

Merkel says Germany committed to nuclear fusion

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BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany is committed to research into nuclear fusion as a clean and abundant source of alternative energy but international cooperation is vital, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday

"Nuclear fusion could provide endless energy without producing radioactive waste," said Merkel in a podcast.

"It is worth investing in such a technology of the future, but no one country can do this alone, you need international scientific cooperation."

In 2006, more than 30 countries signed a deal to build the world's most advanced nuclear fusion reactor, the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER).

The objective of ITER is to demonstrate the feasibility of producing electricity from a fusion reaction, which involves fusing atomic nuclei at extremely high temperatures inside a giant electromagnetic ring.

Critics argue however it could be at least 50 years before a commercially viable reactor is built, if one is built at all.

Merkel said her government was increasing funds available for research this year and was committed to developing renewable energy sources. (Reporting by Sarah Marsh)