

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Eicke R. Weber receives SOLAR FUTURE.TODAY Visionary Influencers Lifetime Achievement Award 2019**

**Freiburg/Abu Dhabi (January 16, 2019) Prof. Eicke R. Weber, former director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE and Vice President of the International Solar Energy Society (ISES) has been awarded the SOLAR FUTURE.TODAY Visionary Influencer Award 2019 in the category Yearly Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented to Prof. Weber during the 3rd Black-Tie Gala Abu Dhabi on the occasion of the 3rd SOLAR FUTURE.TODAY World Annual Forum in Abu Dhabi last night, on January 15, 2019.**

Eicke R. Weber has been active in solar energy research for many years. Having received his qualification as professor of physics in 1983 from the University of Cologne, he taught at the University of California, Berkeley, for twenty years. In the field of material science, Weber made a name for himself worldwide with his work on defects in silicon and III-V semiconductors such as gallium arsenide and gallium nitride. He was especially interested in how metallurgical silicon with a certain amount of impurities could be used to produce high efficiency solar cells. In 2006 he returned to Germany to assume the position of Institute Director of Fraunhofer ISE, until his retirement in 2016. During his time as director of Fraunhofer ISE, Weber was also professor of physics/solar energy in the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics as well as the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Freiburg.

“We congratulate Eicke Weber on this award! He highly deserves this recognition for his commitment to not only bringing solar energy research forward, but also anchoring renewable energy in the global economic system at the same time”, say Prof. Hans-Martin Henning and Dr. Andreas Bett, who followed Prof. Weber as directors of Fraunhofer ISE in 2017. “Eicke Weber has always supported and continues to support the energy transformation with great enthusiasm on both the scientific and political arenas.”

### **Promoter of the Energy Transition**

Aiming for a CO<sub>2</sub>-free global energy supply, Weber is constantly searching for ways to connect in science, finance and politics. He was instrumental in bringing the worldwide leading Freiburg solar trade fair Intersolar 2008 to San Francisco. In 2013, he signed a cooperation agreement with the International Renewable Energy Agency IRENA. One aim of the agency is to promote renewable electricity in rural areas in the Sun-Belt countries. In 2012 he was decisively involved in founding the Global Alliance for Solar Energy Research Institutes between the three largest solar research institutes in the

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world: the National Renewable Energy Laboratory NREL in the USA, the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology AIST in Japan and Fraunhofer ISE in Germany. One among many of the Alliance's goals is to push photovoltaics into the terawatt range. As President of the Alliance of European Renewable Energy Research Centres EUREC, Weber contributed to the founding of the European Innovation Council EIC. Parallel to the well-known European Research Council, the EIC shall concern itself in particular with the support of excellent applied research.

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Focusing on storage as an essential element of the energy transformation, Eicke R. Weber was a prominent figure in establishing the Bundesverband Energiespeicher BVES (Federal Association of Energy Storage), serving as its first president up to Spring 2016. Weber also was chairman of the annual storage conference Energy Storage Europe in Düsseldorf from its founding until 2016. This storage conference is listed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy as leading international trade fair for energy storage.

During his time as director of Fraunhofer ISE, Weber was committed to supporting start-up companies from the institute. During Weber's term, eight start-ups were founded, among them NexWafe, which uses processes developed at Fraunhofer ISE to manufacture thin silicon wafers without any losses due to sawing, and Blue Inductive, which develops high efficiency inductive charging systems for electric vehicles.

When Fraunhofer ISE received the Zayed Future Energy Prize in January 2014, Weber was able to set up a funding program for Fraunhofer project ideas about sustainable energy supply in foreign countries thanks to a matching sum from the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

As director, Eicke R. Weber also succeeded in intensifying networking between the University Freiburg and the local Fraunhofer Institutes. An English course of studies in Renewable Energy Management was established and Weber initiated the program Master Online Photovoltaics in cooperation with the Faculty of Engineering at University of Freiburg. Worldwide specialists from Fraunhofer ISE teach courses in both programs. Weber also provided an impetus for founding a third department within the Faculty of Engineering, supported predominantly by the five Freiburg Fraunhofer Institutes. The new Department of Sustainable Systems Engineering INATECH is today a reality. Also, Weber was involved in setting up the new Sustainability Center Freiburg between Fraunhofer and the University.

Receiving the **SOLAR FUTURE.TODAY Visionary Influencers Lifetime Achievement Award 2019**, Prof. Weber commented: "I am very honored to receive this award for my lifelong efforts. Today, I am concerned that we will miss the last opportunity to avoid the earth following the path to 'Hothouse Earth' as described in a recent report from members of the IPCC team. Now is the time to transform our global energy system towards 100% renewable energy as fast as possible in order to prohibit

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this from becoming a reality. I plan to continue devote all of my efforts towards this goal.”

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SOLAR FUTURE.TODAY Award 2019 Ceremony: Prof. Eicke R. Weber receives the Visionary Influencers Lifetime Achievement Award. © SOLAR FUTURE.TODAY