

1 Foreword

The IERS Annual Report for 2005 shows how the Service is continuing its active role according to its charter to provide the terrestrial and celestial reference frames and Earth orientation parameters for the astronomical, geodetic and geophysical communities. These IERS products lay the foundation for Earth and astronomical observations as well as practical applications.

Several activities during 2005 were aimed at improvement of key products and consideration of future development. The most prominent was work towards the next ITRF based on rigorous combination of time series at two levels, first within each Technique Centre from the input of their respective Analysis Centres and then combining all the Technique Centre time series by the ITRS Combination Centres. The task was a new level of integration among the IERS components but was not completed as planned in 2005. The IERS Workshop on the Combination Pilot Project considered how the combination process could be extended to other IERS products. Many technical and organizational questions must be resolved. The IERS established a Working Group on Prediction to study how to improve predictions of EOP, which are required for important practical applications. Underlying all IERS products are the IERS Conventions. The Conventions Centre activated its Advisory Board to draw upon the expertise of various communities to address specific modeling issues affecting IERS products.

I take this opportunity writing my first foreword as Chair of the IERS Directing Board to say that the coming years will undoubtedly be a time of change and challenges for the IERS. The IAG has established the Global Geodetic Observing System (GGOS) based on the existing IAG Services to be the integrating entity and advocate for geodesy in its three facets, geometry, rotation and gravity. The IERS is central to two facets and plans to take an active role in GGOS. The space geodetic networks that provide the raw data for the Technique Centres are in decline in some places but elsewhere there is work to advance the techniques and to strengthen the geometry. The future fundamental network will have the various techniques co-located to a high degree and a more uniform geographic distribution. The IERS must be able to withstand and take advantage of these developments. As new methods for generating the IERS products based on greater integration of data and analysis are developed and validated, the relationships between the IERS components and between the IERS and other IAG Services and GGOS may need review. To achieve steady progress and the best outcomes for our communities will require considerable work, attention and good will.

*Chopo Ma
Chair, IERS Directing Board*