

General Prize Committee, Fellow Scientists, Prize Winners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you so much for awarding me the Albert Einstein World Award of Science. When I got the news, I could not believe it. I am so proud and honored.

I see the award as a great acknowledgment of the scientific fields of ancient human genomics, pathogen genomics, and environmental DNA - fields that I have spent my entire career on.

These fields are revolutionizing the way we understand ourselves as humans and the world surrounding us. Through this research, we have learned that our species has been mobile as far back as we can track human history and that the world we know today, with populations located in specific geographical regions, is, for the most part, very recent. We, as humans, are all closely related and share a common past and history, something we should not forget in times of conflict.

We have also learned that disease outbreaks, like the one we faced recently, go much further back in time than previously thought and have shaped our demography and genetics both historically and prehistorically.

We have learned that although humans have impacted the environment for tens of thousands of years, so has climate, likely to a much larger extent. Nature has responded to these climatic changes of the past, making it possible for us, through science, to understand how climatic adaptations take place and ultimately allowing us to mitigate some of the effects of global warming. The latter part is in its infancy, but I hold great hope that past environmental genomics will provide some of the solutions to the climate change threat, for example, in relation to food security, although it is important to remember that one approach can never stand alone when facing global disruption.

It is important for me to emphasize that research is seldom, if ever, done by a single person, and that the discoveries that helped me obtain this prestigious award are the collaborative effort of many people. I would particularly like to thank my past and present colleagues at GeoGenetics, the GLOBE Institute at the University of Copenhagen, my colleagues at the University of Cambridge in the UK, and my colleagues at MARUM in Bremen. Without them, none of this would have been possible. I would also like to thank my collaborators in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and across the US. I would like to thank my funders, particularly the Danish National Research Foundation, The Lundbeck Foundation, the Carlsberg Foundation, the Novo Nordisk Foundation, Frederik Paulsen, and the Wellcome Trust, who have shown trust in me and my group at GeoGenetics for many years. I would also like to thank the indigenous communities around the world that I have collaborated with, which has been a life changing experience for me. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Ulrikke, and our two sons, Rasken and Bror, for being patient with me when I have been absorbed by my science.

Thank you again for giving me and my collaborators the great honor of receiving this prestigious prize for our work.