

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



STANDARD PATENT INFORMATION

(43) International Publication Date
10 May 2001 (10.05.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/32348 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **B23K 26/00**

(21) International Application Number: **PCT/IB00/01730**

(22) International Filing Date: 31 October 2000 (31.10.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
09/433,113 3 November 1999 (03.11.1999) US

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DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR,
HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR,
LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ,
NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM,
TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM,
KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian
patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European
patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE,
IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG,
CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

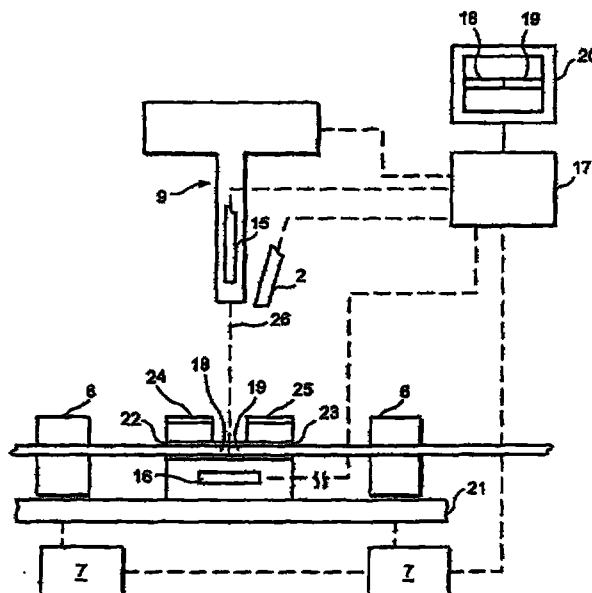
Published:

- With international search report.
- Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU,
AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ,

(54) Title: **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR LASER SPLICING OF OPTICAL FIBERS**



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for fusing a pair of optical fibers (18, 19) together using an intense beam of electromagnetic radiation (26) directed against the aligned ends of the optical fibers (18, 19). The intense beam (26) is of a power sufficient to fuse the fibers together, and is applied for a time sufficient to effect joining of the fibers (18, 19). Preferably, the beam (26) is of a sufficiently high intensity to create a plasma which increases the amount of optical power absorbed by the fiber ends (18, 19).

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