Press Release

59/2023

Federal President Steinmeier informs himself about research in Cabo Verde

International cooperation and education of young researchers were the focus of the visit to the West African archipelago

05.10.2023/Mindelo. During his official visit to Cabo Verde, the German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier informed himself about the joint research of GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel and its partners from Germany and abroad in the region. The programme also included a visit to the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo (OSCM), a research and logistics centre on the island of São Vicente jointly operated by GEOMAR and the Cape Verdean Instituto do Mar (IMar), as well as a meeting with students of the West African Master s programme Climate Change and Marine Sciences funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) within the framework of WASCAL. In addition to Professor Dr. Katja Matthes, Director of GEOMAR, and Administrative Director Frank Spiekermann, Professor Dr. Otmar Wiestler, President of the Helmholtz Association, Ministerial Director Stefan Müller, Head of the Department of Basic Research and Sustainable Development at the BMBF and Chairman of the GEOMAR Board of Governors also accompanied the visit.

Located off the coast of West Africa, in an upwelling system of the tropical Atlantic Ocean, the Cape Verde Islands form the centre of one of our most important life support systems. In the archipelago, it becomes visible how the ocean influences our climate, feeds us and secures livelihoods. During his visit of the islands, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, informed himself about the (e)-11(si)17 eW*nBT/F5 1S11(e)-11( )5.775 502.o1775 502.o17 nBT.Sh/F5 11 Tf-4(

the Cape Verde Ocean Observatory (CVOO), which is located about 100 kilometres off the islands as well as about the research of the IMar and the Universidade Técnica do Atlântico (UTA).

In addition, the distinguished visitors at OSCM met graduates of the Master's programme Climate Change and Marine Sciences funded by the BMBF within the framework of the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL). The programme for young people from twelve West African countries is organised in close cooperation between GEOMAR, UTA and OSCM. It includes lectures, laboratory and field work as well as training at sea the WASCAL Floating University. The combination of international research and academic education provides students with diverse opportunities for their future careers in the region. WASCAL Cabo Verde is an official project of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

In the coming years, a project initiated by GEOMAR will bring together further research institutions in West Africa: The large-scale international project The Future of Tropical Upwelling Regions in the Atlantic Ocean (FUTURO) will investigate how the natural upwelling system off West Africa, which is important for West Africa's population, will develop in a changing climate and how this biologically particularly productive and biodiverse region can be protected and sustainably managed. Health and disease processes in the ocean fundamental to food security and other important functions of the ocean are also assessed.

Coastal upwelling systems like the one off West Africa account for less than one per cent of the ocean's surface area, but provide five per cent of the biological productivity and twenty per cent of the world ocean's fisheries yield. Fish is a major contributor to food security in West Africa, providing about 60 per cent of animal protein needs in some countries. At the same time, these regions are threatened by global change in many ways, explains Professor Dr Arne Körtzinger, Scientific Director of OSCM and coordinator of FUTURO. In view of this enormous importance and the expected changes, the international large-scale exorta me,1(t)5( )-16(o)TURO)in enclnee co f(c)231(r)15(o)-

research with enthusiasm and to contribute through our work to the protection and sustainable use of the ocean, for example as a source of food or as a partner in the fight against climate change. The missions of the German Alliance for Marine Research Alliance (Deutsche Allianz Meeresforschng, DAM), which Professor Dr. Katja Matthes also represented as a board member during the visit of Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, will also benefit from the future activities and the close cooperation between science, politics, business and society.

Links:

https://www.geomar.de/en/news/article/cabo-verde-center-of-ocean-research-for-sustainable-development (01.02.2023)

https://www.geomar.de/en/news/article/high-ranking-delegation-from-cabo-verde-visits-the-kieler-woche GEOMAR press release - (14.06.2023)

https://www.geomar.de/en/centre/research-in-cape-verde GEOMAR: Research in Cabo Verde

https://www.oscm.cv Ocean Science Centre Mindelo (OSCM)

https://www.geomar.de/en/futuro Projektvorhaben FUTURO

https://wascal.org West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL)

https://www.tropos.de/en/current-issues/press-releases/details/atmosphaerenforschung-im-atlantik-wird-ausgebaut TROPOS press release Atmospheric research in the Atlantic to be (05.10.2023)

https://www.tropos.de/en/research/projects-infrastructures-