

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery
by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham
ITER Ministerial
December 20, 2003**

Good morning.

I would like to begin by welcoming all of the distinguished delegates to this ITER Ministerial meeting.

It is my privilege to be able to formally open these negotiations and to thank all of you for the enormous amount of work you have been doing on behalf of the world's energy future.

And let me recognize, and offer special thanks, to Dr. Werner Burkart who has agreed to lead today's discussions. Dr. Burkart's sound judgment, fairness, and patience have helped navigate ITER negotiations through three successful meetings in Vienna, and I want to personally say how much I appreciate his willingness to moderate this important meeting.

When President Bush announced United States participation in the ITER project he noted that "The results of ITER will advance the effort to produce clean, safe, renewable, and commercially-available fusion energy by the middle of this century."

This point cannot be emphasized enough. We have a common purpose and we are aimed at a common goal ... to apply the scientific and engineering genius of all our nations to the energy challenges that will face our world in the years ahead.

Fusion power could well be one of those technologies that allows the world to leapfrog the enormous acceleration in future energy demand we know threatens economic growth in every corner of the world.

Over the lifetime of a child born today, the demand for energy will more than triple from what it is today. Most of that growth will take place in the developing world. And if fusion power proves practical, it will kick in at the right time. It will be there to meet the increasing need for large scale sources of clean energy around the world.

That defines the promise of fusion. And it points to its great benefits.

I know that the delegates seated here today share this vision and this hope.

Today's negotiations are intended to take us a step closer to realizing that vision.

I have heard many times in my career that governments are short sighted ... that they can fund only what will help achieve a short-term goal ... and that they can't look to the future.

The ITER project proves that governments can work together to look to the future. It proves that even when the choices are difficult ... and the task complex ... we can commit to a project that

will not be completed until many of us sitting around this table are well beyond our years of public service.

I look forward to celebrating this remarkable achievement with all of you.

Thank you all for your commitment to ITER and thank you Dr. Burkart for leading our discussions today.