

# A new decree to control gambling venues to come into force

The National Lottery of Charity and Health (Lonabol) will control gambling venues in Bolivia. Until the end of the year, it will have a regulation that will rule the issuance of casino licenses through a tender process, so it may control and prevent the proliferation of this entertainment centers.

Executive director of Lonabol, Marco Antonio Cárdenas, who said that Bolivia has to allow an activity that is legal in other countries, announced that, in 120 days, there will be a new Supreme Director and probably a gambling law, that will allow the entity to grant legal licenses and correct the irregularities committed in previous governments.

The Lottery has temporary contracts with seven gambling companies, signed by former authorities that infringed Supreme Decree 24446, a norm that authorizes this entity to administrate, control, supervise and regulate the lottery games, but he did not grant any license, which was noticed by the Government Watchdog's Office, that generated several lawsuits.

The new regulation, said Cárdenas, will allow the approval of a regulation that will set requirements to grant licenses and another one to sanction those gambling venues that infringe the norms. Currently, he added, there aren't any sanctions established.

Temporary agreements of the lottery will conclude at the end of the year; the new ones will have to comply with the new regulation. Just Lotex and Corhat, which will conclude in 2012 and 2010 respectively, will not have to comply with the rule "but after that period, they will also have to do it," he

said.

The addendum signed by former executive director, Álvaro Antelo, to extend its contract with Lotex (owner of Bingo Bahiti) until 2032, for 20 more years, it being revised and will be subject to an audit by the Watchdog's Office, according to Cárdenas.

The new rules that will be imposed, he said, are the opening of gambling venues that will obtain a license through a tender that will set a number of gambling venues per region and will define three categories according to the number of machines and the type and quality of the halls.

The top-level houses will be exclusive and will operate in five-star hotels; the second-class ones will be those that have among 200 and 250 machines and the third class, those with 60 to 100. Facilities in both cases will have to count with all the comfort according to this activity.

The number of venues will depend on the number of inhabitants. Besides, they aim to raise from 18 to 20 the percentage of the monthly fee paid by lottery companies. They currently pay the 15 % of its gross income.

Lotex delivers around USD 360,000 a month, Corhat USD 59,760 and around USD 2,990 each of the other five companies that have temporary licenses.

The first step for the approval of the new regulation is the administrative resolution issued by Lonabol on September 10th, published on the 14th, which suspends the granting of more licenses until the new decree or the new law are approved, and gaming companies are operating in the country will have to comply with the norm to continue with the activity.