Opening of SESAME 16 May 2017

Statement by Dr Fabiola Gianotti
Director General of CERN
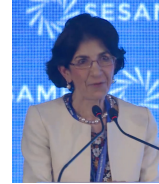
Professor Llewelyn Smith,
Professor Toukan,
Excellences,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Friends and Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is my first visit to SESAME, although I feel I already know the laboratory well. As soon as I arrived, I felt at home, because this place truly embodies the spirit of scientific curiosity and strong peaceful collaboration among people of different ethnicity, culture, traditions and religions that we experience every day at CERN. CERN and SESAME were both established to provide a centre of scientific excellence, to nurture training, and capacity building, and to foster peaceful collaboration across borders, but our links are more tangible than just the principles.

CERN has always been fully engaged with SESAME, from the first discussions between scientists in the CERN cafeteria in the 1990s on applying the CERN model of scientific collaboration to the Middle East, to the development of SESAME accelerator components at CERN, knowledge transfer to the SESAME team, and the very crucial role played by my predecessors, Professors Herwig Schopper and Chris Llewellyn Smith, in their roles of President of the SESAME Council, and I am sure that Professor Rolf Heuer will continue this wonderful tradition.

Our bigest contribution came through the CESSAMag project, which brought together European Commission funding, CERN know-how and the skill and dedication of research institutions and industry in SESAME Members and Observers to build the main ring magnet system and power supplies.

So it is with great pleasure that I am following progress in bringing SESAME on stream to serve a young and diverse research community from this region. I congratulate everyone who has made this superb accomplishment possible. And I assure you that SESAME can rely on CERN's strong and continued commitment as a new and exciting chapter begins.

Thank you.