

Acceptance Speech by Professor  
**Joris Andre Veltman**  
2016 Co-Winner of the King Faisal International Prize  
For Medicine

38<sup>th</sup> KFIP Awards Ceremony  
Wednesday 23/03/2016 (14/06/1437H.)

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques  
King Salman Bin Abdulaziz,  
Your Highnesses,  
Your Eminences,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests.

It is an enormous honor for me to have been awarded the 2016 King Faisal International Prize for Medicine together with my colleague Professor Han Brunner. I want to thank the King Faisal Foundation and the selection committee for recognizing our efforts in bringing genomics to the clinic, and all of our colleagues involved in this process.

This is a most exciting time for human geneticists. Genomics technologies now allow us for the first time to study the entire genome of a person in a reliable and affordable manner. This results in a rapid accumulation of knowledge about the biology underlying health and disease. In addition, it allows us to apply genomics in the clinic, first and foremost for disorders with a strong genetic component. We can now provide accurate information about the genetic causes of disease to individual patients and families. This allows them to learn about the prognosis and possible therapeutic options for their particular disorder, identify family members at risk and make reproductive choices.

In spite of this advancement, knowledge about our genome is still very limited. We still live in the dark ages of genomics and are only just starting to read genomes and understand their language. International sharing of genomic and clinical data in a responsible and respectful

manner will be essential to learn from the information contained in our DNA and realize the promises of personalized medicine for all of mankind. It is a privilege and pleasure to take part in this genomics journey together with all friends and colleagues around the world. Together, there are many important discoveries to be made and useful applications to be developed. Receiving this distinguished award motivates me even more to contribute to the bright future genomic medicine. Thank you again!