

## **Open Letter in support of the reconstruction of the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro**

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was destroyed by a devastating fire. We had to acknowledge that the Museum has lost more than three quarters of its historical collections. This immense damage constitutes a tragic loss of cultural heritage that is invaluable to Brazil and humanity on the whole.

The German Government reacted immediately to the catastrophe and has been offering technical and financial assistance to complement the Brazilian efforts to recover and restore precious artefacts, and to rebuild the Museum.

However, this complex endeavor cannot be shouldered by Brazil and Germany alone. We are convinced it needs and deserves much wider support.

Representing leading German and international museums in the fields of ethnology, cultural anthropology and natural history as well as the two main German museum federations, we have decided to join forces and to add our contribution.

- 1) We pledge our support to an international initiative that focuses on three main objectives:
  - (a) technical expertise for the restoration of recovered artefacts and for the reconstruction of the National Museum, including capacity building,
  - (b) development of a new concept for the rebuilt National Museum,
  - (c) provision of exhibits from our collections for a touring exhibition (to raise and maintain awareness) and, wherever possible, for the rebuilt National Museum,
- 2) We call upon Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations as well as the private sector and philanthropists around the world to contribute to the reconstruction of the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro.
- 3) German museums are recognized worldwide as centers of excellence in terms of quality, diversity, innovation, scientific knowledge and openness for international cooperation. Therefore, we welcome the initiative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create an International Museum Cooperation Agency which will enable German museums to act as global players at an even larger scale. This includes international exhibition projects, capacity building, long-term transfer of knowledge as well as urgently needed reconstruction projects like the one we are confronted with in Rio de Janeiro.
- 4) In order to commemorate the second anniversary of the terrible blast and to foster cooperation we plan a high powered international conference in Rio for September 2020 organized under the leadership of the Goethe-Institut and in close consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We will participate in this effort with a series of professional activities leading up to the conference.

Signed in November of 2019 by:

- Prof. Dr. Beate Reifenscheid, President *ICOM Germany*
- Prof. Dr. Eckart Köhne, President *Deutscher Museumsbund*
- Dr. Silke Stoll, Spokesperson *Fachgruppe Naturwissenschaftliche Museen Deutscher Museumsbund*
- Dr. Gisela Bungarten, Spokesperson *Fachgruppe Kulturhistorische Museen und Kunstmuseen Deutscher Museumsbund*
  
- Prof. Dr. Lars-Christian Koch, Director *Ethnologisches Museum, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin*
- Prof. Dr. Daniel Hess, General Director *Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg*
- Prof. Dr. Hartmut Dorgerloh, General Director *Humboldt Forum, Berlin*
- Prof. Dr. Barbara Göbel, Director *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin*
- Prof. Dr. Inés de Castro, Director *Linden-Museum, Stuttgart*
- Prof. Dr. Barbara Plankensteiner, Director *Museum am Rothenbaum, Hamburg*
- Dr. Uta Werlich, Director *Museum Fünf Kontinente, München*
- Prof. Dr. Johannes Vogel, General Director *Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin*
- Prof. Dr. Matthias Wemhoff, Director *Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin*
- Prof. Dr. Martin Eberle, Director *Museum Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, Kassel*
- Nanette Snoep, Director *Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Köln*
- Prof. Dr. Alexandra Busch, General Director *Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz*
- Prof. Dr. Ulrich Joger, Director *Staatliches Naturhistorisches Museum, Braunschweig*
- Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Hermann Parzinger, President *Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin*
- Prof. Dr. Wiebke Ahrndt, Director *Übersee Museum, Bremen*
- Dr. Eva Ch. Raabe, Director *Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt*