

BDG statement

The Benin Dialogue Group met at the British Museum, London on 25 October 2021.

The members confirmed as Co-Chairs, Abba Tijani - Director General of the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments, HRH Prince Aghatise Erediauwa, and Dr. Barbara Plankensteiner.

Members included representatives from museums and institutions in Nigeria, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Sweden. The Group heard presentations from the Director General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (Nigeria), from Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State, from representatives of the Benin Royal Court on behalf of His Royal Majesty Omo N'Oba N'Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, Oba of Benin, and from the Executive Director of Legacy Restoration Trust – all of whom are actively collaborating to inform the direction and outcomes of current initiatives in Benin City. The members shared information on current activity, including national and institutional developments regarding the return and restitution of Benin works to Nigeria, and to discuss future initiatives focused on Benin City.

In addition, the Group received an update on the progress of the *Digital Benin* project that aims to globally unite dispersed objects from the Kingdom of Benin on a single digital platform. All museums represented in the Benin Dialogue Group are participating in this project thus achieving one of the long-standing goals of the BDG in providing access to information on collections from the Kingdom of Benin around the world. The group discussed initiatives working towards the development of the museum landscape in Benin City.

The BDG intends to meet in late 2022/2023 either in Benin City, Nigeria or Hamburg, Germany.

List of participating institutions of the Benin Dialogue Group, London, 2021:

Edo State Government, Nigeria

The Royal Court of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Abuja, Nigeria

Legacy Restoration Trust, Nigeria

British Museum, London, UK

Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna, Austria

Ethnologisches Museum, State Museums of Berlin, Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, Berlin, Germany

Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne, Germany

Museum am Rothenbaum, Kulturen und Künste der Welt (MARKK), Hamburg, Germany

Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden und GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig, Staatliche

Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Germany

Linden Museum, Stuttgart, Germany

Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Leiden, The Netherlands

National Museums of World Culture, Stockholm, Sweden

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, UK

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK