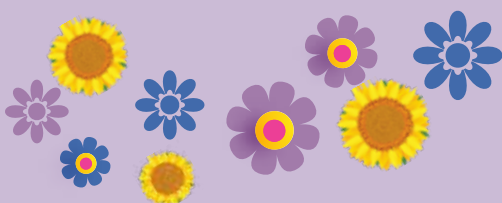




Merck More Than A Mother



Merck More Than A Mother Ambassadors

The First Ladies of: Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Niger, Central African Republic, Ghana, Liberia, Congo Brazzaville, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, in the middle (Merck Foundation CEO), and the Former First Ladies of: Mauritania, Malawi and Burundi

NO TO Infertility Stigma



Women are More Than Mothers
Men are More Than Fathers
No to Infertility Stigma



H.E. Mrs. NEO JANE MASISI
The First Lady of the Republic of Botswana
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



No to infertility Stigma



H.E. Mrs. NEO JANE MASISI
The First Lady of the Republic of Botswana
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador





**La Fertilité est une
Responsabilité
Partagée**



S.E. MADAME ANGELINE NDAYISHIMIYE
La Première Dame du Burundi
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



**Les Femmes sont
Plus Que des Mères
Les Hommes sont
Plus Que des Pères**

S.E. MADAME ANGELINE NDAYISHIMIYE
La Première Dame du Burundi
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



SOYEZ PLUS FORT ENSEMBLE
**L'infertilité affecte autant
les hommes que les femmes**



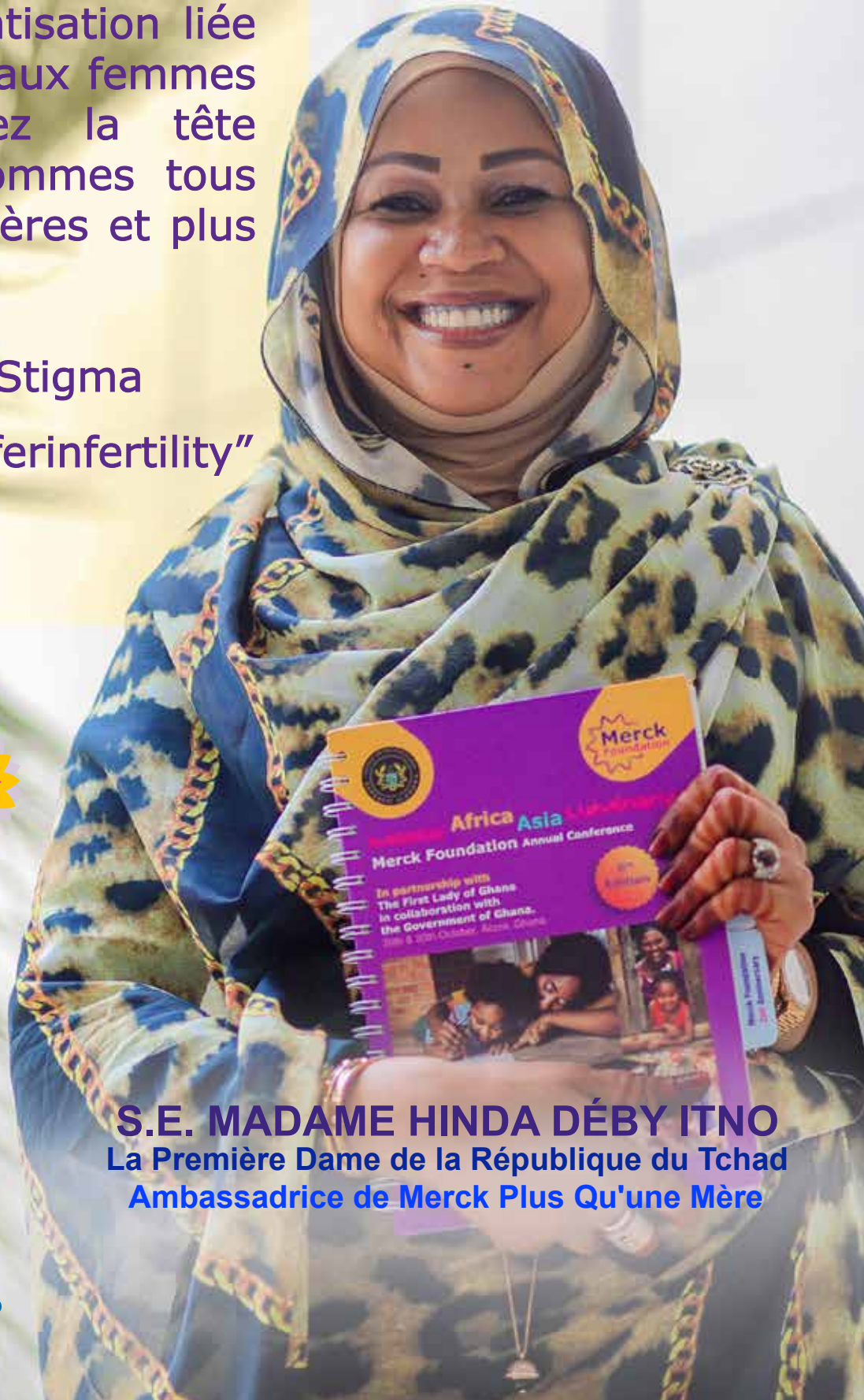
S.E. MADAME HINDA DÉBY ITNO
La Première Dame de la République du Tchad
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



“Travaillons ensemble pour briser la stigmatisation liée à l'infertilité et aux femmes infertiles. Tenez la tête haute, nous sommes tous plus que des mères et plus que des pères.

#NoToInfertilityStigma

#MenToocansufferinfertility”



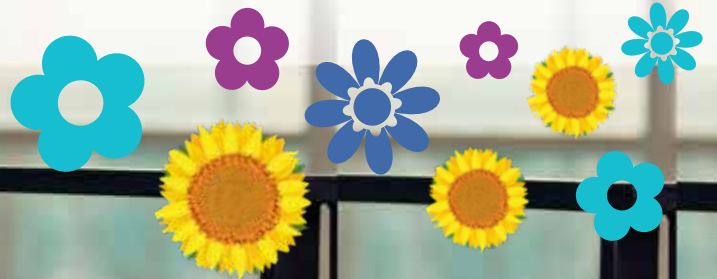
S.E. MADAME HINDA DÉBY ITNO
La Première Dame de la République du Tchad
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



Non à la stigmatisation liée à l'infertilité

**Il faut un Homme et une Femme
pour avoir un enfant**

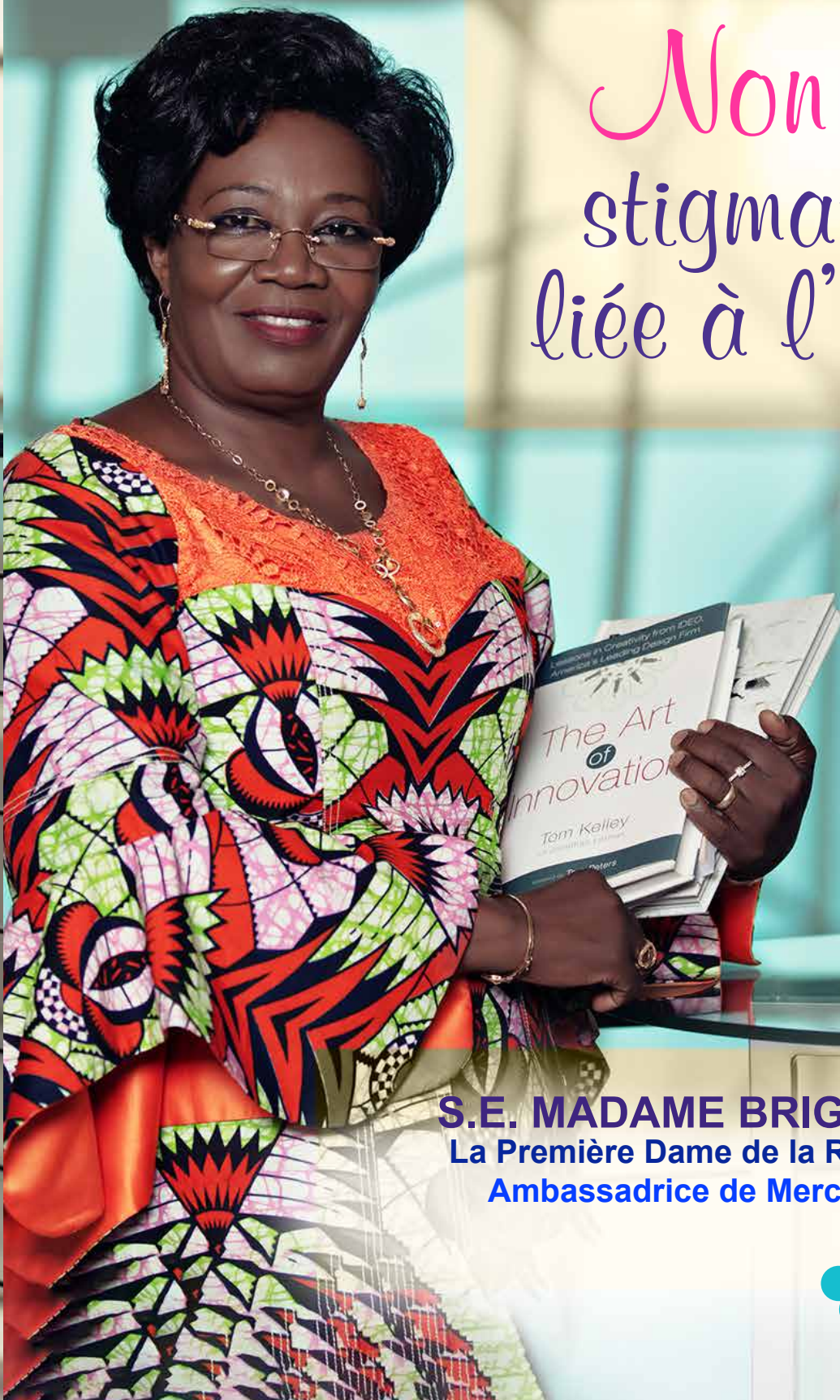
**La Fertilité est
une Responsabilité Partagée**



S.E. MADAME BRIGITTE TOUADERA
La Première Dame de la République Centrafricaine
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



Non à la stigmatisation liée à l'infertilité



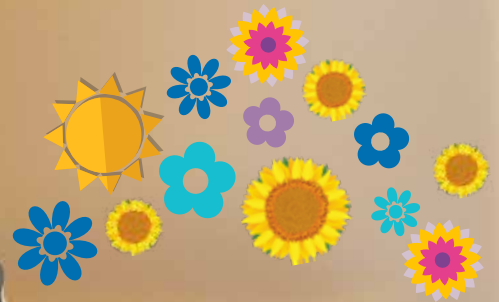
S.E. MADAME BRIGITTE TOUADERA
La Première Dame de la République Centrafricaine
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



**Non à la Stigmatisation
liée à l'infertilité**

**Faites-vous dépister
avec votre femme
et soutenez-la
pendant le traitement**

**L'infertilité affecte
autant les hommes
que les femmes**



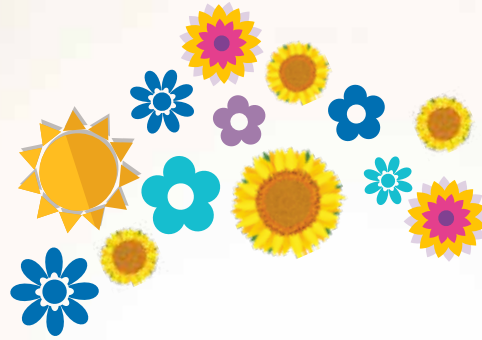
S.E. MADAME DENISE NYAKERU TSHISEKEDI
La Première Dame de la République Démocratique du Congo
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



Les Femmes sont
Plus Que des Mères
Les Hommes sont
Plus Que des Pères

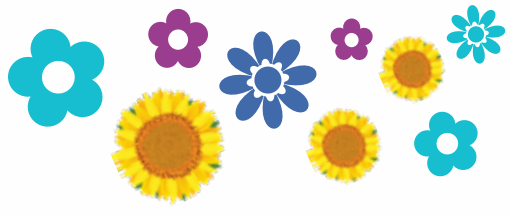


S.E. MADAME DENISE NYAKERU TSHISEKEDI
La Première Dame de la République Démocratique du Congo
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



Fertility is a Shared Responsibility

H.E. Mrs. FATOUMATTA BAH-BARROW
The First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador

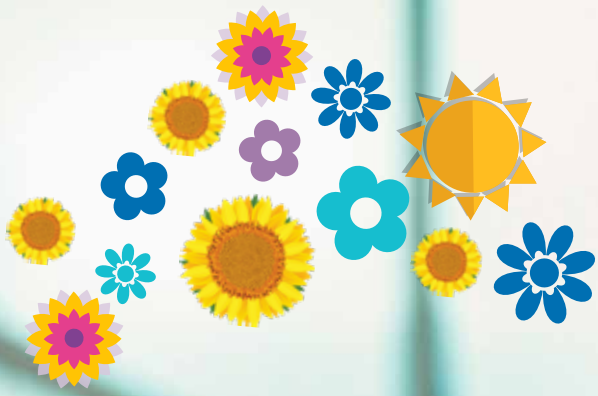


BE STRONGER TOGETHER
Infertility affects
Men and Women equally.



H.E. Mrs. FATOUMATTA BAH-BARROW
The First Lady of the Republic of The Gambia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador





No to Infertility Stigma

Get tested with your wife and support her during treatment.

Infertility affects
Men and Women equally.



H.E. Mrs. REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO
The First Lady of the Republic of Ghana
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



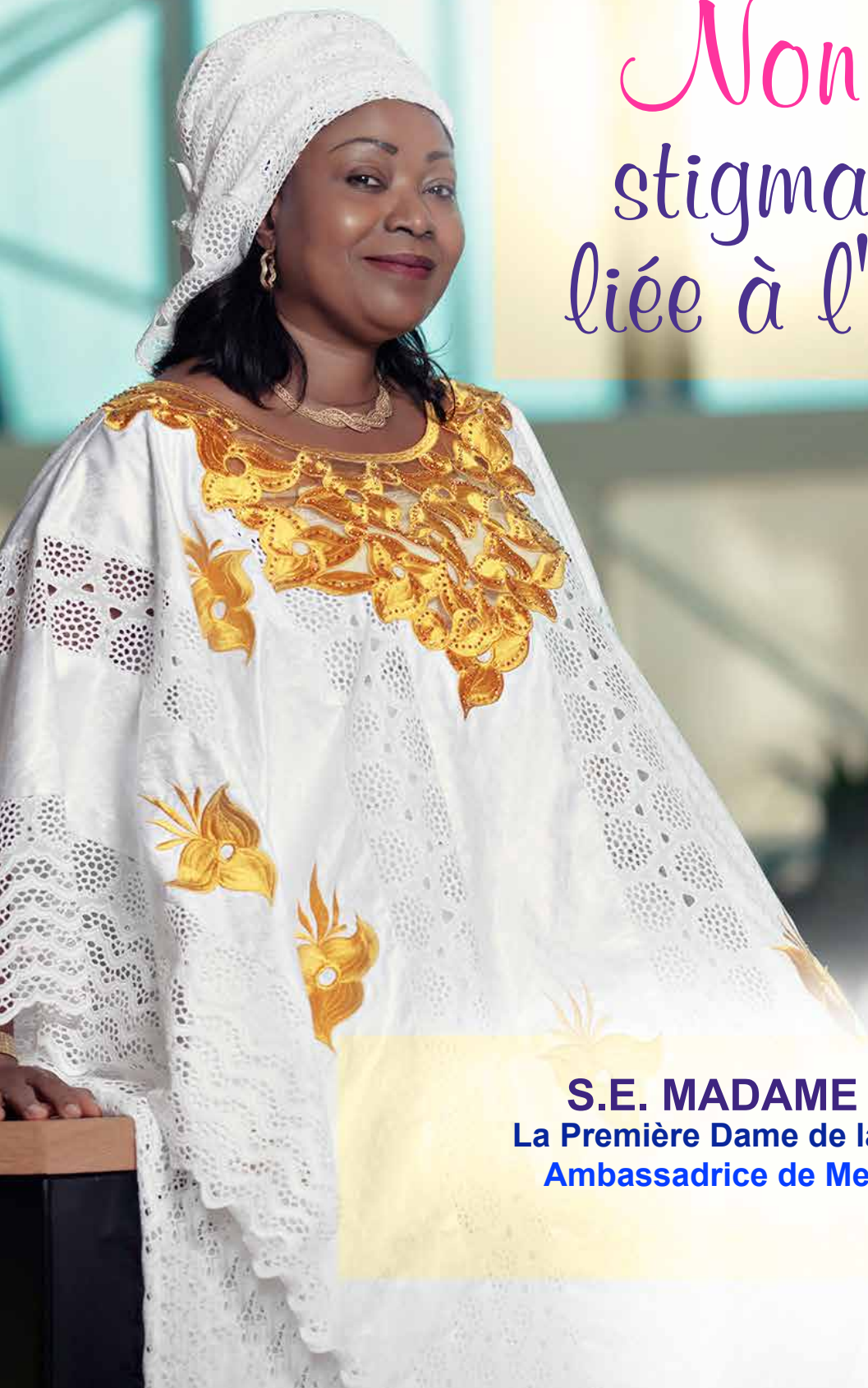
**Women are more
than Mothers
Men are more
than Fathers**



H.E. Mrs. REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO
The First Lady of the Republic of Ghana
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



*Non à la
stigmatisation
liée à l'infertilité*



S.E. MADAME DJÈNÈ CONDÉ
La Première Dame de la République de Guinée
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère

La Fertilité est une
Responsabilité
Partagée



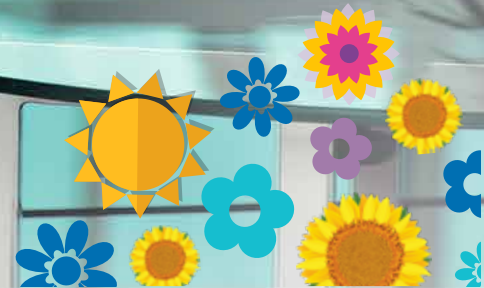
S.E. MADAME DJÈNÈ CONDÉ
La Première Dame de la République de Guinée
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère





"Let's work together to break the stigma around infertility and infertile women. Hold your head up high, we are all more than mothers and more than fathers.

#NoToInfertilityStigma
#MenToocansufferinfertility"



H.E. Mrs. CLAR MARIE WEAH
The First Lady of the Republic of Liberia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



Fertility is a Shared Responsibility

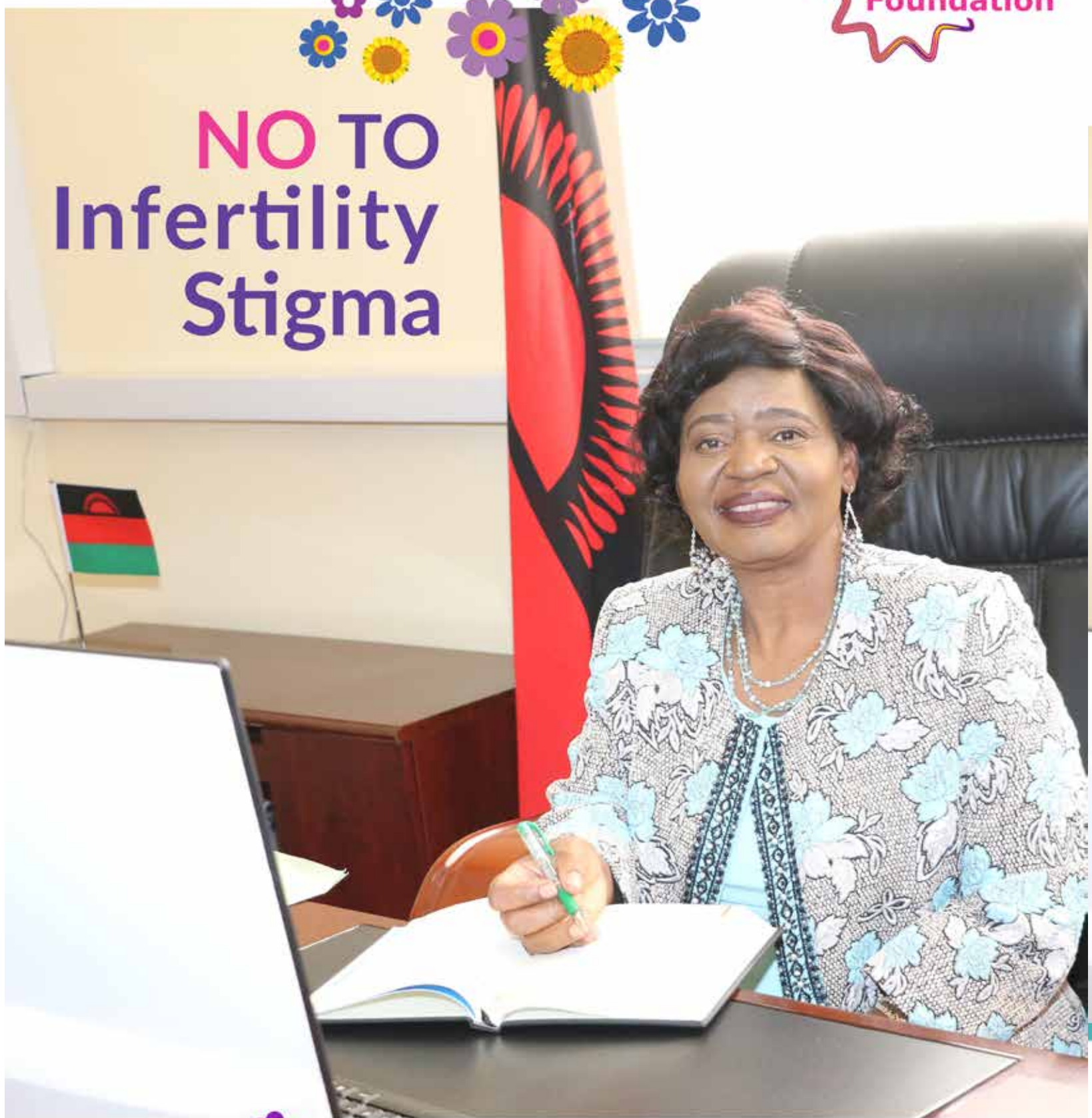


**Women are More Than Mothers
Men are More Than Fathers
No to Infertility Stigma**

H.E. Mrs. CLAR MARIE WEAH
The First Lady of the Republic of Liberia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador

A cluster of colorful flowers in shades of yellow, purple, and blue, scattered in the upper left corner of the image.

NO TO Infertility Stigma



H.E. Mrs. MONICA CHAKWERA
The First Lady of the Republic of Malawi
Ambassador of Merck More Than a Mother



H.E. Mrs. MONICA CHAKWERA
The First Lady of the Republic of Malawi



Women are More Than Mothers
Men are More Than Fathers
No to Infertility Stigma



Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



A infertilidade
Não é um
Estigma



EXCELENTÍSSIMA SENHORA ISAURA FERRÃO NYUSI
A Primeira-Dama da República de Moçambique
Embaixadora da Merck Mais do Que uma Mãe



A infertilidade é uma Responsabilidade Partilhada

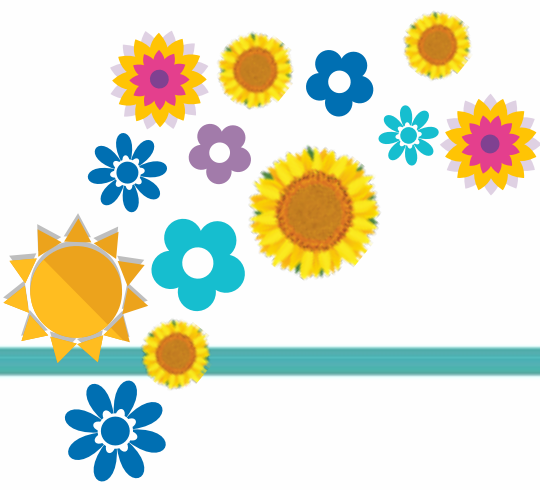


EXCELENTÍSSIMA SENHORA ISAURA FERRÃO NYUSI
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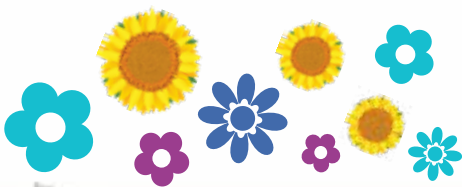


*No to
infertility
Stigma*

H.E. Mrs. MONICA GEINGOS
The First Lady of the Republic of Namibia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



BE STRONGER TOGETHER
Infertility affects
Men and Women equally.



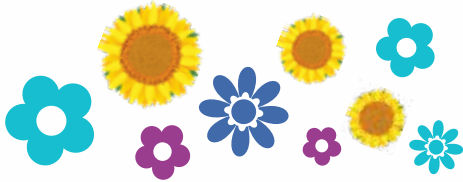
H.E. Mrs. MONICA GEINGOS
The First Lady of the Republic of Namibia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



La Fertilité est une Responsabilité Partagée



S.E. MADAME AÏSSATA ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU
La Première Dame de la République du Niger
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



**Non à la Stigmatisation
liée à l'infertilité**

**Faites-vous dépister
avec votre femme
et soutenez-la
pendant le traitement**

**L'infertilité affecte
autant les hommes
que les femmes**



S.E. MADAME AÏSSATA ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU
La Première Dame de la République du Niger
Ambassadrice de Merck Plus Qu'une Mère



AISHA BUHARI FOUNDATION



Merck
Foundation

BE STRONGER TOGETHER
Infertility affects
Men and Women equally.



H.E. Dr. Mrs. AISHA MUHAMMADU BUHARI
The First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



Fertility is a Shared Responsibility



H.E. Dr. Mrs. AISHA MUHAMMADU BUHARI
The First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



"Let's work together to break the stigma around infertility and infertile women. Hold your head up high, we are all more than mothers and more than fathers."

#NoToInfertilityStigma
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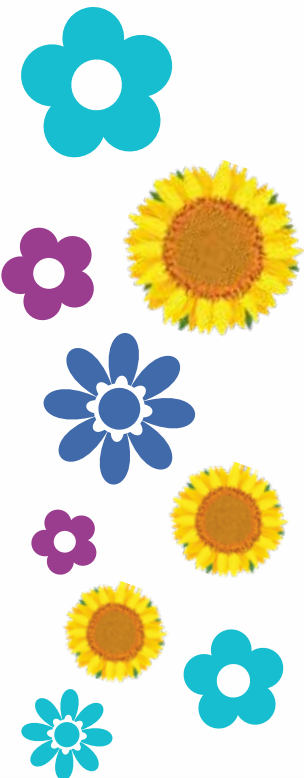
H.E. Mrs. FATIMA MAADA BIO
The First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



Women are More Than Mothers
Men are More Than Fathers
No to Infertility Stigma



H.E. Mrs. FATIMA MAADA BIO
The First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador





**Women are more
than Mothers
Men are more
than Fathers**



H.E. Mrs. ESTHER LUNGU
The First Lady of the Republic of Zambia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador





**Women are More Than Mothers
Men are More Than Fathers
No to Infertility Stigma**

H.E. Mrs. ESTHER LUNGU
The First Lady of the Republic of Zambia
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador





NO TO Infertility Stigma

H.E. Mrs. AUXILLIA MNANGAGWA
The First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador



No to Infertility Stigma

**It takes a Man and a Woman to have a child.
Fertility is a Shared Responsibility**

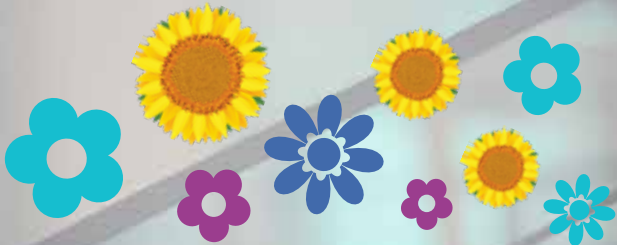


H.E. Mrs. AUXILLIA MNANGAGWA
The First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe
Merck More Than a Mother Ambassador





Fertility is a Shared Responsibility



Senator, Dr. Rasha Kelej
CEO of Merck Foundation
Member of the Egyptian Senate (2020-2025)
One of the 100 Most Influential Africans (2019, 2020)
President of Merck More Than a Mother



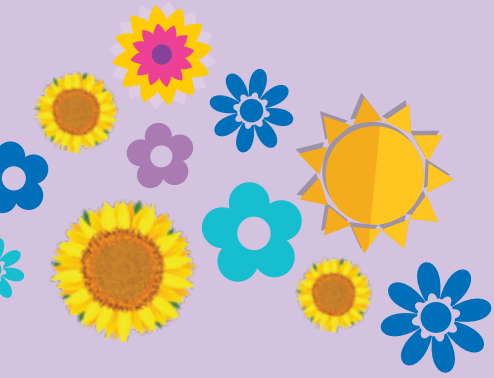
No to infertility Stigma

Get tested with your wife and support her during treatment.

Infertility affects
Men and Women equally.



Senator, Dr. Rasha Kelej
CEO of Merck Foundation
Member of the Egyptian Senate (2020-2025)
One of the 100 Most Influential Africans (2019, 2020)
President of Merck More Than a Mother



Merck More Than A Mother

Together we can create a culture shift



In some cultures, childless women still suffer discrimination, stigma and ostracism.

An inability to have a child or to become pregnant can result in being greatly isolated, disinherited or assaulted. This often results in divorce or physical and psychological violence. ⁽¹⁾

Together we can change this culture.

Background

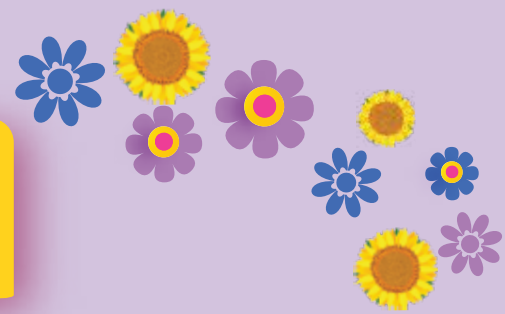
According to WHO data, more than 180 million couples in developing countries (which is one in every 4 couple) suffer from primary or secondary infertility.

Infertility in Africa is caused by infections in every 85% of the women compared to 33% worldwide, which emphasizes the importance of prevention programs in Africa. ⁽¹⁾

The social stigma for childlessness especially for infertile women still leads to isolation and stigmatization in many cultures. ⁽¹⁾

In some cultures, childless women still suffer discrimination, stigma and ostracism. An inability to have a child or to become pregnant can result in being greatly isolated, disinherited or assaulted. This may lead to divorce or physical or psychological violence.

Mothers or Nothing A culture to be changed.



The agony of infertility in resource-constrained settings and the social suffering:

The central difficulty associated with infertility in developing countries is that infertility transforms from an acute, private agony into a harsh, public stigma with complex and devastating consequences.

Although male factors contribute to about half of all cases of infertility, women are also overwhelmingly perceived as being the party responsible for a couple's infertility, and subsequently the social suffering associated with infertility tends to be greater for them than their husbands. ⁽²⁾

Disproportionately having an effect on women, the burden of infertility is often assumed to fault the woman, as pregnancy and childbirth are manifested in the woman. ⁽³⁾

Discrimination against infertile women may include that a girl will never pass into womanhood (regardless of age) if she never becomes pregnant, are no longer marriageable, and viewed as a burden on families and communities. ⁽³⁾

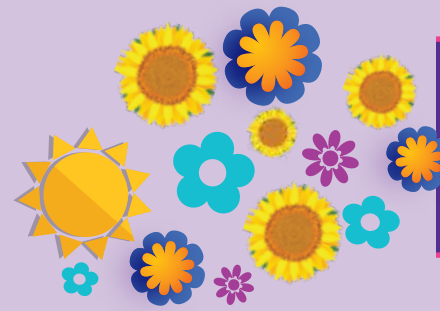
Violence: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Gender Based Violence (GBV) and domestic violence have been shown to have significant associations with individuals and couples suffering from infertility. ⁽³⁾

Mental Health: High rates of clinically significant symptoms of depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies and a strong conceptualization of grief affects infertile individuals. ⁽³⁾

**Male Factors contribute to half of all cases of infertility
'Fertility is a Shared Responsibility'**

About 'Merck More Than a Mother'

No to Infertility Stigma



“Merck More Than a Mother” is a strong movement that aims to empower infertile women through access to information, education and change of mind-sets. This powerful campaign 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, management and male infertility.

In partnership with African First Ladies, Ministries of Health, Information, Education & Gender, Academia, Policymakers, International Fertility Societies, Media & Art, the initiative also provides training for Fertility Specialists and Embryologists to build and advance fertility care capacity in Africa and developing countries.

With **“Merck More Than a Mother”**, we have initiated a cultural shift to de-stigmatize infertility at all levels: By improving awareness, training local experts in the fields of fertility care and media, building advocacy in cooperation with African First Ladies and women leaders and by supporting childless women in starting their own small businesses. It's all about giving every woman the respect and the help she deserves to live a fulfilling life, with or without a child.

“Merck More Than a Father” is a twin campaign of Merck More Than a Mother, which focuses on Fertility being a Shared Responsibility as infertility affects both men and women equally. About half of the causes of infertility are due to or include male factors.



The Strategy of 'Merck More Than a Mother' has been clearly defined as below:

- **Creating a culture shift** to de-stigmatize infertility and to respect and appreciate infertile women in Africa.
- **Raising awareness** about infertility prevention, management and male infertility by integrating it into healthcare infrastructure that already exists, such as HIV, maternal health and mother and child programs.
- **Education and training** for African Embryologists and Fertility specialists since the lack of trained and skilled staff is a big challenge.
- **Building advocacy and open dialogue** and working closely with partners that are African First Ladies, Ministries of Health, Education, Information & Communication, Gender, Academia, Research Institutions, Media & Art in building healthcare capacity and addressing health, social & economic challenges in developing countries and underserved communities.



- **Empowering infertile and childless women** socially and economically through access to information, health and change of mindset and empower women who cannot be treated anymore, through starting a small business for them to enable them to lead independent and happier lives through **"Empowering Berna" project**.



'Merck More Than a Mother' Ambassadors



Merck Foundation works together with African First Ladies, who are the Ambassadors of Merck More Than a Mother, through **Merck Foundation First Ladies Initiative Summit (MFFLI)**. Through this platform, Merck Foundation together with First Ladies, ensures continuous improvement and exchange of variable aspects of different cultures in order to localize and/or standardize specific messages that can raise awareness and create a culture shift across Africa with regards to the below objectives:

- **Breaking the Stigma around infertile couples in general and infertile women in particular.**
- **Empowering Girls and Women Through Education in general and in STEM in particular.**
- **Improving access to quality & equitable healthcare solutions.**

So far, **First Ladies of more than 18 Countries** have partnered with Merck Foundation to lead and execute the initiatives in their respective countries as Merck More Than a Mother Ambassadors.

Our Ambassadors of “Merck More Than a Mother” are:

H.E. Mrs. NEO JANE MASISI	The First Lady of Republic of Botswana
H.E. Madam ANGELINE NDAYISHIMIYE	The First Lady of Republic of Burundi
H.E. Madam BRIGITTE TOUADERA	The First Lady of Central African Republic
H.E. Madam HINDA DÉBY ITNO	The First Lady of Republic of Chad
H.E. Madam ANTOINETTE SASSOU-NGUESSO	The First Lady of Republic of Congo Brazzaville
H.E. Madam DENISE NYAKERU TSHISEKEDI	The First Lady of Democratic Republic of the Congo
H.E. Mrs. FATOUMATTA BAH-BARROW	The First Lady of Republic of The Gambia
H.E. Mrs. REBECCA AKUFO-ADDO	The First Lady of Republic of Ghana
H.E. Madam DJÈNÈ CONDÉ	The First Lady of Republic of Guinea Conakry
H.E. Mrs. CLAR MARIE WEAH	The First Lady of Republic of Liberia
H.E. Mrs. MONICA CHAKWERA	The First Lady of Republic of Malawi
H.E. Mrs. ISAURA FERRÃO NYUSI	The First Lady of the Republic of Mozambique
H.E. Mrs. MONICA GEINGOS	The First Lady of Republic of Namibia
H.E. Madam AÏSSATA ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU	The First Lady of Republic of Niger
H.E. Dr. Mrs. AISHA MUHAMMADU BUHARI	The First Lady of Federal Republic of Nigeria
H.E. Mrs. FATIMA MAADA BIO	The First Lady of Republic of Sierra Leone
H.E. Mrs. ESTHER LUNGU	The First Lady of Republic of Zambia
H.E. Mrs. AUXILLIA MNANGAGWA	The First Lady of Republic of Zimbabwe

Till 2019, the Former First Lady of Republic of Burundi, **H.E Madam DENISE NKURUNZIZA** and the Former First Lady of Republic of Malawi, **H.E. PROFESSOR GERTRUDE MUTHARIKA**, have worked successfully with Merck Foundation as Merck More Than a Mother Ambassadors to break the stigma of infertility and empower infertile women in their countries.

Transforming Fertility Care

Through their “Merck Fertility & Embryology Training Program” launched in 2016 as part of “Merck More Than a Mother” program, Merck Foundation has enrolled more than **180** candidates in clinical and practical training for Fertility specialists and Embryologists from **35** countries such as:

Bangladesh, Botswana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Cote D'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

In 2020, Merck Foundation enrolled more than **95** doctors into both, **one-year Online Diploma and two-year Master Degree in Sexual and Reproductive Medicines and two-year Online Master Degree in the Biotechnology of Human Assisted Reproduction and Embryology.**

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, by training the first Fertility specialists and Embryologists such as; in Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Gambia, Niger, Chad, Guinea, Burundi and Malawi. Merck Foundation supported training of the First public IVF centers in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Rwanda.

Community Awareness and Awards Program



"Merck More Than a Mother" Fashion Awards

It's time to empower infertile women

Who can apply?


All Fashion Designers and Fashion Students from Malawi are invited to create a design with the aim to deliver strong and influential messages to empower infertile women and say "No to Infertility Stigma".

Designs ideas can also deliver messages to encourage men to speak openly about their infertility, because 50% of infertility causes are due to male factor..

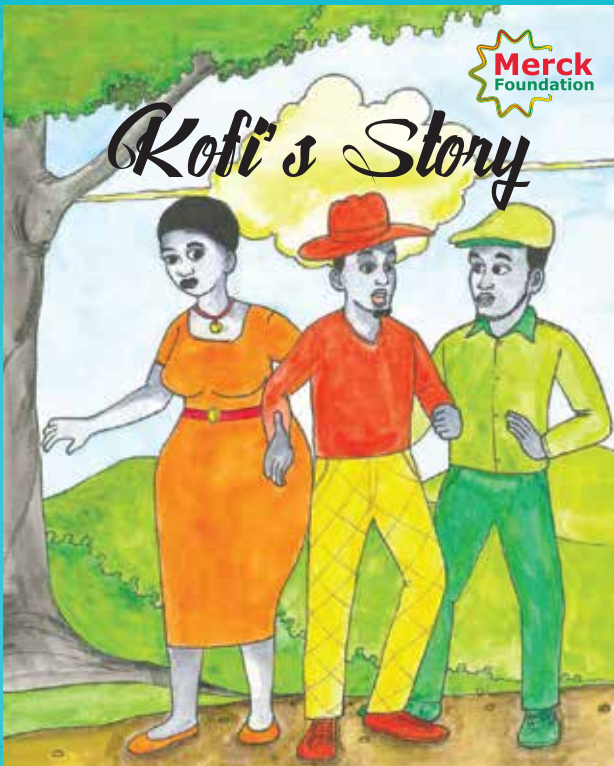


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[Merck Foundation](#)

www.merck-foundation.com



Kofi's Story



A Story of love that stood the test of time

Written and illustrated by:
Dr. Thomas MUYOMBO

HEALTH MEDIA TRAINING

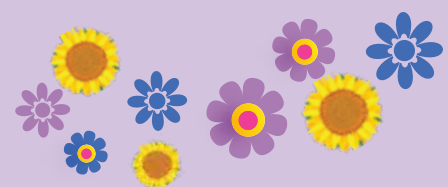
Merck Foundation has been providing training to media representatives and students to benefit them in understanding the infertility issues in African communities and to learn the best media practices to cover such issues and raise awareness by following international standards of reporting and media ethics. More than **1400 media representatives from over 20 countries** have benefitted from this program, so far.

AWARDS:

'Merck More Than a Mother' Media Recognition Awards have been introduced to encourage media to write about the sensitive topic of infertility to bring a culture shift by sensitizing masses. These awards have been so far launched in 11 African countries – Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Senegal, Liberia, Malawi, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Guinea, Niger. The award ceremonies have taken place in Kenya (2018) and Ghana (2019).

'Merck More Than a Mother' Fashion Awards have been launched to involve local fashion industry with the aim to deliver strong and influential messages to empower infertile women and say 'No to Infertility Stigma' and to create meaningful fashion trend to educate their communities that **'Fertility is a Shared Responsibility'**.

'Merck More Than a Mother' Film Awards have been launched to involve the local film industry to remind our communities that Women are more than Just Mothers and Men are more than Just Father.

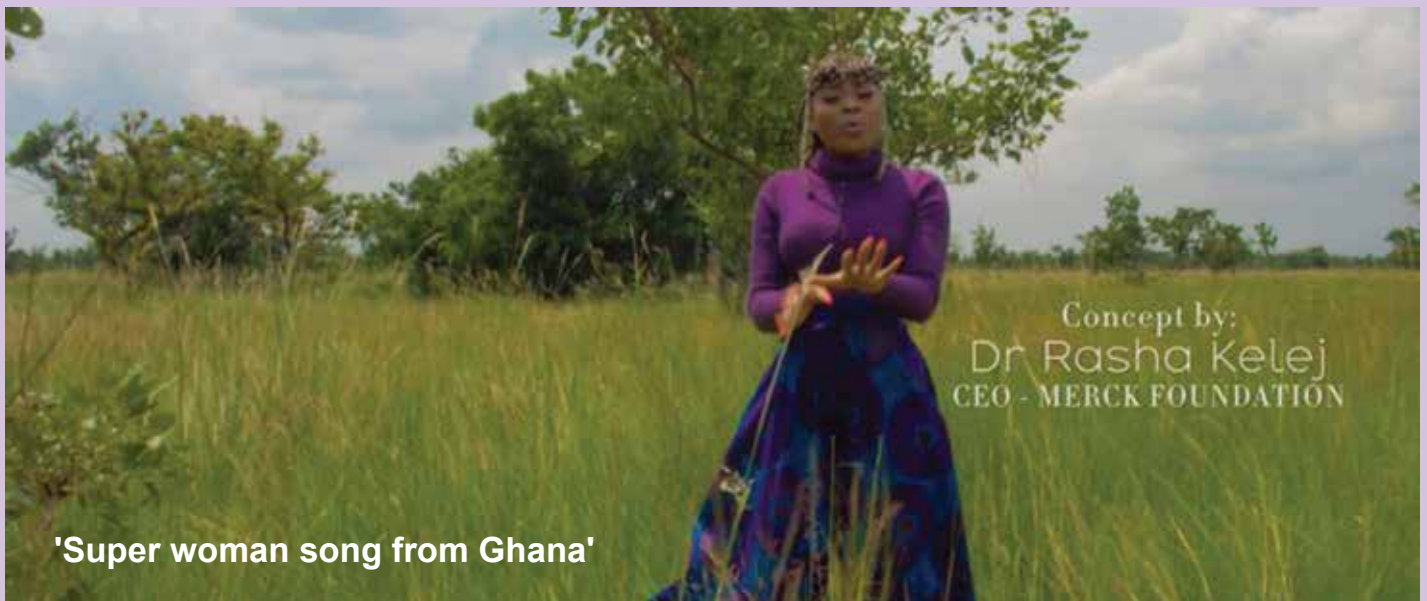


- **Children's Storybooks** launched in **17** countries to address this topic in order to develop strong family values of love and respect from young age.

- **Working with local artists** to create songs and video clips addressing the cultural perception of infertility and how to change it. More than **20** songs have been created in English, French and local languages.

Sierra Leone, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Burundi, Rwanda, Gambia, Malawi, Liberia

Special two songs have been created, composed and sung by the former **First Lady of Burundi** and **The President of Liberia, H.E. Mr. GEORGE WEAH** for **Merck More Than a Mother** campaign to sensitize our African community about this sensitive topic.



AWARENESS MATERIAL

The awareness material developed by us provides easy access to knowledge about infertility, its causes and management and how it affects both men and women equally, with scientific educational materials in a range of languages.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Merck Foundation runs a broad social media campaign under **Merck More Than a Mother**, for infertility prevention and management prevention, to amplify the reach of the efforts. **3 million followers** on our social media from more than **60 countries**.

Empowering Infertile and childless Women

It is very important to empower infertile women by improving access to quality and equitable fertility care so they can bear children as part of their human rights. But for those who cannot be treated anymore, Merck More Than a Mother's campaign 'Empowering Berna' helps to train them to establish their own small business so that they can be independent and rebuild their own lives. We truly believe that a woman is a lot more than just a mother!

'Empowering Berna' has supported more than 1000 childless women

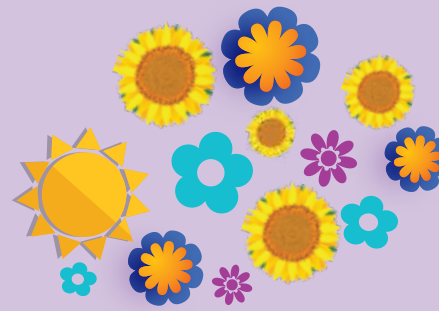
1. Ombelet W. Global access to infertility care in developing countries: a case of human rights, equity and social justice. Facts, Views & Vision in ObGyn. 2012; Monograph:16-7.

2. Hammarberg K, Kirkman M. Infertility in resource-constrained settings: moving towards amelioration. Reprod Biomed 95-189:(2)26;2013.

3. Infertility: Sexual and Reproductive Health. World Health Organization [Internet] 2017. [cited 2019 Aug 07]; Available from: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/infertility/keyissues/en/>

EDUCATING LINDA PROGRAM

Empowering Girls through Education



Merck Foundation strongly believes that Education is one of the most critical areas for women empowerment. It is also an area that represents some of the distinct examples of discrimination women suffer. As evident in UNICEF's declaration that in Africa, among children not attending school, there are twice as many girls as boys, and among illiterate adults there are twice as many women as men.

Girls' education is not a luxury. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women establish it as a basic human right.

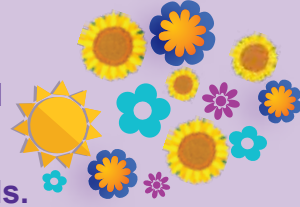
Studies show that, in areas where there is high poverty and decades of conflict, girls face enormous challenges that limit their ability to get the education they deserve.

A few of these challenges include:

- Girls face pressure to fulfill traditional roles as housekeepers and mothers rather than going to school.
- High bride prices are set for girls who are 'kept safe' at home.
- Early and forced marriages increase when poor families need the bride price.



- Limited available money for education is typically invested in boys and men.
- Harmful practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation, are still being practiced in Somalia and some parts of Kenya.
- Schools do not provide proper facilities, including sanitation facilities, for girls.
- Girls are at risk of sexual assault on the way to school, or from male peers or teachers.
- Continued rape and assault of girls in areas of armed conflict.



Merck Foundation launched **'Educating Linda'** in 2019 to help young girls who are unprivileged but brilliant to continue their education. The spirit of the project is to provide an opportunity to such girls to pursue their dreams and reach their potential through access to education. It has been seen that many girls drop out of school due to lack of basic necessities such as fees and uniform.

Merck Foundation will be supporting education of some of the high performing girls by providing scholarship and grants that can cover school fees, school uniforms and other essentials including notebooks, pens and mathematical instruments, so they can reach their potential and pursue their dreams.

Educating Linda program has contributed to the future of **100's** of girls in partnership with the African First Ladies as part of 'Merck More Than a Mother' campaign, from countries such as: Ghana, Burundi, Malawi, Niger and Liberia.



Merck More Than a Mother

Infertility is **NOT** a **STIGMA**

Message to All Women: Infertility affects Men and Women equally **Remember: You are More than a Mother**

- In sub-Saharan Africa, infection is the cause of infertility in up to 85% of women seeking infertility care, compared to 33% worldwide.⁽¹⁾



In Africa, some traditional, cultural and religious practices, combined with low resource environment are thought to be associated with higher levels of non-genetic and preventable causes of infertility such as:^(1,2)

- Poor nutrition
- Untreated sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Unsafe abortions
- Consequence of infections caused by the practice of female genital mutilation
- Exposure to smoking, leaded petrol and other environmental pollutants

Untreated infections can lead to infertility - Have regular checkup and see the doctor early if you feel unwell.

Health Facts :

Besides the negative impact that **HIV** has on your body's immunity, it can also affect your body's ability to produce hormones required to fall pregnant, or lead to early menopause - the stage when monthly periods stop and you cannot fall pregnant⁽³⁾

In women, STDs such as **Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea** may have few or no symptoms. Left untreated, these 'silent infections' can result in pelvic inflammatory disease - a condition that can cause serious complications such as chronic pelvic pain, ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb) and infertility^(4,5)



Both Men and Women should practice "Safe Sex" and avoid risky behaviour that can lead to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as Chlamydia. STDs can cause serious complications including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), blockage of fallopian tubes, ectopic pregnancy and prostatitis, which can subsequently cause infertility.^(4,5)

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#MenToo #NoToInfertilityStigma



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Infertility is **NOT** a **STIGMA**

For women, a number of strategies may help increase the chances of becoming pregnant:

Exercise moderately

Regular exercise is important, but if you are exercising so intensely that your periods are infrequent or absent, your fertility (ability to fall pregnant) may be impaired.⁽¹⁻³⁾



Eat a balanced diet and maintain a healthy weight

Being underweight or overweight can affect your hormone production or result in disturbances in your monthly periods, which can cause infertility⁽¹⁻³⁾



Quit smoking

Tobacco has multiple negative effects on fertility, not to mention your general health and the health of your unborn baby.

If you smoke and are considering pregnancy, **quit now**⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾

Avoid alcohol and "street" drugs

These substances may impair your ability to conceive and have a healthy pregnancy. Don't drink alcohol or use illegal drugs⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾



Avoid industrial & environmental toxins

such as pesticides and heavy metals found in large fish and stockfish⁽⁴⁾



Limit caffeine

Women trying to get pregnant may want to limit caffeine intake. Ask your doctor for guidance on safe use of caffeine⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾



Avoid or reduce stress⁽⁵⁾

1. Optimizing natural fertility fact sheet [internet]. American Society of Reproductive Medicine; 2015 [cited 2020 Jan 9]. Available from: https://www.reproductivefacts.org/globalassets/rf/news-and-publications/bookletsfact-sheets/english-fact-sheets-and-info-booklets/optimizing_natural_fertility_factsheet.pdf

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Merck More Than a Father

Fertility is a Shared Responsibility

BE STRONGER TOGETHER

Infertility affects Men and Women equally.



- Infertility does not just affect women⁽¹⁾
- About half of the causes of infertility are due to, or include male factors⁽¹⁾
- Infertility is one of the commonest conditions affecting reproductive age group between 20 and 45 years⁽²⁾

GET INFORMED

GET TESTED WITH YOUR WIFE

SUPPORT YOUR WIFE

The following healthy tips may help:

	<p>Avoid drugs, stop smoking and limit your alcohol intake - factors which may contribute to male infertility⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾</p>			
	<p>Avoid high temperatures as this can affect sperm production and motility. Although this effect is usually temporary, avoid riding motorbikes, hot tubs and steam baths - instead use showers and wear loose pants⁽⁵⁾</p>			
<p>Avoid exposure to industrial and environmental toxins, such as paints and pesticides which may damage and impact sperm production⁽⁶⁾ Exercise regularly⁽⁷⁾</p>			<p>Exercise regularly⁽⁷⁾</p>	
	<p>Eat a balanced diet, and maintain a healthy weight Obesity is directly related to testosterone levels, which is a key hormone responsible for sperm production.⁽⁸⁾ Eating a balanced diet provides the necessary nutrients to optimize sperm function and minimize the effects of factors which may otherwise damage the sperm⁽⁹⁾</p>			

SHARE THE TREATMENT JOURNEY TOGETHER

Infertility is NOT a STIGMA

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