TALKING POINT SHORT TAKES

*Moral crusaders against condom ad*

*are part of the problem in Aids war*

The proverbial ostrich with a

knack for burying its head

in the sand would have been

very much at home in Kenya. This

is because Kenyans not only like

burying their heads in the sand, but

also cherish living in self-denial.

The case in point is the heat that

was generated by “Weka Condom

Mpangoni” advert. This was a public

campaign encouraging use of

condom among women in sexual

relationship outside marriage.

The heat forced Population

Service International, who are the

sponsors of the campaign, to suspend

the advert on March 19 amid

mounting protests from religious

leaders as debate for and against

the advert raged in the social media.

Ironically, religious leaders who

are up in arms against the advert

have a representative who sits in

the National Aids Control Council

(NACC) board that came up with

the advert.

Those whose ire has been drawn

by the advert describe it as immoral

and misleading. According

to them, women are depicted as

cheats. They also claim that the

advert encourages infidelity and

casual sex among Kenyans.

It is imperative to note that the

controversial advert was informed

by research that shows that married

couples are three times more

likely to be infected with HIV compared

to prostitutes.

T*he Kenya AIDS epidemic update*

*2012*, described as the first comprehensive

update of HIV and Aids

epidemic in the country over the

last decade, gives grim statistics,

which authorities say informed the

creation of the condom use advert

campaign.

The findings warn that more

than 44.1 per cent of all new HIV

infections are occurring in stable or

long-term relationships, including

marriages, and that 65 per cent of

recent infections occurred among

women under 35 years while 40.1

per cent for men aged 35-44 years

were victims.

Prostitutes accounted for a paltry

14.05 per cent of new infections followed

closely by those engaging in

casual sex, like one night stands, at

20.28 per cent. The report further

estimated that 45 per cent of married

couples who are HIV positive

have partners who are not currently

infected, therefore putting their

discordance at great risk.

Tragically for this country,

religious leaders and other selfanointed

moral crusaders will not

let those in the know deal with

problems at hand without erecting

unwarranted hurdles. If they

are not happy with such strategies,

the best they can do is to give the

best alternative of passing useful

information.

**KIMANI WA NJUGUNA, Gatundu**