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# ThEC13 Welcome Talk

Rolf Heuer

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## Abstract

CERN is very much concerned about energy and energy efficiency.

Thank you very much, Egil. This is something of a late welcome to this conference, I realize. I know you have been here since yesterday morning, but I have just got back from Spain where, as you might have heard, François Englert, Peter Higgs, and CERN were presented with the Prince of Asturias award for science and technology. This is the first time that such a high level prize has been given to theory and experiment together, an accurate reflection of how modern physics works, and perhaps a model for other award givers.

It's a pleasure to welcome you here to this wonderful landmark, the Globe of Science and Innovation, which, if I am not mistaken, is here due to the initiative of Monsieur Couchepin, whom I also want to warmly welcome to this place, to your conference home so to speak. It is a fantastic landmark and we use it very, very often. On the ground floor, there is a permanent exhibition on particle physics, and up here we host seminars and colloquia, as well as events such as this conference.

Turning to the conference, I hear that it has already started very successfully. First of all, there are people from many countries here: it is the first time that so many experts from all over the world have come together to discuss new directions towards thorium-based energy. In particular, I hear that this morning there was a special announcement [1]. This really is a conference that not only takes stock of what is going on, but also looks forward to what can be done, on a timescale that may be long. But we particle physicists are used to long timescales and we have learned to adapt accordingly.

Why did CERN agree to help organize this conference? First of all, we are very much concerned about energy and energy efficiency, subjects that are important for us. A lab-

oratory like CERN can also help a lot in exploring the basic physics involved in these questions. And here I would like to mention, coming back to that long timescale, that in the mid-1990s Carlo Rubbia started his pioneering work on the transmutation of nuclear waste. That's already about two decades ago. Things are slowly developing, but I think that a conference like ThEC13 will very much help to accelerate it, because when people get together with a shared objective and general consensus on how to go forward, that makes an impression on others, and things do move ahead. Accelerator-driven systems make a good example: a field in which I hope we can help, working together with other countries and other regions, India and China, for example. There is interest on our side, and I am happy we have representatives of those countries here.

I am also happy to see in the program, that at the end of the conference, for those of you who are still alert after all your discussions, there is the opportunity to visit our facilities. I hope many of you will take the opportunity, because going down to the experiments is always spectacular, and at the moment the experiments are open, so you can see a great deal. It is very humbling to see the places where 3000 scientists work together in order to study the smallest particles.

CERN is a unique place, with a remarkable atmosphere, which serves as a model of how people can work together when they share a common goal. This is important, not only for CERN, but also for the thorium energy community. Forget about individual ways of doing things. Unite behind a common goal, and then you can really achieve something. And here, I hope that the CERN model will inspire you, by seeing how we are doing projects, and what can be achieved

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when individual differences are put aside. After all, next year CERN turns 60 and we remain attractive. I wish you a good continuation of this workshop, and many fruitful discussions. And when the conference is over, I hope you will tell me where the future lies.

Thank you very much.

## Reference

1. Van Der Durpel, L.: An industrial view on thorium: possibilities, challenges and paths forward. In: Proceedings of the International Thorium Energy Conference, ThEC13, Geneva, Switzerland, 27–31 Oct 2013