

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CAMPAIGNING GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

1 Polling Day for the Presidential Election will be held on Saturday, 23 September 2017. As the office is the highest position in the land, election campaigning should befit the dignity and role of the President.

#### **Guiding principles for the election campaign**

2 The form of a Presidential Election campaign should differ fundamentally from that of a General Election campaign given the different roles that the elected President and the elected government perform.

3 The President should remain above the political fray. It is not his role to support or oppose the Government of the day or to advance his own agenda or policies.

4 Under the Constitution, the President has important ceremonial and representational roles as Head of State. He represents and promotes Singapore's interests abroad. His key role is to be the custodian of Singapore's reserves and to ensure that only people of integrity are appointed to key public sector jobs. The President should have the direct mandate of the people to perform these important national functions on their behalf. This is the main reason that the President is elected, and not appointed.

5 The focus of the Presidential Election campaign should therefore be on the suitability and integrity of candidates to discharge these functions, while maintaining the dignity of the office.

#### **Key elements of the Presidential election campaign**

6 Candidates are required to make a statutory declaration that they understand the role of the President under the Constitution. They are also encouraged to undertake that they will conduct their election campaign in a manner that is dignified, decorous and consistent with the President's position as the Head of State and the symbol of national unity.

#### Use of TV for campaigning

7 Television will be a key medium of the campaign because of its national reach. It also allows voters to assess the candidates in a manner in keeping with the decorum and dignity of the office of President.

8 Each candidate will be allocated two blocks of 10 minutes' airtime, free of charge, to make his statements across 17 Mediacorp TV channels and Mediacorp and SPH radio channels. Mediacorp will record and broadcast these statements in the form of a "Presidential Candidate Broadcast" (PCB). The first PCB will be televised the day after Nomination Day; while the second PCB will be televised on the eve of Cooling-off Day. Candidates may use the four official languages for transmission of the PCBs.

9 Two forums with the candidates will also be broadcast on free-to-air television. One forum will be organised and live-streamed by SPH on the third day after Nomination Day, while the other will be organised and broadcast live by Mediacorp on the sixth day after Nomination Day. Both forums will be broadcast on free-to-air TV channels (please refer to annex for timeline).

### Campaigning on the Internet and through films

10 Apart from TV, candidates may carry out campaigning on the Internet or through films, but these are subject to the Films Act and Broadcasting Act. Candidates who intend to exhibit the films publicly or to distribute their physical copies must submit them first to the Info-communications Media Development authority (IMDA) for classification. However, live recordings of election activities exhibited or distributed on the Internet do not need to be submitted to IMDA for classification so long as they do not distort, dramatise, sensationalise or mislead viewers.

11 The display of election advertising on the Internet – including through emails, on social media platforms and discussion forums – by the candidates must abide by the Presidential Elections (Election Advertising) Regulations. This includes the requirement to declare to the Returning Officer the particulars of every Internet election advertising platform that will be used to publish election advertising by or on behalf of a candidate.

12 Candidates and voters alike must not make, exhibit or distribute party political films that employ dramatisation and/or animation to distort, sensationalise and mislead viewers on political matters.

### Publication of exit polls and election surveys

13 In accordance with the Presidential Elections Act, the publication of exit polls and election surveys – such as a poll on who the voters are likely to vote for – is disallowed from the day that the Writ of Election is issued until Polling Day, both days inclusive.

### Election meetings (Rallies)

14 Candidates are encouraged to use platforms that reach out to voters at large such as the TV broadcasts and social media. There will not be any designated rally sites. Candidates who wish to hold rallies will need to secure rally sites on their own, obtain approval from the owners of the premises or sites, and apply to Police for a permit. Police will assess the application based on public order considerations. Applications can only be submitted after the close of nomination proceedings. They must be submitted two days before the intended rally date, by the designated time.

### Banners, posters and printing of campaign materials

15 Candidates should refer to the Presidential Elections Act for the rules on the printing and display of banners and posters, as well as the printing of campaign materials. No person shall display or cause to be displayed in any public place posters and banners without authorisation by the Returning Officer.

### Campaigning by political parties and civic organisations on behalf of a candidate

16 Under the Presidential Elections Act, any person who conducts activities to promote or procure the election of a candidate, must be individually authorised in writing by the candidate or his election agent, on or after Nomination Day. Individuals who are not citizens of Singapore are prohibited from taking part in any election activity.

17 The position of the President is non-partisan. Political parties should not be involved in campaigning using their party names and symbols in support of a candidate.

18 Civic, business or professional bodies that wish to participate in any political activity or allow their funds or premises to be used for political purposes need to ensure that their

constitutions allow them to do so, and that they do not contravene any laws that they are subject to. Such political activities include endorsing certain candidates and publishing advertisements or issuing press statements to express support for a candidate. Advertisements or statements that amount to election advertising should comply with the Presidential Elections Act.

19 While such bodies should have their own processes to consult their members and consider the merits of supporting a candidate, it remains each individual's right as a voter, regardless of his membership of any organisation, to freely decide whom to support and how to cast his vote.

#### Cooling-off period

20 A cooling-off period where all campaigning must stop will be observed from midnight on Cooling-off Day and until after polls close on Polling Day.

#### Election financing

21 The Presidential Elections Act limits campaign expenses to 30 cents per registered voter or \$600,000, whichever is greater. Based on the number of electors in the registers as of 28 August 2017, the election expenses limit for PE 2017 is \$754,982.40.

22 Under the Political Donations Act, only Singapore citizens who are 21 years or older, or Singapore-controlled companies which carry on business wholly or mainly in Singapore, are allowed to make political donations.

**ISSUED BY  
ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE**

**29 AUG 2017**

