

Yesterday in Washington, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is the co-chair of the World Bank's World Development Report advisory panel, led the discussion on the preparation of the World Bank's most influential report next year, Internet and Development, together with World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu.

"This will be a manual for developing countries on how to move forward in a contemporary, rapid and successful way," President Ilves said characterising the report that the World Bank's World Development Report advisory panel refined yesterday, and which will be ready in January 2016. "A digital gap still exists in the world. Billions of people have no access to the Internet and owning a mobile phone does not ensure that people have a good Internet connection. The purpose of the report is to help make sure that the opportunities of the digital age spread throughout the world as quickly as possible and that inequality is reduced."

The report examines how supporting information technology can impact on economic growth and the efficiency of the public sector; why it has been successful in some countries and not in others; what changes need to be made in legislation, the education system and institutions; and how to influence society in order for it to be receptive and open to change.

The main target group of the report is the policymakers and government officials of developing countries, international organisations and developmental aid agencies, as well as the representatives of the private sector, academic circles and civil society associations.

"There are also a series of exacting recommendations that people should consider when assisting developing countries, so that our help and support can truly be directed at the future and not flounder in yesterday's solutions," said President Ilves. "These recommendations are also useful and relevant for policymakers in developed countries, including Europe and Estonia, because the report focuses on topics such as economic growth, employment and services in the Internet age."

The World Bank's Development Report called "Internet and Development" is being prepared under the joint leadership of President Ilves and World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu, and it encompasses both the private and public sectors. It includes lessons based on the failures and successes of various countries related to information technology. By introducing Estonia's e-services, our technical solutions, such as our secure online identity and X-Road, are

being introduced, which form the basis for democracy and transparency. And more broadly, Estonia's way of thinking is also introduced, i.e. that open technology and innovation can be key to a country's development.

On the working visit to the United States, which started on 16 April and ended today, the Estonian Head of State visited the influential think tank, the Atlantic Council, in Washington, and spoke about the significantly altered security situation in the Baltic region at a closed working lunch organised by CEPA, the Center for European Policy Analysis, which is focused on research related to Central and Eastern Europe. Since December, President Ilves has been a member of the international CEPA Advisory Council.

President Ilves also appeared for the 11th time at a conference organised by JBANC, the Joint Baltic American National Committee, and at the Wilson Center, one of the top ten think tanks in the world, where, based on the example of Estonia, he spoke about the impact of a free and secure Internet on the economic progress of country.

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