



**Remarks on behalf of the United States Government_
by Dr. Raymond L. Orbach
Director, Office of Science
U.S. Department of Energy
at the ITER Agreement Initialing Ceremony
Brussels, Belgium May 24, 2006**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, fellow heads-of-delegation, party representatives, distinguished guests, and observers. It is a pleasure to be with you here in Brussels.

We thank the European Union for their hospitality and support, as well as the IAEA and Dr. Burkhardt for their ongoing support.

In January 2003, President Bush announced that the United States would join the multilateral negotiations for the construction and operation of ITER, and last summer our Congress indicated in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 their support for this endeavor and the process by which the United States Government may formally accept the text of the ITER agreement. Finally, in his State of the Union Address to the American people this year, President Bush reaffirmed his support for basic research and highlighted his belief that research in methods of harnessing clean energy has a leading role in global energy security.

Today is a momentous occasion in the history of science. We not only mark the conclusion of years of negotiations and collaborative planning amongst the ITER parties, we are also on the verge of the real work of ITER: to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion in a facility that for the first time will be able to produce a sustained, burning plasma, much like that needed for a full-scale fusion power plant.

It is truly remarkable that more than half of the world's population will be represented in this undertaking to promote enhanced global energy security. Our negotiations have produced an agreement that should serve as a model for future large-scale international scientific collaboration.

I believe the spirit of cooperation we have all demonstrated will continue through the construction and operations phases. I am strongly encouraged by indications of this in

the Provisional ITER organization.

First, ITER has a wonderful leader in Director-General Ikeda, who has a distinguished record of achievement in international diplomacy as well as in science and technological policy management. The Department of Energy is honored to work with Ambassador Ikeda.

Second, we have a strong project manager in ITER Principal Deputy Director-General and Project Construction Leader, Dr. Holtkamp. He managed the on-schedule, on-budget construction of the billion-dollar Spallation Neutron Source at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. We fully expect his standard of project management to be maintained throughout ITER construction and operation.

Fusion energy has the promise of playing a leading role in global long-term plans for energy security because it offers the potential for plentiful, safe, and environmentally benign energy. The United States has every hope that ITER will help fulfill this promise and the U.S. remains committed to the ITER endeavor.

To that end, the United States would welcome the opportunity to host the ITER signing ceremony in Washington this November.

Thank you.