

## NWGB CEO TALKS TOUGH ON LACK OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE GAMBLING INDUSTRY



Rustenburg-It's a multi-billion-rand industry where lack of transformation remains an area of concern. Since 1994 the gambling industry remains largely untransformed. In an instance where there is a glimmer of hope, Africans are incorporated for cosmetic purposes.

The Chief Executive Officer of the North-West Gambling Board, Mr Fortune Sekgaphane maintained that the Board will stamp its authority in seeing to it that it dismantles monopoly capital in the sector. Mr Sekgaphane said that the previously disadvantaged individuals must be empowered to be active participants in the sector not only as employees, but owners of many and diverse operations.

The North-West Gambling Board under the leadership of Mr. Sekgaphane recently held an interactive session with licensees in Rustenburg in a workshop themed: "Assessing progress made in transforming the Gambling Industry in the North West Province."

Mr Sekgaphane asserted that there has to be a paradigm shift particularly in transforming the gambling industry in the North West.

*"Transformation is not happening. We still have companies doing business the way they used to back in the old days. It's very rare to find black people being owners or CEO's of big Multi-National Corporations in the gambling industry. And I'm saying that this narrative need to change,"* he said.

He further warned against companies who use black people as fronts in their companies. Insisting that punitive measures will have to be taken against companies that flout the law.

*"A disturbing trend we have picked up in our operations, as a Board is that there are pockets of fronting where businesses masquerade, as black operations just for Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment compliance. This should be exposed,"* he said.

Of concern is a lack of adequate socio-economic commitment by the gambling industry and given the country's skewed past, licensees are duty bound to be part of a solution in addressing matters of socio-economic concern in communities where they operate.

*"We want a percentage of net profit to go to our Socio-Economic Development fund, which helps disadvantaged learners to get bursaries, school uniform, sanitary towels and stationery and address many other social concerns which needs our intervention. There has to be a distinction between a licensee in America and South Africa. Our past dictates to us to play a role in remedying the ills of the past,"* Sekgaphane said.

There is already some movement in the establishment of the fund. And the North West Gambling Board has already constructed a house for an impoverished family of eleven people at a village on the outskirts of Mahikeng. Furthermore, the North West Gambling Board is funding four students who are pursuing their post matric studies at various institutions in the province. The "Back to School" campaign is another initiative championed by the North West Gambling Board where school shoes and stationaries are being donated to learners from impoverished households in many economically depressed communities of the North West.

*"There is more we can do together as regulators and the industry if we can share common understanding of the expectations of the poor and the economically marginalized population of our country",* Sekgaphane said.