

# Merck Foundation CEO together with The First Lady of Central African Republic meets 100 infertile women

BANGUI, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, December 6, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Merck Foundation CEO, Dr. Rasha Kelej together with H.E. MADAM BRIGITTE TOUADERA, The First Lady of Central African Republic – C.A.R. & Merck more than a Mother Ambassador, conducted a special meeting with more than 100 infertile women who have been enrolled in the “Empowering Berna” to establish small businesses for them.

“Empowering Berna” is special project part of Merck more than a Mother campaign initiated by Merck Foundation for underprivileged infertile women who can no longer be treated, to establish small businesses and train them to be able to generate steady monthly income.

H.E. MADAM BRIGITTE TOUADERA, The First Lady of Central African Republic & Merck more than a Mother Ambassador emphasized “It is great initiative by Merck Foundation to empower our women by improving their access to information, knowledge and through capacity building to start their own business. Thus, they will be independent and lead a respectable life. This way they can comprehend their rights, roles and responsibilities and be more than mothers.”

Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation & President Merck More than A Mother emphasized, “It is very important to empower infertile women by providing treatment so they can bear children as part of their human rights. But for those who cannot be treated anymore, our initiative ‘Empowering Berna’ will help to train them to establish their own small business so that they can be independent and re-build their own lives. We truly believe that a woman is a lot more than just a mother. We should also encourage men to speak up about their infertility and support their wives. We will also help young couple to find proper access to fertility care by providing training to fertility specialists as we did for oncologists and diabetes specialists. Our vision is to establish a strong platform of health specialists in the country and the rest of Africa”.

Merck Foundation also underscored their commitment to build healthcare capacity in the country. During the committee meeting, many new programs were finalized and launched in partnership with the Ministry of Health of C.A.R.



H.E. MADAM BRIGITTE TOUADERA, The First Lady of Central African Republic, Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation & President, Merck More Than a Mother and Dr Pierre Somse ,Minister of Health and Population C.A.R. addressing the group of infertile women

Merck foundation acknowledged and awarded the First Lady of Central African Republic for her efforts as “Merck more than a Mother” Ambassador in Central African Republic.

Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation & President Merck More than A Mother, together with H.E. MADAM BRIGITTE TOUADERA, The First Lady of Central African Republic & Merck more than a Mother Ambassador pledged to support more childless women through Merck more than a Mother campaign. In partnership with the First Lady and ministry of health, Merck foundation will also provide clinical training on fertility specialty to improve access to quality and equitable fertility care in the country.

Merck Foundation has discussed with the H.E. President of Central African Republic, H.E. FAUSTIN-ARCHANGE TOUADÉRA, their long term partnership to build healthcare capacity in the country which he strongly endorsed and supported.

Merck Foundation also approved a list of candidates to be enrolled in their one and two year oncology fellowship program as a contribution to improve cancer care in the country. Moreover, they will also provide on-line diabetes diplomas in French for Doctors from C.A.R as well as cardiovascular preventive medicines fellowship in Asia.

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



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H.E. MADAM BRIGITTE TOUADERA, The First Lady of Central African Republic and Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation & President, Merck More Than a Mother during their special meeting with more than 100 infertile women

the aim to increase the limited number of oncologists in Africa and Developing countries. The program provides 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 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, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

About '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, Cameron, 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.

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