

## **Geological Heritage in Africa: the Case Study of East African Geo-Sites/Parks**

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By January 1996, 35 out of 56 African countries (62.5%) had ratified and joined the World Heritage Convention. Out of the 469 sites on the World Heritage List (by January 1996), Africa accounts for only 70 sites (14.9% of the world's total). This figure is very dismal when compared to Europe, though Africa has the most spectacular and scenic geological and geomorphological treasures of all ages documenting our planet's internal and external processes through time. These Earth's treasures have to be explored, documented and preserved for the benefit of all mankind.

East African geological history is very spectacular in that it began from about 4 billion years ago (e.g. Archaean Craton) and continues to today (e.g. active rifts and alkaline volcanism). Only three geo-sites/parks (Aldabra Atoll, Ngorongoro Crater and Kilimanjaro National Park) appear on the World Heritage List, though East Africa has at least twenty localities which deserve to be on this list. Unique geological sites such as Oldoinyo Lengai (active alkaline volcanism, Tanzania), Tendaguru (dinosaurs' bones, Tanzania) Lake Turkana basin (dinosaurs' bones, rifting tectonics, Kenya). Owen Falls of Uganda, Lithospheric - scale Aswa Shear Zone which runs from Uganda to Madagascar via southern Kenya, and many more localities call for recognition as geological heritage and have to appear on the UNESCO/World Heritage List as geo - sites/parks.