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Dr. Owl Says...

He can eat with elders, a child whose hand is clean

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Shelter Gambia launched

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Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Ramou Cole-Ceesay, deputising for the minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr Mariatou Jallow, last Thursday launched 'Shelter Gambia', at a colourful ceremony held at the Social Welfare Home for Elderly People in Bakoteh.

Shelter Gambia is a non-profit, faith-based charity organisation with the goal of taking care of women who have had a successful Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) surgery after being released from hospital. The idea is to get them good réhabilitation. VVF occurs when a women has a prolonged labour without médical help, leaving them incontinent. Such women can have surgery and, in most cases damages can be corrected to such an extent that they can have the chance of getting prégnant again.

In her launching statement, Ramou Cole-Ceesay disclosed that in developing countries including The Gambia, complications in pregnancy and child birth processes remain the leading cause of death among women of child bearing age and girls. She noted that global statistics from the WHO reveal that every minute, around the world, one prégnant woman dies in the procès while 20 to 30 other prégnant women suffer long term or permanent injuries or disability "from the procès of trying to give life."

According to her, the importance attached to the health and well-being of women and girls by the Gambia Government is clearly explained by the déclaration of free-of-charge maternal and newborn health services for Gambian women, among other efforts, pointing to the allocation of the Shelter Gambia Home within the complex of the Department of Social Welfare by government as another strong indication. "This Shelter, under the abled leadership of our dynamic German nurse, Ms Orla Klippe (founder), in close partnership with the Department of Social Welfare in particular, will avail women a two months post opérative and rehabilitative care to fistula patients. The feeding of these patients and payment of skills, facilities and support staff will be borne by Madam Klippe" she stated.

For her part, Ms Orla Klippe revealed that she got in contact with affected women in West Africa through a Christian médical assignment. According to her, their situation had touched her so deeply that she didn't want to watch inactively while young girls and women do not get any help and have to lead undignified lives due to the lack of finances and worldly systems. "That is why I have been here in The Gambia for more than two years now, and I have established contacts in order to assist these women back into normal life," she said.

With Shelter Gambia and in coopération with The Gambia Government, she said, they want to establish a facility in which these women can stay for about two months after being discharged from the hospitals if needed with their children, during which time they will have the chance of recuperating.

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