QUESTION ITU-R 236-2/7,[[1]](#footnote-1)\*

The future of the UTC time scale

(2001-2014-2017)

The ITU Radiocommunication Assembly,

considering

*a)* that Resolution **655 (WRC-15)** invites the ITU Radiocommunication Sector and BIPM, along with other organizations, to cooperate in studies, dialogue, and reports to address issues identified in that Resolution concerning the definition of time scales and the dissemination of time signals via telecommunication systems;

*b)* that UTC is the legal basis for time-keeping for most countries in the world, and *de‑facto* is the time scale used in most others;

*c)* that Recommendation ITU-R TF.460-6 states that all standard-frequency and time signal emissions should conform as closely as possible to UTC;

*d)* that Recommendation ITU-R TF.460-6 describes the procedure for the occasional insertion of leap seconds into UTC to ensure that it does not differ by more than 0.9 seconds from the time determined from the rotation of the Earth (UT1);

*e)* that the occasional insertion of leap seconds into UTC creates serious operational difficulties for many navigation, industrial, financial, and telecommunication systems today,

decides that the following Questions should be studied

1 What are the various aspects of current and potential future reference time scales, including their impacts and applications in telecommunications, industry, and other areas of human activity?

2 What are the requirements for the content and structure of time signals to be disseminated by radiocommunication systems?

3 Does the current leap second procedure satisfy user needs or should an alternative procedure be adopted?

further decides

1 that the results of the above studies should be included in ITU‑R Reports;

2 that the above studies should be completed before 2023.

Category: C2

1. \* This Question should be brought to the attention of the Bureau international des Poids et Mesures (BIPM), the International Earth Rotation Service (IERS), Study Group 13 of the Telecommunication Standardization Sector and Radiocommunication Study Group 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)