

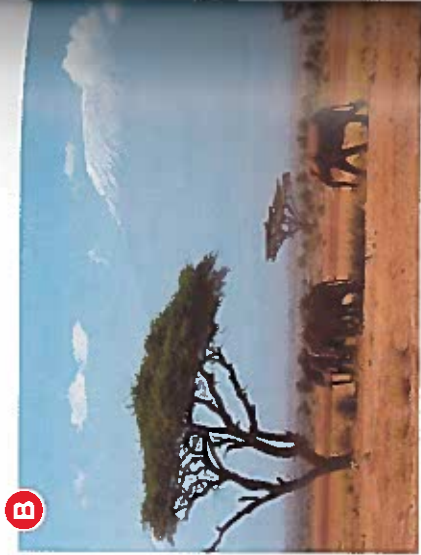
# What is the physical landscape of Africa?

## Learning objectives

- ▶ To know the physical landscape of Africa.
- ▶ To understand the importance of the natural resources of Africa.

In terms of its physical geography, Africa is different to other continents. Its surface is mainly composed of very old, stable, hard rocks. Much of the continent is formed of one tectonic plate. The Great Rift Valley in East Africa is being formed as tectonic activity forms new plates. As plates do not collide into the continent, there are few mountain belts as found in other continents, except the Atlas Mountains to the north. The Sahara Desert, the world's largest hot desert, dominates North Africa. Some of the world's largest and longest rivers are found in Africa, see Map A.

### A Physical map of Africa, Philip's Essential School Atlas



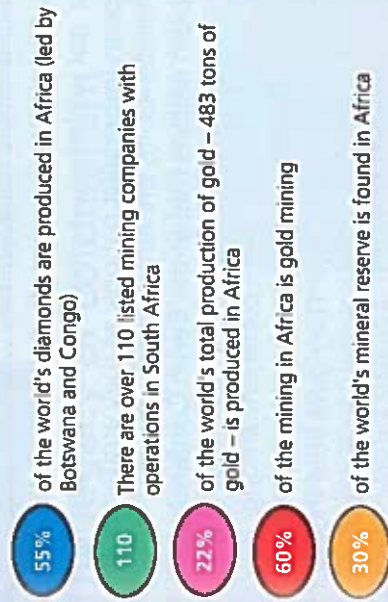
## Natural resources

Africa is rich in natural resources:

- It exports 16 per cent of the world's uranium, used to produce nuclear energy; bauxite, a main aluminium ore; and 58 per cent of the world's cobalt.
- In 2011, Africa produced more than half of the world's diamonds, and nearly 75 per cent of the world's platinum.
- Africa has 10 per cent of the world's oil and gas reserves.
- Africa is also rich in forests, a source of major hardwoods.
- Nigeria and Libya are two of the leading oil producing countries in the world.

These mineral resources are not, however, evenly distributed across the continent. The largest reserves are concentrated in a few countries: Guinea mines 90 per cent of Africa's bauxite; Ghana and South Africa account for 60 per cent of Africa's gold. South Africa is the world's largest producer of chrome, manganese, platinum, vanadium and vermiculite. Botswana and the Democratic Republic of Congo produce 69 per cent of Africa's diamonds. Zambia holds 69–75 per cent of Africa's copper.

### Mining in Africa: FACTS



### E Facts from a mining company in Africa

## Activities

- Look back at Lesson 11.2, Diagram A (page 204). Describe how Africa has formed over the last 200 million years.
- Look back at Lessons 11.3 and 11.4 (pages 206–207) and compare the geographical data there with Map A.
  - Describe the distribution of volcanoes and earthquakes across Africa.
  - Use coordinates to name and locate places on Map A that you think are formed as a result of plate movements.
- Look carefully at Map A.
  - On an outline map of Africa, locate and name the physical landforms and landscapes found at the following coordinates:
    - 37° S 37°20' E
    - 23° N 5° E
    - 0°10' S 24°30' E
    - 10° N 37° E
    - 24° S 25° E
    - 32° N 5° W
  - Compare Map A with Map C in Lesson 6.1.0 (page 121) and name the river basins in Africa (13, 15, 17, 18, 20).
  - Name the seas and oceans that surround the continent.
- Look carefully at Photos B–D. They show the Great Rift Valley, the Sahara Desert, and Mount Kilimanjaro.
  - Match the photos to their locations.
  - In each case justify your choice.
  - Locate each image on Map A.
  - For one of the photos use the enquiry questions to describe what you can see.
- Look carefully at information E.
  - List the statistical evidence that demonstrates the world importance of natural resources in Africa.
  - What is the issue regarding Africa's natural resources?

## Stretch and challenge

Go to the degree confluence website: <http://confluence.org>

Find confluence points as close as possible to the coordinates provided in question 3a), for two locations (some points are yet to be visited). Use the enquiry questions on page 3 to describe each location, and locate it on your outline map of Africa.