

# ITER Press Release

21 November 2006

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## ITER Organization gets the go-ahead

Today, Ministers from the seven Parties of the international nuclear fusion project ITER (China, European Union, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States of America) came together to sign the agreement to establish the International Organization that will implement the ITER fusion energy project.

The signature took place at a ceremony at the Elysée Palace in Paris and was hosted by the President of the French Republic M. Jacques Chirac and by the President of the European Commission, M. José Manuel Durão Barroso. The signed documents were formally handed over to the representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to be deposited with the Director General of the IAEA.

The first meeting of the Interim ITER Council took place at Ministerial level after the signing ceremony, under the chairmanship of Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research. This constituted the first act of the newly established ITER Organization. With the signature of the ITER Agreement and the first Council meeting, the ITER Organization can start its operation on a provisional basis pending the entry into force of the agreement which is expected in the course of 2007.

ITER Director General Nominee Kaname Ikeda said “With the accomplishment of today’s meeting, the ITER Organization is able to embark on its mission, as a worldwide international cooperation, to help create a new source of energy for humankind”.

## BACKGROUND TO THE NEWS RELEASE

ITER will be the world's largest experimental facility to demonstrate the scientific and technical feasibility of fusion power. The construction costs of ITER are estimated at 5 billion Euros over ten years, most of which will be awarded in the form of contracts to industrial companies and fusion research institutions. Europe will contribute roughly half of the costs of construction, while the other six parties to this joint international venture (Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, India, and the USA), will contribute equally to the rest.

In June 2005, the ITER partners decided unanimously to choose the European site at Cadarache, in the South of France, as the location for the construction of ITER.

The ITER Organisation will be established as an international organisation by the ITER Agreement. The ITER Agreement sets out all the necessary provisions for the ITER Organization to become operational, such as its purpose and functions, its members, its legal personality, its Council, Director-General and staff, its resources, etc.

Upon its entering into force, the ITER Agreement will have a duration initially of 35 years with the possibility of extension for up to 10 years.

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.

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**Notes for editors:**

More information on the ITER project and fusion energy can be found on [www.iter.org](http://www.iter.org)

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