

## 1. Weekly Report SO259 (INDEX 2017)



27.08.2017

After a scheduled and easy travel and arrival of all 37 scientific cruise members in Colombo, Sri Lanka, last Monday and Tuesday and subsequent arrangement talks with the shipping agency and ship's master Lutz Mallon, we entered TFS SONNE last Wednesday. The laboratories, offices and cabins were occupied and equipped with our scientific tools for measurements and analyses. In total ten containers were loaded and our equipment was installed on the vessel. On Wednesday evening, we were visited on board by a delegation from the Geological Survey of Sri Lanka. After a presentation of our scientific program and Germany's exploration project in the Indian Ocean a ship's tour demonstrated the extraordinary equipment and facilities of TFS SONNE. SONNE departed Colombo last Thursday shortly before 15:00 and we began the transit to our working and claim area along the southernmost Central and the northern Southeast Indian Ridge.



*TFS SONNE in the harbor of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

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The scientific crew is represented by BGR and marine groups from different German research institutions and universities including the universities of Bremen, Hamburg and Erlangen, GEOMAR and DZMB Senckenberg am Meer, two experts from Kiel and Seattle, and four trainees from the International Seabed Authority representing developing countries including Egypt, Ghana, Thailand and the Cook Islands. The entire team assisted greatly in the mobilization and the preparation for scientific operations. Along the transit to the working area, we commenced the bathymetric mapping after leaving the Sri Lanka exclusive economic zone. Our first oceanographic station was conducted just south of the equator, together with two additional stations enroute began our scientific program to document the different water masses in the central Indian Ocean and their relationship to the oceanographic and environmental conditions in the working and exploration area. Yesterday and today, we had two phone calls with the Ministry for Education and Research on the event of an open day ceremony of the German government in Berlin. On this occasion, we could inform her Federal Minister Mrs. Wanka and the interested public about our workings on the exploration license. We are particularly grateful for the warm wishes for success of the scientific program and the greetings to the scientific and ship's crew by Mrs. Wanka.

SONNE is very well equipped for our scientific program and we were warmly welcomed with empathy. Following a short period of getting used to ship movements, all participants are well and look forward with high interest to our variable activities in the license area.

With best regards,

Dr. Ulrich Schwarz-Schampera, Chief Scientist