

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met today with Sir John Holmes, the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met today with Sir John Holmes, the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The alternatives of the UN and its member states for mitigating the most acute crisis, such as those in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, were discussed at the meeting. Sir John Holmes emphasised the UN's appreciation of Estonia's contribution, which has been both palpable and visible over the last years.

When discussing development aid and humanitarian aid as a whole, President Ilves stressed that this form of aid must be well devised and focused as accurately as possible. "In a world suffering from recession, characterised by a scarce supply of free assets, any form of assistance must be as rational as possible. Quite often, we should consider the liberalisation of economic relations instead of a mere increasing of aid, which is more complicated politically, yet would render better results," stated the President of the Republic.

The Estonian Head of State thanked Sir Holmes for leading UN humanitarian aid reform and added that the seminar, conducted today in Tallinn by the OCHA (Office for the Co-ordination of Human Affairs) to raise awareness of new and potential humanitarian aid donors, serves as one of the examples of Estonia's fine co-operation with the OCHA.

The conference entitled "Humanitarian Partnership Forum for Emerging European Donors" is being organised by the Estonian Foreign Ministry in co-operation with the Finnish Foreign Ministry and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The seminar, in Tallinn, is a part of OCHA's 2009 annual spring regional seminar for the ODSG (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Donor Support Group). Donors, participating in the seminar, will discuss the development and co-ordination of the UN humanitarian aid system, with a focus on strengthening UN humanitarian aid policies and increasing financial support.

Office of the President  
Public Relations Department  
Phone +372 631 6229