



## MERCY SHIPS REPORT



### The Right Tools to Care for Mothers and Children

Sept 16 – 30, 2006



Abibata Alidu is prone to problem pregnancies. She lost three babies in a row because she didn't get to a hospital in time to have the children delivered by caesarean section. In July, Mercy Ships surgeons repaired the birth injury

Abibata sustained during her third and final pregnancy.

Abibata is actually lucky to have survived at all. In Ghana, more than half of all women give birth at home without the assistance of a medical professional. A devastatingly high maternal and child mortality rate is the inevitable result.

When a Mercy Ship visited Ghana in 1994 and 1995, volunteers constructed an 80 bed maternity ward at Tema General Hospital, the community's largest medical facility. Thousands of women have given birth there in the years since, but Tema General is no longer able to handle the maternity case load in a city whose population has grown to more than

300,000 people.

So at the suggestion of the Ghana Ministry of Health, Mercy Ships agreed to construct a second maternity ward at Tema Polyclinic in partnership with the **Cargill company's Citizenship Committee** who provided project funding. The facility provides antenatal care to more than 8000 women a year, but presently has no birthing facilities. The new 5,000 square foot Polyclinic maternity ward will serve more than 20 communities in the southern reaches of Tema.

The clinic's foundation has been laid and the floor poured. Masons set the first course of cement wall block in place this week and the Mercy Ships team expects to have the walls completed in 30 days or less. The finished facility will consist of a four bed birthing room, a surgical suite where c-sections can be performed, a 14 bed general ward, and toileting facilities.

