

WHO to spend Sh2bn on research for pneumonia vaccine

By **NATION** Correspondent

A total of Sh2.19 billion will be used on research for a pneumonia vaccine.

An international meeting at Mnarani Club in Kilifi District was yesterday told that the research was being carried out at the Johns Hopkins University.

The money will come from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, said Prof Orin S. Levine, the executive director of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at the university.

About 1.6 million adults and 800,000 children die from pneumonia every year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), he said.

He was speaking at the third annual conference on pneumonia and related diseases.

"Nearly all these deaths occur in the world's poorest countries. Pneumococcal meningitis is the most severe form of pneumococcal disease and one of the most fatal childhood illnesses," said Prof Levine, noting that in developing coun-

tries, it killed or disabled between 40 to 70 per cent of the children who got infected.

The WHO and other stakeholders were working to improve the vaccine and make it accessible, he said.

Dr Wamae Maranga said that 2.5 per cent of children admitted in the hospitals in the country suffered from meningitis.