



MEDIA RELEASE

Government Measures to Tackle Gambling Problems and Social Safeguards for Casino Operations

The Government will set up a comprehensive national framework to tackle problem gambling in Singapore.

2 This follows the release of a survey last week which found that 2.1% of the respondents showed traits and behaviours suggesting probable compulsive gambling.

3 The inter-Ministry framework on problem gambling will comprise:

- a. *National Council on Gambling*
- b. *Public education on problem gambling*
- c. *Counselling and support services at the community level*
- d. *Professional medical treatment for compulsive gamblers*
- e. *Research on gambling*
- f. *Regulation and enforcement of the gambling industry*

National Council on Gambling

4 As part of the national framework to address problem gambling, a National Council on Gambling will be set up in the second half of this year. The Council will advise MCYS on public education on problem gambling, and assess the effectiveness of treatment, counselling and support programmes to tackle problem gambling. Details on the Council are at [Annex A](#).

Public Education

5 Public Education on problem gambling will be mounted to raise awareness as well as publicise community resources and help services available. These programmes will commence in July 2005.

Medical Treatment for Compulsive Gamblers, and Counselling and Support Services at Community Level

6 MCYS will work with the community to reach out to those who need help. Social workers at the Family Service Centres (FSCs) as well as staff at Community Development Councils will be trained to identify compulsive gamblers and refer them to CAMP (Community Addictions Management Programme) for treatment.

7 The less serious cases will be referred to selected FSCs and social agencies for counselling and support. Their staff will be trained to provide specialist expertise to offer problem gambling intervention. Meanwhile, the FSCs will continue to offer general counselling and assistance to problem gamblers and their families.

8 Details of CAMP's services, and the enhanced counselling and support services to be provided by social service agencies are at Annex B.

9 Members of the public who wish to have more information about compulsive gambling may check CAMP's website at www.camp.org.sg, or call CAMP at 63892387/89 from 8 am to 5 pm (Monday to Friday). The helpline number for Family Service Centres is **1800-8380100** and it is operational from 9 am to 5.30 pm (Monday to Friday).

Stringent Social Safeguards for Casino

10 In addition to the national framework which will apply to all forms of gambling, stringent social safeguards for casinos will be put in place. The safeguards are highlighted as follows:

a) Casino entry levy on all Citizens and Permanent Residents

A levy of \$100 per day or \$2,000 a year for membership will be imposed on all citizens and permanent residents.

The entry levies collected will be channeled to the Singapore Totalisator Board for charitable and worthy causes.

b) Exclusion measures

The following provisions have been put in place to exclude local residents from casino premises:

- Spouses and family members will be empowered to exclude persons with gambling problems.

- Persons on publicly funded social assistance programmes, bankrupts and those with poor credit record will be excluded from the casino.

c) No extension of credit

The casino operator will not be allowed to accept credit cards and post-dated cheques from local residents and will also not be permitted to extend credit to local residents. The only exception would be for resident premium players who would have to deposit no less than \$100,000 upfront with the casino.

d) Advertising

All forms of advertising of the casino in the local mass media will be prohibited.

MCYS will work with the Ministry of Home Affairs, which will set up the casino regulatory agency, to ensure the strict enforcement of all the safeguards.

Issued by _____

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH AND SPORTS
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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON GAMBLING

The key functions of the National Council on Gambling are to:

- Advise MCYS on public education programmes on problem gambling;
- Allocate funding for preventive and rehabilitative programmes initiated by the social service sector; and
- Coordinate with CAMP on the treatment programmes for gambling addicts; and
- Assess the overall effectiveness of the treatment, counselling and support programmes to address problem gambling

The Council will be chaired by a well-respected individual, and have some 10 -12 members with expertise and experience in public communications, counselling, and rehabilitative/treatment services.

The members will be appointed by the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports for a two-year term.

**COMMUNITY ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (CAMP)
- NATIONAL WELLNESS CENTRE**

The Community Addictions Management Programme (CAMP) under the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) will set up a national wellness centre to provide community-based care to individuals with addiction problems, particularly those with compulsive gambling problems.

The Centre will adopt an integrated approach to facilitate recovery from addictions which incorporates medical, psychological and social intervention processes. The Centre's services will comprise five components:

a. Treatment Programmes, including:

- screening and assessment of severity of gambling addiction,
- case management, counselling and family therapy
- financial planning and legal counselling
- Gamblers Anonymous (support groups)
- medical treatment for cases where there are psychiatry conditions (e.g. depression)
- residential treatment for a small proportion of severe cases with suicidal tendencies.

b Training and Education including continuing training programme for CAMP's addictions specialists, training on screening and brief intervention skills and continuing education for Family Service Centres and social service agencies.

c Research – evaluation of clinical outcomes to develop best practices suited for our culture, programme evaluation to ensure that treatment meets established key performance indicators.

d Prevention - work with MCYS in developing public awareness as well as targeted prevention programs aimed at at-risk groups. Develop research with MCYS to examine the effectiveness of prevention programmes.

e Community Partnership with other agencies including Family Service Centers, Credit Counselling Singapore, etc. for better integration and streamlining of services and programmes.

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