

SYNCHROTRONS

CERN establishes formal links with SESAME

A memorandum of understanding that provides for co-operation between the new international centre for Synchrotron light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), CERN and Jordan has been signed. During the visit of King Abdullah II of Jordan to the laboratory on 12 June, Luciano Maiani, CERN's director-general, Herwig Schopper, president of the SESAME Council, and Khaled Toukan, Jordanian education minister, signed the memorandum, which covers the exchange of scientific personnel, fellows and equipment.

The organizational structure of SESAME is based on the model of CERN. At the suggestion of Schopper – who is a former director-general of CERN – SESAME was created under the umbrella of UNESCO in the same way that CERN began some 50 years ago. The SESAME Council now comprises nine

founder members: Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates – who will fund the centre's annual budget. Other states are expected to join in the coming months. The Jordanian government will provide \$12 million for the construction of the centre.

There are close to 50 synchrotron radiation sources in the world, but very few are located in developing countries. SESAME, which is being built on the site of the Al-Balqa Applied University, 30 km from Amman in Jordan, will be the Middle East's first synchrotron. Based on components from the BESSY 1 synchrotron in Berlin, SESAME should be up and running in 2006. It will produce synchrotron radiation over a broad range of wavelengths from the infrared to X-rays, and will therefore have various fields of application. The facility, which should attract scientists from numerous



Left to right: King Abdullah II of Jordan visiting CERN with Luciano Maiani, director-general of CERN, Maurice Bourquin, president of the CERN Council, and Herwig Schopper, president of the SESAME Council.

disciplines and nationalities, is a good example of collaboration between countries in the grip of political tensions. As Schopper underlines, SESAME is opening the way for technological progress and peaceful scientific development in the Middle East.