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'I've always cooperated closely with KKMM Minister on 5G' – Tengku Zafrul

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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 10 (Bernama) – The single 5G network or Single Wholesale Network (SWN) concept has been discussed between the Finance Ministry (MoF) and the Communications and Multimedia Ministry (KKMM) in Cabinet since 2019.

Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz said the concept was proposed by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in the Final Report on the Allocation of Spectrum Bands for Mobile Broadband Service in Malaysia published at that time.

He said the report proposed the formation of a single entity by a 5G consortium comprising telecommunication companies (telcos) compared with awarding the 5G spectrums individually.

However, due to the difference in interests among the telcos, the effort to share networks, save costs and launch 5G did not materialise as hoped.

"All this time, MoF has been in close cooperation with KKMM and its agency SKMM in every effort to enhance the

digital connectivity in Malaysia.

"I have always discussed with the KKMM minister, past and present, and I will continue to work closely with the KKMM minister to ensure that the country's digital economy thrives," he said in his latest social media post.

Tengku Zafrul was clarifying a statement by Deputy Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Zahidi Zainul Abidin in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday that there was no consultation with KKMM on the appointment of Digital Nasional Bhd (DNB) to undertake the deployment of the 5G network and infrastructure via the SWN model.

He claimed that KKMM was also aware that a special purpose vehicle wholly owned by the government would be appointed to implement a single 5G network infrastructure nationwide.

On March 1, 2021, MoF announced the formation of DNB to manage the 5G SWN based on the cost recovery model rather than a profit maximisation model.

"The cost recovery model took priority so the 5G network implementation could be accelerated at a low cost. It will ensure reasonable 5G usage cost for the people and businesses.

"The supply-driven model is also important to ensure 5G services can be enjoyed by those living in rural areas," he explained.

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