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The German science and technology company donated 2 minilabs to Côte d'Ivoire supporting their fight against counterfeit medicines

Merck (http://www.MerckGroup.com), a leading science and technology company, today announced the opening of its affiliate office in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, which will serve as the regional hub for the company's operations in French-speaking Central and West African countries.

"For several years, Côte d'Ivoire has shown continuous growth, as well as economic, political and social stability. The main driver of this achievement being its increase in competitiveness and steady progress in economic development,(1)" Dr. Frank Stangenberg-Haverkamp, Chairman of the Executive Board and the Family Board of E. Merck KG, said at the opening. "We are excited to open this office in Abidjan, which will be our first in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa."

The office was inaugurated by his Excellency, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Côte d'Ivoire, Dr. Claus Auer and key representatives of the Ivorian government along with Dr. Stangenberg-Haverkamp and Dr. Karim Bendhaou, President of North & West Africa.

"This new office will allow us to reinforce and to develop our already existing activities in the country and it will be the hub for French speaking countries in Central and West Africa. We will continue to bring specialist and high-quality products to serve patients and help them to improve their quality of life," added Dr. Bendhaou.

Merck also donated two minilabs with the aim of supporting Côte d'Ivoire in its fight against counterfeit medicines. The minilabs, which help to detect counterfeits, are manufactured by the Global Pharma Health Fund (GPHF), a charitable initiative financed by Merck.

"We are pleased that our plan to establish a public-private partnership to combat counterfeits will be translated into effective measures with the donated minilabs, in addition to an awareness campaign led by the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene," Bendhaou said. The donation ceremony was graced by The First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire, Dominique Claudine Ouattara and H.E. Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, Dr. Raymonde Goudou Coffie. These minilabs will be the first to be used in Côte d'Ivoire.

"This donation done by Merck will allow us to reinforce our structures for drug monitoring. The people will be reassured that they are investing in medicines which are safe, not dangerous and suitable for consumption," H.E. Minister of Health and Public Hygiene expressed her gratitude for this donation. "The mobile compact laboratories are globally renowned for their ability to detect counterfeits quickly, cost-efficiently and reliably. The Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene makes quality control its top priority."

Merck's fight against counterfeit medicines is part of the company's health-related corporate responsibility initiatives. Many people in low- to middle-income countries lack access to high-quality health solutions and Merck is leveraging its expertise and collaborating with strong partners to develop innovative solutions for such patients.

(1) "Lions on the Move II: Realizing the potential of Africa's Economies" McKinsey Global Institute, Sept. 2016

About Merck
Merck (http://www.MerckGroup.com) is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 50,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2015, Merck generated sales of € 12.85 billion in 66 countries.
Founded in 1668, Merck is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.