

## **Zahid Challenges Malaysians To Write Award-winning Books**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today challenged Malaysians to write books that can draw international acclaim and even win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

The Deputy Prime Minister said scholars, academics and writers should come up with quality works.

Writers of fiction, for example, should forge collaboration with film producers to bring out films and telenovelas of international quality, he said at the 2015 National Book Award and Scholars appreciation ceremony here.

"Produce works that enthrall the international community and, at the same time, to win the Nobel Prize. We as Malaysians, regardless of race, ideology, culture and religion, will feel proud to be a Malaysian nation," he said.

The event, organised by the National Book Development Foundation, was also attended by Ahmad Zahid's wife Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis and foundation chairman Hasan Hamzah.

Ahmad Zahid said writers still saw a small market for books without venturing into other fields such as adaptation into films to draw greater attention of the people.

For example, he said, the Harry Potter novels brought to the silver screen became a box office hit and commanded a greater audience.

"We are still in a cocoon ... perhaps we feel we are too small to project our works onto the international arena and to make them into films for a global audience," he said.

Ahmad Zahid also called on Malaysian film-makers to produce films from the works of writers in the country.

At the event, he launched the Telenovela Award which will feature as a new category in the National Book Awards 2016.

The National Book Awards aims to reward and recognise the contribution of resources behind the book industry and to provide a boost for the production of high quality works.

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