

'Best African Women Researchers' announced

Merck has followed up the success of its Cancer Access Program, which empowers women in the field of oncology, where they were underrepresented, with another initiative that empowers African women - this time in the field of research, to offer better health care to women.

Prof Frank Stangenberg-Haverkamp, Chairman of Executive Board and Family Board of E. Merck KG and recipient of the African Alliance's 'HE for SHE' award for women empowerment, is behind the commitment to empower women in research, thereby bridging the gender equality gap in STEM Africa.



UNESCO-MARS 2016 Award winners: (L-R) front row - 'Best African Woman Researchers Award' 4th place winner Maria Nabaggala, from Infectious Diseases Institute, Uganda; 5th place winner, Martha Zewdie, from Armauer Hansen Research Institute, Ethiopia; 2nd place Best Young African Researchers winner, Constantine Asahngwa, Cameroon Centre for Evidence Based Health Care; Best Young African Researchers 1st place winner Patricia Rantshabeng from University of Botswana; Best African Women Researchers 2nd place winner, Rogomenoma Quedraogo, Laboratory of Biology and Molecular Genetics University, Burkina Faso; 'Best Young Researcher Award' 3rd place winner, Lamin Cham from National Aids Control Program, Gambia; 2nd row: 2nd place Best Young Researchers Award winner, Tinashe Nyazika, University of Zimbabwe; Best African Woman Researchers Award' 1st place winner, Beatrice Nyagol from Kenya Medical Research Institute, together with Prof. Yifru Berhane, Minister of Health, Ethiopia; Prof. Dr Frank Stangenberg-Haverkamp, Chairman, Executive Board and Family Board of E. Merck KG; Prof. Afework Kassu Gizaw, Minister of Science and Technology, Ethiopia; Ahmed Fahmi, Program Director, UNESCO and Rasha Kelej, Chief Social Officer, Merck Healthcare.

In an historical first, Merck announced five winners from Kenya, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Uganda and Ethiopia under the category of 'Best African Women Researchers Award' and four winners from Botswana, Cameroon, Gambia and Zimbabwe for 'Best Young African Researchers Award' during the recently held 2nd UNESCO-Merck Africa Research Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where the first 'Best African Women Researchers Award' was being launched at the recently held second UNESCO-Merck Africa Research Summit (MARS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The MARS Research award-winners will be appointed as Merck ambassadors of empowering females in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or STEM in their own countries through several future initiatives to be announced in 2017.

The Best African Women Researchers Award winners were ranked as follows:

- **1st Place:** Beatrice Nyagol, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Kenya
- **2nd Place:** Rogomenoma Ouedraogo, Laboratory of Biology and Molecular Genetics University, Burkina Faso
- **3rd Place:** Sandrine Liabagui ep Assangaboua, Ecole Doctorale Regionale d'Afrique Centrale, Franceville, Gabon
- **4th Place:** Maria Nabaggala, Infectious Diseases Institute, Uganda
- **5th Place:** Martha Zewdie, Armauer Hansen Research Institute, Ethiopia

The first recipient of the 'Best Young African Researchers Award', Patricia Rantshabeng from Botswana, was awarded for her study on cancer in women and its relation to infectious diseases:

Second place went to Constantine Asahngwa of the Cameroon Centre for Evidence Based Health Care, with third place tied between Tinashe Nyazika of the University of Zimbabwe and Lamin Cham of the National Aids Control Program in the Gambia.

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