

Gaming regulators urged to team up to fight crime

By NG KAI LING

COLLABORATION among casino gaming regulators worldwide is important to effectively tackle cross-border syndicated crimes, said Mr S. Iswaran, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office.

Speaking to some 200 delegates yesterday at an annual conference for international gaming regulators at the Pan Pacific Hotel, Mr Iswaran said that the risks associated with gaming are common to all jurisdictions.

They include money-laundering, organised crime, cheating and problem gaming.

This is the first time the three-day International Association of Gaming Regulators' annual conference is being held in Asia.

The conference ends tomorrow.

Delegates hail from 19 countries including South Africa, Colombia, the United States and Australia.

Mr Iswaran, who is also the Second Minister for Home Affairs and Trade and Industry, added that the risks will become more complex as crime syndicates operate across borders, sharing information and using communication technology to avoid detection by enforcement agencies.

"Through partnerships, regulators can enhance mutual understanding and learning, improve the quality of gaming regulation and be better positioned to meet the emerging regulatory challenges," said Mr Iswaran.

To this end, Singapore's Casino Regulatory Authority (CRA) signed two memorandums of understanding yesterday.

One was with the Alderney Gambling Control Commission in Britain's Channel Islands and the other with the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

The Genting Group, the parent company of Resorts World Sentosa, holds a gaming licence in Alderney in the Channel Islands, while Las Vegas Sands, the parent company of Marina Bay Sands, has a licence in Pennsylvania.

The MOUs will strengthen cooperation between CRA and the two regulators in areas such as sharing information and knowledge, and study visits.

Ms Susan Hensel, the president of the International Association of Gaming Regulators, said that it is timely to hold the conference here as the gaming industry is seeing "explosive" growth in the region.

She added that the regulators also wanted to study Singapore's integrated resort model to see what can be applied in their own jurisdictions.

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