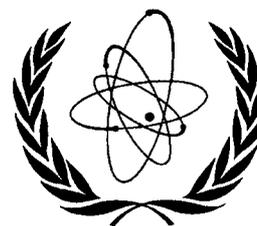


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FIRST FORMAL ITER NEGOTIATIONS MAKE EXCELLENT PROGRESS

by Dr. P. Barnard, Chairman and CEO, Iter Canada

November 8 and 9 2001 marked the historic beginning of formal Negotiations Meetings on the ITER project. Delegations from Canada, the European Union, Japan and the Russian Federation met in Toronto, Canada, for the first in a series of Negotiations that is expected to lead, by the end of 2002, to an agreement on the joint implementation of ITER. This agreement will govern, under international law, the construction, operation and decommissioning of ITER. All four Participants have been authorized by their governments to proceed to negotiate.

Preparatory meetings were held in Vienna in July and in Moscow in June, where Canada's Ambassador Rod Irwin presented his country's offer to host the ITER project. Japan and the European Union have also expressed an interest in presenting a bid. Preparatory experts meetings were held in Toronto in late September.

The final Preparatory Meeting for the first Negotiations Meeting was also held in Toronto, Canada, on 7 November 2001. The results of this meeting formed the basis for key agenda items for the Negotiations Meeting the following day.

The Negotiations, chaired by Iter Canada Chairman and CEO Dr. Peter Barnard, began with the acceptance of a defined Work Plan and Milestones for the Negotiating Process. The Work Plan foresees the development of a consensus on the preferred site for ITER by mid-2002 and finalizing the Joint Implementation Agreement by the end of 2002. The Delegations then established the Negotiators' Standing Sub-Group (NSSG), approving its charter and noting the following designated members: Canada - M.J. Stewart and J. Campbell; European Union - J. Grunwald and J.-P. Rager; Japan - S. Ohtake, J. Michigami and H. Kishimoto; and Russian Federation - V. Korzhavin and Y. Konashkov.



Participants in the meeting

The meeting addressed the recommendations from the Preparatory Meeting and reached agreement on a way forward on the following key issues:

1. The Delegations endorsed the recommendation of the Preparatory Meeting that a Working Document prepared by the EU should be the basis for the elaboration of a first draft of the Joint Implementation Agreement at NSSG-1 for consideration at the next Negotiations Meeting in January.
2. The Delegations undertook to provide information on their intention with respect to the preferred procurement items to be contributed in kind to ITER construction. The International Team will also provide technical advice on this matter.
3. The Delegations endorsed the conclusion of the Preparatory Meeting with respect to the joint assessment of specific sites that a consolidated paper should be developed for the NSSG-1 meeting, taking advantage, as much as possible, of further exchanges of views in advance.

All of these issues will be pursued by the NSSG. In addition, the Delegations assigned an additional Task to the sub-group. Owing to the importance of defining the management structure of the ITER Legal Entity and the transition into construction and operation, the NSSG, with the technical assistance of the Coordinated Technical Activities (CTA) personnel, is to give early consideration to this issue.



Dr. P. Barnard chairing the Negotiations

The Delegations also took note of the record of the Project Board meeting of 7 November 2001 that reported on the group's progress and set out the Work Plan for the CTA.

The Negotiations Meetings next addressed the status of site offers. The discussion included acknowledgement of the Canadian site offer, review of comments on other possible offers from the European Union (France and Spain) and from Japan (Naka and Rokkasho), and commendations to the Canadian delegation for the preparation of its site offer and for the Workshops held on 5 and 6 November 2001 (see separate article in this issue).

During the Negotiations Meetings participants reported on the positive tone that had characterized recent high-level contacts with a number of United States of America authorities concerning possible re-entry of the US. The delegations shared the view that all ITER EDA Parties would be welcome to join the Negotiations while they were in progress. At the same time, they recognized the advantages of early participation, particularly as it concerns the agreements that will have to be worked out on the allocation of responsibilities for providing ITER components and systems.

The Negotiations concluded by issuing a joint news release, reflecting a commitment to share the progress reports on the efforts to implement ITER. In the words of the release: "The participants in the Negotiations took important first steps on a variety of issues, and plan to hold the second round of Negotiations in Japan in January of 2002." These meetings will be in Tokyo on 22 and 23 January, and the third and fourth Negotiations Meetings are tentatively scheduled for March in Moscow and May in Cadarache, France. The first meeting of the Negotiators' Standing Sub-Group is also set for 18 - 20 December 2001 in Tokyo.