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## **Cabo Verde: Center of Ocean Research for Sustainable Development** **A delegation of GEOMAR sets important course for further research and cooperation in the region during a visit on site**

**01 February 2022 / Kiel.** With its visit to Cabo Verde, the Executive Board of GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel paid its inaugural visit to the local partners, which had been postponed several times due to the pandemic. Diverse discussions consolidated the further cooperation in the region and strengthened the role of the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo (OSCM), which GEOMAR started in 2017 together with the Cape Verdean Instituto do Mar (IMar). The focus here is on regional networking, logistical and technological services, and academic training. In addition, GEOMAR Director Professor Dr. Katja Matthes was able to welcome the participants of the "Ocean Race Summit" at OSCM, a high-profile summit on the sustainable protection of the oceans.

Located off the coast of West Africa in the tropical Atlantic Ocean, the Cape Verde Islands form the center of one of our most important life support systems. On the archipelago it becomes visible how the ocean influences our climate, feeds us and secures livelihoods. GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel has therefore been active in the region for almost 20 years and works closely with regional science, politics and society. Together with the Instituto do Mar (IMar), GEOMAR founded the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo (OSCM) on the Cape Verdean island of São Vicente in 2017.

A delegation of GEOMAR, consisting of Director Professor Dr. Katja Matthes, Administrative Director Frank Spiekermann, Professor Dr. Arne Körtzinger, Scientific Director of the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo (OSCM), Cordula Zenk, Cape Verde Coordinator at GEOMAR and Dr. Björn Fiedler, Scientific Coordinator of OSCM, now set important course for strengthening the cooperation and future research projects around Cabo Verde during a visit to Mindelo. The highlight of the visit was the "Ocean Race Summit" at OSCM. The high-profile summit, held in the framework of the world's largest sailing regatta "The Ocean Race", set accents on sustainable protection of the oceans and the need for increased ocean observation.

"With the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo, we have created an outstanding and unique platform to support science, exchange and knowledge transfer with multiple stakeholders. The Ocean Race Summit highlights this in an outstanding way: The OSCM is a meeting place for science, politics and society," emphasized Professor Dr. Katja Matthes in her welcome address to the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres, the Prime Ministers of Cabo Verde and Portugal as well as other government representatives and the sailing teams and other prominent supporters of ocean research and sustainable development.

"The Ocean Race Summit at OSCM has brought together science, policy and the private sector to address both exploration and sustainable use of the ocean in West Africa. This region in particular faces significant challenges in the coming years against the backdrop of climate change, which we can only address together. We are convinced that we can make a visible contribution with OSCM," says Prof. Dr. Arne Körtzinger, scientific director of OSCM at GEOMAR.

The research center is to be more closely integrated into the "Campus do Mar" in the future. This provides for stronger national and regional networking in terms of resource sharing and knowledge transfer of academic and professional training and research in Cabo Verde and will be complemented by further strategically important partnerships to gain access to ship time.

"An important component of our plans is to strengthen academic training," explains Dr. Björn Fiedler. The marine chemist supports the international master's program "Climate Change and Marine Sciences" at the Universidade Técnica do Atlântico (UTA) for students from West Africa in Mindelo. This graduate school is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) as part of the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL). "We can only address the changes in the ocean and their impacts on society through cross-national collaboration and by taking into account regional knowledge," Dr. Fiedler said. "WASCAL and initiatives going beyond it are therefore important to strengthen knowledge in the region and international networking. We want to support this even more than before. In addition to the political framework, this will also require long-term commitment from foundations and private donors in the future."

In their talks with Prime Minister Ulisses Correia e Silva and Minister of the Sea Abraão Vicente, the GEOMAR delegation agreed to intensify cooperation and open OSCM to national and regional partnerships. The vision is shared that Cabo Verde, with Campus do Mar and OSCM, will position itself as a regional and international platform of excellence in science, knowledge production, technology transfer, education and professional qualification, with the participation of institutional, public and private partners. "On both sides, the commitment to long-term cooperation and ongoing engagement is palpable," sums up administrative director Frank Spiekermann. "This is an important basis for our further joint planning."

Cabo Verde is also the center of interest of a large-scale research project that GEOMAR is currently developing in exchange with numerous national and international institutions. "The Future of Tropical Upwelling Regions in the Atlantic Ocean" (FUTURO) will investigate how the natural upwelling area off West Africa will develop in the course of climate change and how this biologically particularly productive and species-rich region can be protected and sustainably managed. "Upwelling areas are of the highest ecological and socio-economic importance due to their enormous biological productivity. At the same time, they are subject to strong human influences," explains Professor Dr. Arne Körtzinger. "We can only study them adequately in a methodologically complex and holistic approach. We want to achieve this with the help of a one-year international observation campaign combining research vessels, autonomous measuring instruments and other innovative methods."

The trip also marked the Directorate's inaugural visit to Cape Verde, which had been postponed several times due to the pandemic. "We are very grateful for the warm welcome and the large number of informative and fruitful discussions and meetings, which allowed us to get an excellent overview of the local conditions and opportunities" said Professor Dr. Katja Matthes. "I am sure we will be able to follow this up with more face-to-face meetings very soon."

#### **Reference:**

#### **Please note:**

The study was funded by XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

#### **Links:**

[www.geomar.de](http://www.geomar.de) GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

<https://www.geomar.de/zentrum/forschung-auf-kap-verde/ocean-science-center-mindelo> GEOMAR research on Cape Verde

<https://www.geomar.de/futuro> FUTURO

<https://www.geomar.de/entdecken/ozeandekade/floating-university> WASCAL Floating University

<https://www.oscm.cv> Ocean Science Centre Mindelo

<https://www.oceanblogs.org/capeverde> Cape Verde Blog

<https://www.theoceanrace.com/en/racing-with-purpose/summits-and-policy> The Ocean Race  
Summits

[https://www.theoceanrace.com/en/rwp/news/13303\\_The-UN-Secretary-General-Prime-Ministers-athletes-and-ocean-advocates-call-for-urgent-action-to-protect-the-ocean](https://www.theoceanrace.com/en/rwp/news/13303_The-UN-Secretary-General-Prime-Ministers-athletes-and-ocean-advocates-call-for-urgent-action-to-protect-the-ocean) The Ocean Race press release “The UN Secretary-General, Prime Ministers, athletes and ocean advocates call for urgent action to protect the ocean”

**Images:**

At [www.geomar.de/n8821](http://www.geomar.de/n8821) images are available for download.

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