

## **Joint press release between the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Finland**

On Monday, the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Benin, H.E. Olushegun Adjadi Bakari, and the Republic of Finland, H.E. Elina Valtonen, met at the Government Banquet Hall ‘Smolna’ in Helsinki. This meeting occurs within the context of strengthening relations between the two countries, affirming their commitment to building a strong, diverse, and sustainable partnership based on shared values and mutual respect.

The discussions focused on regional peace and security, reiterating their willingness to actively contribute to global stability, particularly through the promotion of multilateralism and commitment to rules-based international system. The ministers also discussed initiatives of common interest aimed at promoting bilateral trade relations.

As a sign of this renewed cooperation, H.E. Olushegun Adjadi Bakari expressed his gratitude to The National Museum of Finland for initiating the restitution of the royal stool Kataklé, the twenty-seventh piece of the royal treasures taken by General Alfred Dodds during the campaigns of 1892. Rediscovered thanks to the commitment of Beninese citizens, this culturally significant artifact illustrates the importance of heritage restitution in strengthening ties between peoples. The ministers recognized the symbolic importance of this gesture for collective memory and expressed their desire to extend this partnership into new areas of strategic interest.

The ministers concluded by reaffirming their commitment to maintaining regular dialogue through bilateral consultations and enhancing exchanges within the framework of the UN, the EU-AU dialogue, and Nordic-African interactions.

They acknowledged the significance of this meeting as a key step in deepening their relations and pursuing joint projects for the sake of international prosperity and stability.

Helsinki, 4th of November 2024 –