



Strides in Preservation of Malawi's Natural Stone

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The geology of Malawi is broadly grouped into four main lithological units that is the Basement Complex, the Karoo Super group, Tertiary to Quaternary sedimentary deposits and the Chilwa Alkaline province. The basement complex rocks cover much of the country and range in age from late Precambrian to early Paleozoic. They have been affected by three major phases of deformation and metamorphism that is the Irumide, Ubendian and The Pan-African. These rocks comprise gneisses, granulites and schists with associated mafic, ultramafic, syenites and granite rocks. The Karoo System sedimentary rocks range in age from Permian to lower Jurassic and are mainly restricted to two areas in the extreme North and extreme Alkaline Province - late Jurassic to Cretaceous in age, preceded by upper Karoo Dolerite dyke swarms and basaltic lavas, have been intruded into the Basement Complex gneisses of southern Malawi.

Malawi is endowed with different types of natural stone deposits most of which remain unexploited and explored. Over twenty quarry operators supply quarry stone for road and building construction in Malawi. Hundreds of artisanal workers continue to supply aggregate stones within and on the outskirts of urban areas. Ornamental stones and granitic dimension stones are also quarried, but in insignificant volumes. In Northern Malawi, there are several granite deposits including the Nyika, which is the largest single outcrop occupying approximately 260.5 km², Mtwalo Amazonite an opaque to translucent bluish –green variety of microcline feldspar that occurs in alkali granites and pegmatite, the Ilomba granite (sodalite) occurring in small areas within biotite; apatite, plagioclase and calcite. In the Center, there are the Dzalanyama granites, and the Sani granites. In the South, there are the Mangochi granites. Dolerite and gabbroic rocks spread across the country, trending as black granites. Malawi is also endowed with many deposits of marble. A variety of other igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks are also used as dimension stones.

Discovery and preservation of more natural stone deposits through research is essential in the country. Natural stone preservation has not only the potential to generate significant direct and indirect economic benefits for Malawi but also to preserve its heritage.