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UN **official,**

**laud efforts**

**on disease**

By NATION Reporter

The Sessional Paper on Aids in Kenya is “a remarkable piece of work”, according to Dr Peter Plot, the

executive director of the Joint United Nations

Programme on HIV/Aids.

Dr Piot said yesterday the session was evidence of the Government’s commitment to curbing

the Aids epidemic.

There were very few countries with a clear long-term multi-sectoral strategy that made a political

commitment to combating HP//Aids, he told Health

Minister Jacksor Mulinge when he called on him.

The Joint UNAIds programme is a combined UN

effort at tackling HIV/Aids.

Dr Piot described Kenya’s strategy as a fantastic

approach. You have the right political strategy which

makes it easy to mobilise resources and partners,” he

said, pledging tht UNA ¡cts would help Kenya implement the objectives.

He said it would never be too late to do something

despite the magnitude of HIV/Aids in Kenya “cause each and

every day more youth become

sexually active”

The secret weapon to winning

the battle, he added, was to forge

strong alliances with the other

sectors of society such as non

governmental organisations,

churches and the private sector,

particularly in making decisions

about changes in sexual behaviour

and sex education.

Mulinge said the Sessional Paper on Aids would be

discussed during the current Parliament, next week.

said by March 1997, the

number of reported Aids cases

had reached 74,75. The epidemic

is still showing a upward trend.

I-le indicated hat while most

pans of the country had stable

prevalence rates dyer the last three

years, Meru and Kisii had shown

rapid increases.

In Kisii, prevalence rates shot

up to 15 percent n 1996 from 4.3

per cent in 1995 while in Meru

they rose to 16 per cent from

1995’s nine per cent,

Said Mr Muhige: ‘Whereas

HIV prevalence appears to be declining in urban centres, it is rising

rapidly in rural areas.”

In 1995, the urban prevalence

was 13 per cent. Thìs dropped to

12 per cent in I 96. In the rural

areas, however, the incidence of

HIV rose from six per cent in

1995 to seven per cent in 1996.

Infant ‘aids deaths’ to rise

Infant and child mortality rates

emanating fro Aids is projected

to rise by 80 ,r cent by the Year

2000, the regional director of

United Nation Children's Fund

said yesterday.

Ms Shahida Azfar said if measures

to contain the disease were

not effected, the projected mortality

rates were bound to be higher.

She said Africa would be the

, worst hit as the disease was projected

to increase three-fold, if

proper measures s to contain the

spread were no taken.

"This calls for strong leadership

and openness in tackling the

dreaded disease~," said Ms Azfar.

She was speaking during the

launch of tile Progress ,of

Nations 199~ report on global

Aids trend at the Inter-Continental

Hotel.

The report a so dwells on Contemporary

affecting the

rights of the child.

, •Due to the killer disease, there

has been a tremendous increase of

households headed by children,"

she said.

The executive director

United Nation's Joint programme

on HIV/Aids ( aids), Dr Peter

piot, said initially Aids was

known to be a disease for adults

only, an assumption ion that had been

found to be

Dr Piot said more than two million children had been born With

the virus.

'Others were infected through

blood transfusion and sexual

abuse, ' ' he said.

The executive director said

anti-aids drug were still expensive

the reach of

and far

most patients, especially those

living 'n developing countries.

He said the risk of transmission

from mother to child can be reduced by two-thirds With the

of AZT anti-Aids drug.

'In a year's time, if things go

well the risk Of transmission from

mother to child would be zero,' '

he said.

He said research had proved

that sex education played a major

role in the Aids prevention campaign among the youth contrary to

beliefs it increased sexual activity

among the youth.

However, he said, the United

organisations will sup-

port education and awareness

campaigns that take into consideration education policies, culture

and values of a particular country.

He said more than 140 mahon

children were out of school de-

spite promises by to

increase education facilities by

the year 2000.

'Most of these children are

girls, who are prone to sexual

abuse," said Dr Piot\_

urged religious organisation to continue supplementing government efforts to reduce the spread of the disease.

UnIcef country representative, Mr Crispin Wilson said

Kenya a had more than 360000

infected with the virus and the number was expected

to increase if sexual behavourial

patterns do not change.

'"By the year 2000, if conditions. remain the same, the figure

will double," he said.

Speaking at Kibera's self-help

centre, Mr Wilson urged the private sector .to supplement governments' efforts through rehabilitation centres for orphaned children

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