



PS Julius Bitok addressing the media in the company of religious leaders on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Image: HANDOUT

The piloting of the digital ID is set to begin after the government gazetted the regulations to anchor a new personal registration system.

The new card to be known as Maisha Digital Card also received a major boost after religious leaders endorsed it and pledged to support public sensitisation on its rollout.

In a Special Gazette dated October 25, 2023, Interior Cabinet Secretary Kithure Kindiki amended the Registration of Persons Regulations to provide for an electronic card and an electronic register.

The Regulations also allow the use of facial features to complement fingerprints for personal identification.

The amended regulations also officially recognize the Unique Personal Identifier (UPI) that will be issued at birth and that will be a lifelong identification number for each Kenyan.



preparedness for the adoption of digital ID.

“We intend to have the piloting act as a guide on what we need to do right. We want to make sure that this time, we get it right in view of the frustrations that have plagued previous attempts to introduce a digital ID.”

He said public participation and stakeholders’ engagement forums will continue across the country.

So far, 698 forums involving among others, the civil society, the private sector, media, development partners and National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs), have been held.

The meeting was attended by the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops(KCCB), the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) and the Hindu Council of Kenya (HCK) among others.

Bishop Philip Kitoto, the Chairman of EAK, said digital ID was a reality that Kenya needed to embrace but urged the government to address relevant concerns including the security of personal data related to registration.

“As a country, we have to align with global trends and address concerns related to the security of registration documents. But equally important is the assurance that personal data is secure and that it will not fall into the wrong hands.”

While supporting the proposed registration system, Pastor Samuel Makori of the Seventh Day Adventist Church urged the government to avoid duplication and waste of resources.

“The government is doing the right thing and we will fully support it. But we want an assurance that we will not be undertaking a similar exercise whenever a new administration comes in place.”

Sujaatha Raju of the HCK and Malkiat Singh of the Sikh Union also expressed support for the digital ID saying it will make it easier for citizens to access government services.



“We have done a data protection impact assessment which was not done in previous projects. We have submitted a data protection impact assessment report to the Data Commissioner to ensure the process follows the law.”

He said the government was keen to avoid the challenges that beset HudumaNamba and other previous attempts to introduce digital ID in the country.

“We are going to enhance our national security because the new Maisha Namba card is tamper-proof. With your phone, you can also apply for your Maisha Digital ID and access online services easily. We want to ensure the entire government leverages technology for service delivery.”

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