



Kenya: A Natural Outlook: Chapter 11. Major Soil and Data Types in Kenya (Developments in Earth Surface Processes)

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Soil is a natural resource that supports food production and numerous types of support to life on earth. It occurs on the earth's surface as groups or types, which have special capabilities. To identify these capabilities, soil scientists have developed tools for mapping soil types in the landscape so that their potential uses can be maximised. However, the mapping tool needs sufficient input data that many countries in the world do not have. In Kenya, the input data for soil mapping can be found from several governmental and nongovernmental organisations. This study identified and described publicly available soil data and new tools that can be used to produce high-resolution soil map of Kenya. The spatial distribution of the locations of these soil information sources showed that the northeastern parts of the country have been poorly represented in soil information development. Furthermore, using the available soil data, this study developed a new soil map of Kenya at a higher scale than the currently available area-class map. This soil map depicts the country as consisting of 22 main soil groups according to the FAO-UNESCO classification. These groups are dominated by soil types that have strong crop production limitations under rain-fed agriculture but are good for the development of pastoral resources. This implies that rain-fed crop production in the country cannot adequately sustain the consumptive demand of over 40 million people unless improved farming methods are applied.

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