



WORLD BANK GROUP



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF ESTONIA TO THE UN**



Save the Date

A High-Level panel discussion

Development in the Digital Age

**Co-hosted by the President of the WORLD BANK, Dr. Jim Yong Kim
The President of ESTONIA, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves
The Secretary of State of the USA, Mr. John F. Kerry (TBC)**

Moderator:

Richard Samans, Head of the Centre for the Global Agenda, Member of the Managing Board, World Economic Forum

High level speakers:

Chief Economist of the WORLD BANK, Mr. Kaushik Basu

DATE: Sunday, 27 September 2015, 11.00-13.00

LOCATION: UN HQ, CR 3, New York

Space is limited, please RSVP to tmadsen@mfa.ee by 22 September.

(Please indicate if you do NOT have the UN badge)

**For further information: Kristel Lõuk, kristel.louk@mfa.ee, +1 212 883 0640
See the concept note enclosed**

CONCEPT NOTE, DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A High-Level panel discussion co-hosted by Estonia, the USA and the World Bank Group

Background

Over the last two decades, digital technologies have had a profound impact on social and economic development. No other major technology has reached so many people in such a short time. Today, more people in developing countries have access to a mobile phone than to electricity or clean water. The various benefits of the digital revolution are undeniable—easier communication, greater access to information, and new forms of leisure, to name a few. In the developing world the focus is gradually shifting to generating the broader benefits typically associated with technology—higher economic growth, more jobs and better public services.

A discussion on how to make digital technologies a more effective force for development is timely, in light of the UN Summit on Post-2015 Development Agenda and after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is also useful to consider whether and how digital technologies can accelerate the process of attaining these goals. The forthcoming World Development Report 2016: *Digital Dividends*, to be launched in January 2016, provides many useful facts and analysis to anchor this discussion.

In this context, the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the United States, and the World Bank will co-host a High-Level Side Event, Development in the Digital Age, on September 27, 2015.

About

The discussion will focus on two policy areas that improve the impact of digital technologies on development. First, to promote policy and regulatory environments that will make the Internet more accessible, affordable, open and safe. Second, how to make digital technologies a more effective force for development and whether and how digital technologies can accelerate the process of attaining these goals.

Ninety percent of people without access to the Internet live in the developing world. Bridging the digital divide between and within countries—across borders, gender, income and age—is essential in the emerging digital economy. Along with better connectivity, the Digital Revolution has opened up new possibilities for disadvantaged and excluded groups. However, these technologies have also brought a new set of challenges, such as cybersecurity, maintaining an open Internet, and protecting users' privacy. The panel discussion will address various private sector initiatives as well as government actions. For example the U.S. State Department's soon to be launched new diplomatic initiative, to help catalyse public-private partnerships to close the global digital divide. It will also explore the policy priorities for the global community to create an open and trusted environment in the digital world.

Over the last decade, digital technologies have been a source of significant economic growth and net job creation, as well as an important force for transparency and accountability around the world. Although significant progress has been made with respect to expanding access and in turn benefits, additional efforts on the part of all stakeholders are needed to connect the unconnected. The panel discussion will explore the policy options to amplify the development impact of digital technologies. In doing so, it will survey the experience of countries with strong track records on digital development such as Estonia, or aspiring such as Rwanda or Tanzania and draw policy lessons for other countries.

Format

The format will be a panel discussion. Following the introduction by the Moderator, each Speaker will make an introductory statement followed by a moderated discussion, in which the Speakers would also answer the questions raised from the floor.

Time, Date, and Location. 27 September 2015, 11.00-13.00, UN HQ, conference room 3