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Concentrator Photovoltaics: Not Only Solar Cells

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An efficiency of 46 percent has recently been achieved with four-junction solar cells under a concentration on the cell of 508 times the normal solar power flux on the Earth's surface. Such high efficiencies are the driving force for the development of the concentrator photovoltaic (CPV) technology.

But solar cell efficiency is not the only factor. To be cost-effective, a CPV system requires optical elements that, properly mounted, cast enhanced solar power on the cells. The cell mountings must be able to dissipate the heat of the power not converted into electricity without reaching unacceptable temperatures. They have to be mounted on trackers that keep the cells in focus during the sun's journey across the sky. All these requirements have to be met in a cheap industrial way and produce large surfaces.

Dr. Antonio Luque is an emeritus professor at the Polytechnic University of Madrid and founder of its Solar Energy Institute. He is also affiliated with the Nanostructured Solar Cells Laboratory Ioffe Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia. The inventor of the intermediate-band solar cell, he holds about 20 patents and has about 1000 Web of Science citations. He has been honored with several important distinctions, among them the Böer Solar Energy Medal from the University of Delaware.

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Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2015

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