



Landscapes with high geotouristic value and impact from the Benguela-Sumbe region (Western Angola): inventory and geological characterization

Luís V. Duarte (1), Januário Segundo (2), Alberto Gonçalves (3), João R. Cavita (2), Luís Lapão (4), Manuel Bandeira (3), Pedro Callapez (5), Luís Meneses (6), and Mendonça E. Prata (7)

(1) Universidade de Coimbra, Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Ciências da Terra and IMAR-CMA, Portugal (lduarte@dct.uc.pt), (2) Instituto Superior Politécnico Maravilha, Benguela, Angola, (3) Universidade Katyavala Bwila, Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação de Benguela, Angola, (4) Partex Oil & Gas, Portugal, (5) Universidade de Coimbra, Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Ciências da Terra and Centro de Geofísica, Portugal, (6) Opinion Consulting, Angola, (7) Direcção Provincial da Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia da Província do Kuanza Sul –Sumbe, Angola

The natural beauties and wildlife of Austral Africa are worldwide known, and their related touristic and socio-economic activities have a strong interregional impact. Angola, one of the larger countries from this region of the Southern Hemisphere, shows a high number of natural landscapes, well testified by the recent election of “7 Natural Wonders of Angola”. This contest, the first one of this kind carry out in Africa, means the priority of this country in the promotion of geotourism. Despite the large diversity of landscapes, among deserts, mountains, coastal cliffs, waterfalls, and/or caves, resulting from different geomorphological contexts and age (from Archaean to Recent), the geological knowledge of the territory remains poor, through scientific documents, great part of them published before and around the 70’s of last century. Based on this concern, the first goal of this work is the inventory and the geological description of several geosites with natural relevance and touristic potential from the Meso-Cenozoic coastal region of Benguela and Sumbe Provinces (Western Angola). This area, particularly materialized by the sedimentary infill of Benguela Basin, with deposits (carbonates, siliciclastics and evaporites) mainly dated from the Cretaceous, has been recently studied and researched by our team in the domains of sedimentary geology, stratigraphy, geological mapping, resources and geoheritage. On the basinal onshore stand out hundreds of outcrops with good exposure, great part of them never studied, representing and recording a large number of sedimentary units deposited on a complex tectonic setting. Besides the geological characterization of Egito-Praia, Sassa Caves and Binga waterfalls (this one located in the eastern boundary of the basin), three of the twenty seven sites proposed for the reported Angola’s natural wonders contest, we present and describe several other distinctive natural sites and coastal landscapes of this region such as the cases of Binge, Tapado, Quicombo, Quissonde and Porto Amboim beaches. All these localities, mainly highlighted by their geomorphological attributes and high geotouristic impact (including history and other leisure aspects), present an exceptional geological record, being important in the stratigraphic knowledge of the Benguela (and Kwanza) Basin. With this work we intend to update and promote the geological knowledge of all these sites, so that this new information could be support future programs of valorization and geoconservation.

The authors would like to acknowledge the consortium agreement between the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and Instituto Superior Politécnico da Tundavala (Angola).