

**Strengthen Collaboration To Fight Drug Abuse Scourge - Muhyiddin
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has called on international organisations and communities to strengthen collaboration to combat the drug abuse menace in view of its rising threats to society.

The Deputy Prime Minister said it was also paramount for international organisations and communities to continue to work together to identify and roll out collaborative mechanisms and initiatives to address the complex challenges of drug issues and abuse.

"Although much has been done, we surely need to do more. We must strengthen our resolve and aggressively reenergise our efforts to fight and eliminate drug abuse on both personal and global levels.

"Today, new and more potent drugs for abuse are being introduced. Our youths as well as the marginalised or vulnerable population remain at risk," he said in his opening address at the 24th International Federation of Non-Government Organisations for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse (IFNGO) World Conference here, today.

Muhyiddin, who chairs the Anti-drugs Cabinet Committee, said on the domestic front, the government had established strong collaboration with communities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in combating, prevention and eradication programmes.

He said in 2010 and 2011, the government allocated a total of RM6.5 million for NGOs which provided treatment and rehabilitation services as well as support for drug users.

"The relationships of government and the NGOs are closely-bonded and this has leveraged many joint-cooperation programmes in the field of treatment and rehabilitation and preventive education," he said.

He cited the Cure and Care Service Centre (CCSS) in the Chow Kit area of the city as one such collaborative efforts as the facility was funded by the government but run by an NGO, Yayasan Salam.

"The synergy has seen tremendous positive results whereby we see greater numbers of drug users in the area turning in to seek consultation and help in terms of treatment and rehabilitation, as well as referral services," he noted.

He said in the field of preventive education, the National Anti-Drugs Agency also worked closely with the National Association for Drug Prevention (Pemadam) in carrying out home-based programmes, training of volunteers to conduct drug prevention programmes as well as detecting drug users in local communities.

In conjunction with IFNGO's 30th anniversary, Muhyiddin presented Information Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Rais Yatim with an award in recognition of the latter's role and advocacy in combating drug abuse.

Rais was the IFNGO's founder and its inaugural Charter president when it was formed in 1981. A commemorative coffee table book on the IFNGO was also launched to mark the

anniversary.

In his speech earlier, Australian High Commissioner Miles Kupa said the United Nations estimated that six per cent or 250 million of the world's population consumed illicit drugs, with the illicit drug trade worldwide being estimated to be worth RM300 billion annually.

"Closer to home, we now have more than half of the world's heroin users in Asia. Consumption is also increasing in places surrounding Afghanistan like Pakistan, Iraq and Central Asia.

"To compound this problem, the Asian region contains an estimated 20 million people who use amphetamine-type stimulants including methamphetamine and ecstasy and other synthetic drugs," he said.

Currently, INFNGO has 87 registered members in 43 countries including Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Russia, Sudan, Iran, Italy and Malaysia.

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