

# GIRAF 2009

GIRAF 2009 - Geoscience Information in Africa

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The Geological Survey of Namibia hosted the international GIRAF 2009 workshop from the 16-20 March 2009 at the Ministry of Mines and Energy auditorium, in Windhoek. About 94 scientists and GIS professionals, from 30 countries (27 of which are African countries) attended the workshop.

GIRAF 2009 was organised by the Federal Institute for Geo-sciences and Natural Resources (BGR), in co-operation with the Geological Survey of Namibia (GSN), and the IUGS Commission for the Management and Application of Geo-science Information (CGI). The main sponsor of the event was the German Federal Ministry for Cooperation and Development and their organising committee, who included Dr. Gabi Schneider (GSN), Anna Nguno (GSN) and Peter Schuette (BGR), and was headed by Dr. Kristine Asch (BGR, Chair of CGI), and supported by Ian Jackson (British Geological Survey) and Dr. Max Fernandez (Royal Museum Tervuren).

The aim of the workshop was to:

- endorse the building of a pan-African network for geo-science information
- bring together the relevant authorities and national experts for geo-science information across the continent
- promote Africa's active involvement in the global geo-science information community

Invited speakers including Dr. Sospeter Muhongo, Dr. Felix Toteu, Dr. Sarah Gains, Ian Jackson, Dr. Kristine Asch and Anna Nguno, provided African and global perspectives on geo-science data issues. During the workshop, various presentations on approaches applied to manage and distribute geo-science information across Africa were given. Apart from presentations, courses on Freeware GIS, Web servers and GeoSciML were also offered. Several working group sessions were held in order to exchange ideas on improving the handling and management of geological information in Africa, and creating a strategic plan. A working group session on identifying GIS infrastructural needs in Africa.

During the workshop, the participants were also treated to a variety of conference dinners and an excursion to GocheGanas lodge & Nature Reserve. In overall, the workshop was a success with most of the international delegates also expressing their delight with our country. A GIRAF Strategy and Agreement document was approved and signed by the participants, at the end of the workshop. More information about GIRAF can be found at [www.giraf2009.org](http://www.giraf2009.org).