

Spokespeople from Partner Organisations

Primary Spokespeople

Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's government was appointed by the King on October 17, 2005. It is a majority government representing the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party, and the Centre Party.

Mr. Stoltenberg was Candidatus Oeconomiae (economist) at the University of Oslo from 1987.

Mr. Stoltenberg was Prime Minister in 2000-2001; Minister of Finance from 1996-1997 in Thorbjørn Jagland's government; Minister of Trade and Energy from 1993-1996 in Gro Harlem Brundtland's third government; and State Secretary at the Ministry of the Environment from 1990-1991 under Gro Harlem Brundtland's third government.

Mr. Stoltenberg has been Member of the Storting (Parliament) for Oslo since 1993, and was Deputy Member of the Storting from 1989-1993. He was Labour's Parliamentary Leader at the change of government; Member of the Storting's Standing Committee on Social Affairs from 1991-1993; Leader of the Standing Committee on Oil and Energy Affairs from 1997-2000; and Member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs from 2001-2005.

Mr. Stoltenberg has been Leader of the Labour Party since 2002. He was Deputy Leader from 1992-2002, and has been a member of the party's central board since 1985. He was Leader of the Labour Youth League (AUF) from 1985-1989; Member of the AUF central board from 1979-1989; Vice President of the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) from 1985-1989; and leader of the Oslo Labour Party from 1990-1992.

Mr. Stoltenberg has a forceful engagement for development issues and is a strong supporter of the United Nations. He was a Board Member of the Global Vaccine Fund 2001-2005; a member of the Norwegian Defence Commission 1990-1992, and headed the Government's Commission on male roles in 1986.

Jens Stoltenberg was a part-time journalist on the national daily Arbeiderbladet from 1979-1981; Information Secretary at the Oslo Labour Party in 1981; executive officer at Statistics Norway from 1989-1990; and lectured in economics at the University of Oslo from 1989-1990.

Source: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/primeminister/Prime-Minister-Jens-Stoltenberg.html?id=1597>

Cary Fowler, Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust

Cary Fowler is Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, which seeks to ensure the conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide. The Global Crop Diversity Trust and, specifically, Dr. Fowler have played a key role in the creation of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Dr. Fowler headed the international committee that assessed the feasibility of establishing a seed vault, and then developed its scientific and operational plan. He has been a central figure in virtually every aspect of its development from the beginning.

The Trust will cover ongoing operational costs, theoretically forever. And it is currently organising and assisting developing countries with preparing, packaging, and transporting their seeds to the Arctic. The Global Crop Diversity Trust considers the vault an essential component of a rational and secure global system for conserving the genetic diversity of all our crops.

Prior to joining the Global Crop Diversity Trust, Dr. Cary Fowler was Professor and Director of Research in the Department for International Environment & Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. He also was a Senior Advisor to the Director General of Bioversity International. In this latter role, he represented the Future Harvest Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in negotiations on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources.

Cary's career in the conservation and use of crop diversity spans 30 years. He was Program Director for the National Sharecroppers Fund / Rural Advancement Fund, a US-based NGO engaged in plant genetic resources education and advocacy. In 1985, he was awarded the Right Livelihood Award (the 'Alternative Nobel Prize') in a ceremony in the Swedish Parliament. In the 1990s, he headed the International Conference and Programme on Plant Genetic Resources at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which produced the UN's first ever global assessment of the state of the world's plant genetic resources. He drafted and supervised negotiations of FAO's Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources, adopted by 150 countries in 1996. That same year he served as Special Assistant to the Secretary-General of the World Food Summit. He is a past-member of the National Plant Genetic Resources Board of the U.S. and the Board of Trustees of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico.

Cary is the author of several books on the subject of plant genetic resources and more than 75 articles on the topic in agriculture, law, and development journals.

Wangari Maathai, Founder of the Green Belt Movement, Nobel Laureate, and Vice Chair, Global Crop Diversity Trust

Professor Wangari Maathai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy, and peace. She is the founder of the Green Belt Movement, a grassroots environmental organization that has assisted women and their families in planting more than 35 million trees across Kenya to protect the environment and promote sustainable livelihoods. She is a Member of Parliament and a former Assistant Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya. Among the many honours and awards Wangari Maathai has received are the Right Livelihood Award (1984); the Global 500 Roll of Honour (1991); the Goldman Environmental Prize (1991); the Africa Prize (1991); the Edinburgh Medal (1993); the Sophie Prize (2004) and the Legion d'Honneur (2006).

Source: <http://www.croptrust.org/main/board.php?itemid=70>

Additional Spokespeople

Grethe Helene Evjen, Project Manager, Svalbard Global Seed Vault; Senior Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Grethe Helene Evjen is Project Manager for the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and Secretary of the Steering Committee responsible for its establishment. The Steering Committee was established by the Norwegian government in 2005. It has been responsible for the planning of the facility as well as its regulations, funding, and organisation. The Steering Committee includes participants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Environment; the Ministry of Justice and Police; and the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform.

She has been involved in the planning of the seed vault from the Norwegian side since January 2004. Ms. Evjen was the head of several Norwegian delegations to meetings of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, to the negotiations of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and to sessions of the Governing Body to the International Treaty.

Prior to her appointment in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1992, she was the Regional Officer of Crops in the southwest region of Norway. From 1987-1990, she was a Norwegian volunteer and secondary school teacher in Northern Tanzania. In 1990, she consulted on rural development in Tanzania on behalf of the Canadian Commission. Grethe Helene Evjen attended the Agriculture University of Norway and received an MSc in Crop Science in 1987.

Jessica Kathle, Director of the Nordic Genetic Resource Center

Jessica Kathle is Director of the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen). Previously, she was Head of the Department of Animal and Aquacultural Sciences at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB).

Dr. Kathle gained her doctorate in animal husbandry in 1991 for work on animal genetics, and spent 10 years as an Associate Professor at UMB, formerly the Agricultural University of Norway (NLH), working on animal husbandry and genetics and specialising in poultry. After that, Dr. Kathle spent three years as Assistant Faculty Director of the University of Oslo Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, before returning to UMB and her current post.

In addition to academic work, she has also honed her financial and management skills. In 1995, she was Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Chair of the Norwegian Association of Researchers, and Chief Shop Steward.

Source: <http://www.norden.org/webb/news/news.asp?lang=6&id=7232>

Terje Riis-Johansen, Minister of Agriculture and Food, Norway

Minister Terje Riis-Johansen has been the Minister of Agriculture and Food in Norway since 2005 and Leader of Skien Centre Party since 2003. Previously, Mr. Riis-Johansen served in the Skien Municipal Council as a Member of Industry Council, and as a Political Advisor to the Ministry of Finance during Kjell Magne Bondevik's first government. He was the General Manager of Riis-Johansen parkanlegg AS from 1999-2005. He was also a member of the executive committee of the Norwegian Farmers' Union from 2000-2005.

Mr. Riis-Johansen attended the Agrotechnical programme at Hedmark University College in 1990-1991, the Agrotechnical programme (accounting and economics) at Øksnevad Agricultural College from 1989-1990, and he studied Agronomics at the Sørve Agricultural College from 1986-1987.

Source: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/The-Ministry-of-Agriculture-and-Food/Minister-of-Agriculture-and-Food-Terje-R.html?id=1596>

Erik Solheim, Minister of International Development, Norway

Minister Erik Solheim has been involved in Norwegian politics for over thirty years. In 1987, he became leader of the Socialist Left Party and rose quickly to become a popular figure in Norwegian politics. Mr. Solheim served as Member of Parliament from 1989 to 2001. Through the 1990's, he led his party through a period of rising popularity. From the spring of 2000, he was granted a leave of absence from Parliament to serve as special advisor to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka. He went on to become one of the most recognizable figures in the peace negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers. On October 17, 2005, he continued his engagement with international affairs when he was appointed Minister of International Development in the cabinet of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg.

Magnus Tveiten, Project Manager, Directorate of Public Construction and Property

Magnus Bredeli Tveiten is the Project Manager for the building of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault at Statsbygg, the agency which acts as property manager and advisor in construction and property affairs for the Norwegian government. Mr. Tveiten received his professional training as an architect in Great Britain and Norway, graduating from the Technical University of Trondheim in 1977. He also has a law degree from the University of Oslo in 1992, specialising in construction and planning law. He has worked in both private and public practice, equally divided between building design, planning, and property development.

Prior to joining Statsbygg in August 2005, Mr. Tveiten worked for the property development department in the Municipality of Oslo, his last assignment being project manager for the urban transformation project at Ensjø in the Norwegian Capital of Oslo. He also has worked with the development and sale of the former airport of Oslo at Fornebu, which was shut down in the autumn of 1998 to be replaced by the present airport at Gardermoen.