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Geotourism - an area that needs special attention in Tanzania

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Earth's resources involve not only its mineral and energy resources and land-use for construction, but also its natural wonders including its unique geological and biological features, which attract nature lovers and tourists.

Tanzania is structured on a granitic nucleus of the Archaean Craton, with younger crystalline rocks of Proterozoic to Recent age progressively rimming the granitic nucleus. The younger sedimentary rocks occupy the coastal plains and inland basins, with volcanism filling the rifted grabens. Archaean, Proterozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic rocks occur in Tanzania. In the north, the East African Rift Valley is slowly pulling apart the Earth's crust, forming an active continental rift zone in East Africa.

This unique geological setting has created plentiful natural wonders in Tanzania, including: the Ngorongoro Crater (the largest, inactive, unbroken and unflooded caldera in the world), the Kilimanjaro (the roof of Africa), the Oldoinyo Lengai (the only active volcano on planet Earth erupting natro-carbonatite lava), the Oldupai Gorge (the cradle of mankind, home of the first hominoids), the Tendaguru (most famous dinosaur locality in Africa), and many more. Thanks to those natural wonders, Tanzania is known as a favorite tourist destination.

These unique natural wonders of Tanzania should be protected, conserved, and managed sustainably to ensure that they are preserved for the benefit of today's and future generations. However, in Tanzania, geotourism is still not sufficiently appreciated. Some geosites, which contribute as the best locality for geotourism, are ill-protected and vulnerable to disappearance. Some geosites that could present spectacular locality for geotourism, are not documented. There is a need to well-document such geosites in Tanzania, with a geoheritage conservation approach for socioeconomic benefits of the

communities around the geosites, and for the general public. This will stimulate geotourism, facilitating the consideration of some geosites into geoparks, thus enhancing the tourism industry in Tanzania.

