

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, introduced the development and experience of Estonian e-governance in New York, where he emphasised that having an internet connection available to as many people as possible is merely a technical solution; serious digital development requires serious work in shaping governance, legislation and education.

Yesterday, the Estonian Head of State met in New York with the e-governance team of the Global Economic Forum, which is responsible for preparing a report that introduces digital governance options; Estonia's success story in the implementation of e-governance holds a central place in the report. President Ilves gave a TV interview at the forum where he encouraged all countries to contribute smartly to the digital future, with awareness and commitment, and he expressed his concern for the digital bottleneck of the European Union. "If the European Union fails to continue with rapid digital development, we will become a beautiful museum for the United States of America, India and China, who will leave us behind," warned President Ilves.

Today, the Estonian Head of State gave the opening address at Columbia University in New York at a conference on information technology and development aid; in his speech, he introduced the World Bank's World Development Report, which was compiled under his co-leadership. According to President Ilves, the extensive development report presents Estonia as an example of success in that Estonia has demonstrated how various technical solutions can be the basis for democracy and transparency, and can support rapid economic development. The Estonian Head of State emphasised that simply having an internet connection is not enough to reap the fruits of digital development; most of the work needs to be done at the level of government, legislation and education.

The World Bank's development reports focus on various issues each year and these command a high position in the top ten most 'downloaded' research reports from year to year. This year's report, Digital Dividends, has already reached the highest online-viewing and downloading numbers, which reach tens of thousands.

Apart from President Ilves, representatives of Google, Microsoft and the UN delivered presentations at the Columbia University conference.

Office of the President
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