Press Release

The Indian Minister of Earth Sciences, Science and Technology & Health and Family welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan and the Norwegian Minister for Climate and Environment Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn met today for a bilateral meeting at Prithvi Bhavan, Ministry of Earth Sciences to discuss avenues of collaboration especially in the field of ocean sciences and health sector. The Norwegian Ambassador HE Hans Jacob Frydenlund was also present along with the Norwegian delegation. Senior officials from Ministry of Health and Ministry of Earth Sciences also participated in the bilateral meeting.

The meeting is a follow-up of the Joint Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development taken up under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Norway in January 2019 establishing the Indo-Norway Ocean Dialogue.

Honble Minister for Earth Sciences while welcoming the Norwegian Minister and his colleagues recalled the strong collaboration existing between India and Norway in polar science and appreciated the efforts being undertaken by Norway in the field of green technology and ocean blue economy. He stressed the need for an Integrated Ocean Management with special emphasis on marine spatial planning, benthic habitat mapping as a tool for conservation and Krill fishing. He highlighted the schemes launched by Government of India in the health sector especially the Ayushman Bharat, a National Health Protection Scheme for the poor and vulnerable, which looks at both curative as well as the preventive aspects. The Government of India is also promoting yoga and traditional medicines for healthy living. He said that the Indian Government has also taken several initiatives to reduce child and maternal mortality.

Mr Sveinung Rotevatn, the Norwegian Minister for Climate and Environment, said that he is quite impressed with India’s programs in Economy, health and energy sectors. He said both India and Norway have common challenges and there are many areas of common interest in which both India and Norway can effectively collaborate. He specifically appreciated the efforts being made by India in the area of clean energy and said that managing of Ocean resources is of mutual interest. The single use plastics ban by Government of India is a great national effort. He emphasized the need to jointly collaborate in many areas for an integrated ocean management.

Dr Rajeevan Secretary of Earth Sciences recalled the successful collaboration that his Ministry of Earth Sciences has been having with Norway on polar science. He said we need to further work together to develop effective technologies for managing our ocean resources. Shri Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary spoke in detail about the initiatives taken by Indian Government in Digital Health, Cashless services for health sector and launching of telemedicine initiative for the rural sector. The Norway Ambassador to India Mr Hans Jacob Frydenlung emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between India and Norway in both the ocean and health sector.

The bilateral meeting was followed by launching of a book by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister highlighting the progress made under the Joint Initiative on Blue economy. A letter of intent on Integrated Ocean Management and Research was signed between Ministry of Earth Sciences and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway and Ministry of Climate and Environment, Norway.