

News Article

NLC COMMISSIONER CALLS FOR STRONGER ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL LOTTERIES

Commissioner Jodi Scholtz calls for stronger global cooperation, regulatory vigilance and public awareness to protect players, legitimate operators and public-benefit funding.



EL INDUSTRY DAYS 2026, MARRAKECH, MOROCCO – 8 JUNE 2026

National Lotteries Commission (NLC) Commissioner Jodi Scholtz has called for stronger global cooperation, regulatory vigilance and public awareness to combat the growing threat of illegal lotteries and unregulated gaming activities.

Speaking during the “Protecting the Lottery Ecosystem from Illegal Gaming” session at EL Industry Days 2026 in Marrakech, Morocco, Commissioner Scholtz shared South Africa’s regulatory experience and highlighted the significant risks that illegal lotteries pose to consumers, legitimate lottery operators and public-benefit funding programmes.

“A well-regulated lottery system safeguards players and ensures that lottery proceeds continue to support good causes and community development.”

- Commissioner Jodi Scholtz,
National Lotteries Commission

Commissioner Scholtz noted that revenue generated through National Lottery ticket sales is directed towards good causes, funding projects that contribute to social development and improve the lives of communities across South Africa.

A key focus of the address was the growing challenge posed by illegal lotteries, particularly those operating online or disguised as promotional competitions. These activities often exploit regulatory gaps, mislead consumers and divert revenue away from legitimate lottery systems and public-benefit programmes.

She also warned that illegal lotteries expose participants to financial losses, identity theft and fraud, while eroding public confidence in regulated lottery systems.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SESSION



PROTECTING THE LOTTERY ECOSYSTEM

Ensuring player protection, lottery integrity and funding for good causes by combating illegal lotteries.



THE GROWING THREAT

Illegal lotteries exploit regulatory gaps, mislead consumers and divert billions of rand away from public-benefit funding.



COLLABORATION IS KEY

A coordinated approach involving regulators, law-enforcement agencies, policymakers and industry stakeholders.



PROTECTING VULNERABLE PLAYERS

Protecting elderly persons, low-income communities and digitally inexperienced individuals through awareness and education.



The NLC has identified a growing trend in which competitions are marketed to the public under the guise of promotional advertising. Where participants are required to pay a fee to enter, such activities may constitute illegal lotteries under South African law.



South Africa’s National Lottery generated more than R7 billion in 2025, while illegal lottery and gambling activities are estimated to divert billions of rand offshore annually, undermining regulatory objectives and public-benefit funding.



Addressing the issue requires a coordinated approach involving regulators, law-enforcement agencies and industry stakeholders, supported by strengthened education and awareness campaigns for consumers.



Elderly persons, low-income communities and digitally inexperienced individuals are often disproportionately targeted by illegal lottery operators. The NLC continues to run public awareness initiatives to help consumers identify legitimate lottery products.

The presentation formed part of Industry Days 2026, an international gathering of lottery and gaming industry leaders hosted in Marrakech under the theme “Lotteries Bridging Continents.” The event brought together representatives from 39 countries across Africa, Europe, North America, and Australia to engage on key issues shaping the lottery sector, including innovation, responsible gaming, retail digitalisation, and the fight against illegal gaming.

“Player protection remains at the heart of lottery regulation. By maintaining integrity, transparency and accountability, we can ensure that lotteries continue to serve the public good and contribute meaningfully to national development.”

- Commissioner Jodi Scholtz,
National Lotteries Commission



With illegal gaming continuing to evolve across jurisdictions, the discussions in Marrakech underscored the importance of collaboration between regulators, industry stakeholders and law-enforcement agencies. Through sharing South Africa’s regulatory experience, Commissioner Scholtz contributed to an international dialogue focused on strengthening player protection and preserving the integrity of lottery systems.