

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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ITER GAINS MOMENTUM

Aomori, Japan 18 June 2008

On 17-18 June 2008, the ITER Council, the Governing Body of the new International Organization, convened for its second meeting. The two day meeting in Aomori, Japan, brought together senior representatives from the seven ITER Members: China, the European Union, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States.

Mr. Shingo Mimura, Governor of the Aomori Prefecture, welcomed delegates with a reminder of the global significance of the ITER project. *“At a time when stable energy supplies and the promotion of strategies to tackle climate change are topics of global concern, the world is watching the ITER project. Implemented by seven parties that together make up half of the earth’s population, it is utilizing the wisdom of humankind to strive for a secure and stable energy supply.”*

The Director-General of the ITER Organization, Kaname Ikeda, reported on the progress of the project since the first meeting of the ITER Council in November 2007, focusing on on-going site preparation, and the continuing build-up and development of the project team. The Director-General thanked the Members for their continued support stating, *“ITER is the greatest science adventure of our time. By creating ITER our Members have established a completely new model for international collaboration and it is our challenge to show that outstanding talent coming from many different nationalities can fuse to create a dynamic workforce. I believe we are making excellent progress.”*

The key item on the agenda was a discussion of the implications of the design review, for the scope, schedule and cost of the project. The Council approved the new Project Specification proposed by the ITER Organization. The Project Specification is a top level document detailing ITER’s scientific goals and technical parameters. The Council also agreed, for planning purposes, the revised Overall Project Schedule with a target date of 2018 for first plasma.



The Council received the revised Project Plan and Resource Estimates from the ITER Organization. The Council agreed that the resource estimates should be independently assessed by an international group of experts, headed by Dr Frank Briscoe (EU).

The Council approved the conditions for accession of an eighth state during the early ITER Construction Phase and also approved the start of formal interactions with Kazakhstan as a potential new Party to the ITER Agreement on this basis, subject to approval by all Member governments. It was also agreed that representatives from Kazakhstan could participate as observers in meetings convened by the ITER Organization prior to possible accession.

ITER Council Chair Sir Chris Llewellyn Smith concluded. *“All Members recognized the very impressive progress since the first Council meeting and the importance of maintaining the momentum of the Project. Hard work by the ITER Organization and the Domestic Agencies, supported by the world’s fusion community, which has resolved major design issues, allowed the Council to adopt a new reference design. Council’s decision to set up a rigorous independent assessment of the Organization’s costs is the next step in turning the new design and schedule into reality.”*

BACKGROUND TO THE NEWS RELEASE

ITER will be the world's largest experimental fusion facility and is designed to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion power. Fusion is the process which powers the sun and the stars. When light atomic nuclei fuse together to form heavier ones, a large amount of energy is released. Fusion research is aimed at developing a prototype fusion power plant that is safe and reliable, environmentally responsible and economically viable, with abundant and widespread fuel resources.

The ITER project is sited at Cadarache in the South of France. Europe will contribute almost half of the costs of its construction, while the other six Members to this joint international venture (China, Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the USA), will contribute equally to the rest.



Each Member has set up a Domestic Agency responsible for its contributions to ITER. The Domestic Agencies employ their own staff and have their own budgets, and will place contracts with suppliers to procure in-kind contributions.

More information on the ITER project and fusion energy can be found on www.iter.org