HIV/Aids trend worrying

Statistics on HIV/Aids have, in recent years,

demonstrated a decline in the rate of new

infections, giving hope that the war against

the pandemic was slowly being won.

However, new information indicates that

the trend may have changed but the problem

persists. Research evidence from the National

Aids and Sexually Transmitted Infections Control

Programme (Nascop) shows that many new

infections are being registered among new-born

babies.

According to Nascop, 11,000 babies born every

year are HIV-positive, meaning that mother-to-child

infection is rising. Part of the reason is that many

women fall victim to sexual violence, sometimes

perpetrated by HIV-positive men, infecting them

and in case of pregnancy, their unborn babies too.

Added to this are certain cultural practices such

as wife inheritance, which in some cases force

women into sexual relationships with HIV-positive

men.

Given the circumstances, new campaigns

targeting pregnant mothers, especially in rural

areas and in urban slums, should be mounted

to reduce mother-to-child infections, which are

becoming the new frontier for HIV-challenge.