responsible Gambling Month. The Focus will also be on educating and creating awareness among vulnerable groups (school learners and the senior citizens) on illegal gambling and the harmful effects by ensuring that responsible gambling is taken to the people.

National Responsible Gambling Month is ideally timed, as South Africans gear up for the festive season and receive their 13th cheques and year-end bonuses. The SARGF hopes that by being highly active during this period people will take a more measured approach to gambling and seek help should they require it.

Although the Foundation is funded through voluntary contributions made by licensed gambling operators, which contribute 0.1% of their Gross Gambling Revenue, the SARGF is also committed to assisting people who have problems with illegal gambling.



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As Executive Director, Sibongile Simelane-Quntana, explains, “The Foundation has referred and funded the treatment of 590 individuals with gambling disorders annually, and this number has remained constant over the past five years. Of concern to us, however, is that we have seen an increase in Internet, under-age and illegal gambling related problems, even though casino and horse racing betting related problem gambling has decreased.”

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About SARGF

The SARGF is a renewed non-profit company, public-private initiative between Government and the gambling industry that is committed to promoting responsible gambling in South Africa. 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 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