



## Lüderitz → Stellenbosch

### What Toyota members make together.

The team is headed to Fish River Canyon, the largest canyon in Africa. Hiroki Kimura of the Z-Frontier Division is driving from Lüderitz to the canyon. Even though the clouds of dust churned up by the lead car give him trouble, he is overjoyed to be driving on the unpaved road. He's currently working on creating rehabilitation support robots so that people with conditions like paralysis of their lower body can get back the joy of mobility. *"The robots are designed for people who need physical rehabilitation. It's hard for me to use*

*an actual robot to make decisions. But coming to Africa, I've once again met colleagues who enjoy driving. I want us to be able to use the robots, even if it's simulated use, and evaluate them."* The challenging roads of Africa seem to have given Kimura a new goal.

The team planned 45 minutes for each car to get through the border checkpoint crossing from Namibia into South Africa, but it actually took 10 hours for all of the cars to cross the border. The team members were exhausted. *"Waiting for hours reminds me of the border between Libya and Tunisia,"* comments Taiji Sato, who works in the Toyota Libya After Sales Department, but he does not let his

fatigue show. Libya and southern Africa are quite distant from each other, but he says that he has found many commonalities between the two regions. *"People like four-wheel drive. The landscape resembles Libya so much that I think I'm there."* In the punishing environment, faulty maintenance is the same as risking your life. *"When your car stops, you use up your food and water. One breakdown and you could lose your life. People who drive have to do routine maintenance to check up on their car's condition. Your car is like a member of your family."*

Each of the team members came to Africa with ideas of what they would find there. Takato Yokogi of the Japan Sales

Operating Division says, “I came to faraway Africa, but I can still do what I normally do. The support of the other members really helps.” He learned driving skills from Team 2a, who all work with actual vehicles, and got advice on practical aspects of living in Africa by eating together with the local team members. “I thought I knew about cars, but all I knew were the figures from catalogs. I’ve gotten more advice and tips than I can count—on my posture while driving, where to focus my line of sight, the distance to keep between cars, how to brake, and more. Hideyuki

*Tanaka from the Advanced Technical Skills Institute really got me to think. He taught me the importance of my mindset when driving.*” No matter what situation you find yourself in, you need to maintain your presence of mind while driving. This is the same whether you’re in Africa or Japan or Europe.

## What the team found in Africa.

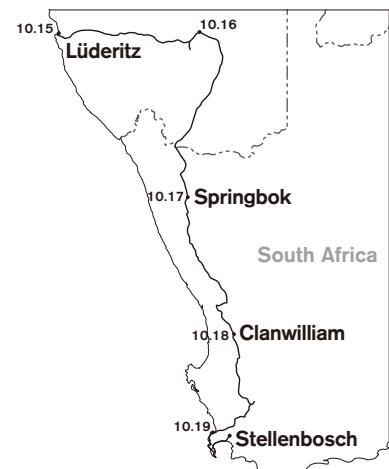
The scenery completely changed as the team headed from the town of

Clanwilliam to Cape Town. The number of trees increased and there were fields all around. “That’s wheat. It just goes on forever,” says Alan Beyer from TSAM. After they drove through Bainskloof Pass, the number of cars on the road increased the closer they got to Cape Town. They saw a lot of new Toyotas and many quite old ones too. Fumitaka Nishijima from the Tahara Plant Quality Control Division remarked, “The many used cars is proof of the trust they have in us.” He continued, “Even after a long time, Toyotas have few malfunctions. But if we let people





*extreme disparity between rich and poor in South Africa. But even people who live in difficult circumstances want a car. How can we get even more people into cars?"* Yamamoto says this while watching people walking along an interminably long road. Meanwhile, he was also able to experience the appeal that Namibia and South Africa had to offer, with their wide-open lands and rich variety of tourist attractions. Yamamoto is not the only one who felt the appeal of Africa; it was the same with the other team members. Africa's presence went far beyond what they had imagined back in Japan. The members from Team 2b went back to their respective countries over the weekend, and Team 2c newly joined the Drive Project.



*down on this, they won't buy our cars any more." What can Toyota do to have people continue to choose its cars? Nishijima grumbled, "It's not easy. We have to maintain quality even when we reduce costs. I work in quality control, which is like the last bastion of quality. We have to keep our reputation from falling in Africa."*

The team was driving from Cape

Town via the Cape of Good Hope to Spier Wine Farm, the finish line for Team 2b. Ayumu Yamamoto of the Advanced Body Planning Division had this to say as he drove from the Cape of Good Hope to the vineyard. "There were a lot of different roads in Africa, and this makes it even more important that cars meet the local needs from the development stage. I also felt the

**Distance:** 1,826km

**Duration:** October 15-19, 2018

**Days:** 5 days

**Vehicles:** Fortuner, Land Cruiser 200, Hilux Double Cab, Land Cruiser 79 Double Cab, Land Cruiser Prado, Rav4, Corolla, Quest