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Subject: Recommendation ITU-R TF.460

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United Kingdom

THE FUTURE OF THE UTC TIMESCALE

1 The United Kingdom government has considered further the proposals submitted to Working Party 7A for the revision of Recommendation ITU-R TF.460-6. The essential part of these proposals is that Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) would be re-defined by ceasing the addition of leap seconds, thereby causing UTC to differ from UT1, a timescale based on the Earth's rotation, by more than the current limit of 0.9 second.

2 The UK continues to oppose strongly the proposed change to UTC. The following matters have been taken in to account in coming to this view:

2.1 The UK has considered the discussions about the proposed change within Working Party 7A, including the evidence presented to the Working Party of technical problems arising from the implementation of the leap second on 31 December 2005. It has concluded that the problems reported are minor and amenable to technical solutions, and that they do not provide sufficient justification for the proposed change.

2.2 British astronomers and navigators have strongly recommended that civil time should remain closely linked to mean solar time as is done with the current definition of UTC.

2.3 No British organisations have supported the proposed change.

2.4 In the UK no evidence has been found of serious difficulties arising from the introduction of a leap second.

3. In summary UK strongly oppose the proposed changes to the Recommendation ITU-R TF.460-6 as the technical issues and concerns we raised regarding the proposal are still unresolved.
