

**National security essential to sustaining food security, says Ahmad Zahid**  
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*Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi equates food security with national security.*

"We have seen too many cases where when a country collapses, food is unavailable simple because the national security is comprised," he said, emphasising that that prerequisite to sustaining food security was national security.

Ahmad Zahid was opening the 33rd Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, in Putrajaya.

Saying that national security was a matter close to his heart as the Home Minister, he said production of food would not be feasible if a country was war-stricken.

He said he was committed to ensuring that national as well as regional security and stability were strengthened and maintained.

"Only then can our food security agenda become a reality," he said.

Ahmad Zahid also said that three approaches to ensuring food security and food sovereignty in the region.

These were stimulating private sector investment in agriculture, addressing climate change issues with sustainable agriculture and reducing poverty by utilising biodiversity, he said.

"I firmly believe that these three approaches can further spur the region to better development," he said, adding that he hoped there would be active discussion on the subject for the benefit of member countries.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia was one of the 72 countries worldwide that had achieved the Millennium Development Goals-1 (MDG-1) target to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

In 2014, he said, Malaysia was among the 13 countries which received FAO recognition for outstanding progress in fighting hunger, ahead of the end of 2015 MDG deadline.

"However, we did not stop there," he said, adding that the government continued to address the issue of poverty through the National Economic Policy that was implemented via the five-year Economic Development Plan.

Drawing the audience's attention to the fact that one-third of food produced worldwide was wasted yearly, Ahmad Zahid called on the UN member states to

support the initiative by FAO to reduce food wastage and help minimise the carbon footprint due to excessive food production.

At the event, Ahmad Zahid also launched the MySaveFood campaign, a global initiative to reduce food waste.

The five-day conference, being held at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre since March 7, is hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry and attended by delegates from 46 Asia-Pacific countries. – Bernama, March 10, 2016.

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