OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAM

MEMBER COUNTRIES:

Australia
Belgium
Canada
Chinese Taipei
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Iceland
Italy
Japan
Korea
The Netherlands
Norway
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States of America

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CHINESE TAIPEI JOINS INTERNATIONAL OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAM

The Chinese Taipei ODP Consortium has joined with Australia, Canada, and Korea to form the Australia/Canada/Chinese Taipei/Korea Consortium for Ocean Drilling. The addition of Chinese Taipei brings the international membership of the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) to a total of 20 countries/territories.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in Canberra, Australia on January 29 by Dr. Ju-Chin Chen of National Taiwan University, representing the Chinese Taipei ODP Consortium, and Dr. Neil Williams, Executive Director of the Australian Geological Survey Organization (AGSO) and Chairman of the Australian ODP Council.

In welcoming the inclusion of Chinese Taipei in the ODP consortium, Dr. Williams noted that understanding of the world's oceans requires an international effort. The enlarged consortium will allow Australia's geoscience community to further develop its knowledge and understanding of ocean geoscience in general and the Australian region in particular. "The Australian Geological Survey Organization recognizes data collected by the ODP as a key component of the management of Australia's Ocean Territory" noted Dr. Williams.

"The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea has signaled a new era of international cooperation in the exploration of the world's oceans," stated Dr. David Falvey, Director of the Ocean Drilling Program in Washington, D.C. "With Korea and now Chinese Taipei as our newest program participants, I look forward to the newly emerging economies of Asia taking a more prominent role in, and further enhancing the international dimension of the ODP."

Australia and Canada have been consortium members of the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) since 1988, and Korea joined in 1996. Australia's participation in the Consortium is funded by the Australian Research Council, AGSO, and the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee representing 12 Australian universities. Canadian funding is provided through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Geological Survey of Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Korea is represented by the Korea Institute of Geology, Mining and Materials. The Chinese Taipei ODP Consortium involves most geoscience research institutions and universities in Chinese Taipei with funding provided by the National Science Council.

The Australia/Canada/Chinese Taipei/Korea Consortium will pay a full member financial contribution as stipulated in the MOU between the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and AGSO. The annual budget for the ODP is 44.4 million US dollars. The Consortium's annual contribution is $2.71 million. NSF provides approximately 60 percent of the annual Program budget and the remaining member countries contribute 40 percent.

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ODP uses the scientific drill ship *JOIDES Resolution* to explore the history and structure of the Earth beneath the world's ocean basins, carrying out approximately eight-week long cruises to drill holes deep into the seafloor. From these holes, scientists retrieve core samples and geophysical data from the sediment and rock layers beneath the seafloor. The cores-slender cylinders 9.5 meters long-reveal clues about Earth's basic processes including the rearrangement of the continents, the evolution of life in the sea, and the changes over time of global climate, ocean currents, worldwide sea levels, and Earth's magnetic field. These layers contain a record of millions of years of geologic history.

On February 18, the *JOIDES Resolution* will depart Charleston, South Carolina for the next expedition to drill several sites between Bermuda and Florida. Sediment cores collected during this expedition will provide important new data that will help scientists better understand the ocean's role in global climate change. The *JOIDES Resolution* is scheduled to explore the southwest Pacific in late 1998 (the Great Australian Bight in Oct.-Nov. 1998 and the Indian Ocean's Kerguelen Plateau in Dec. 1998-January 1999).

The Ocean Drilling Program is primarily funded by the US National Science Foundation and other research agencies in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Joint Oceanographic Institutions for Deep Earth Sampling (JOIDES), an international group of scientists, provides scientific planning and program advice. Joint Oceanographic Institutions, Inc., a nonprofit consortium of 10 major U.S. oceanographic institutions, manages the program. Texas A&M University, Science Operator, manages and staffs the drillship. Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University manages the wireline services.

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