

**Malaysia, Other Muslim Nations Should Be In Forefront of Global Halal Industry - Ahmad Zahid
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 14 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and other Muslim nations should be in the forefront of the global halal industry, says Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

The deputy prime minister said halal was not about one country's agenda but the concerted efforts of many nations.

"These efforts will require, among others, structured capacity building programmes and an efficient and seamless global supply chain to propel halal from its current niche into the mainstream of global economics and industry," he said.

He was launching the two-day Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries Halal Conference here today.

Ahmad Zahid said the halal industry was not confined to food but also covered services, namely finance and banking, insurance, education and training, research, certification, consultancy, logistics and healthcare, as well as travel and tours.

He hoped Malaysia and other Islamic nations would work together, including sharing ideas and knowledge, to lead in the industry.

He said Islamic nations were now lagging behind in seizing halal economy opportunities while non-Muslim international companies were now leading the industry.

"Many Islamic scholars have produced the idea of halal industry, but we are being left behind as the non-Muslim companies are grabbing the market.

"We (Muslim countries) need to be together and synchronise our efforts to be in the forefront of the halal industry," he said, stressing that a holistic approach was needed.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia's promotion of the global halal economy was an important element in its Global Movement of Moderates to subdue the Islamophobia that became worse because of the acts of certain terrorist groups.

He said Malaysia's determination to promote the halal industry "went far beyond the commercial aspect", adding the halal industry could project Islam to the global community as the religion that advocated peace.

"With the rising of the Muslim population around the world up to 1.8 billion people, we are not trying to show our supremacy.

"We want to share with the world our halal products...It is also about the global market penetration of the halal industry," said the deputy prime minister.

Also present were Science, Technology and Innovation Deputy Minister Datuk Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah, International Trade and Industry Deputy Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan and Deputy Minister in The Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki.

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