

**SPEECH BY THE FIRST LADY  
FIRST LADIES SEMINAR  
ON CANCER AWARENESS IN THE OIC  
AFRICAN MEMBER STATES**

**Ouagadougou, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018**

**Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to show my appreciation to my dear sister, **Mrs Sika KABORE**, for receiving us to this high level subregional meeting ; and to **all my**

**sisters First Ladies** gathered here this morning.

I also wish to commend **the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the Islamic Development Bank**, co-organizing this important initiative for the fight against cancer; as well as all the personalities present.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As you know, cancer is a serious disease that affects people in all countries, and Africa has not been spared. **According to**

**the World Health Organization, cancer is the second leading cause of death in the world after heart disease, and this disease causes an estimated 8.8 million deaths worldwide each year.**

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, **60% of new cases of cancer occur in developing countries.**

The situation is even critical in Africa, **where majority of sick people have no access to adequate treatment and care.**

In Côte d'Ivoire, every year, **there are 15,000 new cases of cancers, including 8,000 cases in women, with an average age of 47 years old.**

In 75% of cases, the high mortality rate is due to **late diagnosis**. Cancer is a real public health problem in our country, as everywhere else in Africa.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In view of those considerations, **Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken many actions to fight cancer effectively.**

To this end, the Government has raised this issue as part of its national priorities through the implementation of **the National Program for Fight against Cancer** in 2008. The program aims at reducing the impact of cancerous disease through awareness campaign, immunization campaign, early diagnosis and research.

The implementation of this program resulted in the following results :

At the level of **primary and secondary prevention**:

- **1,500,000 women** were informed on **breast and cervical cancer risks**.
- **16,000 girls were vaccinated** against Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which represents the main cause of uterine cancer.
- and **50,000 women have been diagnosed with cervical and breast cancer** in several health facilities of the country.

In terms of **capacity building**, **300 health workers have been trained for the treatment of cancer**. In addition, a **medical oncology degree has been introduced in Côte d'Ivoire since 2016**, which increases the number of specialists in this field.

Regarding the **improvement of the technical platform**, Côte d'Ivoire has acquired **equipment for the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer and other diseases**.

With regard to curative care, ces dernières années, **in recent years the Ivorian Government has subsidized the medical treatment of people suffering from cancer,** which has led to a **significant reduction in the cost of drugs.**

In addition, **the first National Center for Medical Oncology and Radiotherapy of Côte d'Ivoire,** a very modern center equipped with **leading – edge technologies,** was

**inaugurated on 18 December 2017 by President Alassane OUATTARA,** to provide a better assistance to cancer patients.

This facility includes a radiotherapy unit, a medical oncology unit and a laboratory, also a pharmacy that is adapted to the specific needs of patients.

Government is also planning to implement other project. For example the construction of a Regional Oncology Center in Grand-Bassam in partnership with the Republic of Korea, and two

Radiotherapy Centers in Bouaké and Daloa are also underway.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In our country, childhood cancer accounts for 5% of all cancer cases recorded each year.

It is for this reason that I have decided that **the Mother-Child Hospital of Bingerville, built by my Foundation Children of Arica, and inaugurated in March 2018, should be equipped with**

**a wing of pediatric oncology**, in order to provide quality care to children with cancer.

children can receive both heavy chemotherapy treatments and outpatient day treatment, and will soon be able to benefit from the house of life which is being built by the Lalla Salama Foundation of Morocco, in partnership with the Children of Africa Foundation.

In the same vein, I have also taken action in the interest of children with cancer, by **creating recreational spaces in hospitals' pediatric oncology services.**

**My dear sisters,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Combating cancer is very important for our countries, I hope that by joining our efforts, we will be able to significantly reduce its impact on our populations.

**Thank you.**