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<i>INVITED TALK:</i> Status of the ICRF3 and Gaia activities

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The ICRF3, the next realization of the International Celestial Reference Frame, is going to be built within the next two years for approval at the IAU 2018 General Assembly. This timescale is driven by the forthcoming optical reference frame to be built by the Gaia mission and aligned at best with the ICRF3. The ICRF3 work is carried out by an IAU Working Group set up in 2012. While the work so far was primarily focused on increasing the pool of observations, it must now concentrate on the analysis. The Gaia mission is operational since September 2014, observing 30-40 million sources per day. It is performing largely nominally despite a few problems which slightly degrade the accuracy. A first release of the Gaia data is planned for mid-2016 while a second release is expected by mid-2017.

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