

CV - Erik Solheim

Erik Solheim is probably unique in holding the combined portfolio of Minister of the Environment and International Development. This allows him to launch initiatives that take a coherent approach to development and the environment.

Climate and the environment

Mr Solheim's most important achievement in his post as minister is probably the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative, under which Norway cooperates closely with Brazil, Indonesia, Guyana and other countries on conservation and sustainable use of rainforests. The initiative has attracted interest worldwide, and has provided input to the negotiations on reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD+).

Mr Solheim has also put in place the Nature Management Act, which many consider to be Norway's most important piece of environmental legislation in 100 years. He has secured legal protection of several national parks and of the forest areas surrounding Oslo. He headed the Norwegian delegations and was in charge of Norway's work in connection with the four climate change conferences from Bali to Cancun. He played a key role in the efforts to secure an international agreement on biological diversity in Nagoya in Japan in 2010.

Peace efforts and development

During Mr Solheim's period in office, Norway's allocations for development assistance have increased to one per cent of gross national income, which is the highest share in the world. At the same time, Mr Solheim has given Norway's aid clearer political direction by emphasising conflict prevention, by working to engage capital, taxation and business as engines of development, by seeking to integrate development assistance into overall foreign policy, and by advocating that developing countries gain control over their own revenues through the programmes *Oil for Development* and *Tax for Development*. Mr Solheim attaches importance to the role of the private sector in development.

From 2000 to 2005, Mr Solheim was the main facilitator of the peace process in Sri Lanka. This peace process led to the ceasefire agreement and what is known as the Oslo Declaration concerning a federal state in Sri Lanka. Mr Solheim has also been involved in the peace processes in Sudan, Nepal and Burundi. He was the first European minister to visit Zimbabwe following the establishment of the Government of National Unity. He has visited Myanmar three times for talks with the opposition and

the government. He has also launched an initiative to promote broader Norwegian cooperation with Latin America.

Political career

Mr Solheim was a member of the Storting, the Norwegian Parliament, for the Socialist Left Party (SV) from 1989 to 2001. He was party leader from 1987 to 1997. The key themes of his leadership period were transformation of the party into Norway's leading green party, adaptation of Norwegian socialism to the post-Cold War period and the start of work to prepare the party for government participation. Mr Solheim was leader of the Socialist Youth League from 1977 to 1980, and Party Secretary of the Socialist Left Party from 1981 to 1985.

Personal data

Date of birth: 18 January 1955

Place of residence: Oslo

Marital status: Married, four children (Øyvind, born 1986; Mari, born 1989; Aksel, born 2001; and Sofie, born 2005)

Education: Undergraduate degree in History and Social Studies, University of Oslo

Leisure activities: Reading, particularly historical and war literature; outdoor recreation and sports, particularly football. He spends most of his spare time with his family.

Mr Solheim has written two books (*Den store samtalen* and *Nærmere*) and contributed articles to a number of major periodicals and other publications.

Awards

“Champion of the Earth” – UN Environment Programme

“Hero of the Environment” – Time Magazine

Appointments

2007– Minister of the Environment and International Development

2005–2007 Minister of International Development

2000–2005 Special Adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
peace facilitator in Sri Lanka

1989–2001 Member of the Storting for the Socialist Left Party

1987–1997 Leader of the Socialist Left Party

1981–1985 Party Secretary of the Socialist Left Party

1977–1980 Leader of the Socialist Youth League