In medicine time can make all the difference between life and death. Obviously in emergencies every second counts. In research, however, developing new and effective approaches to combating disease is bound to take some time. But even here it is clear that the faster new scientific findings translate into practical applications, the sooner suffering can be relieved and lives saved. So in research, too, every day counts.

Cooperation is a crucial way of saving valuable time. In Germany we are establishing new research centres for six common diseases that will allow us to pool expertise and speed up the process of translating research results into standard treatments. In the treatment of neglected diseases and the diseases of poverty, too, cooperation is key to achieving rapid progress. Only if researchers, policy-makers, business and civil society work together at international level can we expect solutions that really work. Cooperation needs mutual trust and understanding. I am therefore delighted that the World Health Summit in Berlin has proved to be an ideal venue for international dialogue in this field. The motto of this year’s conference, “Today’s Science – Tomorrow’s Agenda”, highlights the seminal role of research in achieving medical advances. It reminds us, too, that shared insights and responsibility must be followed by prompt action.

I wish the World Health Summit 2011 participants and organizers a very productive conference and a host of stimulating discussions and encounters.

Dr. Angela Merkel
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany