

Merck Foundation partners with First Lady Guinea to build healthcare capacity & break infertility stigma in the country

CONAKRY, GUINEA, June 15, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Merck Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Merck KGaA Germany in partnership with The First Lady of Guinea, H.E. DJENE CONDÉ and Ministry of Health AND Ministry of Information & Communication launched their programs to build equitable healthcare capacity and break the infertility stigma in the country.

H.E. DJENE CONDÉ, The First Lady of Guinea and Ambassador of Merck More Than a Mother emphasized, "I have been an Ambassador of "Merck More than a Mother" since 2017 with aim to empower infertile women and build fertility care capacity in the country. I am happy to welcome Merck Foundation to officially launch their programs which are going to be very beneficial for our nation. Their innovative initiatives will improve access to equitable healthcare solutions and will help to break the stigma of infertility across the country".



Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation and President, Merck More Than a Mother with The First Lady of Guinea, H.E. DJENE CONDÉ with Hon'ble Minister of Health of Guinea, Dr. Edouard Nyankoye Lamah during their visit to the first ever fertility centre in

Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation and President, Merck More Than a Mother explained, "We are very happy to underscore our long term commitment to build healthcare capacity in Guinea. We are also very proud to acknowledge the great efforts of The First Lady Of Guinea as 'Merck More a Than a Mother' Ambassador. We are going to work closely with her to raise awareness about infertility prevention, male infertility and define interventions to break infertility stigma. Moreover, we will continue to build healthcare capacity in the country by providing training to Guinean doctors in the fields of Fertility, Diabetes and Cancer Care."

Merck Foundation will also be working closely with the Office of First Lady to support the establishment of first ever public IVF centre 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 create the desired culture shift with regard to breaking the stigma around infertility.

"Few initiatives include announcing the Merck more than a Mother Media Recognition Award and Media Health Training for the first time in the country in partnership with The First Lady of Guinea together with Ministry Health and Ministry of Communication & Information. Moreover,

creating songs in partnership with local artists to address the stigma related to infertility and educate people across the country.

Merck foundation will also launch a cartoon story to educate children family values of love and respect and sensitize them about the great values of women since young ages. In addition to 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.

Moreover, Merck foundation has provided clinical training on fertility specialty in the past two years and will continue this program in partnership with 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 one year oncology fellowship program as a contribution to improve cancer care in the country.

Merck foundation will also continue to enroll doctors in Diabetes diploma in French as part of their Diabetes Blue Points Project.

About 'Merck More Than a Mother' campaign;

"Merck More Than a Mother" initiative aims to empower infertile women through access to information, education and health and by changing mind-sets. This powerful initiative supports governments in defining policies to enhance access to regulated, safe and effective fertility care. It defines interventions to break the stigma around infertile women and raises awareness about infertility prevention and management. In partnership with academia, ministries of health and international fertility societies, the initiative also provides medical education and training for healthcare providers and embryologists to build and advance fertility care capacity in Africa and developing countries.



Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation and President, Merck More Than a Mother with The First Lady of Guinea, H.E. DJENE CONDÉ



Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation and President, Merck More Than a Mother with The First Lady of Guinea, H.E. DJENE CONDÉ during the launch of Merck Foundation activities in Guinea

With “Merck More than a mother”, we have initiated a cultural shift to de-stigmatize infertility on all levels: By improving awareness, training the skills of local experts, building advocacy in cooperation with decision makers and by supporting childless women in starting their own small business. It’s all about giving every woman the respect and the help she deserves to live a fulfilling life, with or without a child.

The Ambassadors of “Merck More Than a Mother” are: H.E. NEO JANE MASISI, The First Lady of Botswana; H.E DENISE NKURUNZIZA, The First Lady of Burundi; H.E. BRIGITTE TOUADERA, The First Lady of Central African Republic; H.E. HINDA DEBY ITNO, The First Lady of Chad; H.E. ANTOINETTE SASSOU-NGUESSO, The First Lady of Congo; H.E. REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO, The First Lady of Ghana; H.E. FATOUMATTA BAH-BARROW, The First Lady of The Gambia; H.E. CONDÉ DJENE, The First Lady of Guinea Conakry; H.E. CLAR WEAH, The First Lady of Republic of Liberia; H.E. PROFESSOR GERTRUDE MUTHARIKA, The First Lady of Malawi; H.E. MARIAM MINT AHMAD TEKBER, The First lady of the Mauritania; H.E. DR. ISAURA FERRÃO NYUSI, The First Lady of Mozambique; H.E AÏSSATA ISSOUFOU MAHAMADO, The First Lady of Niger; H.E FATIMA MAADA, The First Lady of Sierra Leone; H.E. AUXILLIA MNANGAGW, The First Lady of Zimbabwe; H.E. ESTHER LUNGU, The First Lady of Zambia.

Also, part of the campaign is our Merck Embryology & Fertility Training Program, a three-month hands-on practical course in partnership with IRSI, Indonesia, IIRRH, India and Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Manipal University), India to establish the platform of fertility specialists across Africa and developing countries. Merck Foundation provided for more than 109 candidates, in clinical and practical training for fertility specialists and embryologists in more than 30 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.

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