Angatia's appeal to Kenyans over HIV

The Minister for Health, Mr

Joshua Angatia, yesterday said

Kenyans need to change their social

and cultural attitude in order

to check the spread of the HIV

virus and. Aids.

Mr Angatia said this when he;""

opened the 23rd Annual Scientific

Conference of the Kenya Medical

Association at the Travelers

Beach Hotel in Mombasa.

,He said some communities still

found plausible folklore explanations

to account for Aids, thus

tending to disbelieve and discard

scientific facts about the transmission of the deadly virus.

"Such attitudes have 'not '

helped much in curbing the

spread of the virus", he said.

Mr Angatia said although the

knowledge base regarding HIV

infection was solid in Kenya, the

expected corresponding

behavioural change was still

lacking.

"There is, therefore, a worry

knowledge-practice gap which

must be closed."

The Minister challenged

behavioural scientists, particularly those specialised in psychology,

social and cultural issues to

lead the way in educating Kenyans to change their attitudes.

He said that the absence of

specific vaccine or therapy for

the HIV virus have. been rightly

stressed by health workers and

other scientists.

He said that the Ministry of

Health in conjunction with other

Ministries had from time to time

issued official HIV-related guidelines

which have been stressed by

health workers and other

,scientist~.

He said that the guidelines

have covered issues such as blood

transfusions, counseling, precaution

at work places and ethical

matters.

Inadequate health facilities

have put medical practitioners at

a great risk of contracting the

*HN* virus" the conference' was

told. .

Delivering a keynote adding during the opening of

conference, Prof Mutama

Mugambi, said that most Ministry

of health facilities are very

deficient at present .. '

"Health facilities need to be

equipped and adequately staffed'

to handle diagnosis, blood Screening,

counseling and disease management", Prof Mugambi said.

He-said the National Aids Control

Programmes have largely

failed to have the expected impact

.due to local interference

with their operations including

high staff turnovers ..

He said the Programmes have

lacked local resources and hence

heavily depended on donor funds .