

13 October 2021

Germany and Nigeria sign Memorandum of Understanding on museum cooperation

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on museum cooperation was signed today, 13th October 2021 between the Director General of the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), Prof. Abba Isa Tijani, and the Director General for Culture and Communication of the German Federal Foreign Office, Dr. Andreas Görgen, during the visit of a German delegation to Abuja.

Members of the delegation included Prof. Dr. Barbara Plankensteiner, Director of the Museum at the Rothenbaum - Cultures and Arts of the World in Hamburg (MARKK) and spokesperson for the Benin Dialogue Group, as well as Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger, President of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation.

After an initial visit to Nigeria in May 2021, a visit by a Nigerian delegation to Berlin in July 2021 and the current visit to Abuja, the MoU stipulates that the return of Benin bronzes from German museums will be embedded in a broad collaboration in the areas of archeology, museum facilities and museum cooperation.

Both sides affirmed that the process leading to returns of Benin bronzes will begin in the second quarter of 2022 with transfers of ownership. To this end, a framework agreement is to be concluded in December 2021.

Both sides also agreed that Benin bronzes will continue to be exhibited in German museums and that there will be cooperation on exhibition projects.

German Ambassador to Nigeria, Birgitt Ory, said: "I am delighted that the German delegation achieved so much progress. This underlines again our commitment to the Nigerian – German cooperation in this field. We commend our Nigerian partners for their cooperation and are looking forward to the next steps".

The head of the German delegation, Dr. Andreas Görgen, emphasized: "I am very pleased that, after the previous meetings, we were able to create a reliable basis for the return of Benin bronzes and for further cooperation. I am sure that our joint engagement will put Nigerian – German cultural relations on a new foundation."

The next meeting is scheduled for December 2021 in Germany.

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