

# Gross turnover of casinos grew

Willemstad – The gross turnover of the 13 casinos on Curaçao amounted to 284.5 million guilders last year, according to the statistics of the Gaming Control Board (GCB). This represents an increase of more than 50 million compared to 2007.

The upward trend started in 2005, when a total turnover of 185.3 million guilders was realised. The following year this amounted to 194 million guilders.

According to GCB Director Raynold Nivillac, the amount of 284 million is not too low; an average of 21 million guilders turnover per casino. “It concerns medium-sized casinos and there’s a possible yearly increase.”

To perform the tasks completely, the casinos must contribute towards the GCB. This is currently not the case and was reason for GCB publishing a policy document “Revenues from Casino System,” in February.

The casino sector must contribute 20 million guilders each year, of which 12.5 million guilders are meant for the Island Treasury and 7.5 million guilders to cover GCB’s expenses. This is ten million guilders more than is presently being contributed.

The association of casino holders on Curaçao does not agree with the publication of this policy document, which for that matter has not been approved yet. The document states, among other things, that a higher percentage for permit fees is applicable for gambling machines than for gambling tables, because gambling machines are viewed as a high risk game regarding addiction.

Furthermore, there’s a plea for entrance fees for non-tourists

of ten guilders for casinos. The entrance fee must also be viewed as discouragement for local visitors, because gambling addiction is substantial on the island according to the Foundation to Manage Addiction (FMA) statistics and previously those of Deloitte.

The association is of the opinion that GCB was too rash. The gambling addiction issue is not being denied, but must also not be misused for financial gain, as lawyer Mirto Murray states in his press release on behalf of the association.

“The study was concluded a few years ago, but measures were never taken to tackle the problem. From time to time, the GCB will raise this problem as is now the case to force their policy document through. Moreover, a substantial part of the addiction problem does not concern the casino games, but the daily number game “Wega di Number,” the bi-weekly national lottery “Landsloterij” and “Bon kuné” games.

The number of gambling addicts hooked on casino games does not even amount to one per cent, the association claims. The sector regrets that they were not involved with the drawing up of the new policy document.

The proposal for the players’ tax of ten per cent was already viewed as not feasible, and in the second proposal the activities of the casinos are limited, but they are required to pay more tax. According to the association, this is drastic, unrealistic and disastrous for the tourism industry.

It was agreed that the association would forward proposals, but to their astonishment the GCB decided to go ahead with the publication. This only results in further disruption of the relation between the association and the GCB which is presently laborious, the release states.

The association acknowledges that supervision is necessary, but pleads for an “audit-based structure” of the supervision and not a GCB with 50 employees costing 7.5 million guilders

per year. The association will therefore issue an alternative plan to ensure the employment within the casino industry.