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## **Sustainable Geoscience Information In Africa - The GIRAF Network And Its Future Development**

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Most African countries have common geoscience information challenges such as human resources (find and retain skilled staff, isolated projects, difficult to access data and research results and the geological Surveys often struggle to manage their data and infrastructure.

The Geoscience InfoRmation in AFrica network (GIRAF) provides a forum to address and improve the situation and has built a platform for African geoscience information experts to share information and experience and to cooperate and network across political boundaries. In addition, GIRAF facilitates the identification of knowledge gaps and offers opportunities from an African perspective.

GIRAF is evolving since 2007. Objectives of GIRAF activities are the provision, dissemination and use of geoscience information and geodata in Africa through a sound geodata-management supporting sustainable development in the fields of

- Mineral planning and mining;
- Artisanal mining (environmental impact studies, legalizing, health aspects, socially acceptable living conditions in mining housing estates, etc.);
- Securing and protection of water resources;
- Soil protection.

GIRAF was initiated by the Commission for the Management and Application of Geoscience Information (CGI) of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) 2007 in Mozambique at a planning workshop during the 21. Colloquium of African Geology in Mozambique. The Network is coordinated since then by Dr. Kristine Asch of BGR, Secretary General of the CGI, together with the GIRAF Steering Committee consisting of eminent African Key players such as Prof. Aberra Mogessie (President of Geological Society of Africa, GSaf), Dr. Felix Toteu (UNESCO Nairobi), Prof. Ezzoura Errami (President of the African Association of Women Geologists) and others. The Committee is supporting the network and its development and is providing advice. The future GIRAF office is planned to be hosted by AMGC (African Minerals and Geosciences Centre in Dar es Salaam).

Four main GIRAF conferences were held by now: in 2009 (GIRAF2009, Windhoek, Namibia), in 2011 (GIRAF2011, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania), in 2013 (GIRAF 2013, Accra, Ghana) and in 2015 (GIRAF2015, Maputo, Mozambique).

At the last event, GIRAF2015, also the future of GIRAF was extensively discussed, in addition to the big themes of Geoscience information for sustainable mining, for stones for development and for the environment. A constitution for the future GIRAF was drafted and it is planned that in November 2016, at the 26<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of African Geology (CAG26), the coordination of GIRAF will be finally handed over to the African GIRAF members. Two GIRAF ambassadors, Florence Malong from Cameroon and Terence Ngole from Tanzania are nominated as co-coordinators in the interim period; the current ambassadors will act as interim GIRAF pre-Council members.

This presentation presents the achievements and challenges of the GIRAF network so far and gives an outlook to the future of the GIRAF.

