Report on Aids spread released

UNITED NATIONs. Thursday

The number of people in eastern

Europe infected with HIV, the

\_virus that causes Aids, increased

nine-fold in just three years from

fewer than 30,000 to an estimated

270,000 by the end of 1998, the

United Nations reported today.

"Approximately 80 percent of

infections are in individuals who

inject drugs," said Mr Peter Piot,

director of the UN joint programme

on HIV/Aids.

Mr Piot is due to make the opening

speech to the ninth international

conference on people living,

with HIV/Aids in Warsaw on

Friday.

"In the region, Ukraine has been

the most dramatically affected

and Belarus, Moldova,' Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation

also have growing HIV

epidemics."

But, he said, "Condom manufacturers

have reported that Poland is

now the largest market, for condoms

in eastern Europe -- an

indication of how many people

have adopted safer behaviour."

(AFP)