

# Leverage digital tech to combat corruption—Veep

BY KINGSLEY ASARE & ANITA NYARKO-YIRENKYI

**T**HE Vice President, Dr Alhaji Mahmudu Bawumia, has called on the anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies in Africa, to leverage digital technology to combat corruption.

He said: "In an age of sophisticated artificial intelligence, enabled cybercrime is for anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies to invest in digital forensics and tools that will enable our various countries track, trace and disrupt the entire corruption value chain".

The Vice President made the call at the 14th Commonwealth Regional Congress and Annual Regional Conference of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, currently underway in Accra.

The four-day event, is being organised by the Economic and

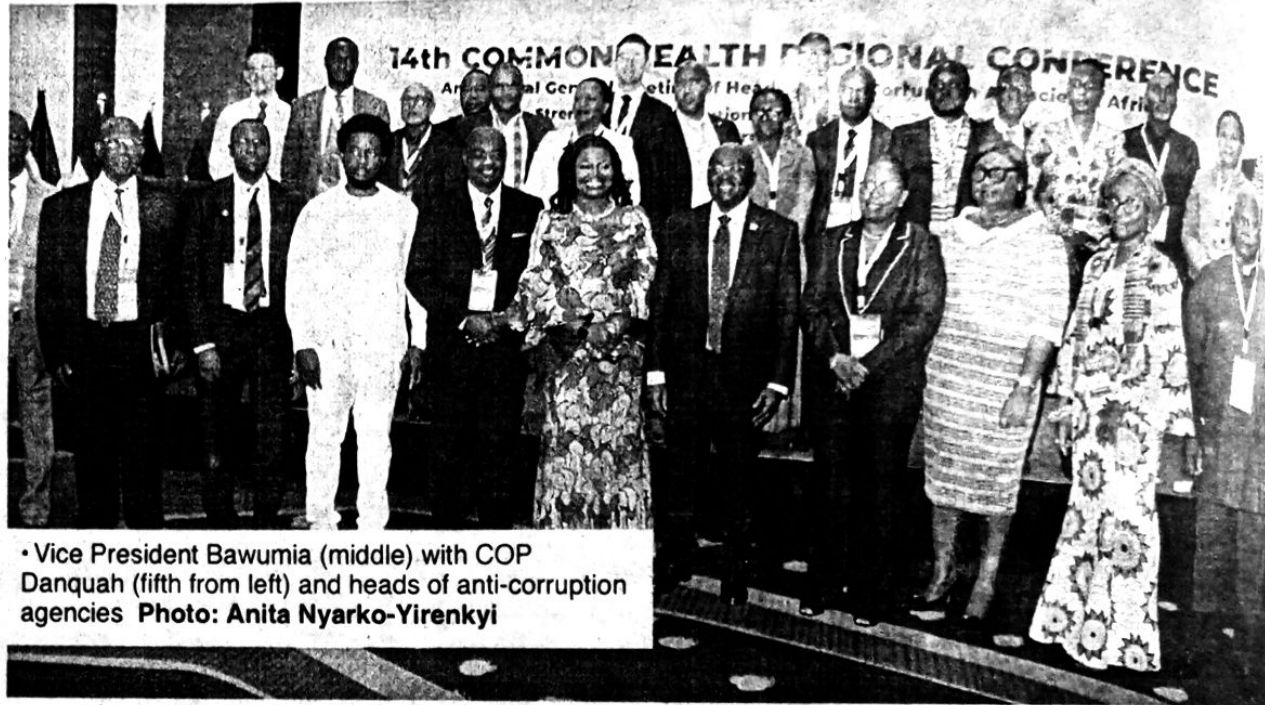
Organised Crime Office (EOCO), under the theme: "Strengthening Institutions and Promoting Transparency: A Means of Fighting Corruption in Commonwealth Africa."

It is being attended by more than 120 delegates from anti-corruption institutions from 21 Commonwealth countries.

Dr Bawumia, who delivered the keynote address under the theme: "Forging partnerships: Blueprint for forensic investigations and asset recovery in Commonwealth Africa," said with the right digital tools and its use, anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies could defeat the worst forms of public corruption, including the networks that underpinned them.

He said digital technology had the capacity to track and disrupt corruption and related activities of actors in the corruption value chain.

The Vice President asked anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies to establish customised



• Vice President Bawumia (middle) with COP Danquah (fifth from left) and heads of anti-corruption agencies Photo: Anita Nyarko-Yirenkyi

security operation centres towards fighting corruption, adding that bribery and corruption threatened the development of Africa and its youth.

He said corruption siphoned and denied Africa the needed financial resources to develop and fund education, health, and infrastructure.

Dr Bawumia said some estimates suggested that over the last five decades, more than \$1 trillion, which was equivalent to all the official development assistance, was lost in Africa through corruption and illicit financial flows.

He said this should be a deeply

worrying situation to every African, especially to anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies.

"No country, no region or community is immune. It damages education, health, justice, democracy, and development, and it is one of the biggest impediments to achieving the sustainable development goals. It is my hope that together we will continue our efforts to defeat corruption in Africa in all its forms," the Vice President stated.

The partner of Grant Thornton, UK, LLP, Amaechi Nsofor, called for political will, international collaboration and funding, to help

combat corruption and illicit financial flows.

He said corruption cost Africa about \$100 billion per annum and illicit financial flows cost about \$60 billion.

Mr Nsofor said the cost of corruption and illicit financial flows was more than \$120 billion annually needed to address the infrastructure gap of Africa.

"If we are able to tackle corruption and illicit financial flows from Africa, there will be no need for the governments of the region to borrow to finance infrastructural and development projects," he said.