Press Release

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28th ITER Council: Steady progress despite challenges including COVID-19

ST PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France (17 June 2021) – The ITER Council has convened to review the performance of the ITER Project. The Council evaluated the progress of construction, manufacturing, and assembly, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on project progress.

At its Twenty-Eighth Meeting on 16-17 June 2021, the ITER Council convened via remote videoconference to assess the latest progress reports and performance metrics of the ITER Project. The project has maintained steady progress, both with respect to Members' best efforts for delivery of components and worksite installation and assembly activities. However, the effects of some technical challenges and the ongoing pandemic are being closely monitored, and will be further assessed after due consideration of all possible mitigation measures to prevent any delays that could impact the schedule for the achievement of First Plasma.

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Continuity under COVID-19 conditions: The ITER Organization and Domestic Agencies have continued to exhibit resourcefulness and resolve in implementing continuity plans under COVID-19 conditions. Under its "New Normal" arrangements, the ITER Organization has continued progress in delivery and installation of components while rigorously adhering to hygienic measures and experiencing minimal health impacts from the pandemic.

Physical progress: The Council noted, with appreciation, the significant project achievements since its last meeting in November 2020, including the continued delivery of some major components and progress in machine assembly.

- The first of ITER's superconducting magnets, poloidal field coil #6, has been positioned in the tokamak pit, with one additional poloidal field coil completed and the others steadily progressing.
- Seven toroidal field coils have now been delivered to the ITER site, with the eighth completed and ready for shipment.
- The first module of the central solenoid is fully qualified and now ready for shipment, with the second to ship later this summer.
- Assembly of the first vacuum vessel sector sub-assembly has begun in the Assembly Hall, incorporating the associated toroidal field coils and thermal shield elements.
- All cryostat elements have been delivered to the ITER site, and welding is beginning on the cryostat lid.
- Manufacturing of the other key components is underway in the Members' industrial enterprises.
- Major progress has been achieved on plant systems for reactive power compensation, magnet power conversion, cryogenics, and cooling water, with multiple systems beginning or preparing for commissioning.

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ITER Member support: The Council noted that the ITER Organization and its collaboration partners are facing unprecedented pressure due to the pandemic and the difficulties encountered in manufacturing some of ITER's First-of-a-Kind components. The Council encouraged all ITER Members to meet their in-kind and in-cash commitments to enable the successful implementation of the construction strategy on schedule. The Council requested the ITER Organization and its collaboration partners to take all possible measures to ensure Fusion Power Operation in 2035 as currently planned.

Council Members reaffirmed their strong belief in the value of the ITER mission, and resolved to work together to find timely solutions to facilitate ITER's success. The Council congratulated the One-ITER Team on the commitment to effective collaboration that has put the project on the path to success. The Council will continue to monitor project performance closely, and to provide the support needed to ensure a robust pace of achievement.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRESS RELEASE

ITER—designed to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion power—will be the world's largest experimental fusion facility. Fusion is the process that 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 safe, abundant and environmentally responsible energy source.

ITER is also a first-of-a-kind global collaboration. Europe is contributing almost half of the costs of its construction, while the other six Members to this joint international venture (China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the USA), are contributing equally to the rest. The ITER Project is under construction in Saint-Paul-lez-Durance, in the south of France.

For more information on the ITER Project, visit: http://www.iter.org/