

Contact:

Laban COBLENTZ

[laban.coblentz@iter.org](mailto:laban.coblentz@iter.org)

+33 4 42 17 66 17

Sabina GRIFFITH

[sabina.griffith@iter.org](mailto:sabina.griffith@iter.org)

+33 4 42 17 66 15

## *Bernard Bigot, ITER Director-General 2015-2022*

***SAINT-PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France (14 May 2022) – Bernard Bigot, Director-General of the ITER Organization since 2015, passed away on 14 May 2022 at the age of 72 due to illness. His premature death will be felt with the greatest sadness by all those who were privileged to work alongside him in the many domains where he left his mark, a very personal blend of dedication and rigour. The ITER Organization, its staff and collaborators, and its international partners extend their sincerest sympathy and condolences to his family and loved ones.***

In the course of his long and distinguished career, Bernard Bigot held senior positions in research, higher education and government. A chemist by training, he was first and foremost a dedicated high-level public servant. From the creation of the *École normale supérieure de Lyon*, which he helped to establish in the 1980s, to positions at ministerial level in science, technology, research and education for successive French governments, as France's High Commissioner for Atomic Energy (2003-2009), and as Chairman and CEO of the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (2009-2012 and 2012-2015), Mr Bigot used his intelligence, his creativity, his diplomacy and an impressive capacity to work to bring about what he hoped would be "*un monde meilleur*" (a better world).

In this "*monde meilleur*," energy—as a motor for human and social development—occupied a central role. The ITER international research program, which he accepted to lead from 2015, clearly fell within this category. Starting with a series of profound structural and managerial reforms, Bernard Bigot put the project on a path to success that continues today.

Despite the volume of work related to ITER, Bernard Bigot remained deeply attached to a number of institutions and associations that he believed in and that he supported in various ways. He was president of the non-profit foundation of the *Maison de la Chimie* in Paris, an international centre for chemistry. He was a member of the board of directors of the chemistry and chemical engineering school CPE Lyon (*École supérieure chimie physique électronique de Lyon*), and president of the *Université de Lyon* foundation. He followed with interest the scientific work of the *Institut Mérieux* (biology), the *Institut de Paléontologie Humaine* (human paleontology), and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (planetary health). He had recently been elected to the French Academy of Technologies (*Académie des technologies*).

Bernard Bigot was a Commander in the French Order of the Legion of Honour, an Officer of the French Order of the National Merit, and a Commander in the Royal Swedish Order of the Polar Star. He was the recipient of the Gold and Silver Star in the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun and was recently awarded the Chinese Government Friendship Award.

Always ready to exchange with media representatives, politicians, economists, VIPs, or simple visitors, he knew how to make complex subjects understandable and meaningful. His enthusiasm was communicative.

Bernard Bigot was a visionary. Demanding in his expectations of others, and even more of himself, he valued loyalty above all else. Under an exterior that could appear austere, he was a profoundly human man.

Well beyond ITER and the international research community, his passing will be felt as a tremendous loss.

china

eu

india

japan

korea

russia

usa