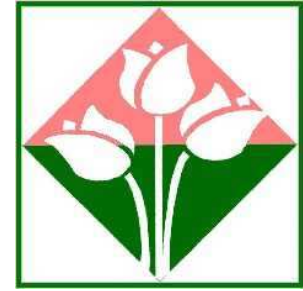




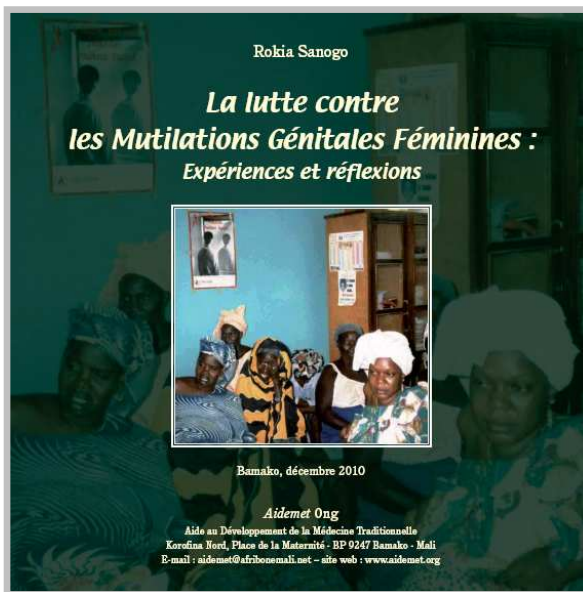
Press Conference

## The Fight Against Female Genital Mutilations

Bamako, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011



As part of the celebration of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the Health and Population Pivot Group, and the NGO "Aid to Development of Traditional Medicine" (*Aidemet*) held a press conference on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 to launch the booklet "**The fight against Female Genital Mutilations: Experiences and Thoughts**", which was published in December 2010 with the technical and financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Bamako Office.



It is a tool to support *Aidemet's* campaign for female genital mutilations (FGM) to be recognised as a public health problem in Mali. The booklet presents a summary of the activities implemented in Kadiolo (Sikasso Region, Mali) from 2002, and reflections on these activities, which focused on the gateway to Maternal and Child Health.

The challenge, with different stakeholders, was to define more innovative approaches and more effective and useful strategies, for the gradual abandonment of the practice of FGM, by barriers which must be more socio-cultural than legal.

Prof. Rokia Sanogo, author of the booklet and President of *Aidemet* NGO, said: "FGM is an ancient practice, rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of Mali. It refers to a set of behaviours and attitudes

that must be understood as intrinsically linked to questions of identity, culture, and social norms. Therefore, its elimination will be neither quick nor easy".

She continued: "We must be aware that there are no miracle solutions, but we must continue to act on the various aspects of the problem and on the societal demand for it. We must use suitable approaches, while locating the abandonment of the practice in the context of normal social and cultural progress among the communities in question".

In conclusion: "To be most effective in the fight against FGM, we will need to pay more attention to socio-cultural and traditional values, with strategies that don't single out the problem of FGM, but which include it in the broader framework of reproductive health promotion, and of the fight against maternal and neonatal mortality, which are universally recognised as urgent problems".



Bamako, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

Text compiled by Dr Sergio Giani, Programs Officer of *Aidemet* Ong.

