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## Gov't set to implement national ID in October

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The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is hopeful that the government can implement the country's national identification (ID) system by October this year.

In a briefing, Budget Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said yesterday that Congress is expected to pass a law next week that would govern the national ID system for Filipinos and foreigners residing in the country.

The proposed national ID has already been sponsored in the Senate, while its corresponding house version has been approved by the lower chamber on third and final reading in September last year.

Diokno now said the deliberations in the Senate should commence this week.

Once the proposed measure is passed into law, it will establish a single national identification system referred to as the "Philippine Identification System" or the "PhilSys," covering all Filipino citizens and resident aliens of the country.

"The unified system would promote seamless delivery of service, improve the efficiency, transparency, and targeted delivery of public and social services, and enhance administrative governance," Diokno said.

The budget chief believes the national ID is expected to reduce corruption, curtail bureaucratic red tape, avert fraudulent transactions and misrepresentations, strengthen financial inclusion, as well as promote ease of doing business.

"Consequently, every Filipino and resident alien of the country shall be identified through the use of a unique and permanent PhilSys Number (PSN), which is randomly generated," the DBM chief said.

"It shall be the standard number assigned to each individual to be incorporated in all identification systems of government agencies," he added.

The DBM has allocated P2 billion for the initial implementation of the national ID this year.

Currently, the most harmonized identification system that the Philippines has is the Unified Multi-purpose ID or UMID, which is issued to the members of several government owned entities.

These state-run companies are the Social Security System (SSS), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth), and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund).

However, Diokno said the UMID only covers less than 20 percent of the population since the start of its implementation and enrollment process in 2010.

"Hence, the UMID is not enough to solve the inconvenience and unnecessary and costly redundancies of multiple government ID systems," Diokno said.

The budget chief, meanwhile, assured that people's privacy will not be compromised once the bill is passed into law.

Diokno said that indiscriminate data collection may pose risks to individual privacy, admitting "privacy remains to be one of the main concerns surrounding the establishment of a national ID system."

"As such, data to be collected by the Philippine Registry for the national ID shall be limited to demographic information such as: a) Name; b) Sex; c) Date of Birth; d) Place of Birth; and e) Address," Diokno said.

Other information such as Mobile Number and E-mail address of the cardholder are optional, he said.

Also, Biometrics information to be collected include facial image, full set of fingerprints, iris scan and if necessary, other identifiable features of an individual as may be determined.

PHILSYS CARD SYSTEM