

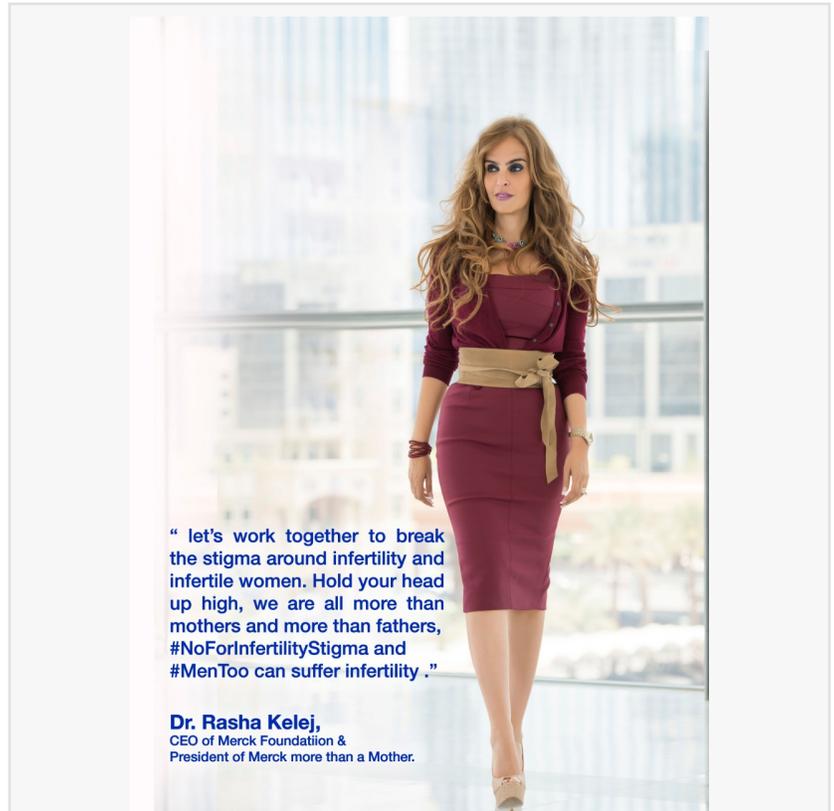
# Merck Foundation marks International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

NAIROBI, KENYA, November 26, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Merck Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Merck Germany, marks today the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and also marks the start of the "16 Days of Activism" that precedes Human Rights Day on December 10 each year.

Through their "Merck more than a Mother" campaign, Merck Foundation wishes to empower infertile women against all sorts of discrimination, abuse and psychological & physical violence due to their inability to bear children.

"Together with our partners and our ambassadors, we can create a culture shift to sensitize all communities to respect women whether they are mothers or not. Women are more than Mothers, this is what we stand for. No for violence against women and #NoForInfertilityStigma. Merck Foundation marks the International Day for Elimination of Domestic Violence against Women today and every day as part of our daily activities to empower infertile women through access to information, health, change of mindset and economic empowerment so that they can be independent and stronger" emphasizes Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation and President of Merck more than a Mother.

Watch the story of Merck Foundation CEO visit to Jackline Mwendu, the victim of infertility stigma. She was abused and accused of being unable to bear a child. Although she was not the one with the infertility problem – it was her husband. Yet he refused to get treated and abused her. He chopped off both her hands trying to kill her. Merck Foundation empowered and helped her to start her new life, new home and a new supermarket to lead a good life. She became the "Merck more than a



Message from Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation & President, Merck More than a Mother



Mother” heroine.

<https://youtu.be/dRog-3nROx4>

<https://youtu.be/yR4525kFFIk>

Merck More Than a Mother’ campaign;

In many cultures, childless women suffer discrimination, stigma, and ostracism. Their inability to have children results in great isolation, disinheritance, and assaults. “Merck More Than a Mother” empowers such women through the access to information, health, change of mindsets and economic empowerment.

As part of this Campaign, we started “Empowering Berna” project in Africa to help childless and infertile women starting their own business and thus achieve financial independence and become stronger and happier. The project has benefited more than 1,000 women across the continent.



Also, part of the campaign is our Merck Embryology & Fertility Training Program, a three-month hands-on practical course to establish the platform of fertility specialists across Africa and Asia.

Merck Foundation provided for more than 84 candidates, three months to six months clinical and practical training for fertility specialists and embryologists in more than 29 countries across Africa and Asia such as: Chad, Niger, Central African Republic, Cote D'Ivoire , Ghana, Ethiopia , Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania , Zambia , Nigeria, Benin, Mali, Burkina Fuso, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cameroon, Rwanda, Botswana, DR Congo , Congo Brazzaville, Gambia ,Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Cambodia.

Merck Foundation is making history in many African countries where they never had fertility specialists or specialized fertility clinics before ‘Merck More Than a Mother’ intervention, to train the first fertility specialists such as; in Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Gambia, Niger, Chad, and Guinea.

Merck Foundation plan supported the establishment of the first public IVF centers in Ethiopia and Uganda through providing the clinical and practical training necessary for their staff. Merck Foundation also plans to support the establishment of the first public IVF in Tanzania soon.

“Merck more than a Mother” launched in 2015, is a program of the Merck Foundation, the foundation drives many of our initiatives and programs in the area of build health care and research capacity and improves access to equitable healthcare solutions.

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