

Speech by
Mr Jacques Chirac
President of the French Republic

**On the occasion of the signing ceremony for the
International ITER Agreement on controlled Nuclear Fusion**

Paris, Elysée Palace

21 November 2006

Mr President of the European Commission,
Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Elected Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you today for the signing of the international ITER Agreement on controlled nuclear fusion, a new step on an adventure exceptional in every way.

Exceptional for its scientific ambition: to harness the sun's power to take up the challenge of ecological energy.

Exceptional for its international scale: the unprecedented association of seven major partners from the North to the South, whose representatives I warmly welcome.

Europe and France particularly appreciate the honour you have bestowed on us by choosing Cadarache to host the facility. Our hearts will be set on fully assuming this responsibility.

We are duty bound by the stakes. If nothing changes, humanity will have consumed in two hundred years most of the fossil resources accumulated over hundreds of millions of years, triggering at the same time a climatic upheaval. The depletion of these resources and action to combat global warming call for a revolution in our methods of production and consumption.

It is our duty to undertake the research that will prepare energy solutions for our descendants. The major scientific project that is ITER is one of the most innovative programmes to steer this tremendous change. It is the hand held out to future generations, in the name of solidarity and responsibility.

The ambition is huge! To control nuclear fusion. To control the tremendous amount of energy generated at one hundred million degrees and to design sufficiently resistant materials for the purpose. To produce as much energy from a litre of seawater as a litre of oil or a kilo of coal.

A great deal of progress has been made since the first Russian Tokamak. Yet ITER marks a milestone, and three decades of research lay ahead for our nations with the hope of a solution of use to all mankind.

On behalf of us all, it is my pleasure to pay tribute to every one of those, researchers, engineers and technicians, who conceived and have passionately defended and developed ITER.

This major scientific project is also the fruit of over twenty years of exemplary international co-operation under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

For the first time ever, seven major partners — Japan, Russia, China, the United States, Korea, India and Europe — representing half the humanity, have joined forces to build an immense scientific facility.

With information exchanges and sharing among scientists from the world over, international partnership, and the pooling of contributions and skills, ITER is first and foremost a victory over the strategies of supremacy that so marked the last century. The victory of humanity's interest as a whole.

The choice of the Cadarache site owes a great deal to Europe's commitment, which has supported fusion programmes for the last thirty years. I would like to thank all the Europeans who have taken part in these programmes, and especially President Barroso, without whom none of this would have been possible. This all-important Europe to whom France owes the hosting of ITER!

Not to mention the all-important local authorities. The urban district community, general councils and regional council are all supporting the project through their financial assistance and by hosting the scientists and their families. Since they are all aware of the economic ramifications of ITER: nearly 3,000 direct and indirect jobs in the region and many others in each partner country.

ITER will also open up new prospects for many sectors in the high-tech industries, public works and engineering. All the firms will have their opportunity in the European and international invitations to tender that are starting to be launched. Their mobilisation is vital to the project's success.

Last but not least, ITER, this scientific jewel, will have tremendous knock-on effects in terms of scientific, academic and industrial image, attractiveness and activity. France is proud and pleased that the international community has chosen this country, bearing witness to the quality and competitiveness of our teams and our environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

France will be ever vigilant and committed to the success of ITER, to the success of this emblematic response to the challenges of our time: the response of humanity united, putting science, industry and progress to work for economic development respectful of the environment.

Thank you.