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**GIANT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAP OF AFRICA
TOURS NATION'S SCHOOLS**

WASHINGTON (April 10, 2007)—Elementary and middle school students across the United States are exploring Africa in a big way — with the world's largest map of the continent. The map, measuring 35 feet by 26 feet and weighing 102 pounds, is designed as a geo-game board to introduce students to the power of maps and the diverse geography of Africa.

The map comes with a trunk full of accessories, including interactive activities, games, books, videos and music that teach students about the physical characteristics of the continent as well as its rich history and varied cultures. Working in teams, students mark the equator with ropes to learn about climate and latitude. A relay race helps them learn all the countries; scavenger hunts and safaris introduce them to the continent's famed wildlife and varied environments.

"Children have a whole new perspective on Africa after they've walked on this map," said Dan Beaupré, director of education partnerships. "The hands- and feet-on experience brings the geography of Africa to life in a meaningful way and helps the students understand the connections between people and places."

The map was first featured as a standard pull-out map in the September 2005 issue of National Geographic magazine, a special issue devoted entirely to Africa. National Geographic's map division enlarged the map — the biggest map ever created by the Society — for National Geographic Live! education tours around the country. The brightly colored, smooth vinyl surface accurately illustrates Africa's oceans, seas, rivers, mountains, countries and capitals.

Giant maps are planned for the other continents — an Asia map is slated to roll out in summer 2007.

The huge Africa map also helps showcase My Wonderful World, a five-year National Geographic-led campaign to improve geographic literacy so students can become more informed global citizens. The campaign (mywonderfulworld.org) is designed to improve the geographic literacy of young people ages 8-17 by motivating parents and educators to make geography more available and accessible in school, at home and in the community.

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The National Geographic Society is one of the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Founded in 1888 to "increase and diffuse geographic knowledge," the Society today works to inspire people to care about the planet. It reaches more than 360 million people worldwide each month through its official journal, National Geographic, and four other magazines; National Geographic Channel; television documentaries; radio programs; films; books; DVDs; maps; and interactive media. National Geographic has funded more than 8,000 scientific research projects and supports an education program combating geographic illiteracy. For more information, visit nationalgeographic.com.

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