

**Government Concerned About Drug Abuse among School Children - Ahmad Zahid  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 25 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today expressed the government's concern over the abuse of drugs among school children.

"Drug traffickers are now using students to become addicts so that the drug market can be lucrative," he said at a press conference after chairing the Cabinet Committee on Eradication of Drugs in Parliament Building here Tuesday.

He also referred to a study conducted by the Education Ministry involving 35,755 respondents, comprising students from Form One to Six which found 1,457 of them took drugs.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, said 74 per cent of them took methamphetamine, 20 per cent cannabis and the rest other types of drugs.

According to him, the study also found that Form Five students recorded the highest percentage of students taking drugs at 40.6 per cent, followed by Form Four (32.5 per cent), Form Three (19.8 per cent), Form Two (5.4 per cent) and Form One (0.08 per cent).

"Of this total, Kedah had the highest number of students who tried drugs (274), followed by Kelantan (197), Perak (180) and the remainder the other states," said Ahmad Zahid.

He said that among the suggestions made at the meeting was to take steps to liquidate the confiscated assets of drug traffickers who have been sentenced by the courts.

"We confiscate the assets and property, and we apply to the court to liquidate and cash in the assets, and the proceeds of the sales can be used in prevention and rehabilitation," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said the meeting also approved the proposal to set up a Special Laboratory for the Testing of Dangerous Drugs at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital.

On the proposal to set up a special court for drug-related cases, he said this had already been done, thus accelerating the trial and judgement process of the courts.

Ahmad Zahid said the ministry would also continue efforts to strengthen existing measures by the National Anti-Drugs Agency, the Narcotics Criminal Investigation Department, Health Ministry and Malaysian Royal Customs Department as well as the Anti-Drug Association of Malaysian (Pemadam) to be more effective.

"We will meet in 30 days (for this meeting). I do not want to see the decisions made only on paper anymore, they must be translated into operations and follow-up action," he said.

He also urged all parties, including parents to cooperate in fighting drugs and not leaves the job to

drug enforcement and rehabilitation agencies.

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