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Merck Foundation meets the First Lady of Guinea to plan the launch of programs

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Merck Foundation had appointed The First Lady of Guinea as the Ambassador of 'Merck More Than a Mother' campaign in 2017.



Merck Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Merck KGaA Germany met The First Lady of Guinea to plan the launch of their programs and initiatives in the country. The meeting was held between The First Lady of Guinea, H.E. Madam DJENE CONDE and Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation.

The First Lady of Guinea, H.E. Madam DJENE CONDE and Ambassador of Merck More Than a Mother emphasized, “Guinea is all set to welcome the programs of Merck Foundation. These programs are going to be very beneficial for our people and their social and economic well-being. Merck Foundation will help us build healthcare capacity and break the stigma of infertility in the country.”

Merck Foundation had appointed The First Lady of Guinea as the Ambassador of Merck More Than a Mother in 2017.

Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation and President, Merck More Than a Mother explained, “I am happy to work closely with Her Excellency First Lady of Guinea. We acknowledge her great efforts as “Merck More Than a Mother” Ambassador to empower infertile women in the country. With the launch of our programs, we will underscore our long -term partnership to build healthcare capacity and train doctors in the fields of Cancer Care, Fertility, and Diabetes care.”

Merck Foundation will be working closely with the Office of First Lady to support the establishment of first-ever public IVF center in the country by providing technical advice and training to medical and paramedical staff.

Merck Foundation also plans to introduce other unique initiatives in the country to get the desired culture shift with regard to the stigma related to infertility.

“Few initiatives include announcing the Merck more than a Mother Media Recognition Award and Media Health Training in partnership with The First Lady of Guinea together with Ministry Health and Ministry of Communication & Information. Creating songs and movies in partnership with local artists to address the stigma related to infertility and educate people across the country. Also, involving fashion industry to deliver the message of breaking the stigma of infertile women to the community in day to day life which will be achieved by organizing ‘Merck More Than a Mother’ Fashion Awards,” explained Dr. Rasha Kelej.

“Another innovative initiative is to launch an inspiring cartoon storybook for children to empower our boys at elementary level, to develop true respect for women and teach them family values of love and respect and few facts about Infertility, prevention and how it affects both men and women equally,” Dr. Rasha Kelej added.

Merck Foundation has provided clinical training on fertility specialty in the past two years and will continue this program in partnership with the ministry of health to improve access to quality and equitable fertility care in the country.

Merck Foundation will also continue enrolling doctors from Guinea in their two-year oncology fellowship program and master degree as a contribution to improve cancer care in the country.

Merck foundation will also continue to enrol doctors for their Diabetes Blue Points Project.

About Merck Oncology Fellowship Program

The Merck Oncology Fellowship Program, a key initiative of Merck Cancer Access Program, focuses on building additional capacity through medical education and training. The lack of financial means is not the only challenge in Africa and developing countries, but a scarcity of trained health care personnel capable to tackle the prevention, early diagnosis and management of cancer at all levels of the health care systems is even a bigger challenge.

Merck Oncology Fellowship Program focuses on building professional cancer care capacity with the aim to increase the limited number of oncologists in Africa and Developing countries. The program provides a One-year fellowship program at Tata Memorial Centre - India, One and half-years Oncology Fellowship programs at University of Malaya - Malaysia, Two years Oncology Fellowship Program at University of Nairobi - Kenya and Two years Master degree in Medical, Surgical, Pediatric and Radiation Oncology at Cairo University - Egypt, in partnership with African Ministries of Health, Local Governments and Academia.

Launched in 2016, over 43 candidates from more than 21 African countries have rolled in the Merck Oncology Fellowship Program. The program will continue to build cancer care capability in African countries such as Botswana, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.