

# **Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill**

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**Bill No: 14/1990**

***Read the first time: 12th June 1990***

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### **Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill**

**Bill No. 14/1990**

*Read the first time on 12th June 1990.*

An Act to provide for the maintenance of religious harmony and for establishing a Presidential Council for Religious Harmony and for matters connected therewith.

Be it enacted by the President with the advice and consent of the Parliament of Singapore, as follows:

## **PART I**

### **PRELIMINARY**

#### **Short title and commencement**

**1.** This Act may be cited as the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act 1990 and shall come into operation on such date as the Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, appoint.

## Interpretation

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

“Council” means the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony constituted under section 3;

“Presidential Council” means the Presidential Council for Minority Rights constituted under Part VII of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore;

“publication” includes any newsletter, journal, periodical, book, film, videotape, audio tape or any written, pictorial, aural or printed matter containing any audio or visible representation which by its images, form, shape or sound or in any other manner is capable of suggesting words or ideas, and every copy and reproduction or substantial reproduction of any publication;

“religious institution” includes a church, cathedral, chapel, sanctuary, mosque, surau, temple, synagogue or other place of worship;

“religious group” includes —

- (a) any company or other body corporate incorporated under the Companies Act [Cap. 50, 1990 Ed.] or any other written law for the purpose of promoting any religion, religious worship or dealing with religious affairs or practising, conducting, teaching or propagating any religious belief; and
- (b) any body of persons, whether or not registered as a society under the Societies Act [Cap. 311], whose object is the promotion of any religion, religious worship or the practice, conduct, teaching or propagating of any religious belief.

## PART II

### ESTABLISHMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS HARMONY

#### **Establishment of Presidential Council for Religious Harmony**

3.—(1) There shall be a Presidential Council for Religious Harmony comprising a chairman and not more than 15 other members who are either representatives of the major religions in Singapore or are persons who, in the opinion of the Presidential Council, have distinguished themselves in public service or community relations in Singapore.

(2) The chairman and every member of the Council shall be appointed by the

President, on the advice of the Presidential Council, for a period not exceeding 3 years and shall be eligible for reappointment.

(3) The President may at any time revoke the appointment of the chairman or any member of the Council and may, on the advice of the Presidential Council, appoint any person to fill any vacancy which may arise in the Council for any reason whatsoever.

### **Functions of Council**

4.—(1) The functions of the Council shall be —

- (a) to consider and report to the Minister on matters affecting the maintenance of religious harmony in Singapore which are referred to the Council by the Minister or by Parliament; and
- (b) to consider and make recommendations on orders referred to the Council by the Minister under section 11.

(2) The Council shall have the power to appoint a Secretary to the Council and such other officers as may be required to enable the Council to carry out its functions under this Act.

(3) The Council may, subject to the provisions of this Act, regulate its own procedure.

### **Validity of Council's actions**

5. The Council may transact its business notwithstanding any vacancy among its members and proceedings of and recommendations by the Council shall be valid notwithstanding any defect in the appointment of its members or that some person who was not entitled to do so took part in its proceedings.

### **Members are public servants and protected from legal action**

6.—(1) Every member or officer of the Council shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of the Penal Code [Cap. 224].

(2) Nothing done by any member or officer of the Council in the discharge of the powers and functions of the Council shall render him liable to any suit or action.

### **Secrecy**

7. The proceedings of the Council shall be secret and no member or servant thereof shall disclose or divulge to any person, other than the President or the Minister or any member of the Council, any matter which has arisen at any meeting unless he is expressly authorised to do so.