



Joint News Release

BASF and Regional Dermatology Training Centre (RDTC) in Tanzania develop sunscreen for people with albinism

- Local RDTC production assures the supply of sunscreen for 2,000 affected people in North Tanzania
- BASF provides ingredients and expertise for improved sunscreen and further expansion of the station

MONHEIM, GERMANY – MOSHI, TANZANIA – September 3, 2014 – Their greatest enemy is the sun: Each year, 20,000 people in Tanzania fight the consequences of a congenital pigmentation disorder. Those affected have light-colored skin, hair and eyes, making them more susceptible to sunburn and putting them at increased risk of skin cancer. In the East African country at the equator one in every 2,500 inhabitants is a person with albinism. The average life expectancy of the affected is 30 years. In Moshi located at the foot of Kilimanjaro, the Regional Dermatology Training Centre (RDTC) has helped these people for more than 22 years by providing an extensive support program. Part of it is a local sunscreen production. BASF supports RDTC in the development of an improved sunscreen for people with albinism. Today, the team introduces first results at the World Congress on Cancers of the Skin in Edinburgh.

Sunscreen sought for extreme conditions

Since November 2012, RDTC has produced in its own facility a self-developed sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) 30 – the Kilimanjaro Suncare – and through outposts it has distributed it free of charge to 2,000 people suffering from albinism in North Tanzania. Since 2013, BASF has provided ingredients and the expertise for the further expansion of the production. In the meantime, an even better way to protect the affected from the sun is sought together: “First, we only delivered free ingredients for sunscreen” said Uli Osterwalder, an expert at BASF for the segment sun protection. “Now we are working together on a suitable sunscreen that protects the skin of affected local people under extreme conditions even better from the rays of the sun.”

Best possible protection for people with albinism

In addition to a higher sun protection factor (SPF 50), the new sunscreen should have above all a high absorption of UVA rays and a long lasting protection. Because the existing sunscreen “KiliSun” as it is called by Tanzanians has one decisive disadvantage; it does not currently provide enough UVA protection. “As opposed to UVB rays, UVA rays penetrate the skin deeply. They can alter cells in the long term and thereby promote the development of skin cancer,” said Mafalda Soto Valdés from the Spanish development aid organization

AFRICA DIRECTO. As a trained pharmacist, she formulates the sunscreen locally and drives the project ahead. In Tanzania, the intense UV rays combined with a lack of suitable clothing and sun protection leads to so-called actinic keratosis – a precancerous stage of skin cancer – in people with albinism below the age of 20. “RDTC wants to protect people with albinism from the extreme high sun radiation at the equator in the best possible way. We want to provide medical advice and support and supply them with the sunscreens necessary for survival. BASF is an important partner in this endeavor,” emphasized Valdés.

Water-in-oil emulsion for a long lasting protection

However, the search for an even more effective alternative is not an easy one: “More than 90 percent of all sunscreens available in Europe are oil-in-water emulsions. They are easy to apply, are easily absorbed and assure a comfortable feeling on the skin; however, they cannot withstand the hot African sun. They are simply washed away through increased sweating,” explains Osterwalder. Therefore, a BASF team of sunscreen experts wants to develop a water-in-oil emulsion together with representatives of RDTC. “It is not absorbed as quickly but it offers long lasting protection,” says Osterwalder. In the long term, the new sun protection emulsion should replace the existing sunscreen. Until that time, “KiliSun” sunscreen is enriched with the BASF UV filter Uvinul® A Plus. It supplements the important UVA protection while further improving the skin feel of the sunscreen.

About BASF

BASF is the worldwide leading chemical company: The Chemical Company. The portfolio ranges from chemicals to plastics, from finishing products and pesticides to oil and gas. We combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. With research and innovation, we support our customers in nearly all industries. We fulfill the needs of society today and in the future. Our products and solutions contribute to the preservation of resources, safeguard nutrition and improve the quality of life. We have summarized the contribution BASF makes in our corporate mission statement: We create chemistry for a sustainable future. In 2013, BASF generated sales of approx. €74 billion and it employed more than 112,000 people. BASF is listed on the stock exchanges of Frankfurt (BAS), London (BFA) and Zurich (AN). For further information about BASF, go to www.basf.com.

About RDTC

The Regional Dermatology Training Centre (RDTC) in Moshi, Tanzania was founded in 1992 thanks to the collaboration between the Government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), the International Foundation for Dermatology (IFD), the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) and The Good Samaritan Foundation (GSF). RDTC is a specialized Centre focused on the diagnosis and treatment of dermatological conditions. In 1998 the RDTC was designated as a WHO collaborating Centre for Dermatology, Leprosy and STDs and it became the first pan-African institution in dermato-venereology teaching in Sub-Saharan Africa. From 1992, more than 160 students (coming from Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Ruanda, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan and Congo) have completed Dermato-Venereology Officer (Community Dermatologists) courses. It is located adjacent to the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (K.C.M.C.). For further information, go to www.kcmc.ac.tz

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