

Press Release

Morocco



Foundation S and the GFAOP reaffirm their commitment to work together to fight childhood cancer in Africa

Rabat (Morocco), February 22, 2023. Foundation S and the Groupe Franco-Africain d'Oncologie Pédiatrique (GFAOP) organized on February 22, 2023, in Rabat, Morocco, a pan-African conference on the theme "Childhood Cancers in Africa: Challenges, Perspectives and Solutions".

This medical and advocacy meeting, which is part of the International Childhood Cancer Day, was an opportunity for Foundation S and GFAOP to reaffirm their commitment to collaborate on joint initiatives in support of the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal of achieving at least a 60% survival rate for all children with cancer on the African continent by 2030.

The collaboration between Foundation S and GFAOP, renewed in 2022 for the next three years, consists of supporting hospitals and medical staff in West and Francophone African countries¹ in their fight against childhood cancer, by offering them dedicated training in pediatric oncology, improving diagnostic capabilities, access to treatment or the therapeutic recommendations for the five most frequent pediatric cancers in Africa.

Professeuse Laila Hessissen

Chairman of the GFAOP

"The GFAOP is a network of 24 Pediatric Oncology Units in 18 French-speaking African countries. Our objective is to increase the capacity of the teams so that a maximum number of children with cancer are treated in French-speaking Africa, at affordable costs, and that we can achieve a cure rate of at least 60% of children arriving in specialized services with a disease that has been treated early, thanks to structured support."

In high-income countries, more than 80% of children diagnosed with cancer in time are cured. In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), this rate drops below 20%.

In French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa, at least 30% of children arriving at existing pediatric oncology units are too advanced to receive curative treatment,² and in the inpatient population, the proportion of children who are cured remains below 20%.³

The reasons for this difference in survival can be attributed to several factors: lack of training and information on the curability of cancers, inadequate infrastructure and often difficult access to healthcare centers that are sometimes far away, but above all, the delay in diagnosis: it is estimated that only about 40% of children with cancer in sub-Saharan Africa are diagnosed³.

To address this inequality, Sanofi launched the **My Child Matters** (MCM) program in 2005 to support children with cancer and their families. Now housed within Foundation S, MCM aims to improve diagnosis, access to cancer care, treatment adherence and strengthen health systems in low- and middle-income countries.

Docteur Isabelle Villadary

Head, Childhood Cancer program, Foundation S

"Since 2005, 140,000 (one hundred and forty thousand) children with cancer have been positively impacted and more than 41,000 (forty-one thousand) healthcare professionals have benefited from targeted training in pediatric oncology through 83 projects supported by My Child Matters."

In September 2022, Foundation S launched a new call for projects. 60 project teams responded, including 24 from Africa. The My Child Matters Expert Committee, in charge of the final selection of projects, will make its final decision at the end of March 2023.

About the conference

This scientific event was attended by experts from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Kingdom of Morocco, WHO Africa, the International Society of Pediatric Oncology Africa (SIOP Africa), African health professionals as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps and the media.

Docteur Dille Mahamadou Issimouha

Technical Officer Cancer for West and Central Africa at the WHO Regional Office for Africa
“WHO works closely with GFAOP and care units in 15 French-speaking sub-Saharan African countries¹. This collaboration with GFAOP is an exceptional lever for all actors engaged in pediatric cancer, which will contribute to the successful implementation of the Global Childhood Cancer Initiative in several African countries. Partnerships in the field with civil society provide an opportunity for health authorities to achieve significant and sustainable results to improve the survival of children with cancer.”

Two sessions were organized during this conference: Why cancer in Africa is no longer a fatality, and how to improve care for sick children and support for families.

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Gabon, Senegal, Togo

² B Mallon PBC

³ Lancet Oncology 2019 projection DFCI

About Foundation S

Foundation S, Sanofi's philanthropy engine, seeks to create healthier futures for generations to come. Through a "Think & Do Tank" approach, Foundation S aspires to amplify innovation and collaboration as well as support concrete actions to improve the lives of people in vulnerable communities in four key areas: fighting childhood cancer, with its signature initiative My Child Matters; increasing health resilience of climate vulnerable populations; Neglected Tropical Diseases (Contributing to sleeping sickness elimination by 2030) and broadening humanitarian donations with a focus on displaced populations.

<https://www.foundation-s.sanofi.com/>

About the GFAOP

Since its establishment in 2000, the Franco-African Pediatric Oncology Group (GFAOP) has contributed to the creation of 24 specialized care units in public hospitals in 18 French-speaking African countries and has helped train 100 pediatricians and 700 doctors and nurses, including with diploma courses, develop therapeutic guidelines, improve access to medicines, strengthen medical capacities, and improve the environment for families. GFAOP focuses its efforts on treating the five most common and curable cancers: Burkitt's and Hodgkin's lymphoma, standard-risk acute lymphocytic leukemia, neuroblastoma and retinoblastoma. The network's teams currently treat 1,500 children per year and aim to treat 7,500 per year by 2030. The association is supported by the generosity of public donors, private foundations, associations and private donors.

www.gfaop.org

About Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer

The Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer was established by WHO and its partners in 2018, with the goal of "achieving a survival rate of at least 60% for children with cancer globally by 2030, thereby redressing a profound inequity between high-income and low- and middle-income countries". The CureAll approach aims to assess the current situation in a country or region, develop and implement an action plan, and monitor progress. Through advocacy as well as resource allocation and mobilization, in conjunction with governance, CureAll creates centers of excellence with cancer care networks and actors, to achieve comprehensive and high-quality services for children with cancer. These services include the use of evidence-based protocols, technologies and drugs for cancer diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring and evaluation, thereby promoting continuous improvement. The successful implementation of this initiative is expected to save an additional 1 million lives.

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-initiative-for-childhood-cancer>

Media relations

Aziz Yousfi Malki

Africa Communications & CSR Coordinator | + 212 6 61 35 71 99 | aziz.yousfimalki@sanofi.com

