

## **Clan backs Tony Tan for president** **Federation of Tan Clan Associations picks him over other three Tans**

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The 10,000-strong Federation of Tan Clan Associations has thrown its weight behind former deputy prime minister Tony Tan's bid for the presidency - the first group here to publicly do so.

Secretary-general Tan Lian Ker, 80, explained yesterday that the decision to endorse him over three other aspirants with the Tan surname - Dr Tan Cheng Bock, Mr Tan Kin Lian and Mr Tan Jee Say - was due to Dr Tony Tan's association and contributions to the federation.

Dr Tony Tan, 71, has been its honorary adviser since 2006 and his professional assistance and contributions had enhanced the image of the federation and its members, he added.

Speaking to reporters after a dialogue between federation members and Dr Tan, he said it was only proper the federation back Dr Tan over the others, who are not involved in the clan's umbrella body.

He said earlier that the next elected president had to carry out his duties with decorum, be able to raise Singapore's standing internationally, unite the people, and have a deep appreciation and knowledge of the complexities behind the decisions he may have to make.

Noting that Dr Tan held key ministerial posts during his 27 years in politics till 2006, and then in the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation and Singapore Press Holdings, he said:

'In my opinion, Dr Tony Tan is the most qualified person among the six (hopefuls) for the post of president. I would strongly urge all chairmen of Tan clan associations to call on their members to support and vote for (him).'

And as former MP Tan Cheng Bock, 71, former NTUC Income chief Tan Kin Lian, 63, and former senior civil servant Tan Jee Say, 57, have no involvement with the federation, it has no plans to invite them to speak to members, he added.

The two other presidential hopefuls are former JTC Corporation group chief financial officer Andrew Kuan, 57, and private tutor Ooi Boon Ewe, 71.

The idea for a federation for the 13 Tan clan associations was mooted by philanthropist Tan Chin Tuan - Dr Tony Tan's uncle - and was set up in 2002.

At yesterday's dialogue at the Lam Soon clan building in Upper Paya Lebar Road, federation president Tan Thiam Lye, 62, wished Dr Tan success in the contest and said he hoped he would use his experience to contribute to Singapore.

Dr Tan said during the discussion with more than 100 clan representatives that he supported clan associations because they played important roles in bonding Singaporeans in good times and bad.

He told reporters afterwards that he was 'proud to be a Tan' and was very appreciative of the federation's endorsement and strong support.

He was also asked by reporters for his response to Law Minister K. Shanmugam's comments on the role and powers of the president at a forum last Friday.

Dr Tan said there were a number of serious issues raised during the forum organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.

'I would prefer to think about the points they made because I think that these are serious considerations which anybody who aspires to the position of president will have to give very serious thought to,' he said.

'It's so serious that I don't think it's good to give a quick off-the-cuff answer to these issues because they go to the very heart of what the presidency is about.'