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Theme: “ Your Choice, My Future: Selecting Responsible Leaders for a Better Nation” Two significant phrases stand out in my speech which I am so much privileged to deliver. One phrase involves you, leaders “ Your choice” and the other concerning each young one, “ My Future”. Such phrases resonate critical concerns for you and I “ for a better nation”, an earnest prayer of all the people. I’m so glad for this opportunity to highlight about the challenges leaders must consider in their choices. On the other hand, may this moment awaken members specially the young ones in the selection of leaders. Mr. Webster defined “ choice” as (in its noun form) “ a variety to choose from” while, in its adjective form, it is “ of high quality, carefully selected”. May I consider on the latter, that it is; where choice is defined as, allow me to repeat, “ of high quality, carefully selected”. Friends, guests, board of judges, ladies and gentlemen, Good day! The beginning of the theme states: “ Your Choice, My Future”. The choice of the leader determines the future of the nation. That’s the first point to be underscored. Going back to the definition, choice is “ of high quality, carefully selected”.

The answer to our earnest prayer for a better nation will be spelled out by the leader who makes a “ choice”, not a “ name” or a “ position” or worse “ money”. Stated in another way, a responsible leader makes a choice, not for his selfish and greedy desires, but for my future, for a better nation. We can’t read minds and check the heart of a leader who knows to make a “ choice”. So the next point, “ what are the characteristics of a responsible leader?” is worth-answering to guide us in the selection of a leader. From Marya Axner, a contributor in the drive for “ Learning How to Become a Responsible Community Leader”, I recreated the “ I+4C’s” checklist. According to the author, one doesn’t have to be a perfect human being to be a community leader either. That’s good, since none of us are. Thus, allow me to briefly present the “ I+4C’s” that successful community leaders often have: I for integrity: To trust you, people have to know that you say what you believe and act accordingly. If people trust you, they may follow you to the ends of the earth. Let me move on the “ 4C’s” added to “ I”

First C, for Courage: It’s okay to shake your boots, but someone has to go slay that dragon, and it might as well be you. Leadership means that you show others the way through the dark, scary forest. Go ahead and speak the truth even when it’s not popular. Second C, for Commitment: You have to stick with a task through the good times and the bad. Your commitment will serve as a model. Third C, for Caring about others: People will follow you if they know you care about them and about others. The greater ability to care about all types of people, the more confidence they will have in you. Forth C, for Creativity and flexibility: Every situation will call for a different response. Be ready to change and come up with new solutions. So fellow young people, as we start dreaming for a better nation where we can enjoy a better future, let our minds record the “ I+4C’s” checklist to be played by the heart in selecting responsible leaders. That’s leaving now the big challenges as I end. Once again, friends, guests, ladies and gentlemen, becoming aware of the qualities of a responsible leader is also a responsibility you and I must consider for a better nation in the future.