

Honorable Minister, dear Secretary, distinguished guests,

It is my great pleasure to be here today for the inaugural of BioAsia2020. I am proud that Switzerland, for the first time, is the official partner country of this important platform. My thanks go to the Government of Telangana and to the organizers of BioAsia 2020 for the invitation.

After three and a half years in India, I must admit that this is my first visit to Hyderabad. Yesterday, I stole some time to visit the old city's splendid cultural heritage and taste the famous local Biryani. But, of course, Biryani is not the reason why we are here today.

If I am here today, with a delegation of startups, scientists, and innovators, it is because Hyderabad has emerged as one of India's leading innovation hubs. And I wish to convey to you three key messages:

Message number one: yes, Switzerland is proud of Roger Federer and the beautiful alpine scenes in Bollywood movies. But my country is more than that. Switzerland is an innovation and science powerhouse that is looking to engage with India. Various rankings have placed

Switzerland as the most innovative country worldwide. In total, we invest 3.4% of our GDP into R&D, most of which comes from the pharma and life sciences sector. But we wouldn't be one of the most innovative countries, if it wasn't for the very vibrant ecosystem composed of world-leading universities and innovative startups, some of which are here with us and are looking to engage with you. India is one of the priority countries for Switzerland when it comes to innovation and science. Hence, since 2010, we are present in India with swissnex, which is one of Switzerland's five innovation Consulates around the world. The swissnex team has been coaching startups, facilitating a number of research partnerships and scouting for new technologies ever since. Please do reach out to swissnex to find out more about their activities.

My second message: impactful innovation in healthcare requires global collaboration and public-private partnerships. Diseases such as Ebola, the Zika virus, and the ongoing novel coronavirus outbreak are recurring reminders of the threat posed by such endemics. Complex challenges such as Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) require a comprehensive understanding as well as international and public-private partnerships. For instance, my colleagues from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are looking into the effects of manufacturing practices of the pharma sector and AMR on the environment. Contacts have already been established with Indian pharma

companies, as well as the State governments of Telangana and Karnataka, in order to identify partners interested in implementing good practices in sustainable antibiotics production in India. Those of you interested in learning more about this initiative are welcome to reach out to the team of SDC.

Let me conclude with my third and last message: innovation, science and technology form a key pillar of Indo-Swiss business relations, which we are striving to make even stronger. Over 150 Indian companies across various sectors, such as life sciences, ICT and analytics, use Switzerland as a base for their European operations. The last two years have witnessed an interest from companies engaged in emerging technology areas such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and Fintech. Hence, Switzerland has consistently been among the top 10 investment destinations for Indian companies over the last 10 years. Likewise, Switzerland is the 11th largest investor in India and counts over 250 companies with operations in this country. To support these efforts, I am here with a strong Swiss team from the Swiss Business Hub India, which is your contact point for all questions related to investments and trade.

I look forward to seeing the network of innovators and the exchange of ideas between our two countries grow even stronger. The first

opportunity is tomorrow morning, at 9.30 AM, at our Indo-Swiss Healthtech Breakfast. If you are interested, please contact any staff member of swissnex.

Thank you for your attention and thanks again to the Government of Telangana for making possible this fruitful partnership.