- Gambling / Sports betting

Casino not for QC gov't execs, workers

Manila Standard · 21 May 2024 · A3 · By Rio N. Araja

QUEZON City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Monday banned the 19,000 city hall officials and employees from entering the soon-to-open Solaire Resort North to gamble.

During the 1st International Conference on Responsible Gambling and Gaming Addiction at the Novotel Araneta in Cubao, Quezon City, Belmonte disclosed that the city government has coordinated with the casinoresort operator to create a databank of the photographs of all city government personnel for detection once they try to enter the facility.

An electronic device posted at the entrance could easily tell if the entrant is a city hall official or employee, and a casino staff would immediately step in to remind him or her about the prohibition.

"Even if one wears a wig, a mask or a hat, one's face can still be detected using a very sophisticated system," Belmonte said.

"We will not embarrass anyone here," she added.

The mayor clarified however a city government official or employee may be allowed to enter and eat in any of the resort's food establishments and check in at the hotel facility.

She said minors will have a separate entrance to ensure that they could not see the casino area.

According to Belmonte, the city council had passed when she was still a vice mayor a stringent ordinance to regulate responsible gaming and gambling activities of the 3.2 million QCitizens.

"One can ban oneself from entering the casino resort, or even his family can do that, too," she pointed out.

The resort is scheduled to formally open on May 25.

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. chairman and chief executive officer Alejandro Tengco lauded Belmonte for the passage of guideline to address the problem of gambling among her constituents.

Belmonte believed that gambling and gaming cannot only be found in casino resorts but also in other places.

She said she has discussed with the other host-mayors of casino facilities if they could ask for a share from Pagcor's revenues since "we are the hosts who have to bear the brunt of the social costs of gambling and gaming."

Tengco was amenable to the proposition.