

## The British Museum Board

### Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2011 at the British Museum

#### Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)  
Ms Karen Armstrong  
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly  
Lord Broers  
Sir Ronald Cohen  
Dame Liz Forgan  
Professor Clive Gamble  
Miss Val Gooding  
Mr Antony Gormley  
Ms Bonnie Greer  
Ms Penny Hughes  
Baroness Kennedy  
Mrs Edmée Leventis  
Mr David Norgrove  
Professor Amartya Sen  
Lord Stern  
Baroness Wheatcroft

#### In Attendance

Neil MacGregor	Director
Andrew Burnett	Deputy Director
Chris Yates	Director of Administration
Lissant Bolton	Curator, Head of Oceania (Item 1)
Justin Morris	Director of Operations and Projects (Item 8)
Tony Wilson	Senior Project Manager (Item 9)
Joanna Mackle	Director of Public Engagement (from Item 10)
Carolyn Marsden-Smith	Head of Exhibitions (Item 10)
Venetia Porter	Curator, Middle East (Item 10)
Dora Thornton	Curator, Renaissance Collection (Item 10)
Mark Bates	Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)

#### 1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Professor Sen to the Board.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Chief Anyaoku, Mr Finlay, Mr Iacobescu, Dr Kennard and Sir Martin Sorrell.

#### 2. Torres Strait human remains claim

- 2.1 Lissant Bolton presented the background to a claim received through the Australian Prime Minister's Office from the Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group for the de-accession and repatriation from the Museum's collection of two ancestral remains (skulls).

- 2.2. The Trustees approved the preparation of a dossier of information for submission to the Board at a later date to inform the decision on repatriation. The Board decided not to agree to a request to meet representatives of the claimant at this stage.

### **3. Minutes of Meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 March 2011 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

- 3.2 Matters arising:

- 3.2.1 Item 2.2.1, Cyrus Cylinder loan: the Director reported on his attendance at the exhibition closing ceremony in Tehran, and reported the safe return of the Cylinder to the Museum on 18 April.

- 3.2.2 Item 2.2.2, Director of Development: the Director informed the Board that Caroline Usher had been appointed Director of Development from 27 June.

- 3.2.3 Item 4.1, Martin Sorrell: the Director reported that Sir Martin Sorrell had visited the Museum in June for an introductory tour.

### **4. Declaration of Interests**

- 4.1 No interests were declared.

### **5. Chairman's report**

- 5.1 The Chairman was pleased to report that Penny Hughes and George Iacobescu had been reappointed as Trustees by the Prime Minister.

### **6. Management Report**

- 6.1 The Trustees noted the Management Report.

- 6.2 The Director reported that:

- As a result of national PCS strike taking place that day, the upper galleries in the Museum had been closed.
- The Art Fund Prize awarded to the Museum for *A History of the World* would be used to fund a series of spotlight tours of key objects to partner museums in the UK.
- The International Folkwang prize money would be used this year to fund a fellow selected from past International Training Programme participants. In addition, the Museum Folkwang in Essen had decided to award an annual three-month fellowship for ITP participants.
- The Museum had developed an Indian museum leadership programme for up to 18 potential museum directors which would be delivered in Delhi, Mumbai and at the Museum.
- Two spoliation claims relating to items in the Museum's collection had been received by the Spoliation Advisory Panel. The Museum's submissions to the Panel would be discussed at the Standing Committee.

- Discussions with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation on the proposed closure of the Paul Hamlyn Library were ongoing.
- 6.3 The Director informed the Committee of a number of senior management changes: Steve Gill, Director of Visitor and Building Services, had left the Museum and his responsibilities had been taken on by Justin Morris in the new role of Director of Operations and Projects; Chris Yates had taken on responsibility for strategy and planning; and Hugo Chapman would be appointed Keeper of Prints and Drawings following Antony Griffiths' retirement in July.
- 6.4 Following a joint meeting of the Standing Committee and Directorate Group in May to discuss Museum strategy, it had been agreed that a three-year Operating Plan for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 would be developed, supported by a strategic vision to 2020.

## 7. Committee reports

### Standing Committee

- 7.1 The Chairman advised that recent Standing Committee business was covered by the Board agenda.

### Nominations and Governance Committee

- 7.2 Val Gooding reported that the Nominations and Governance Committee had been considering the skills needs arising from forthcoming vacancies, and was compiling a list of potential candidates which would be circulated to Trustees; it was proposed to hold the next recruitment exercise for Trustees in the autumn. The Committee had also approved changes to the Governance Policies and Principles, subject to the Board's approval of changes to the Audit Committee's terms of reference.

### **Action: Governance and Planning Manager**

### Audit Committee

- 7.3 David Norgrove reported that the Audit Committee had approved the annual report and the statement of internal control. The Committee had also considered key areas of reputational risk and was generally reassured by the Museum's management of these risks.
- 7.4 The Board approved changes to the Audit Committee's terms of reference as recommended.

## 8. Security

- 8.1 Justin Morris presented the outcome of a recent review of Museum security, the action taken to date and future plans. The Board would receive a progress report at the next meeting.

### **Action: Director of Operations & Projects**

## 9. World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre

- 9.1 Tony Wilson informed the Board of a serious accident to an operative on the site.
- 9.2 Tony Wilson provided a progress report on the WCEC and advised that the project was on time and to budget.

**10. Exhibitions**

- 10.1 Venetia Porter and Dora Thornton gave presentations on *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam* and *Shakespeare's theatre of the world* respectively.

**11. Stewardship report**

- 11.1 The Board noted the 2010/11 Stewardship report.

**12. Advocacy Report**

- 12.1 The Board noted the Advocacy Report.
- 12.2 Joanna Mackle drew attention to the Museum's consultation with external groups, particularly on *Hajj: journey to the heart of Islam*, which was helping to develop the exhibition's programme.

**13. Operating Plan and Budget 2011/12**

- 13.1 Following provisional approval at the last Board meeting, the Trustees confirmed their approval of the Operating Plan and Budget for 2011/12

**14. Loans**

- 14.1 The Board approved loans to the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia, Mexico and to the Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow.

**15. Bank signatories**

- 15.1 The Board approved a revised list of bank signatories.

**16. Acquisitions report**

- 16.1 The Board noted the summary of 2010/11 Acquisitions report.

**17. Committee minutes**

- 17.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee of 3 March 2011; the Audit Committee meetings of 26 October 2010 and 18 January 2011; and the Nominations and Governance Committee of 17 February 2011.

**18. Closed session**

- 18.1 The Chairman held a closed session with the Trustees only.

**Date of next meeting: 30 September-1 October 2011**

\_\_\_\_\_Chairman