

**AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LAUNCHING THE
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH (IYPE), NGURDOTO
CONFERENCE CENTRE, ARUSHA TANZANIA,
08-09 MAY 2008**
“Earth Sciences for Society Development in Africa”

**ARUSHA DECLARATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF PLANET EARTH**

Preamble

Recalling Resolution 60/192 of the United Nations General Assembly proclaiming 2008 the International Year of Planet Earth;

Welcoming Declarations Assembly/AU/Decl.4 (VIII) and Assembly/AU/Decl.5 (VIII) of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Climate Change and Development of Africa and on Science, Technology and Research and Development, respectively;

Recalling Maputo Declaration on the Development of the Geosciences in Africa presented at the 21st Colloquium of African Geology held from 3 to 5 July 2006;

Further recalling the Declaration of the International Year of Planet Earth presented at the Global Launch Event on 12th February 2008 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris;

Considering the potential role geosciences can contribute towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa;

Noting the crucial roles of the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in this regard;

Convinced that important issues like climate, water, natural resources, energy, health, soils, ocean, deep earth, and natural hazards as highlighted in the International Year of Planet Earth’s science programme impact on the social and economic development of Africa;

Further convinced that knowledge and understanding in geosciences can help Africa learn from the past mistakes in the environmental management of planet Earth in order to improve the quality of life of its people;

We, the Participants of the IYPE Africa Launch Event,

Urge Leaders of African nations to give their political support to this initiative, to recognize the great potential of the geosciences in the building a safer, healthier and wealthier planet Earth, and to encourage the development of new knowledge and technologies for the benefit of the African nations;

Encourage the African Geoscience community, the UN system, NGOs, CBOs, private sector and partners in development to support this initiative by:

- (a) developing strategies to reduce the impact of natural and human induced hazards and disasters and improving the awareness of the African people of the need to combat poverty through sustainable management of the environment and the natural resources of the continent;
- (b) Strengthening the national Geoscience infrastructures, increasing national research budgets, enhancing research capacity of African science institutions in order to foster the emergence of high quality research, development and innovation in Africa;
- (c) *Improving* the extent and quality of geological understanding throughout the continent and developing improved geoscience information networks, in order to assist exploration of minerals, energy and water resources and to address major environmental challenges that face the continent;
- (d) *Promoting* awareness of the structure, evolution, beauty and diversity of the African continent and the culture of its people inscribed in landscapes, through the establishment of “Geoparks”, biosphere reserves and African Geological Heritage Sites as a public tool for conservation and development;
- (e) *Improving* access to Geoscience knowledge through revised national educational systems in order to attract more young Africans, especially women in Geoscience and related disciplines;
- (f) *Promoting* the African Geo-heritage and the establishment of Earth Resources Museums in Africa and making available educational and research materials and encourage open access and tools that will make scientific knowledge on planet Earth more accessible to the public and provide a lasting legacy for the IYPE.
- (g) *Promoting Geoscience research that leads to policy formulation;*
- (h) *Enhancing* the capacity to adapt to climate variability by expanding climate monitoring station network and improving reliability of weather and climate forecasts over Africa.