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Merck Foundation commits to improve cancer care in Africa

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Dr. RashaKelej, CEO of Merck Foundation meets the First Ladies of Gambia, Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe



Merck Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Merck KGaA Germany continues their long term commitment to improve access to cancer care and to build capacity through their Merck Access Program in Africa.

Dr. RashaKelej, CEO of Merck Foundation met the First Lady of Gambia, H.E. Fatoumattah Bah-Barrow, First Lady of Lesotho, H.E. MaesiahThabane, First Lady of Botswana, H.E. Neo Masisi and First Lady of Zimbabwe, H.E. AuxilliaMnangagwa to discuss Merck Cancer Access Program and Merck Foundation long term partnership to build capacity in their countries in the fields of cancer, fertility and diabetes.

“We are committed to lead Africa to a better future through changing the landscape of Cancer care in the continent. Our meeting today was an effort in the same direction. Merck Foundation has been actively working to realize our vision and achieve our objectives of building professional capacity with the aim to increase the limited number of oncologists in more than 17 African countries. We will now strengthen our efforts in more countries,” emphasized Dr. RashaKelej.

So far, more than 30 candidates from Niger, Chad, Guinea, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Liberia, Botswana, South Africa, Gambia, Senegal, Zambia, Namibia, Mauritius and Ghana have been enrolled in the one year and two year Oncology Fellowship Program in partnership with African ministries of health and First Ladies offices to be conducted in the University of Nairobi, Kenya, Tata Memorial Centre, India, University of Malaya, Malaysia, and Cairo University, Egypt.

Merck Cancer Access Program builds cancer care capacity, supports the implementation and development of specialized healthcare solutions and is augmented by community awareness campaigns to contribute to the reduction of cancer incidences and improve survival rates.

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. Therefore, Merck Foundation has conducted the 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.