Unique telescope looks at the universe

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CONDOR, a deuterium observation telescope receiver, opened its eye to the universe for the first time last month and opened a new chapter in astronomy.

The telescope ... located in the Chilean Andes ... detected hot gas in the vicinity of young massive stars from radiation at the extremely high radio frequency of 1.5 terahertz -- 1.5 million million Hertz.

Scientists said the CONDOR detections are the first THz-frequency observations acquired with a large, 39-foot diameter telescope -- the only telescope with a mirror larger than 16-feet that can observe terahertz frequencies.

Researchers said the CONDOR observations open up the nearly unknown universe for exploration.

"If one could only see blue things, one would never know about trees and grass," said Martina Wiedner, CONDOR project leader. "Similarly, one discovers new things in the universe by looking at it in different frequencies."

The CONDOR project is operated by the First Physical Institute of the University of Cologne.

The telescope was built jointly by the Max Planck Institute for Radio Astronomy in Bonn, Germany; the Onsala Space Observatory, Sweden; and the European Southern Observatory.