

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of Minister of State (IC) for Environment & Forests

Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan

**with Mr. Erik Solheim, Minister for Environment and International
Development of the Kingdom of Norway**

Mr. Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and International Development of Norway called on Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan, the Minister for Environment and Forests in her office on 1st February, 2012. Minister Mr. Solheim is visiting Delhi to participate in the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, being organized by TERI from 2-4 February, 2012.

The two Ministers exchanged views on a range of issues relating to international cooperation on environmental protection, sustainable development, Rio +20 issues, and REDD+ as well as some other important issues relating to bilateral cooperation. They discussed the preparations for the Conference on Bio-diversity (CBD 11) being held in Hyderabad in India and the steps needed to make it a successful conference. Minister Smt. Natarajan stressed on the importance of the treating the issue of equity as central to the implementation of all Rio Conventions including climate change, bio-diversity. She stressed that adherence to Rio Principles, particularly the principle of CBDR was critical for the success of the Rio +20 conference. She conveyed to Norway India's strong opposition to EU's unilateral decision of imposing tax on foreign airlines including India in the name of climate change.

In a meeting today with the Minister for Environment and International Development of the Kingdom of Norway, Mr. Erik Solheim, the Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan, expressed India's strong reservations on the issue of custody of two young Indian children in Norway who have been separated by the Norwegian child care services from their natural parents. Minister Natarajan forcefully reiterated the Government's request that the two young children Master Abhigyan and Baby Aishwarya Bhattacharya be reunited with their extended family in India. She underlined that the issue has attracted wide attention in the Indian media and has evoked tremendous emotional resonance with the people of India. She emphasized that it was of utmost importance that the children should not be deprived of their national cultural and linguistic traditions. She exhorted the Norwegian authorities to urgently resolve the matter. The Norwegian Minister assured her that the matter was receiving the full attention of the Norwegian Government. The matter was before the Court but the Norwegian authorities would do everything possible to ensure that the best interests of the two children are served.

The possibility of holding the meeting of the next India-Norway Joint Working Group on Environment in Oslo was also discussed by the two Ministers.