

Victims' woes being documented

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat: The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) has started documenting testimonies of people living with HIV about the discrimination they face. **SUN 21.5.2000**

The project, which was begun last year, is expected to be completed in a few months, MAC president Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir said.

She said the purpose is to identify the problem areas so that appropriate action can be taken to resolve them.

"The problem we have is that very few people are willing to come out and state their case because the implications of public exposure are so great.

"This is a chicken and egg situation - it is hard to prove that there is discrimination against them) if they don't come out,"

she told reporters after the opening of the MAC's fifth biannual general meeting today.

However, she said, it is crucial to record their testimonies or else both the MAC and the government will not know the details of discrimination and how to respond to their problems.

Marina said the documentation is done by MAC's trained workers who are trusted by these people to guarantee their anonymity.

She said some have complained about the attitude of medical staff towards them, treating them differently.

"We have to document exactly what happened so we can present the information to the Health Ministry, so they know what sort of training is needed to prevent this," she said.