

News Release: 16th July 2007

PAUL BOATENG TO VISIT BRISTOL'S SLAVERY EXHIBITION

The Right Honourable Paul Boateng, the first person of African descent to be elected to the British Parliament, will visit the 'Breaking the Chains' slavery exhibition at the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum on Wednesday 18th July. Mr Boateng will also meet civil rights' campaigner Paul Stephenson and representatives of the Bristol Black Archives Partnership.

Mr Boateng, a graduate of the University of Bristol, represented Brent South in London between 1987 and 2005. He also became Britain's first government minister of African or Afro-Caribbean descent when appointed to the Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury in 2002. He is currently British High Commissioner to South Africa.

The £1 million 'Breaking the Chains' Heritage Lottery funded exhibition tells the story of the transatlantic slave trade. It is the centrepiece of Bristol and the South West's commemoration programme for this year's 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. The exhibition was opened by HRH the Princess Royal in April and has already received thousands of visitors from all over the world. It will run for eighteen months.

Dr Gareth Griffiths, Director of the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, says he is delighted to welcome back Paul Boateng to Bristol. "Mr. Boateng assisted the Museum in its early development by launching one of its first temporary exhibitions almost ten years ago. This is a great opportunity to show him, in his important role as British High Commissioner to South Africa,

the exciting projects that are being developed with African and Caribbean countries as part of the 'Breaking the Chains' exhibition."

Mr Boateng will also meet representatives of the Bristol Black Archives Partnership (BBAP), which is a consortium of community, heritage and academic organisations and individuals who have come together to protect local Black history. Recognising the year's commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, the partnership concentrates on preserving and promoting the history of the African-Caribbean community. It is hoped that this will act as a springboard for working with other communities in the future.

Black Archives Patron, Paul Stephenson says: "The work of the partnership shows the vital contribution Black African-Caribbean people have made to this city over the generations. It will stimulate interest in the way these people have made a cultural impact". The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Bristol's Museums, Galleries & Archives Service.

Mr Boateng will also be receiving an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Bristol.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The Rt.Hon Paul Boateng will visit 'Breaking the Chains' at the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum at 2pm on Wednesday 18th July.
- Pictures of the 'Breaking the Chains' exhibition can be seen at <http://www.empiremuseum.co.uk/private/btc.htm> (high resolution versions available on request).

For further information, please contact the Museum Press Office:

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Useful links

British Empire & Commonwealth Museum

www.empiremuseum.co.uk

Bristol Black Archives Partnership

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Leisure-Culture/records-and-archives/bristol-black-archives-partnership.en>

British High Commission in South Africa

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029395231&a=KOverseasMission&aid=1013618507963>