

**Malaysia, US Ink Agreement In Preventing And Combating Serious Crime**  
**Bernama**  
**Nov 19, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is one step closer in joining the United States' Visa Waiver Programme (US VWP) after both countries today inked the agreement on enhancing cooperation in Preventing and Combating Serious Crime (PCSC).

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi witnessed the signing ceremony between the Home Ministry's Secretary General Datuk Seri Alwi Ibrahim and US Ambassador to Malaysia Joseph Yun.

Ahmad Zahid said the PCSC agreement is one of the two important documents in addition to the Homeland Security Presidential Directive No. 6 (HSPD-6) Arrangement which is a vital prerequisite for Malaysia's participation into the US VWP.

"The agreement is very important because with this HSPD-6 and PCSC fully signed, the two conditions set in the US check list are met.

"The followup action that we do is to ensure that all information we share is not imbalanced or favourable to a certain party only," he told reporters after the signing ceremony here today.

Ahmad Zahid said the HSPD-6 allows for the exchange of biographic information of known and suspected terrorist while the PCSC focus on the cooperation in detection, prevention and investigation of serious crime more effectively.

"As a result of this agreement, what we will do, among others, is to obtain 1.2 million finger prints through biometric data.

"This data will be used fully by PDRM in studying the suspect list to determine terrorists or suspected terrorists in the country and foreign terrorists suspected of using Malaysia as a transit," he said.

Ahmad Zahid and US Secretary of State Senator John Kerry have already signed the HSPD-6 arrangement on Oct 8 in Washington.

Ahmad Zahid added to date, 38 nations had already participated in the US VWP including two ASEAN member countries, Singapore and Brunei.

He said Malaysia was also in the process of meeting other related requirements concerning the admission to the US VWP.

Meanwhile, Yun said Malaysia participation in US VWP would conclude in near future after an amazing progress over the last 12 months.

"In my experience we have reached the fastest progress in visa waiver programme of any country I have been associated with," he said.

The US VWP enables Malaysians to travel to the US without visa for 90 days for tourism and business purposes.

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