

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
ON APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBILITY

1. The President of the Republic of Singapore is the post of highest honour and responsibility. He is vested with the custodial powers to protect the country's financial reserves against a profligate government and has veto powers over key appointments. As Head of State, the President must be a person of integrity, good character and reputation. He must also have the experience and ability to effectively discharge the functions and duties of the office.

2. For this reason, the process to certify candidates for election to the office of the President is rigorous. The Constitution of the Republic of Singapore provides for the Presidential Elections Committee to scrutinise aspiring candidates to ensure that they have the necessary credentials to be elected to the office. The Constitution requires the prospective candidate:

- a. to satisfy the Committee that he is a person of integrity, good character and reputation; and
- b. when he applies for qualification under Article 19(2)(g)(iv) of the Constitution, to satisfy the Committee that he, having held office for a period of not less than 3 years in such position of seniority and responsibility in such organisation or department in the public or private sector as described in Article 19(2)(g)(iv) of the Constitution, has such experience and ability in administering and managing financial affairs as to enable him to carry out effectively the functions and duties of the office of the President.

3. The Presidential Elections Act requires a candidate to apply to the Committee for a Certificate of Eligibility. Extracts of Article 19 of the Constitution and section 8 of the Presidential Elections Act are attached.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

4 At the close of applications on 6 August 2005, the Presidential Elections Committee received 4 applications in total. The applicants were:

- a. Mr Kuan Yoke Loon, Andrew;
- b. Mr Ramachandran Govindasamy Naidu;
- c. Mr S R Nathan; and
- d. Mr Ooi Boon Ewe.

5. The Committee met on 12 Aug 05 and deliberated on each application.

CERTIFICATE ISSUED

6. The Committee issued only one certificate of eligibility on 13 August 2005. Mr S R Nathan is the incumbent President of the Republic of Singapore. He has all the credentials for the office of the President and is well regarded and respected for his public service. The Committee considered Mr Nathan as a man of integrity, good character and reputation. He did not apply for qualification under Article 19(2)(g)(iv). Mr S R Nathan has been issued with the Certificate of Eligibility.

UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

7. Mr Ramachandran Govindasamy Naidu and Mr Ooi Boon Ewe did not satisfy the Presidential Elections Committee that they had the prerequisite experience and ability to effectively carry out the functions and duties of the office of the President.

a. Ramachandran Govindasamy Naidu. He was employed under the Commonwealth Forces from 1946 to 1987. He retired from service as a Senior Store Keeper.

b. Ooi Boon Ewe. He claimed to be the sole proprietor of a realty business. The licence for the business had, however, expired at the time of his application for a Certificate of Eligibility.

Their career history obviously showed that they did not hold any similar or comparable position of seniority and responsibility in any other organisation or department of equivalent size or complexity in the public or private sector as those mentioned in the Constitution. The Committee was further of the opinion that they could not have the experience and ability in administering and managing financial affairs as to effectively discharge the duties and responsibilities of the office of the President.

8. As for Mr Andrew Kuan, the former Group Chief Financial Officer of JTC, the Committee assessed the seniority and responsibility of that position as being not comparable to those mentioned in the Constitution and he therefore could not have the experience and ability in administering and managing financial affairs as to effectively discharge the functions and duties of the office of President.

9. All the three applicants have been formally notified that they have been unsuccessful in their applications for the COE.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
13 AUGUST 2005

ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONSTITUTION

19. -- (1) No person shall be elected as President unless he is qualified for election in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

(2) A person shall be qualified to be elected as President if he —

- (a) is a citizen of Singapore;
- (b) is not less than 45 years of age;
- (c) possesses the qualifications specified in Article 44 (2) (c) and (d);
- (d) is not subject to any of the disqualifications specified in Article 45;
- (e) satisfies the Presidential Elections Committee that he is a person of integrity, good character and reputation;
- (f) is not a member of any political party on the date of his nomination for election; and
- (g) has for a period of not less than 3 years held office —

- (i) as Minister, Chief Justice, Speaker, Attorney-General, Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Auditor-General, Accountant-General or Permanent Secretary;
- (ii) as chairman or chief executive officer of a statutory board to which Article 22A applies;
- (iii) as chairman of the board of directors or chief executive officer of a company incorporated or registered under the Companies Act (Cap. 50) with a paid-up capital of at least \$100 million or its equivalent in foreign currency; or
- (iv) in any other similar or comparable position of seniority and responsibility in any other organisation or department of equivalent size or complexity in the public or private sector which, in the opinion of the Presidential Elections Committee, has given him such experience and ability in administering and managing financial affairs as to enable him to carry out effectively the functions and duties of the office of President.

(3) The President shall —

- (a) not hold any other office created or recognised by this Constitution;
- (b) not actively engage in any commercial enterprise;
- (c) not be a member of any political party; and
- (d) if he is a Member of Parliament, vacate his seat in Parliament.

(4) Nothing in clause (3) shall be construed as requiring any person exercising the functions of the office of President under Article 22N or 22O to —

- (a) if he is a member of any political party, resign as a member of that party; or
- (b) vacate his seat in Parliament or any other office created or recognised by this Constitution.

SECTION 8 OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ACT

8.-- (1) At any time after the date referred to in section 6 (1) (a) or such date which is 3 months before the date referred to in section 6 (1) (b), whichever is the earlier, but in any case not later than 3 days after the date of the writ for an election, every person who desires to be elected to the office of President shall apply in the prescribed manner to the Presidential Elections Committee for a certificate in the prescribed form.

(1A) The certificate referred to in subsection (1) shall certify, for the purposes of an election —

- (a) that the Committee is satisfied that the person applying is a person of integrity, good character and reputation; and
- (b) where the person applying states that he desires to contest in an election by virtue of being qualified under Article 19 (2) (g) (iv) of the Constitution, that the Committee is of the opinion that the person, having held office for a period of not less than 3 years in such position of seniority and responsibility in such organisation or department in the public or private sector as described in Article 19 (2) (g) (iv) of the Constitution, has such experience and ability in administering and managing financial affairs as to enable him to carry out effectively the functions and duties of the office of President.

(2) If the Presidential Elections Committee, upon receipt of an application under subsection (1) —

- (a) is satisfied that the applicant is a person of integrity, good character and reputation; or
- (b) is of the opinion that the applicant has such experience and ability in administering and managing financial affairs as to enable him to carry out effectively the functions and duties of the office of President,

the Committee shall not later than the day before nomination day issue to the applicant the certificate referred to in subsection (1) containing the relevant certification.

(3) Any such certificate shall be final and shall not be subject to appeal or review in any court.