

# 100 Most Influential African Women 2023 announced

The rating firm, Avance Media's 100 Most Influential African Women 2023 is made up of prominent African women breaking the bias across the world and includes two presidents, three vice presidents, one prime minister, ministers, and top CEOs of both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations.

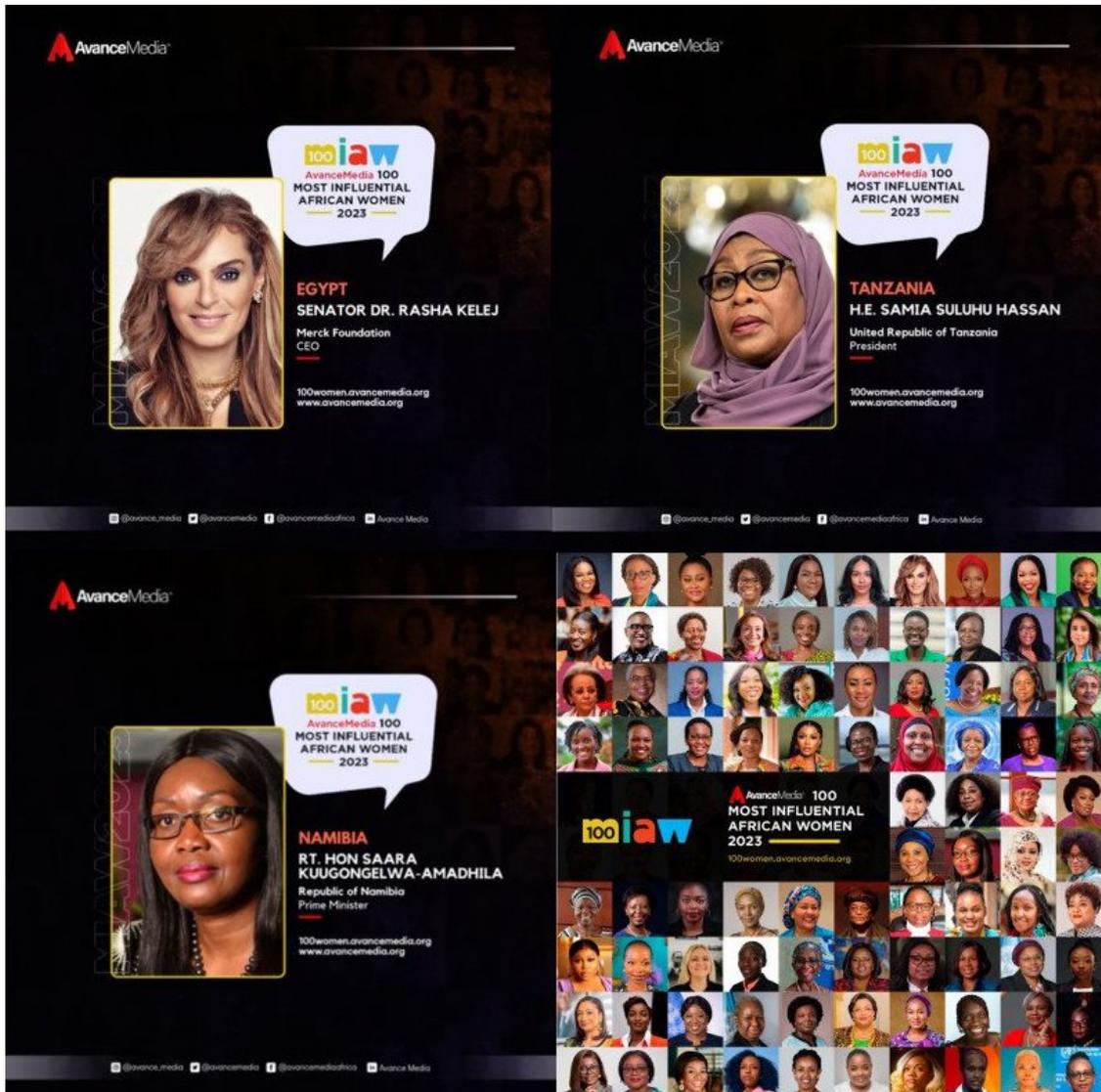


Image supplied. The list of the 100 Most Influential African Women 2023 has been announced

The firm has launched its annual publication to highlight and celebrate the remarkable endeavours of African women, who inspire the future leaders of Africa.

It includes the President of Tanzania - H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, Merck Foundation CEO, senator - Dr Rasha Kelej; prime minister of Namibia - Rt. Hon Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila.

## Most influential NGO

Kelej, also president of *More Than a Mother* campaign has been recognised for the fifth consecutive year.

Under her leadership, the Merck Foundation was recognised as the 2022 NGO of the Year, the most influential NGO in Africa whose collective efforts greatly contribute to shaping Africa's future through key sectors such as health, education and economic empowerment by transforming patient care landscape, creating a culture shift, supporting girl education, empowering women, and breaking infertility stigma in Africa and beyond.

Kelej has been recognised for her commitment towards women empowerment, girl education and patient care transformation in Africa and other developing countries.

“Thank you all for recognising my efforts & commitment, which is part of Merck Foundation's commitment towards building healthcare capacity, transforming the patient care landscape with a special focus on women's health, empowering women and girls so that they can reach their potential and pursue their dreams,” says Kelej.

She adds, “I promise to continue to my efforts in leading Merck Foundation to further empower women, support girl education, and improve patient access to quality and equitable healthcare in Africa, Asia and beyond. Congratulations to all the exceptional women who have been selected this year with me. Well deserved.”

Kelej was also conferred with the Doctorate of Letters (D.Litt) Degree (Honoris Causa) by the Krishna World University, India, for her outstanding achievement in the social sciences, justice and reform, earlier this year.

### ***More Than a Mother* campaign**

In partnership with 22 First Ladies of Africa as ambassadors of *More Than a Mother* campaign, has provided more than 1,700 scholarships to young doctors from 50 countries.

Scholarships of one-year, two-year, and three-year diploma and Master degrees in more than 42 critical and underserved specialties are provided to these doctors who became the first specialists in their countries.

“ I am very proud that over 780 scholarships out of total scholarships are provided to female medical graduates, this is a great milestone for us,” says Kelej.

### ***Educating Linda* programme**

Through the ‘Educating Linda’ programme in partnership with 22 first ladies of Africa, Kelej has also contributed to the future of thousands of school girls by providing scholarships and essential school items in many African countries.

This programme has benefitted many girls by providing scholarships in many African countries like Burundi, Central African Republic, DRC, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe and more.

Moreover, 3,000 sets of essential school items have been distributed for girls' schools in many countries like Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, and Zambia.

### **Mars Awards**

the Merck Foundation has also announced the Mars Awards to appreciate and recognise Best African Women Researchers and Best Young African Researcher.

The aim is to empower women and young African researchers, advance their research capacity and promote their contribution to Stem (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), with a focus on the role of scientific research in women's health and reproductive care this year.

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