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Plan to set up hi-tech surgery centre in Kigali gains momentum

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Sybill Storz, managing director of KARL STORZ, Professor Jacques Marescaux, and members of IRCAD delegation pay tribute to the 1994 Genocide victims after visiting the memorial yesterday. Nadege Imbabazi.

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Professor Jacques Marescaux, the president of France based Research Institute against Digestive Cancer (IRCAD), has visited Rwanda for the second time as part of his plan to establish an IRCAD centre in Kigali.

IRCAD is a renowned France based health institute specialising in minimally invasive surgery with branches in Brazil and Taiwan. Minimally invasive surgery is the method of carrying out operation using advanced technology.

Upon his arrival in Rwanda, the French doctor visited Kigali Genocide Memorial (KGM) together with Sybill Storz, a German-based businesswoman and managing director of KARL STORZ, and a delegation from IRCAD. The delegation laid wreath and paid tribute to the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Speaking to the media after the tour, Marescaux revealed that the establishment of an IRCAD centre in Kigali is in advanced stages as they have secured partnerships with different stakeholders, adding that the centre would soon be set up.

“I’m here because we plan to build an institute of research in minimally invasive surgery that is ready to save lives. This will be the largest institute as it will serve as a continental centre. Already, all our networks of international experts have agreed to come to Kigali for this project. I had also to convince big companies like Karl Storz and an American company, all of which have agreed to invest in the centre. This is why doctor Storz is here with me,” he explained.

He disclosed that Medtronic, a global leader in medical technology, services, and solutions, has committed to invest US\$1 million (approximately Rwf 849.7 million) of medical devices for the centre every year. He also said that Karl Storz was looking to invest more than US\$7 million (approximately Rwf5.9 billion).

The centre, he said, would go a long way in training the next generation of surgeons on the continent, and that it would attract different doctors and professionals from Africa and across the world to come and work in Rwanda.

“We are not only going to build a training centre, but also a big department of research for computer-assisted surgery. We want all African surgeons to benefit from this centre, and the benefits will go beyond surgeons to citizens of Rwanda and the continent,” he noted.

The medic is expected to meet senior government officials to discuss his immediate plans for the construction of the facility.

The overall aim is to build an institute to develop new techniques for minimally invasive surgery or non-aggressive surgery. This means using new technologies in saving lives in surgery, like computer-assisted surgery.

Rwanda is currently making huge investments in adopting modern technologies to improve the health sector, and Malick Kayumba, the Head of Communications at Rwanda Biomedical Centre, told The New Times that this centre is one of the projects that the country is looking forward to.

He said that the government has already identified land in Kicukiro District, where infrastructure will be set up, and that construction activities for IRCAD centre will kick off any time soon.

“The centre will be constructed in Masaka near where the University Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK) will be relocated,” he said.

The government said last year that the proposed centre would train surgeons who would then be dispatched to different district hospitals across the country.

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