

In Washington in May of this year, the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, asked the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to become a co-leader of the Advisory Panel of the World Bank Report. At the invitation of the Estonian Head of State, the members of the Panel gathered in Tallinn today. The influential World Bank report will be completed by 2016 and bears the title of "Internet and Development".

The meeting brought the following persons to our capital city today: Chief Economist of the World Bank, Kaushik Basu; former Prime and Foreign Minister of Sweden, Carl Bildt, spokesperson of Chilean technology industry, Yessica Cartajena; information technology expert from Ghana, Dorothy Gordon; Professor Richard Heeks; information technology expert Monica Kerretts-Makau; lecturer of Beijing University, Feng Lu; spokesperson for the IT sector of India, Narayana Murthy; and Google representative Nicklas Lundblad.

The 2016 World Development Report, "Internet and Development", is being prepared under the joint leadership of President Ilves and the Chief Economist of the World Bank, Kaushik Basu, and it will focus on best practices within both the private and public sectors. The report serves to analyse trends and give examples from different countries, including the e-services offered in Estonia, thereby introducing our technical solutions – secure online-identity and X-Road (e-Estonia), which are the corner stones for our democracy and transparency – to a larger audience.

According to President Ilves, it is very important that the World Bank has chosen Internet as the keynote topic for the World Development Report, as this will change general ideas about the functioning of economy and society. "An openness to technology and innovation may become the key to the development of a country, as Estonia's experiences have shown," he added. According to the Head of State, the opportunity to co-lead the Advisory Panel of the World Bank's World Development Report primarily represents for him an opportunity to introduce the solutions and rationale adopted by Estonia.

The World Bank issues policy development documents on a regular basis, the most influential being the World Development Report, which defines development policy mentalities and gives recommendations in different spheres. The report is a supporting document for developing countries, the World Bank, the United Nations, regional development agencies and international organisations. The document includes recommendations about information technology solutions that developing countries could implement and that the development agencies should fund.

The World Bank Group is an international organisation pursuing goals that primarily aim to reduce poverty and enhance the living standard of people; loans, strategic counselling, technical assistance and the sharing of experiences are offered to low and average income countries for that purpose.

Estonia, being a highly developed country, supports the efforts of the World Bank and the preparation of the 2016 report, in line with the country's development strategy for 2011–2015, in which supporting spheres that promote more extensive application of information and communication technology is set as one of the goals.

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