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Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

Media Release

12 February 2008

Paris, France: International Year of Planet Earth Launch

ANSTO contributes to official publication *Planet Earth*

Two chapters on climate change written by ANSTO's Institute for Environmental Research Head, Professor John Dodson, will be featured in the official publication of the **UNESCO-backed** initiative – **International Year of Planet Earth** – launched in Paris today at 10.00am (8.00pm Sydney time).

The event is supported by no fewer than **191 United Nations countries** and the number continues to grow. The official book, ***Planet Earth***, will highlight key areas that must be nurtured or addressed if the world is to sustain itself. The chapters are written by well-known experts like Professor Dodson who have specialised in earth sciences as academics, teachers, commentators and science writers.

Professor Dodson said he was honoured to be invited to contribute to the publication about climate change, which he considers to be one of mankind's most serious challenges. He believes that the changes to the climate resulting from human activity will demand significant life-style and policy adjustments.

"My two chapters outline what the world's climate change challenges are and some of the steps we need to take to address them," he said.

"The way our climate has evolved and changed over the centuries is all recorded, whether by man or the planet itself, and now there are many records that track climate changes over many hundreds, even millions of years," said Professor Dodson. "By using science to map patterns and date climatic events we can track climate variability over many cycles and create models to simulate them. This puts us in a position to better plan for the future.

"The other area of climate change I explore in the chapters is how societies have adapted, or failed to adapt, with climate change," he said. "This is a fascinating area of research and one that particularly applies to modern man whom I believe will need to make societal adjustments to deal with climate change in the near future.

"The Mayan's of Central America are an example of a race which failed to adapt to climate change when they faced drought which extended over decades or more. In the end, climate change destroyed their society.

"The changes we may need to make include cutting back energy and water consumption, discovering new natural resources, recycling more and generally changing the way we live," he said. "The future depends very much on the choices and decisions we make now and in the every near future."

Planet Earth also focuses on many other issues such as water resources, discovery of new natural resources, improvement in understanding evolution, health and much more. The many new efforts and initiative being undertaken by a range of international organisations and industries are also strongly featured. *Planet Earth* will be distributed internationally. For more information also go to www.yearofplanetearth.org

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*ANSTO is the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation - the country's national nuclear research and development organisation and the centre of Australian nuclear expertise.