



Press Release

INDIA, WORLD BANK TO DEEPEN COOPERATION ON INDIA'S GREEN AGENDA

New Delhi, January 13, 2011: India and the World Bank today agreed to further strengthen their partnership to advance India's green-growth agenda at a meeting today between Minister of State for Environment & Forests (Independent Charge) Jairam Ramesh, and World Bank Group President Robert B. Zoellick.

Welcoming the discussions, **Mr Ramesh** noted, *“Our Government is clear about the need to reflect and factor in ecological concerns into our growth process so that the benefits of growth can be achieved without critically straining the environment. Our projects supported by the World Bank specifically address our most compelling environmental concerns, including river cleaning and conserving our biodiversity. We are also discussing the strengthening of our pollution control boards as an area of future engagement.”*

Applauding the government's efforts, **Mr Zoellick** said, *“India is working to integrate its growth objectives and need to overcome poverty with the sustainability of natural resources and the well-being of future generations. The Government is striving to avoid actions that will add to costs – today and tomorrow – for health, clean water, clean air and preservation of valuable biodiversity. The World Bank Group is pleased to share its experience to support India's inclusive and sustainable development.”*

The Minister and the Bank President discussed the Government's vision for a strong sustainable development agenda. The Government is focusing efforts on applying rigorous environmental safeguards for infrastructure projects, strengthening the environmental governance system, revitalizing regulatory institutions, investing in air and water quality improvements, and addressing the challenge of climate change on an ongoing basis.

Responding to the Government of India's call for enhanced support for integrating environment sustainability into its high-growth agenda, Mr. Zoellick reiterated the World Bank's commitment to provide support over the next two years in this area. This financial support will be earmarked for a range of initiatives to help strengthen environmental management practices and will be additional to what is already committed to build responses across sectors to challenges posed by climate change.

The partnership between the World Bank and the Government of India will support programs that help India maintain high growth as a primary objective, while also either building climate resilience or promoting clean energy solutions, consistent with India's 11th Five Year Plan. This includes projects that build fuel-efficient transport infrastructure, clean energy hydropower plants, efficient water supply and wastewater systems, as well as programs that help farmers, fishing communities and people in other vulnerable communities safeguard their livelihoods against the vagaries of a changing climate.

As India accelerates its response to the environment challenges that face its growing economy, the Bank too has stepped up its financial support for the government's various environment management and protection programs. Some of the initiatives include:

I. Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project

In the fiscal year ended June 2010, the Bank approved \$220 million to help India manage and protect its valued coastal zones without sacrificing the livelihoods of those that depend on it. The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project is helping establish an institutional structure to coordinate coastal zone management nationally, and is piloting integrated approaches to coastal zone management in Gujarat, Orissa and West Bengal.

II. Industrial Pollution Management Project

The Bank also provided \$65 million to help rehabilitate select industrially polluted sites and to support the development of a national framework for the remediation of polluted and orphaned contaminated sites. An ongoing \$20 million project for energy efficiency also supports the phasing out of ozone-depleting substances.

III. The National Ganga Project

The Bank is preparing a \$ 1 billion project to support the government's ambitious program to clean and conserve the Ganga, which involves operationalisation of the National Ganga River Basin Authority and associated state-level institutions. It will finance sewage collection and treatment and municipal solid waste management to help reduce pollution in the river.

IV. New Areas of Engagement Being Discussed:

(a) Strengthening Capacity of CPCB/SPCBs

The proposed project to strengthen the capacity of the Pollution Control Boards will help build their skills and infrastructure, ensure their financial sustainability and set up new monitoring and data management mechanisms.

(b) Biodiversity Conservation

The proposed biodiversity project will seek to demonstrate conservation measures in various ecosystems, catalogue India's rich biodiversity in hotspots, and support livelihoods of communities living within biodiversity-rich areas and enable them to benefit from investments in these areas.