

At their meeting in Washington today World Bank president Jim Yong Kim made a proposal to President Toomas Hendrik Ilves that the Estonian head of state take up the post of co-director of the steering group on the World Development Report. The most influential of the reports published by the World Bank, the next edition – entitled 'The Internet and Development' – is due to be released in 2016.

"Estonia's e-solutions not only set an example to the rest of Europe, but have drawn attention to themselves all over the world," President Ilves said. "In that sense, the invitation to co-direct the steering group on the World Development Report is a mark of recognition first and foremost for Estonia."

The head of state added that Estonia's e-solutions have been helping other countries for many years. "We've had a hand in setting up the e-governance systems of quite a number of countries, offering them a free technical platform," he explained. "And now we have the chance to offer them even broader support at both the technological and intellectual levels."

The World Bank regularly publishes policy-shaping documents, the most influential of which is the World Development Report, which defines development policy thinking and makes recommendations in a number of areas. The report is of assistance to developing countries, the World Bank, the UN, regional development agencies and international organisations.

Preparations for the 2016 report, which will focus on the Internet and development, will now begin under the leadership of President Ilves and World Bank chief economist Kaushik Basu. It will take in both the public and private sectors, with a focus on best practice. The report plans to shine the spotlight on Estonia as a successful state of e-governance and e-services, showcasing its technical solutions – including secure online ID, the X-Road and digital signatures – which form the basis of democracy and transparency. The document will include recommendations on the kinds of information technology solutions developing countries could implement and development agencies finance.

The World Bank Group is an international organisation whose aim is primarily to reduce poverty and improve people's standard of living. To this end it offers countries with low and average incomes loans, strategic advice, technical support and shared experience.

As a highly developed country, Estonia is supporting the operations of the World Bank Group and the publication of the 2016 report, guided by the country's development cooperation strategy for 2011-2015, one of the priorities of which is supporting areas that promote the more widespread implementation of information and communication technology.

While in Washington President Ilves also met with World Bank chief economist Kaushik Basu, with whom he will now be co-directing the work of the steering group, and gave a presentation on the digital society and Estonia's e-solutions to senior specialists from the organisation.

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