

Welcome address - *Global Forum 2012 Shaping the future*
Chris Heister, County Governor of Stockholm

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first give you a warm welcome to Stockholm!

I am very glad that the conference *Global Forum 2012 Shaping the future* is held here in Stockholm. Not the least because the topics of this two day conference and the issues which are being discussed are getting increasingly important. This is obvious in Europe, as well as in the Stockholm region, where digital development is seen as a major possibility to foster competitiveness.

Seeing so many of you here today is also inspiring because I think that working with digital development needs the engagement and involvement of all sectors of society - from private to public. Together we can use the potential of ICT for business, for creating efficient public services and an inclusive society where ICT can be used to ease life for citizens in their communication with government agencies, with health care institutions and in their professional lives. ICT solutions have an almost unlimited range of application, and it is valuable that authorities contribute by releasing data which can be utilized by entrepreneurs to develop prosperous ideas, later used by people in their everyday life. Phone applications for planning travels with public transport is a perfect example of this.

For Stockholm, ICT is also important for the development of all parts of our region. It can and will contribute to reducing the importance of geographical distances for companies and entrepreneurs in rural areas and at the same time it will enhance possibilities for cooperation and for doing business.

The Stockholm region is a successful region in terms of competitiveness and innovation capacity - conditions important to foster digital development. One third of the Swedish GDP is created within the region and Stockholm accounts for one fourth of the total labor market in Sweden. It is a dynamic region with a fast growing population, and also a population active in the development of the region. Only in 2011- 24 000 new businesses were started here.

The Stockholm region is furthermore ranked as the most knowledge intensive region outside the US and the region has 19 institutions of higher education, among them the three leading universities Stockholm University, The KTH Royal Institute of Technology and the Karolinska Institute, the latter ranked as one of the absolute top medical universities in Europe.

Moreover, there are a number of strong research institutions and internationally competitive clusters in the region. Life science, Cleantech and, not the least, ICT are all very important sectors for research and business development. The region resides Kista Science City - one of the world's leading ICT clusters, which is currently home to more than 1 000 IT and telecommunications companies, 6 800 university students and over 1000 researchers in the field.

But as any other region, The Stockholm region face major challenges - globalization, an ageing population and climate change are among the most significant ones. The increased global competition calls for collaboration on the international, as well as on the national and regional level. I would therefore like to highlight the newly adopted regional innovation strategy of the Stockholm region setting out the goal for the region to be the most innovation driven economy in 2025. In order to achieve this, the most influent stakeholders, policy

makers and the universities have launched a strategy for the future. A number of action plans are to be implemented on – for instance – Research and Innovation infrastructure, Innovation procurement and Reinforcing the cross sector approach, to mention a few. With focus on these areas we set out to lay a solid foundation for the business community to renew itself and to develop. ICT is one major cornerstone in this development.

I would like to wish you a successful conference with many interesting discussions and I do hope that you will have some time to enjoy the beautiful city of Stockholm.

Thank you.