

Osamu Motojima

ITER Organization Director-General

On 28 July, 2010, the ITER Council appointed Professor Osamu Motojima, from Japan, Director-General of the ITER Organization.

Prof. Motojima is a well-known and much-respected figure in the field of fusion science in Japan and abroad. Known as a tireless proponent of fusion energy, Prof. Motojima was awarded the prestigious Alfvén lecture from Alfvén Laboratory, Royal Institute for Technology, Sweden in 2002, and the Fusion Power Associates Distinguished Career Award in 2008, for ‘...distinguished, lifelong career contributions to fusion development’. He has been the recipient of numerous research awards throughout his career for work accomplished in the fields of superconductivity and steady-state plasmas.

Prof. Motojima graduated from the Kyoto University in Physics in 1971, before completing a Master’s course in Physics in 1973 and a PhD in Electrical Engineering in 1976. Early in his career, he worked as a research associate and professor of plasma physics before joining the Japanese National Institute for Fusion Science (NIFS) in 1989.

At NIFS, Prof. Motojima held full-time professorship from 1989-2003, while directing the Research Operations Division and the Device Engineering Division, and serving as Scientific Advisor to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). In 1998, he took over the responsibility for the Large Helical Device (LHD) program at NIFS to build the largest superconducting stellarator in the world. Prof. Motojima remembers the creation of the first high-temperature plasma at LHD on 31 March, 1998 as “...*the greatest moment in my life as a researcher.*”

Prof. Motojima continued to direct the LHD program until April 2003, when he became Director-General of NIFS, crowning nearly twenty years spent within the Institute. During his tenure as NIFS Director-General from 2003-2009, he also served as Executive Director and Executive Board Member of the inter-university research institute in natural sciences NINS. He has been an active member of numerous committees and boards in support of fusion throughout his career, and was editor of *Fusion Engineering and Design* from 2001-2006.

Prof. Motojima has followed the ITER project since its inception, and has been a member of the ITER Council since 2007.

“50 years have been necessary to develop plasma physics and fusion research... We have done our best, and we only need to maintain our effort for a much shorter period [of time] to ensure that the goal is achieved. The dream is alive! New fusion energy is an achievable goal!” (IAEA Geneva, Oct 2008)

Since 2009, Prof. Motojima has been a foreign member of The Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, President of the Future Energy Research Association in Japan, and President of the Japanese Society of Plasma Science and Nuclear Fusion Research. He also serves as Chairman of the International Energy Agency (IEA) Stellarator Committee, the MEXT Fusion Research Council and its subcommittee on Energy, Science and Technology.

In September 2011 Prof. Motojima received the Honorary Professorship by the University of Provence for “taking up a challenge on which our future depends”, as the University’s Vice-President Denis Bertin said. In December 2011 the ITER Director-General received the *Honoris Causa* degree from the University of Science & Technology of China and in March 2012 he received the *Honoris Causa* degree from the University of Ghent (Belgium).