

Nilekani takes over as head of India's Unique Identification Authority

Global News Centre for Microfinance: July 23, 2009

Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani took over as head of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIAI) on Thursday with a mandate to create a national database of identity details of citizens.

The task ahead of Nilekani is to provide a unique identification card to every citizen of India. This card will contain all details like the name, sex, address, marital status, photo, identification mark and finger biometrics by 2011. It can be used as a voter I-card or as a proof for opening a bank account and to get benefits under numerous welfare schemes like NREGS, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Food Security Act or get access to bank loans or microfinance, especially for the rural and urban poor.

Nilekani also said Ram Sevak Sharma, a 1978 batch Jharkhand cadre IAS officer, will take over as Secretary and CEO of the organisation and the first set of database will be ready in 12 to 18 months time as announced by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in his budget speech.

Nilekani was appointed as head of UIAI on July 13 and is expected to take few more weeks to get a team together to carry out the task.