

International Meridian Conference

The International Meridian Conference was a conference held in October 1884 in Washington, D.C., in the United States, to determine a prime meridian for international use.

The conference was held at the request of U.S. President Chester A. Arthur. On 22 October 1884, the following resolutions were adopted by the conference (voting having taken place on 13 October)

- That it is the opinion of this Congress that it is desirable to adopt a single prime meridian for all nations, in place of the multiplicity of initial meridians which now exist. (This resolution was unanimously adopted.)
- That the Conference proposes to the Governments here represented the adoption of the meridian passing through the centre of the transit instrument at the Observatory of Greenwich as the initial meridian for longitude. (Ayes, 22; noes, 1; abstaining, 2.)
- That from this meridian longitude shall be counted in two directions up to 180 degrees, east longitude being plus and west longitude minus. (Ayes, 14; noes, 5; abstaining, 6.)
- That the Conference proposes the adoption of a universal day for all purposes for which it may be found convenient, and which shall not interfere with the use of local or standard time where desirable. (Ayes, 23; abstaining, 2.)
- That this universal day is to be a mean solar day; is to begin for all the world at the moment of mean midnight of the initial meridian, coinciding with the beginning of the civil day and date of that meridian; and is to be counted from zero up to twenty-four hours. (Ayes, 14; noes, 3; abstaining, 7.)
- That the Conference expresses the hope that as soon as may be practicable the astronomical and nautical days will be arranged everywhere to begin at midnight.
- That the Conference expresses the hope that the technical studies designed to regulate and extend the application of the decimal system to the division of angular space and of time shall be resumed, so as to permit the extension of this application to all cases in which it presents real advantages. (Ayes, 21; abstaining, 3.)