

1 Foreword

In the 2008–2009 period the IERS took significant steps to fulfill its mandate to provide fundamental reference frames for scientific and other users. The relevant IERS/IVS Working Group completed its work on the Second Realization of the International Celestial Reference Frame by Very Long Baseline Interferometry. The ICRF2 catalogue was documented in IERS Technical Note 35 and adopted as the fundamental celestial reference frame by a resolution of the IAU General Assembly in August 2009. The ITRS Center worked closely with the four Technique Centers to generate validated time series input for the incremental approach first used for ITRF2005. The data reprocessing was long and arduous. Although the nominal end date was not achieved, it is clear that the result was worthwhile.

Two components of the IERS took steps to refresh their work. The Conventions Center systematically revised and updated the IERS Conventions in preparation for a new edition. To revitalize the present GGFC Special Bureaus a new call was issued, and the GGFC was restructured. The structural changes were instituted to allow for the establishment of operational products and for inclusion of new operational products. In addition, the Earth Orientation Center revised Bulletin B in May 2009 based on input from the user community.

The Working Group on Combination and the Working Group on Prediction finished their work in 2008 and 2009, respectively. A new Working Group on Combination at the Observation Level was established in 2009.

A number of workshops were held, partially co-organized with GGOS: GGOS Unified Analysis Workshop, Follow-Up Meeting, Vienna, Austria, April 15, 2008; IERS Workshop on EOP Combination and Prediction, Warsaw, Poland, October 19–21, 2009; Second GGOS Unified Analysis Workshop, San Francisco, USA, December 11–12, 2009.

While considerable progress was made in specific areas, achieving greater integration, consistency and accuracy for all the IERS products still will require considerable thought and work. As the requirements from the science and other user communities become more stringent it may be that fundamental conceptual advances are needed. It must be kept in mind that the IERS is a Service, and useful, reliable and credible products are the keys to relevance.

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