SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1999

Aids sabotages donor efforts says Wackman

The Aids scourge has undermined

donor efforts to implement and

promote sustainable development.

World Bank country director

Harold Wackman said yesterday.

Mr Wackman told an MPs’

symposium on Ads in Mombasa

that the bank had made the pandemic one of its main targets. He

pledged the bank’s help in fighting the scourge.

Mr Wackman urged leaders to

speak more often and openly

about the epidemic and to ensure

it is addressed in all sectors.

“There is so much more we can

do and there is so much we can

do better and there is a lot we

should stop doing,” he said.

Leaders should desist from using the epidemic and its dreadful consequences for political purposes, he said, adding that individual motivation derails and dismantles efforts to tight Aids.

“I urge you to forget your political, religious

or cultural differences and join forces to fight the real enemy; HIV/Aids epidemic in Kenya. The HIV infection

does not recognize your political

parties, your religion or your

tribes. Fight together to protect

our future and that of our children,” he said.

He urged political leaders not

to leave the tight to medical professionals alone. He said it was

shocking that out of every 100

adults in Kenya, 14 are HIV

positive. .

The World Bank, he said was

concerned with the impact of

Aids on human development saying life expectancy in Africa had

been reduced by 15 years.

‘Profits in many countries

have decreased by almost 20 per

cent as a direct result of

HIV/Aids. The World Bank estimates that countries with high

H1V prevalence will lose I per

cent GDP growth per capita

annually,” Mr Wckman said.

It is estimated that Kenya’s

cumulative loss as a result of

Aids will be 15 per cent over the

next decade, he said.

He called on the government.

leaders and society to rigorously

create policy, legal and fiscal

space to allow the civil society to

flourish and contribute to counter

the source.

He urged the Government to

make condoms more accessible

by ‘lowering the inconvenience

of acquiring” them. It should

also urgently finalize the cost-

sharing policy and improve transparency particularity in the treatment costs for sexually transmitted diseases and Aids

related illnesses.