

**Candidates Watch Campaign – Replies**  
***Tony Woon Yeow Thong***

**Question 1**

**In not more than 80 words, please provide a brief introduction about yourself and how you perceive yourself as a legal practitioner.**

I was admitted as an advocate & solicitor of the High Court of Malaya in 1990 after completing my pupillage period at Messrs Zain & Co. I then started practise as a legal assistant in a firm in Seremban practising in banking work essentially banking litigation, loan documentation and conveyancing. In 1999, I started my own firm, Messrs Woon & Co and have been practising as such till date. My practise area now are mostly in commercial and civil litigation with a small amount of work in family law, probate & administration and conveyancing. I believe in granting extension of time and adjournments to fellow lawyers and proceeding to an adjudication on merits rather than technicalities.

**Question 2**

**Which committee would you seek to chair and what are your aspirations and intentions for the said committee during your tenure? If you do not intend to chair a committee, please state your reasons for the same and tell us what do you intend to achieve during your tenure as a Council Member?**

I intend to continue to serve another term as Chairperson of NYLC. There are 3 core objectives of NYLC which are, continuation of the Putik Lada column, the Oral History project and Working Conditions of young lawyers. I also intend to allow young lawyers to determine the future direction and philosophy of NYLC through discussions at the next NYLC Convention to be held in January 2011. I would decline the Chair of NYLC if there is another more suitable candidate as I also intend to serve as Secretary of the Bar next term.

**Question 3**

**The issue of setting a term limit for members serving the Bar Council has attracted many supporters as well as detractors. Do you think that there should be a term limit for members to be in the Bar Council? Please provide reasons for your answer.**

In my view, there should not be a limit especially a short term limit on anyone serving the Bar Council. The reason for this is if a Council member were to Chair a particular committee for 2 terms and continue to Chair different committees for 2 terms each, it would mean a period of 10 years to serve on 5 different committees. Those serving especially the ones elected from the floor as well as state bar representatives should strive to Chair one of the committees. There

should, however, be a limit of perhaps 2 or 3 terms as Chair of a particular committee.

#### **Question 4**

**Based on feedback received, many Young Lawyers are leaving the profession because of perceived deteriorating working conditions at the Bar. What are your views about the working conditions that Young Lawyers are being subjected to and how would you seek to improve these conditions?**

There are a multitude of reasons leading to young lawyers leaving the profession ranging from wages, working hours, prospects, stress to suitability of the profession. This issue is one of the core objective of NYLC and an ongoing effort to help create increasingly better working conditions.

#### **Question 5**

**The Johor Bar and the Penang Bar have recently held EGMs, *inter alia*, to obtain feedback in relation to the Fast Track System implemented by the judiciary which places emphasis on a Key Performance Index (“KPI”). Has the quality of justice dispensed by the Courts suffered as a result of the KPI that has been put into place? What would you do to improve the situation?**

Whilst it is true that the implementation of KPI has lead to a deterioration in the quality of justice, it does not hold true in all cases. There are still cases where parties had benefitted in the shortest amount of time spent in the disposal of the suit. The dispensation of justice should be done in an efficient manner and in the shortest time possible but never at the expense of justice. There must be continued consultation between the Bar and the Judiciary to work towards dispensation of quality justice without too much delays.

#### **Question 6**

**Do you think the Solicitor’s Remuneration Order (SRO) has achieved the objectives it was put in place for? Do you think more should be done by the Bar Council to ensure adherence to the SRO or alternatively, should the SRO be done away with all together?**

When the SRER was implemented in 2004, there was increasing compliance with the SRO by all parties especially the banks. Such compliance seem to have dwindled in recent years and the recent High Court's decision that the SREC is invalid has certainly add a damper to compliance of the SRO. It is clear that year after year, this issue has been debated and the Bar has always mandated the Council to uphold and enforce compliance of the SRO. Members should support

the compliance of SRO by holding strong to their principles and continued education on the advantages of compliance must be provided by the Bar Council.

### **Question 7**

**What are your views on the failure of the Attorney-General to bring charges against the individuals named by the Royal Commission of Inquiry in their findings on the leaked video-clips *vis a vis* judicial appointments? What action do you propose the Bar Council take?**

The Bar Council has certainly been deliberating on this issue and steps have been taken to take the person/s involved to task. It would be best that Council does not reveal the decision undertaken so as not to allow the perpetrator/s undue advantage. Disciplinary proceedings have already commenced and the hearing for the DC has already been fixed. Hopefully DC will adjudicate in the shortest time possible.