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Academic Medicine Must Take Responsibility for Global Health

World Health Convention in Geneva from May 17-21, 2010.

Prof. Dr. Detlev Ganten, President of the World Health Summit and Chairman of the Foundation Board of the Charité Foundation, on the occasion of the Geneva World Health Convention which began today, called for a stronger commitment of university medicine. "We need to see our research activities in a more global context", said Prof. Dr. Ganten.

"Medicine and health care will fundamentally change in the next twenty years. According to this development, doctors and scientists need to feel responsible for placing economical and ethical aspects of public health on the political agenda", says Prof. Dr. Detlev Ganten. He was suggesting a basic reconsideration of international health care systems and the practical side of public health.

In 2009, the deans of eight prestigious medical universities joined together to form the M8 Alliance (M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centres and Medical Universities), then recently met again in April 2010 at the Charité Universitätsmedizin.

The purpose of the meeting was to prepare the second World Health Summit, which will take place in October 2010 in Berlin.

"We can only cope with the challenges of the future if we co-operate internationally on all levels of medical research, prevention and treatment as well as in the field of training health professionals", explained Karl Max Einhäupl, Chairman of the Charité.

The M8 Alliance sees academic medicine in a key role concerning the solution of national and global health questions. They not only consider themselves a think tank but also as pioneers of borderless, multinational co-operation. A close collaboration of academic health, science and politics is necessary in the fields of establishing medical research capacity in Africa, globalization of doctor training, and new approaches to training for health professionals specializing in health supply in structurally weak regions.

Collaboration with the respective national governments is a matter of particular concern for the M8 Alliance. Prof. Dr. Stephen K. Smith, Principal of the Faculty of Medicine of Imperial College London and Co-President of the 2010 World Health Summit, emphasized the importance of academic health care centers and medical universities as the backbone of international health care systems: "They achieve maximum efficiency in health care, train doctors and researchers of future generations and are economic strongholds in their respective countries. The pharmaceutical industry as well as manufacturers of medical devices depend on the research of these scientists".

The World Health Summit 2010 takes place from October 10-13 in Berlin.

www.worldhealthsummit.org

www.m8alliance.org

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