

STATEMENT FROM PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE: CAMPAIGNING FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

1. In accordance with Article 17(3)(b) of the Constitution, the election of the President is to be held before the commencement of the new term of the President on 1 September 2011.

Guiding Principles for the Presidential Election

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

3. The process of getting elected to the office of President should be dignified and above the political fray. The elected President should have the status of a person who has the direct mandate of the people to perform an important national function on their behalf.

4. Under the Constitution, the President has important ceremonial and representational roles as Head of State in Singapore as well as representing and promoting Singapore's interests abroad. His key role as an elected President is to be the custodian of Singapore's reserves and to ensure that only people of integrity are appointed to the key public sector jobs. This is the main reason for a direct Presidential election. However, it is not the President's role to support or oppose the Government of the day or to advance his own agenda or policies.

5. The focus of the Presidential Election should therefore be on the suitability and integrity of the candidates to discharge these functions and bring credit to Singapore internationally.

6. The rules and regulations for the conduct of the Presidential Election should therefore foster a campaign that maintains the dignity of the office and focuses on the key attributes of suitability and integrity of the candidates for the office of President.

Key Elements for the Presidential Campaign

Use of TV for Campaigning

7. TV will be a major medium of the campaign because of its wide reach at the national level. This medium will also allow voters to assess the candidates in a manner in keeping with the decorum and dignity of the office of President. MediaCorp will facilitate campaigning over television (TV) for the candidates by providing them TV air-time to address the electorate.

a. Each candidate will have two blocks of 10 minutes of TV air time, free of charge, to make his statements. MediaCorp will record and broadcast the candidate making 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 Polling Day. An exemption will be granted to allow for this telecast as election advertising is generally not allowed on the eve of Polling Day. The broadcast will be repeated in the four official languages. (Mediacorp will provide a suitable translation for broadcast in those languages which the candidate is not himself speaking in).

b. In addition, MediaCorp will produce and broadcast a TV profile on each candidate featuring his personal and professional background.

c. MediaCorp will also broadcast a joint TV interview with all the candidates to allow voters to directly compare the candidates' suitability for the office.

Campaigning through the New Media

8. Candidates may carry out campaigning through the Internet or new media.

9. The making, exhibiting or distributing (including through such new media) of a film by anyone concerning the candidates or the election remains subject to the restrictions in the Films Act. An exemption will be granted during the election period to allow any individual to exhibit and distribute live recordings of lawful election activities on the Internet, so long as the film does not distort or dramatise the election activity, and the film is not materially altered.

10. Internet content providers may be required to register their website/weblog with MDA if the site is deemed to be "providing any programme, for the propagation, promotion or discussion of political or religious issues relating to Singapore".

Rallies

11. Compared to the 1993 Presidential election, voters now have wider access to information about the candidates through the print media, more extensive TV coverage, and the new media. Candidates may however want to introduce themselves in-person to Singaporeans. Each candidate will therefore be allowed to hold one rally, should he wish to do so, at designated locations.

Banners, Posters and Mailing of Campaign Materials

12. The printing and display of banners and posters, and the printing and mailing of campaign materials by the candidates should be carried out in conformance with the Presidential Elections Act.

Campaigning by Political Parties and Civic Organisations on behalf of a Candidate

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

14. Civic, business and professional bodies may endorse certain candidates, and publish advertisements or issue press statements expressing their support for a candidate, provided their constitutions allow them to do so. However, they cannot be engaged to carry out any activity which is done for the purpose of promoting or procuring a candidate's election or defeat.

15. All election activities must be carried out in the name of a candidate, and all election workers must be individually authorised in writing by the candidate or his election agent from nomination day onwards. Individuals who are non-citizens are prohibited from conducting election activity and cannot be authorised.

Election Financing

16. The PE Act limits campaign expenses to 30¢ per registered voter or \$600,000 whichever is the greater.

17. Under the Political Donations Act, the only permissible donors for a presidential candidate are Singapore citizens who are 21 years or older, or a Singapore-controlled company which carries on business wholly or mainly in Singapore.

Cooling-off Period

18. A cooling-off period where all campaigning must stop will be observed on the eve of Polling Day.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

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Source: http://www.pmo.gov.sg/content/pmosite/mediacentre/pressreleases/2011/July/Campaigning_for_the_Presidential_Election.html