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Foreword

The 2001 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation will be held in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. This is the fourth conference to be held outside the USA, and the second to be held in Asia. Seoul is the economic and cultural center of Korea, and offers a unique setting combining tradition and modernism for a conference on high technology.

We are witnessing the beginning of the new millennium, and the theme of this conference reflects the timely objective, "Frontiers of Robotics and Automation in the New Millennium". This conference will provide an opportunity to promote new emerging concepts in robotics and automation technology.

A record number of papers totaling over 1150 have been submitted to the program committee, by authors from more than 50 countries. Of these, 678 papers were selected for presentation at the conference. Geographically, the accepted papers come in roughly equal proportions from North America, Europe, and Asia.

The conference will be running in 13 parallel sessions with three plenary speeches and two panel discussions. The scope of the plenary speeches ranges from medical robotics and machine tool technologies to nano-robotics. We will also have panel discussions on manufacturing automation and rehabilitation robotic systems. We believe these topics will surely be critical issues for the future robotics community.

A number of special efforts were made in the preparation of this conference. For the first time in the history of this conference, an on-line electronic system was used to handle paper submissions, reviews, and registration. This contributed greatly in eliminating paperwork and communication delays. The conference will be held at the same time with KOFA2001, a full-scale annual exhibition on factory automation. A series of workshops and symposiums related to robotics and automation were also scheduled around the conference dates, to enable participants to attend more than one meeting while attending ICRA2001. Special sessions on Korean industrial automation have been scheduled during the conference in order to provide an opportunity for visitors to become acquainted with the local robotics and automation activities. These special sessions will focus on technology developments in automation of the automobile industry, semiconductor industry, and steel industry in Korea.

We are very grateful for all the hard work of many people and would like to express the deepest thanks to all the supporting organizations.

All the best,



Wook Hyun Kwon
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