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Implications of horsts and grabens on the development of canyons and seismicity on the west africa coast

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1 **IMPLICATIONS OF HORSTS AND GRABENS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANYONS**
2 **AND SEISMICITY ON THE WEST AFRICA COAST**

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7 **ABSTRACT**

8 Subsurface basement topography in the Nigerian portion of the Benin Basin has been studied using
9 borehole data of wells drilled to the basement and one strike line seismic section. Two areas of a sharp
10 drop in topography with a horst in between were observed in the study area. These features were
11 projected to a seismic section in the offshore area of the Benin basin. The result depicts the structural
12 features as horst and grabens coinciding with the Avon platform bounded on the right side by Ise
13 graben, and the Orimedu graben to the left. The observed relationship of the grabens with the present
14 day location of Avon Canyon on the seismic section also suggests an active subsidence along fractured
15 zones. The subsidence, which probably is occurring along similar fracture zones in the Gulf of Guinea,
16 could be responsible for the occasionally reported seismicity on the margin of West Africa. A detailed
17 seismographic study of the fracture zones is recommended.

18
19 Keywords: Basement, Gulf of Guinea, Benin basin, horst, graben, seismicity, canyon.

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21 **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

22
23 Faults associated with the Basement underlying sedimentary successions have become a widely
24 recognized feature in both the continental and oceanic basements (Welsink *et al.*, 1989; Edwards,
25 1992; King and Thrasher, 1992; Herzer and Wood, 1992; Leroy *et al.*; 1992; Withjack *et al.*, 1999;
26 Hsiao *et al.*, 2004). The recognition of these structural features is connected with improved quality of
27 seismic reflection and gravity data. Such structural features are essential to the understanding the
28 geological evolution of sedimentary basins as well as petroleum systems therein. In most cases, the
29 basement structural configuration controls the incipient structures in the overlying sediments. The
30 current interest in the analysis of the basement structures and their configuration is based on the roles
31 basement faults and other structures play in shaping basement architecture, stratigraphic architecture as
32 well as hydrocarbon accumulations (Platt, 1995; Idelsink *et al.*, 1992; Walker *et al.*, 1992; Ameen,

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