

## Drug NGOs should unite to battle drug abuse: DPM

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KUALA LUMPUR. May 22, 2016. Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (2L) officiating the launch of Malaysian Substance Abuse Council (MASAC) during the National Recovery Symposium at Dynasty Hotel on May 22, 2016. — Sunpix by Zulfadhli Zaki

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has called on all anti-drugs Non-Governmental Organisations to join hands in eradicating drug abuse in the country.

Zahid, who is also the Home Minister said he is disappointed with the number of drug abusers increasing despite there being a lot of NGOs working to eradicate the problem.

"The time has come to put aside all our differences and find a common ground to tackle the problem," he said during his speech at the launch of Malaysian Substance Abuse Council (MASAC) held at Dynasty Hotel here today.

"Some of us might have expertise in one field, others might not, so this common ground would be a channel for all NGO's to focus on their main objective," he said.

Zahid added it is very important to protect the 30 million Malaysians from drugs as each and every citizen is an asset that could spur the country forward.

"The nation will be damaged if generation Y, Z and Alpha is tarnished by drug abuse. We are the nation's asset, and when a person becomes an addict, he has turned into a liability, which will then affect the society, parents, social institution as well as the nation," he said.

He added the "liabilities" would be a burden to the nation as huge effort and monies are needed to fix the problem.

Explaining, he said, when a person becomes an addict, the nation cannot utilise him/her as an asset. The government need to seek agencies such as the National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK), The Malaysian Drugs Prevention Association (Pemadam) and even MASAC to rehabilitate them.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid said the government has allocated RM2 million to MASAC which has about 7,000 members from over 60 NGOs nationwide to combat drug abuse.

MASAC also serves as a platform to better coordinate efforts to combat and prevent drug abuse. MASAC was registered in 2014 where its core business is to provide free community service such as treatment and rehabilitation.