



12. September 2018

Rede anlässlich des Intelligent Health Summit 2018 in Basel (Englisch)

Von Regierungsrat Baschi Dürr

Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of the City of Basel, I am delighted to welcome you here today. I am pleased that you have chosen Basel as the venue for your conference. This region, located at the point where three countries – Switzerland, Germany, and France – meet, is perfectly positioned to host an event such as yours.

We are honoured to have you as our guests during the «Intelligent Health» summit. In Basel, we are proud of our university, which is the oldest university in Switzerland. It was founded in 1460 and included, from its very beginning, a medical faculty. Today, we are home to the leading pharmaceutical companies Roche and Novartis, as well as numerous small and medium-sized life science companies. You won't find another small city with such innovative power anywhere else in the world.

Beyond the life sciences, this also applies to innovation in general: Not least as a nationally leading and internationally renowned cultural location – from the world's oldest art museum to the 'Theatre of the Year' in the German-speaking countries and a flourishing creative economy. Our open society provides fruit for thoughts that creates the breeding ground for progress and innovation in all areas. This vibrant atmosphere inspires researchers from all over the world who live and work here.

Healthcare is one of the major global megatrends, both in input and in output. The more numerous, the richer, the older mankind becomes – and it will on many continents – the more the demand for more and better medicine will increase. Over the last 150 years, we have come impressively far, and yet medical progress continues, at some levels faster than ever before.

Even though I once worked for Roche, I am not an expert – probably the only non-expert in the room! But I have no doubt that the personalised, the digitised, or: the Intelligent Health, will continue to be the big driver today and, to an even greater extent, tomorrow. We are also familiar with this from other areas in the private or public sectors. I myself am responsible for security and the police in Basel – and here too the big question is: How can we generate more data and what can we learn from this data? Incidentally, this question is not completely new when we think of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which was founded as early as 1947.

Big Data is the magic word. But a lot of data alone is useless. It takes intelligence to evaluate, to understand, and to eventually bring about results. The volume of data is increasing at an unprecedented speed. If our intelligence only grows by half along with it, the potential for progress, especially medical progress, is still enormous!

Intelligent Health is, I presume, about cooperation. Times are long since past when a single researcher could make the big breakthrough in a lonely laboratory. It requires teams, networking amongst companies and between industry and academia. Summits like today's are necessary to drive this innovation forward. Here, experts from various disciplines exchange ideas and come up with new ideas so that they can later take further development steps in their laboratories and offices.

Intelligent Health is also – for sure! – about money. As we all know, healthcare innovations are expensive, often very expensive. In the first phase, they are generally more costly than existing remedies. New products, techniques, and therapies therefore drive up healthcare costs in the first place. But measures will exist in future, when doctors will not only rely on clinical diagnoses but also consider the fundamental biology of their patients to assess the likelihood of a patient responding to a certain therapy before treatment has even started. And that will save on healthcare costs. And the price of these novel products will determine who is going to profit from these savings. I hope that this will include every stakeholder on board – both in the public and the private sectors.

And finally, Intelligent Health is – in spite of computers – about caring and curing. The human being is still at the centre. The relationship of trust between patients and doctors remains an important factor in the treatment of diseases. No algorithm can offer this feeling of security. Although robotics are also becoming increasingly important in the operating theatre, the 3D printer of tomorrow will not be capable of generating the doctor as a consultant and the nurse at the patient's bedside. This we shall never forget.

So, ladies and gentlemen, even though you are not going to found a medical CIA today, I hope that from this summit you will take home decisive new impetus for your vital work.

Thank you for your attention! Have a great summit, and have a pleasant stay and an inspiring time in our city!