**Kemri's ties with local**

**Herbalists explained**

Local herbalists have given

only 1,500 samples of traditional

herbs to the Kenya Institute

of Medical Research

(KEMRI) and not 45,000

samples as alleged by some of

them ..

The director of Keinri's

Traditional Medicines and

Drugs Research Centre, Dr

Kofi Tsekpo, told a special

press conference in Nairobi

yesterday that the institute

had dealings with 20 traditional

medicine practitioners.

Dr Tsekpo was explaining

to the Press on how the traditional

medicine centre functions

and its relationship

with herbalists.

The conference was attended

by four: herbalists who are

co-operating with the centre.

The director said that no

one could rob a genuine traditional

herbalist of his

medicine.

"We try to inform herbalists

, about the possible dangers that

, may be in their drugs Unfortunately

some of them do not

possess any letter of acknowedgement

from us about the receipt of samples of their of how their medicine works."

He said that the criteria to be

met by drugs to be administered

to humans include purity, safety

and identity of plants because

substances from certain poisonous

plants cannot be used.

There is no traditional herb

that can cure AIDS up to now

although we have a keen interest

in herbal treatment of such

condition.

He said that the controversial

herbalist from western Kenya,

Mr Hudson Lubanga, had attempted

to send a bag to the

centre which he claimed contained

Aids herbs "but the procedure

requires that such be handed

in person and the herbalist

interviewed before his goods are

accepted".

Dr Ksekpo said that the centre

had highly qualified researchers

with a minimum of a master degrees

who have skills in identifying

genuine herbalists.

"We don't just go with what

they tell us or what they bring

here. We actually follow them up

at a later date to see whether they

are at least known to the community

as herbalists." he added

Dr Ksepko said' that the centre

Helped genuine herbalists "who

are not among those who shouted

loudest".

**Aids: Scientists claim success**

Researchers in Europe are claiming

they are about to make a major

breakthrough in finding an effective

treatment for the Human

Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

which causes Aids.

In Belgium, reseachers claim

that they have identified new

anti-viral substances which can

be used to interfere with an enzyme

that is essential to the survival

of the virus.

Dr Rudi Pauwels. from the Rega Institute of Medical Research,

claims that the new antiviral

compounds codenamed

TIBO can block an enzyme and

therefore stop the virus from

multiplying. However, critics say

that the compounds is similar to

others which have been developed

such as DDC and DOI,

which could be used' to block an

enzyme called Reverse

Transcriptase which slows the

--replication ,of the virus. None of these compounds have

produced dramatic results like

the ones obtained by KEMRI researchers

who developed KEMRON.

KEMRON eliminated fatal

Aids symptoms in at least 101

patients. '

The efficacy of the drug.

shocked many observers world

wide, who believed an Aids drogs

could not come from a developing

country.